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Culture Unbound Vol. 1 Editorial

By Johan Fornäs, Martin Fredriksson & Jenny Johannisson

Why Culture Unbound? Why culture, why cultural research, why a new academic journal, electronically published with open access? There are many viable answers, but the term “unbound” serves as a key to opening up the response to all these questions. Let us, in this very first editorial, say something about the unboundedness we are assuming or striving for in relation to culture, cultural research and Culture Unbound itself.

Cultural research and cultural studies are fields of knowledge crisscrossed with lines of division and even hostilities. Just like in other social arenas (including politics or religion), there are plenty of clashes between civilisations, gaps and divides that separate camps from each other and give rise to voids and taboos of various kinds. Culture Unbound wants to contribute a nodal point of connection, partly inspired by a Swedish tradition of negotiation and mediation which will be commented on further below. We do not seek unity but lively argument, believing in the value of decent interfaces where positions can interact in constructive ways.

In the field of cultural theory, some individual thinkers similarly seek interaction with highly diverse directions of thought, and cherish differences as a unique source of development and insight, preferring cosmopolitan or hybridising theoretical “bricolage” to ascetic purism. Others tend to develop a strongly particular coherent universe of ideas, in contrast and often quite starkly opposed to the rest. The former strive to think with others, the latter to think against others. Scholars of the latter type are more than welcome to publish with us, but the journal stands closer to the former in its own practices. Both ways of thinking are needed to renew and sharpen cultural research. There is an obvious value in strong, critical positions that clear the air and test where radical counter-positions might lead. But there is also a need for arenas where communicative, as well as polarising, thoughts can interact in unpredictable ways. Culture Unbound strives to serve as such a forum, and will thus not take a stand for or against any particular branch of cultural research, but always value heterology and polyphony.

Tony Bennett (1998: 535) has described cultural studies as a transdisciplinary crossroads with simultaneously critical, reflexive and bridging functions, “acting as an interdisciplinary clearing-house within the humanities, providing a useful interface at which the concerns of different disciplines, and of other interdisciplinary knowledges, can enter into fruitful forms of dialogue”. These “other interdisciplinary knowledges” include feminist and postcolonial studies, science and technology studies, as well as critical theory and cultural sociology. They are in-
creasingly put to work not only in the humanities, but also in the social sciences, thus contributing to bridging the gap between human and societal perspectives on cultural practices. While cultural studies, according to a dominant genealogy, once was born in Birmingham as a particular British school of thought, it has since then developed into a transnational and transdisciplinary interface. Still, it retains certain limitations and is surrounded by strong hostilities in many regions, which is one reason why *Culture Unbound* has opted to be a “journal of current cultural research” rather than just “cultural studies”. This choice of name indicates an explicit ambition to connect to a research field that is broader than cultural studies alone, including all branches of interdisciplinary cultural analysis, critical theory, psychoanalysis, science and technology studies (STS), cultural sociology, ethnography, etc.

Étienne Balibar (2004: 235) has argued for “the idea of the ‘vanishing mediator’” with “Europe as the interpreter of the world, translating languages and cultures in all directions”, in “an attempt to restore the political function of intellectuals” where they “would be border lines themselves”. *Culture Unbound* will make use of this conjuncture of relaxed boundaries and, from a position of mediation, exploit the productive potential of the dialogical combination of a series of challenging crosscurrents in cultural research. This is a Swedish (or Nordic), but also a European and global interest. While it corresponds well to the Nordic countries’ long-standing tradition of mediating and negotiating between different political and cultural fractions on a global arena, *Culture Unbound* can also, in a sense, sympathise with the EU’s motto “united in diversity” – although certainly without subscribing to all the other parts of the current European project. Ultimately, however, *Culture Unbound* is a transnational and inclusive forum that seeks to bring together different strands of cultural research from different parts of the world. This new journal creates a new communicative platform for glocal cultural research, open to scholars everywhere but with a special mission to also open channels for voices from the Swedish and Nordic regions. This should meet broad interest, since these local voices contribute unique perspectives to the major issues in the field today.

The launching of *Culture Unbound* is possible thanks to the joint efforts of three units at Linköping University in Sweden. This university is famous for organising interdisciplinary thematic programmes for research and PhD education. One such ‘theme’ unit is the Department of Culture Studies (Tema Q), covering a wide area of studies on cultural issues. A second partner is the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), a national hub for international and transdisciplinary exchange in this field. The third partner is the Swedish Cultural Policy Research Observatory (SweCult), which links cultural researchers to practitioners and politicians in the cultural sector. Two of the initial journal editors, Editor-in-Chief Johan Fornäs and Executive Editor Martin Fredriksson, are employed
at the two former units, while the third editor, Associate Editor Jenny Johannis-
son, is Vice Chair of the Board of SweCult and works at the Centre for Cultural
Policy Research at University College of Borås, which publishes The Nordic
Journal of Cultural Policy (*Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidskrift*). The intention is to let
new editors take over at intervals, to give scope for other voices. The current trio
has agreed to serve as editors initially for three years. Future editors may either be
located at the same Swedish academic units, or in some other appropriate envi-
ronment, in Sweden or elsewhere. Linköping University Electronic Press offers
professional support and a channel for publishing the journal with open access.

If *Culture Unbound* is a forum where different disciplines and forms of cultural
research can intersect, it also aims to view this area of research in a broader aca-
demic context. While the journal focuses on internal boundaries within the vast
field of cultural research, it also takes an interest in the perimeters of the field as a
whole. Neither culture nor cultural research have ever been a static sphere with
clear-cut boundaries to the world of politics, economics or everyday life. Today,
this is even more evident, as an ongoing process of culturalisation continuously
expands the concept of culture and integrates it with more or less every other so-
cial sphere. In the wake of the cultural turn, the cultural perspective has been gain-
ing new ground within the social and political sciences, and during the 1990s this
also spilled over into the economic sphere. Since then, culture has been acknowl-
edged, and exploited, both as a commercial resource in the new economy and as
an analytical tool at business schools all over the world. Yes, it has even interfered
with the natural sciences and technological knowledge-production.

In roughly the last half century, the object of cultural research has expanded
rapidly, and some may regard this as an attempt from the humanities to colonise
the rest of academia. Even though a quick look at the distribution of funding be-
tween the humanities and the natural sciences should put such suspicions to rest, it
could still be relevant to question how this process of culturalisation affects other
academic disciplines.¹ And how does it affect the humanities? In a time when the
field of cultural research is expanding and its boundaries are constantly negoti-
ated, the great challenge may be not to transgress these borders, but to identify
them. If culture is everywhere, what are the limits of cultural research? Can cul-
tural research become as unlimited as its object of research, and would that be a
sign of freedom or a symptom of lost identity?

These questions are fundamental to the future of the humanities and social sci-
ces, and neither a single editorial nor a legion of academic articles will settle
them for good. Still, we will make *Culture Unbound* a forum for discussions that
transgress what we consider to be counterproductive boundaries. Hence, *Culture
Unbound* will strive to move beyond both a narrow understanding of culture, and
the norms guiding individual academic disciplines. Culture can never be com-
pletely unbound, but current cultural research may identify and explore the new
boundaries and frontiers of cultural practices and cultural research that the process of culturalisation has brought with it.

As an initial attempt in this direction, the first thematic section of the first volume of *Culture Unbound* is devoted to the usefulness of cultural research against the backdrop of culturalisation. However, similar reflections on the role and shape of current cultural research will now and then reappear in various forms, both in future theme sections and in individual articles. We plan to issue a series of thematic sections to be published over the next years, so that each annual volume will present three of four such themes, together with reviews of publications relating to similar topics. In due time, the succession of themes will, in practice, indicate the potential and scope of the journal, and demonstrate more clearly than any introductory editorial what this journal is about.

In 2009, the first theme on the usefulness of cultural research will be followed by a further two thematic sections: a section on urbanity and representation, entitled *Signs of the City, City of Signs* and edited by Geoff Stahl, is up for publication in early fall, and a section on *Surveillance and Governementality*, edited by Toby Miller, will be published by the end of the year. Over the next couple of years, we aim to deal with questions such as academic and artistic knowledge production; culture–nature; intellectual property; rural media spaces; fields of cultural production, and uses of the past. But there will always be room for individual articles in any conceivable direction, so that *Culture Unbound* is able to both make focused interventions in cultural studies and represent the border-crossing multiplicity of approaches in the wider field of cultural research.

In short, we have provided the following arguments for launching this journal:

Firstly, *culture* is, in some ways, less limited by strict boundaries. In several of the multiplying definitions of the term, culture and cultural aspects or phenomena move across the boundaries of inherited divisions, necessitating increased and focused attention that does not limit itself to any given disciplinary or geographic domain. *Culture Unbound* will trace these changes as they affect new developments of cultural research.

Secondly, *cultural research* is currently in an interesting flux, with growing interest in, and need, for boundary-crossing innovations, where the field of cultural studies is becoming transnationally glocalised and is mutually interacting with other, sometimes regional, branches of interdisciplinary cultural research. *Culture Unbound* will act as an interface and arena for such interchanges.

Thirdly, the journal *Culture Unbound* will formally strive to provide an unbound, free and open space for intellectual exchange. Not bound to any printed format and not limited by subscription fees, it is an open-access resource available to anyone with a networked computer and a wish to take part in recent developments in the understanding of the many facets of culture and culturalisation.
Johan Fornäs is Editor-in-Chief of *Culture Unbound*, Professor at the Department of Culture Studies (Tema Q) and Director of the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), Linköping University. With a background in musicology and media studies, he was 2004-08 Vice Chair of the international Association for Cultural Studies (ACS).

Martin Fredriksson is Executive Editor of *Culture Unbound*. He is also administrator at ACSIS and graduate student at the Department of Culture Studies, Linköping University. In December 2009 he will publish his dissertation on the relation between the cultural construction of The Author as a Genius and the history of Swedish Copyright Law 1877-1960.

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**Notes**

1. This journal’s title, “Culture Unbound”, derives from Fornäs et al. (2007), discussing the processes and discourses of culturalisation. It was in turn inspired by O’Dell (1997).

**References**


What’s the Use of Cultural Research?
Editorial theme introduction

By Johan Fornäs, Martin Fredriksson & Jenny Johannisson

What’s the use of cultural research? In late modern society, culture is increasingly positioned as a key force or core element, whether in management or sustainable development discourses, debates on European integration or media trends. At the same time, the value and importance of cultural research is often somewhat paradoxically questioned, and there is a mood of imminent threat and lack of confidence among scholars in this field.

The first thematic section in the first volume of *Culture Unbound* is devoted to the usefulness of cultural research against the backdrop of culturalisation. It aims to explore the impact of culturalisation on cultural research in a broad sense. This concept is a contested one. Does it mainly denote a trendy ideological discourse or a ‘real’ historical process? Could it be an instrument in furthering cultural research, or does it, on the contrary, risk devaluing the concept of culture, when it is inflated and spread far beyond the domains of ‘proper’ cultural research (whatever that may be)? What risks may be identified in using culture as a tool to further research interests? What are the politics guiding different definitions of usefulness (and, indeed, culture) in cultural research and elsewhere?

**Culture, Research Policy and the Politics of Usefulness**

One topic in such a discussion of culture, cultural research and usefulness deals more specifically with issues of usefulness, quality and measurement in the human sciences in general, and in interdisciplinary cultural research in particular. Even if culture today is often identified as a key innovative force, cultural researchers rarely experience that their research is positioned at the fore. Is this due to the fact that many cultural researchers work in disciplines or fields that are not easily assessed according to existing criteria in research councils and other funding bodies? Or is it due to the cultural researchers’ inability to convey that their research is useful? Are the quality criteria guiding cultural research different from the quality criteria of other research fields and outside academia, that is, can the ‘usefulness’ of research be universally defined, or is it completely dependent on the context? Could usefulness be measured in ways that give more credit to cultural research than is the case today?

There is a tension between the criteria of usefulness and the criteria of excellence in the academic world. On the one hand, quality assessment often stresses
the importance of international publication and other factors of individual merit. Major national and international research-funding bodies, established publishing companies and top-ranking academic journals always tend to rate much higher than being useful to the local environment. Works written and published in the domestic language and distributed to a wider audience locally or nationally can, on the other hand, sometimes be deemed more immediately useful to society than those with high excellence points in the big international journal. There is also a tension in that excellence tends to be measured by internal scientific criteria whereas usefulness involves other, extra-academic actors and partners. This is related to the boundary between academic cultural research and political, social and cultural practices found in other parts of society. There is a need to strike a balance between critical intellectual autonomy and self-reflexive linkages to other, non-academic interests and forms of knowledge and understanding.

There is probably no simple solution to these issues. Usefulness can, at best, be fused with excellence and critique, and all cultural researchers should probably strive for such moments. But there is no neutral middle point between them, no perfectly balanced (“lagom”, as we say in Swedish) critical usefulness that solves the problems once and for all. Instead, the research system must be able to uphold a contradictory ambivalence, with a plurality of support and funding structures where quite contrasting projects and perspectives can thrive as parallel alternatives, rather than seeking to widen a golden middle road for all.

On the one hand, efforts should be undertaken to make even critical cultural research useful, demonstrating how such knowledge-seeking helps to solve, or at least deal with, urgent societal problems on several levels. Even the negativity of critical perspectives serves as an empowering function by simply attacking blocks of dominance and boundaries that prevent people from developing their creative potential. Moreover, there is always at least an implicit positive, or even utopian, moment in even the most critical research, by indirectly hinting at possible alternative directions for history.

On the other hand, the whole discourse of usefulness needs to be seriously challenged, since a more autonomous quest for knowledge, based on scientific curiosity rather than on other, more pragmatic, interests can lead to insights that only much later turn out to be of use to others. The inherent instrumentalism implied by the concept of “usefulness” could thus be questioned in favour of the intrinsic value of cultural research, aligning the interests of cultural research with those of high culture (Fornäs et al. 2007: 28). The discourse of usefulness is thus inherently intertwined with issues of power. According to whose interests is usefulness assessed? All citizens do not have equal access to formulating problems, and critical basic research should not let itself be bound to the often short-sighted needs of dominant institutional interests in society – those who have the money to spend on research. For the same reason, it could be argued that the power of defining relevant research problems should not be left solely to the researchers, since they
partly represent the institutionalised interests of academia. Arguments in favour of the intrinsic value of cultural research should therefore be balanced against the possibilities for other members of society to gain access to the influence on knowledge-production.

This creates a complex dialectics. A critique of usefulness can be ultimately useful, although it is often the critical element that makes research truly meaningful and helpful for long-term societal development. However, it is difficult for individual scholars to simultaneously fulfil both functions: to make research useful while criticising the demands for usefulness as such. Both these positions need to be played out against each other and delimit each other’s claims, so that neither deteriorates into either servile apologetics or stubborn isolation.

Cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1992/1996: 340, 347f) has argued that intellectuals (in his case both in academia and culture) must be able to combine autonomy and commitment.

…[It] is by increasing their autonomy […] that intellectuals can increase the effectiveness of a political action whose ends and means have their origin in the specific logic of the fields of cultural production. […] On the one hand, the aim is to reinforce autonomy […]. On the other hand, it must tear cultural producers away from the temptation to remain in their ivory tower, and encourage them to fight, if only to guarantee themselves the power over the instruments of production and consecration and, by involving themselves in their own times, to assert the values associated with their autonomy.

In arguing for a social responsibility based on autonomous forms of practice in the cultural and academic fields, including research, seminars, scholarly publications etc., Bourdieu gathered support from both Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas, who also, albeit in different terms, have been engaged in supporting the critical and socially responsible knowledge production that is possible only through a self-critical and reflexive application of field-specific procedures, nourished not least in cultural research. Their various critiques against the commercial and political governing of culture and research did not aim to isolate them in any ivory tower, but rather to enable unique interventions in politics and social life.

A complicated question is how this rather strong ideal of autonomy can be reconciled with the interdisciplinary efforts of cultural studies, which also partly strive to undermine the boundary between academic and non-academic knowledge-production. This was essential already to Raymond Williams, who was in other respects rather close to (not least) Habermas’ position (Nieminen 1997). This issue will have to be left for another occasion, however. Cultural researchers in the current situation do need to defend a minimal degree of relative autonomy, in order to retain at least some scope for curiosity and critique, even if they also accept certain demands on usefulness (while fiercely rejecting others). It is not despite, but because of, our critical problematisations that we can work meaningfully for dialogues and alliances with non-academic actors in educational, political and cultural movements of various kinds.
More specifically, there are in many parts of the world several problems to solve in order to defend the specific values of cultural research in the current context of accelerating demands for profitability, usefulness and/or excellence. The precise conditions and balance between them shift between countries and regions, but from our Swedish horizon, we can, for example, identify the following, briefly summarised, issues.

As for the outflow of research in the form of academic publishing, much remains to be done before the prevailing measures, culled from medicine and the natural sciences, can be said to fairly represent the quality and quantity of publishing according to the established practices in the humanities and social sciences. In these areas, books, anthologies and national publication in the domestic language are in many cases more influential – and indeed more important – than articles in leading international journals, even if the latter serve as a useful complement.

Concerning the inflow in terms of external funding, a greater flexibility is also needed so that evaluations do not focus on a too limited set of funding options, but can accommodate a more diverse span of sources. It is also questionable whether external funding is always a mark of excellence, since the most critical research may actually both want and be forced to cope on a rather autonomous basis. In addition, research in areas with few and financially weak external partners also deserves societal support. A key aim for cultural research is to improve understanding and communication between people, and this can hardly be measured in terms of how able they are to attract external funding.

The "through-flow" of people and knowledge effected by academic education already tends to possess relatively standardised quality and quantity measures, but their links to research evaluation are sometimes neglected. There is a tendency to prioritise research and publishing merits before educational ones, even in contexts where the latter are arguably essential.

Not all publishing is academic. Various forms of communication with the general public, in the media or by other means, should also be regarded as relevant to quality assessments.

Most of the preceding aspects are usually measured individually, but there is also a specific value in the ability to build creative collectives. One may well discuss the possibility of acknowledging how research environments are constructed and reproduced socially and intellectually.

Quality measures should not be permanent and one-dimensional, but should aim high. There is no absolute quality; instead, quality is a relative concept. Quality for whom, in what respect? There must therefore be different scales for different purposes, depending on whether one is asking for the best research producer, the best educator, etc.

The evaluation procedures of research funding bodies are mostly deficient in adequately dealing with genuinely interdisciplinary proposals and projects. New and solid procedures need to be developed, to counteract the bias of the strong and
conservative mono-disciplinary system against innovative transdisciplinary projects. Otherwise, transdisciplinary research runs the risk of repeatedly falling between chairs.

The last point deserves a few clarifying words. Interdisciplinarity is a common buzzword in programmes on the local, national and transnational level, but in practice, research-funding systems are less successful in living up to the elegant phrases of innovative transgression.

Michael Gibbons (1994) and Helga Nowotny et al. (2001) opened up perspectives for the future of research where a late-modern “Mode 2” society makes traditional disciplinary (and national) boundaries increasingly defunct. While they tend to regard this as mainly a result of external pressures, Andrew Barry and Georgina Born (2008) have argued that there is also a strong internal, scholarly factor involved. Not only the societal interests demand new forms of knowledge that cross academic borders. Not least the increase in cultural studies exemplifies how such a transgressive push is also nourished from within the universities, where scholars doing cultural research have long found it necessary to forge new links and develop the creative borderlands between conventional disciplines. Such cross-disciplinary research makes the in-betweenness itself intellectually productive, producing knowledge that is not merely a combination of separate elements from single disciplines, but builds on – and produces – a growing movement of scholars who may perhaps be called “researchers without frontiers”.

Similar ideas are currently being tried out in European research policy, where interdisciplinary and transnational cooperation is often prioritised. However, both on a national and an international level, evaluating instruments tend to lag behind. According to Barry and Born, the tendency to use combinations of monodisciplinary experts in such cases misses the opportunity and necessity of acknowledging the specificity of transdisciplinary research, which is more than an additive combination of traditional areas, aiming instead at producing new insights across the boundaries. Research funders at all levels need to develop new standard procedures incorporating mechanisms to find, select and prioritise evaluators who themselves have genuine interdisciplinary experience when dealing with interdisciplinary proposals. At present, surprisingly, this is rarely the case, which is unfortunate for the creative innovativity of research at large, and for exploiting the potential contributions of cultural research in particular.

When talking about transdisciplinary research, it is important to also touch on the relationship between cultural studies as a critical intellectual movement and cultural research as a broader set of interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences. Cultural studies have historically provided an arena for critical research on the boundaries between traditional academic disciplines. The transnational circuits have served as a useful interface between different traditions and perspectives. Still, there are also other strands of cultural research that are not entirely at home under the cultural studies umbrella. So what is the relationship
between cultural studies and cultural research today? Are both concepts needed, and how do they differ? Why have groups of scholars, centres and other initiatives around the world chosen one or the other term to identify their activities?

**Mapping out Different Uses for Culture in Research**

As the editors, we are pleased to present a wide range of articles on this set of topics, each relevant to the discussion of the role of our own vocation, cultural research, today and in the future. Some of these articles address the initial question — *What’s the use of cultural research* — more or less directly. In the first article, entitled “What’s the Use of Culture”, Tom O’Dell discusses how cultural research in general and anthropology in particular can be applied in different areas of research, such as tourism and cultural economics, and how the demands for usefulness, as well as the scholarly responses towards such demands, have been articulated in different ways in different historical and national contexts.

Billy Ehn’s and Orvar Löfgren’s article “Ethnography in the Market Place” takes an even more empirical stance on the matter of usability. Ehn and Löfgren open their text by posing the question “What happens when cultural analysis enters the world of applied research and academics become consultants working with corporations and public institutions?” The article focuses on commercial ethnographers in Sweden and Denmark who sell their services on an open market. They serve as practical examples of how cultural analysis can be applied outside the universities, how this affects the research process and what kinds of reaction it may trigger inside and outside academia.

The next article, “‘Cultural Policy’: Towards a Global Survey”, relates the question of applied research to the specific field of cultural policy studies. Here, Yudhishthir Raj Isar approaches two major shortcomings in the tradition of cultural policy studies: “the divide between ‘theoretical’ and ‘applied’ research and the quasi-exclusive focus on governmental agency in the analysis of cultural systems”. He claims that it is essential to transcend these limitations if cultural policy research is to be truly useful in the future.

The two final articles open the perspective towards a more general discussion on the conditions and future for scholarly research. Mikko Lehtonen’s article “Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies” is not concerned so much with the relationship between research and culture, as with the cultures of research and the role of cultural research within the cultural landscape that academia constitutes. In this context cultural studies represent the challenge of *purposeful diversity*: of building an environment hospitable to scholarly heterogeneity.

The last article in this first thematic section of *Culture Unbound* has the somewhat fatalistic title “The Future of the European University: Liberal Democracy or Authoritarian Capitalism?” This should not be seen as a sign of defeatism but
rather as a way of emphasising the urgency of the overarching question: What’s the use of cultural research? Here, Sharon Rider points out the pitfall hidden in an exaggerated devotion to the ideals of applicability and a blind faith in the existing methods for evaluating research. She warns that the “transformation of the university into a supplier of specific solutions for pre-determined, non-scientific needs” runs the risk of sacrificing the potential for universities to contribute to the development of a liberal democracy, for the short-term payoff of providing solutions for an authoritarian capitalism. In short, it is a defence for the freedom and self-sufficiency of academic research and a reminder that cultural research can be of no use to anyone else if it is of no use in itself.

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What’s the Use of Culture?

By Tom O’Dell

Abstract
Like it or not, cultural theorists are increasingly finding themselves challenged to answer a very short but profound question: What’s the use of cultural research? Within the academy the question of the usefulness of cultural research has provoked a wide array of responses, ranging from feelings of resentment or the fear of losing one’s intellectual freedom to those of approval (often reinforced by a sense that one can in some way help society, or those less empowered) – and an endless number of positions in between. This article places the question of the usefulness of cultural research in relation to issues of the historical and cultural context in which it has appeared over the better part of the past century. Its point of departure rises from the author’s own academic background in American cultural anthropology and Swedish ethnology, as well as the work the author has conducted on tourism and the experience economy in Sweden.

The article begins by briefly discussing the different roles applied anthropology has previously played in both Britain and the United States. This section emphasizes a need to understand the question of “usefulness” as being contextually bound. The text then moves on to consider the role culture is playing in contemporary economic life (exemplified here by the field of tourism) and to reflect upon some of the consequences the cultural economy is having in everyday life. Following this the text concludes with a section focusing upon the research challenges and needs coming from the tourism industry. This final section of the paper works to both illuminate and problematize the need which exists at present for the development of different forms of cultural research.

Keywords: Applied cultural research, cultural economy, tourism, sector research, higher education
What’s the Use of Culture?

Like it or not, cultural theorists are increasingly finding themselves challenged to answer a very short but profound question: What’s the use of cultural research? The question itself can take different forms, and be heard emanating from a diverse array of actors. Research councils, for example, not only expect an explanation of how proposed projects relate to, and will advance, our theoretical knowledge of whatever particular subject it is that we are interested in studying, but on a growing scale they even expect a clear and concise explanation of how that work will be of relevance to society. And in the classroom students are more eager than ever to know how the subject matter they are being taught will be of relevance to them outside of academia. Indeed, before even enrolling in courses an increasing number of them want to know what they will become if they study a particular subject or enrol in a specific program (O’Dell 2008). Politicians for their part, rarely decry the value of knowledge, but are prepared more than ever to support research that leads to patents, new services, economic development, regional growth, and a directly measurable expansion of employment opportunities while paying much less attention to (or at least investing comparatively smaller resources in) research directed towards more abstract non-profit oriented cultural and social phenomenon.

Within the academy the question of the usefulness of cultural research has also provoked a wide array of responses, ranging from feelings of resentment or the fear of losing one’s intellectual freedom to those of approval (often reinforced by a sense that one can in some way help society, or those less empowered) – and an endless number of positions in between (cf. Kedia 2008; Rider 2008; Wright 2008: 28). This, however, is not the first time that these types of questions have been posed to cultural theorists and spurred debate. American and British anthropologists, as I shall discuss below engaged questions of applicability and usefulness throughout larger portions of the 20th century (Bennett 1996), and continue to do so. But even if the question of usefulness has a longer history, it’s important to bear in mind the fact that its cultural framing has changed with the historical context.

In what follows, I want to place the question of the usefulness of cultural research in relation to the issue of the historical and cultural context in which this question has appeared. I will primarily focus my discussion to issues of applied research although in doing this, as I shall point out in the latter portion of the text, my intention is not to reify the practice/theory divide which has fuelled so much debate in anthropology in the past. To the contrary I shall argue for a need to better understand the manner in which issues of practice and theory have to be better understood as implicated in one another. My point of departure rises from both
my academic background in American cultural anthropology and Swedish ethnology, as well as from my work on tourism and the experience economy in Sweden. In this regard it is heavily inspired by observations I have made from the border between academia and the practical realities of those working in the experience economy. And while the perspective from which I address this border is influenced by the anthropological and ethnological angle from which I am viewing it – and the fact that I am viewing this juncture from an anthropologically oriented perspective should be borne in mind – I am quite certain that the analysis and discussion presented below will be readily recognizable, even if differently tinted, to cultural analysts working in a wide array of fields beyond anthropology and ethnology.

I shall begin briefly by placing applied cultural research in a historical context. The text then moves on to consider the role culture is playing in economic life (exemplified here by the field of tourism) and to reflect upon some of the consequences the cultural economy is having in everyday life. Following this, the text concludes with a section focusing upon the research challenges and needs coming from the tourism industry. This final section of the paper works to both illuminate and problematize the need which exists at present for the development of different forms of cultural research.

The Shifting Context

In a time in which cultural researchers are increasingly being asked to explicate the social, economic, or political relevance of their research, it is interesting to take a step back and gaze upon the very same question as it has come to expression in other cultural and historic contexts. Within the context of British social anthropology, for example, one finds a rather long history of disciplinary debate and tension. Exemplifying this, Edmund Leach endeavoured in 1946 to block the entry of anyone but “pure” anthropologists into the Association of Social Anthropologists – clearly seeing the academy as the home of the “pure” (Wright 2006: 30), and Malinowski is reported to have very clearly reported his position on the practice/theory divide by stating, “Applied anthropology is for the half-baked” (quoted in Wright 2006: 30).

Nonetheless, British Anthropology simultaneously found itself implicated in a rather vague borderland (that of the colonial/empire border) in which practice and theory lived in association with one another, and not so seldom, in dependence of one another. Scholars such as Evans-Pritchard, for example were conducting work of relevance for colonial authorities (and funded by them), but still had very clear academic intentions. There existed here a complex matrix of scholarly ambitions, political desires, and calculated perceptions of opportunity calling. Colonial governments needed knowledge, and funding organizations such as the Colonial So-
cial Science Research Council (1944-1962) were established to support applied research that could be of governmental service (Pink 2006: 4). By the 1980s and 1990s, as the number of people possessing Ph.D.s in anthropology swelled far beyond the number of positions available within the academy, the movement of scholars into the realms of policy, practice and business became unavoidable. However, the legitimacy of this work as “real” anthropology often remained a touchy issue, and attempts to gain legitimacy through the establishment of professional organizations proved to be less than effective as these organizations tended to suffer from rather short life lengths (Sillitoe 2007: 149; Wright 2006).

The situation in the United States was equally complicated, although while the British context of applied anthropology has been characterised as one of “serial ambivalence” (Mills 2006: 56), the situation in the US has been more continuous, if nonetheless, equally contested. While Britain had it colonies, American anthropologists had indigenous groups closer to home that they could focus their attention upon. As early as the 1930s policies such as the Indian Reorganization Act drew anthropologists into the world of policy and practice as they worked under the auspices of such organizations as the Indian Bureau of Affairs to restore tribal governance, participate in land reclamation procedures, and study the shifting context of economic development, social organization and reservation life encountered by Native Americans in the pursuing decades (Partridge & Eddy 1987: 25pp.).

Over the course of World War II anthropologists found themselves increasingly working together with the American government. Among other things, anthropological research addressed issues of how national morale could be affected in times of war, and how cultural differences might be understood to affect the processes at work here. Anthropologists such as Ralph Linton and George P. Murdock worked to train American Military personnel for duties abroad, and others participated in the development of separate and uniquely different conditions for the surrender and occupation of Nazi Germany and Japan based upon understandings of the cultural differences between the nations. And in the immediate post-war era anthropologists were similarly involved as advisors in the development and implementation of foreign policies. In this context, participation in applied contexts was far less controversial than it would become in subsequent years, as most anthropologists saw their work as a way of countering racism and participating in the attempt to defeat Nazi Germany (Ibid.: 31pp.; Wax 1987: 4-5).

Understanding culture, and working in terms of it was clearly deemed to be useful by many – the manner in which applied work was viewed in terms of ethics would, however, soon change. Much of this change would take root in the mid 1960s and early 1970s in the wake of the controversies surrounding Project Camelot and some of the work being conducted by anthropologists in South East Asia in conjunction with the Vietnam War (cf. Hill 1987: 11pp.). In the case of Camelot the American Military planned on expending millions of dollars funding social
scientific research devoted, in essence, to the study of processes of social change in Chile (Horowitz 1967). The political implications of this work, coupled with the fact that it was to be conducted under the auspices of the Department of Defense, sparked a firestorm of ethical debate within the American Anthropological Association, which only intensified when it was learned that in South East Asia anthropologists had been working with both the American Military and Royal Thai government conducting research which would benefit those countries’ counterinsurgency programs. (Hill 1987; Jorgensen 1971). Among other things, anthropologists debated where the limits of “free research” should and could be set, whether political implications should be taken into consideration when conducting research, or whether “the advancement of science” was a cause worthy of pursuing in and of itself regardless of potential political consequences, and the degree to which scholars had (or did not have) an ethical responsibility to protect their informants’ well-being or their discipline’s reputation. The details of the debates sparked by these incidents have been covered by others (Jorgensen 1971; Partridge & Eddy 1987: 46), so I will not dwell further upon them here, but it should be noted that even if this was not the first time ethical issues had been discussed within anthropology, these incidents did push the question of ethics to the fore of anthropological attention. And even if the discussions provoked by the incidents of the 1960s have changed over time, the issue of ethics has remained a topic of debate and reflection within anthropology in a very different manner than had been the case previously. But in light of the question of ethics, it can be interesting to reflect briefly upon the context out which a research project such as Camelot could arise.

As Mark Solovey (2001) has argued, the immediate post World War II period was a time of some difficulty for scholars in the humanities and social sciences who were generally regarded as scholars of junior calibre in comparison to those operating in the natural sciences. This was the period in which the National Science Foundation (NSF) was established and its scientific boards predominantly filled by scholars from the natural sciences. It was also a time in which political conservatives viewed much of the work being done in the social sciences with deep scepticism, seeing it as an extension of New Deal liberalism. These types of political forces worked to further marginalize social scientists in NSF contexts. Under McCarthyism attitudes hardened even further and a great number of scholars opted to redefine themselves as “behavioural scientists” rather than social scientists (the former title sounded more positivist in nature, and simultaneously took the word “social” — and possible associations to “socialist” — out of the picture). Linkages to the military could work advantageously in this context to take the edge off, or avoid entirely, McCarthyist inspired attacks upon one’s work, reputation, and political sympathies (Solovey 2001: 174pp.). At the time, Project Camelot would have been one of the largest social science projects ever funded in the US. It was never initiated and died while still in the planning stages, but if some
As I am arguing, the realm of the cultural has long had the uneasy characteristics of a “force field” (cf. Amin & Thrift 2007: 152) – a source of energy and tension – deriving a special kind of power from its ability to attract and link the attention of academic, political and economic interests. But force fields tend to be somewhat unstable, pulsing entities whose characteristics and orientation can change to meet the needs, demands, and risks of new situations. This becomes particularly evident as we move our discussion forward in time to the years around the new millennium. Where the military had once stood as a viable funding alternative for some, the “free market” now seems to have partially taken its place, offering a wide array of opportunities as businesses and governments increasingly come to identify the realm of the cultural (defined in terms of identity, creativity and the general desire to mobilize the ephemeral) as a significant source of potential economic growth. But now we are moving once again into yet another new context – a context which scholars are increasingly referring to as the cultural economy.

Transformation in the Blur

As other scholars have pointed out, the cultural economy is a context in which entrepreneurs are ever borrowing concepts once anchored in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology and freely invoking them to their own advantage as they sell products, and services through appeals to culture, lifestyle, identity, aura, and authenticity (Aronsson 2007: 16pp.; Löfgren & Willim 2005: 12). But as they appropriate these concepts and fashion them to their own needs, they change (or perhaps one could say, “translate”) them in the process.

Take culture, in the context of tourism today, for example. As a commodity of tourism, “culture” is constantly being packaged and sold to us in terms of such things as difference, otherness, heritage, song, dance, food, music, and art (cf. Craik 1997; Clifford 1997; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Macdonald 1997). More often than not, the processes of commoditization at work here involve parallel processes of delimitation, segmentation, and enclosure as culture is reified as a thing – a “local culture”, an alteric experience of food, art, another way of life, a particular interpretation of the past, etc. Rather than being understood as a process, it is handled as an object. To some extent, this is an inevitable outcome of the market process. In order to sell products marketers have to be able to convince consumers of the manner in which the commodities they are selling are different
from those being sold by others (cf. Callon, Méadel & Raberharisoa 2002). The processes of reification that are at work here make it possible for place marketers to create an aura around specific places, and to brand cities. They work to form and affect tourist expectations (Ooi 2005), and provide locals with a ready made story or image in relation to which they can (in the best of cases) position themselves and their products.

Culture, in this context is often understood as something highly positive, benignly pleasant, entertaining, and interesting. However, the cultural economy of tourism also involves less pleasant processes. As John Hannigan has argued (1998) urban renewal projects designed to attract tourists and turn cities into more exciting places of entertainment and cultural consumption, have an overwhelming tendency to marginalize politically and economically weaker groups in those cities. This point was brought home by comments made to me by a leading strategist from one of Copenhagen’s largest and most influential tourist organizations. From the perspective of his organization, the attractiveness of Copenhagen as a destination would be increased if youths and immigrants could be moved out of the center of town where tourists tended to congregate. These segments of the local population simply did not fit in with the image of Copenhagen that his organization was trying to create. As a consequence, it was with great approval that he watched as plans were drawn up to convert one of the larger arcades and entertainment centers in downtown Copenhagen (a place in which youths and immigrants tended to congregate) into an expensive luxury hotel.

Similar processes could be found at work in Österlen (a rural geographic portion of southeastern Sweden) in the early years of the new millennium as members of a local village council discussed plans to create new job opportunities and the possibility for economic growth in their local community through investments in the tourists industry. In this case, it was the people of Kåseberga who, together with local politicians and other “experts” (myself included) discussed plans to develop Ales stenar (an archaeological site comprised of a 67 meter long Stone Henge-like ship barrow constructed around 600 AD) into a larger year-round attraction. An architectural competition was started to find an appropriate design for a potential museum dedicated to Ales stenar. Amongst the three finalists was a spectacular three story glass building to be built into the hillside on the backside of the village. It was to include a permanent exhibition over Ales stenar, an auditorium that could be used to accommodate school classes and other lecture functions, a space for temporary art exhibitions, a new modern restaurant intended to serve gourmet foods on the top floor, and from the restaurant an exit leading directly out to the Ales stenar. While some saw the possibility of using such a monumental building as a possible flagship that could help position Kåseberga as a site of central importance for tourism in the region, others, including a local retired fisherman whose house would neighbor this new glass flagship were more critical and wondered if such an extravagant building would help Kåseberga, or
only function as an out of place eyesore detracting from what they saw as the charm of an otherwise simple Scanian harbor and village.

The examples of Copenhagen and Kåseberga illuminate some of the classical problems generated out of attempts to delineate culture and package it as a commodity for touristic purposes. They concern the manner in which borders of inclusion and exclusion are drawn up, and the effects they have for all parties involved. But they also raise questions of how the power to define those borders is distributed through society. As the situation in Copenhagen illustrates, when culture is reified it can readily be mobilized and positioned to the advantage of those who are already empowered. Events need not always turn out this way, but as pressure mounts upon place marketers, regional and urban planners, as well as smaller interests groups in local communities (to name just a few among the plethora of other actors in the cultural economy) to convert culture into profit bearing capital, then there is reason to critically reflect upon the question of what happens to the silenced voices of those who are not empowered. As culture is invoked to turn a profit, what are the consequences of this movement, and for whom? And what, if any role might cultural analysts be able to play (or be expected to play) in these processes at present and in the future?

In the case of Kåseberga debates concerned, among other things, competing ideals over the physical and social arrangement of the local community, but they even concerned issues of economic sustainability and the central question of how large an investment that community could risk bearing. The case may be that “the market” is dependent upon processes of reification in its endeavor to package and sell culture, but when culture (understood as the ephemeral process that it is) is both everywhere and nowhere at the same time, then how can one truly be sure that any investments in this economy will have bearing? The answer may be “careful market analysis” in the case of large scale projects, but as the scale of those projects diminish along with their research and analysis budgets, then what types of safety nets still exist? As Hannigan points out (1998) investments in the cultural economy of tourism and experience production have a tendency to bear a great deal of risk with them. Consequently, as the people of Kåseberga weigh their options, one is struck by the fact that there is a need for knowledge here. And this brings me to the border (which I think is all too often fetishized in an unproductive manner as a border of radical alterity) between academics and practitioners in the cultural economy.

Borders of Rigidity in Academia and Business

The years around the new millennium saw the publication of two important documents outlining strategies for the development and growth of the tourist industry in Sweden: Turismforskning 2005: Nationellt forsknings- och utveckling-
sprogram (1999)\textsuperscript{1} (Tourism Research 2005: A National Research and Developmental Program), and Framtidsprogrammet: Strategier för tillväxt I den svenska rese- och turistindustrin (2001)\textsuperscript{2} (Program for the Future: Strategies for Growth in the Swedish Travel and Tourism Industry). Both documents pointed to the important role tourism played for the Swedish economy, but they also argued for the need to intensify the level of sector oriented research being conducted. However, as the authors of these documents pointed out, a number of hindrances lay in the way for such a development. Among the problems cited was the fact that the level of education in the field needed to be raised and adapted to better meet the needs of the industry. The study of tourism was a relatively new area of research interest suffering from a low academic status. These two problems were themselves compounded by the fact that the field lacked professors holding research positions who could focus their work upon issues of importance for the industry. And all of this ultimately inhibited the flow of research finances to the field of tourism.

Nearly a decade later the situation has changed slightly. Tourism has become increasingly institutionalized through the establishment and development of a growing number of university programs and degrees. In conjunction with this growth it has been intellectually fortified by an expanding cadre of scholars devoting their efforts to the study of tourism and related phenomena. And in recent years it has seen the establishment of a Scandinavian based international journal through which scholars have been able to share and spread their findings. The subject is maturing, but the ability of scholars to conduct research in this area of study remains hampered by several factors. A number of the problems cited in the 1999 report remain intact, including a lack of representation by senior researchers on the evaluation boards of Sweden’s largest and most important research funds. The situation is further complicated by the fact that, with a few exceptions, the branch is dominated by a relatively large number of small businesses with limited resources. This structural dimension of the tourism industry has impaired the development of sector financed scholarship.

Despite this structural problem, however, attempts have been made to begin to establish a broader sector based platform for tourism research. One of the more recent and notable movements in this directions was undertaken by VINNOVA (The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems) and a few other key branch actors in the spring of 2007. A limited number of businesses and organizations working with tourism were invited to join VINNOVA and design four to five new and innovatively oriented research projects which they deemed to be of utmost importance.\textsuperscript{3} The tone for the work that would follow was set at the first meeting of branch representatives in which it was emphatically pointed out that the one thing the branch did not need was academic research producing abstract results and theories. As one representative pointed out, he had to produce quarterly reports defining how his company’s resources were being used, and he therefore needed to see concrete measurable results within a half year or so. Others
concurred and the projects that were launched tended to be more oriented towards
the development and implementation of concrete services and products than the
undertaking of actual research.

I describe this case at length here because it tends to point to a number of prob-
lems that are currently facing scholars and practitioners in the field of tourism,
and while the example focuses upon tourism specifically, I suspect that the situa-
tion is not dramatically different in many other areas of the cultural economy.
The problem here is that, on the one hand, efforts that would lead to increasing
the academic status of the field of tourism (and that would facilitate the flow of
research funding into that field of study from existing established financiers such
as the Swedish Research Council and The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Founda-
tion) require a high degree of free scholarly research. The argument often put for-
ward by tourism scholars is that such research ultimately leads to the promotion of
more scholars to the level of professor who in turn can give the branch both the
knowledge it needs specific to the Swedish context, and a weight of legitimacy
when arguing for the branch in political contexts. On the other hand, actors in the
industry are eager to receive practical hands on information that addresses their
particular problems now or in the very near future. They frequently do not find the
connection between abstract theories and practical utility as immediately apparent.

It would be simple to say that the distinction between these two research objec-
tives need not be exclusionary, and indeed, they are not. However, as we approach
the ten year mark since the publication of Turismforskning 2005: Nationellt
forsknings- och utvecklingsprogram, there is reason to pause and reflect upon the
fact that tourism is one segment of the cultural economy in need of different types
of research. Quick and short term projects may work well to satisfy the immediate
needs of particular actors, but longer term projects are better suited for providing
the broader theoretical knowledge needed as a base for these smaller projects. The
branch at present, for structural and cultural reasons, seems unprepared to take
long term initiatives. The question then is, to what extent are scholars within the
academy prepared and willing to engage themselves in small consultant-like pro-
jects in which they are intellectually steered and economically dependent upon the
businesses or organization funding the research. Phrased somewhat differently,
one can wonder to what extent the cultural economy may be considered as not
only an arena of current scholarly interest and study, but even a potential site of
work for cultural analysts.

Cultural Analysis Beyond the University

A review of the literature shows that a great deal of effort has been expended over
the course of the past decade studying aspects of the cultural economy. Scholars
in the humanities and social sciences have a great deal to say here, but as student
enrolments decline, and those young people who do decide to go on to higher education increasingly consider issues of employability when choosing an education, it may be appropriate to reflect upon the manner in which the skills and knowledge that cultural analysts have won through the study of culture and economy might be better adapted to the classroom. Some work in this direction is already underway within anthropology. Terry Redding (2008: 30) has for example pointed to a handful of programs working in this direction in the United States, the situation in Britain is less developed (Pink 2006: 20) and in Scandinavia Umeå University offers degrees in Cultural Analysis and Cultural Entrepreneurship, while the Departments of Ethnology in Lund and Copenhagen offer a joint International Masters in Applied Cultural Analysis.

Movement in this direction is interesting and challenging as it once again blurs the culture/economy border, repositioning the academic, moving her/him from the role of the independent observer to that of the employed practitioner or entrepreneur. And once again, as in the case with the concept of culture as it moves from one field of knowledge – and the practice of knowledge – to another (as discussed above) the dynamic processes laden in borders and border crossings bear with them the powers of transformation. In this case, they involve the transformation of how we view and understand the knowledge that we produce from our diverse disciplinary points of departure. It is a movement which forces us to ponder the ethics of our work and the ethical boundaries in which we are willing (or are not willing) to conduct that work. Here it is interesting to note that while applied anthropologists have long lived in the shadow of similar issues, rather than simply selling their souls to the market, applied anthropologists have led some of the most critical and nuanced discussions of what it ethically means to work in the market (see Cassell & Jacobs 1987; Kedia 2008: 25; Marvin 2006; Partridge & Eddy 1987).

But beyond ethics, this is a movement which pushes us methodologically. What does it mean to conduct cultural analysis in a modern society such as the United States, Britain, or Sweden? When time is of the essence, what types of strategies for the conducting of “quick ethnography” (Handwerker 2001) might we be able to develop? And here it should be noted that it is not just a cross section of anthropologists who are working with quick forms of ethnography. Ethnologists working within their own national cultural settings have long worked with serially organized forms of short-term fieldwork – moving repeatedly between the field and the desk in an attempt to distance themselves from, and gain perspective on, the materials they have collected. And in a similar manner other scholars from fields such as cultural sociology and media studies regularly find themselves conducting smaller studies of contemporary phenomenon – analyzing on-going events in modern society, bracketed in rather specific and narrow time frames.

Nonetheless, with a few exceptions (Czarniawska 2007; Sunderland & Denny 2007) there is strikingly very little written about the methods and techniques re-
quired to do quick ethnography, and conduct cultural analyses under tight time constraints in modern societies (Sillitoe 2007: 155f.). Applied anthropology has a head start here, but much of the work conducted in this field concerns work in relation to governmental policy questions, development issues, and work in non-western contexts (cf. Pink 2006). Moving towards the border of applied cultural analysis bears risks and problems with it, but it can also force us to hone our debates, methods, and theoretical perspectives.

My intention here is not to argue for the development of an applied cultural analysis over and above existing forms of cultural analysis or cultural studies. There can be no form of applied cultural analysis if there does not exist a strong theoretical base upon which it can rest. Without our theories and the development of those theories we would rapidly lose our significance, relevance, and “usefulness” to society (as well as our “value” as applied analysts). My ambition here has rather been to point to some of the ways in which we might increasingly find that we are implicated in the cultural economy, and to point to the fact that we do face a series of opportunities and challenges in the future which we can either confront or embrace (or both). But these will be opportunities and challenges which will be increasingly difficult to ignore or sweep under the carpet.

Cultural theorists have long been highly sceptical of market forces and the effects those forces might have upon research conducted under their auspices. In other times and other contexts working in conjunction with the military or colonial governments seemed, to at least some anthropologists, like as a golden opportunity. Today, most scholars would be highly dubious of such associations. But as we increasingly turn towards the market it is important to remember the lessons of the past. The concerns of those who are wary of the market are not unfounded and we must continue to discuss and address the problems of conducting applied research in market contexts. However, the question is if we can turn our backs to these contemporary contexts entirely. As we increasingly come to understand the ways in which the borders between culture and economy are entangled in one another, we, as cultural analysts, may find that we not only possess unique and important perspectives from which to understand the culture/economy nexus, but even skills, critical insights, and theoretical approaches that are needed in the labor force and diverse segments of the cultural sector, which are of deep social relevance and can help our students find employment opportunities.

To be sure, engagement with the market bears the risk of complicity – or what some will see as the means to capitalizing on the market. But it can also be seen as a way of affecting the market, confronting it, and changing aspects of it – the fact that our knowledge may be “useful” does not necessarily mean that it has to be complicit. And in an age in which fewer and fewer of our students will ever have the opportunity to find careers within the university system, I would argue that we have the responsibility to help them understand how the knowledge we imbue upon them can be used in the labor market. As I have argued above, actors in the
cultural economy are in need of knowledge, and it is here that we have the potential of better equipping our students (and ourselves) for a life after/beyond the university. And while such a movement may raise uneasy ethical questions, the challenge before us is that of confronting those issues and integrating them into our lessons. The border between the university and the market will long prove to be a treacherous and difficult territory to navigate, but the question is, how much longer can we avoid confronting that border more fully than we have to date? And for how much longer can disciplines interested in the study of culture attract students and thereby survive as intact departments without more fully addressing student concerns of employability, or considering the needs of the labor market when planning university courses, or without more thoroughly reflecting upon and communicating the social relevance of the knowledge they disseminate? These may be difficult and unsettling questions, but the answer to them does not lie in avoiding them.

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**Notes**

2 Näringsdepartementet & den svenska rese- och turistindustrin (2001)
3 The research project was designed – in line with VINNOVA’s general policy – such that those participating in the project invested their own resources in the work to be done, and VINNOVA countered in turn by matching those investments.
4 A growing body of work is (and has been) in the process of developing which helps explain the many ways in which culture and economy are entwined in one another (du Gay & Pryke 2002; Lash & Urry 1994; Ray & Sayer 1999). Anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists have, for example, turned their attention to the realms of business, work and economy, examining arenas of activity ranging from advertising (McFall 2002), IT companies (Willim 2002), the performative strategies of middle level corporate managers (Thrift 2000), and the introduction of New Age philosophies to management theory (Heelas 2002; Goldschmidt Salmon 2005) to the packaging of events (Ristilammi 2002), experiences (Christersdotter 2005; O’Dell 2005), feelings (Thrift 2004), and aesthetics in business contexts (Pine & Gilmore 1999). Nonetheless, as I am arguing here, there is room here to more thoroughly consider the manner in which the knowledge that has been won here might be used and further developed in applied contexts.
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Ethnography in the Marketplace

By Billy Ehn & Orvar Löfgren

Abstract
What happens when cultural analysis enters the world of applied research and academics become consultants working with corporations and public institutions? The divide between academic research and commercial ethnography has often hampered communication and critical exchanges between these two worlds.

In this paper we look at the experiences of consultants, drawing on Danish and Swedish examples. What can we learn from them when it comes to organizing research under time pressure, communicating results and making people understand the potentials of cultural analysis? And how could consultants “out there” benefit from a continuing dialogue with their colleagues in Academia?

Keywords: Applied research, cultural analysis, ethnography, academic identity, consumer studies.
Ethnography in the Marketplace

Although only a fraction of the university students will end up in the academic system, disciplines like anthropology, European ethnology and cultural studies still have a tendency in their teaching to focus very much on research careers. Most students will, however, have to find other career paths and arenas. Cultural analysis thus gets applied in museums and journalism, in government institutions as well as in private corporations, in cultural policy and social work.

It was only a few years ago that a concept like “applied cultural research” seemed very alien to the Swedish humanities. Back in those days scholars voiced their surprise, and even suspicion, when they encountered colleagues or students from disciplines like economics or psychology where applied research was a normal part of everyday academic life. “Applied” still had a special ring to it and not too positive; it smelled of shallow and “impure” research, of ethical compromises and a kind of last resort if no funding could be found for “real research” (see Roberts 2005). There was a definite Berührungsangst here, especially in dealing with the private sector.

In other disciplines like American anthropology there was a well-established tradition of applied research that emerged out of an interest in development projects in Third World countries, but then spread to other sectors (see Tom O’Dell’s paper in this issue). Anthropologists worked, for example, as advisors and evaluators, often providing a voice for those with less access to decision making (Fiske 2008: 127). Later on many corporations hired anthropologists as consultants to perform a wide variety of tasks, such as facilitating labour and community relations, building resource and economic development, designing products, and training employees (Kedia 2008: 19).¹ Over the years there has been a lot of discussion about this development, its ethical, academic and social consequences.

In Scandinavia of today, several forces have pulled the discussion of applied research into the field of the cultural sciences. First of all, there has been a growing demand from students asking for an academic education with closer ties to the labour market (see Schoug 2008). Another influence was more structural and came from the streamlining of European university education as part of EU reforms. “The Bologna process” meant that new words like “employability” came into the foreground.

The academic responses to such pressures varied from complaints about an accelerating commercialization and market adaptation of university programmes to curiosity about what possibilities these new directions could have.² For us two, coming from the discipline of European ethnology, it meant rethinking teaching, research and academic identities,³ as we got involved in developing new programmes of applied cultural analysis, and it is this experience that forms the plat-
form for our discussion. How could we prepare the students for the challenges, problems and opportunities that work in this new field brought along?  

Ambassadors of cultural research

What happens when cultural analysis is applied in careers outside of Academia? In this paper we want to look at the ways it is put to use by people who establish themselves as consultants, or “commercial ethnographers” as some of them call themselves, looking for clients in the private and the public sector. What are their activities doing to the self-understanding of the cultural sciences, and also to the shaping of theoretical and methodological tools?

Whether we welcome it or not, this growing sector is also changing Alma Mater. We are therefore interested in what the consultants bring back to the mother sciences in terms of questions of ethics, research design, methods and goals. We would like to see a better dialogue between their world and the academic one to avoid getting trapped in unproductive polarizations like pure and impure research, deep and shallow studies, slow and fast ethnographies – and, not least, Academia versus “the real world”.

There are relatively many ethnologists and anthropologists employed in the public sector, but we have chosen to focus on the still relatively few in Scandinavia who have developed their own consultancy firms. We find them especially interesting because their activities bring out both the problems and the possibilities in establishing yourself in a market where the clients often have vague or no knowledge of the uses of cultural research. We have talked to some of these entrepreneurs in Sweden and Denmark that are busy developing new fields, but also challenging some of Academia’s norms and ideals.

They work in different settings, from one-person firms to units that have expanded into larger organizations. Others are employed for established and more traditional business consulting firms or hired as “the resident ethnographer” in big corporations. They are analysing, among a lot of other things, consumer behaviours and trends, community changes and workplace organizations. The rapidly growing interest in user-driven innovation is an example of one such field, where cultural analysts are sought after.

When explaining why they are needed, these consultants use expressions like “opening the eyes of their clients”. The goal is to make their employers look at their own organization, activities or customers in a new perspective. The consultants talk about “cracking the cultural code and discover hidden patterns and structures”. They want to explore the gap between what people say they are doing and what they really do, which of course is not an unfamiliar argument also in academic research. Apart from making a living, they see themselves as devoted ambassadors or missionaries of cultural analysis, trying to build bridges between the
research world and industry, and they also provide a fast-growing labour market for ethnology and anthropology students today.

**Marketing your competence**

The people we talked to have moved out of Academia in order to create their own jobs, finding a market niche, and recruiting clients. This hard task has taught them quite a lot about self-presentations and communication. How do you convince potential employers that they could make use of cultural analysis, people who usually know very little about, for example, ethnology? In Academia we are in similar ways trying to “sell” cultural analysis to other disciplines, multidisciplinary projects or funding agencies, but our communicative skills often seem less developed than among those “out there”.

The lessons to be learnt concerning communication are important, since a common complaint we meet among students is that they lack confidence in their skills as cultural analysts or don’t know how to present those skills in simple words. Coming from the humanities where there isn’t much of a tradition of assured self-presentation, students are often insecure: what do I know, what kinds of competences do I have compared to an economist, a political scientist or a hands-on engineer? Why should I be hired? There is so much that you have learned that you don’t even see as skills or assets.7

In this regard you have a lot to learn from experienced professionals, both about which capacities your education has given and which new competencies you have to acquire. Two American anthropologists and private consultants for many years, Carla N. Littlefield and Emilia Gonzalez-Clements (2008), have provided very concrete advice on starting and operating a consulting business.8 For example, they say that the consultant must be a master of multitasking and keeping track of details, including keeping a schedule and being on time. “Cold calls” should not be seen as a failure, but as a lesson in rejection. You also have to learn how to price your service, promoting your company and start networking to find clients. High self-esteem is obviously necessary in this market. But it is not enough to propagate your competence and convince the clients you are worth every penny. You also have to “learn their language and moving around in different settings as a chameleon – without giving up your individual character”, as one of the consultants said. Meeting the world of business or administrators in the public sector also means running into their stereotypes of ethnologists and anthropologists, or as another consultant put it:

> I usually dress up a bit and then tell my audience, “Did you expect me to turn up in a pony-tail and a baggy sweater?” Their laughter tells me that this is precisely what they had expected…
The Swedish consultant Ida Hult (2008: 47) writes that she is trying to satisfy the client’s requirements as well as her own curiosity. In order to sell ethnography you have to learn their ways of thinking and behaving:

Adopt corporate clothing, make small talk over coffee, learn a few business words, and then go “ethno” and show them that you are different. If you make your clients both comfortable and curious, they will listen to you.

One of the implications of this adaptation to the corporate world is that you will be finding yourself doing a kind of double research. First you have to learn the culture of your client, and then you go out and do the fieldwork for which you are getting paid. How does this interchange between adaptation and production of knowledge work? In other words, in what ways are the consultants changed by their experiences, and how do they influence their clients?

**Doing ethnography**

The big task is to make your potential customers interested in what you have to sell. What can you offer? First of all it is striking how central the concept of “ethnography” has become over the last years. When we worked with planning the courses in applied cultural analysis we asked prospective employers what they wanted from students. The most common answer was “the skills of doing good ethnography”. What’s the attraction?

First of all, many clients expect something new and different. They are tired of old and well-established research tools, from traditional consumer surveys to focus groups. Ethnography carries a promise of something more colourful and experimental. There is also a magic in the methods of “fieldwork”, actually getting out into the urban jungles, talking to people, observing consumers in mundane settings.

The “surprise effect” has become a common mantra for ethnographers both inside and outside of Academia. Cultural analysis is said to render the familiar strange and the strange familiar. This is accomplished by spending time with people in the context of their daily lives, watching, listening and learning about their world in their home, at their work, at the local gym, wherever. Such fieldwork demands that you enter the field with an open mind and without too many preconceived notions, letting people show you what’s important in their lives through their own words and actions.

This is a methodological approach based upon what today is often called “the serendipity approach”, not actually knowing what you are looking for. Such a label, however, may hide the cumulative and systematic dimensions of even seemingly anarchistic analytical work. Although it may appear like a very improvised and informal activity, it calls for a constant and critical reflexivity about your own preconceived notions or prejudices. It is also an approach that in its
seeming vagueness and openness may provoke both some academics and clients in the private or public market. Is this really research?

Another problem is actually the reverse. One of the results of this new interest in fieldwork is that ethnography has become a buzz word, travelling into a number of new contexts and also changing its meaning during that travel. Ironically ethnography has become an attractive brand name for doing fast research at home – as opposed to the long and hard years of anthropological fieldwork abroad it used to stand for. As such it often works as a convenient way of describing a mix of methods. It has become a label for a range of qualitative techniques, which are based on the idea of “being there”.

In a somewhat absurd inventory Simon Roberts (2005: 86) enumerates some hundred-and-forty different ethnographic field methods, among them accompanied shopping, at-home ethnography, daily routine shadowing, deep hanging out, immersion, naked behaviour research, store walks, and guerrilla ethnography. A special term is “quick and dirty ethnography” (Handwerker 2002) where short and focused studies are carried out, to quickly gain a general picture, for example of a work setting or a consumer habit. In its most watered-down version “ethnography” is trivialized into a simple technique of “hanging out with real people”. In this sense the technique may be used by people without ethnographic training, for example by computer designers, who feel they need to take a look at the world of the users (see Bergqvist 2004). In contrast to the idea of “easy fieldwork”, it could be argued that “quick and dirty” approaches call for more sophisticated tools and better planning than traditional long-time ethnography, in order to make the most of a limited time span.

When marketing their special ethnographic skills, cultural analysts will have to demonstrate that they are doing something other than just simply “hanging out”. They must also prove that their methods produce new and different kinds of knowledge. As fieldworkers, one of the consultants told us, we focus on the everyday life of ordinary people. We are exploring what they are interested in and what they are valuing, but also things that are unconscious or forgotten. We are seeing whole situations where others are seeing fragments, she continued. We put trends, patterns of behaviour, and changes in lifestyles in a new light. Again, this is a kind of argumentation that is found in Academia as well. Cultural analysis thrives on promising something different, a new angle, another perspective, making the invisible visible or the inconspicuous important.

Consultants thus constantly have to demonstrate that ethnography is good for reaching those aha-insights that other methodologies cannot. This often calls for challenging the preferences for quantitative data collection that are found among corporations. “One of the things we learned early was to argue for the potentials of a qualitative approach”, a consultant ethnologist remembered, “our clients at first found it hard to understand why ten in-depth interviews could produce more interesting knowledge than a ‘scientific sample’ of forty quick ones.” (Again,
there are pedagogical skills developed here that cultural analysts in Academia could learn from when they enter similar debates with colleagues from “the hard sciences”.

Consultants learn to argue against the wisdom of market surveys or preconceived ideas about what customers want or need. Often you end up finding things that neither you, nor your clients, had anticipated. One of the practical purposes of this method is that designers, communicators and product developers will understand the relationship between what they produce and the meanings the products and messages have for the audience and users.

The expanding demand for qualitative methods and ethnographies of everyday life is thus often a result of a new interest in everyday life. An ethnologist who started to work for a large manufacturer of household appliances found a traditional industrial setting, where engineers and product developers usually devised new products drawing on their own experiences or with the help of some market surveys. She had been hired as an ethnographer, because of the new interest in user-driven innovation, where the innovation processes was turned around. She started by exploring the needs, interests and priorities found in the everyday lives of potential customers. This called for a much more open kind of fieldwork that challenged many of the routines of product developers.

Conflicts of loyalty?

When discussing the world of consultants in the marketplace with our more sceptical academic colleagues, the question of ethics quickly emerges – sometimes too quickly, we think, because it can often become a somewhat predictable exchange between two camps. Such issues should of course not be avoided, but you have to keep in mind that researchers and consultants look at them in somewhat different ways, depending on their working conditions.

In the USA the debate has been intense on the ethical and political implications of working as an anthropologist for governments and corporations (see Willigen 2002: 48ff.). One of the practical consequences is the codes of ethics, one for researchers and one for consultants and the like, that have been established by anthropological associations. The rules of behaviour in these codes are much elaborated, for example concerning responsibility and respect.  

In Scandinavia this debate is yet not very elaborated. When we began our talks with the consultants we were interested in how they experienced conflicts of loyalty between commercial and academic cultural analysis. We thought it would be difficult to combine the task of helping business companies solve problems and the scientific commission of being detached and critical. Perhaps the results of their fast and applied research also would be rather cursory?
The Danish ethnologist Mine Sylow (2008: 21), who has done cultural analysis for the food industry, suggests a tension of that kind. In making short, precise and useful recommendations for the industry, she noticed that the cultural insights sometimes become too simplified and that important things can get “lost in translation”. This may be a weakness of cultural analysis, she writes; it works best when it is possible to explain the complexity of results rather than by offering “quick and dirty” commentary. But among the other consultants almost nobody thought conflicting loyalties were a great problem. One of them told us she had never experienced this problem – maybe because she had always had the opportunity to choose her customers and had never been forced to work for companies honouring goals and values that she disliked. Moreover, she felt free to criticize her clients’ activities and perspectives – well, that’s the point of her job! Her own aim as a cultural analyst has not primarily been to make them sell more products and earn more money.

However, in some cases you have to make clear that you do not share all the views of your clients. Will it then be possible to work for them and under what terms? “Would you work for any company?” we asked a consultant employed by a household appliance firm. “I feel comfortable working with consumer-driven innovation in this context”, she answered, “but I would never work for companies like Coca-Cola or Philip Morris”.

Academic sceptics may argue that consultants shy away from ethical questions, creating symbolic boundaries between “good and bad clients”, but it could also be argued that consultants in fact often live much closer to ethical issues than researchers in Academia. Questions of ethics may become very concrete and frequent in the everyday life of consultants. Here is a research territory where borders are discussed, transgressed or contested in ways that could be useful for those of us in Academia who seldom find our work challenged on ethical or political grounds (see for example the discussion in Pripp 2007: 29).

Some of the consultants seem to be anxious to stress that they are not selling themselves, while, simultaneously, their survival on the market totally depends on recruiting new clients and getting well paid. The projects you offer therefore must be highly useful for the customers. In practice this means a constant switching between wearing “the ethnographic glasses” and “the costume of the consultant”, as one consultant expressed it, while another said that she never felt that she had to sell out her “inner cultural analyst”,

because I simply decline an offer if it doesn’t work for me with my background, personality and ethical principles. Most often I produce two documents of every project, one that is “ethno” and one for the client – this is my way of not letting down my inner cultural analyst.

Even if these enthusiasts show a great deal of idealism and wish to reform the world, the fact is that they are hired by clients that own the result of their work. While some clients will be quite open about making results or reports public, oth-
ers want to keep them to themselves as trade secrets. In such cases you are not allowed to discuss your findings with colleagues outside the project. Compared to academic research this consequently becomes a more closed world.

**Speedy research, clear results**

In contrast to academic research that most often is rather slow and painstaking, commercial ethnography is said to be very fast. You do not have months and years to sit down and think about the complexity of your material. The customers are in a hurry and expect speedy research and lucid results. In a short time you have to make yourself acquainted with a new and often strange context and at the same time you must be cautious and avoid making premature conclusions.

But compared to the world of business you are still working at a slower pace. The consultants often take two to three months to reflect on problems that the customers usually want to solve at once. The time constraints make it necessary to develop skills of tight budgeting of time and resources. Working with an eight-week assignment means that you constantly have to think about priorities and the keeping of deadlines – it becomes a highly disciplined way of doing investigations.

To get the most out of these conditions, you have to be creative in combining bits of preliminary observations with team-based brainstorming – sessions when walls are cluttered with yellow post-it slips or mind maps are drawn on the whiteboard. There is a movement back and forth between reflection, collection of new materials, swapping crazy ideas and disciplining chaos into a finished project. What kinds of fieldwork should you do?

For example, how about following a man on parental leave for a full fortnight, observing and discussing his new life, rather than doing traditional interviews with a sample of young fathers? Or what about choosing a couple of very different bars, and spending three days in each to learn about bar managers’ relations to customers and staff? Should we use video cameras or not? Formal or informal interviews? There is a constant need to prioritize and think about which fieldwork strategies would work best. Similar processes can be found in academic projects, but here they are often not brought out in the open in the same manner.

An important resource is the fact that many consultants work closely in teams. This may in some ways compensate for the limited time. As a part of a team you have to learn to forget “the lone wolf life” of much academic research. Data, thoughts and results must constantly be pooled and tested by others, and this means that new recruits from Academia have to learn the techniques and skills of constantly sharing research experiences.

Another feature is the frequent use of contrastive or comparative international settings. Exploring the same problem in the French and the American hospital
systems or documenting how people organize family parties in five different cosmopolitan cities around the world gives you a chance to avoid some of the bias of doing anthropology at home. Our point here is that the need for tough time budgeting, teamwork and contrastive field sites may bring out some new research skills that Academia certainly could learn from.

The ability to communicate your results in a way that catches the attention of the client is also a necessary skill. “When we hire new students for a project we have to show them the importance of starting by thinking about the results”, a consultant told us. “You have to envisage the final product, think about what a report could look like and what it would mean to the client. Then you can start working backwards in planning the project, discussing approaches, methods and materials. For the students this is often a very different way of working.”

The presentation of the results is always on your mind. You have to be lucid and know how to summarize, another consultant said. It’s forbidden to present your research in an overly abstract and complicated way. The reports have to be short, clear and easy to read, containing direct answers to the client’s questions, without scientific references and methodological expositions. Concentrate on the most important things.

It works well to tell arresting stories, a third consultant put it, to talk in metaphors, showing images and using PowerPoint. The language should not be “academic”, yet professional and qualitative. Visual images are important. “Sometimes, we spend a lot of time finding the perfect video clip that will bring out the core of our argument”, as one consultant put it. It might also be important to produce a dramatic feeling of urgency: “The world is changing rapidly or the world is very different from what you think. How will your corporation or government agency react to this?”

Just as in academic research, the production and presentation of knowledge among consultants may develop into set genres. What does, for example, the need for a string of bullet points do not only to communication styles but also to the organization of research? There are processes of routinization at work here as in any other research setting, as Richard Wilk (2009) has pointed out in a recent review of a handbook on applied consumer research. He thinks that one of the risks is that consultants make “a skewed selection of anthropological theories and tools, slighting the traditions which aim towards more methodological rigor”.

**Following through**

A special condition in commercial ethnography is that your job doesn’t end with a report. One of the most essential parts of the project is putting your results to work. You might find that it is not the eye-opening analysis that is the real problem, but communicating the results in ways which gain real effects, rather than
another report ending up on the shelf. This partly depends on your relationship to your client and the role you play during your project. You are in a way balancing between, on the one hand, being an important expert that people listen to when you present your results, but the next minute you are a subordinate with rather marginal influence on the business in the company or the organization.

Learning to let go of the project and give up your ownership of the knowledge means making sure the implementation becomes the concern of the other actors involved. Are they ready to take over, do they want to, do they have the position to make an impact on future decisions? Without this effort to make your results work, you might feel like one consultant, who remembered a project where this last stage didn’t work:

We had finished our project and when we were about to hand over our results to a group of engineers and designers it felt just like throwing our findings up and over a big wall, hoping that the guys on the other side could make sense of them.

In most cases, however, you learn to work closely with those engineers and designers, and find that the old boundaries between researchers and “doers” become blurred. Still, you have to be good at simultaneous translation, one consultant said.

I must always, on the spot, master the art of reformulating a customer problem to a cultural analytic problem. Later I have to transform a cultural analytic solution to a customer solution.

This practice of “cultural translation” is described by Ida Hult (2008: 41ff) and using her presentation of a project together with two other cases we would like to exemplify ethnographic practices in a little more detail.

Three ways of surprising a client

Ida Hult’s company Trendethnography was hired by a large international bank to investigate property mortgages among first-time buyers. When the projected finally got started, after a year of talks with the potential client, Trendethnography and the bank turned out to have very different views of the customers. For the ethnologists they were not only buying a house or an apartment, but also a dream. Therefore it was necessary to consider the emotional and seemingly irrational aspects of their economic behaviour. How do people really accomplish and experience a purchase of a property, was the consultants’ basic question, and then they suggested a lot of other issues that the bank people often found strange. These questions to the customers turned out to give the bank representatives quite new insights. Their traditional mode of thinking was very different.

How do you approach a property deal? How do you talk about it? How do you perceive it? What is your relationship to all the actors in the deal, especially to your bank contact? What is a home? What is your relationship to the “important documents” involved in a bank loan? What is the state of your economy? What is your attitude to money? (Hult 2008: 41)
The ethnologists did fieldwork in seven households for three months. During that time they kept a close contact with the bank staff. Ida Hult explains their strategic principle as standing firmly rooted with one leg in the world of ethnology, and one leg in the world of business. The task was to translate between the two.

At the conclusion of the project the consultants made a final presentation – partly by “telling stories” about their fieldwork experiences and about the hopes and fears, beliefs and dreams, of the bank customers. They also presented a written report about the facts and feelings of the customers’ investments, richly illustrated with pictures and quotations. It also contained advice, on implementations and possible solutions.10

Doing such cultural translations may be a daunting task. Another example comes from ReD Associates in Copenhagen, a company specializing in user-driven innovations. One of their projects started out with a problem of a medical manufacturer of bandages and tools for handling ostomies or incontinence conditions. The firm wanted to know if the ways they packaged and branded their products were really cost-effective. The consultants decided to use a classic ethnographic approach of “following the object” (Marcus 1998: 91) and observed the ways in which the products were dealt with by all kinds of groups, from the storage staff at the large hospitals, to doctors and nurses and very different kinds of patients. One of the methods was using the technique of “shadowing” (see Czarniawska 2007). The team decided to closely follow specialist nurses who were dealing with newly diagnosed patients. This was a group of specialists that turned out to have the richest experience of the many relevant problems.

In order to get a contrastive material the consultants decided to do fieldwork in the French and American health care systems. They made a video interview with an American male living without medical insurance in a trailer park and who constantly struggled with the problems of affording bandages and the need to get back to work. This interview served as a very effective contrast to French patients in a welfare state where people never had to worry about the costs or lengths of medical treatments.

Another contrastive approach dealt with the life cycle of treatments and products. How did a newly operated user deal with the products compared to one who had employed them for years? By using Arnold van Gennep’s (1909) old theoretical concepts “rites of passage” and “liminality” the consultants found a way to describe the patients’ experiences that was unexpected to the medical staff and helped them to transform existing practices. The ethnologists described the life of a patient with a chronic illness as a process consisting of different phases. Immediately after the diagnosis the patient was in a period of liminality, alienated from his/her healthy self, as well as socially marginalized. To deal with this new reality the patient had to learn to cope with a lot of physical, technical and psychological aspects of the chronic illness. One of these aspects concerned how life very much...
came to revolve around the wound and its proper treatment, which was complicated.

The insight the consultants brought back to the manufacturers was that the standard products they shipped over the world had very different meanings and uses in different situations. The demands of people handling these products were not really understood by the company. By regarding people’s highly varying situations and needs, for example of emotional support as well as directions for product use, the ethnologists succeeded in communicating a new, cultural perspective on this medical problem (Voldum & Work Havelund 2008: 36).

The third example comes from the consultancy firm Hausenberg, also based in Copenhagen. They were approached by the local council of a Copenhagen working-class suburb, dominated by grey high-rise buildings from the 1960s and endless rows of detached houses. It was a suburb regarded as devoid of any architectural beauty or interesting historical traditions. The council was brave enough to want to enter a competition to develop local heritage projects, sponsored by the National Heritage Board and a large credit union. Hausenberg was hired to make this unlikely project happen.

How do you identify, document and communicate valuable traits of local heritage in a setting, which is famous for having none? How do you find history in a community described as without history? In a limited period of time a heritage plan was to be produced, a plan that resonated with different groups and subcultures in a community that included a wide variety of ethnic minorities as well as a social spectrum spanning from old working-class inhabitants to new middle-class commuters.

The consultants had to be really creative in trying to view this setting with fresh eyes and explore what locals valued and were attached to. In their fieldwork they combined ethnographic methods like “walk and talk” interviews and workshops with locals, bringing in reference groups for meetings in surprising settings, turning the inconspicuous or ignored into new assets. Instead of “freezing” interesting parts of the environment, defining them as valuable heritage sites in the conventional ways, Hausenberg worked together with local actors to define themes that mirrored local practices. Many of the detached houses were typical built by working-class families, without any architectural guidance, and had then been the objects of endless DIY projects of additions and rebuilding, and it was precisely this individualism and constant improvisation that was singled out as a striking local tradition.

The final plan did work. To the astonishment of the 53 other competing communities and local councils, this Copenhagen suburb was one of the four winners and was able to spend the next two years turning the new heritage ideas into practice. Again, it was the surprise effect that made the job, seeing local settings as
potential and future landmarks that emphasized some of the important material and mental infrastructures of local life.

The three cases shared a successful strategy of teaching the clients something they did not know and had not expected. To attain this effect a range of ethnographic strategies and tactics had to be developed. The consultants had to convince their clients that it was better to invest in qualitative and experimental methods rather than in “business as usual”. Interestingly enough, all the three projects could, albeit with different goals and organizational frameworks, have been possible also as “pure” academic projects.

So what?

Is it possible that ethnology students and researchers would benefit from losing some of their reluctance to deal with the practical and ethical consequences of their research, or by being unafraid to undermine their privileged positions in the academic ivory tower with its academic judgements and solutions?

This impertinent question is asked by the ethnologists Jakob K. Voldum and Louise Work Havelund (2008: 35), who worked at ReD Associates with the medical project described above. They argue that ethnologists should be prepared to learn more from practitioners that have experience of applied cultural research. We are inclined to agree with them. Listening to the consultants has made us see our own academic activities in a different light.

One of the lessons is that in the world of business and public organizations you are always confronted with the question: “So what?” All clients, regardless of their activity, want to know exactly what the cultural analysis will mean to their company. They will not be satisfied by the answer that the world is complex and that it takes time to understand people and culture. They take it for granted that the research results should have a real and immediate effect on what they are doing.

Another lesson is that more interdisciplinary co-operation is advisable to counteract monocular vision. In the medical device project, the ethnologists took advantage of collaborating with the client’s designers that were very good at practical solutions. But sometimes these designers got trapped by their creative thinking and initial sketches. On the other hand, the ethnologists were good at looking at the problems from unexpected angles, but often got ensnared in the webs of critical thinking. However, together these two parties made a more effective team, ready to answer the tricky question of “So what?”

There is also something to be learned from the consultants’ experiences of how to work fast and efficiently, and how to utilize analytical perspectives in close cooperation with non-academics. The consultants are constantly trained in their ability to present both their professional competence and their findings in convincing and comprehensive ways. It is absolutely necessary for their survival in
this market to know how, for example, business people and officials in various organizations think and speak and how they look upon academic research. This is knowledge that university students need, as do teachers trying to produce courses with an applied profile.

In the applied courses we have been involved in it was interesting to note what kinds of problems were voiced when the pros and cons of applied research were discussed. Sometimes the student groups were split on matters of how, when, why and for whom they were ready to work. While some feared that the critical edge of research would disappear or that ethics would be ignored, others felt that this was an “ivory tower” attitude, an excuse for not having to do the messy job of applying knowledge and following it being put to use. Such heated debates are important and may provoke self-reflection on both sides.

**Applied and critical research**

The ultimate goal of all research is of course to provide understandings that can be applied to the world around us. Yet the question of application is a touchy one among cultural researchers. Some debaters voice a fear of overreaching in accommodating to new market trends or demands. They see this process as a sliding one, where the role of humanities as providing first and foremost the tools of critical thinking is blunted or even pacified. How is the critical edge to be kept alive and sharpened?

Writing about the tasks of a critical ethnography Jim Thomas (1993: 2ff) points out that cultural worlds tend to entrap people in taken-for-granted reality, and the role of researchers is to question commonsense assumptions by describing and analysing otherwise hidden agendas that inhibit, repress and constrain people in their everyday lives. He reminds us that the dimension of power is always there, but often found in surprising places and forms.

Strikingly enough, it is precisely this critical perspective that the consultants found most important among the academic luggage they carried with them into their new careers. This again underlines the importance of our academic courses to nurture and develop a critical thinking. We should also remind students that research that desperately starts out by trying to be “useful” or “easily applicable” may in fact end up becoming predictable or non-challenging if it loses its open, reflective and critical perspective.

In this paper we have focused on the activities of consultants that in our view make interesting options and tensions visible. If anyone should think that we have presented a too rosy picture of their pursuits, it may be a consequence of our ambition to learn something new from their experiences and to argue for a better dialogue between their world and Academia.
At this preliminary stage of our ongoing study we have been interested in the self-understandings and experiences of consultants, but later on we would like to take a closer look at their work. There are several issues that we have only touched on briefly so far but would like to explore in more detail.

First of all, what are the special characteristics and conditions for the production of knowledge in this practical field? The expectation of doing cultural analysis under strict time limitations might call for analytical shortcuts or turn certain approaches into favoured routines. What kinds of critical scrutiny and feedback are possible, and how is new theoretical and methodological energy introduced?

Secondly, we are interested in how the forms of research presentation – the uses of short reports, PowerPoint bullets, images and video clips – influence the actual investigations. What spaces are open for discussing nuances, complexities and reflective self-criticism? In relation to the academic traditions the consultants carry with them, what do they eventually have to give up or find new forms for when working as consultants?

Thirdly, how does the interaction between consultants and clients run? What new possibilities are opened by the bridging of very different worlds of thought, and what kinds of more or less productive conflicts may appear?

Fourthly, we would like to know more about the ways in which the consultants nurture their academic identity, as cultural analysts, ethnologists or anthropologists. How do they influence attitudes to cultural research in the business world and what consequences might this have for the future labour market for our students?

So much for our curiosity in studying “them”, but such a project also need to include a reverse process: the consultants returning home to take a critical look at traditions, routines and rituals of research among those of us who have remained in Academia. What may they be able to problematize in a world we take for granted?

Today, students who choose to work as consultants experience that it is a one-way road. As one of our anthropological colleagues put it, “once you leave Academia to do commercial anthropology, you can never come back and nobody takes much notice of what you are doing out there”. We need better opportunities for people to move back and forth between the two worlds.

And maybe this is happening in new ways. For some of the gulf between applied and non-applied that is often guarded jealously in Academia is actually becoming a continuum. We have many colleagues who combine academic teaching and research with taking on applied jobs in order to make a living and find that this kind of research commuting can be both challenging and enriching. Considering ongoing developments in the job market for academics, we will see more of this.

Looking back on our own careers in academic research, we are also struck by the many times we have crossed that line between two worlds ourselves, doing
workshops with practitioners or giving advice to institutions outside of the university. Research that does not involve the ways potential users of the results act and think always misses something important.

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**Notes**

1 In his dissertation *Among the Interculturalists* the anthropologist Tommy Dahlén (1997) has investigated a special sector of consultants working with cultural perspectives, that of intercultural communication – the many international consultants and educators who help companies and business people to act in a “culturally correct” way in foreign countries. The literature about “intercultural understanding” is huge; one recent example is Rapaille (2006). See also Sharpe (2004) for a discussion of the use of ethnography in the business world.

2 The usefulness of cultural research is, of course, not only a question about getting employed as a consultant. A frequent more general critique of cultural researchers, at least in Scandinavia, is that they are too invisible and passive in media and political debates (see for example Hylland Eriksen 2006).

3 In the debate about the use of cultural research we also recognize the discussion about “Mode 2” as a novel way of doing “post-academic” science (see for example Ziman 2000). Moreover, the universities today are far from alone in producing scientific knowledge. The right to define such knowledge is highly contested.

4 We have been involved in the development of the education programmes for Cultural Analysis in Umeå, a four-year programme that has been running since 2002 (see Ehn & Nilsson 2006) and the international two-year programme Master of Applied Cultural Analysis (MACA), which is a joint project of Copenhagen and Lund Universities (see www.maca.ac). There are other examples of such projects, for example the programme for Social and Cultural Analysis at Linköping University.

5 “Do we jeopardize our scientific depth, or do we gain new insights useful to our ethnological methods and theory building”, is a common question that, among others, the editors of a special issue on applied ethnology, Cecilia Fredriksson and Håkan Jönsson (2008: 10), have asked.

6 We have interviewed Katarina Graffman at Inculture, Ida Hult at Trendethnography, both in Stockholm, Nicolai Carlberg and Søren Møller Christensen at Hausenberg in Copenhagen. We
have also talked to Caroline Beck at Nueva and visited ReD Associates, in Copenhagen. Moreover, we have received information from Helena Kovacs at Apprino and Jonas Modin at Splitvision, both in Stockholm/Gothenburg. The often elaborate websites have been another source of information.

7 One thing the students in Cultural Analysis at Umeå University had to learn was to adapt themselves to concepts like “marketing” and “career coaching”. They were also trained in networking and in elaborating their competence in applied cultural analysis, for example in the special branch of trade and industry (see Ehn & Nilsson 2006: 4ff).

8 Other handbooks look at experiences of applied ethnography in consumer, design and market-research (see Mariampolski 2006, Randall et al. 2007 and Sunderland & Denny 2007).

9 One of the codes was approved in 1983 by the Society for Applied Anthropology (http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm) and one in 1998 by the American Anthropological Association (http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethics.htm).

10 Since the presentation the ethnologists have continued to participate in various internal activities at the bank, such as education, consulting and leadership training. Now the bank has hired Trendethnography for a new project.

11 To her own surprise the anthropologist Barbara L. K. Pillsbury (2008) became an executive leader in a big company. One of the advantages of her anthropological education was, she thinks, that it conditioned her to understand and work with differences of all kinds. Another was that she learned to communicate with people of diverse backgrounds and statuses and to recognize that every organization has its own culture. But Pillsbury has also observed that the anthropological perspective in fact sometimes may be a hindrance for being an effective leader in a large organization. One may, for example, place too much emphasis on cultural differences and stumble over local truths that slow processes in today’s fast-paced world.

References


“Cultural Policy”: Towards a Global Survey

By Yudhishthir Raj Isar

Abstract

The field of “cultural policy” has acquired sufficient purchase internationally to warrant a comparative global survey. This article examines questions that arise preliminary to such an endeavour. It looks first at the problems posed by the divided nature of “cultural policy” research: on the one hand policy advisory work that is essentially pragmatic, and on the other so-called “theoretical” analysis which has little or no purchase on policy-making. In both cases, key elements are missed. A way out of the quandary would be to privilege a line of inquiry that analyzes the “arts and heritage” both in relation to the institutional terms and objectives of these fields but also as components of a broader “cultural system” whose dynamics can only be properly grasped in terms of the social science or “ways of life” paradigm. Such a line of inquiry would address: the ways in which subsidized cultural practice interacts with or is impacted by social, economic and political forces; the domains of public intervention where the cultural in the broader social science sense elicits policy stances and policy action; the nature of public intervention in both categories; whether and how the objects and practices of intervention are conceptualised in a holistic way. A second set of interrogations concerns axes for the comparison of “cultural policy” trans-nationally. One possible axis is provided by different state stances with respect to Raymond Williams’ categories of national aggrandizement, economic reductionism, public patronage of the arts, media regulation and the negotiated construction of cultural identity. Another avenue would be to unpack interpretations of two leading current agendas, namely “cultural diversity” and the “cultural and/or creative industries”.

Keywords: Cultural policy; cultural politics; sociology of culture; cultural theory; cultural industries; cultural diversity; creativity and innovation.
“Cultural Policy”: Towards a Global Survey

“Cultural policy” has acquired sufficient purchase internationally for a comparative global survey of different “cultural policy” stances and measures to appear both feasible and timely. The reflections that follow are prolegomena to such an endeavour, some of the necessary preliminaries to a systematic inquiry into “cultural policy” worldwide.¹

At the outset, or even before the outset, two sets of issues should concern us. Both deeply influence the pertinence and usability of the literature one might have recourse to in carrying out such an ambitious project, short of carrying out an ethnographical inquiry in x number of selected or representative countries. First, the divided nature of research on “cultural policy”: on the one hand policy advisory work that concerns itself little with higher ends and values, and on the other so-called “theoretical” analysis which has little or no purchase on policy-making. Could a third party deploy conceptual tools that could bridge the divide and if so how? The second set of interrogations concerns ways of comparing “cultural policy” trans-nationally. I shall suggest several axes of differentiation that appear relevant, but only tentatively, as I have yet to settle on an overarching analytical framework.

A house divided

What is understood by “cultural policy” and “cultural policy research”? My use of quotation marks so far in the present text is intended to signal my concern with the semantic bivalence of these terms: both are deployed, broadly speaking, in two quite distinct sets of ways by two different communities of inquiry, and for quite divergent purposes.

The first and most common understanding of “cultural policy” was neatly encapsulated many years ago by Augustin Girard (1983: 13): “a system of ultimate aims, practical objectives and means, pursued by a group and applied by an authority [and]…combined in an explicitly coherent system.” Here “cultural policy” is what governments (as well as other entities) envision and enact in terms of cultural affairs, the latter understood as relating to “the works and practices of intellectual, and especially artistic activity” (Williams 1988: 90). Its analysis means studying how governments seek to support and regulate the arts and heritage. It also means analyzing how the arts and heritage are seen as “resources” and are used in the service of ends such as economic growth, employment, or social cohesion. Increasingly, this instrumental view of cultural expression as resources (Yúdice 2003) means that the attention and the moneys lavished on them are increasingly justified in terms of “protecting” or “promoting” the “ways of life”
that, for example, audiovisual culture in the European Union setting is considered
to express, shape and represent (Schlesinger 2001).

There is something missing in these sorts of approaches. This is because state
policy is far from being the only determinant of what we might call the “cultural
system”. Clearly, today a range of other forces are at work: the marketplace, or
societal dispositions and actions, notably civil society campaigns related to cul-
tural causes and quality of life issues, impact on the cultural far more deeply than
the measures taken by ministries of culture… At the forefront of India’s contem-
porary cultural system, for example, stands the popular culture generated and dis-
seminated by “Bollywood” and other major centres of film and television produc-
tion. The “policies” of the ministries responsible respectively for “culture” and
“information” impinge but superficially on particular universe. Instead, they sup-
port institutions of “high culture”, offer awards and prizes to artists and writers,
and pursue efforts of cultural diplomacy (the latter in particular pales into insig-
nificance in comparison to the international reach of the private film industry).
Furthermore, in India as in many other multi-ethnic nations, cultural policy think-
ing at the governmental level is inscribed in terms so narrow that it misses both
the ways in which discourses of nationalism, development, modernization and
citizenship have mobilized different forms of cultural expression, and the ways in
which subtle hierarchies in these discourses trump officially sanctioned notions of
“authenticity” or “tradition” (Naregal 2008).

What is more, this kind of cultural policy research is overwhelmingly descrip-
tive. The culture of the “cultural policy researchers” – most of whom work as
consultants for one public authority or another – is a mostly unproblematised ob-
ject, analyzed in more or less functionalist terms. Their critical research questions
rarely range beyond the delivery or non-delivery of outputs (in turn generally just
the outputs of governmental action), but the premises on the basis of which those
outputs are defined, the values they embody, or the sometimes covert goals they
pursue – in other words the outcomes – are rarely questioned.

Totally different is a field of academy-driven scholarship for which “cultural
policy” means

the politics of culture in the most general sense: it is about the clash of ideas, institu-
tional struggles and power relations in the production and circulation of symbolic
meanings… (McGuigan 1996:1)

In the same vein, Lewis and Miller see “cultural policy” as “a site for the produc-
tion of cultural citizens, with the cultural industries providing not only a ream of
representations about oneself and others, but a series of rationales for particular
types of conduct” (Lewis and Miller 2003: 1). This academic tradition emerged
relatively recently – only in the 1980s in fact. Influenced largely by cultural stud-
ies (as well as by critical sociology, e.g., that of Pierre Bourdieu – who, paradoxi-
cally, disparaged cultural studies), the perspective here is inherently contestatory
and critical: cultural policy is “cultural politics” – and hence broadens its remit to
include the workings of the marketplace, usually doing so in admonitory terms. In
many cases it also cites the increasingly vigorous claims of “cultural civil soci-
ety.” It should be noted in passing that in European usages there is some slippage
around and between “cultural policy” and “cultural politics”. While politique cul-
turelle in the Francophone world concerns the taken-for-granted role of the public
authorities in cultural provision, and their role alone, the German notion of Kul-
turpolitik is inherently ambiguous; it could involve only such cultural provision,
or embrace the critical dimension we are alluding to here.

As the ideological moorings of much of this work are radical leftist and/or lib-
ertarian in inspiration, constructive engagement with policy-makers themselves is
rarely part of the programme. Often, such engagement is deliberately shunned.
Not surprisingly, the findings of this brand of scholarship are unpalatable to pol-
icy-makers, for most of the latter cleave to overtly instrumental agendas. Also, it
must be said, much “cultural theory” often expresses itself in terms so abstruse
and convoluted to the policy-making audience.

There are of course other, humanistic, traditions of research that do not involve
the “flattening of human complexity and meaningfulness” as Rothfield put it
(1999: 2); yet he too rues the limited purchase of such scholarship in the face of
the political and economic forces that dominate, in his case, the American cultural
system. It is possible nevertheless to apply a critical rationality to the “broad field
of public processes involved in formulating, implementing, and contesting gov-
ernmental intervention in, and support of, cultural activity” (Cunningham 2004:
14).

Such is the triple wager set out just over a decade ago by Tony Bennett. First, to
understand how cultural policies are “parts of a distinctive configuration of the
relations between government and culture which characterise modern societies”; sec-
ond, to encompass “complex forms of cultural management and administra-
tion” in ways that deliver adequate historical understanding and theoretical pur-
chase; third, to forge “effective and productive relationships with intellectual
workers in policy bureaux and agencies and cultural institutions – but as well as,
rather than at the expense of, other connections and, indeed, often as a means of
pursuing issues arising from those other connections” (Bennett 1998: 4).

Winning Bennett’s wager would appear to be somewhat out of reach still. The
divide between the two versions of “cultural policy” remains deep. This divide
was addressed by another Bennett, Oliver, in an essay reviewing the Lewis and
Miller Reader cited above and the late Mark Schuster’s book Informing Cultural
Policy: The Research and Information Infrastructure. Each work represents a
world “largely oblivious to the preoccupations of the other” (Bennett 2004: 237),
the first limited by “an uncritical attachment to a simplistic notion of the progres-
se”, while for the second “what constitutes both cultural policy and cultural pol-
icy research seems broadly to be what governments, their ministries of culture,
arts councils and related organisations determine them to be” and is limited to
“the investigation of instrumental questions through empirical social science” (ibid.: 242). Although he is happy to recognize multiple approaches because of the “intellectual vitality” that could be engendered by their encounter, Oliver Bennett still sees an unavoidable “clash” between two worlds that are, adapting Adorno, the torn halves that can never add up to a whole. The arena for the clash in question is the English-speaking West; Bennett (building on Ahearne 2004) contends that it does not exist in France and Germany, where many public intellectuals have contributed to cultural policy debate. His point is made principally to challenge the claim to representativity of the Lewis and Miller Reader. Yet there is little evidence that, on the “continent”, the conversation between academic inquiry and policy-oriented advocacy work is in reality less divided, despite Ahearne’s evocation, for France, of collaborations between government and the likes of Bourdieu and de Certeau. These, he claims, “have played an important part in the elaboration of what one might call a nationally available critical cultural policy intelligence” (Ahearne 2004: 11). This seems overstated. Although both Pierre Bourdieu and Michel de Certeau among other social scientists were commissioned in the 1970s by Augustin Girard at the French ministry’s Département des études et de la prospective to carry out research that would enrich official reflection, the record shows that scant use was made of their findings. Much of their work was most probably never even reviewed by ministers and senior officials.

On the one side, then, we see entities such as research funding bodies or councils, departments and programs in universities that have a remit for research on cultural issues, university-level programmes in policy studies and/or public administration (or other fields) that include a focus on the culture and media sectors, or dedicated university-based or independent research centres. In the other camp (and only sometimes do they involve the same people), stand those who provide paid analytical services to ministries and art councils; to government-commissioned survey bodies; to agencies in the arts, cultural and media industries; to private foundations and to regional and international organizations, such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO (Bennett 2002).

While it may appear inevitable that the two camps will continue to advance separately and in parallel, some sub-disciplines appear to be bridging the gap. Cultural economics, for example, engaged as it is by necessity with market forces, informs policy-making for culture in to some extent the same way as do economists who deal with money, employment or industrial development, or like sociologists and political scientists whose findings inspire guidelines for the governance of various social and political sectors. But analogies in other domains are hard to find. Most “cultural” research seems only to enjoy purchase on policy when done in the name of some form of institutional promotion or advocacy. To be sure, public policy is intrinsically instrumental in nature. Clearly, in the current climate, it would be difficult for it to be otherwise, as neo-liberal frameworks favour privatisation and deregulation, threatening in the process hitherto secure
funding levels of the subsidized cultural sector: witness the proliferation of “eco-

nomic impact studies” in the 1980s, the “social impact” work of the 1990s (Ben-
nett 2004), and all the boosterism around the “creative industries” today.

How to bridge the divide?

A way out of the quandary would be to privilege a line of inquiry that analyzes the
“arts and heritage” both in relation to the institutional terms and objectives of
these fields but also within a broader “cultural system” whose dynamics can only
be properly grasped in terms of the social science or “ways of life” paradigm that
embraces state, market and civil society together so as to encompass the constitu-
tive position of culture in all aspects of social and public life (Hall 1997).

This solution has its dangers. There is the problem of over-extensivity, of a
definition so broad that it is of limited analytical usefulness, leading to the kind of
generalized confusion that Marshall Sahlins warned about “when culture in the
humanistic sense is not distinguished from “culture” in its anthropological senses,
notably culture as the total and distinctive way of life of a people or society. From
the latter point of view it is meaningless to talk of “the relation between culture
and the economy”, since the economy is part of a people’s culture…” (World
Commission on Culture and Development 1996: 21). Yet in reality, since the
adoption of the totalizing grab-bag definition proffered by MONDIACULT, the
1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico, not just international
organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, but also most national
governments would now claim, rhetorically, that the true reading of culture today
is this vexingly expansive, so-called “anthropological” definition.2

We know of course that this rhetorical trope is honoured far more in the breach.
Yet there are significant exceptions such as the advocacy of a “cultural exception”
(now transmuted into “cultural diversity”) for audiovisual goods and services (Isar
2006). The argument is made for the latter not principally for their own sake, qua
the sector of audiovisual production, but because they are seen to embody the dis-
tinctive “soul and spirit” or “cultural identity” of different peoples or nations. The
champions of this reading of “cultural diversity” are on to something though, for
their perspective does oblige us to begin to articulate a critical discourse on what
ministries of culture do that embeds these activities in broader societal dynamics
and processes (Dubois and Laborier 2003). Such an inquiry would need to ad-
address: i) the ways in which subsidized cultural practice interacts with or is im-
pacted by social, economic and political forces; ii) the domains of public interven-
tion, e.g. home affairs, social welfare or immigration, in which the cultural in the
broader social science sense elicits policy stances and policy action; iii) the nature
of public intervention in both categories – whether subsidy or investment, directly
controlled or at arms length; iv) whether and how the objects and practices of in-
tervention are brought together and conceptualised conjointly as actually constituting a “cultural policy”.

Such research would do justice to two dimensions of the centrality of culture. On the one hand it would allow the analyst to capture the epistemological weight of culture today, its position in relation to knowledge and concepts, how “culture” is used to transform people’s understanding, explanations and visions of the world. On the other it would help her uncover the substantive centrality of the cultural: the actual empirical structure and organization of cultural activities, institutions and relationships and their “significance in the structure and organization of late-modern society, in the processes of development of the global environment and in the disposition of its economic and material resources” (Hall 1997: 236). In so doing it would also compensate for the persisting anomaly of restricting cultural policy to arts policy, thus excluding media and communications, arenas that are so intricately with the substantive centrality of the cultural…

Such an approach could also do much to reduce the gap between what governments frame as cultural policy and a cultural landscape that is increasingly dominated by both the global market-driven cultural economy and civil society activism. The activities and processes of the former in particular “sit uneasily within the public policy framework”, as Pratt points out (2005: 31). Policy-makers have engaged in very limited ways with market-driven culture, whether “high” or “low”. Instead, they have focused on providing support in the form of subsidy to expressive cultural forms as public goods. The mainly not-for-profit cultural sector remains the principal object of cultural policy, in a relationship of increasing tension vis à vis the mainly for-profit cultural industries. As I have observed elsewhere (Isar 2000), most ministries/departments responsible for cultural affairs have neither the mandate nor the technical expertise to grasp the complexities of cultural production, distribution and consumption. A great deal of the latter is market-driven; outputs do not conform to traditional canons of valuation and valorisation and they require measurement in terms that challenge the assumptions, such as market failure or public goods, on which policy rests. Conversely, cultural sector actors find that their environment and needs are simply not understood by the policy-makers. In culture as in other fields, the state needs to play the role of interlocutor, advisor, honest broker, persuader and “incentiviser”, to coin a term…

Policy-makers face three further interconnected sets of challenges; each demands an analytical response (Pratt 2005). First, the challenge of a transversal approach that embraces different agents (the public authorities at different levels of government; the private sector; civil society) and different domains of action such as tourism, education, environment, foreign affairs and labour, amongst others. Second, the need to forge conceptual tools that address strategic longer term questions, in other words to dispose of the information needed for some degree of indicative planning of future policy, particularly as regards the ways cultural pro-
duction and consumption are organized. Third, the need for new infrastructures of public participation in order to sustain a sufficient momentum in favour of this holistic approach, in other words a more open and democratic form of decision-making. The cultural policy “consultants” cannot provide the analytical tools required for such purposes; nor will policy-makers obtain them from the academic world, for want of the right theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The more general challenge therefore is to be able to inform both policy-makers and academia through research that has sufficient conceptual and empirical purchase on the cultural systems of today and tomorrow. This is the horizon identified already in 1996 by the World Commission on Culture and Development, which devoted a chapter of its report, Our Creative Diversity, to the idea of “Re-thinking Cultural Policies” (World Commission on Culture and Development 1996: 231-253). Meeting the challenge would contribute to reconciling Tom O’Regan’s four purposes for cultural policy studies, viz. state, reformist, antagonistic and diagnostic (O’Regan 1992: 418). It is also why, for the purposes of The Cultures and Globalization Series, we adopted the following working definition of the “culture” for our publication:

Culture in the broad sense we propose to employ refers to the social construction, articulation and reception of meaning. Culture is the lived and creative experience for individuals and a body of artifacts, symbols, texts and objects. Culture involves enactment and representation. It embraces art and art discourse, the symbolic world of meanings, the commodified output of the cultural industries as well as the spontaneous or enacted, organized or unorganized cultural expressions of everyday life, including social relations. (Anheier and Isar 2007: 9)

What axes of differentiation?

If cultural systems – government, market, civil society – are to be analyzed comparatively in meaningful ways, what axes of differentiation might we use? On what basis to construct a typology of stances and situations? Before addressing this question, let me first take up a more general need, which is to take into account a range of contexts in which cultural systems exist. By “context” I mean the overall economic and socio-political environment in which policies are articulated and enacted, as well as the histories within which these have developed. In much of Asia and Africa, for example, the institutionalized cultural sector is small and of relatively recent origin; most cultural life does not take place in venues such as theatres and museums. Such institutions exist, together with bodies devoted to heritage preservation, both as colonial legacies and recently developed tools of cultural “modernity”, adopted as adjuncts to nation-building. The budgets of the cultural ministries responsible for such bodies are minute; their action too is often largely rhetorical. Many societies have not experienced the societal changes that have made “culture” a recognized domain of public intervention – I am not referring here to the special case of the United States, which still rejects such a gov-
ernmental role on principle, but to the overwhelming majority of countries where
the reverse principle obtains, but is not respected. In Latin America, (excepting
perhaps those of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico), the role of cultural ministries
may well be as marginal to the cultural system as they are in South Asia, although
the institutionalized cultural sector does have deeper roots. In these settings,
where the state has played a role in broader cultural policy debates, the question,
as García Canclini asks, is how different groups, ethnic communities, and regions
have been represented. In many ways, the process of definition of national cul-
tures has “reduced their local specificities to politico-cultural abstractions in the
interest of social control or to legitimate a certain form of nationalism” (García
Canclini 2000: 303). Yet cultural ministries have been relatively weak in pursuing
goals such as these, ill-equipped as they are to develop adequate regulatory in-
struments, incentives, infrastructures, and the like.

Throughout the world, political rhetoric uses the “ways of life” notion: the “cul-
tures” of different nations, as in the MONDIACULT definition already cited. But
in every case, “high” culture is the real remit. The issues arising from the broader
notion are addressed by other departments than the ministry of culture or not at
all. Recently, however, “ways of life” notions are beginning to receive policy at-
tention to the extent to which the latter are perceived as threatened by global
forces. These anxieties have given a bit of edge to cultural policy. The rapidity
and intensity of the flows of cultural content and products present new challenges
to “cultural identities”, clearly enhancing the salience of domains such as culture,
tourism and sports – in all of which we can observe a range of different domestic
pressures to stem, encourage, or take advantage of culture flows (Singh 2007).
There is another sense in which the issue of context arises: these recent develop-
ments also challenge the relevance of the nation-state “container”. As a result of
globalization,

the nexus of culture and nation no longer dominates: the cultural dimension has be-
come constitutive of collective identity at narrower as well as broader levels… What
is more, cultural processes take place in increasingly “deterioralized” transna-
tional, global contexts, many of which are beyond the reach of national policies.
Mapping and analyzing this shifting terrain, in all regions of the world, as well as
the factors, patterns, processes, and outcomes associated with the “complex connec-
tivity” (Tomlinson 1999) of globalization, are therefore key challenges (Anheier and
Isar 2008: 1).

Returning now to the possible bases for cross-country comparison, McGuigan
(2004) recently revisited the not-very-well known five axes of state/culture rela-
tions defined by Raymond Williams in 1984. On the basis of the distinction he
drew between “cultural policy as display” and “cultural policy proper” Williams
suggested the following articulation: under the first category, “cultural policy as
display”: 1) national aggrandizement and 2) economic reductionism; under the
second, “cultural policy proper”: 3) public patronage of the arts; 4) media regula-
tion and 5) negotiated construction of cultural identity. The five categories in the
template remain germane, despite the fact that the distinction between what is “proper”, i.e. what the welfare state is supposed to do conscientiously and perhaps even disinterestedly and what is (mere) “display” is no longer tenable. Not only have the lines between the two become irreparably blurred, the disinterested propriety of Williams’ vision may well have been an illusion in the first place. Yet if cultural policy as display is here to stay, and right across the board, each of the five categories remains pertinent (although media regulation, i.e. media policy, is all too often hived off from cultural policy studies. Perhaps nowadays one would simply want to add to the understanding of both 2) economic reductionism and 4) media regulation, the policy issues raised by the much more prominent place of the cultural industries, as discussed in the previous section.

As regards 3), public patronage of the arts, Hillman-Chartrand and McCaughey’s typology of State stances (1989) – the Facilitator State, the Patron State, the Architect State and the Engineer State – also retains its relevance, although recent developments, particularly multiple convergences and the growth of the cultural industries, have complexified the landscape. Briefly put, the Facilitator State funds the arts essentially through foregone taxes or tax deductions, provided according to the wishes of individual and corporate donors, the marketplace being the main driver. The United States alone embodied this model when it was first proposed as it still does today. Most, however, remain the Patron State, e.g., the United Kingdom, that honours the “arm’s length” principle, or the Architect State that constructs an official system of support structures and measures (France and The Netherlands). An increasing number of countries, including according to Mangset et al. (2008) the Nordic countries, may be a cross between the two. The final model, that of the Engineer State, ideologically driven and owning the means of cultural production, is no doubt an almost extant species, yet many aspects of the Engineer role are aspired to in developing countries that practice a dirigiste cultural discourse.

Another analytical grid could be built on the basis of the binaries put forward some years ago in a Council of Europe publication: choices between competing visions, imperatives or priorities that can be conceived as a “balancing act” (Matarrasso and Landry 1999), between. Two of the “framework” choices – so-called because they determine cultural policy positioning in relation to political, social and ethical values – would serve our purpose well.³ One is the distinction between the democratization of culture and cultural democracy: either giving people access to a pre-determined set of cultural goods and services or giving them tools of agency, voice and representation in terms of their own cultural expressions. The first approach assumes that a single cultural canon determined on high can be propagated to “the masses.” Nor has it been successful, as the unequal distribution of “cultural capital” in society has made access to culture either problematic or unsolicited by the intended beneficiaries, while the scale of market-driven cultural industries has reduced the reach of subsidised cultural provision. Cultural democ-
racy on the other hand, seeks to augment and diversify access to the means of cultural production and distribution, to involve people in fundamental debates about the value of cultural identity and expression, while also giving them agency as regards the means of cultural production, distribution and consumption…

Given the prevalence of instrumental rationales for cultural policy already discussed, a second useful axis of differentiation is between culture for its own sake or for the sake of other benefits. The option here is between intrinsic “quality of life” arguments for cultural expression and other related cultural values versus the idea that they should be tools or instruments for other social and economic purposes. The instrumental position is now challenged in both Western Europe and North America (Holden 2006); in many settings elsewhere, it has not yet taken hold to anywhere near the same extent, if at all.

Other choices explored in the volume are also relevant; these arise in various other areas, such as implementation, social development, economics and management. Most of these, although presented as choices to be made within cultural administrations, could also be the basis for comparisons between them, e.g., in the realm of implementation, the options between consultation or active participation, between the search for prestige as opposed to community development, or between national (local) visibility or international; in the realm of social development, the definition of the “community” in singular or plural terms, a monist definition of culture vs. a pluralist one, a privileging of the past (heritage) or of the present (contemporary arts), of visitors (tourists) over residents, of an external image in favour of internal reality.

International Agendas in Cultural Policy?

Finally, what leading agendas internationally might be foregrounded for comparative purposes, or so as to discern major long-term trends? I would suggest two, both of which require clarification and unpacking, as they are now used as catchwords in a plethora of ways. These are i) cultural diversity and ii) the cultural and/or creative industries.

As a consequence of the culturalism of our time, which Appadurai nicely characterized as being “the conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics…” (1996:15), cultural diversity is no longer just a given of the human condition but has become a globally shared normative meta-narrative. In addition, the debate at UNESCO around the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions has transubstantiated the notion into the right and responsibility of nation-states to support the production of cultural goods and services that express their “national identity”. This rather reductive understanding of a hitherto more capacious theme emerged through a discursive reframing of the exception culturelle that had been the rallying cry of the Canadian and French governments since the
end of the Uruguay Round in the mid-1990s. The shift from “exception” to “diversity” as the master concept allowed their cultural diplomacy to move from a negative to a positive stance; more importantly, it enabled it also to tap into a variegated range of anxieties everywhere, stemming from the real or perceived decline in “cultural diversity”, this time understood very much in the anthropological sense. Thought to be dramatically accelerated by globalization, this very decline has, dialectically, generated a dynamic of culturalist repluralization.

Unsurprisingly, multiple interpretations of its scope now appear to be crystallizing around the UNESCO Convention, as different constituencies, including sub-national communities and minorities, see the treaty as a powerful tool to advance cultural claims other than those of “cultural goods and services” or for that matter, just States alone. There is a growing awareness, as Stolcke has put it (1995: 12), of the “political meanings with which specific political contexts and relationships endow cultural difference. It is the configuration of socio-political structures and relationships both within and between groups that activates differences and shapes possibilities and impossibilities of communication.” It is for such reasons that in our Brief for the third volume of The Cultures and Globalization Series (Anheier and Isar 2010) devoted to the topic “Cultural Expression, Creativity and Innovation” we asked contributors to address questions such as the following. What are the dimensions of diversity in cultural expression: artistic languages, repertoires and practices? Are there diversifying genres, fields, regions and localities, or professions and organizational systems, or certain types of clusters? Conversely, are there other areas that show less diversity or appear to be either stable or regressive? How is diversity in cultural expression being communicated and exchanged on the global canvas?

Finally, some reflections on the cultural/creative industries, simply because this sub-sector has become a, if not the, dominant paradigm in Western European cultural policy discourse. This conceptual development sits so well with the instrumentalizing frameworks of the reigning neo-liberal capitalist system that its hegemonic status it is acquiring equally hegemonic status elsewhere, from Brazil to China. An ubiquitous new “creative industries” hype needs to be deconstructed, if only to better grapple with the very real issues that lie behind it. Today, an ever-increasing range of economic activity is concerned with producing and marketing goods and services that are permeated in one way or another with broadly aesthetic or semiotic attributes. The aesthetic has been commodified; and the commodity has been aestheticized. While the industrial and the digital mediate practically every cultural process, “cognitive-cultural” goods and services have become a major segment of our economies; their production and distribution mobilize considerable human, material and technical resources.

In the process, the idea of “creativity”, that till recently artists had the principal claim on, has been vastly expanded and is applied today to a very broad range of activities and professions, many of which are far removed from artistic creation.
In this capacity, the “cultural” has become a key economic policy issue. Witness the 2006 study *The Economy of Culture in Europe* done for the European Commission and the subsequent foregrounding of the field in EU policy. The question is whether all types of cultural production can be justified in terms of economic gain. While the cultural sector itself may find it opportune to do so rhetorically, if only to garner support for its activities and institutions, such opportunism pinions it to neo-liberal understandings. It is therefore crucially important, as a range of cultural economists, geographers and other social scientists are already doing, to explore this segment of the “cultural system” more deeply. In eliciting contributions from such researchers for the second volume of *The Cultures and Globalization Series* on “The Cultural Economy” we asked them to address questions such as the following. How do commercial viability and artistic creativity relate to each other in this context? To what degree do the imperatives of the market threaten (or possibly foster) collaborative or process-based arts activity? How do market-driven phenomena create new figures of the creative artist in increasingly hybrid and precarious working environments? What are the current and emerging organizational forms for the investment, production, distribution and consumption of cultural goods and services? As cultural production becomes part of a mixed economy at the national level, what are the emerging patterns transnationally? Who are the “winners” and “losers” as the cultural economy becomes globalized? Are some art forms and genres being marginalized, becoming increasingly excluded, while others move to the centre of transnational cultural attention and economic interests?

**Concluding thoughts**

Both sets of questions raised in this article concern “big” issues. Both have to do with lacunae that must be transcended if cultural policy research is to rise to the challenges of our time and, *a fortiori*, if robust international comparisons are to be made. For “culture” today crystallizes great expectations and great illusions. The two go together; both stem from visions yet at once overblown and truncated, from simplifications that are both partial and reductive, and ultimately from readings that are excessively instrumental. The agenda adumbrated here is designed to escape these pitfalls, but it is no doubt easier to advocate than to accomplish.

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Notes

1 An earlier version of this article was published as “Cultural policy: issues and interrogations in an international perspective” in Svante Beckman and Sten Månsson (eds.), KulturSverige 2009. Problemanalys och statistik, Linköping: SweCult.

2 The MONDIACULT definition: “…culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, values systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 1982).

3 The authors list the narrower and broader notions of culture as their first overarching “framework” choice. Their word, “dilemma”, is surely too strong. For in actual practice there is no such duality: cultural policy still deals preponderantly with “high” culture. The challenge of moving it forward is how to broaden its scope.

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Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies

By Mikko Lehtonen

Abstract

As cultural studies has sought for a foothold in universities, it has faced pressures of modern disciplinarity it aims at to challenge and alter. In the conjuncture of neo-liberal university policies new weight is given to multidisciplinarity as an instrument for reshaping universities in favour of cost-effectiveness and quick-fix applications. In this new situation cultural studies has to defend purposeful and enduring diversity in and of universities. In order to be able to do this it has to think of itself not only as a critical space but also as such place where universities could critically reflect themselves and their place in the world.

Keywords: Cultural studies, universities, disciplines, neoliberalism, diversity
Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies

Stories told of cultural studies stress its worldly nature, repeating that its agenda is, or at least should be, informed by the contexts studied. Along with scholars who work e.g. in fields of women’s studies or postcolonial studies, cultural studies practitioners like to see themselves as cunning smugglers of earthly questions inside the walls of academia.

The multi-, cross-, post- or anti-disciplinary project of cultural studies came famously into existence outside the universities. It has, however, for 40 years sought its place inside academia (e.g. Bennett 1998, Dworkin 1997, Grossberg 1997a and 1997b, Lee 2003). Establishing cultural studies projects, programmes, centres and like, has in the last decades primarily taken place in academic contexts. There has been some discussion on how cultural studies changes the academic contexts it works in (e.g. Hall 1992, Williams 1989), but not that much debate on how academic contexts have produced various pressures on the forms cultural studies has assumed.

In this text, I outline the two-way traffic between cultural studies and its academic contexts. First, I discuss university cultures that form immediate contexts of cultural studies scholars’ activities, looking at both heteronomous and autonomous elements of these cultures. Second, I look closer at workings of academic disciplines and the pressures disciplinarity produces for cultural studies. Finally, I look closer at various locations of cultural studies in the contemporary (neo-liberal) academia in the light of two somewhat different notions of cultural studies, i.e., cultural studies as a space and as a place.

I University Cultures

What kinds of contexts of action are universities for cultural studies? In order to get a grip on this, let me discuss the notion of university cultures. By "university cultures” I refer to certain simultaneously real and symbolic practices. These practices consist of certain procedures and assumptions, a body of relatively stable workings and suppositions. The shared values, norms and behaviours constitute a certain culture pervading all academic disciplines (classic portrayals of the phenomenon are Becher 1989 and Clark 1987, see also Ylijoki 2000, 2005 and 2008).

Usually university cultures are thought to consist of such things as an interest in knowledge for its own sake, critical thinking, specialised knowledge, disputation, openness, scepticism, tolerance, reflection, academic freedom and the like (e.g. Merton 1968). Such characterisations, however, are first and foremost ideal, based rather on how academia wants to be seen than on how it actually works.
Heteronomy

One of self-idealisations of academia is the tendency to see itself as a predominantly autonomous field of action. But university cultures are not self-sufficient in the sense of being dependent only on themselves. On the contrary, it is relatively easy to perceive various ways in which university cultures are heteronomous, that is, dependent on factors other than universities. Let me refer to just three such elements:

First, various academic disciplines are linked to trajectories of life and professions their practitioners study and educate functionaries to. To take one example, literary studies, in which I graduated, are in many ways tied to literary institutions, reproducing not only their values but also the institutions themselves. In the late modern world it would be quite difficult to imagine literary public sphere without the research and training contributions of academic literary scholars. Another example is media studies, in which I currently work. Media scholars too reproduce the phenomena they study – not only by educating journalists and passing on certain professional habits and attitudes but also, for example, by acquiescing to the division of labour between different media forms as they scatter into groups of print media, television, radio, film and internet researchers.

Second, the national considerations also have their impacts on university cultures. In late modern nation states there are certain canons of subjects that nations must study and teach at the highest level if they want to be considered as modern and civilised. These canons vary to some extent (say, between Australia, India or Sweden), but the specific variations are all built on certain modern classifications, differentiating between natural and human sciences, social sciences and the humanities, international and national fields, theoretical and empirical sciences etc. Much the same way as each nation has to have a flag and a national anthem, they also need to have universities with certain academic disciplines in order to be accepted as full members of the family of modern nations. This, of course, is just one of the paradoxical outcomes of the modern universal compulsion to clothe transnational imperatives in national guises, but it nevertheless has its impact in shaping the assumedly universal institutions into particular national forms (e.g. Sassen 2006).

Third, universities are as educative and research institutes tied in manifold ways to transnational and national economies, politics and cultures. The forms of practical connections between universities, economic agents, states and actors of civil societies vary, but they all have their hopes and fears in relation to universities. Political and economic agents also have their ways of ensuring that universities assume their designated place. The compulsive or persuasive policies towards universities vary from one conjuncture to another. In the current neo-liberal conjuncture universities are coerced and coaxed to recreate themselves in the image
of enterprises (e.g. Slaughter & Leslie 1997, Canaan & Shumar ed. 2008) that behave largely in a market-oriented way while competing for external funding.

Cultural studies exists in ambiguous relation to these elements of heteronomy. For cultural studies there are no self-evident professions or institutions to reproduce. Neither is cultural studies a predominantly national (let alone nationalistic) field of research in the sense that it would have been born for purposes of constructing nationally oriented understandings of contemporary world. Cultural studies also tends to have a critical stance towards various transnational and national economic, political and cultural forces, even though there are also pressures towards exploitation of its findings among entrepreneurs and policy makers. Instead of dependencies outlined above, cultural studies brings forward other kinds of ideas on relations between universities and civil society, stressing that academic researchers are not in their work responsible first and foremost for nations, enterprises or professions but for those who cannot in conditions of modern division of labour work as intellectuals.

**Autonomy**

Universities and single academic disciplines rarely reflect these dependencies. Perhaps this is part of their persistent habit of not paying too much attention to reflecting their own actual ways of thinking and acting (apart from idealisations produced on various ceremonious occasions).

To stress the heteronomous nature of university cultures is not, of course, to say that they are determined only from the outside. The centuries long traditions of universities themselves also imprint these cultures, as is often stressed at various academic anniversaries. Usually these traditions are seen to emanate from mediaeval universities, famously based on a model offered by the guilds (Reeves 1969). As mediaeval guilds, the first universities also distinguished between apprenticeship, journeymanship and mastership from each other. This model gave the universities four premises that still largely persist: First, novices do indeed belong to the same organisation as the masters. Second, there are progressive levels in learning. Third, the disciples in the middle of their education (journeymen) can teach the novices. Fourth, the master has a monopoly of teaching and learning.

Modern universities are much more diverse and segmented in structure than the mediaeval ones. Moreover, in addition to the traditional task of teaching, modern universities have also assumed the more recent task of research. In recent years these two tasks, teaching and research, have been further complemented by a third one, known as service activities, that in the neo-liberal conjuncture first and foremost imply an incentive to contribute to economic development.

In spite of the introduction of new duties, the mediaeval guild model is still recognisable in modern universities, especially within academic disciplines. The guild model is not officially subscribed to, but practically it is adhered to.
What makes the suppositions, norms and practical workings of universities effective is primarily the fact that they are largely implicit, not publicly articulated nor subjected to critical scrutiny (cf. Gerholm 1990). This, of course, is a normal modus operandi of power. Only a dim-witted ruler would try to make explicit the workings of his power. (On the other hand, a witless ruler would probably not even know what the sources of his power are.)

The implicit cultures influence daily academic practices in such a strong way that in comparison to this mute coercion and patronising all that universities publicly proclaim of themselves – be they strategies, statutes, degree requirements or other – are doomed to seem quite insipid. Anyone wishing to study the values, norms and workings of universities in printed form would no doubt be disappointed as the values, norms etc. are not recorded, but must be ferreted out by each and every one as best they can. This, in its turn, guarantees that the power of the masters remains largely unquestioned.

Cultural studies has an uneasy relation to allegedly autonomous features of universities. In its multi-, inter-, cross-, post- or anti-disciplinary tones it resembles in some ways pre-modern universities with their generalist approaches. In stressing worldly research and teaching agendas it represents an alternative view concerning new “service activities” of universities, willing to work not for enterprises but for civil society. Finally, in relation to disciplinary power, cultural studies aims to work as a meta-discipline, a field where university can critically measure itself. (I will return to this last point.)

Academic feudalism and socialism

Two metaphors come relatively effortlessly to mind when trying to decipher what is going on in contemporary universities. They are metaphors of universities as feudal states and of universities as “actually existing socialism”. The former depicts traditional modern university with relatively big autonomy and small external economic pressures, whereas the latter describes (paradoxically) the current “academic capitalism” (of which see Ylijoki 2003).

Feudal states were famously made up of the king, noble landowners and vassals who were granted possession of land by the landowners. The feudal system was characterized by absence of public authority and the exercise of administrative and judicial functions by local lords. Academic disciplines are indeed reminiscent of autonomic fiefs with their own noblemen and limited openness in their functioning. The noblemen, known as professors, “form the core of local, national, and international scientific establishments” and “play a key part in the development of scientific knowledge” (Elias 1982: 5). Socialisation into one’s own discipline here equals socialisation into implicit traditional knowledges of one’s fief (cf. Gerholm 1990). After learning the unwritten rules one gains inclusion in the disciplinary “us”.
If the universities at the level of disciplines are reminiscent of feudal fiefs, as wholes they recall “actually existing socialism”. “Actually existing socialism” meant, among other things, modifying reality into a highly aesthetic form in the sense that what mattered was not the quantity nor indeed the quality of production or the population’s actual quality of living. What mattered in this simulation was, instead, how the production was represented to central government and how the powers-that-be represented the reality to the people.

Under the neo-liberal university policies the university reality is largely aestheticized in the sense that Schein (how things seem to be) takes precedence over Sein (how things actually are). In other words, in contemporary universities outer appearances take precedence over the real state of things, at least in relations between universities and ministries of education or in the public images of universities. At stake in negotiations between state funded universities and ministries of education is not what the universities really do (particularly in relation to the actual quality of teaching or research), but what they appear to do in numerical terms. The neo-liberal university policies cast the university leaders in the role of factory managers in “actually existing socialism” and the heads of faculties and departments in the roles of middle management. The discussions between universities and governmental departments concern what the universities say they produce, not what they really produce.

Both models are awkward for cultural studies project. Feudalism tends to produce neurotic disciplinary identities with constant guarding of academic borders, occasional xenophobia and (luckily infrequent) ostracism. Actually existing socialism creates aversion towards research agendas set from the civil society as well as towards production of critical knowledge.

II Disciplinarities

Modern university cultures are predominantly disciplinary cultures. First year students or new PhD students do not acculturate into universities as wholes but into disciplines. One way to characterise the invisible disciplinary acculturation of novices into academia is to portray it as their acquisition of a discipline-specific habitus. This does not involve the explicit transmission of rules or learning of roles, but “a tacit understanding gained by participating in the practices of a certain field” (Becher & Huber 1990: 237). Socialisation or acculturation to university cultures occurs largely by learning the norms and workings of disciplines by trial and error. These norms and workings constitute the hidden curriculum of each discipline, conceptualized by Oilli-Helena Ylijoki (2000: 341) as their moral orders.

The new members of staff are recruited from those who have internalised this tacit knowledge. The university cultures thus reproduce themselves first by invisible teaching of invisible norms, and, second, by filling teaching positions with
those who have absorbed these norms thereby successfully acculturating to the
discipline in question.

These invisible norms form a glass ceiling, felt sorely by many who have tried
to spark off debates on the paradigmatic matters of various disciplines, only to
find that with their best intentions they have been condemned to be heretics, not
one of “us”.

If the values, norms and workings of universities were explicit and public, free
for all to read, weigh up and criticise, universities would surely be different. This
might bring with it such academic freedom of thinking and interaction that is not
available to those who have to grope their ways blindfold through the normative
jungle. Now, however, we live in universities where the norms and workings are
neither explicit nor rationalised.

Cultural studies relation to disciplinarity is uneasy – not least because many of
its practitioners are forced or other refugees from disciplines they were educated
in. For some time cultural studies has been seen as a means by which the univer-
sity thinks about itself (Hall 2008: 18). In its anti- and inter-disciplinarity cultural
studies is a “reluctant discipline” (Bennett 1998) or a meta-discipline (“meta”
meaning here that it is a field that does not take disciplinarity as an unquestioned
premise but tries, instead, to scrutinise the conditions and consequences of aca-
demic disciplinary system). As such, cultural studies has a potential to be simulta-
neously a free field (“third space” between discrete disciplines), a battlefield (a
forum for demarcations and confrontations) and a field of overlap10. It has a po-
tential to produce hybridising bricolages and to bring together elements that have
elsewhere been separated from each other. (I will return to this towards the end of
this text.)

**Tacit and expressed disciplinarity**

To stress various negative consequences of disciplinarity, as I have done above, is
not to say that the disciplinary organisation of academic research and teaching is
totally without foundation. Obviously there has to be some kind of division of
labour between academic researchers so that they can produce cumulative areas of
knowledge. In order to be able to say something about something one has to de-
limit the topics one is talking about as well as the ways one talks about them. As
in all other discursive action, in academic work, too, one has to define an object
and a way to speak about it.

Modern disciplinarity, however, has also non-productive dimensions. Choosing
the object and accepted ways of talking about it inevitably excludes numerous
things from disciplinary considerations. In the last instance disciplines can only
institute themselves by the aid of what lies outside them, by distinguishing them-
selves from that which they are not, i.e., what they exclude or expel from their
limits (Hall 2008: 71–72, Weber 1987). Also disciplines, indeed, have constitutive
outsides and cannot, hence, be “self-identical, independent, autonomous, or self-contained” (Hall 2008: 72).

The homogeneity of academic disciplines is produced, however, not only tacitly but also overtly. The homogeneity is based, on the one hand, on various attempts to draw distinctions between one’s own and other disciplines, and, on the other hand, in a constant guarding and homogenising of areas thus formed. Disciplinary power resides first and foremost in questions concerning what is studied and how. It also underlies in questions concerning for whom or what the research is carried on. In other words, disciplinary power is power to define proper objects of knowledge and correct ways to view them.

The openness of cultural studies lies in this sense exactly in its anti-disciplinary nature. In cultural studies there are no given objects of knowledge. “Culture” is no such object, since cultural studies approaches culture not as something that is already known. Culture is not in cultural studies something that is used to explain things, but a thing that has itself to be explained. For cultural studies culture is not an answer but a question and a means of asking. In this sense cultural studies is not grounded on a given theory of culture but is rather meta-theory that aims at explaining the explainer, that is, culture.

Multidisciplinarity

Advocating multidisciplinarity used to equal being against the academic grain. All of a sudden multidisciplinarity, however, seems now to be the hottest hot among academic policy makers. For cultural studies practitioners who have been advocating the blessedness of multidisciplinarity for aeons, it is baffling to come across the new academic fashion of reiterating the seemingly identical mantra in official speeches and documents. Today, it is not uncommon to hear even from state authorities that cross-disciplinary areas of research are vital to the future of universities.

An optimistic reading of this twist would point out that universities and officialdom have finally realised that the modern disciplinary division of academic labour does not fit the logic of the late modern world and that most of today’s relevant research questions lie in the no man’s lands between modern disciplines. An optimist would relate new weight given for multidisciplinarity to the fact that contemporary disciplinary divisions were formed in conditions of classical modernity and that they do epitomise modern sphere logic (e.g. between “society” and “culture”), as well as the logic of the internal divisions of the public sphere (e.g. between press, literature, film and television, music, drama, visual arts etc.). The optimist would further stress that in late modernity it is increasingly troublesome to try to understand these spheres and modalities in isolation from each other.

The pessimist, on the other hand, might think that the new inclination towards multidisciplinarity is linked to neo-liberal policies where universities are turned upside down in order to eliminate overlap, to build bigger units than before and,
instead of basic research, to emphasise such applied research that would yield immediate harvests. In this new mode of knowledge production (Gibbons et al. 1994) university research is “transforming from the traditional discipline-based basic research into transdisciplinary, problem-oriented project research carried out with external funding” (Ylijoki 2005: 557).

The pessimist might further ponder whether the new multidisciplinarity does really entail a critical stance towards current logic of disciplinarity – apart from possible administrative reforms. Does not the policy that consumes basic resources of universities in fact buttress the walls between the disciplines as each discipline curls up around its “core contents”? In this sense one might even ponder whether this specific form of multidisciplinarity in fact contributes in maintaining the disciplinary borders intact.

### III Spaces and Places of Cultural studies

Like other cultural formations, the university cultures, too, are ambivalent, entailing tradition and innovation, structure and action, subservience and autonomy. If university cultures were purely repressive, academia would be occupied exclusively by masochists. Even in the prevailing circumstances innovation, action and autonomy are salient elements of research and teaching.

The thousand-dollar question is, then: How could innovation, action and autonomy also be necessary elements of university cultures? By this I mean the challenge of organising research and teaching so as to promote true innovativeness (instead of contemporary self-proclaimed “innovativeness” that mostly serves a quick productive application) and the activity of those working at the universities.

### Organising Anarchy

Here we come up against the classical question: How to organise anarchy? My own, undeniably Utopian but perhaps for that very reason most topical answer is: By making visible violence that is intrinsic in disciplinarity and hence re-opening the domain of politics in universities.

To open this up a bit: The disciplinary system tends to represent itself as a natural one, but, in order to function as legitimately instituted fields of knowledge, disciplines must repress their multiple dependencies on existing power-relations. Disciplines cannot found itself, as Gary Hall (2008: 73) reminds. Instead, their authority must come from somewhere else that is outside the disciplines and precedes them. This authorizing authority is none other than state (ibid.).

Disciplines must be actively reminded of the constitutive violence on which their identities are built. They must be time and again pointed out that “any such differentiation or demarcation that goes to institute a discipline – the judgment or decision as to what to include and what to exclude, what should be taken inside
and what expelled – is an inherently unstable and irreducibly violent one” (Hall 2008: 73).

Trouble is that in current disciplinary university system it is difficult to produce spaces and places for openly political discussions concerning academic work. By “political” I mean such dialogues where participants would from the outset admit that there are no pregiven or self-explanatory premises for outlining the place, content or segmentation of academic work. If the historical and discursive character of disciplines were made explicit, the domain of politics could be perhaps (re)opened in universities. By making the academia to remember what it has forgotten, i.e., by denaturalizing the basic assumptions of current disciplinary system, cultural studies could represent a new political challenge of organised diversity in universities.

**Cultural Studies as a Space and a Place**

In order to be able to do this, cultural studies should be thought not only as a space but also as a place. What do I mean by this? Cultural studies is often depicted as a space, that is, an area for actions and effects. As a space cultural studies is, as it were, a free field, a “third space” somewhere beyond disciplinary determinations. But should we, given the diverse institutionalisation of cultural studies in the last decades, also speak of cultural studies in less abstract terms, that is, as a place? And if cultural studies was seen as a place, what kind of place would it be?

The problem in this shift of perspective is, of course, that places are all too often spoken of in terms of stasis with more or less clear cut boundaries. Prevailing notions of places imply that they are more or less limited and gain their identities from and within themselves. These notions imply that places are containers, so to speak, and not clusters of relations. Places are not conceived as interfaces, but as enclosures with permanent origins and immoveable centres. These images effectively prevent us from thinking of places from the perspectives of activity, decentralisedness and change. On the contrary, the prevailing imagery calls for emphasizing the borders that keep places apart from other places, instead of foregrounding all the connections places have to the realities of which they are parts. Moreover, in these images each individual is first and foremost tied to one single place, whereas in real life, of course, people are successively and often also simultaneously linked to many places. Place is represented in this imagery as a self-sufficient autotopy. It is a locus of constant guarding of borders, of endless inclusion of “us” and exclusion of “them”.

Perhaps such notions of places have made cultural studies scholars speak of their project more in terms of space than place. But should one not try to redefine the dominant notions of what places are also in relation to cultural studies? This would not necessarily be a futile exercise, since the conceptualisations of what a place is also have implications for the ways academic disciplines and fields of
research are conceived of. Perhaps it is no coincidence that dominant ideas of places closely resemble dominant ideas of disciplines as such autotopies in need of constant border guarding?

The alternative way of imagining places that might also help to think of cultural studies as a place in a new way would be an idea of a place as a historical formation where numerous elements from outside the place “itself” are present. This would entail thinking of a place as a cluster of relations, not as a container. To adapt a metaphor widely used in cultural studies, places could be perceived as diasporic.

A diasporic place? Perhaps, but not a diasporic place in the sense of it being filled with nostalgic longing for some original home terrain one has been forced to relinquish. Perhaps, instead, a diasporic place in the sense of a dwelling for a considerable number of people who have had to find refuge, a different place to be in, a new terrain of hope and new beginnings. A diasporic place as a field in which one can feel anchored and at home in, but which is not expected to be eternally identical with itself. A place without "roots" in the sense of origins, but with a lot of "routes" in the sense of passages and pathways (cf. Gilroy 1995).

The idea of cultural studies as a diasporic place might bring back the idea cherished at the beginning of the 1990s, that is, the idea of practitioners of cultural studies as nomads (e.g. Grossberg 1992: 126). The idea of a diasporic place is close to a notion of researchers as nomads in the sense that those in diaspora must also be acutely aware of their own positionality. But whereas the idea of a nomad easily leads to romanticizing cultural researchers as some kind of free-ranging intellectuals without any external determinations, the idea of cultural studies as a specific diasporic place might bring with it questions of institutional power. To ask who, when, how and under which conditions have to travel and temporarily settle down is to ask in what contexts the intellectual movement in question takes place. What are the institutional power relations that determine such displacements and dislocations? How do these relations over-determine diasporic formations? In other words, how do the power relations imprint the spaces and places of cultural studies, and how does this affect its make-up?

The challenge of cultural studies

As the mantra of multidisciplinarity gains popularity among neoconservatives, it is vital to bear in mind that multidisciplinarity, too, always has its contexts that affect its forms and usages. Multidisciplinarity is not an automatic passage to critical heaven. It can also be used as a neo-liberal instrument for readjusting universities in favour of cost-effectiveness and quick-fix applications. Such multidisciplinarity often leaves the traditional disciplinary borders untouched and is organised around projects where researchers from various disciplines gather temporarily only to quickly return to their immutable academic homes.
In relation to such multidisciplinary the challenge that cultural studies should represent along other fields with expressed emancipatory interests of knowledge is different. It is the challenge of purposeful and enduring diversity. If disciplinarity equals scarcity, regulation and control, purposeful and enduring diversity represents abundance, variation and potentiality. It represents an effort to build an environment conducive to diversity, an effort to put “diversity at the centre of the curriculum and the demographics of university” (Appadurai 1996: 26). It is a project where there are no given objects whose meaning and nature is established in advance by disciplinary conventions (Nelson and Gaonkar 1996: 18).

Purposefully diverse new formations do not easily enter universities where each feudal lord stands guard over his modest plot. New formations may not be viewed with delight in university leaderships for whom they may not at first glance represent a promise of such results that would bring riches to their institutions. And yet the hope for universities lies in hybrids and impure cross-breeding. In a world where modern divisions between economy, politics and culture are increasingly blurred and where media boundaries become more and more insignificant, the hope of understanding what is going on does not lie in fostering the purity of disciplines.

In late modern contexts the pursuit of disciplinary purity would mean the pursuit of a dead space. In order to fight against disciplinary pressures as well as neoliberal coercion towards artificial multidisciplinarity, spaces of cultural studies should also be organised into places – places of discontent, endless suspicion and questioning that is also directed towards the non-place one dwells in. As a meta-discipline where university critically reflects itself cultural studies might also contribute to another kind of university (Hall 2008) that is not only a possibility but also a necessity.

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Notes

1  An often cited example of this is Hall 1992, especially pp. 278–279.
2  To give just one relatively recent example of such pressures: In today’s Finnish academia, it is nowadays virtually de rigueur to write in English and submit manuscripts to international, most often Anglo-American, forums. Otherwise one’s chances of success in the battle for domestic research funding are thin. Now, this is diametrically opposed to the worldly ethos of cultural studies, creating a situation where an increasing proportion of cultural research is directed at other scholars and not to those whose lives are the topic of research. This produces, indeed, a vicious circle where one has to publish extensively in English in order to publish more in the future – again in English. By this I do not intend to say that Finnish cultural studies practitioners should publish only in Finnish or that Japanese colleagues should always prefer their own mother tongue. English is undeniably lingua franca of also the international cultural studies community with all obvious pros and cons (of which see Fornäs and Lehtonen 2005). One cannot escape the imperatives of English when communicating with colleagues from all over the world. This, however, should not divert Finnish, Japanese or other cultural studies scholars from acting as public intellectuals also in their own languages and home countries.
3  Cf. what Ludwig Huber (1990: 241) writes: “The term culture refers here to both everyday life and social and cognitive structures of universities and is linked to an idea of acculturation or socialisation as the development of certain dispositions to act that are specific for universities and disciplines, produced in and reproducing their culture.”
4  The conscious choice of the plural – ‘university cultures’ – instead of the singular refers, of course, to the fact that in universities there are several disparate (normally discipline based) cultures. Disciplines differ from each other in many ways, among them attitudes to socio-political issues, social background of their practitioners, external relations and resources (Huber 1990). The most common breeding grounds of cultural studies – humanities, social sciences and education – are, however, not necessarily that different from each other.
5  The emergent research area of multimodality and intermediality (of which see, e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) is an exception to this rule.
6  It is well known that in mediaeval universities there were no modern disciplines. Instead, teaching was organised so that students were first trained in trivium (logic, grammar and rhetoric) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), specialising only after that in medicine, jurisprudence or theology. The university went by the name universitas, meaning a whole or the whole world.
7  A small example of this comes from my own university where students are in their exam papers always asked to identify their main subject. As I teach the multidisciplinary Media Culture program that is a main subject only at the MA and PhD levels, my basic degree students have routinely to affirm in the beginning of each exam that they do not belong in the last instance to the field they are studying with me but are instead inhabitants of another area.
8  “Any person entering a new group with the ambition of becoming a fully fledged, competent member has to learn to comply with its academic rules. This applies also to academic departments”, writes Tomas Gerholm (1990: 263).
9  Ludwig Huber (1990: 248) describes this acculturation or socialisation as follows: "individuals act as they do only in part consciously and directly in response to goals. Born into certain fields and then initiated to others, and finding themselves in certain positions surrounded by clusters (groups) of people sharing this situation, people somehow grasp how the game works, learn by doing and incorporate the generating schemes very much as a child learns its mother tongue and patterns of social behaviour, i.e. a practical competence [...] without knowing the rules or consciously complying with them.”
10  On these three types of fields, see Fornäs & al. 2002.
11  On these metaphors, see Lehtonen 2005. On conceptualisations concerning spaces and places, see Massey 2005, part four.
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The Future of the European University: Liberal Democracy or Authoritarian Capitalism?

By Sharon Rider

Abstract
This paper examines the prevalent notion that the production of knowledge, academic research and teaching can and ought to be audited and assessed in the same manner as the production of other goods and services. The emphasis on similarities between industry and the academy leads to a neglect of fundamental differences in their aims and, as a consequence, a tendency to evaluate scientific research in terms of patents and product development and colleges and universities in terms of the labour market. The article examines the idea of the free academy, on the one hand, and compares and contrasts it to the idea of free enterprise, on the other. It is argued that the view of the university as a supplier of specific solutions for pre-determined, non-scientific needs (a workforce with skills currently in demand, innovations for commercial partners, justifications for political decisions, etc) undermines the public legitimacy of university science and weakens the fabric of scientific training and practice. The article proposes that the university’s main purpose must be to provide a recognized neutral, autonomous agency of rigorous, disinterested investigation and scientific education, which constitutes a necessary condition for an enlightened liberal democracy: an informed, capable and critical citizenry.

Keywords: Academic freedom, basic research, higher education, innovation, Humboldt, research policy, science studies.
The Demise of the Classical University

In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, Azar Gat has convincingly argued that there is good reason to question the standard assumption that the inherent desirability of liberal democracy or its supposed economic efficiency constitutes a guarantee of its continued success and proliferation (Gat 2007). To the contrary, he argues, the reason for the failures of autocratic capitalist regimes earlier, as well as the triumph of leading liberal democracies, must be considered also in terms that have nothing to do with form of government, but rather accidents of history, geographical and demographic factors. His conclusion is that authoritarian capitalist regimes such as Russia and China might well prove to be equally or more efficient at producing wealth than liberal democracies, and thereby also possess a strong appeal to developing countries, pose a political as well as economic challenge for established liberal democracies.

This aspect of globalization has already had a palpable effect on the university, one of the most important institutions of liberal democracy. This development has three elements. First of all, the Humboldtian ideal of the unity of research and teaching has been in practice scrapped in favour of a division of labour, the function of which is to produce more efficiently: patents and citations, in the case of research; highly skilled labourers, in the case of teaching. Second, this division of labour is necessary insofar as the university is seen primarily as an economic motor for the region (understood locally for smaller colleges and nationally for the major universities). The classical ideals of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*, the academic equivalents to free speech and civil rights in liberal democracies, are eroded as they constitute impediments to achieving the market ideals of efficiency in production and distribution of goods (goods here understood as more engineers and fewer humanists among students, for example; patents and technical applications instead of *Bildung* and basic research.). The goals of New Public Management are achieved through accounting systems devised in the private sector to monitor direct measurable effects. As a consequence, the long-term ideals of education and science (seen as two sides of the same activity) for the betterment of the individual and the society, which does not lend itself to this sort of accountancy, is regarded merely as a failure to produce. Third, to the extent that the university is seen to have a responsibility beyond serving the economic needs of the county or country, this responsibility is interpreted in terms of political ends (the humanities and social sciences can provide, for example, ideological arguments for desired goals: ethnic tolerance, gender equality, sustainable development).

Once more, the value of the university is seen in terms of measurable results, independently of the specific aim of the classical university, its basic mission, in which the value of scientific study was its content, how it was performed, not the results at which it arrived. The university of our day is concerned first and fore-
most with the production of things: degrees, citations, innovations. The classical university was originally conceived as a place where one formed, or produced, a certain kind of person: someone capable of sound judgement in, for instance, political issues. The deterioration of the idea of the university poses a danger to science and to liberal democracy. The risk for science is that it cannot justify itself without recourse to its products, seen in economic terms (jobs for its students, innovations and citations for its faculty). This reduces its aims to those of any actor on the market. At the same time, democracy itself is associated with the market, rather than with a society of informed citizens. The results of the university bereft of its essential mission, in political terms, would be technocratic rule of an uncritical populace of consumers, not a civil society.

It seems to me that one of the main responsibilities of researchers and teachers in the cultural sciences is to take notice of what recent developments in their own backyard, the university, may have for unforeseen consequences beyond the academy. In the words of R.G. Collingwood:

The fate of European science and European civilization is at stake. The gravity of the peril lies especially in the fact that so few recognize any peril to exist. When Rome was in danger, it was the cackling of the sacred geese that saved the Capitol. I am only a professorial goose, consecrated with a cap and gown and fed at a college table; but cackling is my job, and cackle I will. (Collingwood 1940/1998: 343)

### The Birth of the Innovative University

In Sweden, an agency was founded in 2001, the name of which is derived from a specific view of the aim and purpose of research: Vinnova, the “Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems”. In short, the agency was founded with the explicit purpose of promoting an innovations-system approach and cluster-theory in research policy. The agency both supports economically oriented research and promotes a specific set of ideals concerning what constitutes social, economic and intellectual value. The most striking thing about Vinnova is that it is the product of consensus across party lines and throughout different sectors of society as to what science is and should be, a consensus that is all the more striking because it is so deeply problematic.¹

The ideals represented by Vinnova are in no way unique to that agency; rather, that the agency was formed is merely a symptom of the pervasiveness of the agenda of which it is a part (Eklund 2007; Miettinen 2002). One of the most basic assumptions in current research policy, in Sweden as in the rest of Europe, is that there exists an intimate relationship between academic excellence and “innovation”. In fields of research where technical applications have a clear commercial value, such as biotechnology and information science, this assumption poses some challenges, but is nonetheless in harmony with the goals of technical development. (see Bok 2003, pp. 1-17) What is problematic is rather the generalization
from the specific purposes, methods and practices of research and development centres to science as a whole. In short, we need more serious discussion about what it means for the future of science and higher education to eradicate the difference between fundamental research and teaching, on the one hand, and the production of patents and products, on the other, by means of economic policy. In this essay, I will argue that the picture of scientific inquiry peddled by policymakers in Europe is misleading, and constitutes a direct threat to the welfare of the scientific enterprise as such, and ultimately to the society which is thought to reap its benefits. (There may well also be good reason to question to what extent these ideals are ultimately compatible with the classical liberal notion of free enterprise, but that is another issue. See Svensson 2008).

When one raises the sorts of criticisms that I will be making here, it is common that one is accused of romanticizing or idealizing the free academy; therefore, it must be admitted at the outset that the classical ideals of science associated with the model of the Humboldtian university were, in fact, ideals and indeed, as with all ideals worth striving for, rarely if ever realized in full. Yet this is precisely its virtue. Goals that are realizable to such an extent that one can measure with precision how well they are being met are, by definition, not ideals. An ideal is something which guides behavior by not being fully realizable in practice. In point of fact, to replace classical academic ideals with measurable outcomes and results (such as examination frequency or number of citations) is to lower our ambitions - in the name of “excellence”.

The ideals associated with Wilhelm von Humboldt in the early 19th century became the blueprint for the (then) new university in Berlin and later many other universities in Germany, the United States, and throughout the world. The Humboldtian ideal is characterized by two essential features. One is the unity of teaching and research. Research and teaching are to be conducted by the same people, as two sides of the same activity. Since lecturers lecture about their research, or alternatively, since researchers explain their research in lectures, teaching is always about ongoing research, its form and/or its content. Thus the Humboldtian university is decidedly theoretical by definition. It is not primarily concerned with practical applications, technical skills or vocational training. The aim of university teaching is to educate and cultivate in a general sense, as distinct from occupational training. The second characteristic of the Humboldtian university is academic freedom. This entails freedom for the professor to decide on which topics to do research and which material to teach. But it also entails the freedom of the student to decide on his own program of study and work at his own pace. There were no standard course plans or employability requirements for classes at the Humboldtian university. That sort of things was rather associated with trade schools.
A more recent formulation of academic ideals is sociologist Robert Merton’s statement of the guiding norms for science, called CUDOS, which he saw as the implicitly binding values of the scientific community. They are: **Communalism**, which entails that scientific results are the common property of the entire scientific community writ large; **Universalism**, which means that all scientists can contribute to science regardless of race, nationality or gender; **Disinterestedness**, which demands that scientists’ results should not be entangled with their personal beliefs, private interests or political causes. (In short, scientists should have a scientific interest in science, not a personal interest in their findings); **Originality**, an characteristic that was added later on by the physicist and theorist of science John Ziman, states that research must add something new or different to our knowledge and understanding; **Scepticism** requires that scientific claims be exposed to critical scrutiny before being accepted. ²

One can interpret both Merton’s norms and Humboldt’s idea of the university as regulative ideals, insofar as they were thought to express what all serious science has had its aim, whether or not the aims were achieved in practice, either by the individual or the scientific community. What made science science was this set of shared ideals, a kind scientific self-image, as a litmus test for how well we, as scientists and scholars, were working in accordance with our highest ambitions. In this sense, the academy was autonomous, that is, self-regulating.

But since the 1980’s, policy in the US and Europe has been concerned with auditing not the scientific value of scientific work, but its economic and political value. Mertonian norms have been jettisoned in favour of a regional, institutional and commercial picture of science, in which it is seen in terms of dubious entities such as the “Triple Helix”, “clusters” and “innovations systems”. “Collaboration”, which formerly had rather distasteful political connotations, has become a *sine qua non* for “excellence”. In this respect, the autonomy of science, academic freedom, is seen as constituting a hinder to achieving excellence. The freedom to form research questions is increasingly circumscribed, via economic steering, to the freedom to formulate methods for solving policy-defined problems (assimilation of immigrants, alternatives to fossil fuel, etc.). In higher education, the freedom to develop a course of education is increasingly, again by way of economic incentives, limited to the freedom to design courses that would attract students and meet the labour needs of industry. Politicians and policy-makers have succeeded in this radical transformation of the very notion of science with the enthusiastic support of industry, as well as the engineering community and even a number of labour unions. (Widmalm 2008) The transformation was not based on what we know about scientific discovery and progress from, say, studies in the history of science.

More than mere agreement, there appears to be a sense of urgency in the unending flow of proclamations about the need for basic research to converge with
R&D. In what respect basic research remains basic when its questions are formulated in advance in terms of direct application, patents and/or economic benefits is, however, unclear. To the contrary, these calls are in essence a demand to filter resources from fundamental research and broad academic training to short-term corporate and political interests. Yet if they were to be heeded without reservation, the Swedish university could no longer claim to underwrite the bill of rights signed in 1988 by the vice-chancellors of Europe’s universities, the Magna Charta Universitatum. The question is how many signatories would be left.

Yet the question has to be asked: what is lost, really, if the university were to become an extended arm of politics and industry? Why shouldn’t the idea and practice of science change, along with everything else? What’s wrong with prioritizing our scientific interests and concentrating our resources and energies in the direction of perceived needs? In the following sections, I will try to point to possible dangers. I see these as falling into two groups. The one group has to do with the future of science and scholarship as such; the other has to do with the future of a culture in which science as an ideal of non-partisan, disinterested search for knowledge for the benefit of humanity (as opposed to a certain nation, a certain group, a certain set of economic interests) is no longer a cornerstone of civil society.

With regard to the first question, there is good historical reason to reflect critically upon the politically popular portrayal of the classical university as a huge, plodding sauropod that inefficiently consumes enormous resources and is destined to be replaced in the struggle for existence by smaller, quick-footed and more adaptable forms. The first university still in existence, the University of Bologna, was founded in 1088. According to a Carnegie Policy Study, of 66 corporative entities existing between the 16th century and the middle of the twentieth, 52 were universities. No businesses have displayed a similar resilience, a comparable capacity to adapt to change, or to interact with a new society, under new conditions. The ideal of scientific autonomy is arguably an important factor explaining the continuity of the university throughout the upheavals of the last two centuries. If we transform it into the extended arm of industrial policy, we do irrevocable damage to the eco-system of independent, critical thought. The free academy may well be a necessary condition for sustainable development, both in science and in society. In any case, truly groundbreaking research, excellence as a scientific ideal and not an empty phrase to fill with whatever industry or politicians want at the time, is, as the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos has argued, something that shows itself in hindsight. No one has ever succeeded in formulating a sure-fire, risk-free guarantee for scientific fecundity, novelty or reliability or criterion for determining which of these is most important. It seems unlikely that bureaucrats in Stockholm or Brussels are equipped to formulate and prioritize such criteria when philosophers, historians, sociologists and scientists have failed.
As for the role of science in society, it should be noticed that the notion that science can and should be directed in specific ways, on the basis of political and economic goals and interests has been tried at least twice before: in the Soviet Union and in Nazi Germany. It was in response to these that Merton formulated his scientific norms (Gustavsson 2008:18); Merton called Nazi science “anti-science”. The fact that modern research policy is capitalist rather than socialist does not make it less totalitarian, and it does not make it more scientific. Rather, by stressing the need for funnelling funding into economically productive fields, policy-makers are, in the words of the historian of science Sven Widmalm, “in effect making the national system for research into a money-laundering business, transferring tax-payer’s money into support for local industries” (Widmalm 2008:269). And just as nobody can foretell when and in what context the next great scientific breakthrough will occur, nobody can say for certain what society will be like or will need in fifty or a hundred or two hundred years. If there were a group in a better position than others to analyze and understand social, scientific and historical developments such as to be able to make reasonably informed guesses, it would be historians, political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists. But their research receives precious little funding. (After all, where are the immediate economic benefits or industrial applications?)

The Rhetoric of Free Enterprise and the Free Academy

Science has been seen as holding promise for the realization of many social, political and economic goals since at least the 16th century (Shapin 1996). But rarely, if ever, have the possibilities and potential of research been the source of so much economic planning as today. In the words of the OECD: ”In the knowledge-based economy, science and technology and their applications in industry and communications are major sources of economic growth and well-being.” (http://oecd.org/about/0.2337) In Sweden, a slew of government-sponsored studies, policy documents, propositions, proposals have been produced, disseminated, discussed, debated and implemented during the last decade which express the ambition to utilize science as an instrument of economic growth. In 2005, the Swedish government presented a research policy proposal, Research for a Better Life (Forskning för ett bättre liv), with the pronouncement that ”in order to realize the vision of Sweden becoming the most competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy in Europe, Swedish research must continue to keep up with the world’s best.” (Prop. 2004/05:80: 9) The proposal expresses great confidence in science to deliver technological solutions that will generate jobs for Sweden’s citizens and profits for its industries and businesses. It also explicitly renounces the classical scientific and academic idea that there is or can be a tension between basic, interdisciplinary science and demand-driven, applied R&D. More recently, in Re-
sources for Quality (Resurser för kvalitet, SOU 2007:81) and Research Funding: Quality and Relevance (Forskningsfinansiering - kvalitet och relevans, SOU 2008:30), two government-commissioned reports, the investigators argue for a market-model for university funding, in which the state would no longer play the role of guarantor of basic research that may not be of immediate interest or use, that is, which is not "competitive" or in demand on the open market. Rather, all these documents have in common an emphasis on increased competition between universities, but also between departments, research groups, and even individual researchers. The idea behind increased competition is naturally to promote first-class research, and thereby reap its technological and economic rewards. Thus everyone is in agreement that first-class research is important; if there is room for discussion, it rather concerns how to achieve it.

One standard approach is to play the reasonable middle-ground, and acknowledge that the university has two compatible responsibilities: to supply industry and society with answers to pressing questions, but also to conduct basic research and maintain academic standards of scientific independence and neutrality. In an op-ed article (Dagens Nyheter, 20 February 2008), the Swedish Minister of Research, Lars Leijonborg, argues for the importance of basic research for social development, and insists upon the need to raise its status and reinforce its structure. While the authors of the reports cited above see salvation in the marketplace of science, where the role of the state is substantially diminished and faculty, research groups and universities compete with each other for students and funding, the minister wishes to emphasize the value of basic research and see to it that it receives the resources it requires. That the minister displays concern for the future of basic research would seem to be especially reassuring at a time when politicians and industry seem to demand almost instantaneous results and solutions for the perceived technical, practical and political needs of the day. Yet one wonders how deeply he has considered what constitutes basic research: in what, if anything, the essential difference between basic research and technical development lies. The answer is not self-evident.

A possible definition of basic research would be that it is merely academic freedom applied primarily to research (rather than teaching). In other words, basic research is research conducted by scientists and scholars, for scientific and scholarly reasons, and not primarily with an eye toward some specific non-scientific end (that is, not intended to be used in non-scientific contexts immediately). Given this definition, one might be inclined to think that basic or free research thrives best in the kind of competitive atmosphere proposed by the propositions and policy documents mentioned earlier. After all, wouldn't successful competition in the free market of ideas be both an incentive and a guarantee of quality and creativity in research? In what follows, I wish to suggest that this common-sense way of formulating the question conceals a number of gravely problematic as-
sumptions concerning the nature of science and the idea of academic training and research.5

One problem with the idea that excellent scientific research is best promoted through increased competition is that it implicitly assumes that the issue of quality is tied to production and distribution. Much policy today regards the university as essentially a certain kind of enterprise, the business concept of which is to produce and distribute knowledge as efficiently as possible. The "shareholders", in this case, the Swedish taxpayers via the state, receive "dividends" in the form of increased job opportunities and tax revenues that can be translated into public goods, all of which are expected to be created along with new products and applications (in particular, those designated "innovations"). In order to make production and distribution more efficient, the majority of documents arrive at something like the following: 1) the university system should produce scientific knowledge of high quality; 2) the product (knowledge) should be delivered as quickly as possible to its users (industry, county councils, etc) to be converted into commercial or other applications; and 3) there ought to be a central authority or set of authorities to oversee (1) and (2). In this way, it is thought, the state can guarantee the quality, understood as utility, of the knowledge produced. Concepts such as "quality control", "strategic investments", "trade marking", "cutting-edge research", "target groups", "market adjustment" and the like proliferate in the attempt to find means of controlling how academic knowledge is produced and disseminated, to ensure its usefulness. One difficulty, however, is that the usefulness of scientific knowledge in the deepest sense is far more difficult to plan and gage than those outside of the academy (and unfortunately, a fair number within it) seem prepared to acknowledge.

It might well be that this deeper sense no longer has a place in our thinking about the university and its purpose. This discourse of academic excellence constitutes a contemporary textbook example of neo-liberal governmentality, in the Foucauldian sense. The explicit attempt here is to create apparatuses, institutions, agencies, systems and services the aim of which is to inculcate a certain mentality within a population (in this case, university teachers and researchers): we are to see ourselves as free and enterprising, autonomous actors in an open market, and to behave accordingly. Thus the control exercised is intended to create a mentality among academics, a form of intellectual life, not through governance in the sense of the imposition of rules, regulations, laws and mandates, but through structuring the field of academic activity in such a way as to ensure that academics govern themselves in such a way as to attain the desired effect in their behavior. Ideally, we will all think in terms of citations, the international publication market and rankings as the objective goals for, and proof of, our intellectual activity (rather than, say, the search for truth).6
To see how this discourse functions, there are certain recurring features of the thinking that permeates research policy in Europe today that should be noticed. Most significantly and pervasively, there is a tendency to ignore or at least belittle the basic difference between the idea of academic research, on the one hand, and the aims of demand-driven research, on the other. The idea of the modern university, “the free academy”, requires that the scientific investigation and training, which are its unified raison d’être, shall to the greatest extent possible be conducted with no regard to the extra-scientific preferences, aims and goals of interest groups, political alignments or economic interests. To state the matter paradoxically, the purpose of the university is to guarantee that it will not take into consideration the pressures and demands placed on it by its stakeholders, i.e., those who pay for it and who stand to benefit from its results. A necessary condition for the success of this odd construction is that university teaching and research are seen as professions, whence it would be absurd to demand that their criteria and methods should be assessed or designed by laymen. The whole point of professionalism is that its practitioners are deemed capable of making judgments which those not trained in the profession and deemed competent by its peers cannot. Thus the state pays the university to maintain its neutrality with regard to the science it conducts: the university is expected to strive toward complete independence with regard to how it formulates its research questions, which methods it uses to investigate these questions, and the results at which it arrives. It shall be recalled, as stated earlier, that is only an ideal and, as such, has rarely, if ever, been achieved in practice. Nonetheless, it is this ideal that has guided all serious scientific investigation since antiquity. The idea of business, of “free enterprise”, is in this respect the opposite of the free academy. The idea of business is to develop commercial solutions with regard to the interests, demands and preferences of the society in which it operates. In business, as opposed to science, the customer is always right.

The first and primary principle in the Magna Charta Universitatum, the European universities’ bill of rights, states:

“The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.” (emphasis added).

The results of a study of a certain commercial product can be problematic for certain economic interest groups; the results of a study on certain cultural patterns may be offensive to certain ideological alignments; the results of a study of certain policy decisions can stir political agitation, and so forth. But such reactions are, or should be, of no relevance, academically speaking. The point of publicly financed, state-secured appointments of university faculty after scientific assess-
ment is to guarantee that academic researchers and teachers should be able to render results publicly, “speak truth to power”, without fear of reprisal. Only with this guarantee in place can the university assure that it strives to meet the needs of all of society. This is the crucial part of what it means for it to be autonomous, that is, independent of all political and economic interests. This is the quintessence of the idea of science, of the mission of university research and teaching. This is how it qua university can best serve society at large.

In free enterprise, the opposite applies. The extent to which a business fulfils its idea, i.e., meets the needs of the society in which it functions, is never an internal affair. Rather, the value of what it does is by definition something decided by others, outside of the business. Suppliers decide whether or not they deem the company credit-worthy, sufficiently interesting from the point of view of development, or production, or logistics. Customers, other companies or individual clients, decide if the company produces goods and services that fit with their respective financial structures and needs. How well the company succeeds is thus a matter of what potential and existing clients and customers think of their way of producing and delivering their product, it is the clients and customers who determine the value of what the company does (Håkansson & Waluszewski 2007): this is the nature of competition in free enterprise. It is here that we must notice that what applies to the market cannot apply to the university without changing essentially and irrevocably its meaning and mission. If science is tailor-made to meet the needs of a specific clientele, if its value is a matter of popularity or public opinion, then it has no specific task qua university.

One might compare academic freedom with freedom of speech in this respect. The aim of legislating the latter in liberal democracies is to ensure the right to speak out, even when, or rather especially when, what one wants to say is precisely something that others do not wish to hear. Civil rights of this sort were originally formulated as a necessary safeguard against authoritarian attempts to stifle individual rights; in other words, the assumption behind the establishment of rights is the recognition that there exists a tension in society between different interests, necessitating laws that guarantee this right. Without this pressure, such legislation would be meaningless. One might go as far as to say that the legislation of such rights in itself constitutes a recognition that they are always inevitably under siege. Similarly, the point of a special article in national law guaranteeing academic freedom for teachers and researchers at the university is to guard against the exploitation of university teaching and academic researchers by interests outside of the university (political interests, economic interests, ideological interests, etc). It is this tension between the ideal of the university as a neutral agency of research and teaching and the temptation on the part of various elements in society to use it for its own ends that gives meaning to all references to academic freedom such as formulated in the Magna Charta. If we fail to recognize this es-
sentential tension, academic freedom becomes an empty phrase, an ornament to make university research more prestigious and classy, a sentimental tribute to the heydays of the university as an indispensable institution for a civil society.

**The Industrial University**

How can the university interact with society and fulfil its function without jeopardizing internal criteria of scientific quality? The first and most crucial step is to recognize that there exists a tension between the idea and ideals of scientific investigation, on the one hand, and the economic, industrial function of the university, on the other. This tension between the demands of science and societal and political expectations has always existed and, one may hope, always will. It’s a sign that research and teaching are bold and vital, that the open, critical quest for knowledge is still the guiding principle of the academy. If this essential tension is suppressed, there is simply no reason for there to be universities. If ”the free pursuit of knowledge” is in fact allied with corporations or organizations with an interest in steering the direction of research, then it cannot be the economic responsibility of the taxpayer or the moral responsibility of the citizen to support it.

Two possible objections to the claims above come to mind. First, don’t we, the academic community, have a responsibility to our fellow citizens to be engaged in the problems of our day? Shouldn’t we do what we can, with our special competence as scientists and scholars, help to do something to stave global warming and reduce its consequences, cure illnesses and save lives, contribute to a healthier lifestyle in the industrialized world, investigate the causes of war, criminality and poverty and propose methods of reducing them, and so forth? Is it not our responsibility to do our share, especially given that the European university is publicly financed? The short answer is, naturally, yes. But this is only to say that the knowledge we produce should be made available and put to use when and where it can be used. The question of how it is put to use, when it should prove useful, to whom and in what circumstances is not something that we can foretell, and it is not part of science as science, but rather of science seen primarily as technological development.

A second objection is that all references today to the Humboldtian university are merely nostalgic; the university has *de facto* been integrated into a political economic system from which it cannot remain separate without serious damage, if not outright destruction, of both. But a critique of present need not be interpreted as a call for a return to the past; as Nietzsche so wisely pointed out, man is not a crab. There is no return to Humboldt. What we can do, however, is recall the spirit, not the letter, of Humboldt’s reforms. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, Humboldt saw the need to reform the university, not only administratively, but in its very conception. His reforms were intended to make the university
something of use to mankind by entrusting its functions to the scientific spirit of its faculty and the diligence of the students. Vocational schools, he thought, were almost damaging to students, by depriving them of the possibility of widening and deepening their understanding at too early an age. This is an important point, because the pressure toward the “vocationalization” of the university is seemingly ever-present and nearly irresistible. This following remarks, written over a hundred years ago, are hauntingly perspicuous as a description of the contemporary university:

But the present age is, as aforesaid, supposed to be an age, not of whole mature and harmonious personalities, but of labour of the greatest possible common utility. That means, however, that men have to be adjusted to the purposes of the age so as to be ready for employment as soon as possible: they must labour in the factories of the general good before they are mature – indeed so that they shall not become mature – for this would be a luxury which would deprive the “labour market” of a great deal of the workforce[...] Believe me: if men are to labour and be useful in the factory of science before they are mature, science will soon be ruined just as effectively as the slaves thus employed too early. I regret the need to make use of the jargon of the slave-owner and employer of labour to describe things which in themselves ought to be thought of as free of utility and raised above the necessities of life; but the words “factory”, “labour market”, “supply”, “making profitable” and whatever auxiliary verbs egoism now employs, come unbidden to the lips when one wishes to describe the most recent generation of men of learning. Sterling mediocrity grows even more mediocre, science ever more profitable in the economic sense. (Nietzsche 1874/1999: 99)

By applying economic criteria to scientific thinking, the discourse of academic excellence has actually introduced a new concept of quality (namely, quantity), whereby actual academic quality in scholarship and instruction are diminished in the service of mass production (of degrees, citations, “qualified labour”, etc). What we need to do now is re-conceive how the university can fulfil its mission, let us call it the mission of intellectual freedom (as distinct from freedom of choice in the economic sense), in our day. Humboldt’s problem situation is not ours. But we can learn from how he created something new (in relation to the Church, the State, the Napoleonic laws, etc). In the same way, we can learn something from Merton’s critique of Soviet and Nazi science, even if we do not subscribe to his CUDOS as relevant or accurate today. We can analyze our own situation, in the spirit of critique and self-critique, the basic requirements of enlightened thinking.

In “The Age of the World Picture”, Martin Heidegger defines reflection as “the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called into question.” (Heidegger 1938: 115) In the essay quoted, he goes on to reflect, in the aforementioned sense, upon the notion of science and links it, in our day, with the notion of research (as distinct from the *doctrina* and *scientia* of the Middle Ages, and from the Greek *episteme*). One of the essential characteristics of modern research, he says, is that
the extension and consolidation of the institutional character of the sciences se-
cures methodological unity and objectivity. Thus science becomes an ongoing
activity or industry (\textit{Betrieb}), in two senses. In the first sense, which he seems to
think is the proper and adequate sense for scientific inquiry, science comes into its
own: “The scholar disappears. He is succeeded by the research man who is en-
gaged in research projects. These, rather than the cultivating of erudition, lend to
his work its atmosphere of incisiveness. The research man no longer needs a li-
brary at home. Moreover, he is constantly on the move. He negotiates meeting and
collects information at congresses. He contracts for commissions with publishers.
The latter now determine along with him which books must be written.” (Heideg-
ger 1938: 124). This might sound critical, but Heidegger contrasts this sort of re-
search, which he finds in the natural sciences but also in historiographical and
archaeological research, with disciplines that “still remain mired in mere erudi-
tion” (the humanities). He remarks further that to the extent that modern research-
ners take seriously the actual form of their science, the more ably and willingly
they will offer themselves, as a collective, to the common good and “return to the
public anonymity of all work useful to society.”

But there is another sense of industry, that of “mere business”, rather, mere
“busyness” (\textit{des blossen Betriebs}) or “bustle”. In this kind of ongoing activity,
science forgets its point and purpose, leaving it behind as a given; it does not
bother with the confirmation and verification of its results and calculations of
these, but “simply chases after such results and calculations” (Heidegger 1938:
137). Thus, he argues, precisely because scientific research must be an ongoing
activity, because its self-perpetuation is its essence, “mere business” must at all
times be combated: “the more completely research becomes ongoing activity, and
in that way mounts to its proper level of performance, the more constantly does
the danger of mere industriousness grow within it. Finally, a situation arises in
which the distinction between ongoing activity and busyness not only becomes
unrecognizable, but has become unreal as well.” (Heidegger 1938: 137). This is
the situation we find ourselves in today, of which I will offer examples in the next
section.

\textbf{Science in the Marketplace and the Republic of Ideas}

The tension between the university’s internal criteria and demands and desires
from actors from without (the state, political groups, the church, etc) has always
existed. We have every reason to hope that it will continue to exist. It should be
seen as something positive, a clear indication that the academy is alive and well;
that research and teaching are healthy, vigorous and unafraid; that we are indus-
trious and not merely busy. It means that the serious, open, critical quest for
knowledge and understanding of the world, regardless of whatever debate to
which it might give rise, is still the mission of the university, and the call of its faculty. If this tension is stifled, the university no longer has a mission that distinguishes it from any other institution that conducts teaching or training (such as consultancy firms or trade schools) or research (pharmaceutical companies, the automobile industry, the information technology industry). Why should taxpayers finance a university when in point of fact, its employees are not servants of the people, but allied with specific interests?

What is worrisome is that representatives for the academy, those responsible for its organization and financing, neglect, conceal or even explicitly reject that this tension between the academy and interests outside of it is something requiring vigilance. They seem not to notice, or not to care, that “collaboration” with industry, for example, logically requires that there be two distinct entities: a university, on the one hand, and a company, or companies, on the other. The more entangled the two are, the less reasonable it is to call the phenomenon “collaboration”. The university becomes rather a supplier of resources (labs, personnel, equipment) for industrial development. Yet it has become increasingly common to embrace this vision as the point and purpose of the university.

A recent Swedish example is the so-called Radio Center Gävle – Center for Radio Frequency Measurement Technology, a collaboration between Gävle University, the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Gävle County Council and Ericsson Radio Systems and over twenty other corporations. According to Claes Beckman, Professor of Electronics and one of the key figures at the centre, collaboration is and should be the highest priority: “The college must collaborate, collaborate, and collaborate in order to supply the region with suitable competence.”(Wall 2008: 4-5). Beckman argues that research is not a goal in itself, nor a primary goal, for a scientific community such as a university. “Basic research” is, in this sense, a myth. Without collaboration, there is no science: “You can’t read your way to knowledge. You have to do it yourself, be where it’s happening, in order to learn.” Further, research is always just a means to an end. Research must contribute to regional development, and researchers ought to work primarily for the benefit of the region (in this case, Gävleborg county). In his view, the aim of the university is to attract young people, and give them training that will lead to good jobs and induce them to settle down in the region. Moreover, the college should see to it that “they have a good time together, enjoy themselves, move in together and raise a family: that’s economic growth.” The Radio Center laboratory, housed in Ericsson’s Gävle headquarters, is about as close a collaboration as one can imagine, and is conceived to achieve these ends. Instruments are purchased with funding from the corporations involved, the city and county, and the university itself. Funding for research comes from the various research councils and agencies, which in turn rely heavily and in some cases exclusively on public funding. According to Beckman, seven eighths of the centre’s budget is externally
financed. (The various techniques and instruments developed are not publicly owned.)

Whatever one thinks of such collaborations, it is disturbing that a representative of the academy publicly proclaims that no valuable knowledge can be derived “merely from reading”; that the production of knowledge should be geared toward a specific community with specific interests, and not toward increasing the common store of scientific insight; that the scientific enterprise is just a means towards achieving political and economic ends.

To call into question the view that the university need not aim at universality, that knowledge is always and everywhere a means and never and end in itself, or that there is no value in purely “theoretical” understanding cited above, is not to suggest that the “old academy” lived up to its stated ideals of universality, integrity and intellectual openness and vitality. One might argue, for instance, that it as a rule regularly fails to live up to principle 3 of the Magna Charta: “Rejecting intolerance and always open to dialogue, the university is an ideal meeting-ground for teachers capable of imparting their knowledge and well equipped to develop it […].” We all know that the university is not the boiling cauldron of critical thinking from different points of view that it ought to be. Powerful alliances between different networks, disciplines and research groups will often employ the rhetoric of scientific standards and academic consensus to stifle novel, dissident or simply different kinds of research, rather than engaging them in an open critical discussion. In practice, a dogmatic, self-satisfied scholastic orientation can enjoy an extremely high academic standing within a discipline by virtue of coalitions and strategies, rather than by virtue of intrinsic value. Here there is most certainly room for self-criticism and self-examination. There are good reasons why students as well as administrators and policy-makers want to hold the academy accountable. The problem is that the means that have been introduced are likely to have the opposite effect. Citations in highly ranked journals, for instance, tend to confirm and reinforce standard models, mainstream theories and conventional methods. It often takes decades for novel ideas or bold hypotheses to receive general recognition. (See Altbach (2006).

Thus to defend the ideal of the classical university, the ideal of the unity of teaching and research for the good of mankind, rather than of this region or that region, this county or that country, is not to defend the old, pompous academy with its robes and arrogance and class privileges. That university is, at any rate, quickly dying off. It became sclerotic, with its senile anecdotes about legendary lectures by great men fluent in thirty tongues, heated debates between Professor X and Privatdozent Y at the infamous seminar in March, 1958, etc. It became a dusty relic of itself, a collection of dead forms, emptied of vitality and meaning. Thus it was seen by many, perhaps especially the students, as something that no longer commanded the respect that it assumed it deserved; it became in the eyes
of many, and with some justification, simply ridiculous and unnecessary. But this
is simply to say that it no longer could live up to its own ideals, that these ideals
were no longer the principles and values by which its teachers and researchers
lived. Science as a calling was reduced to science as a paid hobby and, by the
1960’s, the students sensed it. But the modern bureaucratized university, with its
perpetual assessment exercises, economic guidelines, strategy documents and the
like turn the republic of ideas into a homogenous, international conglomerate
whose employees are just that, traders in the marketplace, rather than citizens of
the republic of ideas (with the freedom and responsibility, the rights and duties,
that citizenship entails).

The strategies promoted by policy-makers and university administrators (and as
we’ve seen, even certain members of the professoriat) assume that we can know
in advance where science is going, what ideas and which methods will "pay off",
either scientifically or economically, in the long run. In this respect, the policies
and strategies themselves do not exhibit the characteristics of being "open to dia-
logue” or committed to stringent testing of its assumptions. To the contrary, they
have rather the character of articles of faith, as emphasized by Nobel prize-winner
Arvid Carlsson and Swedish MP Finn Bengtsson:

[…] the mantra among today’s professional pundits concerning the organization and
financing of research, constantly stressing the notion of "strong research environ-
ments”, bears witness to a lack on insight into and reflection about how unique re-
search results and their applications actually arise […]. It is most likely the case that
the presence of a "strong research environment”, the concept of which usually im-
plcitly includes the need for a top-down organization and standardization of
thought, to the contrary could have killed the further development of ideas of inno-
vative character […]. When this sort of idea is first hatched, it is by one or a few
people and hardly by a collective research-strong environment. Often enough, the
idea itself is at that point in a far too delicate phase to overcome resistance so that
the thought can be thought through and come to the point where convincing evi-
dence for the thesis can be generated and development toward useful applications
can take place. (Carlsson & Bengtsson 2008)

In short, strategy models benefit neither innovative scientific thinking nor social
needs. Basic research, on the other hand, unencumbered by managerialism, is a
necessary pre-requisite for all technical developments, applications and innova-
tions. As Tord Ekelöf, Professor in Elementary Particle Physics at Uppsala Uni-
versity has pointed out: "Who experienced the need to be able to generate electric-
ical power and distribute it in society before the fundamental laws of electricity
were discovered? […] Who formulated the need for radio or television before the
laws of electro-magnetic radiation were discovered? […] The needs arose, or
could be formulated, first after basic research had come so far that a technical de-
velopment could be discerned.” (Uppsala Nya Tidning, 10 March 2008). Exam-
les of this kind proliferate in the history of science.

A particularly telling example of how basic research can be radically trans-
formed into useful applications can be gleaned from the pre-history of information
technology. Frege and Russell, both philosophers and logicians, and Hilbert, a mathematician, worked independently of each other at the turn of the twentieth century, each concerned with establishing the basic foundations of mathematics. This sort of project belongs properly to philosophy, i.e. the project was purely theoretical. Neither Hilbert, nor Frege nor Russell were concerned with technical solutions for industry, or even primarily with applications in mathematics. But as a matter of historical fact, a result of this project was a highly useful discovery: formalisation. This discovery made possible the development of formal languages, recursion theory and algorithm theory, which in turn form the foundation of computer technology. Frege and Russell did not have World of Warcraft or eBay in mind when they attempted to work out the foundations of mathematics. They were engaged in philosophical reflection on mathematics, and their project, their aim, was philosophical. Thus in retrospect it is possible to identify a concrete historical link between theoretical philosophy, on the one hand, and all commercial solutions developed within the information technology industry, on the other: but who will provide society or industry with knowledge the use of which cannot be determined or assessed in advance, if academic knowledge production is steered towards what seems beneficial from the vantage point of short-term interests and goals?

Perhaps the most impressive example of the gap between motives and expectations, on the one hand, and actual applications, on the other, is that of classical mechanics. For Newton, the point of the study of physics was to achieve clarity with regard to the mechanisms of nature. In other words, Newton’s studies were devoted, in the first instance, to “natural philosophy”. One must consider his achievement to be a paradigmatic case of “basic research” in the deepest sense: Newton wanted to determine the essential mechanisms of nature, once and for all. The later discovery of the theory of relativity showed, however, that the question was not resolved once and for all. Newton’s theory did not constitute the ultimate theoretical description of nature as he had hoped. But it did turn out to be one of the most powerful scientific tools ever invented, and showed itself to be useful in applications which Newton could never have imagined. It is rather characteristic for the great scientific discoveries that the greater the discovery, the less it was understood at the time how it could be used. That, if anything, is a strong utilitarian argument for allowing researchers to formulate their own questions and fumble along with their own attempts at answering them. No citation index in the world, however sublimely contrived, will tell us in advance where to find the next Newton. To the contrary, the more we try to control and predict scientific innovation, the less likely that our science will be capable of producing a Newton.

The risk Europe is taking in trying to control what knowledge is produced, where and when, is that the kind of research that is not deemed marketable, relevant, useful, tactical, desirable or interesting just now simply won’t occur. In the
long run, we will lose many great opportunities for scientific discovery. We will lose potential gains, both economically and scientifically, if we are not willing to take risks. In science as in sports, there is always uncertainty, a risk of failure: no pain, no gain. The majority of new businesses fail after the first year, the majority of new commercial inventions never find a use, but end up in a curiosa cabinet. How is it that something that neither scientists nor businesses are capable of determining in advance is something that research-policy administrators can so confidently plan and control?

The examples of the philosophical foundations of E-bay and Newton’s metaphysical concerns are not pulled out of a hat. They meant to point to a very serious issue having to do with the status and future of the humanities and social sciences. The university has a mission to support and maintain different scientific traditions, to keep different ways of seeing, studying and understanding our common world alive. A number of these disciplines have grown out of intellectual traditions stretching back a millennium or more, as have a number of the classical disciplines within the natural sciences (such as mathematics and physics) and the professions (law and medicine). In this context, what is to be supported and maintained are not merely “competences” or “areas of expertise”, that can be achieved through strategic investments or political directives. Rather, the disciplines manifest a way of thinking that has taken generations of scholars and scientists to evolve. Nor is it a matter of practical knowledge that is directly tied to the labour market or societal needs. Naturally, it does happen that research and teaching in these subjects happens to be directly useful or in demand in some profession or commercial context; in such cases, there is very good reason to make strategic investments. But such considerations are not what have kept these disciplines alive over the centuries.

What is it then that constitutes the core of research and teaching in disciplines where the utility of the subject is not self-evident? What is the difference between science as a calling and science as a career? The answer has to do with the attitude one takes to one’s subject matter; this is where Humboldtian ideals and Mertonian norms come in. The scientific attitude is one of a personal interest in and commitment to a subject matter or a research problem combined with the conviction that there is an intrinsic value to this form of knowledge being kept alive and available to future generations of researchers, teachers and students (See Rider 2007b). In other words, the goal of scientific thinking is its own further perpetuation. Science, like virtue, is its own reward. The scholarly attitude can be characterized as a sense of duty to see that a particular academic culture, its scientific values, scholarly norms and intellectual standards as much as its objects, theories and methods, continue to develop and be related to a new world and a future science with new challenges and new problems. It is this commitment and this conviction that keeps science going, especially the cultural sciences, despite constant
intervention and control by administrators and policy-makers and ever more meagre resources for teaching. If this commitment and conviction is lost, we will lose with it intellectual traditions and scientific domains which we will not be able to transmit to future generations. History has shown that traditions and cultures are destroyed much more swiftly than they are built. And what is lost here is not something that shows itself in the instant, but rather in what we will be capable or incapable of, as a society and as a culture, as citizens and scientists, for many years to come. And this not only in terms of inventions that will arise or applications that will never come about, but in what sort of society we will have as a result of the teaching the next generation of doctors, lawyers, engineers, administrators, lawyers, teachers, psychologists, politicians, economists, journalists and ministers, as well as researchers, come into contact with during their years at the university.

Change and renewal are important, and nothing says that they must stand in conflict with the idea of science. To the contrary, internationalization, cooperation with organizations and pursuits outside the university, etc. are an important part of the evolution of science, and need not threaten its autonomy. The free academy can even be an extremely important factor in attaining societal goals, precisely because teaching and research are conducted on the academy’s own terms. From this point of view, universities and researchers should most certainly be encouraged in their attempts to relate their activities to the world in which they find themselves. This is what it means for the university to be a vital institution. But if we really want to ensure quality in research and teaching, we should preserve its integrity so that, in the best-case scenario, it maintains a continuity and a tradition that guarantees scientific development not just in ten or twenty years, but in fifty or a hundred, when a new political rhetoric, other economic models and different educational policy trends prevail.8

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Notes
1 The article uses the Swedish university as its primary example, but parallels can be found throughout the European Union as well as North America, Australia and New Zealand. The UK, for example, pioneered the use of metrics in the Academic Assessment Exercise already in
1988 (interestingly, professional societies in England have for the first time issued criticism of the practice this year).

2 See Merton (1973) and Ziman (2000).

3 “För att förverkliga visionen att Sverige skall bli Europas mest konkurrenskraftiga, dynamiska och kunskapssbaserade ekonomi måste svensk forskning fortsätta hålla världsklass.”

4 “Regeringen prioriterar medicinsk forskning” (“The Government Prioritizes Medical Research”).

5 An indication that the minister of research did not actually understand what it was that he was defending in his defence of basic research was his reply to an op-ed article appearing in Svenska Dagbladet which criticized the government’s research policy (SvD, Brännpunkt, 10 November 2008). Leijonborg responded that the “opposition” between basic research and innovation policy was “counterproductive”, a common viewpoint among research policy-makers. (SvD, Brännpunkt, 14 November 2008). But why would the European university chancellors who countersigned the Magna Charta insist so stubbornly upon such a “counterproductive” opposition, namely, the boundary between sovereign basic research and research steered toward innovation? The insistence issues from the recognition that as soon as research is steered by interests outside of science, it ceases to be science. Dirigisme with regard to what research will render which innovations may well be desirable from a politician’s point of view, but it is not at all clear that it works (SvD, Brännpunkt, 24 November 2008).


7 It would behove both research administrators and even members of the academy to remind themselves of the characteristics of science as vocation, especially as articulated by Max Weber in his classic “Science as a Vocation” (Weber 1946).

8 Parts of the article have appeared, in slightly altered versions, in Research Europe, 4 September 2008 (“Ivory Trade”) and 13 November 2008 (“Innovation’s Debt”). A Swedish article with the same themes appeared originally in Kulturella perspektiv, Nr. 2, 2008 under the title “Nyttan av den akademiska friheten” (“The Utility of Academic Freedom”). I would like to thank Steve Fuller, Sverker Gustavsson, Ylva Hasselberg, Alexandra Waluszewski and the participants in the Higher Seminar in Philosophy at Södertörn University College for inspiration, information and critical discussion.

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Schoenberg and the Radical Economies of *Harmonielehre*

By Murray Dineen

**Abstract**

This article examines Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre* as a text shaped by the influence of Central European science and politics. In accord with a severely economical approach to his subject, Schoenberg’s critique of figured bass and chorale harmonization is compared with Ernst Mach’s writings on scientific method. In support of this comparison, the article addresses the role played in Schoenberg’s political development by the Leftist editor and organizer, David J. Bach, one of Schoenberg’s closest childhood friends and a student of Mach. The comparison between Schoenberg and Mach, then, is drawn not only in terms of scientific method but also in light of the radical politics of the Austrian Left at the time, a politics for which both Mach and Schoenberg held sympathies. It should not be overlooked that later, however, they ceased to acknowledge these sympathies explicitly, and Schoenberg would appear to have abandoned them entirely.

**Keywords**: Musicology, Harmonielehre, Arnold Schoenberg, Ernst Mach.
Schoenberg and the Radical Economies of Harmonielehre

The father’s death in 1890 was a severe blow for the Schoenberg family, a blow manifest not only in frequent changes of residence in the following years, but also the gifted student Arnold was taken from school only a few days after the father’s death and according to the wishes of the mother began a banking career. The change of school for the banking world alongside material need made the theories of Marxism especially clear to him.

Albrecht Dümling

Common wisdom holds Schoenberg’s radical stance toward music to be artistic in genesis and made manifest principally in compositions from about the time of the Book of the Hanging Gardens and the Three Pieces for Piano, op. 11, to the twelve-tone works of the mid-1920s.1 According to another, less familiar point of view, however, Schoenberg’s stance was born in part from radical shifts in science and politics during the course of the preceding half century, shifts that had a palpable effect upon Central European thought in general, Viennese thought about art in particular.2 Seldom has either account been related to Harmonielehre – the study of harmony – in general, or to the opening chapters of Schoenberg’s Harmonielehre – his treatise on harmony3 – despite the fact that its first edition, dated 1911, was written shortly after op. 11, and the introduction to the heavily revised third edition is dated 1921, appearing thus as the twelve-tone conception was congealing.4

This article addresses the polemics of the opening chapters of the Harmonielehre as a product of developments in Central European science, politics, and music theory between the Fin-de-siècle and 1921. Schoenberg’s treatise is a complex, at times contradictory work, and the polemics of the opening chapters are transformed in complex and often contradictory ways in later chapters.5 The opening chapters, however, set the tone of the whole work by confronting accepted theoretical practices and their attendant conception in an aggressive manner. In both form and substance, Schoenberg’s treatise is a consistently radical, not merely revisionary Harmonielehre.

Restricting itself largely to the polemic introduction to the Harmonielehre, the article begins by examining Schoenberg’s rethinking of the study of harmony (in particular his criticisms of figured bass, chorale harmonization, and so-called “talent,” as these imply a Leftist perspective) and his severely economical approach to the creation of chordal progressions. The article addresses the background to this shift in conception toward economy. It notes a similar severely economical conception found in writings about scientific method by the physicist Ernst Mach. One of Schoenberg’s closest childhood friends, the socialist David J. Bach, a student of Mach, might have conveyed to Schoenberg this aspect of Mach’s thought – the notion of economy in method. Bach would have done so in light of the radical politics of the Austrian Left in the decades around the Fin-de-siècle, a politics
which both Mach and the youthful Schoenberg found appealing. The comparison of Mach and Schoenberg, then, is twofold, based upon a common sympathy for economies and upon David Bach, with whom, no doubt, Schoenberg discussed Mach.

Neither Schoenberg’s nor Mach’s commitment to Leftist politics was unequivocal, however. This article concludes by considering symptoms of an ambivalence toward both science and politics in Schoenberg’s later essays.

**Figured Bass, Chorale Harmonization, and the Economies of Chordal Progression**

Schoenberg circumscribes his subject narrowly in the opening chapters of *Harmonielehre*. Elusive, irrational, and mystical aspects of harmony, indicated by terms such as beauty and nature, are best avoided, since they cannot be taught in a course of logical and thus rational instruction. Instruction in harmony should concern itself only with the study of chordal progressions as these are put to some effect [Wirkung] or goal, such as the expression of a key.

The remainder of the *Harmonielehre* attests to these economies by jettisoning the realization of figured basses and the harmonization of chorale melodies (although Schoenberg rehabilitates the latter in limited form in Chapter 16). Even the notion of motive, which Schoenberg called the “motor that drives this movement of the voices” is “absent,” beyond consideration, in his *Harmonielehre* (Schoenberg 1978: 34).

Circumscribing his subject thus, Schoenberg lays the responsibility for the chordal progression entirely upon the student’s logical abilities. The student is taught to build a progression by combining a small group of chords in simple but effective progressions. Only by creating the entire progression itself – bass, soprano, alto, and tenor voices – in a logical manner can the student take complete charge of the process. This is Schoenbergian *Harmonielehre*.

Schoenberg’s immediate reasons for excising figured bass and chorale harmonization are pedagogic. Neither teaches harmonic composition – the creation of chordal progressions in and of themselves, devoid of any predeterminations. In both, the chordal progression is determined “by someone else,” as Schoenberg puts it (1978: 14). The student assigned a given melody or bass is required in effect to second guess the composer’s vision or counterfeit a reasonable facsimile. This is not the “primary matter” of *Harmonielehre*, “but rather a secondary matter” (1978: 14).

Understanding the place of figured bass and chorale harmonization in *Harmonielehre*, we are in a better position to understand Schoenberg’s radically economical approach. The substance of this argument for economy sharpens from the first typescript of the *Harmonielehre* (preserved in a manuscript container in the
Schoenberg Center referred to hereafter as TBK2) through the first edition to the third.\(^7\) In TBK2, Schoenberg draws a distinction between *Harmonielehre* and what he calls “artistic” voice leading. By the adjective “artistic,” Schoenberg denotes a voice leading that gives individual voices their own expressive effect. Given his focus on chordal progression, he prefers that the student subvert the individuality of voices to the overall effect of the harmonic progression. Whatever voice leading takes place in *Harmonielehre* should arise simply and necessarily out of the creation of the chordal progression and should not be treated as a distinct entity in its own right. Accordingly, he says in TBK2 that neither counterpoint (which regulates voice leading quite apart from chordal progression) nor melody (which regulates voice leading according to “artistic” concerns or concerns of form in the sense of *Formenlehre*) plays a role in determining voice leading. Following his Viennese antecedents, Simon Sechter and Anton Bruckner, Schoenberg instructs the student of the *Harmonielehre* to move the voices from one harmony to another according to the “law of the shortest way,” which stipulates that a given voice be sustained on a common tone between any two harmonies or move by the smallest interval possible, while avoiding forbidden parallel perfect intervals.\(^8\) “Artistic” voice leading, if it is allowed at all, is held to the minimum as simply not beneficial to the sense of the whole progression and its effect:

It is not the business of harmonic instruction to teach artistic voice leading either in the sense of counterpoint or melodically in the sense of *Formenlehre*. Instead voice leading in harmonic instruction ought to be seen as only such movement of the voices that enables the most effective and the simplest connection of chords and thereby avoids errors. (Schoenberg TBK 2: 2)\(^9\)

A blunt condemnation follows shortly thereafter: “The method that introduces the student to figured bass is impractical, since what they learn above all is voice leading...” (Schoenberg TBK 2:2).\(^10\) This depreciatory tone is sustained in the 1911 edition of the *Harmonielehre*:

In this sense, all harmony books that introduce the student to figured bass for the purpose of the placement of voices are impractical. There the student learns only voice leading,...and that is not the affair of harmonic instruction. (Schoenberg 1911: 9)\(^11\)

Seen in light of this pointed excision of figured bass and chorale harmonization from harmonic instruction over two decades and two editions, Schoenberg’s approach becomes clear. The study of harmony is governed by a strict economy. To admit luxury would be to threaten chaos:

It will surely benefit us here, in the study of harmony, to derive the nature of chord connections strictly from the nature of the chords themselves, putting aside rhythmic, melodic, and other such considerations. For the complexity that would arise, if all possibilities of harmonic functions were compounded with all rhythmic and motivic possibilities, would surely overwhelm the teacher as well as the pupil. (Schoenberg 1978: 13)\(^12\)
And chaos is not a vehicle for the pedagogy of harmony. Schoenberg will teach only the “craft” of harmony, as a carpenter might teach their trade. So Schoenberg concludes his first chapter with the famous phrase: “I would be proud if, to adapt a familiar saying, I could say: ‘I have taken from composition pupils a bad aesthetics and have given them in return a good course in handicraft’” (Schoenberg 1978: 12)

**Egalitarian Harmonielehre**

As Schoenberg enumerates the faults of current instructional practice, we catch a glimpse of Schoenbergian politics, of what can be called his egalitarian approach to the study of harmony. The glimpse is had briefly in Chapter 2, entitled “Teaching Harmony.” Schoenberg says that to expect the pupil to acquire automatically the skills necessary for creating good chord progressions merely by realizing figured bass or even by studying masterworks is indefensible folly. Nothing is being acquired here, but instead:

> The teacher is relying on the talent of the pupil, by all means the best thing to do, especially wherever the teacher is not able to influence the pupil’s awareness deliberately, wherever he cannot apply explicit methods to produce explicit, predictable knowledge and abilities in the pupil. (Schoenberg 1978: 14)

This, of course, is a cutting critique, delivered tongue in cheek: a really good teacher should be able to influence the pupil deliberately, with explicit methods, producing explicit and predictable abilities in the student. But bad teachers rely instead upon a student’s extant talents—their familiarity with appropriate idioms. (For example, in harmonizing a chorale, a “talented” student familiar with a standard hymnal might know to put chords II and IV before the dominant V, and to follow V by I or by VI, as in the deceptive cadence.) Under the auspices of bad teachers, “talented” students can get by:

> Of course gifted pupils may be able to do it moderately well; for these are already equipped, through listening to music and remembering it, with a certain instinct for the right harmonic progression.... The less gifted or those gifted in other ways are helpless, since their training [when limited to figure bass and chorale harmonization] dealt merely with voice leading; and they never learn to design a piece of music whose harmonic construction succeeds by virtue of logical progressions. (Schoenberg 1978: 14)

But talent succeeds only superficially. And where the teacher relies inordinately upon talent, the real task of Harmonielehre—the logical construction of chordal progressions—will be overlooked.

Harmony taught thus develops a talented but superficial ersatz skill at “melodising [das gewisse Melodisieren],” as Schoenberg calls it (1978: 21), and this becomes pedagogically problematic: mistaking formulaic realization for composition, students gain a false sense of security, which deserts them once faced
with a real compositional task such as the creation of an effective harmonic progression appropriate to an unprecedented situation.

A good harmony teacher treats talented – privileged – students and those lacking such talents as essentially alike. They cultivate all those attributes of the student – any student – that a bad teacher cannot. In this sense, Harmonielehre is egalitarian, drawing no distinction according to talent stemming from background and privilege.

There may be an autobiographical thread running through this argument. In recollections published elsewhere, Schoenberg notes that he and his friends heard little music apart from that which they made themselves, and although a work such as the early D-major String Quartet is redolent of Dvorak and Brahms, one wonders if Schoenberg had an initial experience with harmonic instruction (prior to his studies with Zemlinsky) that revealed inadequacies in his “talent” and background. Coming from disadvantaged circumstances in terms of economic and thus class structure (the death of his father having left his family in severe straits in a fin-de-siècle climate of inordinate wealth and luxury), Schoenberg would have been sensitive to the privileges of fortunate background. Here lie suggestions of socialist tendencies to which we shall turn shortly.

In truth, the lack of such an encumbering background might well have enabled Schoenberg to make the radical innovations that branded his own compositions as revolutionary. By setting talent to one side in the Harmonielehre, Schoenberg established a framework for radical harmonic innovation in his students, among them Berg, whose private lessons with Schoenberg became the basis for the harmony treatise.

For Schoenberg, then, reliance upon talent should take second place to the deliberate influence of the pupil’s awareness. A Harmonielehre based upon talent caters to an innately conservative elite given to acting on a precedent. For a self-educated composer given to a radical rethinking of compositional practice, such a conservative and elitist approach to the study of harmony must have been repugnant.

While too extravagant a reading Schoenberg’s treatment of talent ought to be avoided (for indeed it appears only briefly in his treatise), its consequences are palpable (some of which will be addressed below under the rubric of economy). Above and beyond the polemics of the Harmonielehre itself, his egalitarian approach to the study of harmony can be equated with an egalitarian approach to education in general in Europe and particularly in Austria at the time, wherein all students – rich or poor, boys or girls, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish – take equal part in the process of learning. The fact that this approach evolved under Leftist auspices, during years when Schoenberg himself still felt the latter’s sway, may explain something of its presence in his treatise. As the Harmonielehre grew, so did Schoenberg’s family, with two small children – Gertrud, born in 1902, and
Georg, born in 1906 – and little or no financial resources to devote to their education. At the same time, Schoenberg felt no doubt the influence of Austro-Marxism in the guise of a childhood friend, the Leftist David J. Bach, who secured employment for Schoenberg as a chorus director in distinctly Leftist circumstances (discussed below). Berg’s lessons with Schoenberg were given without fee and without a textbook, given (as Berg’s three notebooks attest) in an astonishingly anarchistic manner – without appeal to “talent,” and radical in its extreme economy. And during these years, Schoenberg was employed at Eugenie Schwarzwald’s school, wherein he met much the same egalitarian and distinctly liberal approach to education. Schwarzwald employed other radically innovative artists like Schoenberg – painters such as Oscar Kokoschka (1911-12), whose conception of education was distinctly egalitarian.

At the time of the Harmonielehre’s conception, the Leftist conception of an egalitarian education took concrete form in the plan for an Einheitsschule, a “unified school,” where predispositions, particularly class differences, were done away with:

\[T\]he socialists suggested strongly that all children should be kept in a unified school for all eight years of compulsory schooling.... [This increased] the likelihood of rich and poor children sharing the same schools where democratic values could be taught and social distinctions worn away. (Zeps 1987: 22)

The concept of an Einheitsschule is but one manifestation of a constant Austrian Leftist interest in education as a vehicle for class struggle, in particular as a vehicle to counterbalance the conservative sway of the Catholic Church. Another, earlier manifestation of concern was the Primary School Law of 1869 (enacted five years before Schoenberg’s birth), which extended compulsory elementary education from six to eight years and allowed for the appointment of teachers without regard to religious affiliation. The Social Democratic Party, led by Victor Adler, from 1889 constituted the principal opposition to what Edward Timms calls the “hegemonic claims” of religious conservatives and budding fascist nationalists (2006: 38), and created an atmosphere auspicious to educational experiments such as those of Karl Seitz, a liberal educator (later the mayor of Vienna from 1923 to 1934) who, in 1895, founded the journal Freie Lehrstimme [Voice of Free Teachers] aimed at reforming conservative educational institutions, this growing out of what Timms calls “newly established workers’ educational institutions” (2006: 38). In 1898, Seitz and perhaps the best known of modern Austrian educators, Otto Glöckel (born, like Schoenberg, in 1874), came into conflict with the Christian Socialist Mayor of Vienna, Karl Leuger, an anti-Semite with an anti-socialist bent, and were dismissed from positions as educators (Zepps 1987: 19). Thus began a period of conflict and radicalization in education and politics in general, one that Schoenberg was no doubt well apprised of by his friend David Bach and by the pages of the Arbeiter-Zeitung, a newly founded Leftist daily newspaper in which Bach played a considerable role, not the least as a cultural critic and re-
viewer. Marxist Leftist politics in Austria (Austro-Marxism, as it is often called) was less erstwhile revolutionary than devoted to practical revision. As Timms puts it, the “socialist movement in Vienna was unique in developing a conception of Austro-Marxism that gave priority to education and culture” (2006: 41). This conception gave rise in 1908 to an organization devoted to secular and democratic education—egalitarian education—the Sozialdemokratischer Verein Kinderfreunde [The Social Democratic Association of Children’s Friends], which might have appealed to Schoenberg as the father of young children. In this light, even Eugenie Schwarzwald’s Lyzeum school, originally for young women (when it opened in 1901), where Schoenberg taught in 1904 and again in 1917, can be seen as a product of Austro-Marxist influence. And ultimately it was to Schwarzwald’s school that Schoenberg sent his daughter, Gertrud. The lessons of a liberal, egalitarian education were surely not lost on him. This explains, if only in part, the well known phrase, cited above, about removing an aesthetics and replacing it with “a good course in handicraft” (Schoenberg 1978: 12). Presumably, having set aside elitist illusions such as the notion of “talent,” what remained was the equivalent of a solid proletarian handicraft.

**The Economical Craft of Effective Harmony**

The craft of Harmonielehre comes into sharper focus around Schoenberg’s use of the term *effect* to describe chordal progression as this changes from TBK2 to the first and third editions. Initially he speaks of *effect* as if it were the quality of a progression. In TBK2, he says that the task of instruction in harmony is to show the student the “best possibilities” for joining chords together so as to create “effective progressions”: “It is all the more the task of [harmonic study] to impart to [the student] the best possibilities at hand so that chords can follow one another in fully effective progressions.” By 1911, however, *effect* denotes the object of a progression. The task of harmonic instruction is to impart the ability to construct logical progressions aimed at a certain effect. Schoenberg refines the definition of *effect* by means of the term *constructive meaning* [*constructive Bedeutung*] saying in essence that the principal goal of harmonic instruction is to make the student aware of the constructive meaning of harmonic progressions (Schoenberg 1911: 9). Unfortunately, the concept of constructive meaning is left ill defined in the 1911 *Harmonielehre*. Finally, in the 1922 edition he describes an effective progression as contextual, “suited to the task at hand.” Its constructive meaning is determined by the circumstances at hand—in expressing a key in a given context or in a modulation, for example—and not according to some stock preconceived notion:

...the principal goal of harmonic study [is] to connect chords in terms of their individual character or identity and to join them in such progressions that their effect [Wirkung] is suited to the task at hand... (Schoenberg 1922: 9)
According to the evolving usage of *effect*, Schoenbergian harmonic effects are neither predetermined nor formulaic; they are individual – calculated to a specific individual end. A catalogue of good effects – preconceived formulae giving rise to stock impressions – would be as irrelevant to Schoenberg’s method as figured bass and chorale harmonization. Instead the craft of harmonic effect is to be applied afresh with every new progression as determined by its context.

No doubt there are stock effects common to many progressions. Schoenberg, however, forbids their use, for they give a false sense of mastery. The student must forgo repetition in particular: “We must forego for the present the advantage of using repetition to attain effects...” (Schoenberg 1978: 122). Repetition (apart from beginning and ending with the tonic chord) will not impart a sense of constructive meaning to a given progression.

Schoenbergian effect arises from the particular combination of chords in a progression, when this combination is seen in the context of a system of similar combinations and progressions. In other words, the context that shapes effect is not a literature of good harmonic progressions derived from extant works of music, nor is it formed of predetermined figured basses or chorale melodies, nor formed from any stock or common effects (such as cadential closure). The context in which Schoenbergian effect operates is a severely limited field of progressions determined logically according to a small set of guidelines introduced in the *Harmonielehre*. Each progression is effective according to its particular identity as determined in logical relation to other progressions. We can speak of this as the space of Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre*: its guidelines prescribe a limited set of paths through harmonic space, and the identity of each path is determined by its relationship to the other paths in that space.

In the first exercises then, Schoenberg establishes a set of “guidelines [Richtlinien]” as he calls them. These guidelines severely limit the number of progressions possible (in keeping with Schoenberg’s economies). Eight such guidelines cover the connection of two chords (Schoenberg 1978: 36-42):

1. No interval greater than an octave is allowed between adjacent soprano, alto, and tenor voices.
2. Only the root may be doubled, and this only at the octave.
3. Move the voices as little as possible (the “law of the shortest way”), and keep all tones common to two successive chords in the same voice.
4. Connect in direct succession only chords that have at least one common tone.
5. The fundamental (or root) always goes in the bass, [thus all chords are used in root position].
6. No voice crossing is allowed.
7. Write the exercises in whole notes without bar lines.
8. VII is not to be used in the initial set of exercises; use only I, II, III, IV, V, and VI.

Of these eight conditions, nos. 4 and 8 (no. 4 in particular) reduce the number of connections possible between two chords to a group easily manageable by a student. That is to say, after eliminating the VII chord and connecting only chords...
with at least one common tone, only twenty progressions of two chords each are possible (whereas without these restrictions, forty-two progressions are possible). These twenty progressions are set forth in Figure 1.

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Figure 1. Twenty Progressions Derived from Schoenberg’s Guidelines.

Schoenberg introduces two more guidelines, nos. 9 and 10, to cover the connection of diatonic chords in short phrases (Schoenberg 1978: 42):

9. Do not repeat a chord, except I, which should begin and end the exercise.
10. Phrases should be from four to six chords in length. The fewer the better, so as to avoid repetitions.

These have the principal result of enforcing brevity. With six chords at the student’s disposal, only one of which can be repeated, the length of a given phrase can be at most seven chords, (although curiously Schoenberg restricts this, in condition no.10, to a maximum of six chords in length).

It follows that the choice of a given chord has an immediate logical effect on the subsequent shape of the progression – *effect* in the sense of both immediate outcome and constructive meaning. Compare, for example, the effect produced by following a III chord by a I, or by a V, or by a VI. Following a III by a I will end the progression (since a I chord can only come at the beginning or the end). Following III by a V will allow for only two immediate continuations, II or I. Following III by VI, however, will allow for three immediate continuations, to IV, II, or I. The circumstances – the spatial field of progressions possible under Schoenberg’s guidelines – are determined directly by the choice of a given chord, since choosing one chord will have the effect of opening up the field to new possibilities (as in the case of V and VI) or curtailing the possibilities (as in the case of I). The “effects,” then, of following III by I, V, and VI are both readily apparent and logical, given Schoenberg’s guidelines.

Working solely with these conditions (and setting to side externals such as beauty and talent), the student assesses every prospective chordal connection in terms of immediate logical effect: how will it shape the field of subsequent possibilities; how will it shape the space of the harmony? The result is a strict reductionism in method and aim; beauty and aesthetics are removed from consideration. Economy, clarity, logic—these are the qualities Schoenberg lauds as truly “organic” (Schoenberg 1978: 270) and sets the student to attaining in the Harmo-
nielehre. Anything else is redundant, contrived, and artificial, and has no business in the study of harmony.

From this logical reductive approach, Schoenberg posits a psychology of artistic effect: every work of art seems as a relationship between cause and effect, a “cause” from which “effects visibly proceed.” We cannot conceive of a work of art unless we see it as an arrangement of cause and effect:

[Our musical logic] cannot imagine that there are causes without effects. Consequently, it wants to see effects from every cause, and in its works of art it arranges the causes in such a way that the effects visibly proceed from them. (Schoenberg 1978: 164)\(^28\)

Thus Schoenberg replaces an aesthetics of beauty with an aesthetics of economy, which he calls “artistic economy”: “only such means are to be used as are absolutely necessary for producing a certain effect” (Schoenberg 1978: 164).\(^29\)

**System and Presentation in Harmonielehre**

Schoenberg’s notion of artistic economy is the driving force behind the polemic first chapter to his treatise, entitled “Theory or System of Presentation [Theorie oder Darstellungssystem]?” Therein, Schoenberg takes pains to delimit what is admissible as music theory. In doing so he eliminates a phony aesthetics of beauty as a basis for theory in much the same way as he disqualifies talent as a basis for the instruction of harmony.\(^30\) Neither are amenable to logic, and thus neither are acceptable in a truly systematic course of harmony.

At the heart of Schoenberg’s polemic lies tonality. While common wisdom holds that Schoenberg rejected, obviated, or destroyed tonality outright,\(^31\) in truth he rejected only the uneconomical notion that tonality is an eternal verity in music, “a natural law of music, eternally valid,” and thus must always be present. He rejects this notion as merely a “prejudice,” something logically indefensible, and claims to refute it in the Harmonielehre:

In this book I believe I have succeeded in refuting some old prejudices of musical aesthetics. That these prejudices have remained with us right up to the present would in itself be proof enough of my contention. But when I say what it is that I do not consider a necessity of art; when I say: tonality is no natural law of music, eternally valid – then it is plain for everyone to see how the theorists spring up in indignation to cast their veto against my integrity. Who today would want to admit that [my statement about tonality is true] even if I proved it still more incisively than I shall do here? (Schoenberg 1978: 9)\(^25\)

It is an unnecessary extravagance to claim that tonality is indispensable to all musical form. By means of aesthetics, music theory has set its sights erroneously on eternal verities:

The power that the theorist has to have to fortify an untenable position comes from his alliance with aesthetics. Now aesthetics deals only with the eternal things...One of the most gratifying means for producing musical form is tonality. What a differ-
ent impression it makes, though, if [the theorist] speaks of the principle of tonality, as [an eternal thing] a law – ‘Thou shalt...’–adherence to which shall be indispensa-
table to all musical form. (Schoenberg 1978: 9)33

Tonality is just a vehicle, not a precondition.
A real aesthetics would limit itself to genuine, not illusory artistic questions. A real aesthetic could suffice solely with inferences drawn from observing artistic effects (Kunstwirkungen). It would suffice to say merely that tonality is a “gratifying means for producing musical form.” Tongue firmly in cheek, Schoenberg notes that everyone knows this, but “hardly anyone takes it into consideration”

Someone could declare that I am going too far, that nowadays, as everybody knows, aesthetics does not prescribe laws of Beauty but merely attempts to infer their existence from the effects of art. Quite correct: almost everyone knows that nowadays. Yet hardly anyone takes it into consideration. (Schoenberg 1978: 9)34

Like empty formulae (and thus like talent without understanding), the extravagant claims of theorists lack logical coherence. The theorist’s intent – to sanction beauty – is clear and laudable, but faulty. Aesthetic judgement should flow from first principles (much as the effects produced in the student’s progressions flow from the strict conditions Schoenberg sets upon the succession of harmonies). No such logic obtains with an aesthetics of beauty based upon apodictic assertions. The frivolous judgements it produces, being devoid of logic and coherence, are thus “entirely gratuitous”:

Their theories are intended to influence the sense of beauty in such a way that it will produce, for example, harmonic progressions whose effect can be regarded as beautiful; they are intended to justify the exclusion of those sounds and progressions that are esteemed not beautiful. But these theories are not so constructed that the aesthetic judgment follows as a consequence of their first principles, of the logical development of these principles! On the contrary there is no coherence, absolutely no coherence. These judgments, ‘beautiful’ or ‘not beautiful’, are entirely gratuitous excursions into aesthetics and have nothing to do with the logic of the whole. (Schoenberg 1978: 10)35

In his discussion of this spurious musical aesthetics, Schoenberg introduces the term system, a term with implications for both his thought proper and its relation to his Viennese milieu. The power of a false aesthetics of beauty allows theorists to speak of systems.36 Devoid of logic, however, these systems are merely prejudices carried out systematically. As Schoenberg puts it, “Where in the system can we find logically, mutually consistent answers...? In the sense of beauty? What is that? How is the sense of beauty otherwise related to this system? To this system – if you please!!” (Schoenberg 1978: 10)37

Having dismissed these systematic prejudices, Schoenberg offers a valid definition of the term. A system should be a method of coherent organization and classification derived from principles that assure a consistent logic–a system of presentation [Darstellung] as he calls it:38
These systems! Elsewhere I will show how they have really never been just what they still could be: namely, systems of presentation. Methods by which a body of musical material is coherently organized and lucidly classified, methods derived from principles which will assure an unbroken logic. (Schoenberg 1978: 10)39

Figure 1 above is a simple system derived logically from ten principled guidelines. Schoenberg says he has aspired to develop just such a system of presentation here, and “nothing more; I do not know whether I have succeeded or not....” Schoenberg’s aim was to relieve theory of an extravagance, a “responsibility that it could never have fulfilled,” so that it “can restrict itself to that which is really its task: to help the pupil attain such skills as will enable him to produce something of established effectiveness” (Schoenberg 1978: 11).40 This economic manoeuvre explains, at least in part, the sentiment expressed in the last paragraph of the first chapter to the treatise, the comparison with a carpenter (which follows the passage on bad aesthetics and good handicraft, cited above). Schoenberg’s task is “not to set up new eternal laws.” Instead he seeks only to teach an economical handicraft, like carpentry, unburdened by any pretence at teaching aesthetics: “If I should succeed in teaching the pupil the handicraft of our art as completely as a carpenter can teach his, then I shall be satisfied” (Schoenberg 1978: 12).41

Schoenberg’s approach to instruction in harmony is empiricist, avoiding any appeal to a cause (in particular to talent or to an aesthetics of beauty) not immediately and rationally apparent to the student. The results may be modest, but they mark a dramatic reshaping of Harmonielehre, when compared with, for example, the Harmonielehre of Rudolf Louis and Ludwig Thuile, or of Schoenberg’s friend Heinrich Schenker.42 In the former case, the authors’ avowed aim is to “lead the student to a living understanding of harmonic progressions in concrete musical artworks through close and genuine analysis of countless examples drawn from the literature.”43 Thus, in lieu of Schoenberg’s emphasis on a highly constrained set of logical guidelines, Louis and Thuile teach a set of paradigms – formulae in effect – by which the student learns to compose harmony. Schenker’s treatise cannot be compared synoptically with Schoenberg’s in a few sentences, but let it suffice to cite Schoenberg’s appreciation of the treatise in his own Harmonielehre, in particular his polemical disparagement of Schenker’s “mysterious number five,” which, according to Schoenberg, “shows up everywhere in music as a kind of boundary” (Schoenberg 1978: 318), as an upper limit to the practical use of the overtone series, for example. Schenker makes appeals to higher authority, and such appeal would have been out of place in Schoenberg’s treatise on harmony (although not in later writings, as we shall see). Schoenberg leaves unsaid a principal difference with Schenker: the latter’s Harmonielehre is avowedly historical in the terms of musical style, for it seeks to demonstrate the historical development of a category of masterwork and makes ample use of examples from the canonic musical literatures to demonstrate this. Schoenberg, on the other hand, makes little use of musical examples and restricts any consideration of historical
style to the final chapters of his treatise. (And yet it would be incorrect to call Schoenberg’s treatise dehistoricizing, concerned as the opening chapters are with the historical state of music theory.)

Against these and other treatises like them, Schoenberg’s work appears radical in its economy. Measured against contemporary developments in science, however, Schoenberg’s economy is quite in keeping.

**Ernst Mach and the Economy of Modern Science**

Schoenberg’s critique of figured bass and chorale harmonization, his notion of a system of presentation, and in particular his economical approach to theory lend themselves to comparison with the Viennese world of science at the *Fin-de-siècle* and to one of the most influential thinkers of the period, the scientist Ernst Mach. Born in 1838 and thus Schoenberg’s elder, Mach exerted an important critical force upon Schoenberg’s generation, validating their attempts to examine and challenge the legacy passed to them by Hapsburg Vienna. Mach’s thought has been criticized, correctly or otherwise, as a kind of severe positivism – our knowledge of the world is limited to the outward appearance of things, to sensation in other words: “Mach and Comte were both presentationalists in identifying the physical world with what could be immediately sensed, and were phenomenalists in rejecting causes as agents or forces in favor of describing conscious referents in terms of mathematical functions or equations” (Blackmore 1972: 164). His thought has also been characterized, again correctly or otherwise, as empiricism, that is to say relying on observation – principally experimental observation – rather than intuition and speculation.

The exact nature of Mach’s strict positivism and empiricism, however, is of less importance for us than his espousal of a radical reduction in method (and his Leftist politics, to which we turn shortly): he treated the evidence of sensory data by means of the most economical theoretical framework and in doing so rejected any superfluous influences upon science, the influence of theology in particular, much as Schoenberg rejected an aesthetic of beauty and the natural justification of tonality as an eternal verity. As Mach’s principal English-language biographer, John T. Blackmore, speaking of scientific laws, puts it, Mach “was sharply critical of the belief in their ‘causal power’ or ‘aesthetic beauty,’” and denied them existence ‘outside,’ ‘prior to,’ or as ‘intrinsic’ within nature” (1972: 177). Blackmore describes Mach’s thought as follows:

> Natural laws are a product of our psychological needs....The grand universal laws of physics...are not essentially different from descriptions....Laws cannot be ascribed to nature. We find only as much ‘lawfulness’ [Gesetzmässigkeit] in nature as we ourselves have assumed in simplified external experience. (Blackmore 1972: 177)

For Mach, there were no ultimate and absolute laws or designs to the world that could be known with the science of his day. He held theology at best to be irrele-
vant to science, in both its ends (the affirmation of a totally governing force or design) and its method (appeal to a totality as a means of explanation). Mach did not rule out the possibility that the tools of some future science might enable the investigation of absolutes and total designs. Such inquiries, however, were at present impossible without first succumbing to dogma, and dogma was anathema to enlightened science. Mach’s strict emphasis upon empirical data proved particularly useful in this regard: empiricism eliminated the vestiges of dogma that had hindered scientific investigation and explanation. (Mach’s empiricism did, however, run up against strong opposition, notably a theory referred to as “atomism” that was of consequence for Einstein.)

Limiting the immediate grounds for a comparison with Schoenberg to economy in method, we shall examine a selection of Mach’s arguments as set forth in the treatises The Science of Mechanics (Mach 1919) and Knowledge and Error (Mach 1976), in particular his treatment of theology in science, which equates with Schoenberg’s treatment of the aesthetics of beauty in the theory of harmony. Like Schoenberg, Mach concerned himself with utility. Theories were descriptions of sensory data, and their utility lay in the ability to simplify and organize such data. For Mach, it was better to speak of theories as more or less useful rather than true or false, or as eternal verities.

Eternal verity is the subject matter of theology. Mach describes the role theology played in the history of physical science by listing scientists of note who were at one and the same time devoted theologians: Napier, the inventor of logarithms, Blase Pascal, Otto von Guericke, the inventor of the air-pump, Newton, Leibnitz, and Euler (Mach 1919: 447-50). Despite such strong allegiances to religious beliefs on the part of its principal exponents, science engaged theology in a lengthy battle to rid itself of theological prejudices. It took the scientific revolutionary Joseph-Louis Lagrange (1736-1813) in a receptive age to make the “final promulgation” of the idea that “theology and physics are two distinct branches of knowledge”: “Lagrange...declared his intention of utterly disregarding theological and metaphysical speculations, as in their nature precarious and foreign to science...” (Mach 1919: 457).

As the influence of the church waned, scientists had to contend with the residue of theological thought, to “struggle with their own preconceived ideas, and especially with the notion that philosophy and science must be founded on theology” (Mach 1919: 447). Mach is adamant: theology is not science, and theological scientists should have seen this fact: “These men should at least have seen that the questions they discussed did not belong under the heads where they put them, that they were not questions of science.” (Mach 1919: 451) Theology is a luxury, a distraction, the stuff of private confession:

The theological proclivities which these men followed, belong wholly to their innermost private life. They tell us openly things which they are not compelled to tell us, things about which they might have remained silent. (Mach 1919: 450)
In terms of the comprehensive view of the world, Mach draws an important distinction between theology and modern science. Theology believes in the possibility of a “final explanation of the world,” which Mach calls a “mythology” (Mach 1919: 463-4). Mach does not rule out the possibility of a final explanation, but asserts instead that, given the present state of science, final explanations are impossible and can be seen as no more than myths: “To anticipate [a final view], or even to attempt to introduce it into any scientific investigations of the day, would be mythology, not science” (Mach 1919: 464). Along these lines he severely circumscribes the legitimate claims of science:

Physical science does not pretend to be a complete view of the world; it simply claims that it is working toward such a complete view in the future. The highest philosophy of the scientific investigator is precisely this toleration of an incomplete conception of the world and the preference for it rather than an apparently perfect, but inadequate conception.... (Mach 1919: 464-5)

In doing so he rules out theology and other explanatory models aimed at a definite telos. The science of physics ought to eschew finality, at least until finality becomes susceptible to exact research.

Having set final and complete world views aside, Mach dips briefly into aesthetics in a manner Schoenberg would have found sympathetic. Beauty is readily apparent in nature, but inadmissible in scientific method. The task of science is investigation, “not mere admiration.” Again Mach cites a revolutionary, Darwin, the first to replace mere admiration of organic nature with serious inquiry:

The forms of bones, feathers, stalks, and other organic structures, adapted, as they are, in their minutest details to the purposes they serve, are highly calculated to make a profound impression on the thinking beholder, and this fact has again and again been adduced in proof of a supreme wisdom, ruling in nature....We should not forget, however, that investigation, and not mere admiration, is the office of science....there can be no question that [Darwin’s] theory is the first serious attempt to replace mere admiration of the adaptations of organic nature by serious inquiry into the mode of their origin. (Mach 1919: 452-3)

Thus Mach circumscribes science. In essence, theology and aesthetics are as irrelevant to scientific endeavour as an aesthetics of musical beauty espoused theoretically is irrelevant to Schoenberg’s Harmonielehre.

Not content merely to denigrate theological science, Mach turns to a description of a science unencumbered by the superfluous. He begins with his famous emphasis on empirical observation and then proceeds to an important distinction drawn between on the one hand a deductive moment, when facts are distinguishable from observations and can be held in the mind’s eye without “constant recourse to observation,” and on the other hand a formal moment when all the facts thus deduced are held together in the mind’s eye with the “least intellectual effort.” The latter is reductive, a moment of “greatest possible uniformity,” by which Mach means the casting aside of those facts and deductions that do not agree with uniformity. Mach calls the formal residue that remains a “system.” Purged of distrac-
tions and irrelevancies, such a system would be readily comprehensible, “easy of acquisition”:

When the chief facts of a physical science have once been fixed by observation, a new period of its development begins—the deductive.... In this period, the facts are reproducible in the mind without constant recourse to observation.....The deductive development of the science is followed by its formal development. Here it is sought to put in a clear compendious form, or system, the fact to be reproduced, so that each can be reached and mentally pictured with the least intellectual effort. Into our rules for the mental reconstruction of facts we strive to incorporate the greatest possible uniformity, so that these rules shall be easy of acquisition. (Mach 1919: 421)

This is strongly reminiscent of Schoenberg’s simple and readily comprehensible harmonic handiwork devoid of extravagances and recalls to mind his notion of a “system of presentation.” Schoenberg’s system is both uniform and economical, and thus comparable to Mach’s:

Methods by which a body of material is coherently organized and lucidly classified, methods derived from principles which will assure an unbroken logic....A real system should have, above all, principles that embrace all the facts. Ideally, just as many facts as there actually are, no more, no less. (Schoenberg 1978: 10)

Reducing the number of progressions faced by the student by means of a small set of guidelines, Schoenberg adheres to Mach’s injunctions – “the least intellectual effort”, “the greatest possible uniformity”, rules “easy of acquisition.” As Figure 1 above attests, for Schoenberg the student was best served by a principal of severe economy in theory and in practice.

Mach, like Schoenberg, describes the notion of immutable laws of nature as an extravagance. He says that a distinction is customarily drawn between civil (or human) and natural law: it is commonly held that the former can be broken, while the latter cannot. But in truth natural laws are regularly broken, under the auspices of scientific progress. Natural laws, like their civil counterparts, are merely our attempts at reading natural process; they are nothing more than fictions drawn from intuition and conception. Indeed, natural law may be nothing more than informed expectation. Mach explains matters thus:

The usual opinion will be that the laws of nature are rules, which processes in nature must obey, similarly to civil laws, which the actions of citizens ought to obey. A difference is usually seen in that civil laws can be broken while deviations from natural processes are regarded as impossible. However, this view of the laws of nature is shaken by the reflection that we read off and abstract these laws from those processes themselves, and that in doing this we are by no means immune to error. Of course in that case any breaking of the laws of nature may be explained by our mistaken view, and the idea that these laws are unbreakable loses all sense and value. If once we emphasize the subjective side of our view of nature, we easily reach the extreme opinion that our intuition and our concepts alone prescribe laws to nature....in origin, the ‘laws of nature’ are restrictions that under the guidance of our experience we prescribe to our expectations. (Mach 1976: 351)
Schoenberg too questions the ultimate validity of natural laws in music. Being exceptional, art barely lends itself to systematization based on a natural uniformity:

> And only such principles [as natural principles], which are not qualified by exceptions, would have the right to be regarded as generally valid. Such principles would share with natural laws this characteristic of unconditional validity. The laws of art, however, consist mainly of exceptions! (Schoenberg 1978: 10)

Schoenberg does not denigrate honest attempts to discover laws of art. These are valid, but only as good comparisons. As such they can have a beneficial influence empirically upon the “sense organ” of the observer: “Efforts to discover laws of art can then, at best, produce results something like those of a good comparison: that is, they can influence the way in which the sense organ of the subject, the observer, orients itself to the attributes of the object observed (Schoenberg 1978: 11). But under no circumstances ought these be taken as immutable natural laws. A good comparison is merely a thought experiment, not an eternal verity:

> But no one should claim that such wretched results are to be regarded as eternal laws, as something similar to natural laws. For, once again, the laws of nature admit no exceptions, whereas theories of art consist mainly of exceptions. (Schoenberg 1978: 10)

Eternal verities ought to be sacrificed for utility, the utility of a clear and coherent presentation:

> What we do achieve can be enough, if it is given as a method of teaching, as a system of presentation – a system whose organization may aim, sensibly and practically, towards the goals of instruction; a system whose clarity is simply clarity of presentation, a system that does not pretend to clarify the ultimate nature of the things presented. (Schoenberg 1978: 10)

At the heart of Schoenberg’s modesty lies a Machian economy: reduce what is inessential, retain only the useful.

The common ground between Schoenberg and Mach is at its firmest near the beginning of the first chapter of the Harmonielehre. There Schoenberg the empiricist says that we must “...again and again...begin at the beginning; again and again...examine anew for ourselves and attempt to organize anew for ourselves.” Defining his method in a sentiment that might be taken directly from Mach, he goes on to speak of “regarding nothing as given but the phenomena [Erscheinungen]...Since we do definitely know the phenomena we might be more justified in giving the name ‘science’ to our knowledge of the phenomena, rather than to those conjectures that are intended to explain them” (Schoenberg 1922: 8).

The comparison of economy in Schoenberg and Mach is not seamless, but it is substantial. Both are intent on rooting out prejudice in their respective endeavors. And both do so with a strict integrity. Much as Mach discerns in certain scientific procedures the sway of an accessory and superfluous understanding, so too
Schoenberg finds that much current training in harmony depends upon superfluous and thus debilitating accessories.

**Mach, David J. Bach, Schoenberg, and the Politics of Harmonielehre**

Had Schoenberg read Mach’s work, no doubt he would have found Mach’s theoretical economy, his notion of system, and the reduction of the metaphysical appealing. No evidence remains to show Schoenberg knew Mach’s writings directly, but he need not have possessed or even read them in order to have felt their influence. Machian ideas about method and economy were “in the air,” palpable certainly in the ethos of the time.\(^{59}\)

The year 1897 marked not only the completion of Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* but also the beginning of an antagonistic controversy that saw Mach’s philosophy of science give way to new developments—called “atomism”—leading ultimately to Einstein (Lindley 2001). Mach’s principal antagonist was Ludwig Boltzmann, who in 1897 published two papers attacking Mach’s position and positing instead an approach based on a theory of atoms, which Mach branded metaphysic. Boltzmann’s theories at first were dismissed, but his fortunes recovered rapidly upon Mach’s retirement from the University of Vienna in 1901. The University offered Boltzmann not only a chair in theoretical physics but also Mach’s professorship in the philosophy of science. His inaugural philosophy lectures took place in 1903, and were attended reportedly by 600 listeners.

To gain some impression of the polemic nature of Viennese discourse at the time—of which Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre* is but a symptom— as well as the widespread interest in matters both scientific and music theoretic, we need to consider the fact that the principal forums for intellectual exchange encompassed a broad spectrum of subjects, from natural science to the arts and from physics to music, and attracted participants both catholic in taste and outspoken in demeanor. Not long before he ascended to Mach’s professorship, Boltzmann’s name appears on the record of lectures and discussions sponsored by the *Philosophische Gesellschaft an der Universität zu Wien*, alongside the name of a music theorist who on February 15, 1895, and again on March 18, gave a lecture entitled “On the Spirit of Musical Technique,” a scant month after Boltzmann’s inaugural lecture, “On a Physical Application of Probability Statistics” (Blackmore 1995: 278). This shows not merely the mutual respect that philosophy and music had for one another; it suggests further that Schoenberg might well have known of the *Gesellschaft* lectures, of the physicists and their controversies. For that music theorist, well known to Schoenberg in later years, albeit of a very different methodological stripe, was Heinrich Schenker.\(^{60}\)
While it is not necessary, then, that Schoenberg should have known Mach personally for us to sense a certain sympathy in their thoughts, it is possible that the composer, as a participant in the Viennese intellectual community, knew of the scientist’s work in some detail, and accordingly the comparison made above can be expanded beyond a mere resemblance in thought. A most likely candidate for conveying a first-hand knowledge of Mach’s thought to Schoenberg would have been David J. Bach (1874-1947), a close friend in Schoenberg’s youth and a committed socialist his life long, who was Mach’s student.61

Bach’s dissertation (on David Hume), written under Mach’s supervision, was followed by an article, “Der historische Materialismus und die Wissenschaftstheorie [Historical Materialism and the Theory of Science],” published in 1899 in the Czech journal Akademie. Orgán mládeže socialistické. Organ der sozialistischen Jugend (Bach 1899). Friedrich Stadler describes the position on materialism and science that Bach took in the article as representative of a “trend of establishing materialism as an empirical method of research, replacing causality with functionality and evolving a kind of positivist methodology with evolutionary elements...a general characteristic of the Austro-Marxist application of Mach”(Stadler 2001: 136) In this regard, Bach was in a position to convey to Schoenberg not merely the central elements of Marxist thought but also the most recent tendencies in Austrian Marxism, especially a revision of materialism in accord with the empirical and positivist research of Mach.62

The economies of the opening chapters to the Harmonielehre become clearer when seen in light of these developments in Marxist thought. Writing to David Bach in 1895, Schoenberg drew the analogy between class conflict and aesthetics thus: “Just as the activity in social relationships is the product of class conflict, so must aesthetics represent itself as a product of the conflict between idealistic and materialistic ideologies..., and art must bear the scars of the battle of artistic sensibilities derived from these [two] conceptions.”63 As noted above, the polemic carried out in the opening chapters of Schoenberg’s treatise takes aim at certain idealistic assumptions, among them a phony aesthetics of beauty and the assumption of a natural basis of tonality. This polemic is carried out from a perspective very much like that of Marxist materialism and Machian empiricism in its insistence on immediacy and its rejection of abstraction and myth.64

Mach had strong sympathies with the Left. In his major biographical study of Mach’s life and work, John Blackmore enumerates several of these: Mach “shared Marxist indignation with existing economic and industrial conditions in the ‘capitalist’ world.” And he publicly displayed his sentiments in favor of “oppressed” social classes by a number of his conspicuous political actions. In 1896 side by side with Social Democratic laborers he chaired a protest assembly against the allegedly negative attitude of the ruling Christian Socialist Party concerning adult education in Vienna. In 1899 he made known that in his will he planned to leave large sums of money to both the Adult Education Union and the Social Democratic newspaper the Arbeiter-Zeitung.
In 1901 with the aid of an ambulance he insisted on attending the Austrian Upper House in person and voting in favor of a bill limiting the working day for Austrian coal miners to nine hours. In 1902 he spoke bluntly and successfully against the Christian Socialist idea of setting up an exclusively Catholic university in Salzburg.... (Blackmore 1972: 234-35)

Mach’s political activity continued unabated, reaching a peak in 1907:

He made a point of being present in the Austrian House of Peers to vote in favor of an election reform bill, and he wrote several newspaper articles, one against race prejudice, one against the Pope’s new syllabus on Catholic dogma, and two defending the University of Vienna and its unruly students against Karl Lueger and the Christian Socialist city government....By this time Mach had become good friends with Viktor Adler, the respected head of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, and with his son, Friedrich Adler.... (Blackmore 1972: 234-5)65

The influence Mach’s Left-leaning inclinations had upon science was discussed by David Bach and other leading Austro-Marxist luminaries. Friedrich Adler, for example, wrote in 1918, “Mach’s achievement lies not in the improvement of the materialistic conception of history, but, quite on the contrary, in the fact that he pushed physics to that level on which history finds itself thanks to Marx.” (Stadler 2001: 136)

Writing about Mach’s influence upon Adler, Mark Blum suggests that Mach “introduced the notion of relativity within physics, that is, the idea that the definition of a physical body depends upon the context in which it is investigated” (Blum 1985: 156). This contextual thesis called into question the notion of a unified system of explanation, or as Blum puts it: “Whereas other thinkers in physics and in other areas of German Kultur grounded all certain knowledge within a unified system, Mach’s proposition of relativity asserted that no systematic knowledge of the universe was possible, because man’s context of investigation changed constantly” (1985: 156). Recall that Schoenberg, as noted above, adheres to a notion of system in his Harmonielehre, but this is not a fixed system based on extravagant claims of beauty. Instead his system of presentation, or Darstellung, emphasizes the logic of the vehicle of presentation, not the eternal verity of the thing presented (which, being artistic, is hardly subject to systematization). Mach and Schoenberg are alike in this regard—rejecting a certain knowledge that produces fixed and unified systems. This comparison should be drawn against the backdrop of the Austro-Marxism of writers such as Max Adler, Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, and Rudolf Hilferding, among others, which is subject to a broad form of Kantianism antagonistic to teleological design. As Leszek Kolakowski, in his grand overview, Main Currents of Marxism, describes Adler’s Kantian Marxism: “Marxism was a theory – the first scientific theory – of social phenomena, which it studied from the viewpoint of causal connections while fully realizing that in the world of man these connections are effected by purposive action, and by the agency of human intentions, aims, and values” (2005: 565). It is in these regards that Austrian Marxism is sometimes referred to as humanistic, a quality that can
be ascribed to both Schoenberg and Mach. Under this rubric, Marxism believes in a human capacity for responsibility in thought and action, a capacity that emerges when humans are freed of irrelevant and encumbering assumptions.

Mach would have held his Leftist sympathies in common with both Bach and the youthful Schoenberg, until the latter gave up avowed politics for a form of political neutrality around the time of the First World War. As Schoenberg tells us in the essay “My Evolution,” Bach was a formative influence in both music and politics. He may have been responsible for Schoenberg’s employment as the director of several workers’ choirs – first the “Metallarbeiteräsergerbund in Stockerau,” as “Chormeister,” later “Dirigent” of “Arbeitergesangsverband in Mödling, in Donaufeld und Meidling” (Glaser 1981: 442). Most certainly the two would have discussed politics (Schoenberg 1984: 79-80).

If Bach conveyed to Schoenberg not only Mach’s method but also a Leftist appreciation of that method, then certain aspects of Schoenberg’s radical approach to harmony – dispensing with the mythologies, emphasizing craft and instructional economy, and placing complete and total responsibility on the student – can be aligned with the Austrian Left. Much as Mach sought to purge science of its mythologies and untenable prejudices and Schoenberg sought to purge comparable mythologies from the study of harmony, so too Austrian Leftists sought to purge Austria of the sacrosanct influence of church and monarchy, in part by organizing workers along the lines of craft or profession. In the case of Austrian Marxists, this purging was undertaken according to the strict economies of Marx’s thought, which places responsibility firmly on the shoulders of the working classes and dispenses with extravagant myths of all kinds, from the divine right of kings to Adam Smith. Given Schoenberg’s association with Leftist causes prior to the first edition of the Harmonielehre and the revolutionary nature of the treatise’s drastic economical approach, the influence of both Mach and the Left upon the theorist ought not to be ruled out. Its extent must be delimited, however.

Conclusion

While Bach never altered his devotion to socialism, both Mach and Schoenberg did. Mach found himself a matter of controversy in Soviet Russia and attracted the considerable ire of the (at that time little known) Communist polemicist, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Whether for this or for other reasons, Mach withdrew from the field of politics in his last years (Blackmore 1972: 235). Schoenberg, in the essay “My Attitude Toward Politics,” reviewed his early exposure to Leftist politics and his subsequent turn away from political engagement as follows. (The reader must bear in mind, however, the circumstances under which the essay was written.)

In my early twenties, I had friends who introduced me to Marxian theories. When I thereafter had jobs as Chormeister – director of men’s choruses – they called me ‘Genosse’ – comrade, and at this time, when the Social Democrats fought for an ex-
tension of the right of suffrage, I was strongly in sympathy with some of their aims. But before I was twenty-five, I had already discovered the difference between me and a labourer; I then found out that I was a bourgeois and turned away from all political contacts. (Schoenberg 1984: 505-506)

Thus Schoenberg’s direct engagement with Leftist politics seems to have ended at around the turn of the century, although its influence, we suggest, lingered on in the Harmonielehre.

A certain ambivalence to politics develops in Schoenberg’s later writings. The severe economy of the Harmonielehre gives way to the belief in an influential deity, a belief quite out of keeping with Mach, the Left, and the polemical opening chapters of the treatise. Although Schoenberg ruled out appeals to higher telos in Harmonielehre in much the same way Mach ruled out appeal to mysticism and theology in science, later in his life he conceived of a muse-like deity, referred to tongue in cheek as the Supreme Commander, who becomes responsible in considerable part for compositional inspiration. Traces of this theology of inspiration can be found throughout his writings, for example in the essay “Heart and Brain in Music”, from 1946. There Schoenberg cites Brahms in this regard: “‘A good theme is a gift of God,’ [Brahms] said; and he concluded with a word of Goethe: ‘Deserve it in order to possess it.’” (Schoenberg 1984: 67)

In a curious reversal of usage, the term talent appears in the essay “My Evolution.” In the opening to the Harmonielehre, talent was regarded with suspicion: it needs a supplement, and, according to the Harmonielehre, that supplement is to be found in an economy and systematic rigor like that of modern science. In “My Evolution,” however, the supplement to talent is God, the “Almighty.”

What I believe, in fact, is that if one has done his duty with the utmost sincerity and has worked out everything to as near to perfection as he is capable of doing, then the Almighty presents him with a gift, with additional features of beauty such as he never could have produced with his talents alone. (Schoenberg 1984: 86)

This terminological reversal of meaning characterizes the growing ambivalence toward politics and science that Schoenberg’s thought underwent from the time of writing the Harmonielehre to the time of the late essays such as “My Evolution”.

The method and politics of Schoenberg’s Harmonielehre, then, reflect only a limited period of time in his intellectual and creative career. In conclusion let it suffice to say that the polemics of the opening chapters to the Harmonielehre (as seen in light of the contemporary developments in Central European science and politics that gave birth to them) are a momentary symptom of Schoenberg’s developing life, a symptom as important to an overall conception of the man and his work as the contemporary works of revolutionary music and their artistic genesis. The evocation of theology in Schoenberg’s later writings is itself but a symptom of the developing contradictions in his life and thought. Indeed his life and thought might be profitably examined as a whole in light of the letter to David
Bach cited above, where Schoenberg described aesthetics “as a product of the conflict between idealistic and materialistic ideologies.”

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**Notes**

1 See for example Schorske (1981: 345-62), especially p. 345, where lyric poetry, theater, and music are given a principal hand in the development of Schoenberg’s radical musical stance. Compare Rosen (1976: 18-29), where the visual arts are invoked, as well as Mallarmé. See as well, Botstein (1999: 35-36), where the novelists Theodor Fontane and Adalbert Stifter are cited as influential.


3 Schoenberg (1911), and Schoenberg (1922), translated as Schoenberg (1978). While Carter’s translation can be relied upon in general, from time to time the author will provide his own translation for the sake of precision. No copies of a second edition are known to exist.


5 In ways far beyond the scope of this article, thus the concentration upon the opening chapters, which, despite minor contradictions, are remarkably consistent in tone and concept.

6 The other two divisions of basic instruction in music theory are “counterpoint and form,” (p. 13), both of which necessitate consideration of motive. Their subject matter is treated in other treatises, each with their own strict economies. That Schoenberg should address motive in later chapters is one of the contradictions in his treatise referred to above, although to be fair he speaks of motives largely in reference to other composers’ works (see p.164, on Brahms’s Third Symphony, and p.343, on a Bach Chorale). He severely constrains motive in the chapter on chorale harmonization, where he speaks of “this absence of motivic obligations,” (p. 289).

7 From typescripts to first and then third edition, the treatise underwent considerable revision. The revision of the first edition was particularly thorough, leaving hardly a page unaltered. For this reason, the author has treated all three sources as versions of the Harmonielehre, rather than treating the third edition as definitive.

8 See Sechter (1853-54), and Bruckner (1950). The law of the shortest way is found under various rubrics in many manuals of harmony, from Viennese and Central European treatises (notably that of Moritz Hauptmann, Die Natur der Harmonik und Metrik, (1853)) to jazz (see for example, Marc Levine, “Common Tones” The Jazz Theory Book (Petaluma, California: Sher, (1995: 155-61)). The law of the shortest way can be seen from the perspective of recent developments in music theory called “neo-Riemannian,” and the term parsimonious as applied to

9 “Daraus geht hervor, dass es nicht Sache der Harmonielehre ist, kunstreiche Stimmführung, etwa im Sinne des Kontrapunkts, oder melodische im Sinne der Formenlehre zu unterrichten, sondern Stimmführung ist in der Harmonielehre nur jene Bewegung der Stimmen, die am zweckmässigsten und einfachsten die Verbindung der Akkorde ermöglicht und dabei jene Fehler vermeidet....”

10 “Daraus geht hervor, wie unzweckmässig die Methode ist, die dem Schüler bezifferte Bässe gibt,...denn was er dabei lernt, ist höchstens Stimmführung....”

11 “In diesem Sinn sind all Harmonielehrbücher, die dem Schüler bezifferte Bässe zur Aussetzung der Stimmen übergeben, unzweckmässig angelegt. Daraus lernt der Schüler nur Stimmführung, und die ist nicht Sache der Harmonielehre....” Compare, for example, popular contemporary texts such as Louis and Thuille [1907].

12 Schoenberg (1922: 7-8). “Es wird also in unserem Fall, in der Harmonielehre, sicher nützlich sein, das Wesen der Verbindungen lediglich aus dem Wesen der Akkorde abzuleiten, Rhythmisches, Melodisches u. dgl. auszuschalten. Denn die Kompliziertheit, die erstünde, wenn man alle Möglichkeiten der Harmoniefunktionen mit allen Möglichkeiten der Rhythmik und des Motivischen kombinierte, wäre wohl ebenso unüberblickbar für den Lehrer wie für den Schüler.”


14 Schoenberg (1922: 8). “Hier wird also dem Talent des Schülers vertraut, was allerdings insbesondere dort das Beste ist, wo der Lehrer nicht imstande ist, aufs Bewußtsein, aufs bewußtste Wissen und Können des Schülers mit bewußten Mitteln konsequent einzuwirken.”

15 Schoenberg (1922: 8). “Gewiß treffen Begabte das ziemlich gut, denn diese bringen meist durch Gehör und Gedächtnis aus der aufgenommenen Musik ein gewisses Wertgefühl für Harmoniefolgen mit,... Aber der weniger oder anders Begabte steht mit Anweisung, die sich bloß auf die Stimmführung beziehen, hilflos da und erlernt nie einen Tonsatz zu entwerfen, dessen harmonische Konstruktion durch Folgerichtigkeit wirkt.”

16 See this article’s epigraph, taken from Dümling (1975: 1). Translation is this author’s.


18 See Avrich (2006):Chapter 1, on Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (the Spanish extreme Leftist and anarchist, who formed a Modern School in Barcelona in 1901) and Paul Robin (founder of the Prévost Orphanage at Cempuis, near Paris, from 1880 to 1894), among others.


22 That Schoenberg appears to reverse himself on the question of “talent” in a brief essay written in 1917 to advertise a seminar in composition at the Schwarzwald school does not invalidate the conclusions drawn above. See Auner (2003: 139-40). The course was devoted to composition, not harmony *per se*, and by that time political circumstances—especially those of the Left—were in flux, as were Schoenberg’s political allegiances (see below).
23 Schoenberg TBK2: 8: “Dagegen aber ist es desto mehr ihre Aufgabe, ihn die besten Möglichkeiten an die Hand zu geben, um die Folge der Akkorde einander wirkungsvoll selbst gestalten zu können.” The latter half of the phrase is altered in the typescript thus: “…um die Akkorde einander wirkungsvoll folgen lassen.”

24 “Um den Hauptsatz der Harmonielehre zu erfüllen: Akkorde, ihren Eigenschaften gehorchend, zu solchen Folgen zu verbinden, daß deren Wirkung der jeweiligen Aufgabe entspricht…” Translation is this author’s. Compare Schoenberg (1978: 14).


26 The chordal progressions of the Harmonielehre were created contextually, for Berg’s harmony lessons with Schoenberg. See Dineen (2005: 97-112). Thus they can be seen as part of a system created to the specific needs of Schoenberg’s pupil.

27 Given a set of seven chords, each chord can connect with six other chords.

28 Schoenberg (1922: 194). “…unsere Logik…sich nicht vorstellen kann, daß es Ursachen ohne Wirkungen gibt. Die daher von jeder Ursache Wirkung sehen will und die Ursachen in ihren Kunstwerken so setzt, daß die Wirkungen sichtbar aus ihnen hervorgehen.”

29 Schoenberg (1922: 326). “…nur jene Mittel aufzuwenden, die zur Hervorbringung einer bestimmten Wirkung unerläßlich notwendig sind.”

30 Aesthetics, of course, is challenged elsewhere in Schoenberg’s oeuvre. Schorske suggests that the “mature indictment of the protagonists of beauty” took its first artistic form in Moses und Aron. See Schorske (1981: 360). The first edition of the Harmonielehre antedates this by at least fifteen years.

31 See, for example, (Morgan 1991: 1).


35 Schoenberg (1922: 4-5). “…ihre Theorien wollen als praktische Ästhetik wirken; wollen den Schönheitsinn beeinflussen, daß er beispielsweise durch Harmoniefolgen solche Wirkungen hervorbringe, die für schön angesehen werden können; wollen das Recht haben, solche Klänge und Folgen auszuschließen, die für unschön gelten. Aber diese Theorien sind nicht so gebaut, daß aus ihren Grundsätzen aus der folgerichtigen Weiterbildung dieser Grundsätze die ästhetische Bewertung sich von selbst ergibt! Im Gegenteil: da findet kein Zusammenhang statt, absolut kein Zusammenhang. Diese Schön- und Unschönuertete sind ganz unmotivierte Ausflüge ins Ästhetische, die nichts mit der Anlage des Ganzen zu tun haben.”

36 Schoenberg does not make clear reference to any one theorist in this chapter. He might have had in mind Riemann (1887) and (1903). In Chapter 2, Schoenberg pillories Ernst Friedrich
Richter on another matter, but Richter makes claims similar to Schoenberg’s: “All artistic attempts until now have not succeeded in creating a truly defensible scientific musical system [wissenschaftlich-musikalisches System] according to which all areas of musical phenomena find presentation [sich dargestellt finden] by means of a fundamental principle as constant and necessary conclusions.” Richter 1918: 29, cited in Rexroth (1971: 72).


38 See Rexroth (1971: 80-98). See also, Janik and Toulmin (1973: 139-40)

39 Schoenberg (1922: 6) “Diese Systeme! Ich werde bei einem ander Anlaß zeigen, wie sie nicht einmal recht das sind, was sie immerhin sein könnten, nämlich: Systeme der Darstellung. Methoden, die einen Stoff einheitlich einteilen, übersichtlich gliedern und von solchen Grundsätzen ausgehen, die eine undurchbrochene Folge sichern.”

40 Schoenberg (1922: 6): “...kann [die Kompositionslehre] sich auf das beschränken, was wirklich ihre Aufgabe ist: beim Schüler solche Fertigkeiten zu erzielen, daß er imstande ist, etwas von erprobter Wirkung hervorzubringen.”

41 Schoenberg (1922: 6): “Wenn es mir gelingen sollte, einem Schüler das Handwerkliche unserer Kunst so restlos beizubringen, wie das ein Tischler immer kann, dann bin ich zufrieden.”


43 Louis and Thuille [1907:vi]: “...durch die Heranziehung und genaue Analyse zahlreicher Literaturrebeispiele zu einem lebendigen Verständni s der harmonischen Beziehungen im concreten musikalischen Kunstwerke auzuleiten....”

44 Mach wrote three treatises on musical subjects, but while they would prove relevant in a broader discussion of Mach and Schoenberg, they hold little relevance a discussion of Harmo-nielehre proper.

45 See Janik and Toulmin (1973: 133): “…his psychology had a direct impact on the aesthetic views of Jung Wien; Hofmannsthall himself attended Mach’s university lectures..., while Robert Musil was very much in Mach’s debt.”

46 Mach’s critics are numerous, from his contemporaries such as Robert Musil and Vladimir Lenin, to among others Stanley Jaki in our own time. Rarely are these criticisms directed at economy of method, the subject of this comparison between Mach and Schoenberg.

47 See Janik and Toulmin (1973: 133-34). They hold that Mach’s position on science was founded on a basic precept, the “reduction of all knowledge to sensation....The task of all scientific endeavour [being] to describe sense data in the simplest or most economic manner.” At least one notable writer, Paul Feyerabend, differs with this assessment; see (1987):chapter 7. Janik and Toulmin do not emphasize the context of nineteenth-century materialism, which distinguishes Mach’s emphasis upon the senses from earlier scientific projects, that of the Enlightenment for example.

48 His work has been “usually characterized as empiricism, sensualism, and phenomenalism,” but can be called “nominalism...associationism and psychological atomism,” and compared to phenomenalism, and logical atomism, and even a “biological theory of knowledge.” See Capek (1968: 171-2), and Cohen (1968: 132-70).

49 Schoenberg, no doubt, saw economies in the work of other Viennese artists, notably Adolf Loos. But as a theoretical framework, Mach’s notion of economy in scientific method is better suited to a polemic on music theory. On Mach’s influence in general see Stadler (2001: 123-42), wherein Fritz Mautner’s critique of language, and Robert Musil’s fiction are addressed. Economy in prose is an abiding interest of Central-European writers at this time and since;

50 Citing Mach (1905: 454) and (1895: 254).


52 Schoenberg (1922: 5). “Methoden, die einen Stoff einheitlich einteilen, übersichtlich gliedern und von solchen Grundsätzen ausgehen, die eine undurchbrochene Folge sichern.... Ein wirkliches System sollte vor allem Grundsätze haben, die alle Ereignisse einschließen. Am besten: genau so viele Ereignisse, als es wirklich gibt: nicht mehr, nicht weniger.”

53 Schoenberg (1922: 5). “Und nur solche Grundsätze, die nicht auf Ausnahmen angewiesen sind, hätten darauf Anspruch, für allgemein gültig angesehen zu werden, die mit den Naturgesetzen diese Eigenschaft unbedingter Geltung gemein hätten. Aber die Kunstgesetze haben vor allem Ausnahmen!”

54 Schoenberg (1922: 5). “Das Bemühen, Kunstgesetze aufzufinden, kann also höchstens solche Resultate erzielen, wie sie etwa ein guter Vergleich erzielt: Einfluß gewinnen auf die Art, wie sich das Organ des betrachtenden Subjekts einstellt auf die Eigentümlichkeiten des betrachteten Objekts.”


56 Schoenberg (1922: 5-6) “Was übrigbleibt, kann genügen, wenn es sich als Lehrmethode gibt, als System der Darstellung, dessen Organisation sinnreich und zweckmäßig sein mag mit Rücksicht auf die Erreichung des Lehrziels, dessen Klarheit einfach Klarheit der Darstellung ist, aber nicht behauptet, Klarheit zu sein über die Dinge, die dem Dargestellten zugrunde liegen.”

57 Schoenberg (1922: 2): “Nichts als gegeben ansehend als die Erscheinungen... Wir dürften, da wir sie bestimmt wissen, mit mehr Recht unser Wissen um die Erscheinungen Wissenschaft nennen als jene Vermutungen, die sie erklären wollen.”

58 A full comparison lies beyond the confines of methodological economy would entail many contradictions, but that lies beyond the scope of this paper.

59 They were present in a sense at least comparable to the ideas of artistic revolution that Carl Schorske has addressed in Fin-de-siècle Vienna.

60 Several other participants in the Gesellschaft and its lectures are noteworthy for work pertaining to music. Houston Stewart Chamberlain spoke about Wagner’s philosophy on December 16, 1898. The musicologist Guido Adler, a close acquaintance of Schoenberg and friend to the philosopher Alexius Meinong (whose work was discussed regularly at the Gesellschaft), was a Regular Member of the society, as was the “Hofopernsänger” Gerhard Stehmann. See Blackmore (1995: 279 & 296). The Robert Neumann listed on the roster of regular members may be the same person Schoenberg mentions in the Harmonielehre in a discussion of microtones. See Schoenberg (1978: 25, 384, 423-25).


See for example, “Mystification of Capital, etc.,” in Marx (1976: 1052-1058 & 168-69). Marxism, in this sense, is a science aimed at jettisoning certain mystifications from economics.

In 1916, Friedrich Adler assassinated the Minister President of Austria, Count Karl von Stürgkh. He was released from imprisonment during the Austrian revolution of 1918, and became a principal figure in Austrian socialism until the Second World War.


See Auner (2003: 16), the letter to D. J. Bach, dated July 25, 1895, where Schoenberg attempts to square the Romantic notion of nature with “the recognition of social conditions...”

The essay concludes with the following phrase “But I was never a communist,” to which the editor adds: “This statement, and the whole article in fact, shows Schoenberg’s sensitivity to the ‘Loyalty Oath’ controversy at the University of California, although, having retired from that institution for more than six years, he was in no way involved.” See Schoenberg (1984: 536, ft. 2). Written in 1950, the essay coincides with McCarthyism, a fact that may have influenced its tenor. See, however, Auner (2003: 233), and Auner (1999: 99).

67 See Auner (2003: 16), the letter to D. J. Bach, dated July 25, 1895, where Schoenberg attempts to square the Romantic notion of nature with “the recognition of social conditions...”


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The First Swede in Space: The Making of a Public Science Hero

By Andreas Gunnarsson

Abstract
The first Swede in space, Christer Fuglesang, has become an iconic figure for the popularisation of science in Sweden. Named as Sweden’s first astronaut in 1992, Fuglesang remained a relatively anonymous and somewhat derisory figure prior to his space launch in 2006. After his space mission, however, Fuglesang has become the very personification of science in Swedish society. In this paper, the transformation of Fuglesang’s public persona and his construction as a Swedish public science hero is analysed in detail. It is discussed how after 2006, Fuglesang can be seen as providing confirmation, both of the existence of a cultural gap separating science from society, and of the ability of certain heroic individuals to bridge this gap in a way that renders it more appreciable to a larger public.

In the main part of the paper, three aspects of Fuglesang’s elevation into a Swedish public science hero are discussed: First, the cyborg metaphor is used to analyse the fearlessness Fuglesang expresses towards yielding to, and entering into close communion with science and technology. Second, the transcendence of earthly perspective aspired to by science for so long, and apparently realized through space travel, is discussed in relation to Fuglesang’s personal experiences of space. Third, the inseparability of Fuglesang’s nationality from his heroism is discussed. It was only through the repeated flagging of his Swedishness that Fuglesang’s routine space mission gained any particular significance enabling it to be communicated as a major scientific event.

Finally, closer attention is paid to the scientific message Fuglesang is delivering to Swedish society. It is argued that he acts to promote renewed faith and confidence in the ability of science to open up new horizons for the future. The task of the public science hero is to help enable these new horizons to colonize the public imagination.

Keywords: Christer Fuglesang, cyborg, popularisation, science hero, space travel, Sweden
Introduction: An Occasion to Look Up to Science

On January 25th 2007, Christer Fuglesang – the first Swede in space – was treated as a returning hero as he was welcomed back in Stockholm. Included in his reception committee was the Swedish Minister for Education, Lars Leijonborg who greeted him by saying: ”You are a living hero who has proved that even a doctor of particle physics can be an idol”(Aftonbladet 2007 Jan. 27th). Fuglesang’s space mission (official name STS 116/ISS 12A.1) had taken off from Cape Canaveral on 9th December 2006. As with most shuttle missions to the International Space Station (ISS), this one had included construction work on the space station and a change of crew members. Four space walks took place during the mission and Fuglesang participated in three, before the shuttle Discovery returned safely to Earth on 22nd December.

In the year that followed Fuglesang’s space flight, he was rarely out of the public eye in Sweden. He received numerous awards; published two richly illustrated books on his life; participated in countless radio and TV shows; inaugurated the country’s largest science festival; campaigned in the press for more funds to space research, and had an asteroid named after him in connection with a visit to Uppsala University. How are we to make sense of the carousel of highly celebratory forms of public science set in motion in Sweden by what must now be seen as a routine incidence of manned spaceflight 45 years after Gagarin? The aim of this paper is to analyse how space travel has succeeded in transforming Fuglesang into both a symbol for the unquestionable authority of science in Swedish society, and a public hero capable of re-asserting a vision of the centrality of science to the continuing advance and well-being of the Swedish nation as a whole.

Although the problematization of science and society relations in terms of a deplorable deficit, or absence, of public understanding and appreciation of science has been profoundly questioned in recent years, its grip on science communication and popularization practice remains strong. The need to award science and scientists a higher level of public respect and admiration than is typically on offer, will be discussed in this paper as clearly underlying the heroizing of Christer Fuglesang in Swedish society since the beginning of 2007. As Felt (2000) has pointed out, popularisation can be fruitfully analysed in terms of its functional capacity. Internationally, science communication and popularisation have tended to be treated as solutions to various problems and perceived threats to the reigning institutions of science:

It was important to educate an entire society to be ready to support science and invest funds. In countries where the science system was in financial straits […] it was important to remind the public regularly of the general impact that science had on the development of society. (Felt 2000: 30)
In public discourse, the underlying problem is typically depicted in terms of lost opportunities and retarded progress. The general interest for science and technology, and for education in these areas are regularly said to be lapsing throughout "the Western World", at the same time as unreasonable fears and doubts about the benefits of science and technology are apparently growing. Under these circumstances, pre-eminence in science and technology and the societal advantages this infers are portrayed as on the verge of slipping from the nation’s grasp. By avoiding any ambivalence about the expanding science-base of contemporary society, conventional forms of popularisation have persistently addressed problems concerning the public uptake of, and appreciation of, science and the uncertain ability of communication practices to ameliorate these (Wynne 1995: 370, 384-88).

As will be discussed in this paper, Christer Fuglesang has come to personify an alleged gap between Swedish scientific achievement and the rest of Swedish society, at the same time as he is seen as currently symbolizing the best available means for spanning this gap, and making genuine scientific achievement tangible and palpable to the Swedish citizenry at large. The idea of a deep rift dividing science and society that only a few like Fuglesang can successfully bridge has been conceptualised by Bensaude-Vincent (2001) as the foundation of a hierarchical relationship between science and the public. The existence of a gap, or distance, between scientific and lay knowledge has tended to be central to the understanding that Western science has held of itself. Since the middle of the nineteenth century the popularization of science has strived to create a mass audience for scientific knowledge presented as indispensable to society while still always tantalisingly beyond its reach. This conception of the science-public relation has formed the basis for the growth of various public intermediaries and popularisation specialists thought of as public ambassadors and envoys of science, or even scientific missionaries. Through their communicative efforts these individuals have all helped to cement the idea of an inescapable gap between science and society at the same time as they have continually presented themselves as commanding the means to ameliorate it (Bensaude-Vincent 2001). The gap-bridging activities of science popularizers supports a linear communication model that views popularization as a process of translating ready-made science into simplified knowledge packages fit for general public consumption (Hilgartner 1990). This approach can then be seen as structuring a complete range of settings where science orientates itself towards outside audiences. The manner in which the established institutions of science seek to maintain legitimacy, epistemic priority and autonomy, as well as public support and appreciation – has been famously described by Gieryn (1983) as boundary work. Not to be viewed as cynical manipulation, Gieryn argues that boundary work is a vital part of professional development and works to enable scientists to maintain expert authority and public sup-
port by negotiating the boundaries between science and non-science. Consequently, science becomes a central, yet external authority in society, as popularisation and science communication are presented as dedicated to bringing higher asocial knowledge down to Earth. The value of Fuglesang as a populariser is to be found in his role as a definitive ”gap-man” – someone so clearly set apart from the population at large, yet so spectacularly able to bring scientific achievement into public view.

**Christer Fuglesang 1992-2006: Not Quite the ”Right Stuff”?**

The heroic status of Christer Fuglesang which was repeatedly recognized and confirmed in Sweden during 2007, remained undecided until the moment of his launch into space in December 2006 projecting him out of relative anonymity. Prior to launch, his public profile was low rather than high, and anything but unambiguously celebratory. For this reason, a short background concerning the development of Fuglesang’s public image is appropriate in order to more clearly depict his transformation into a true science hero.

In 1992 Christer Fuglesang was announced as the first Swedish astronaut and one of six ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut candidates (Fuglesang 2007: 59-60; Dagens Nyheter 1992 May 16th). His first potential space mission was to the Russian space station Mir on the second of two flights that the ESA had negotiated called EuroMir94 and 95. Fuglesang and the German astronaut Thomas Reiter were selected to train for the second flight, but when the final decision was made, Reiter was favoured over Fuglesang who was named as the backup astronaut. Fuglesang has described this as a frustratingly political decision, and a great personal disappointment made worse by erroneous Swedish newspaper reports stating that he had been the one chosen for the flight (Fuglesang 2007: 98-99, 147, 158-160; Expressen 1995 Mar. 17th; Svenska Dagbladet 2002 Feb. 28th, Expressen 2003 Mar. 30th).

In 1996, a Swedish TV comedy show called *Percy tårar*, with the popular comedy team Killinggänget, made satirical comment on Fuglesang’s prospects of becoming the first Swede in space. Using Fuglesang’s real name a series of sketches presented an astronaut joining the Swedish space programme hoping to become a member of the first Swedish mission to the moon. First, Fuglesang and the other candidates for the mission undergo a series of hilarious tests and exams in order to ascertain who shall board the X-9 rocket. But then the competition gets much tougher as two German candidates arrive. Unable to compete with the superior skills of the two Germans, and as the third place on the mission is assigned to the programme director’s favourite student, Christer is sadly left earthbound surrendering to drugs as the only way to contain his sorrows (SVT 1996). Apparently making fun of his competition with Reiter, and the futility of his long and arduous
training, the real Fuglesang later publicly announced that he found it strange that his actual name had been used in the sketch, jokingly adding, that by rights he felt he should have been paid for the liberty taken (Expressen 2003 Mar. 30th).

Following Reiter’s EuroMir95 mission, Fuglesang transferred to NASA in Houston in 1996 to undergo further astronaut training. At NASA, he joined a large group of astronauts and was again passed over several times in the planning of space missions, before in 2002 being designated a “mission specialist” on the planned launch STS116/ISS 12A.1 scheduled for May 2003 (Fuglesang 2007:189-91, 199-202). However, on February 1st 2003, just months before the scheduled flight, the space shuttle Columbia blew up on re-entry and all aboard were killed. Fuglesang’s mission was immediately postponed. Therefore, when he finally lifted off on December 9th 2006, fourteen years had elapsed since he was publicly named as the first Swedish astronaut.

As this brief history suggests Fuglesang’s early appearances as a public figure were associated with a combination of excitement and expectation repeatedly followed by reports of disappointment and frustration as “the first Swede in space” remained stuck on the launch pad once again. The 1996 satire of him as a naïve dreamer, and a victim of circumstance, outcompeted by the stellar performances of the German astronauts, played on his real life frustrations. In the satire Fuglesang is depicted as not quite the “Right Stuff” and as a figure of public derision. Therefore prior to launch, Fuglesang resembled more a public picture of inadequacy connected with broken dreams, not an untarnished hero in the making. Even though some of the features of the pre-flight image have resurfaced now and again in the post-flight era, the past has largely been forgotten and erased in media representations of Fuglesang after 2006. Fourteen years standing in line for a launch have been re-interpreted and praised as signifying great tenacity and perseverance.

The Post Flight Persona – How and Why Fuglesang Became a Functional Figure for the Popularization of Science in Sweden

The public persona of Fuglesang after 2006 is that of a paragon of personal and professional achievement. There are, however, several distinct sides to this heroic image which shall be subject to separate analysis in the following sections of this paper. The different sides of Fuglesang’s projected heroism relate to the different ways in which he can be seen as wedded to science and technology. Each of these ways enables him to emerge as a genuinely outstanding and exemplary individual commanding skills and experience that many can aspire to gain, but only a few can actually obtain. Together the different sides of Fuglesang’s heroic persona serve to manufacture him as a symbol for both the gap dividing science and society, and the respect and admiration rightly sought by the former from the latter.
The three sides to Fuglesang’s heroic self will be discussed under the headings: cyborg relations; space experience and perspective; and hard working Swedish hero. These three themes are meant to show how the space mission served to remove the ambiguities of the pre-flight identity and position Fuglesang as a role model fit to both confirm and reinstate the great science-public divide.

**Cyborg Relations – The Ability to Live with Technology**

Shortly after the STS 116 mission, the National Museum of Science and Technology in Stockholm opened their exhibition "An Adventure in Space". Hanging from the ceiling above the displays was a mannequin representing Fuglesang in his space suit. This mannequin will here be taken as a starting point for a discussion of how Fuglesang’s achievement is broadly advertised as built upon his exemplary marriage to science and technology. As Benita Shaw (2004) has argued, the space suit itself is simultaneously the uniform worn by the heroic conqueror of space and a sign of otherworldliness. The visor of the space suit depersonalizes the astronaut rendering him indistinguishable from his fellows and closely resembling the heavily armoured knight of old – a former figure of depersonalized valour and virtue. Although the mannequin in the space suit at the Stockholm exhibition could not be mistaken for anybody else than Fuglesang, he is still displayed as a detached, anonymous figure, encapsulated in technology, secured to a space station with a lifeline resembling an umbilical cord (Shaw 2004). As Fuglesang himself has testified, the practice of spacwalking, or EVA (Extra Vehicular Activities), requires careful preparations: "the batteries and the pressurization of the suits were continually monitored, the cooling tested, the oxygen level closely controlled. Nothing is left to chance. To go into space, into a vacuum, is not like taking a walk in the park.”
s a prominent theme in the construction of Fuglesang’s heroic
fin al tests. Gastroscopy was one of the
An
than a normal human is in a lifetime,
(Fuglesang 2007: 110). Getting into the space suit itself took almost an hour, and
the whole process of preparing a spacewalk took several hours. Again as Fugle-
sang confirms: ”You cannot be claustrophobic if you want to get into a space suit”
(Fuglesang 2007: 109). But even though it is a cumbersome and confining envi-
ronment its purpose is to make purposeful action in space possible. This state of
voluntary subjection to technical imperatives which are understood as both con-
fining and enabling is a prominent theme in the construction of Fuglesang’s heroic
post-flight persona.

Part of the extraordinariness of the astronaut relates to his ability to enter into
complete unison with the technologies required for space travel. The emphasis on
physical and mental training and testing procedures in many astronaut narratives
(e.g. Wolfe 1979; Fuglesang 2007) can be viewed as relating to the necessity of
finding and fostering individuals compatible with the technologies of space flight.
The astronaut must not black out under high g-forces; must be able to cope with
weightlessness and able to keep his heart rate down under pressure. The body of
the astronaut is a monitored body – monitored in space, but also closely surveilled
on Earth. In Fuglesang’s case, the process of getting clearance to participate in a
space mission translates into a story of accommodating and complying with a vast
array of medical test procedures. With his initial move from the ESA in Germany
to Star City, Russia, Fuglesang recalls being subjected to two weeks of intensive
medical tests and physical examinations: ”It obviously wasn’t enough with every-
thing that the ESA had already subjected us to: the Russian doctors wanted to
have a look themselves and also do additional tests. Gastroscopy was one of the
less pleasant […]” (Fuglesang 2007: 100).

And again as he transferred from Star City to Houston:

[…] first I had to go through NASA’s medical examination. Doctors in different
countries can’t have a lot of trust in each other. I had already been examined by
Swedish, European and Russian doctors more than a normal human is in a lifetime,
but still this didn’t do. (Fuglesang 2007: 170)

The cyborg has become a much discussed figure, as a science fiction character, as
a hybrid subjectivity, and as an actual technological possibility. The term origi-
nates from the article ”Cyborgs and Space” by M. Clynes and N. Kline
(1960/1995), where they pose the question of how a fish that wished to live on
land would go about doing that – would it bear with it a small amount of water, or
would it be better to modify itself technologically? This metaphor for man in
space makes the point that dragging your natural environment around with you is
both cumbersome and risky, as it will always remain fragile and vulnerable. In-
stead man should, like ”a particularly intelligent and resourceful fish” seek to in-
corporate technical devices, thereby ”creating self-regulating man-machine sys-
tems”. Freeing humans from maintaining complicated life-sustaining systems this
would ”leav[e] man free to explore, to create, to think, and to feel”. (Clynes &
Kline 1960/1995: 29-33) Since Clynes and Kline’s article, the figure of the cyborg
has taken on an expanded meaning, often being viewed as a metaphor for human-machine systems in general. The astronaut cyborg differs from the intelligent fish imagined by Clynes and Kline in that the astronaut is encapsulated in technology rather than the other way around (Shaw 2004). Treating the body of the astronaut as contiguous with technology and as something to be automatically monitored and controlled, promises to liberate human powers of mind and vision enabling them to be dedicated to higher purpose (Romanyshyn 1992: 114-17). The astronaut frees himself from his bodily limitations by subjecting his body to the technological systems that sustain it (Bryld & Lykke 2000: 30-31, 113-15).

Depicting parallel conceptions, Gerovitch (2007) relates how the image of the cosmonaut was linked to the idea of "the new Soviet man", bringing together the human and technological qualities required to form a simultaneously rationalistic, efficient and creative individual. Even though the spaceships were almost completely automated; "Soviet propaganda vividly portrayed cosmonaut heroes bravely flying their spacecraft into the unknown" (2007:136). The cosmonaut was expected to remain calm at all times, to be able to continuously monitor and report on various instrument readings, and to be capable of following orders and procedures even under circumstances of extreme duress. These expectations applied regardless of whether the cosmonaut was on a space mission, still completing his training, or performing public duties. The expectations placed upon the US astronaut turn out to be very similar (Gerovitch 2007).

Tom Wolfe’s The Right Stuff (1979) depicts how the nature of heroism changed with the emergence of the astronaut. The contradiction of being both further enabled by, and enslaved under technology is explicitly described by Wolfe when he tells of the meticulous testing procedures candidate astronauts were subjected to, and their levels of opposition/acquiescence with regards to the (very low) levels of control they were granted over the Mercury capsule. This kinship of the cosmo/astronaut – that Gerovitch identifies in terms of "a split self: both a distinct individual and a little cog, a master of technology and a part of the machine" (Gerovitch 2007: 155) – is what makes him such a good public representative of science and technology – a master and slave rolled into one.

This is particularly evident in the negotiations surrounding extensive and sometimes humiliating medical testing. In order to be selected and approved for space travel the astronaut must undergo the tests, but in order to remain a distinct and heroic, masculine individual he must do so under reasonable protest. Protesting too much, or opposing the tests outright would mean a failure to live up to the demands placed upon astronauts. This is the explanation both Wolfe and Launius provide in their texts for why Peter Conrad did not become one of the Mercury Seven crew. According to them both, Conrad was simply unwilling to submit to the medical and psychological testing, mocking and ridiculing the testing procedures (Launius 2005; Wolfe 1979).
Fuglesang’s depiction of the testing procedures he was subjected to decades after the initial problems experienced trying to turn maverick fighter pilots into astronauts, speaks of a much more accommodative attitude: a measure of jocularity without actual opposition:

Worst was the so-called vestibular training, which consisted of developing one's resistance to motion sickness by sitting in spinning devices. The idea is that it should help against space sickness as well, but I’m not convinced. Every other day we went to what we jokingly called the torture chamber and were spun until we became nauseous. [---] I noted an interesting Pavlov’s reflex in myself: after a while my hands got cold and sweaty already in the hallway on the way to the spinning device. (Fuglesang 2007: 97)

Public interest in astronauts tended to decline after the end of the 1960s, while space launches and landings continued to remain popular spectacles. David Nye (1994) has described this not only in terms of "the machine’s displacing the hero", no longer viewed as particularly exceptional, but also as reflecting the sublime qualities of the launch itself. The awe-inspiring spectacle of the launch has not lost its powers of attraction as an example of what Nye calls the American technological sublime. Linked by many viewers to feelings of patriotism and feelings of American technological superiority the launch serves as both as an object of spectacle and display (Nye 1994: 238-56). Even if the feelings of national pride are no longer as closely tied to the astronauts so much as to the spacecraft they inhabit, the former are still seen as showing an appropriate relationship to science and technology. On top of the rocket, the astronaut so to speak leads by example, when he fearlessly blasts off into space; demonstrating that technology should be consumed and surrendered to, rather than resisted and always treated with fear and caution. This masculine heroism of the astronaut is formed, not in opposition to the technologies of space flight, but in successful combination with them. Mixing metaphors, the fearless white-suited space knight blasting into the unknown fits well with what Constance Penley has called "the WASP space cowboy version of spaceflight" (1997: 58) that while remaining so celebrated excludes other visions of space travel. Despite widespread public ambivalence towards the unfettered inventiveness of science, the astronaut is still being mobilized to demonstrate that faith and confidence in science and technology pays off, both for the individuals concerned and the communities they belong to. As Fuglesang himself has expressed it: "Humanity would not have gotten far if it hadn’t exposed itself to risks” (Expressen 2003 Mar. 30th).

The potential risks of the launch situation have been brought to the fore not least by the launch-related accidents of Challenger in 1986 and Columbia in 2003. According to Nye, the Challenger disaster led to even bigger crowds at launches, since it "dramatized the danger of the launches and rescued them from the banality of uninterrupted success. It fulfilled the dark promise of unimaginable violence
that had always been an unconscious part of the experience of witnessing a launch.” (Nye 1994: 251-52).

After much publicized accidents, to sit on top of the rocket in front of thousands of people, waiting for take off takes on the character of a public showdown between those who are still able to subscribe to an unalloyed faith in scientific and technological progress and those who preach greater caution. Under these circumstances, the astronaut is the embodiment of continued and renewed faith in science and technology, someone still determined to compete to put their life and soul on the line, confident that their vital signs will not betray them. Fuglesang plays out this role of confident believer when he is surprised by his own cool. Describing his feelings on a dictaphone four minutes from lift-off he notes: “Still really not that jittery; more the wonderful feeling of expectation, definitely no nervousness.” (Fuglesang 2007:13; Sveriges Radio 2007) This is how the tension of the launch is expressed: exciting and wonderful, but not scary or nerve-racking. What is about to happen is not tainted by any dark fears or doubts, but filled with promises and expectations – and it is recorded in a calm and collected manner, as a memento of the launch as equivalent to a moment of technological re-birth.

**Space Experience and Perspective**

Having cultivated an appropriate relation to the technologies of space travel the astronaut is finally launched into space. The journey into space itself is an unconditional requirement if the astronaut is to become a functional hero for the popularization of science in society. Being literally out of this world, space travel appears to deliver on a transcendental promise made by science to society. But why space travel should continue to be seen as so astounding today begs explanation not least as the ”god’s eye view” awarded to the astronaut has grown so commonplace as images of Earth from space have permeated everyday life (Cosgrove 2001). In this context Fuglesang is inclined to downplay the novelty and impact of the view from space, without devaluing the opportunity to witness it firsthand:

Some of the most frequent questions I’ve been asked since I returned from space concerns how it affected me as a person. Have I changed? Is my outlook on life different after I’ve seen the Earth from above, from a view that has been granted so very few? [...] I’m pretty sure that I haven’t changed from my time in space [...] None of my crew colleagues claims to have changed to any appreciable extent and none of us are surprised about that. We knew fairly well what we would experience, even though there is a great difference between seeing pictures of it and seeing it with your own eyes. (Fuglesang 2007: 334)

When astronauts leave Earth they evoke an entire field of meanings and promises connected with the transcendence of Earthly perspective and something that has been a central component of both the scientific and broader cultural imagination at least since Copernicus and Galileo (Romanyszyn 1992: 42). The perspective from
space is privileged because it combines a detached ideal of knowledge with a practice of witnessing central to modern science and technology.

Hannah Arendt (1958) describes science as a quest for achieving "the Archimedean point" which is repeatedly afflic ted with "Cartesian doubt". That is, science is a quest for an all-seeing point of observation which perennially falls victim to the belief that all sensory perception is false and illusionary. Science lives with both conceptions and attempts to resolves the contradiction by placing the Archimedean point within the mind, so as to make the point a concept or ideal rather than an actual location:

Without actually standing where Archimedes wished to stand […], still bound to the Earth through the human condition, we have found a way to act on the Earth and within terrestrial nature as though we dispose of it from outside, from the Archimedean point. (Arendt 1958: 262)

The cultural significance of actually viewing the Earth from the outside should not therefore be underestimated. As Cosgrove points out, using Apollo as his metaphor for the transcendent perspective, although images of the globe play an important part in western history and culture, still very few people have actually seen the Earth from the outside:

Achieving the Apollonian perspective, so long anticipated in imagination, produced an unconscious but perhaps predictable set of responses – marvel at a vast yet tiny Earth, reflection on the insignificance of self, and yearning for human unity. […] Humans were henceforth neither grand actors at creation’s centre stage nor helpless creatures at its margins. (Cosgrove 2001: 258-59)

The awe-inspiring transcendence of Earth and the view from the outside is clearly articulated by Fuglesang in his published books, for example when he describes his first space walk:

At the same time the day dawns and the Earth reveals itself beneath me. It passes by at high speed. Sea and clouds. […] I see a much wider view than from inside through the windows. It is very, very beautiful and I can hardly believe that I am here. (Fuglesang 2007: 116)

Fuglesang describes not only the marvel of a transcendent perspective – be it Archimedean or Apollonian – but also the act of witnessing that goes with it positioning him apart from the rest of society.

Witnessing from space has much in common with scientific witnessing practices (Shapin & Schaffer 1985; Haraway 1997), not least since it both realizes the ideal of detached vision and is subject to advanced technical mediation. The marvel expressed above corresponds with, and confirms the privileged vantage point that has been won. Both Western culture in general, and Western science in particular, are heavily indebted to witnessing from privileged points through the technique of linear perspective. With the prominence of linearity in occidental culture what is viewed becomes deeply dependent on the position of the viewer. The procedures of the linear perspective, argues Romanyshyn:
have been taken up, elaborated, and amplified to allow the development of a technical world. […] we have played out in plural fashion the role of being an onlooker on this side of the window observing a world which in myriad forms has become something to be observed. (1992: 57)

With linear perspective, vision and visual representation are central to the perception of the world, and vision is dependent on positioning. The Copernican replacement of the Earth as an object among other objects makes possible our release, and ultimately our escape, from it (Romanyshyn 1992: 35-58, 147-48). If the Earth were not an object that could be observed, it would not be possible to transcend it. This is part of the explanation for why astronauts can claim a privileged status as scientific witnesses: through the separation of the object and subject of knowledge, the view from space has been anticipated for centuries, and the astronaut is cast as the one who finally realises it. A difference in experience and perspective opens up between the astronaut and those left on Earth, similar to the expert – lay divide represented by Bensaude-Vincent’s gap. A decisive difference in experience and perspective gives the astronaut not only the right, but also the obligation to communicate and share this unearthly vision and experience. Fuglesang does this in many forms, perhaps most notably in his books about space and his mission (Fuglesang & Tell 2007; Fuglesang 2007).

The astronaut becomes both our representative in space and a representative for the space experience and perspective – the astronaut bears witness for all of us not in a position to see what he sees. To be a witness is to be a mediator, who we can or cannot treat as credible (Peters 2001). Shapin and Schaffer (1985) show how the act of displaying and witnessing became crucial to the birth of experimental science and the establishment of matters of fact. By staging his experiments for an audience of reliable and respectable “gentlemen” Boyle was able to establish experiment as a valid path to knowledge and the unveiling of nature. Gentleman witnesses were suitable for this task not because they represented the view of anyone, but because they represented the view of someone – someone eminently trustworthy and respected. For Boyle these witnesses were suitable because they were also formally detached from the experiments they witnessed (Shapin & Schaffer 1985). However, the astronaut is not such an independent witness as the gentlemen of old. Instead he has grown indistinguishable from the science he is tasked with warranting and authorizing. Haraway’s figure of the Modest Witness signals how the characteristics of the witness are positioned in order to transform their testimony into the solid foundations for the construction of facts. Haraway’s work insists that the ideal of objective witnessing is by no means detached from perspective and interest. The modesty of the witness depends upon the denial of their situatedness. By claiming universality for their testimony scientific witnesses become themselves universal entities, unmarked and transparent figures, (Haraway 1991: 183-96; 1997). This is one of the reasons why the astronaut becomes such an important symbol for science and technology: Fuglesang has achieved a
vantage point which transforms him into a privileged witness; simultaneously one of us and not one of us. Thereby his accounts of how the Earth appears from space can be accepted as valid and true, we can trust him in the same way we can trust the science and technology that have elevated him into the position from which he views the world.

**Hard Working Swedish Hero – Bringing the Astronaut to the Public**

I was honestly more nervous then [landing at the airport in Stockholm] than I was lying strapped down in the space shuttle on the launch pad. Then I knew fairly well what to expect. Now all I had understood was that the interest was large […]. The welcome and reception were truly magnificent. (Fuglesang 2007: 331)

The deficit model understands the science-public relation as a difference between the scientist who is in possession of privileged knowledge and "the public" made up of lay people who have yet to be made a party to this knowledge (Bensaude-Vincent 2001). The role of popularisation thus becomes to repack and translate science into a form that is sufficiently palatable and comprehensible to lay audiences (Hilgartner 1990: 519-20). Therefore, while popular science is meant to be diluted science, maintaining science’s preferential right of interpretation, it also tries to appeal to lay audiences by relating to what they are imagined to be already familiar with. This suggests the introduction of science into everyday life in a particular way, as attempts are made to wed science with the mundane. Myers sums up the problem when remarking that popularisation is a field "defined in terms of what it is not. […] Popularisation includes only texts about science that are not addressed to other specialist scientists" (Myers 2003: 265). It is this "down to Earth" meeting with the public that makes Fuglesang nervous in the above quote; now that space mission is over, the public mission still remains. In the texts meant to frame, explain and report on Fuglesang’s mission, the combination of elements of otherworldliness and mundanity are played out in a variety of ways, often oscillating between celebrations of the heroic astronaut and devices meant to root him and the science and technology he represents in the realm of the popular. Finding the balance between celebrating the unique qualities of Fuglesang’s achievement while developing further a sense of identity between him and his audience remains a constant challenge.

All spacesuits come with flags attached, in Fuglesang’s case it is a Swedish flag and, as was noted in the media coverage, recruiting representatives from different nations seems to have become a way for NASA and the Russian space program to broaden and maintain their public appeal (Östersundsposten/TT Spektra 2006 Dec. 7th). At the very core of the public interest in the STS 116 mission and in the celebrations of Fuglesang is his nationality. To claim that a space mission could be ordinary or mundane might seem ridiculous, but as far as the history of space flight is concerned, the STS 116 mission bore no resemblance to the groundbreaking missions of the early 1960s. In keeping with the space race analogy one might
say that all the medals were won a long time ago. Therefore, the scale of Fuglesang’s achievement is completely dependent upon which public is being asked to recognize it. For any other than a Swedish public, Fuglesang’s exceptionality is difficult to register. Therefore, his ability to serve as a prominent ambassador for science and technology in society is severely delimited and fully-dependent on his ability to endlessly and tirelessly wave the Swedish flag.

When passing the TV-cameras on the second launch attempt, Fuglesang held up a sign with the text "HEJA SVERIGE, Heja Norge. VIVE L’EUROPE” as a display of his public commitments. First to Sweden, in capital letters, then Norway, in small letters and as a greeting to his Norwegian relatives, and finally to Europe, to the ESA and his French friends on the site. But the Vive L’Europe is also because:

I think we need to cooperate more and better in Europe in order to create a manned space program equivalent to the USA’s and Russia’s. In addition we should spread our values in the world – and in the future into space. (Fuglesang 2007:12)

The symbols are present all through the launch process; one does not go into space merely as an individual, but also as a patriot. On Fuglesang’s spacesuit the Swedish flag figures in two ways, as the plain flag that all astronauts carry on their shoulder, and as part of the mission badge for STS 116 together with the stars and stripes. Apart from the obvious symbolism of the space shuttle being carried into space from the USA by the two flags, this image gives Fuglesang’s nationality great prominence. The badge design signals that NASA takes the Swedishness of Fuglesang very seriously. And his nationality was often underlined, before, during and after the mission. For example, other crew members asked him to talk Swedish when they were filming him or to say something typically Swedish, mission control also played an ABBA song as the wake up tune one morning, and the foods Fuglesang brought with him included elk sausage. (Fuglesang 2007; Sveriges Radio 2007).

All of these markers, served to remind us of and to anchor Fuglesang in a Swedish context made up of everyday cultural fragments such as food, music and phrases. Most of them are very well known, some even emblematic for Sweden,
like the elk that is used in numerous advertising campaigns, or ABBA – one of the country’s most successful music exports. Others are more personal like the phrase "Fina fisken", a somewhat outdated expression meaning that all is ok. The use of national markers has served to connect Fuglesang to Sweden, his accomplishments thereby become Swedish ones. Establishing a common denominator between him and, for example, the children envisaged as becoming interested in science and technology strengthens his role as an example for others. In this sense the appeal to national symbols upholds a connection that otherwise could easily be questioned. Like many other successful individuals with scientific and/or technological careers, Fuglesang has made his career on an international rather than a national stage. Leaving Sweden as early as 1988 to work at CERN and live in France, he went on to Germany, Russia and the United States (Fuglesang 2007: 36). Fuglesang has arguably run the risk of losing touch with many of the cultural markers of everyday life that make up an important component in the construction of banal nationalism. On the other hand, banal nationalism is in many ways an essentialist ideology: nationality is imagined to be determined by birth or upbringing and incorporated as a fixed identity (Billig 1995: 61).

This national identity then forms the basis for the international relations between nations and between the citizens of different nations. Internationalism should therefore be regarded not as an alternative to nationalism, but rather as a feature of it (Billig 1995: 80). Fuglesang’s Swedishness is played out in a similar fashion both by himself, and by others – from the official representatives of the nation to the flag-waving crowds, all recognize that Fuglesang’s achievements are to some degree national achievements. This could be explained as just a “natural” relation between a nation state and one of its citizens, but that would be to overlook the interdependence of astronaut and nation in the way that they are implicated in strengthening images and representations of each other.

Even though the return of Fuglesang to Sweden might be accurately described as a moment of “hot” nationalism, with flags being waved and a meeting with the King, I would argue that the contextualisation of Fuglesang and the mission as a Swedish event is more a result of unreflective banal nationalism. Billig (1995) distinguishes two forms of nationalism: the “hot” one usually reserved for separatist movements; and the banal, everyday nationalism signified by constant flag-angling and flag-waving, serving as a reminder and a reiteration of community membership. Banal nationalism forms the basis for outbursts of hot nationalism, like the patriotic flag-waving crowds at American rocket launches described by Nye (1994). For Fuglesang’s space mission to gain recognition as a major technological event, it must be simultaneously encoded as a national event. Fuglesang is not first in space in any popularly significant way other then being the first Swedish passport holder to orbit the Earth. The displays of Sweden and Swedishness are present on all levels, making it simultaneously significant and natural. By ground-
ing the representation in a banal nationalism Fuglesang’s public image can draw on existing symbols and markers – flags, foods, language and so on – to successfully attach the astronaut both to a Swedish public and an international space program.

In connection with the launch Fuglesang made a statement to the press about his long wait for a mission in which he claimed that the Swedish government had not been supportive enough. Other countries had paid to get ahead of him (Hallands Nyheter/TT 2006 Nov. 21st). His argument did not express personal disappointment so much as a sense national betrayal. He did not say that other individuals had bought their way into space before him, but that other nations had strived harder than Sweden. The difference is crucial; the statement is typical of the way nations work as including and excluding concepts. It is a sort of criticism that implies that the problem with ”Sweden” is that ”we” play by, and respect the rules, while many other nations do not. This constructs, or reconstructs, an image of national problems as deriving from strengths. To be just and fair are not usually regarded as shortcomings, they can only become a problem in relation to the less noble actions of others. But the statement also helps reinterpret the time Fuglesang spent waiting to get into space. Unlike other nation’s astronauts, Swedish ones, because of their national pedigree, know how to stand in line.

Fuglesang’s achievements therefore are to be seen as authentic and genuine, and as resulting from hard work and determination, untainted by politics and power games. The Minister of Education’s comment about the particle physicist turned hero is typical of the official attitude towards Fuglesang: he is a powerful mix of hero, idol and scientist, the perfect symbol for a knowledge-based nation intent on promoting public interest in science and technology and recruitment to educational programmes in these fields.

That it took fourteen years for Fuglesang to get into space is transformed from the basis for jokes and satire into a marker of the man’s resolve. One of Fuglesang’s books (2007) bears the title Thirteen Days in Space After Fourteen Years on Earth, the title plays on the popular image of Fuglesang’s long struggle to gain a place on a space mission. His identity as an also-ran astronaut is, however, rewritten in the book in terms of a quest of stubborn determination where Fuglesang showed great perseverance never doubting he would one day be awarded the opportunity he so justly deserved. In a radio show, broadcast during the summer of 2007, Fuglesang reflects on his public image as the astronaut who was held back before being eventually granted a space mission. He claims that he never worried that he would never make it into space, and that he does not see fourteen years as an exceptionally long time spent preparing for such a major undertaking. Fuglesang takes up the theme of a goal-oriented achiever at the end of his ”space diary”:

To set a goal for oneself and then perform all that is needed to finally reach it is always gratifying. And the harder the goal is to reach, the more obstacles one has to
pass on the way, the better the feeling afterwards. I have accomplished the biggest goal of my life so far. There were more obstacles on the way than I thought there would be on the day I was chosen as astronaut. I hope, and believe, that my space journey has given others the joy I felt myself. That my positive experience has rubbed off on others. (Fuglesang 2007: 333)

Hard work is seen as rewarding, and as a source of personal pleasure and pride in itself. Fuglesang accepts that to accomplish truly great things delayed gratification must be endured. Only then, can your achievements not only be a joy to yourself, but also to others. On December 15th 2006, Swedish television broadcast a live interview with Fuglesang and his colleague Thomas Ritter from on-board the International Space Station (TV4 2006). Before the interview a panel talked about Fuglesang’s career, comparing him to other popular heroes like footballers and pop stars. The presenter marvelled at someone who is neither an athlete nor a pop singer, but whose fame has been won through hard graft, "this is a guy who has studied, he has done his homework…". The government minister in the studio, Maud Olofsson, added that it is his persistence that makes his achievement so special; Fuglesang has worked hard from his school years, getting a PhD, and then single-mindedly dedicating himself to making it into space. She also commented that she hoped Fuglesang would serve as an example to others. This frame was then reinforced during the interview when a nine-year-old boy asked Fuglesang if he thought all the years of waiting had been worthwhile now that he was finally in space. Fuglesang replied that they had been very much worthwhile, but that he had not just waited, he had been working with the space program and that, in itself, had been a highly rewarding experience. Olofsson also wanted Fuglesang to promise to be a good ambassador for "all the kids who want to study science, we need many more like you who study and set grand goals for themselves.” (TV4 2006).

All these descriptions, comments and carefully planned questions underline the same basic theme; the Swedish member of the space program should be seen as a qualified, hard working and honest fellow. That it took so long before he made it into space should not be considered strange or as a sign of weakness, but as a sign of stubborn tenacity. Fuglesang did not buy his ticket into space; he earned it through selfless dedication to the continuing development of space exploration making him both a credit to science and the Swedish nation alike.

How the First Swede in Space Envisions the Future.

So far, the main aim of this text has been to analyse how Fuglesang came to be positioned as an ideal figure for re-asserting the autonomous authority of science in Swedish society. But the question of how the construction of Fuglesang as a popular science hero connects with attempts to enhance public confidence and faith in science and technology more generally remains to be addressed. In this
last section, Fuglesang’s envisioning of the future is scrutinised in order to discuss how his status as public hero allows him to remind the lay public of the benefits of science. In his more generally expressed hopes and fears for scientific, technological and social development, a sense of what is at stake in the practises of popularisation becomes clearer.

The popular science presented here revolves around one person, and science and technology are not explicitly dealt with as facts and artefacts. Rather than explaining and translating scientific details, the popular texts mentioned here are more accurately interpreted as arguments for science in general, and for the project of space exploration in particular. Thus, popular science in this context is about winning public support and license leading to the further enlargement of the scale and scope of autonomous scientific and engineering actions in society. This is partly done by popularisations of different details, but on the whole the idea is to re-assert faith in progress and place the future on a new scientific and technological frontier once more.

The message that Fuglesang delivers is that renewed public faith in science and technology will reward both those individuals and those societies who are willing and able to subject themselves to the rigours of science and engineering cultures. Thus, the science hero brings to life a vision of scientific and technical ingenuity as once again forces capable of solving the problems of our time:

Fresh water and easily accessible oil, two fundamental resources in the world today, risk being in short supply. We will have to work hard on Earth to share them, until new technology solves the problem forever. In the long run it’s a temporary problem we’re facing. But those of us who live now, and our children, want to pass it over as smoothly as possible. (Sveriges Radio 2007)

Science and technology will not only solve contemporary problems, they will also, as in the past, continue to open up new frontiers for the future. The science and technology of the space programme can even end up delivering our salvation, as is evident in this lengthy quote:

I picture to myself how mankind slowly but surely will expand its domain. First to the moon and Mars, then to other planets in our solar system and in time to distant stars and their planets. I envision how we shall land on Mars in twenty-five years, how self-sustaining colonies will be established there in a hundred years, how we shall travel the entire solar system in yet another couple of hundred years and finally build large space cities and travel to other stars. Since I don’t have any science fiction-dreams of hyperspace or such, I count on these star voyages taking several thousand years. Most people get dumbfounded when one speaks of such time spans, but if we look back it is not that long. […] Man has existed as Homo sapiens for a few hundred thousand years. Most things indicate that we originated in Africa and then during several thousands years wandered out across the Earth. Africa was our first cradle, Earth is our second and the solar system will be our third. But there is no reason to remain in any of them. Compared to life’s total age on Earth, about three billion years, ten thousand years for a star voyage is but a moment. (Fuglesang & Tell 2007: 246)
The articulation of goals as grandiose as this is here made more likely by a combination of using two types of time frames, a more comprehensible one for the short term achievements to which I will return, and a far more abstract one for the establishment of human colonies in space. This second time scale is made more credible by reference not to the space programme, or other concrete endeavours, but to evolutionary time. Our travel through the galaxies should not be compared solely to the limited lives of human beings, but rather to the evolution of humankind itself. By alluding to evolutionary processes this progress is not only more likely but also framed as a "natural" development. Space is our natural future home, or our "third cradle". There is no room in this account for an alternative trajectory for humankind, and there is a strong conviction that we must press on reaching for the stars, all that is required is renewed faith and belief, those precious resources that scientists and engineers are so often unfairly deprived of.

The smaller time scale is more modest, but it still outlines what needs to be done in order to make the grander one realisable. Fuglesang’s visions of the future are full of qualifiers about political will and funding. So they are not only arguments for space exploration as a detached project, as he acknowledges the need for public support. Still he remains optimistic, for example, writing enthusiastically about future travels to Mars in the preface of a recent book by Ella Carlsson (2007) that tells of her participation in simulation work in preparation for a Mars landing. Projects such as these are important in the work of science communication as they supply narrative structure. Fuglesang’s mission to the International Space Station is seen as one step in a much larger saga, one that started with Sputnik and will end with mankind colonising distant planets. This is how scientific and technological progress is made tangible and real. The narrative of a history, present and future that creates a whole makes every project a step towards something far greater.

In this light Fuglesang’s commitment to combining his space mission with a public mission is more understandable, it is not hard to imagine that this is another part of the astronaut’s duty towards the continuation of space exploration. The grand narrative of space colonisation supplies the space endeavour, with a definite sense of direction. Establishing and building a space station in orbit around Earth is just the first step in a far grander scheme of things. A development in which there is ample room and opportunity for a new generation of Swedish scientists and engineers to follow the example of the particle physics hero.

At the same time, this development is by no means given. The threat of public indifference might very well undermine the whole project. As science and technology continue to show the way into the future, there remain no guarantees that Swedish society at large will follow. The gap between science and the public may grow dauntingly large if the latter choose to wallow in ignorance rather than adopt the path to knowledge. The gap between science and the public is ultimately not
the problem, so much as a failure on the part of the public to recognize its existence. As Fuglesang expresses it:

What’s worrying is when people confuse astronaut, astronomer and astrologer. The astronomer is someone who carries out research about stars and space and is close to me. But an astrologer is a person who claims that she or he can tell peoples’ future based on where the planets are in the sky. Complete nonsense! I have few abomina-
tions but, pseudo-science in all its forms is one of them. It shocks me when charla-
tans and self-appointed fortune-tellers of different kinds deceive innocent and often vulnerable people. This holds for everything from horoscopes to a large part of so-
called alternative medicine, for example homeopathy and cure by touch. (Sveriges
Radio 2007)

That people confuse astronomers and astrologers tells of a dangerous form of ig-
norance that may be exploited. Science and pseudo-science are portrayed as un-
ambiguous categories, the latter consisting of charlatans and swindlers, the former of unequivocally trustworthy scientists. That people read horoscopes, consult healers and partake in "pseudo-scientific" activities should not be seen as due to choice or preference, it is a sign of human weakness and vulnerability. The boundary work performed here is one that clearly sets science apart from other knowledge-producing activities, and equates true knowledge exclusively with science. The answer to the threat of ignorance and a lack of appreciation for sci-
ence is framed as a request that the public pay heed to scientists in order not to be fooled. A lack of appreciation and interest for science is thus constituted as a so-
cial and political problem. Science communication is a way of protecting the pub-
lic from false gods, regardless of the public’s ability to understand the details of science, they must not lose faith in the vision of a science-based society. So in the end the gap between a knowledgeable science and an ignorant public is re-
established and the cultural leadership of science is reassured as the way towards an enlightened future society.

Conclusion

In summary, by studying the positioning of Fuglesang as a symbol for a divide between science and society which he personally has been able to literally rise above, has enabled us to address the reaffirmation of the cultural boundaries of science (cf. Gieryn 1983) in Swedish society. Once again, science is placed in a separate sphere, at once remote and yet crucial for the future development of the nation as a whole. A perceived lack of public support for autonomous science in society continually generates the need for appropriate mediators capable of bridg-
ing the science/society divide. In the aftermath of his belated launch into space, Fuglesang has been assigned a complementary earthbound mission as he has been launched into the breach of Swedish science and society relations. Simultane-
ously, rendering the gap between Swedish science and society more pronounced,
while amply filling it with his heroism, Fuglesang has served to accentuate a particular division of cultural authority in society once more.

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**Notes**

1 A number of studies and articles in the field of Public Understanding of Science has been concerned with both describing and debunking this idea, sometimes referred to as "the dominant view of popularisation" e.g. Hilgartner (1990), or "the canonical account" e.g. Bucchi (1996), Grundmann & Cavaillé (2000), or, as I do here, "the deficit model" e.g. Miller (2001), Locke (2002) and Sturgis & Allum (2004).

2 Many surveys and studies have been published in recent years that highlight either the decline of interest in science and science education or compare levels of interest in different countries, e.g. EU (2005), Sjöberg & Schreiner (2005), see also studies from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). For a review of studies concerning students declining interests in science and scientific education see Osborne et al. (2003). For a typical view of what is wrong in the science-public relation and the dangers that entails see Dunbar (1995).

3 The work of analytically retrieving the situated traits of astronauts as scientific witnesses, and of the ones who have failed to qualify as modest witnesses in the space endeavour, is still ongoing (cf. Penley 1997; Wajcman 2000; Weitekamp 2004).

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The Divergence Hypothesis in Modernization Theory Across Three European Countries: the UK, Sweden and Greece

By Stefania Kalogeraki

Abstract
Following a comparative approach it is argued that the modernizing trajectories of three European countries, i.e., the UK, Sweden and Greece were different, as the cultural heritages of the three countries under study, formed by specific historical, political and religious events have acted as a filter of their modernization processes and left an imprint on the prevailing values. England followed a type of modernization associated with “bourgeois revolutions”, Sweden was highly influenced by the popular belief system of solidarity of the political culture of Scandinavian nations and Greece, although increasingly modern, can be associated with a more traditional, top to bottom, version of modernization, highly influenced by the Greek Orthodox Church. Secondary data and empirical research show that the different modernizing paths in the three countries have formed their main cultural characteristics; the UK is portrayed as an individualistic culture, Sweden as an amalgamation of both individualism and collectivism, and Greece as a traditional and more collectivist one. As culture, in the Parsonian approach, acts as the binder of the social world it has functioned as a mediating mechanism, shaping the personality traits and social relationships among British, Swedish and Greek citizens in the direction of an individualistic and/or a collectivist ethos. Whilst the thesis of the article does not support the bipolarity of the “divergence” and “convergence” hypotheses it provides some evidence to the former suggesting that modernization does not always take a simple linear path providing no room for variations.

Keywords: Modernization, divergence hypothesis, individualism, collectivism, Europe
1. Introduction

Greenfield (2000) argues that individualism and collectivism reflect the deep structure of cultural differences determining the fundamental relationship between the individual and the group. Hofstede (1980) rated national cultures in terms of individualistic and/or collectivist values on a scale from 1 to 100 (lower scores indicate collectivist and higher scores individualistic cultures). In Hofstede’s analysis the UK has a score of 89 representing the most individualistic culture in Europe (and one of the most individualistic cultures in the world, i.e., the US has a score of 91, closely followed by Canada and Australia). In this scale Greece (score 35) has a greater collectivist orientation (which is one of the most collectivist cultures in Europe) than the UK and Sweden, which has a score (71) between these two countries. Hofstede (1980) apart from individualism, proposed three other factors to distinguish among cultures; power distance, avoiding uncertainty and masculinity/ femininity; all of them derived from a study of values associated with work among employees of IBM company with branches in more than 40 countries.

However, Hofstede’s (1980) scale of individualistic values is the one that has been widely used to rate national cultures and explain cultural differences in social behaviors and personality traits (Triandis 1988, Vandello & Cohen 1999, Hofstede 2001, McCrae 2001, Schimmack et al. 2002). Whilst Hofstede’s analysis took place almost 28 years ago, recent research findings suggest that it still constitutes a valid and important construct of cultural differences among nations for the study of social behaviors (Schimmack et al. 2005). In one of the most recent works of Hofstede and McCrae (2004: 65) they claim that “The IBM national dimension scores (or at least their relative positions) do seem to have remained as valid in the 1990s as they were around 1970”.

The differences in the scores of individualistic and/or collectivist cultural values among the UK, Sweden and Greece give birth to questions such as: Why are values in different European cultures more individualistically oriented while in others they are more collectivistic? The aim of this article is to provide adequate answers to such queries by arguing that the modernizing path of each of these European countries had a decisive impact on the formation of their individualistic and/or collectivistic cultural characteristics.

2. Individualism and collectivism

The central idea of an individualistic cultural orientation is based on individuals’ independence and self-determination, which are seen as legitimate goals of life (Hofstede 1980, Kagitchibasi 1994, 1990, Kim 1994). In contrast, the core element
of a collectivist one is the interdependence, which binds individuals through a set of mutual obligations (Schwartz 1990, Oyserman et al. 2002).

In their social relationships individualists invest primarily in their first-degree relatives and feel rather detached from other groups (Triandis 1989, 1995). They tend to acquire many relationships but these are loose in context, whereby group memberships are impermanent and non-intensive (Kim 1994). Moreover, individualists would abandon relationships or groups when the cost of participation exceeds the benefits redirecting their attention to new groups and relationships best promoting their personal goals (Oyserman 1993, Kagitzbasi 1997). This attribute is central to rational choice theory where action is based on the principle of rational calculation applying economic models of behavior (Becker 1968).

In collectivist cultures the central feature is the subordinating of personal goals to those of the community (Markus & Kitayama 1991, Oyserman 1993). The self is conceived as an aspect of a collective, i.e., family, work-group, religious group, geographic district, or whatever is considered as an in-group by members of the culture (Triandis & Gelfand 1998). In collectivist societies individuals are mainly concerned with in-group’s values and norms, including sharing resources with in-group members establishing in-group stability and long-term relationships. Collectivists may be emotionally attached only to a few groups but they are actively concerned with their preservation and promotion (Triandis 1989, 1995).

Triandis (1995) advocates that in loose cultures, which are usually affluent and complex societies, there is a wide terrain of choices so that people become more rationally oriented and more independent in making their own decisions adopting more individualistic behaviors. In contrast, in tight cultures homogeneity promotes strong social bonds and cohesive relationships. In Triandis’ (1995: 57) words “…homogeneity predisposes a culture toward collectivism. The more homogeneous the culture, the more beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values are shared”. Despite the differences observed between individualism and collectivism these cultural dimensions should not be treated as bipolar constructs as both cultural orientations may coexist (Triandis & Gelfald 1998).

3. Modernization Theory

The above discussion on individualistic and/or collectivist cultural orientations and attributes leads to additional questions: Why do individuals tend to be more autonomous and pursue self-maximisation in some cultures rather than in others? Ultimately, which are the social forces (historical, political or economic) that make some individuals to base their relationships on rationality instead of on emotions or traditions?
Some think that the answers to such questions are to be found in modernization theory (Arts & Holman 2004). The core idea is that traditional societies have been transformed into modern ones through sub-processes such as industrialization, urbanization, democratization, professionalization and bureaucratization, whereby rational decision-making and co-coordinating mechanisms such as markets and states now predominate. The crucial sub-process is industrialization. Due to industrialization, the division of labor has become more complex, increasing urbanization, professionalization and bureaucratization. As national and international markets have spread and commercialization of economic life has taken place, technical and economic forms of rationality have spilled out of the work sphere into all other spheres of social life, enforcing values, which are functionally consistent with rationality.

Modernization, as the outcome of economic and technological advancement, results in greater affluence, pluralism, heterogeneity, and more generally, in extensive individual freedoms (Hawdon 2005). Individual freedoms provide individuals with a variety of choices of associations. More choices of associations free individuals from group control (Simmel 1971). In modern societies personalities become more independent and autonomous as they are differentiated from their social and cultural context (Habermas 1984). The pursuit of personal interests becomes common replacing collective ones (Parsons 1951), and individuals gain freedom in their choices and behaviors but lose the stability and security of earlier times. Therefore, modernization promotes an increasing shift in the direction of an individualistic ethos, i.e., the ability to “be one’s own person” emphasising self-actualisation and personal happiness rather than collective goals.

The theoretical proposition that the socio-economic, cultural and political development will be a unilinear process taking on almost identical forms in all societies with regard to various characteristics such as labor force structure, level of development, technology, state bureaucratization and value system came to be known as the “convergence hypothesis” of modernization theory (Inkeles & Rossi 1956, Lenski & Lenski 1987). Rostow (1960) is among the most well-known theorists of the so called “convergence hypothesis”. Rostow advocates that social development follows five stages the last of which is the modern western society characterized by individualism, rationalism and formal democracy, as well as by mass production and consumerism.

However, other theorists have criticised this hypothesis arguing that societies rather than converging are diverging (what came to be known as the “divergence hypothesis”) as their developmental paths are highly influenced by their unique cultural, political, or environmental characteristics (Odum 1971, Horowitz 1966). For instance, Moore (1966) claims that there have been three different types of modernization (i.e., “bourgeois revolution”, “revolution from above”, “peasant revolution”) mainly associated with changes in the class structure, and with the
political costs and benefits accrued to different political players, which in some cases contributed to increased freedom and rationality, but not in others.

The portrayals of the UK, Sweden and Greece presented below suggest that the path of modernization in each of these European countries was different providing some support to the “divergence hypothesis”. In order to conceptualize “country” the Parsonian approach of culture, as developed in the Social System (Parsons 1951), is applied. In Parsons’ theory (1951), social action is the result of the interrelationships of three systems; the social world (or according to his definition the “social system”), the personality system of the individual actors and the cultural system. According to Parsons (1951), in order to understand social action one must analyze the interrelationships of all three systems. The interrelationship between the actors and the social system is attained by the processes of internalization and socialization of the norms and values of the system by its actors. An effective socialization process means a successful internalization of norms and values in a way that becomes part of the actors’ consciences.

In Parson’s theory culture constitutes one of the functional imperatives of all social systems as it binds the elements of the social world by mediating interaction among actors and by integrating the personality and the social system. Culture has the fundamental ability to be, at least in part, a component of all the other systems. As Parsons and Shils state:

Culture has been distinguished from the other elements of action by the fact that it is intrinsically transmissible from one action system to another –from personality to personality by learning and from social system to social system by diffusion. (Parsons & Shils 1962: 159)

In the social system, culture is embodied in norms and values, which are internalized by the actor in the personality system. Therefore, the norms and values become the imperatives of the cultural system “which guide the choices made by actors and which limit the types of interaction which may occur between individuals” (Parsons & Shils 1962:55).

In this comparative approach on the different paths of modernization, Parson’s concept of “culture” is applied to conceptualize the three European countries under study in cultural terms. It should be noted though that culture, as well as the rest of the action systems, does not exist in the real world but constitutes a tool for analyzing it (Parsons 1951). Hence, culture per se is a methodological device, an abstract concept (Griswold 2004) useful for studies associated with cultural analysis.

The empirical research and the secondary data presented below provide some evidence that the cultural heritages of the three countries under study, formed by specific historical, political and religious events have acted as a filter of their modernization processes and left an imprint on the prevailing values forming their main cultural individualistic and/or a collectivist attributes. As culture acts as the binder of the social world (Parsons 1951), it has functioned as a mediating
mechanism, shaping their personality traits and social relationships in the direction of an individualistic and/or collectivist orientation.

4. The UK

For Marx, Weber and many others, capitalism was born in Western Europe (Macfarlane 1987). This new social formation emerged in its purest and earliest form in England, which acted as the model country for the other continental ones (Marx 1973). As Brenner (1977: 75) claimed it was “classically in England” that “the rise of the three-tiered relation of landlord/capitalist tenant/free wage labour, around which Marx developed much of his theory of capitalist development”, emerged. Weber (1961) considered England the “home of capitalism”. In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, argues that it was in England above all that the Puritan outlook “stood at the cradle of the modern economic man” (1992:174). Polanyi (1944) takes England’s history as the fundamental example of the *Great Transformation* to modernization.

In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith states that the advancing industrial power of England in the latter half of the 18th century was accompanied by an economic liberalism, which came to govern the English thought. Smith argues that the wealth of the nations and consequently the individuals’ wealth and welfare were increased by a capitalist system which promoted no or minimal state interference, i.e., what came to be called as “laissez faire”. Therefore, the greatest benefit to the society could be brought about by individuals acting freely in a competitive marketplace in the pursuit of their own self-interest. Although the arguments were developed on economical grounds they reinforced social ideas on individuals’ freedom and independence whereby state intervention was redundant. It is likely that in these important political, economical and social transformations we can find the roots of the individualistic values still prevailing in Britain.

According to Moore (1966) England followed the “bourgeois revolution” path to modernization, in which a violent revolution abolished the traditional domination of the landed elites and the absolute power of the Crown, bringing with it capitalism and democracy. The “bourgeois revolution” was followed by social transformations that prepared the ground for industrialization and the creation of a modern and market-based new type of economy. These transformations involved the destruction of the absolute power of the crown and of a portion of the traditional elites, and prevented the excessive exploitation of both the peasantry and the working class in the early stages of industrial development. Gelfand et al (1996) identify individualism as a product of the ideology of liberalism, which emerged in France and America, with the French and American Revolution, that according to Moore (1966) followed a similar modernizing path with England, emphasizing freedom and civic liberties. Moore argues
that by the seventeenth century, England already had a competitive, individualistic and commercialized value system, which is still clearly recognizable in modern liberal Britain.

Modern Britain is a highly complex and diverse society (Abercrombie & Warde 2001). It is a multicultural society that encompasses different ethnic groups, each with its own characteristics and customs. The ethnic minority population in Great Britain was 8 per cent in 2001 (National Statistics, Social Trends 2006). Heterogeneity though constitutes one of the pillars of individualistic cultures (Triandis 1995). The UK is less religiously homogeneous than both Sweden and Greece, probably due to its multicultural composition. Data shows that 71.6% of the British are Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, or Methodist), 87% of the Swedish are Lutheran whilst Greece is more religiously homogeneous than both Sweden and the UK as 98% are Greek Orthodox (The World Factbook 2007).

Cultural complexity and affluence provide a wide terrain of choices leading to more individualistic behaviors (Triandis 1995). Data on affluence from the World Bank (World Development Indicators 2005) show that the UK has the highest (26,134) GDP per capita (in US $) of the three countries here considered, closely followed by Sweden (26,019). Greece has the lowest GDP per capita (18,767).

Indicators of social capital show that this affluence is accompanied by a decline in social bonds in the country. Among the indicators that conceptualize social capital, in terms of strength of community spirit and strong social ties, are individuals’ perceptions of their neighbourhood’s bonds of help and trust. Data from the British Crime Survey (1996 as cited in National Statistics, 2003) show that in 1996 the proportion of British (England and Wales only) who perceived that people in their neighbourhood ”help each other” was only 36 per cent. While those who perceived that people ”mostly go their own way” was almost half of the population (49 per cent).

In 1984 both indicators were roughly 40 per cent each, indicating a decline in social cohesion over a decade. Data from the British Social Attitudes Survey (2000 as cited in National Statistics, 2003) on “social trust” show that in 2000, less than half of the adult British population (45 per cent) agreed that ”most people can be trusted”. The indicator of “social trust” has been declining from the late 1950s to the early 1980s and then stabilised around 45 per cent. These changes are in the direction of a shift to more individualistic values indicating that social cohesion and trust are eliminating in the UK. Other indicators appear to support this diagnosis. For example, in the British welfare state, social security is regarded as being a matter of individual responsibility; therefore it promotes a “limited” collective responsibility (Aspalter 2001). In Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology of welfare capitalism, the UK approximates the liberal welfare regime sharing similar characteristics with other Anglo-Saxon countries like the United States, Can-
ada and Australia. Not surprisingly, these countries are the most individualistic around the world (Hofstede 1980).

Whilst the network of associations of the British is influenced by class, gender and ethnicity, it is generally permeated by self-interest (Abercrombie & Warde 2001). Although family and friends act as sources of support at difficult times they are often used instrumentally to further individuals’ careers. This instrumentality is compatible with the main attributes of individualism and rationality as developed earlier in this article. Abercrombie and Warde (2001) support that the web of associations in Britain compared to 1940 is in decline. The British are spending less time with their extended family and friends and participate less in voluntary associations compared to 1940. Instead the modern British are occupied more with their nuclear family, i.e., children and partners, and spend more time at home. These characteristics appear to support previous arguments that individualists invest primarily in their first-degree relatives and feel rather detached from other in-groups.

The non-intact family model, either in terms of family disruption or single parenting, is associated with individualists’ preferences for freedom, independence and autonomy (Storry & Childs 2002, Dion & Dion 1988). Kuijsten (1996) suggests that large proportions of single households are associated with high levels of individualism, independence and freedom in more individualistic cultures, where long term commitments such as marriage are avoided as they are seen as obstacles for individuals’ self-maximization. The decline of family as measured by higher numbers of non-intact families is exemplified in Becker’s (1991) “economic theory of marriage”. Becker explains divorce rates as the consequence of rational calculation, much in the same way that economic behavior is explained in economic markets. In his theory, the household constitutes an economic unit from which both parties (i.e. the husband and the wife) make gains through specialization and the division of labor. The husband brings an income to the household, which is run by the wife. Becker argues that marital breakdown is more likely to occur when the benefits from this trade-off decrease, i.e., when the wife joins the labor force.

Secondary data (Eurostat) shows that in 2005 more divorces (per 1000 inhabitants) took place in the UK (2.6) and Sweden (2.2) and fewer in Greece (1.2). In the same year, more live births outside marriage took place in the UK (42.94) and Sweden (55.45), whilst the indicator is much lower for Greece, i.e., 5.10. Storry and Childs (2002) advocate that the excessive individualism and consumerism, which took place in 1980s economic boom in the UK has lessened the moral values related to family life. Similarly, Barry (1988) argues that the decline of family moral values in the UK is associated with the rational choice calculus embodied in British relationships, in line with Becker’s (1991) “economic theory of marriage”.

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5. Sweden

Sweden appears to approximate the type of a social democratic welfare state emphasizing collective responsibility and simultaneously promoting independence (Esping-Andersen 1990). The country has instituted a social security system with high levels of income maintenance, equal access to benefits and services, overall guaranteeing very high levels of equality. The Swedish welfare state is based on the principle that the welfare of the individual is the responsibility of the social collective (Esping-Andersen & Korpi 1987). This regime type addresses both the market and the family and is characterized by social transfers to children, elderly and generally to all dependents. It "constructs an essentially universal solidarity in favour of the welfare state. All benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay" (Esping-Andersen 1990:28). Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that behind the socialization of the costs of familyhood is the promotion of individual independence composing a combination of both socialism and liberalism. Boekhout van Solinge (1997) advocates that the Swedish welfare system has offered the Swedes a high degree of "security", best described in Swedish as "trygghet". "Trygghet" promotes a high degree of confidence in the society or the "system" and solidarity.

An important factor in the formation of the welfare state in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries is that the peasantry, constituting a consolidating class of small and middle sized family farmers, fought side by side with the working class in a “red-green” coalition in the struggle for political emancipation (Esping-Andersen 1984). Einhorn and Logue (1989) argue that the rise of the universalistic type welfare systems in Scandinavian countries was not due to their higher economic development but to their popular belief system of solidarity and social cohesion, which was imbedded in the political culture of Scandinavian nations. The Scandinavian political culture of social solidarity has formed a cultural heritage that has left an imprint on the prevailing values that endure despite modernization and are still recognizable in the social relationships and personality traits in modern Sweden.

Previous research characterizes Sweden as an amalgam of both collectivism and individualism (Daun, 1991,1992, Triandis 1995). On the one hand, the Swedish culture shares characteristics of sameness and conformity, i.e., collectivist attributes but on the other, it stresses independence and self-sufficiency, i.e., individualist attributes (Triandis & Gerfald 1998). Daun (1996) provides a range of examples of Swedes’ tendency to stress similarities and sameness, including the large proportion of the population involved in voluntary associations and clubs, and their tendency to establish friendliness and mutual understanding by discussing similar topics and experiences. In Daun’s (1996:105) words “they each wan” to play the same melody "with the same rhythm and in the same key”. Daun (1996) exemplifies his arguments on Swedish independence by the high
proportion of Swedish single-person households. According to the author, young people find accommodation in their twenties and old ones decide to stay alone as they do not want to be a burden to their children. Similarly, Popenoe argues (1985) that behind Swedes’ tendency of “living alone” a need for independence and autonomy is hidden.

Popenoe (1987) based on empirical data supports that the Swedish family model has moved farther from the nuclear family than in any other industrial country. According to the author, Swedish familism is based on five main factors: low marriage rate, high cohabitation rate, high rate of family dissolution, small household size and the extensive move of mothers into the labor force. The high cohabitation rate in Sweden is also associated with the individualistic attribute of independence. As Daun (1996:104) puts it: “Another expression of independence among Swedes is the practice - very widespread by international standards - of cohabitating without being married”. Secondary data (OECD 2007) shows that during 2002, 19.8% of the Swedes were cohabitating (as share of those being married, cohabitating or single) compared to 8.6% of the British and only 1.2% of the Greek inhabitants. Non-marital cohabitation in Sweden is legally and culturally accepted, as since 1987 the law placed cohabitation on an equal footing to marriage (Popenoe 1987). In terms of associations, Daun (1996) claims that private relationships in Sweden are restricted to family, whereby attachment to first-degree relatives and detachment from other in-groups is promoted, i.e., a similar pattern of associations to the British citizens.

Popenoe (1985: 99) advocates that “in no other Western society have government planners been granted the amount of authority they have in Sweden”. This "philosophy of planning" is interpreted by Daun (1996: 137) as a "way of arranging social conditions for the best of citizens by means of rational thinking". To remind the reader, rationalism is strongly associated with individualism. It seems that "for the best of citizens" the Swedish bureaucratic state intervenes in every aspect of political, economic, and social life. Hence, Swedish citizens have become dependent upon impersonal services and bureaucratic experts, which function as the state’s formal control apparatuses (Gould 1994). As Gould argues, Sweden

is a highly disciplined society in which the mass of the population has internalized the need for a strong state and the bureaucratic regulation of everyday life. (Gould 1994: 91)

Similarly, Ronnby (1985) criticizes the Swedish bureaucratic state by arguing that the extended welfare policies in the country have created a state apparatus where social controls are intensive, intervening in every aspect of people’s lives. Ronnby claims that in Sweden, welfare policies related to employment, health care, housing, education and social work institutions have taken away people’s ability to care about themselves and the others.
The above arguments provide some evidence that Sweden constitutes a cultural amalgamation of both individualistic and collectivist attributes. On the one hand, the Swedish bureaucratic state intervenes in individuals’ lives with rational means and on the other, the Swedish welfare system, based on a high tax rate provides support to the less-privileged residents and emphasizes the strong commitment to communal obligations.

6. Greece

Historically Greece turned into a stable democracy only in the 1970s, when the authoritarian cliques that had intermittently ruled over the country were definitively forced out of office. This was the crucial step for the onset of an institutional modernization of the country. Although the transition to, and consolidation of democracy in Greece saw the culmination of a long process of political and socio-economic modernization (Malefakis 1995), in the sector of state bureaucracy the change was rather slow (Sotiropoulos 2004). Despite the Greek incorporation into the E.U, some argue that its bureaucratic structure has not yet converged with the Western European one. Greek bureaucracy does not easily match Weber’s ideal type, or any paradigmatic route to modernization (Sotiropoulos 2004). The reason is that in the 19th and 20th centuries, Greece was still struggling with authoritarianism and clientism (Sotiropoulos 2004). Sotiropoulos’ (2004) arguments provide some indirect evidence on the validity of the “divergence hypothesis”, i.e., the existence of different historical trajectories to modernization.

Prokou (2003) argues that the reasons behind the peculiarity of the Greek process of modernization are to be found in the unsuccessful development of agriculture. Greece failed to create an industrial sector well articulated with the other parts of the country’s economy, i.e., efficient linkages between primary and secondary sectors. Others claim that the main reason is to be found in the country’s strong religious roots (Fokas 2000). Greek Orthodoxy and the Church are identified with authoritarianism and reactionary nationalism, which are incompatible with modern Western, pluralist democracy (Prodromou 1996). The importance of the separation between State and Church, as an impulse to modernization, is found in Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) theory about religious cleavages. The State-Church cleavage emerged as the modern state rose as a sovereign political entity against the authority over the church. In some cases this conflict was resolved; permitting polities to enter into modernity but in some others the conflict remained, constituting a barrier to modernity.

Whilst the conflict between Church and State has been long solved, religion still plays a fundamental role in modern Greece, in its national identity and culture (Pollis 1992, Georgiadou 1995). The European Values Study (Halman 2001) shows that 48.7% of Greeks consider religion as very important in their lives,
compared to 12.6% in UK and 10.7% in Sweden. Moreover 54.6% of the Greek consider it especially important to encourage their children to have a religious faith compared to only 18.1% of the British and 4.8% of the Swedish. According to Alivazatos (1999: 33) the Greek Orthodox religion and the Greek language have together formed "the fundamental pillars of its modern identity". Religion and culture are deeply intertwined, and Orthodoxy is widely seen as a preserver and expression of Greek national cultural identity (Georgiadou 1995). Similarly, Pollis (1992:171) states that Greekness "is understood as an organic whole in which Greek Orthodoxy, the ethnos, and the state are a unity".

The strong ties of the national Greek identity and Greek Orthodoxy, which have formed the "Helleno-Christian civilization" (Stavrou 1995:39) have shaped a cultural heritage that, despite the economic development, preserves collectivist values associated with strong traditionalism. Inglehart and Baker (2000) argue that although economic development brings important cultural changes, societies which have been historically dominated by traditional religious values associated with Protestantism, Confucianism, Islam or Orthodoxy are likely to preserve their traditional value system despite modernization.

The great influence of Orthodox Church in the Greek culture is evident in the importance of preserving traditional family models (Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991). Greek traditionalism based on strong family ties and subordination of self-interest to the in-group’s make divorce and single parenting less common. As shown earlier Greece has the lowest divorce rate, and the lowest rate of births outside marriage of the three countries here compared. The results from The European Values Study (Halman 2001) show that 96.8% of the Greeks tend to agree that a child does need a home with both a father and a mother in order to grow up happily compared to 66.8% of the British and 60.1% of the Swedish. In addition, 56.3% of the Greeks tend to disagree with the idea that women may want to have a child as a single parent without a stable relationship, compared to 38.3% of the British and 39.8% of the Swedish (Halman 2001).

In terms of social relationships, research suggests that Greeks consider the values of the in-group, i.e., family, friends, work-group, religious group to be central (Dragonas 1983, Doumanis 1983, Katakis 1984) preserving strong communal relationships. Greeks are mainly occupied with activities associated with their in-groups, they are generally strongly attached to their family, which is the core of the in-group, and quite often they choose to stay close to their families even after they become independent (Georgas et al. 1997). Georgas argues (1989,1991) that the family system in Greece is the most vital source of both emotional and financial support as its function is not limited to socialization processes but also embraces the care of elderly members and the financial support of the newly married couples.
According to several scholars, Greece belongs to a distinct “family” or “world” of welfare capitalism, the Southern model (Leibfried 1993, Rhodes 1996, Ferrera 1996, Bonoli 1997). The Southern welfare model shares similar characteristics with Esping-Andersen’s (1990) “conservative-corporatist” welfare state. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), this model is characterized by a strong commitment to preserve traditional family, by providing benefits that encourage motherhood and maximize dependence on the family. Contrary to the social democratic welfare model, the conservative-corporatist one is based on the principle that the state will intervene only when the family’s ability to service its members has entirely weakened. Flaquer (2000) argues that the vital difference between the Southern welfare and the conservative-corporatist one is the extent to which they use family policies. In Southern Europe households are responsible for providing the necessary welfare to their members, and that this responsibility is taken for granted, i.e., does not depend on any family policy and provisions. The same author claims that as the burden of the welfare responsibility is placed on the household, it creates ties of mutual dependency between its members. The man becomes the breadwinner and the woman is occupied with the care of the household. In this symbiotic relationship we can find the origins of the strong family ties in Southern European countries like Greece.

Although Greece has been described in previous research as a collectivist culture (Polemi-Todoulou 1981, Dragonas 1983) some researchers (Georgas 1989, 1991, Triandis et al. 1986) advocate that social and economic changes have affected its collectivist and traditional orientation. As in other countries, these changes took place due to processes such as urbanization and industrialization but also due to the global exposure to mass media, to tourism, and widespread travel. Some claim that the country is undergoing a transitional stage from collectivism to individualism (Triandis et al. 1986, Georgas et al. 1997).

Even though Greek society’s character has substantially changed Greeks still view concepts like “freedom” or “progress” as collective ideas and not as individual constructs. The results from The European Values Study (Halman 2001) show that 52.1% of the Greeks compared to 31.8% of the British and 34.7% of the Swedish believe that if they had to choose between “freedom”, “equality” or “neither”, they would choose equality. These features are compatible with previous arguments that modernization in Greece has been shaped by conservative roots stressing traditional, and collectivist values forming a cultural heritage that is still recognizable in modern Greece.

7. Conclusion

Whilst Marx (1973) envisioned a linear modernizing path where all societies would become structurally and culturally similar (what came to be known as the
“convergence hypothesis” of modernization theory) other theorists (Horowitz 1966, Moore 1966) advocate that there is room for variations (the so-called “divergence hypothesis” of modernization theory). The article provides some support to the latter by arguing that the modernizing trajectories of the UK, Sweden and Greece were different; England followed the first type of Moore’s modernization (“bourgeois revolutions”), Sweden was highly influenced by the popular belief system of solidarity and social cohesion characteristic of the political culture of Scandinavian nations and Greece, although increasingly modern, can be associated with a more traditional, top to bottom, version of modernization, highly influenced by the Greek Orthodox Church.

It should be noted that whilst the evidence provides some support for the “divergence” hypothesis, it would be over simplistic to treat “divergence” and “convergence” hypotheses as two bipolar constructs. Obviously, these three European societies have all experienced the shift from traditional to modern ones, including, in different extent, processes such as industrialization, urbanization, democratization, professionalization, bureaucratization and subsequently an economic development which tends to bring pervasive cultural changes and push societies in a common direction providing some support to the “converging” path. However, these fundamental cultural changes have been path depended mainly from historical events, political and religious traditions that have formed a cultural heritage that has endured the influence of the economic development. Therefore, although the UK, Sweden and Greece have all faced, economic development in different extent, the cultural heritages of the liberal UK, the solidarity of Sweden and the strong Orthodoxism of Greece have acted as a filter of their modernization processes and left their imprints on the prevailing values, forming accordingly their main cultural attributes, personality traits and social relationships in the direction of an individualistic and/or collectivist ethos.

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Convergence, Creative Industries and Civil Society: Towards a New Agenda for Cultural Policy and Cultural Studies

By Colin Mercer

Abstract
In this article I start with a personal experience "cameo" from 1996 in Australia and extrapolate from that some issues that remain relevant in the sometimes troubled relationship between cultural studies and cultural policy. These are encapsulated in the three "cs" of convergence, creative industries and civil society which provide a new context for both new research and new policy settings. The argument is developed and situated in historical terms by examining the "cultural technologies", especially the newspaper, and subsequently print media in the 19th century, electronic media in the 20th century and digital media in the 21st century which provide the content, the technologies and the rituals for "imagining" our sense of place and belonging. This is then linked to ways of understanding culture and cultural technologies in the context of governmentality and the emergence of culture as a strategic object of policy with the aim of citizen- and population formation and management. This argument is then linked to four contemporary "testbeds" – cultural mapping and planning, cultural statistics and indicators, cultural citizenship and identity, and research of and for cultural policy – and priorities for cultural policy where cultural studies work has been extremely enabling and productive. The article concludes with an argument, derived from the early 20th century work of Patrick Geddes of the necessity of linking, researching, understanding and operationalising the three key elements and disciplines of Folk (anthropology), Work (economics), and Place (geography) in order to properly situate cultural policy, mapping and planning and their relationship to cultural studies and other disciplines.

Keywords: Creative industries, cultural studies, cultural policy, governmentality.
Convergence, creative industries and civil society: towards a new agenda for cultural policy and cultural studies

Let me start with a personal experience cameo.

It's a sticky, hot, and fly-blown day in 1996. I am in a town, Geraldton, in the central coastal region of Western Australia, about an hour's flight north of the State capital of Perth. This is a coastal town with a declining rural industrial base, the stunningly beautiful Spanish mission-style Cathedral of St Xavier designed by the resident English architect priest, (Monsignor John Hawes), and a fairly sizeable Aboriginal population largely displaced from their traditional rural territories.

I am in Geraldton at the invitation of the local Arts Council to talk to council officers, local community and business leaders, and cultural organisations about cultural policy, cultural planning, and multimedia, and how these things might help them to build new communities, new industries, a new sense of place and identity, to provide jobs and activities for their young people – the town's biggest declared ”social problem”. But that is not the central point of this cameo – to talk about taking cultural studies and cultural policy ”into the field” – as important as that is. The real point is to one side of – and in a relationship of actual tension with – the civic ambitions and purpose.

I walk into a place called the Yamaji Language Centre (”Yamaji” –meaning ”man” or ”human being” from the Wajarri language which is dominant in this area) – an organisation funded by the Australian Commonwealth government to provide skill development opportunities for the local Aboriginal population. In this centre – a little air-conditioned oasis of high technology and young people – there are several high end and multimedia-capable computers. One of these is being used by a young Aboriginal boy, perhaps 14 or 15 years old. He is using Geographical Information System (GIS) software combined with multimedia authoring and visualisation packages both to discover and reconstruct the language, culture, families and social memories of his own tribal group. Using GIS he can ”zoom in” on his geographical region of origin on a digital map and by clicking a few times can call up recorded fragments of a lost language, scanned pictures of elders and family members, anthropological accounts of the white ”discovery” of his people, tribal and clan boundaries, secret and sacred sites and representations of his natural and cultural heritage – just the sort of thing you might see on one of the many history, anthropology, culture channels in the new TV environment. He is piecing together these various elements in a multimedia narrative to tell a story: possibly, or possibly not, with an audience in mind. The story is a rich and compelling one that it would not be possible to render in the linear written narrative of a print culture.
The boy should be at school but he doesn't like it much. His reading and writing skills are not too good and the curriculum and teachers are apparently not helping them to get any better. But he's very good at the non-linear, interactive, spatial and often intuitive "linkage" skills that are needed for the new interactive media: layers and trellises, not "lines of communication", "transmitter-receiver" and "messages". The skills and techniques – of memory, association, gesture – of an ancient but by no means primitive oral culture are rendered into digital, multilayered and composite form.

These, after all, are precisely the skills and techniques developed in understanding the indigenous Dreaming (the foundation law or "myth" that informs Australian Aboriginal societies); in understanding the nature of Songlines – the spatio-spiritual tracks of meaning and communication that secure a relationship between land and culture and define not ownership but custodianship and belonging. These are the conceptual and cognitive "mapping" skills of a non-print culture – skills that those of us trained exclusively in a print culture have forgotten or never acquired.

What is the point of this cameo? To suggest, quite simply, that there are important and enabling connections between cultural policy, cultural history and cultural studies that are currently, for epistemological, disciplinary or ideological reasons not being made where they should – or might – be. This seems to me to be disabling in the context of three opportunities for some negotiation and handshakes between a knowledge and research base on the one side and a set of both ethical and operational exigencies on the other.

These three opportunities are provided by the three "Cs" of the title – Convergence, Creative Industries, and Civil Society. Let me now take these three Cs, briefly, one by one, to sketch out some possible scenarios for negotiation and knowledge-transfer – if not yet collaboration.

The Yamaji boy was doing convergence, albeit undoubtedly without knowing or caring about it or knowing what it means. He was using the resources of three converging industry sectors – computing, communications, and content – in order to reconstruct the layers of combined narratives that, in their ensemble and compelling narrative form his family, peers and elders had never seen. Positioning himself precariously, and certainly temporarily, within what Manuel Castells calls the "global space of flows" and with all the assistance of Microsoft, Apple, IBM, and other multinational corporations in software and hardware and content, this young Aborigine was using some of the newest technologies in the world in order to find a way of locating parts of the oldest civilisation in the world in its place and for others, potentially, to witness.

At the same time, the Yamaji boy was, however informally, an "apprentice" in the creative industries if we take the definition of these as "...those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of
intellectual property”. (DCMS, 1998:003) He was doing creative industries with his own skills, creativity, talent and unique engagement with the content. And, while one person does not make an industry, the fact is that when this content is rendered into digital form, it has the potential for mass global circulation now through web sites, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, etc., and the various mobile devices which facilitate the Web 2.0 generation. Depending on the content it also has the potential for commercial exploitation. There are now, for example, many videos of tracks by the blind Aboriginal singer and guitarist Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu,(see http://www.gurrumul.com/) from the remote Elcho Island in Arnhem Land, which are on YouTube (www.youtube.com/gurrumul/). These provide demand stimulation for the (now very successful) commercial sale of his intellectual property on CDs and downloads and frequent commercial performances in Australia and internationally. One person but through the new media of creation, production, distribution and consumption, now an important contributor to the creative industries.

Finally, the Yamaji boy was engaged in the work of elaboration and representation of a complex potential network of forms of affiliation and communication, of reciprocity and interdependency, that can properly be called civil society both in the sense of a community of citizens and the sense of a public sphere in which the networks of relations and dependencies between citizens can be constructed, elaborated and consolidated through "stories". This is an example of what Arjun Appadurai calls “…the micronarratives of film, television, music, and other expressive forms which allow modernity to be rewritten more as vernacular globalization and less as a concession to large-scale national and international policies.” (Appadurai 1996:10). A prescient comment prior to the emergence of YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, etc. The Yamaji boy was doing civil society in this sense. Again, one person does not make civil society, but the means of exchange and communication contribute to the potential for sharing knowledge and information which are essential preconditions of a robust civil society. This was the case with coffee shops and taverns in 18th century Europe, with the mechanised press in the 19th century, and with analogue electronic media and the landline telephone in the 20th century. It is even more the case with the digital interactive media and mobile telephony in the 21st century – as witness the role of Twitter in establishing both national and transnational lines of formal and informal communication in the recent post-election conflicts in Iran. Vernacular globalisation, indeed, leading to new forms of civil society.

Arts of living, doing, and being, not just "arts": that’s what culture is about.

It is now possible to briefly summarise and link these three “Cs” in a broader context of research, analysis and policy development and to outline the main directions of the argument.

Convergence of the “value chains” and the story-telling capacity of the content, telecommunications and computing industries, and digitalisation, create a dra-
matic new context for cultural studies and cultural policy. In just a few years, the desktop or laptop computer has been transformed from a "business machine" facing inwards to a device facing outwards to millions on a "one-to-one", "one-to-many", and "many to many" basis which enables and facilitates activity at every stage of the content industries value chain: from creation through production and reproduction, promotion and marketing, distribution, and point of sale and consumption. New information and communications technologies are unprecedented in their scale and extent of market penetration and consumer take up and their interactive nature is, as yet, uncharted territory but certainly, as the Yamaji boy shows, rich in potential. This offers enormous possibilities for the cultural field but also many potential threats. New research and policy development agendas are needed to respond to this context.

**Creative industries:** have never been so strategic or important in local, regional and national economic development. They have become a mainstream policy concern in need of an appropriate response in research and analysis. As we move, very unevenly, into a "knowledge economy" and from there to a "creative economy", the role and skill sets of creators, producers and cultural intermediaries – as creative content providers, brokers, curators, navigators, distributors, point of sale and access – become more and more important. As industries with a special relationship to local, regional, national and global identity, they have a special place on research and policy agendas. And yet we know very little about them – quantitatively or qualitatively. New research into both the economic potential and the social significance and impact of the creative and content industries is needed and this is especially the case in the forms and patterns of appropriation and consumption of cultural products, their transformation (investment) into forms of cultural capital, and their role in finding a place for the local in the global – the "glocal".

**Civil society:** culture's special and often strained relationship to policy resides in its – often silent – relationship to civil society. In both historical and contemporary terms, as we will see below, culture is about citizen-formation (and management). It is about conduct and affiliation, identity and sense of place – *folk, work and place* as Patrick Geddes once put it. Culture is an important capillary structure for democracy, autonomy and self-expression – and, equally, their denial. Culture is about social exclusion and inclusion. We know these things both tacitly and theoretically but there has been little work to translate these forms of knowledge into the operational policy domain and, conversely, little work to translate these "governmental" concerns back into the field of cultural studies in order to historically inform – but not control – that body of work.

How can we assist – if we want to – in this process of translation between the fields to the mutual benefit of each? Let us start with a strategic recognition of the role of "cultural technologies" from the vernacular Bible and the novel, through the almanac, the newspaper, to the laptop and the iPhone in organising sense of self, identity and lifestyle as well as larger social scale affiliations and networks.
This is the new context and architecture for a productive "handshake" between cultural studies and cultural policy

**Cultural technologies: "Living, doing, thinking, and being” with culture**

It is not too difficult to see how the example of the Yamaji boy may be rich in implications for the ways in which we engage with both cultural studies and the field of cultural policy and how a focus on convergence, creative industries and civil society might assist in the work of translation from one field to the other. How can this "translation" be effected?

These concepts (and practices) are, to use an anthropological expression, good "to do with" and good "to think with". If we can agree, for example, with the American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, that culture is a renewed strategic field in the new global environment; that "culture" has "entirely escaped academic control and been taken up by peoples all over the world in an extraordinary moment of social self-consciousness – an awareness of their own way of life as a value and above all a political right" (Sahlins 1994). Or, if we can agree with another anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai, focussing on the broader category of *imagination* which, he argues, "has broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth and ritual and has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies” (Appadurai 1996: 5) then the stakes become more serious and strategic in the context of both globalisation and the transnational creative potential of the new digital media – especially mobile telephony and Web 2.0.

These stakes are about how it is possible to "re-imagine" communities both within and beyond the frameworks of the nation state and the connections that need to be made between cultural, social, environmental, economic and ethical domains in order for that to happen on a sustainable basis.

"It is the imagination”, Appadurai continues,

...in its collective forms that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape. (Appadurai 1996:7)

Users of social networking sites will know that there is no shortage of imagination – good and bad – in the world. They will also know that they can discover these forms of imagination in places they had never witnessed – or perhaps not sought – before: Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Kirghizistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland. All places of past and present conflict but also of enormous creative potential. How does this argument help in seeking grounds for dialogue between cultural studies and cultural policy?
One part of the answer to this question lies in a resolutely practical and material approach to the cultural field and the various resources – the forms of cultural, social and other capital – that comprise it.

Another part of the answer lies in a more complex and historical understanding of the field of policy as, quite simply and according to a 15th century definition; “[I]n reference to conduct or action generally” (Oxford English Dictionary 1979).

With that historical and lexicological reference let us now consider some historical grounding for the argument.

The material culture of imagination

To address the first part of the answer we can refer to it as the material culture of imagination. In this context we are dealing with not the representational but the ethnographic status and currency of cultural forms and technologies, especially in their more ephemeral and quotidian existence. We are concerned with the "mental tools" (outils mentaux) by which the social and the cultural are known and transacted and become "good to think with". As Roger Chartier has put it: "ways of thinking depend above all on material instruments (the techniques) or conceptual instruments (the sciences) that make them possible" (Chartier 1988:24). Geographical Information Systems software was good to think and imagine with for the Yamaji boy because it ordered its elements in spatially defined "layers" of meaning where knowledge of the land was overlain on knowledge of the culture, the heritage, the kinship relations and so on. These layers of meaning could be supported and reinforced by the (to the boy) unexceptional capacity to patch-in digitalised images from old film and newsreel and photographs and to connect them to different elements of these layers of meaning. It was not that a "way of thinking" was being produced by new material and conceptual instruments. Rather, it was that a way of thinking (and feeling, and doing) was being made representable on and in a screen – and potentially through global digital networks - both to the indigenous thinker and doer and to the non-indigenous witness.

What do these material and conceptual instruments promise for the ways in which we think and do culture in its relations with the self, identity the community and senses of place and belonging, the social and the industrial?

The newspaper, for example: everyday cultural consumption and imagining

To attempt to answer this question, let me both step back in time and take the argument further conceptually by connecting it to Benedict Anderson's proposition that the newspaper or, more precisely, the "ceremony" of its consumption, is a "...vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community..” which is a precondition for the use of the mental tools necessary for thinking and imagin-
ing the nation. This ceremony of consumption transacts and secures a relationship between a mode of reading, "in the lair of the skull" and a "community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations" (Anderson 1983:39-40). Conditions of emergence, conditions of production and distribution and conditions of consumption: these instances will need to be held together in a proper analysis of the newspaper form as a component of material culture and as a cultural technology of imagining. The same arguments will apply to any cultural form, whether analogue or digital in its physical manifestation and in the circumstances and rituals of and distribution consumption. Differences will be produced by the economy of *usages* in which the fluidity of the digital form and its interactivity will be the most important agents of transformation. "Things in their ears": from the Sony Walkman to the iPod and the iPhone, the new generation of mobile devices have dramatically transformed the rituals and circumstances, the possibilities and economy of cultural consumption, especially, though not exclusively by younger people. Unlike the history and political economy of the newspaper – now so challenged by the World Wide Web that even Rupert Murdoch is not sure what to do – this is a "demand-side" calculation for which we have, as yet, neither formula nor outcome. So let us stay more safely historical for a while.

There are definite conditions of emergence for the newspaper form that we may date from the late-sixteenth century *coranto*, a form which regularised a line of communication and correspondence between writer, printer, reader and community. These conditions are print culture (print-capitalism as Benedict Anderson calls it, the first "creative industry" dating from the fifteenth century and the invention of moveable type), the consolidation of national languages partly as a result of the new cultural technology of portable print culture and impelled by the Reformation demand for the Bible and other religious manuals in vernacular national languages, and the establishment of lines of supply and communication – a "robust value production chain" as we might now call it, through new authors, printers, publishers, distributors, booksellers and consumers. These are the necessary but not yet sufficient conditions. What makes them more sufficient is when they offer the reader a position, an identification, a place of informal knowledge, and an expectation of a commodity form, albeit ephemeral, from which things can be understood on a regularised basis.

The *coranto*, Anthony Smith argues, was decisive in this respect, crossing the threshold from various disaggregated forms of narrative of news events to a distinctive new genre:

> The *coranto* was an invention of primary importance, for it attempted to provide an account of the whole world and to give its reader the feeling of comprehensive, periodical knowledge of world affairs. (Smith 1979: 11)

This is a regularity of information that will offer not only facts but also a position from which to understand them. This is part of the function of a genre: to provide
a form of communication but also to offer instructions on how to use it. The genre is “local knowledge” but it also offers comparativism:

In the societies of Europe... [early news publication]... planted in the mind of the individual literate citizen the picture of a world of public events which he could never see or experience for himself. It placed his own society [read “nation”] within the context of the continent and the world. (Smith 1979:13)

The newspaper form inaugurated a regularised mode of communication which would shift the imperatives of conduct-formation, advice on exemplary modes of governance and “manners” from the private, individualised genres of conduct manuals, *Governours*, books of etiquette and other devices of conscience-formation in the post-Renaissance period, into the more strategic domain of the “ordinary moral education of the people”. (Roche 1987:217). In this project, the people would need to be addressed, narrated and generally talked about and imagined in relation to the context in which they could be recognisable: the nation. The slow and uneven but definite emergence and consolidation of national vernacular cultures which we can trace from cultural technologies like dictionaries, grammars, anthologies of national literature, and vernacular “pocket edition” bibles through to politico-administrative technologies like chanceries, road systems, educational apparatuses, currencies and insurance schemes offers a definite genealogy and infrastructure for an embryonic national domain. Further it is possible to know this national domain, that you are in it and part of it, by a regularity of periodical news information from the demarcated domains of both “home” and “overseas” which will have the effect of securing that comparative distinction. We have here the beginnings of a relationship between news and governmentality in its broadest sense of a strategic capillary network of communications: a proto-governmental domain.

Théophraste Renaudot was the first to combine a quite specific type of advertising and the publication of news with explicit objectives of social amelioration in 17th century France. As Anthony Smith explains, a threshold had been crossed in which communication, well-being, and governance could easily co-exist both within a genre and within a certain social logic of the market.

It seemed to Renaudot that one of the causes of poverty in the society around him was the fact that those with goods and services to supply often failed to make contact with those who needed them...Renaudot moved...to Paris and set up...the “Bureau d'Addresses et de Rencontre”...and provided a convenient brokerage between rich and poor. Renaudot's handbills explained that the Bureau provided the means whereby “anyone may give and receive information on all the necessities and commodities of human life and society”. The aim was to reduce begging in the streets of Paris by helping the workless to find employment, masters to find apprentices, borrowers to find lenders, the homeless to find shelter, the sick to discover medicaments. (Smith 1979: 27-28)

The exchange of information, regularised and institutionalised in this way, with a benign – but motivated – belief in the transparency of the social domain offers a logic of assistance and a logic of surveillance at the same time. These procedures
of communication and exchange are directed toward the provision of those "little supplements of life" of which Michel Foucault (1979 - see below) writes.

We might characterise assistance and surveillance as the two necessary conditions of modern governance for which so many Gazettes, Couriers, Zeitungs, and Mercurys would become the exemplary genre. What combines the indigent, the working, the sick, the creditworthy, and the purchaser of commodities here is a logic of communication within demarcated domains traversed by roads and the filaments of governance increasingly replete with what we can call an "ethnic".

With the support of Cardinal de Richelieu, Renaudot assumed the direction of the officially authorised newspaper, La Gazette which continued in publication as La Gazette de France until 1917. It is in relation to precisely this period that Michel Foucault has charted the conditions of emergence of a concept of police which, he argues, "includes everything":

…[b]ut from an extremely particular point of view. Men and things are envisioned as to their relationships: men's coexistence on a territory; their relationships as to property; what they produce; what is exchanged on the market. It also considers how they live, the diseases and accidents which can befall them. What the police sees to (surveille) is a live, active, productive man...the police must ensure "communication" among men in the broad sense of the word...As a form of rational intervention wielding political power over men, the role of the police is to supply them with a little extra strength (petits suppléments de vie). This is done by controlling "communication", i.e., the common activities of individuals (work, production, exchange, accommodation) (Foucault 1979: 248)

Of course this doesn't really include everything: it includes everything that is thought to be governable and communicable: everything that is, that can, in the words of Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, be subject to various regimes of notation (Miller and Rose, 1990). It signals a threshold that has been crossed after which these entities and imperatives could be thought together and strategically. This is the condition of emergence of "news" as an integral rather than contingent form of communication. And there could, in fact, be no better genre to accommodate and distribute these techniques of governmentality than the emergent form of the newspaper containing news, information and – since another function of police is to survey "everything pertaining to men's happiness" (Foucault 1979:250) – diversion and amusement.

The newspaper form, assimilating some prior techniques of correspondence, literary commentary, early forms of advertising, enables new co-ordinates to be thought: the newspaper becomes good to think with in its time and in its place. As such it is a crucial device and cultural technology through which a certain sense of the national community may be inscribed. A nation can be imagined which is peopled, traversed, delimited by roads and frontiers, narratable in terms of politics, business, military affairs, commodity circulation and exchange, and, not least, petty pleasures, diversions and amusements. The origins of journalism witness a proliferation of writers traversing the native country and narrating its manners and customs, the petty pleasures and diverse amusements of its newly dis-
covered peoples. In the UK this certainly includes the work of Defoe in the 17th century and Samuel Johnson in the 18th century and the outputs of new journals and magazines like *The Idler, The Tatler* and *The Spectator* in the same period. There is a generalised imperative to talk about, narrate, excoriate, the everyday manners and customs of the peoples upon whom the narrative gaze was obsessively, albeit sometimes reluctantly, fixed.

**The policy moment: the notation and governance of people and things in their places**

The newspaper provided the conditions of emergence and acceptability of the public figuration of ordinariness and the technique of the panorama: the possibility of representing a nation and its texture through the co-ordinates of time, space and *ethnie*. It is not impossible to see here a connection with that initial bringing together of disparate domains and entities into the field of government that occurred in the early eighteenth century and which Foucault has commented on by way of the *Compendium* of the French administrator Delamare.

Delamare lists eleven areas in which "government" can be operative. These range from religion and morals through roads and buildings to the liberal arts, labour, and the poor.

"What", Foucault asks, "…is the logic behind intervention in cultural rites, small-scale production techniques, intellectual life, and the road network?" (Foucault 1979:250). This is a logic that we can also interrogate with regard to the newspaper panorama and, indeed, the newspaper genre as a whole because here again we have a line to be traced from roads and dams to provisions to forms of religious, ethical and moral life in their diverse locations. Foucault's answer, through commentary on Delamare, takes the following form.

Delamare's answer seems a bit hesitant. Now he says, "The police sees to everything pertaining to men's happiness"; now he says, "The police sees to everything regulating "society" (social relations) carried on between men." Now again, he says that the police sees to *living*. This is the definition I will dwell upon....[Delamare] makes the following remarks as to the police's eleven objects. The police deals with religion, not, of course, from the point of view of dogmatic truth, but from that of the moral quality of life. In seeing to health and supplies, it deals with the preservation of life; concerning trade, factories, workers, the poor and public order, it deals with the conveniences of life. In seeing to the theatre, literature, entertainment, its object is life's pleasures. In short, life is the object of the police: the indispensable and the superfluous. (Foucault 1979:250)

There is a strong connection, then, between the proliferation of everyday cultural forms and the emergent logic of governance: a connection which translates cultural resources, and cultural capital into cultural technologies of person and citizen-management. This is a politics of everyday life, manners and customs – of conduct – that characterises modern forms of governance – which includes not
just "government" but also the conditions and cultural technologies for the forma-
tion of civil society in the non-governmental sphere.

The conditions and the potential of the new cultural technologies were to be
strategically recognised – and multiplied – as objects of policy in the late 18th cen-
tury and 19th century as they led to new "disciplines of detail" in Edward Said’s
words (Said 1984:78).

Disciplines of detail: the Abbé Grégoire and the strategic invest-
ment of the cultural field

There is nothing, of course, more discrete and everyday as a cultural form and
technology than language – the "quotidian mental work of ordinary people" in
Appadurai’s words (see above) and at the moment of the French Revolution,
punctually marking the emergence of modern cultural policy, the Abbé Grégoire
(sometimes called the "Bishop of the Enlightenment" and certainly a political
survivor) forms a discursive apparatus for citizen-management in which "unity of
idiom is an integral part of the revolution" (Grégoire, 1988:139) and where these
two unities would add up to something more substantial: unity of the nation – "the
one and indivisible Republic". This is where language would be the first key
mechanism for defining what is French and what is not French, what is national
and what is other, what is civilised and what is barbarian: where language policy,
in short, would entail the production of that body of discourse – in literature, in
education, in government proclamations, in style manuals, in geographies, in
newspapers, in almanacs – which defines the nation and the national. As Grégoire
himself put it, "the persistence of feudal idioms and patois would only serve to
perpetuate feudal ideas and affiliations" (Grégoire 1988:131).

So, Grégoire initiated one of the first mass ethno-linguistic surveys of the mod-
ern period by sending copies of a well worked-out questionnaire to local men of
letters – "correspondents" – throughout the nation. He asked them to comment on
the extent and circumstances of use of local patois, 3 to what extent they might be
operational in reproducing "old ideas and allegiances" and, in Question 24, he
asks, "What would be the religious and political importance of entirely destroying
this patois?" (Grégoire 1988:38)

The result of this extensive survey was a report presented by Grégoire to the
Assemblée Nationale in 1791 and entitled Report on the Necessity and the Means
to Eliminate Patois and to Universalise the Usage of the French Language. This
Report was received with great acclaim and, unusually, copies were sent to all
administrative units – communes – in the new Republic. The central logic of the
new language policy stressed that to

...eliminate all prejudices, to develop all truths, all talents, all virtues, to meld all
citizens into the national mass, to simplify the mechanism and to facilitate the work-
ing of the political machine, there must be identity of language. The time will cer-
Islam is the religion that is most likely to be associated with terrorism, and it is also the religion of the majority of Muslims around the world. It is important to understand the role of religion in the context of terrorism as this can help prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and promote peace and understanding in the world. The role of religion in society is complex and multifaceted, and it is important to consider the perspectives of different religious communities when discussing this issue.

The role of religion in society is complex and multifaceted. It is important to consider the perspectives of different religious communities when discussing this issue. The role of religion in the context of terrorism is also important to understand as this can help prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and promote peace and understanding in the world.
places, streets, quays, etc, in all the Communes of the Republic, he develops his argument in the following terms:

I submit to you a systematic plan which will establish everywhere names and emblems which are capable of providing useful exercise for the mind, of acting on the heart and of encouraging and maintaining patriotism. This will have the further advantage of facilitating postal services, the movements of commerce, the researches of travellers, the exercise of police and the levying of imposts. (Grégoire, 1977 Vol IV:160)

The logic of these actions of ”detail” is explained:

The people is all, and everything must be done for the people. It is above all in certain arrangements of detail in which government manifests its paternal solicitude for the people and its benevolence towards strangers. (Grégoire 1977, Vol IV: 160 – emphasis added).

This emphasis on ”arrangements of detail” brings us to the core of the relationship between cultural studies and cultural policy. As Edward Said has argued:

The range of specialised disciplines that arose in the nineteenth century were disciplines of detail by which the human subject was first collapsed into swarming detail, then accumulated and assimilated by sciences designed to make the detail functional as well as docile. From that evolved a diffuse administrative apparatus for maintaining order and opportunities for study. (Said 1984: 220–221)

Opportunities for research and ”testbeds” for policy development

The argument so far has attempted, through some historical reconstruction, to position cultural policy as a legitimate object of study and analysis with the field of cultural and communications studies. That is to say, from the point of view of cultural policy, that the organization, embedding and management of the ”cultural resource base” was – and remains – of great import to broader strategic and governmental agendas. This is not, as in many forms of analysis in cultural studies, principally for reasons of ”ideology” understood in a cognitive/representational framework and thereby susceptible to various forms of hermeneutic or semiotic analysis or deconstruction. Rather, it is a matter of regular, practical usage and orientation: le sens pratique in Bourdieu's formulation.

The concern with policy as a focus not only on ”government and bureaucracy” but also as a methodological emphasis on questions of conduct – lignes de conduite or ”lines of conduct” in a French definition of policy matching that earlier English definition recorded in thee OED referred to above – becomes clearer in this context. It does not signal, in other words, simply a concession to or complicity with ”government” in traditional terms but, rather, argues for a systematic inclusion and recognition of the necessarily ”governmental” role of the recognition and management of cultural resources, in historical terms, since at least the mid-eighteenth century as ”populations” and ”citizens” became new objects of political calculation and strategic management.
This is another way of saying that the relationship between continuing concerns with cultural history and theory and the operational focus on contemporary policy is not a contingent or intrinsically antagonistic one. This relationship is governed by a concern with the precise nature of both the theoretical and the policy object: culture. "Cultural Policy Studies" could be translated, in other words, into "Studies in the Relations of Governmentality and Culture". There is, in other words, a close connection between attention to the "technologies" detail and minutiae of culture – culture as resources, culture as techniques, uses, tactics and strategies – and the ways in which we operate in both "pure" and "applied" research. The concern is not simply with what culture represents but with what it actually does in both exceptional and everyday terms. This is not culture as consciousness or ideology or text to be deciphered by decoding the rules, structures and conventions but culture as practical orientation (sens pratique) using the resources, especially the material culture, available to think and do and be. This is, clearly, much more of an "anthropological" than an aesthetic/representational approach to the analysis and management of culture but it is also one which enables a far more productive relationship between "pure" research and "applied" research than the terms will currently allow.

There are a number of areas of work in cultural policy, in which the dichotomy of "pure" and "applied" has been of no use at all but where the relationship between them has been enormously productive. These are in the "testbeds" of cultural mapping and planning, culture, citizenship and identity, cultural indicators, and research of and for policy, all of which have prominent and increasing profiles in national and global policy settings. Let us briefly consider and unpack these testbeds to identify the potential for convergence of the interests and skills of both cultural policy and cultural studies.

**Testbed 1: Cultural Mapping and Planning.**

This is work being undertaken, especially in Australia, Canada, Columbia and the UK, informed by various conceptual frameworks and methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, in collaborative research, policy analysis and development in urban, regional and community contexts. It is targeted at providing the necessary frameworks and tools for the "mapping" and planning of cultural resources. These resources normally include, and frequently start from, "the arts" as traditionally defined and specified in government funding, service, and statistical frameworks. But the work also includes, in qualitative terms, a necessary conceptual broadening of the meaning of culture and of what counts as culture to different sectors of the target population. This often involves ethnographically-oriented survey and consultation work as well as the statistical counting of the number of people, businesses and organisations in the defined cultural sector, patterns of growth and consumption over a defined period.
The move from an aesthetic to an anthropological definition of culture – frequently the product of prior survey work on "what counts for you?" – and its implications for resource management, funding, service delivery and general policy purview and applicability is crucial here. Shopping centres, churches and temples are often much more vibrant and effective "cultural centres" than those officially blessed with that name but they are not normally recognised in extant policy frameworks. Streets and buildings are cultural resources as are the forms of intangible cultural heritage in festivals and local traditions. Again, these resources are frequently not recognised. In urban and regional planning frameworks where the question of culture is usually reduced to issues of embellishment and beautification – an aesthetic definition – rather than the more effective operational and anthropological definition of how people use, relate to, celebrate or desecrate their living environments. The process of "cultural mapping" which needs to be integrated with broader processes of planning provides ways, both qualitative and quantitative, of, on the one hand, conceptually recasting the boundaries of culture and, on the other hand, of forcing policy and planning frameworks to redefine their own operational and resource allocation parameters. You have to "notate before policy" as Grégoire might have put it or "survey before plan" in Patrick Geddes' expression well known to planners but rarely practised by them (see "Coda" below)

This is resolutely workaday and technical work. It involves consultation and negotiation with local government officials, librarians, architects, planners, traffic engineers, community organisations, people in the streets and at the end of telephone lines in order to recognise, map and strategically plan and manage cultural resources. You cannot easily do that if you are guided by an aesthetic approach to culture. You cannot do it either, in my view, if you are not familiar with some of the best theoretical work in the area of urban history, cultural and otherwise. The work of Mike Davis, Richard Sennett, Ed Soja, Sharon Zukin, Anthony Vidler to name only the most prominent, has been invaluable in identifying the limitations and implications of some forms of "cultural development" in the urban context (artists being the "stormtroopers of gentrification", for example or the role of the boulevard as simultaneously a cultural, political and commercial space in modern cities). The extensive body of work in cultural studies on urban cultures, subcultures, minority ethnic cultures, indigenous cultures, etc., has been valuable when "translated" into these policy contexts. That is not to say that, when doing operational policy work, one carries around these weighty tomes on site to point or refer to for guidance. It is simply that this body of work in its concentration on the history of the "little [and grand] tactics of the habitat" (Foucault) provides an invaluable basis for understanding, in the contemporary context, the possible implications of policy and planning decisions for the communities large and small, urban and rural, national and transnational in which one is currently operating.
Testbed 2: Citizenship and Cultural Identity.

This is the research agenda in cultural policy that covers the work, pure and applied, in explicit equity areas such as gender, interculturalism and cultural diversity, marginalised young and older people, and in relation to indigenous cultures and social exclusion. It also covers the more general investigations into the relationship between citizenship and cultural resources in areas such as heritage, education, film and media policy and intellectual property. This is a research schedule which is concerned explicitly or implicitly with the role of cultural resources in the construction and reconstruction of identity, or, more technically and theoretically, with “techniques of the self” and, further, “techniques of community and population” formation and management. It is not – and this is important – a celebratory agenda. From a “governmental” point of view, it is important to recognise that “cultural identity” is not by any means a benign repository of human values and aspirations. What has happened in the Balkans, most acutely in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a matter of cultural identity and cultural policy and in that context is clearly and acutely a strategic governmental issue. Clearly, therefore, any concern with cultural identity has to negotiate its way through a series of complex questions and issues such as: identity on whose terms and to what ends and in what balance between rights and obligations? Is the Mostar bridge destroyed by Serbs in Bosnia a cultural object? It was to the Serbs and the Croats. Were the mosques in Sarajevo, also destroyed by the Serbs, cultural objects? They certainly were to the Bosniaks and the Serbs. Were the Eastern Orthodox churches in the Serbian regions destroyed by the Roman Catholic Croats cultural objects? They certainly were to the Serbs and to the Croats. These scenarios of lethal conflict over cultural resources – from physical infrastructure to ways of dressing and lifestyle orientations – have been repeated in many more countries – Afghanistan, India, Sudan, Somalia. This is why the “governmental” concept of citizenship rather than the more free-wheeling (and often aesthetically determined) concepts of “subjectivity” and identity shapes the agenda in cultural policy. But, importantly, it draws on concepts of both identity and subjectivity which have been more central to cultural studies especially in the context of ethnicity and ethnie.

This is the “constraint” side of the equation. On the “potential” side it is clear that a lot of work needs to be done in this area to account for and redress, for example, the inadequacy of current cultural policy frameworks and resource allocation mechanisms, to recognise, let alone address, the needs and expectations, of women, ethnic and diasporic communities, indigenous communities and youth in strategies for the development of the creative industries. Again, this is not merely a question of giving more resources to identified equity groups. It is also a conceptual issue of recognising and managing the resources that count as cultural to those groups – another crucial contribution of cultural studies to policy from Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige and Paul Gilroy onwards. An aesthetically determined arts framework, to be found in most so-called cultural funding agencies, for example,
is not well-positioned to address the needs of non-European and indigenous communities who recognise neither the European concept of art, nor the aesthetic hierarchy of discrimination and evaluation which govern resource allocation and policy agendas in that area. New conceptual understandings and definitions of the cultural field are necessary to inform policy. This is a crucial meeting point for cultural studies and cultural policy.

Testbed 3: Cultural Indicators and Impacts.

This last point applies especially to cultural indicators and impacts, quantitative and qualitative, which are now much in demand by all levels of government and cultural organisations from local to global levels. This is a research agenda which is ostensibly more "quantitative" in response to the sheer dearth of appropriate cultural statistics and indicators and conceptual frameworks for defining and understanding "impacts". In fact, while based on statistical work and various forms of body counting, it is the blindingly obvious qualitative outputs which are probably more important. In other words, before you can "count" culture you have to know what counts as culture for the stakeholders and communities involved. The facts on who is visiting our museums and art galleries – and who is not visiting them and why – what the major patterns and forms of cultural consumption and participation are by ethnicity, gender, age and location provide some fascinating government and industry-relevant data and show clearly, furthermore, the need for sustained research (and research funding) in this area. Apart from any pure research objectives it is hard not to notice the significant mismatch between current policy frameworks and the actual patterns of cultural activity. As Tony Bennett has argued:

...[t]he causes of inequality of cultural opportunity are so deeply rooted in the fabric of [...] social life they cannot be simply conjured out of existence by the mere wave of a policy wand. Yet, if the problem is to be tackled effectively, it must be properly defined; and if we are to find out where, when and how progress is made, many aspects of the operations of our public cultural institutions need to be more precisely, more regularly and more pointedly measured than is at present the case. (Bennett 1994:23)

Like social statistics and indicators in the nineteenth century statistics as part of the "art of government" as Grégoire put it, cultural statistics and indicators in the 20th and 21st centuries provide not simply a "picture" of activity but also a set of indicators and a "system of notation", the aim of which is, indeed, "governmental". And while government can always be construed as on the side of the "coercive", we would be in no position to stake our own "governmental" claims – and claims to governance – if we were not in possession of these indicators and, especially, the knowledge base that informs them.
Research of or research for policy?

This brings us to the testbed of the relationship between research of cultural policy and research for cultural policy: this is an important nexus for cultural policy and cultural studies. The concern, in various publications and debates is that of the equilibrium which is established between non-commissioned (grant-funded or independent) and commissioned research funded by government, intergovernmental or commercial agencies. The former would normally be deemed to be the area of research of policy and the latter the area of research for policy.

But the distinction is a difficult one to maintain for a number of reasons. Any research of policy has the potential, since it is in the public domain, of being research for policy. The outputs of many forms of “pure” research by academic writers such as Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, James Clifford, Amartya Sen, Michel de Certeau, Tony Bennett, Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall Sahlins and Stuart Hall, to name but a few key names in the cultural field, are increasingly frequently used in cultural policy-related publications generated by UNESCO, The OECD, The European Union, The Council of Europe, The World Bank, national government enquiries, etc. Similarly, it is difficult to undertake, for example, the history of museums, of tourism or of urban cultures and do research of policy without it being taken up as research for policy either explicitly or implicitly.

Following this circle round it is the case, of course, that the findings of research for policy – the absence, for example, of a recognition of or funding framework for “traditional” or “folkloric” cultural forms which are not European in origin or indigenous cultures – can productively feed back – or, better, forward – into research of policy. The trick is to make sure that this wheel keeps turning – of, for, of, of, for – and does not stop at any one point. That cultural studies, cultural, economic and social geography, cultural and social anthropology, development economics provide crucial resources and knowledge to inform and enable new policy settings and priorities.

This wheel not only needs to keep turning but needs to be considerably speeded up. The connections and feedback mechanisms between research of and research for cultural policy seem to me to be increasingly important in the context of the new needs of mass education systems in the post-industrial West and the needs for consolidating the relationship between culture and development in the South in content development, capacity and institution building. We know so little about the current configurations of cultural behaviour and capacity that we cannot hope, without a significant boost in research effort to know not only about the creative industries about which we have been ignorant – at least in our policy frameworks – for so long, but also about the implications and effects of communications and information technologies which are steadily and radically transforming the cultural landscape and the civil society which is constructed upon it and with it. In the context of an explicit commitment to cultural development, cultural diversity, and the creative industries at the international level and the proliferation of cul-
Cultural policies and investments at other levels, we would be mistaken to construe the relations between culture and government as those of antagonism or bad faith. If the concept of governmentality means anything in this context, then it means recognising our *implication*, with the processes and cultural technologies that shape and form our identities and capacities as citizens and populations and taking *that* position and not some Archimedean position of externality as the necessary starting point for negotiation.

**Coda: Place, Work and Folk**

I started with a policy-related thematic triad to identify priority focus areas for cultural studies and cultural policy – Convergence, Creative Industries and Civil Society – and I will conclude with another, more methodologically oriented triad – *Place, Work* and *Folk* – in order to wrap up the argument. In this I refer to the eccentric – but suggestive and enabling – work of Patrick Geddes, often described as the “father of town and country planning” but much more than that in the early twentieth century.

Geddes' attempts at the convergence of the disciplines of geography (*place*), economics (*work*) and anthropology (*folk*) through his adaptations of Frédéric Le Play's work on the European family and his own work in the Edinburgh Outlook Tower, provides a more useful basis for both analysing and managing the contemporary imperatives of governance in rapidly transforming cultural domains. These imperatives include the understanding of lifestyles and cultural patterns; the nature of economic units in post-industrial economies, and the need for strategic and integrated approaches to cultural research, policy development and planning. And, most importantly, ways of thinking these domains together and developing appropriate policy and planning settings accordingly: joined up thinking for joined up government.

Let us accept the dispersed nature of political power in democratic polities operating “through a multitude of agencies and techniques” (Miller and Rose 1990: 1), many of which are only "loosely associated" with formal state institutions. Cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, galleries, public broadcasting and communications systems and cultural programmes like city animation, public art, civic leisure and recreation and even cultural/creative industry” initiatives, fit neatly into this definition, operating, as they do, at "arms length” from formal governmental processes.

Let us also accept that government needs to pay particular attention to indirect mechanisms for "aligning economic, social and personal conduct with socio-political objectives" (Miller and Rose 1990:2). This is directly germane to concerns in cultural policy and planning given the special relationship between culture, forms of conduct, behavioural dispositions and value systems – a relationship which finds its privileged locale in the concept of citizenship. Cultural insti-
tutions and practices have a special place in shaping and modifying forms of social and personal conduct guided by principles of "civilisation", "cultivation" and the development of particular cultural dispositions and attributes. This is a special domain which emerges, clumsily and unfinished, from Geddes' work and which is now finding its way back onto cultural planning agendas and in areas such as cultural industry development, cultural tourism, "placemaking" initiatives, a generalised concern with urban "lifestyles" and a broadening of the agenda for the assessment of "quality of life" and, more recently, "wellbeing" as a priority and imperative for government, especially at the local level.

Geddes positions what he calls "culture-policy" in a profound linkage with the formation and maintenance of citizens and populations – civics and the production of the conditions for "actual citizenship" – and also as an integral component of the larger planning process linking the nodes and valencies of folk, work and place. This is a distinctive and productive move subsequently ignored by planners, geographers, and economists alike but now finding new forms of convergence in a post-industrial, globalised context. There were many advocates of citizenship, including the prominent economist Alfred Marshall, but few who placed the concept and the ideal in the context of policy and planning in specifically urban and regional contexts and even fewer who transacted this relationship in the domain of culture.

In Geddes, then, we can identify an embryonic form of more comprehensive notation for the strategic role of the concept of the "civic person" or citizen, understood as requiring new forms and a new logic of governance which, through forms of supervision, calculation and administration, would be concerned more comprehensively – and embracing these areas as domains of policy – with the management of human relations, environmental, infrastructural, economic and socio-cultural resources.

It is clear that in the nineteenth century, the shift in the logic of government required more detailed and sustained attention to the production and development of new knowledges and notations in order to render "aspects of existence thinkable and calculable" (Miller and Rose 1990:5), prior to becoming objects of a dispersed regulatory and policy apparatus. Thus, initially, the concern with the "manners and customs" of the people which was evident in the development of disciplinary knowledges such as anthropology and ethnography – including "folklore" – renders thinkable and calculable domains of human existence and activity which had not previously been within the purview of government and, therefore not, properly speaking, "objects of policy".

The "municipalisation" of forms of government in the larger urban areas in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the development of more sophisticated forms of management focussed on the person-environment relationship, manifest in French "urbanism", in the eugenics-civics nexus in which Geddes and his colleagues initially worked, and, most importantly, in the development of municipal
structures of government which articulated economic and social well-being, leisure and recreation, cultural services and public health, and social infrastructure relating to waste disposal and transport management for the first time.

This is the context in which we should approach the question of "policy": "...the very existence of a field of concerns termed 'policy' should itself be treated as something to be explained" (Miller and Rose 1990:3). Thus, rather than treating policy as something which is simply "there" and fully fledged as a discipline of study or field of knowledge and action, there is a need to recognise its historical novelty as itself produced by the new logic of governmentality. This is especially – and still – the case with that object most resistant to policy, planning and government: culture.

The concern with "policy" leads to new forms of intellectual labour and to new procedures of "documentation, computation and evaluation" (Miller and Rose 1990:6). Among these we should certainly count the development of social statistics in the nineteenth century – and the renewed attention to the accumulation of cultural statistics, indicators and impacts today. We should also count among these new systems of documentation and classification the techniques and procedures developed by institutions in the cultural field such as museological systems of classification, library-based classification systems and the demarcation of the "art forms" which became the subject of national government intervention, essentially through deficit funding mechanisms, in which the role of John Maynard Keynes in the development of the "Arts Council" model was crucial.

Geddes' work directly engages with the governance of the "autonomous self" in the form of constituting the citizen as a mechanism for establishing a contract between person and environment, individual and society: in habitus. The citizen, with rights and corresponding duties was the linchpin for the development and, most importantly, the articulation of programs in child welfare, health and mental hygiene, education and social insurance. Predating these developments, this nexus is there in Geddes' work too. As Helen Meller argues,

What was needed, Geddes suggested...was to create a new way of thinking centred on the production and development, not of goods, but of people. (Meller 1990:13)

These words suggest that we should, perhaps, be properly concerned, in the understanding of culture and governance with the management of the relationship between folk, work, and place.

Where does this lead in terms of policy and planning and, indeed, politics? To a more complex, more "object of policy" oriented, and less "passionate" engagement with the disciplines of detail and systems of notation which constitute the cultural field. In the cultural field, this means attention to a less totalising and transcendent and more "technical" engagement with cultural resources (and their uses) rather than culture as principally a field of expression and identity. This will lead to a logic of policy and politics, as Jacques Donzelot has put it, where
...the progressive substitution of the concept of participation by the concept of implication is the most significant symptom. We have seen that the concept of participation, especially in the 1970s, led to a problematic of power, and of power considered as something "to have". As a consequence, the various associations found themselves condemned claiming "always more" local power...The shift from a logic of methodically programmed centralised subvention to a contractually agreed project logic entails the necessity of an association for action and no longer a struggle for power (Donzelot 1991: 34)

That is to say, that if the concept (and practice) of citizenship is to have any resonance, the real cultural complexities of the relationship between folk, work and place, will need to be engaged with on terms which recognise the "ecological" complexity of socio-cultural relations and governance.

These are complexities produced by culture-as-governance which have only been partially recognised and which require the development of multidisciplinary "key competencies" and "policy communities" in the ways that Geddes suggested, embryonically, in the following areas:

- In community anthropology and ethnology, including the patterns and rituals of the use of space, objects, narratives by differentiated populations and sub-cultures. Both statistical and social survey methods, quantitative and qualitative, can provide significant indicators about the "uses of culture and community" which are crucial to the constitution of appropriate forms of governance for both government agencies and stakeholders and client groups.

- The measurement and assessment of "quality of life" in responsive and comprehensive terms. Current frameworks for quality of life evaluation tend to be based on generic and objective social and economic indicators which could apply to the nation as a whole, to a region or to a small town. This has been greatly advanced recently by the adoption of quality of life indicators from Local Agenda 21 by national governments and, especially Local Agenda 21 for Culture adopted in 2004 in an initiative led by the cities of Barcelona and Porto Alegre (see: http://www.bcn.es/cultura/agenda21cultura/index_en.htm).

  For governance to develop its own system of notation and therefore a responsive particularity, there is a real need for a new suite of specifically cultural benchmarks, objective (how many museums) and perceptual (do we want to go, feel comfortable and included there?) which can be assessed by stakeholders and act as publicly-owned performance indicators for government programmes.

- The "stewardship" and "custodianship" of resources – environmental, social, economic, infrastructural, cultural. Ownership, the possession or control of resources and power, is not, as Donzelot argues above, the central issue. What is most crucial in developing the
relationship between rights and responsibilities through the concept of citizenship is the development of programme and project logics, in the cultural field, for the management of resources. A system of notation, representation and intervention which could, for example, mark out a "sense of place" which is not purely celebratory and affirmative through now traditional means such as festivals and public art schemes, but also "governmental" in its ambitions to develop a "strategic plan" for that place including sustainable employment initiatives (ie. Folk-Work-Place) would move significantly beyond the enclave and sectoral logics currently influencing research, analysis and policy in the cultural field.. (see Mercer: 1997 for a fuller elaboration of the important ce of Geddes in this context)

For Geddes to have been able to postulate these connections between planning, civic virtues and interests, citizen-formation, the management of public behaviour and social well-being, and to propose the institutions and cultural technologies through which these ends could be achieved, a good deal had to have happened in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to have made these connections and logics thinkable in strategic terms. There is no reason why this broader logic of urban and community government cannot be re-positioned in pedagogical, political and policy terms to make it re-thinkable in and for the 21st century.

Understanding the interactions of Place, Work and Folk in this apparently simple but conceptually rich – and necessarily interdisciplinary – formulation, would enable us to think and act in more productive ways about the interests, needs and capacities of that young Aboriginal boy and many hundreds of millions precariously positioned, like him, in urban and rural, developed and less developed contexts throughout the world, in relation to cultural capital and the cultural field.

For this to happen, however, there needs to be an effective recognition in re3 search, policy and teaching frameworks, of the necessity of finding a new articulation between culture as a "governmental" prerogative and the competencies formed and distributed in new cultural field.

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Notes

1 One of 20 churches that he designed, in his 15 years there, in smaller rural communities in Western Australia from 1915 to 1930.

2 Though, since the invention of the concept of ‘creative industries’ and its gradual positioning within mainstream policy by the UK Blair Government in 1997 this agenda, in research and policy as been greatly accelerated by new work and policy settings in both individual countries – Australia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia – and by international organisations such as the EU, International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNESCO, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and NGOs such as the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD).

3 Not just dialects or accents but grammatically and semantically different languages like Breton, Gaelic or Provençale. These are – or can be – as different from modern French as Cornish, Irish and Scottish Gaels, Welsor Welsh are from modern English.

4 Bosnia and Herzegovina is the recent beneficiary of $US 8 million allocation from the Spanish Government through the Millennium Development Goals programme for a 5 year project – Improving Cultural Understanding in Bosnia and Herzegovina – which will require the development of a new cultural policy framework, new legal instruments for culture and new linkages between cultural and education policies. The programme is managed and overseen by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

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Digital Media and the Order of Ethnography:
On Modes of Digitization in the Museum of World Culture

By Andreas Henriksson

Abstract
The article applies and elaborates an Actor-Network Theory approach to digitization. Defining digitization as the determining of relations between new digital media and old materials within local networks, the article attempts to investigate locally engendered ambiguities of such processes.

The model is applied in a case study of the Swedish Museum of World Culture and its attempt at renewing old ethnographic objects through the use of digital media. The study is comprised of several interviews, observations and extensive document analysis.

The article concludes by underlining the contingency and ambiguity involved in introducing digital media into the networks of old objects. It also addresses the cohesive and stabilizing roles played by computer programs and museum objects respectively.

Keywords: Actor-Network Theory, digital media, information systems, digitization, the Museum of World Culture, John Law, ethnography.
Introduction

As of late, theorists have suggested that ethnographic museums in the West are becoming exponents of post-colonialist notions and ideas (Chakrabarty 2002; Fiskesjö 2007; Macdonald 2005; Riegel 1996; not all agree, see Saunders 2001). This change is coupled with changes in exhibition forms. In the wake of public downsizing and new democratic ideals, the authoritative and formal voice of earlier years, stating “facts” and prescribing interpretations of displayed objects, has given way to irony, reflexivity, criticism, and to the invitation of visitor interpretations.

In this way, ethnographic museums have entered a less certain era, where there is much debate about definitions of success and/or failure. In this context, digitization and digital information systems have been introduced as tools in working out new ways to present old ethnographic objects (Cameron & Kenderdine 2007).

There are studies investigating large-scale digitization projects of long-standing museum institutions, as well as discussions about tensions between digital media and museums in general. Few though, have sought to map the less clear-cut cases, where different digital media have been introduced in the midst of already existing debates around museum identity and the future of ethnography. In these latter cases, digitization could be expected to take various forms and have several competing purposes, as it is employed by proponents of differing views of ethnography. In this article, I have sought to map the digitization project of a Swedish state museum in Gothenburg that was expressly created in order to deal with the heritage left by the ethnographic museum in the same city. The new and much debated museum was named the Museum of World Culture (MWC). I argue that digital media has been assigned multiple and contradictory functions and meanings in the MWC. This allows a more nuanced and detailed account of how digital media interacts with other materials in local organizations.

In investigating the use of digital media in the MWC, I have utilized concepts and tenets found in the texts of Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Although many ANT-scholars in recent years have ventured to investigate the construction of information technologies, it is only with some reluctance that they sporadically take on the specifics of digital media (Adams & Berg 2004; Marres 2004). ANT has come to be associated with a focus on local arrangements, as opposed to general phenomena and concepts (Law 2004). Prone as many theorists of digitization are to investigate digital media as displaying universal differences to analogue media (Hayles 2005), ANT scholars are bound to be skeptical of the field. I wish to work out approaches that lessen those tensions and create bridges between ANT and digital media studies.
Information Artifacts and Digital Objects

Digital media is not the same as information systems. ANT theorists have, so far, mainly focused on information systems, without much pondering upon the specifics of digital media. (Adams & Berg 2004; Hanseth, Monteiro, & Hatling 1996; Star, Bowker, & Neumann 2003; Tatnall 2002; Tatnall 2005). I would argue that digitization as such, describing relations between digital media and other technologies, could and should be integrated into ANT studies of more recent information systems developments.

Investigators of information systems have adopted the concept of information artifacts to describe the assemblages – e.g. information-sharing communities, common taxonomies or common practices – that are brought about by artifacts such as databases, shared nomenclatures and interactive websites. Digital objects could very well work as information artifacts – digital databases and Internet sites are the obvious examples. Nevertheless, one should distinguish the one from the other on the grounds that digital objects are commonly said to be inherently bound with an analogue counterpart, bonds that are not a necessary characteristic of information artifacts (Cameron 2007). The concept of digital object seems inscribed in the analogue/digital divide, a divide that continues to exert itself even after the most elaborate attempts at abolishing its hold on the concept.

I would argue that it is precisely this presupposition of the analogue/digital divide, seemingly inherent in the concept of digital objects that makes ANT theorists suspicious. Shunning any presupposed divisions, ANT rather seeks to demonstrate how such boundaries are the effects of specific semiotic and material networks. For the same reason, the concept of information artifacts, which avoids such distinctions, is suited quite well to ANT research.

In my view, digital objects do not necessarily point us to any given distinction, but may denote a process of negotiation and ever-shifting meaning of the relationship between digital media and other material parts of an organization, such as objects, buildings and events. Thus, we may treat digitizing as the contingent working out of an analogue/digital divide and determining procedures for crossing the same divide.

My approach, which places the processes and ambiguities of digital objects at the centre of focus, does not challenge information artifact-centered projects. With the concept of digital objects, nevertheless, we focus our attention on the working-out of analogue/digital divisions and relations by presupposing some version of the analogue/digital divide. The versions that are worked out in local settings – complex interdependencies or simple dichotomies (cf. Hayles 2005; Parry 2007: 69) – are then something for empirical investigation and interpretation to work out.

Hence, the aim of this article is to elaborate an ANT approach to digitization as the determining of relations between digital media and other materials within organizations. The model, presented under the title modes of digitization, is applied...
to the Museum of World Culture. I will ask how modes of digitization are arranged in the context of the renewed ethnographic museum, both separately and within the museum as a whole, and how they determine both information artifacts and the renovation of ethnographic objects.

The Museum

The Museum of World Culture, MWC was designated early on to become one of the more experimental museums among the National Museums of World Culture (NMWC) (Rogestam et al. 1998: 41). The NMWC is a national authority that has the status of a “state-administered and funded” museum in Sweden, which gives it the money and responsibility to incorporate international museum trends as well as maintain a well-travelled staff. The MWC case was thus potentially both part of a larger flow of museum arrangements as well as a place for re-envisioning exhibitions, a fertile ground for ANT studies.

The MWC opened for the first time in December 2004. It had taken over both the collections and some staff from its predecessor, Gothenburg’s Ethnographic Museum – an institution that had closed down four years earlier.

The museum was created concurrent with the National Museums of World Culture, or the NMWC, under which it is currently placed. The authority is centrally located in the Gothenburg museum building, but is also responsible for three other Stockholm-based museums.

In the year 2000, the NMWC authority took over from the preparatory committee that had published its summary report the year before. That report was, according to many, the most detailed instruction to the new authority and its museums written to date, and some have recently argued that it has carried too much influence upon the MWC through the years (KPMG 2008; Lundahl 2008).

The report puts a great deal of hope in new technology to pave the way for an experimental museum with little room for the gaze of the rational, disembodied and disinterested visitor.

It is obvious that the demands on exhibitions have increased when it comes to external shape and active implementation of technology, but also concerning topicality, ideas and relevance more broadly. […] The idea to focus the Gothenburg museum on experimental forms of exhibition has been brought up. […] Furthermore, it has been pointed out that a bolder and less conventional perspective on objects can promote for example artistic and interdisciplinary approaches, and that technology, object, and personal contacts constitute a both/and [sic] and can never really replace each other. (Rogestam et al. 1998: 40-41. My translation)

The idea, it seems, is to integrate information technology into the museum in order to meet the growing demands on exhibitions, both from the public and from other museums. Consistent with this, the report goes on to maintain the importance of displayed objects, not because the objects are examples of abstract categories, but because of their “entirely unique ability to create a sense of something concrete and near” (Rogestam et al. 1998: 30. My translation)
To be sure, a re-enchanted museum is being described, where objects and spaces come to life to tell their stories and entice the audience. Even if technology is not the only means of re-enchanting, it certainly is described as one tool among several for re-envisioning exhibition forms.

The Problem

Håkan Thörn, who was one of the first employees to develop the content of the exhibition, points out that in a museum where experimentation is the norm, old ethnographic objects are, although a necessary problem, not always a welcome one:

At the same time, the museum’s aspiration for change comes with an array of contradictions that, as far as I can tell, will always mark its activities. Not least, these contradictions arise from the collection of hundreds of thousands of objects that the museum inherited from its predecessor, Gothenburg’s Ethnographical Museum. In spite of its focus on contemporary problems, one of the tasks of the museum is to administer this collection and display parts of it to the public. (Thörn 2005: 47. My translation)

This dual task of experimenting and preserving, come together in the project of re-envisioning the objects and giving them new meaning. This is in fact seen as a central task for the new museum. Perhaps best summed up by the Head of Museum Collections when I interviewed him, this attitude emerges:

We must start seeing the objects in a new light. […] It is perhaps also something of a general trend in the West. I mean, most museums here have gone through some sort of transformation. So it was only timely that the old Ethnographic Museum disappeared and became the Museum of World Culture. Now, Sweden has not had any colonies, but in many countries, like Holland, there has been a significant process dealing with their colonial past. (2008-05-19. My translation)

In other words, the objects constitute a problem for the MWC, connected to the demise of colonialism and the imperative to rework the museum. This problem is maintained as a problem throughout the organization.

Of course, it could be argued that the problem is not one of objects, but one of interpreting the objects. There is always some truth in saying that interpretation is a human, not an object activity. Nevertheless, there are numerous and venerable arguments for highlighting the surprisingly complex role and agency of objects in interpretative processes (see e.g. Latour’s discussion on the "Third Source of Uncertainty" in Latour 2005). For example, objects tend to gather interpretations; they tend to provoke new interpretations, and tie together different ones together. It is precisely this agency of objects that ANT seeks to unravel. Therefore, digitization is a solution insofar as it is able to reshape the objects and redraw their relationships. This is, I will proceed to show, precisely how digitization is employed in the MWC.
Digitization in ANT – Problems and Possibilities

Many of the questions, theories, and empirical results that surround digital media today, can be called media materialist. The concept is close to Katharine Hayles’ notion of New Materialism, the idea that the medium in which texts are represented goes a long way to making sense of their content – a variation on an argument that has been made within various schools of thought; Hayles mentions, among others, thinkers such as Walter Ong, Jacques Derrida and Oliver Sacks (Hayles 2005: 40-41, 142). Digitization thus presupposes, according to the media materialists, a process of translation: it is not only a transportation of certain content to a new medium, the content itself must change when the medium changes. Hence, there are issues of interpretation to be tackled within that process.

Media materialism is different from relational materialism – the notion that Law has adopted to describe the ontological position of ANT (Law 1994). Media materialists focus the inherent qualities of different media when the interpenetration of content and medium is discussed. To relational materialists, on the other hand, this argument is off the mark, as media cannot have any qualities that they do not acquire as part of local networks.

While siding with ANT on the importance of local networks, I do maintain that we can construct concepts that downplay the opposition between relational and media materialism and that help us understand the specifics of digital media. This is done by seeing digital media as a new material that must be instated and made intrinsic to the local contexts where it is introduced. In this way, we neither deny that the new medium is always enacted locally, nor do we deny that the medium has a pseudo-universal character, namely its newness, that creates a need for adapting and accommodating within the local contexts where it is introduced.

Introducing Modes of Digitization

I would like to begin by introducing a concept of digital media that foregoes a priori distinctions. In a vein closely related to Actor-Network Theory, I will decenter the concept of media, making the possible specific character of digital media not a question of inherent or formal makeup, but of local networks and arrangements.

Bruno Latour seems to suggest that the local always has a network character that surpasses its limits and connects it to other locales (Latour 2005). For him, the locale, such as for example a meeting in a specific building, is always a collection of many different objects, each with their own local history and purpose. The “local situation” is thus always a specific configuration of many different situations, which ties together in specific networks and with specific effects. I will use the word local network to denote this idea of the distributed local situation, where disparate objects are assembled from multiple places and times.
In an article on medical Internet sites, Samantha Adams and Marc Berg touch on the debate between media and relational materialism (Adams & Berg 2004). Arguing from the point of view of ANT, they show that concerns raised about new, digital media are the same as those raised about printed texts in the 15th century. Their point, to repeat the argument made by relational materialists generally, is that different media have no inherent qualities, but play similar roles in the relational networks into which they are introduced.

Importantly, however, Adams and Berg’s article is evidence that Actor-Network Theorists are prepared to accept that the introduction of new media into old networks, at least temporarily, opens the latter for debate and re-arrangements. Their argument resonates with Bruno Latour’s concept of black-boxing; according to Latour, the development of a new technology involves a myriad of concerns that are black-boxed once the technology is deemed usable and “retailable” (Latour 1987). However, under specific circumstances – as when a group questions the safety of the new technology – the black box is re-opened, and its bits and pieces once again are available to reassess and rearrange. Adams and Berg’s article, then, can be said to demonstrate the capacity of new media to reopen the black boxes of the local networks where they are introduced.

Finally, then, combining the innovatory effects of new media (Adams & Berg 2004), Latour’s black-boxing, I propose modes of digitization as a concept for the rearranging processes opened up by the introduction of digital media, processes that, through defining the analogue/digital divide and the procedures of making digital, determine the position of new technologies within local networks. These processes are also central to retaining, challenging, and changing organization identity, knowledge, and reflexivity.

Take, for example, decisions on how many digital photos are to be taken of every object in a museum collection, before an entire inventory can be said to have been digitized. This is in every sense a question of how to define analogue objects, their digital counterparts and their future functions (is the computerized version only to be a guide to the analogue collection, or will 3-D exhibits replace existing exhibits, etc.), concurrent with the working out of procedures for converting analogue to digital (namely, in said example, through deciding on the number of digital photos to be taken).

Two central points to be made after this definition are: (1) there may be multiple modes of digitization arranging one local network and (2) the investigation of any mode of digitization must be pursued empirically. These points do not follow from, but are implicit in the definition above, as the concept is modelled on the theoretical and methodological points made by Law when he introduces the concept modes of ordering (Law 1994: 106-107).

Law wishes to introduce a way of thinking into Actor-Network Theory that looks for patterns, rather than questions any claim to meaning and overall connection whatsoever. He claims that his concept is unusually “bold” for the poststruc-
turalist camp, in that it allows for imputing large patterns to empirical data. It is
nevertheless to this camp that he wishes to belong. The argument Law proposes
for his “boldness” is that there must be room to describe those relative and contin-
genent orders within which, according to the standard poststructuralist account, sub-
jectivity and agency are materialized. His argument is that such patterns, for ex-
ample the order of bureaucracy or enterprise, are self-perpetuating and do, them-
selves, supply the rules by which they are evaluated. Thus, these orderings are the
basis for local meaningfulness. However, as Law nevertheless adheres to the post-
structuralist principle that universal meaningfulness is im-
possible, it follows that
modes of ordering, and as a consequence modes of digitization, must necessarily
be \textit{multiple}. As there are no universal principles or patterns upon which all mean-
ingsfulness can be modelled, it also follows that every mode of ordering or digitiz-
ing must be investigated empirically, not theoretically. These two points, multi-
plicity and the necessity of empirical investigation, are at the core of the concept
of contingency. Thus, as it derives from Law’s concept, the notion \textit{modes of digi-
itzation} must be read as simultaneously bold and contingent.

\textbf{Modes of Digitization as Performed Arrangements}

From its very start, ANT has been associated with constructivism; different quali-
ties such as stability, change, materiality, and agency, have all had to be explained
by arrangements of networks. The theory has come to maintain that there is, in
principle, no distinction between human and object within these networks – again,
that distinction must be explained through arrangements.

One important finding in ANT studies is that \textit{stable} artifacts, as outcomes of
heterogeneous and painstaking construction, are important in keeping some peo-
ple together while creating borders between others. I make a similar point when
discussing information artifacts above. In short, artifacts play important roles in
organizing work, but are also the outcome of such organization. For example,
spoken words can only go so far, but lines drawn upon a map, once they have att-
tained legitimacy, can be pivotal in keeping whole nations together and others
apart.

Consequently, modes of digitization are not actual structures, nor are they mere
concepts. They are relations between humans and materials that are “performed”
contingently. By performed, I mean that they exist only through performance; that
their logic and aims, which do indeed exist, are not those of the performing indi-
viduals, but belong to emerging patterns of relational orderings. By contingently, I
mean that they are the outcome of a range of different localities, times and differ-
ent ways of arrangement. They are also contingent upon always having relations
to other modes, to which they develop material and performative interfaces, rela-
tions that also characterize them. Furthermore, these performances are only possi-
ble through the information artifacts that hold them together and which they, in
turn, shape.
Two Competing Modes of Digitization

My investigation of the MWC led me to distinguish between two modes of digitization: **mediating digitization** and **object digitization**.

I look at these modes of digitization as both performed and materialized contingently. This will become evident in the layout of the following presentations of the two modes of digitization found within the MWC. I will present each of the modes in three stages. First, I wish to point out the features that mark mediating and object digitization as modes of digitization. Second, I will show which information artifact hold the modes together internally. Third, true to my theoretical admonition that modes of digitization are performed contingently and lack an isolated, systematic kernel, I will demonstrate how each mode varies and becomes more or less vague when forced to negotiate with other modes of ordering.

Performativity and materialization are also at the centre of the concluding passage as well, where I will not only look at how the modes are performed, but also examine the artifacts – software programs, museum objects, buildings, etc. – that are central to holding both the modes of digitization and the museum as a whole together.

Mediating

Mediating as a Mode of Digitization

Solutions are often found when problems are reworked. For the MWC Director of Marketing and Information, the problem of ethnographic objects should be reworked to become one of visitor experience.

The purpose [of the museum] is not to display objects. The purpose is, of course, to give people a substantial experience in their everyday lives, something that connects their everyday lives with bigger, global events. That is our purpose. And then we use exhibitions and objects as methods. […] That is something you could possibly also get from exciting documentaries on television and, to a lesser extent, from newspapers. (2008-05-28. My translation)

Here, the Director of Marketing and Information explains the role of objects and exhibitions: they are means of gaining experiences that carry messages. Hence, objects and the cultures they represent are no longer the starting point of the ethnographic museum and its exhibits. Rather, the MWC first chooses messages or themes independent of its collections (e.g. “Trafficking,” “AIDS,” or “Modern day Africa”), and then picks appropriate objects – a practice that has required many external procurements.

This shift from object to experience – which has many parallels in the museum world at large (Hein 2000) – is not without consequence for digital media. If objects are only a means of creating experiences, a point implied in the interview cited above, then there can be several other means that may work equally well.
Indeed, the same experience can be created and mediated by parallel means, so that museum visitors can come in contact with the intended message in different places and in different forms.

I don’t say, “We are working on an exhibition.” I want to work on a “project”. And there are many different ways of creating the appropriate experience. Trafficking is a great example of this. There is an exhibition. We have had many happenings around it. We have a series of seminars with different researchers. We have produced a supplement that was published and distributed with Göteborgs-Posten [local newspaper]. We are involved in an international cooperation with fifteen different institutions that work to change laws. We have a campaign site that will accompany the exhibition when it starts to move around to different museums. (2008-05-28. My translation)

The campaign sites are digital exhibitions, accessible on the museum website. They serve the dual purpose of giving far-away visitors a good portion of the actual exhibition experience, as well as attracting others to the museum building.

At this point, I argue that mediating is a mode of digitization. Indeed, in shifting the focus from object to message and experience, objects and websites become synonymous for their roles as mediators of messages. Hence, mediating is a rearrangement that makes digital media an important resource in the new museum. This is not to say anything relative to causality, however, such as implying that mediating could only have been adopted as a mode of ordering after the introduction of digital media. Nevertheless, as a specific way of thinking about and organizing the resources of the museum, mediating puts digital media on a par with objects in terms of their ability to generate experiences. Mediating clearly plays the role of instigating digitization of experience within the MWC.

Information Artifacts

While mediating emerges out of the rearrangement of objects and messages, it is also discernable in new software applications commissioned by the MWC. Reproducing the difference between stable messages and experiences on the one hand, and shifting media on the other, the Marketing and Information staff has chosen to commission a consultant to develop a new and unique application for each new exhibition.

This is done using Flash, computer software optimized for the free, non-standardized tailoring of multimedia presentations. Freedom from standards does however mean that Flash users are ultimately responsible for all layout and graphics details themselves, so that the application development process requires expertise and artistry. Ultimately, the form that mediating has taken within the MWC, developing new Flash presentations for each exhibition, has become costly.

Digital exhibitions built within Flash are also part of defining objects as media since they are designed with the specific concept of objects in mind. Indeed, when digital exhibits have been developed, objects are allowed to play a part only inso-
far as they can be made intrinsic to the experience the application intends to generate.

**Ambiguities**

It is important to notice that a mode of digitization is not driven by any kernel of thought. It is simply a performative pattern that is discernable within local situations. As such, it can be more or less unitary, more or less noticeable, more or less clear. In order to emphasize this, let me now turn to some vague points about mediating.

After having completed a first interpretation of the interviews I conducted at the MWC, I sent all interviewees a copy of interviews and solicited comments. One of the interviewees called and argued quite forcefully that I had exaggerated the way in which digital media had been allowed to replace ethnographic objects. Certainly, this interviewee admitted, the objects are media utilized for the mediation of specific experiences and messages; nevertheless, they are *unique* media, underpinning *unique* experiences – the digital exhibitions that the MWC offers on their campaign sites can consequently only be approximations of the actual exhibits. According to this interviewee, she and her colleagues had a deep and passionate interest in ethnographic objects and the unique experiences that can be created using these peculiar media.

This additional information did, however, not convince me that objects were still the centre of mediating, especially since that view was belied by statements in earlier interviews, arguing for the primacy of experience over objects. And so, even if mediating focuses on *unique*, rather than generic experiences, such unique experiences can also be elicited by digital media. This is true even if those latter experiences are other than those mediated by unique objects. Consequently, even if unique experiences are substituted for generic ones, the centrality of objects is contested in mediating, and the rhetoric of mediating remains a valid asset in the process of adopting digital media as an important museum resource.

Whereas “mediating” from the standpoint of the earlier interviews could be interpreted as saying that objects could be substituted by any medium that gives the same experience, the talk of “unique objects” denies any such substitution. This latter talk of uniqueness, however, opens the possibility of equally unique digital presentations, the value of which only becomes evident when their link to objects is denied. In other words, digital presentations become objects in their own right with this latter move to uniqueness.

Looking back at earlier interviews, in addition to interpreting the museum website in the light of this ambiguity, I recognize that the MWC uses two kinds of digital media. One of these mimics the exhibitions and tries to replicate the museum experience on the Internet. I will call this *mimicking medium*. The other one is presented as a museum object in its own right, and brackets relations to analogue mediums. I will call this latter version *pure medium*.
It may be helpful to point out that mimicking mediums do not necessarily mimic objects. In the case of mediating, they seek to replicate *experiences* in digital form, while treating museum objects as other mimicking media. Thus, the differences between mimicking and pure media are not entirely parallel to historian Parry Ross’ distinctions of “digital surrogate” and “born digital” (Parry 2007: 69). Above all, Ross restricts the concept of analogue to museum objects. Leaving such definitions to my interviewees, I suggest that the distinction between mimicking and pure media have entirely to do with rules of evaluation. Whereas mimicking media are evaluated on the basis of some relation (e.g. to the experience created by analogue exhibits in their role as media), pure media are evaluated on the basis of rules pertinent to the medium as such.

When discussing the museum website, the staff and the commissioned consultant did not seem eager to have it mediate anything other than itself: its pages were supposed to attract new visitors to the museum by being *different* and *up-to-date*. When the consultant who had developed the website described how he and his colleagues had philosophized about web design, he thus emphasized *difference* and *topicality*:

> [We] built up navigation and what we call pushing links, so you can immediately show the visitor the most recent news, instead of having some dreary navigation up in the left corner, because that doesn’t build up any image, well, there is not much going on there, it’s rather boring. […] If they wanted a website to attract visitors to the [museum] building, then they really had to have a site that visually attracted people, well, and those other pages just don’t do that. (2008-07-01. My translation)

As is evident from this passage, difference and topicality should be understood as qualities of web design. First of all, *topicality*, or “up-to-dateness,” is accomplished through pushing links as opposed to traditional, unchanging website menus containing general categories (e.g. About us, Contact information, Collections). These link directly to current events and thus must be changed as new events replace old.

Secondly, what the consultant means by the MWC site being *different* from other Internet sites soon evolved to become “‘different from the websites of the other museums organized under the NMWC.’” Thus, difference had mainly been accomplished by reworking the Content Management System (CMS), used by all the NMWC museums, and that determined the appearance of their sites. It had also involved defending those changes against the subsequent onslaught from the NMWC, which was eager to sustain the graphic consistency of its museums.

The ambiguities of mediating can be summarized as pertaining to the concept of medium. When objects and digital media are put on par with one another, they are both discussed in terms of their ability to convey messages or experiences. By contrast, topicality and difference are qualities ascribed directly to media as such, not to any message or experience that those media are supposed to convey.
short, the meanings of mimicking media lie in messages and experiences; the meanings of pure media lie in the setup of the medium itself.

I wish to avoid the notion that mediating is an ideology that promotes digital media to the detriment of other materials within the museum. Rather, as a mode of digitization, mediating is a particular way of doing things and speaking about what is done. Specifically, mediating is a way of doing and speaking about media. It does so with other modes of ordering. Indeed, I would suggest that ambiguities pertaining to the concept of medium have to do with the relative autonomy that the Marketing personnel enjoys in changing the website, versus the need to negotiate with others when it comes to the arrangement of both analogue and digital exhibitions.

Digitization of Objects

Historically, an ethnographic object was a piece of evidence, evidence perhaps not foremost of its culture of origin, but of supremacy of the West and its allegedly unsurpassed ability to systematize and build knowledge of the world. Today, these fairytale-like narratives underpinning the importance of the objects are gone; what is left is often no more than dusty piles of worthless shards.

Perhaps it is within the realm of storage, more than anywhere else, that the absence of that bygone magic is most evident; where disenchanted objects of no particular interest cry out for something to be done with them. As the Director of Collections told me, “then, of course, there are collections without the remotest interest to anyone. I mean, we have thousands of potsherds, and no one cares about them” (2008-05-19. My translation).

As I will show, digitizing objects is a process initiated to save objects from this utter meaninglessness, to replace objects’ old relations to each other and to humans with new relations. Their future usefulness must be guaranteed, and so ethnography must be problematized and replaced by something new. Slowly, there is a digitalized order emerging, one that prepares objects for future, unimagined uses – a forward thinking plan for a journey to places where no ethnographic object has gone before.

Object Digitization as a Mode of Digitization

Digitizing objects is about planning ahead. When I talked to the recently employed digitization coordinator for the NMWC, it soon became obvious that he has future, perhaps unconventional users in mind. At least, this is one reason why he has drawn up guidelines for object digitization in all museums, and why he has put so much effort into convincing photographers to include a stick with a color scale on all digital photos:

“I have wanted to include a color scale from the start, but there was so much resistance to it; many thought it didn’t serve any purpose. So, in my current proposition, we will continue without the color scale, but make some tests with the scale during
the coming year. After all, it is the color scale that will guarantee that colors are cor-
rect if, for example, someone from Greece in ten years time wants to check out the
coloring of a particular object.” (2008-06-04. My translation)

There is, however, one particular future usage for the catalogue that the coordina-
tor prioritizes:

“Most important is the location, that we know where in the collection we can find
the object. That is how I think about the future, that each object should have a posi-
tion and a searchable word, that we should be able to do searches. [...] The idea is
that we, before an upcoming exhibition for example, can get a quick overview of
which of the objects in the collection can be used. [...] And that we can serve re-
searchers more efficiently at the object secretariat. We should quickly be able to get
a list of all the things we have and show images. And regarding the images, it is a
stated aim that we shouldn’t have to go down in the storage rooms and bring out
every object.” (2008-06-04. My translation)

As in the case of mediating, I am reluct ant to handle causal order here. Certain
central elements of object digitization are tightly connected to cataloguing, which
clearly emerged before the advent of digital media. Cataloguing of objects has
three priorities: (1) that objects can be easily found in collections, (2) that the col-
lection catalogue can be searched with words, and (3) that objects can be substi-
tuted with digital images and texts as long as the actual objects are not required. In
contrast, ethnography was about categorizing objects correctly; placing them not
in the context of the specific museum catalogue, but in the taxonomic context of a
scientifically ordered world of “primitive cultures.” Returning to catalogue cate-
gories, they are above all used as indexes for finding objects by means of
searches. Thus, challenging ethnographic ordering is not something new that
arises out of digital media, but comes about even when the catalogue is made a
central concern.

That said, however, increasing the quality of the catalogue is a specific way of
engaging digital media in the museum; so object digitization is a mode of digitiza-
tion. Also, as we will see, while principles of cataloguing are central to this pro-
ject, object digitization is not the same as catalogue digitization. With digitization,
the search-centered approach is accentuated and the order of ethnography further
undermined; simply making the old catalogue digitally available is not enough for
the concerned museum staff. Thus, ideally, cataloguing the whole collection
should start afresh, and the old analogue catalogue should be discarded. In the
end, meaning should be provided primarily by the individual users who come to
the digital catalogue with specific search words, who in turn create the temporal
order of results. The meaning of an object can no longer be limited to a card;
words in a database enable users to create meaningful search results.

In a continuation of this ordering of things, we see a possibility that would have
struck many old ethnographers as absurd, namely letting users themselves provide
the words used to describe objects in the database. While this possibility has been
realized in radical ways in some museums around the world, it is only discussed
within the MWC, and then only in terms of expanding, not replacing the existing catalogue.

“We could also more easily expand our knowledge about our own objects. Objects we know nothing about, there are individuals in this society that know a hell of a lot about them. If they could come and tell us what they know about the objects, that would be invaluable.” (2008-05-28. My translation)

Nevertheless, even if the MWC does not follow up on the more radical implications of its new digital order, its new database does not have stable taxonomies, but does, ideally, create new taxonomies from the words furnished by the users and then orders objects accordingly. Through digitization, the very order of objects is broken up and made malleable and thus applicable to varying tasks.

Order, then, has moved closer to and has centered upon the individual user of the catalogue. While scientific order centered on the learned scholar who was able to interpret and order the world to a homogeneous whole, and while catalogue order hinged upon the able cataloguer, searchable order purports to begin with any individual, recreating itself according to individual interests.

**Information Artifacts**

Contrary to mediating that has tended to develop new, non-standardized software applications for each new exhibit, object digitization is a standardizing practice. Indeed, speaking with museum personnel who work with storage and with the digitization coordinator, I soon discovered that the development of standardized software and search engines was not only a project connecting different members of the MWC staff, but was a project that surpassed each museum to include coordination of projects on the national, European and even global levels. Thus, whereas the museum had newly adopted digitization software that had been developed by a group of Swedish public museums, some members of staff were also active in international networks, discussing technological ways of bypassing locally differing standards in order to facilitate common search engines.

Thus, while mediating supports difference and change, object digitization defends common standards. In other words, the software being developed by the two different modes of digitization mirror their respective ideas of a future for ethnographic objects.

**Ambiguities**

If we interpret object digitization as a certain way of compiling digital databases, not as an ideology or a system of thought, we must realize that struggles over mundane questions such as whether or not to include a color scale on photos, penetrates to the heart of such issues as where to draw a line between digital and analogue. For example, is it accurate to call the database digital if it has exactly the same use as the paper-based catalogue? Which uses must the database facilitate, in order to merit the name digital? Are color scales a necessary feature?
This lack of clarity becomes even more evident when turning to the procedures by which the museum collection has hitherto been entered into the computer-based database. As digitization of objects was emphasized in the 1999 report that characterized much of the work in the MWC since its inception, this type of digitization was one of the first activities initiated.

In the MWC, young employees were put to the task of entering the entire old catalogue, word by word, into computers by use of keyboards. As the digitization coordinator can establish today, however, there is a not-so-subtle difference between digitizing old catalogues and digitizing objects:

Then they [the users] really just have the information from the cards in digital form, not knowledge about whether the object exists or not, or in which condition it is. The card could be from the 1920s and the object could have disappeared, been destroyed or registered incorrectly, for example. So you could ask yourself whether it is a digitization of the catalogue cards we want or a digitization of the objects. (2008-06-04. My translation)

This distinction, as made by the coordinator, seems to testify to the relative strength of ethnographic discourse during those first years of the museum, and the relative weakness of object digitization. I do not argue that the choice to register the old catalogue constitutes some planned coup on the part of the ethnographers. However, it does point to a lack of critical distance to the paper-based catalogue.

Object digitization, then, is bound up with several ambiguities born out of its practices. As I have shown, both photographing objects and entering text into the computer-based database, involves choices where object digitization, in its role of a mode of digitization, has not yet succeeded in seizing the initiative for itself. Rather, as of yet, its attempts at standardized procedures have been challenged by local practices and limitations.

**Conflicting Modes of Digitization**

Mediating and object digitization are not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, they clash in terms of how certain things are to be done within the museum. The Head of Marketing and Information was, for example, quite critical of how the object digitization process had been implemented:

Just because you take that text and that image and put it out there [on the Internet], it doesn’t get more interesting. That which makes an object interesting, and which really means applying the concept of accessibility, is formulating the information so that it becomes interesting. (2008-05-28. My translation)

This interview segment questions unmediated objects and their place in object digitization. Again, mediating focuses on the experience that objects generate; object digitization focuses on ascertaining the future uses of the objects. In this respect they clash.
I interviewed the photographer, recruited from the old ethnographic museum, who was stationed in the storage building. His opinion of the current museum exhibitions illustrates what the “object people” thought about mediating:

I think we must have a collection and a permanent exhibition that represents the collection, or else we are not a museum. Today, the building has become a place where different objects and ideas come and go. / Henriksson: So what is it then, if not a museum? A community centre. But we do still call ourselves the Museum of World Culture. So if we are to present ourselves, we must present what we have, namely our collections. What else should we display on the website, if not our collections?


One could read this as a questioning of the monopoly that the Marketing and Information personnel maintains over the website at present. However, the primary argument concerns the objects. Whereas mediating chooses themes and messages for the exhibitions quite independently of museum collections and procures needed objects from other museums, object digitization starts with actual objects. Again, this is a topic upon which the two modes of digitization clash.

It is worth noting that the two modes of digitization do not share any common computer software, but that computer software nevertheless is an important factor in binding together each of the separate modes of digitization. Thus, while mediating accomplishes difference through the reworking of the CMS software and invests a great deal of money in the development of Flash applications, and while object digitization finds an important project in the development of common programs and search engines – these modes of digitization have little or no interest in one another’s software programs. When it comes to the general cohesion of the museum, we must refer to artifacts other than the information artifacts – the computer programs – of each respective digitization project.

The results of this study suggest that modes of digitization are discernable through their respective system of software applications. The development of these programs, though not necessarily a process of standardization, serves as a hub for the digitization process. Hence the programs are products of the imagined future order of materials within the organization that each mode of digitization is actualizing, or failing to actualize, through its ongoing work of organizing.

Whereas the development of computer programs holds each mode of digitization together, conditions for the integrity of the museum as a whole must be sought elsewhere, such as the museum locations and their relations. The geographical division of the MWC, where object storage is kept separate from the museum building, is a conspicuous feature of the museum. My interviews demonstrate that the staff of the storage building and the staff of the museum building seldom met. The members of the staff that were interviewed also held to different views of the objects depending upon the building in which they worked. I do not wish to speculate on whether the division is the reason behind, or an effect of different practices within the museum. Officially, it is explained by the inability of the museum building to adequately house object collections. Nevertheless, I
would argue that the current unity of the museum presupposes the geographical separation of the different modes of ordering and digitization that the bifurcation of the museum accomplishes.

However, the museum and the storage building are not the only locations that are counted as part of the MWC. An equally important place is the website, entirely dominated at present by the Marketing and Information staff. I would argue that the monopoly that these staff members wield over the content of the website, is an important factor in keeping the two modes of digitization apart. Whether this monopoly will remain, or whether, for example, adherents of object digitization will demand that their database is published on the website, is anyone’s guess -- as are the consequences of those alternatives for the museum’s future unity.

Finally, I argue that objects are a common problem for mediating and object digitization. This problem is not peripheral, nor is it a temporary nuisance. Rather, objects are the common ground upon which the two different modes of digitization come together and act.

I believe it possible to claim that it is exactly the post-colonial questioning of ethnographic objects that opens up the museum as a space where novel exhibition strategies can meet. Indeed, I argue that it is only as long as these strategies sustain the problematic status of these objects, that the unity of the museum will remain intact.

Conclusions

In this article, I have tried to show that the introduction of digital media not only requires the configuration of devices, but also necessitates an entire battery of rearrangements — modes of digitization — that include many different materials and living beings. Specifically, I have suggested that software programs may be important for the internal cohesion of modes of digitization, whereas relations between different modes of digitization are sustained by other materials. I have also tried to show that as these modes of digitization meet and clash with other modes of ordering, stability and clear-cut distinctions are not the obvious end of the process. Rather, central concepts such as medium and even pivotal distinctions such as digital/analogue may need to remain undecided in order to sustain local networks.

My suggestion is that digital media should be treated as a newcomer to local situations, where its novelty requires the rearrangements of networks. Needless to say, this implies that rearrangements in the face of new media are modes of digitization, i.e. contingent arrangements that become general standards only by virtue of dissemination.

These assertions lead to new problems that open the door for future study: (1) what other modes of digitization can be discerned? (2) what are their histories, i.e. in what types of organizations have they originated and why? and (3) how do dif-
ferent modes of digitization travel from one kind of organization to another and what changes do these travels entail?

In this article, I have shown that post-colonialist museums may currently be important sites for the adaptation and change of modes of digitization. Though I have emphasized the dependency that mediating and object digitization have on the local arrangements of the MWC, these two modes of digitization may also be adopted elsewhere. Indeed, I have already hinted at this conclusion by referring to the different styles whereby mediating and object digitization seem to disseminate or fail to disseminate; whereas object digitization already forms global networks around the development of computer databases and search engines, mediating employs costly consultants, and establishes the necessary contacts for those transactions.

On a more theoretical note, I hope to have demonstrated the pertinence of the digitization concept in pointing to instances where the relationship between digital media and other materials is being determined. I would argue that digital media, by introducing new materials into organizations, should become a distinct object of ANT studies on information systems. Indeed, it is in the face of these new technologies that renewal is required and where utopian reordering of objects becomes possible.

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Notes
1 This article is based on the results of my master thesis, (Henriksson 2008), submitted to the Department of Sociology at Gothenburg University. I am indebted to those who kindly agreed to be interviewed for that thesis – without them my efforts would have come to naught. I also wish to thank Mark Elam and Hans Glimell, Gothenburg University; Åsa Wettergren, Stefan Karlsson and the participants of the article seminar, Karlstad University. Many thanks to my friend Thomas Jacobsson for engaging discussions. Lastly, let me give thanks to the two anonymous referees for Culture Unbound, whose comments I could not have been without.

2 A case study often comprises different semi-structured samples – mine also. I chose to interview thirteen persons. These I selected in three different ways. First, I interviewed persons who worked closely with the digitization process: the photographer, the chief of information and marketing, and an information technician. Secondly, I chose to interview two former employees who I hoped could furnish an independent perspective on the museum. Thirdly, I asked all of the first five interviewees to give me names of other persons they thought I should interview, which led me to seven other interviewees. It should be noted that not all of the interviews are cited within this article; for a more extensive analysis of the material, see (Henriksson 2008). I also read all Swedish newspaper and magazine articles that contained the words
“Världskulturmuseet,” “Världskulturmuseum,” or “Världskultur” (i.e. “The Museum of World culture,” “Museum of World Culture,” or “World Culture”) – all in all 130 articles. Lastly, I read the Government proposition on Information Technology that inspired the report initiating the process that became the MWC, a report that I also read.


4 Law in his turn models “modes of ordering” on Foucault’s concept of discourses. Consequently, there are some important similarities between modes of ordering/digitization and discourses – however, there are also differences. Law argues that the concepts mainly overlap when it comes to their methodological role: both teach us to impute larger patterns onto our empirical data. They are also both about assuming the existence of non-subjective strategies, i.e. that we discern logics and aims in our empirical data without ascribing them to individuals. These logics and aims are discernable because of the internal and contingent meaningfulness that is accomplished through ordering, but not because of any universal and external point of reference that would work to reveal all underlying logics and aims – a fact pointing us methodologically in the direction of participatory observations. Discourses and modes of ordering/digitization also share in a problematization of the concept of agency; the logics and aims discerned are said to animate and to emerge through local practices – hence, adherents of these concepts typically argue that agency and individuality must be explained as outcomes or emergent qualities of these larger patterns. However, Law is critical of Foucault when it comes to the hegemonic character that the latter writer tends to accredit to discourses. In contrast to discourses, then, modes of ordering/digitization are enacted locally and tend to develop interfaces with other modes – contingent interfaces that over time, and to the extent that the modes are accomplished in local orderings, must necessarily characterize each mode. Law also draws on ANT when he suggests that concepts of discourses tend to be reductionist (e.g. claiming linguistics to be the most revelatory analytical tool), whereas modes of ordering are relational materialist, thus implying that the patterns discerned are acted out in many different materials, governed by many different sets of rules (linguistic, psychological, mathematical, chemical, etc.).

5 I am not interested in investigating such causal links in this article – though, needless to say, the causal import of digital media on mediating as a mode of ordering museums is a pertinent subject for future research. Digital media has indeed been mentioned elsewhere as a cause of the shift from objects to experience within museums (Hein 2000: 9-12; Parry 2007: 81). Nevertheless, Hilde Hein, who has thus contributed to this hypothesis, also includes many other historical causes in her nuanced account of recent museum trends. Ross Parry also conditions his position by pointing out that there were curator “traditions” inherently friendly to digital media before digital media was even introduced into any museum.

6 I wish to thank the referee of Culture Unbound for making me aware that the work of John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking on museum experience undermines any claim to correctly mimicking the museum experience digitally. These authors argue that museum experience results from an interaction between several levels where the actual visit to exhibitions, a level that could possibly be copied digitally, is only one (Falk & Dierking 1992). Other levels have to do with personal expectations of the museum, personal agendas for the museum visit as well as the interaction with other visitors and with the museum staff. Falk and Dierking argue that all of these levels together form the resulting experiences and the messages that visitors are able to extract from the exhibits. This clearly speaks against the possibility of accurately copying the museum experience in digital form. In the sense that this talk of interacting levels is not well captured by mediating and other modes of digitization, Falk and Dierking’s account perhaps helps us trace the borders of mediating.

7 So far, the development of Flash applications has been made by external consultants. Due to recent cutbacks of museum funding, however, commissioning consultants is now a thing of the past. (By the way, this is an excellent example of how diverse sites are assembled in local net-
works; the mediating mode of ordering objects calls for individual digital solutions for each new exhibition; the computer program Flash calls for commissioned consultants; the shortened flow of money makes that solution impossible. Will this cause mediating’s concept of objects to change and/or are there alternative routes in the dense jungle of software programs and economical assets?)

References

Interviews
2008-05-14: Interview with a photographer.
2008-05-19: Interview with the Head of storage.
2008-05-28: Interview with the Head of information and marketing.
2008-06-04: Interview with the coordinator for the object digitization project.
2008-07-01: Interview with a consultant formerly commissioned to develop the museum website.

Literature


Cultural Research and Intangible Heritage

By Sheenagh Pietrobruno

Abstract

Intangible heritage deemed worthy of preservation is often regarded as traditional culture that reflects the identity of a particular nation or group. Traditional cultures are distinct from commercial forms, which are transmitted and promoted via businesses, commercial establishments, and media. Research on culture reveals the way that a large part of the world’s intangible heritage includes practices that interweave tradition and commodification as well as blur the boundaries between nations. As these practices do not fit into the clear categories of “traditional” or “national”, they may not be considered for preservation in official project documents such as the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Many of these practices are being, nonetheless, stored today through the unofficial archiving of moving images on the Internet, facilitated by Web 2.0. Through the case studies of various Caribbean performing arts, this paper illustrates how cultural research can provide a comprehensive understanding of intangible culture in both its lived and digital contexts, knowledge that in turn challenges the process of categorization and the measures of preservation of intangible heritage proposed by UNESCO.

Keywords: UNESCO; intangible heritage; popular performing arts; tradition; commodification; video-sharing sites; tumba francesa; Cuban casino, salsa dance.
**Introduction**

In this era of globalization, there is growing fear that cultures around the world will become more uniform, leading to a decrease in cultural diversity. To counter this potential homogeneity, strategies have been developed to preserve those cultures whose very existence could be threatened. Living cultures are highly susceptible to becoming extinct. This heritage, referred to as “intangible”, includes oral forms such as languages, rituals, and the festive and performing arts. The fragility of intangible cultures lies in their being sustained through lived circumstances and stored in human bodies and minds rather than in documents, artifacts, and forms of media. To safeguard the world’s more ephemeral cultural forms and to maintain the diversity of the world’s culture, UNESCO has put forward its *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003).

The intangible performing arts that are commonly deemed worthy of preservation by organizations such as UNESCO are often those regarded as traditional practices that reflect the identity of a specific nation or group. Research on culture, nonetheless, reveals that intangible cultural practices may combine the traditional with the commercial. Furthermore, many intangible cultures cannot be circumscribed within the boundaries of a particular nation or defined group either in their contemporary performances or in historical developments. As certain intangible cultures do not fit neatly into categories of “traditional” or “national”, they may not be regarded as valuable heritages that should be preserved by institutions through funded projects or in actual archives or Internet archives. Many of these practices, nonetheless, are being stored today through the unofficial archiving of moving online images, facilitated by Web 2.0. Since its inception in 2005, YouTube, for example, has become a means for individuals to document, store and safeguard global performing arts outside of the jurisdiction of official, centrally structured organizations such as UNESCO. This study illustrates how cultural research can provide a comprehensive understanding of intangible culture in both its lived and digital contexts, knowledge that in turn challenges the process of categorization and the measures of preservation of intangible heritage proposed by UNESCO. “Cultural research” here refers to in-depth analyses of both the historical and contemporary development of cultural practices.

This paper progresses in various stages. First, a description of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* is provided to emphasizes how UNESCO defines intangible heritage as traditional expressions, developed without commercial interactions. Second, the claim is made that this convention, as well as the practice of classifying specific global intangible cultural forms as “masterpieces” or representative within the convention’s mandate to safeguard the intangible heritage of the world, produces assumptions and a system
of ranking that do not necessarily reflect the way intangible practices manifest in actual circumstances. These presumptions have led UNESCO to misinterpret the function of commercial influences within intangible heritage and not fully account for the global influences within cultural expressions as well as the fundamental changeable nature of culture itself. Although traditional cultures are often viewed as static and frozen in time, in their actual embodiment they undergo change and are influenced by outside forces. Furthermore, despite UNESCO’s assertions that the strategies to preserve intangible culture challenge hierarchical structures, this convention produces underlying hierarchies by ranking the world’s intangible culture and by not incorporating the “high” cultures of western Europe under the rubric of the intangible. Third, the examples of three performing arts – Cuba’s tumba francesa, Cuba’s casino and salsa dance – are put forward to demonstrate that in both their historical and contemporary contexts these performances can challenge the assumptions and hierarchies established through UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as well as the list of masterpieces and the representative list. Fourth, it is proposed that the practice on the part of individuals to upload videos of performance practices on video-sharing sites, of which YouTube is exemplar, is becoming an unofficial means to conserve intangible heritage in a manner that more fully captures its developments in actual circumstances. YouTube, for instance, stores and preserves intangible heritage in a way that questions the viability of UNESCO’s safeguarding strategies as realized through its convention to save the world’s intangible heritage.

**Intangible Heritage and Traditional Culture**

UNESCO’s mandate to preserve intangible heritage stems from an earlier proposal. In 1989, UNESCO tabled its Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, initiating a project that sought to preserve traditional culture and folklore around the world. This undertaking led to UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in October 2003 and entered into force on 20 April 2006 (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 13). In this convention, “intangible cultural heritage” is defined as:

> [T]he practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO 2003)

The practices included within UNESCO’s categorization of intangible heritage are oral traditions and expressions comprising language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature
and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003). Under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (ICH), the understanding of intangible culture parallels our notion of the traditional in the sense that they both can be defined as customs and practices, generally associated with the identity of a particular group or community, which are transmitted from one generation to the next primarily within an oral context. The link between the intangible and traditional heritages in UNESCO’s convention is further brought to the fore in the way that it has stemmed from its 1989 Recommendation to preserve traditional culture and folklore. The definition of “folklore” (or “traditional and popular culture”) set out in the Recommendation has been used, according to Noriko Aikawa-Faure, former director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit of UNESCO, to define intangible heritage in UNESCO’s Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, tabled in connection with a project launched in 1998 (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 40). The definition of “folklore” (or “traditional and popular culture”) in the 1989 Recommendation is as follows:

[T]he totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts. (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 40; UNESCO 1989)

Furthermore, as Richard Kurin states: “Most of the experts who helped formulate the Convention [ICH] assumed that intangible cultural heritage is traditional culture and ruled out all sorts of things” (Kurin 2004: 69). The ICHC also suggests that the intangible cultures that are commonly deemed in need of preservation are primarily those regarded as part of tradition. Traditional forms are distinct from commercial ones, which are disseminated within and linked to various businesses, such as theatres, studies, clubs, and music venues, and which are often marketed and promoted through various forms of media, such as print, television, film, and more recently, the Internet.

The commodification of culture is often viewed as a process that sabotages tradition by altering or even corrupting its original expression. UNESCO calls this danger “folklorisation”, which delineates the commodification of traditional practices into objects to be consumed by external audiences (Hafstein 2009: 106). For instance, the online description, featured on the UNESCO website, of the intangible heritage of the Mevlevi Sema Ceremony of Turkey (which includes the dance of the whirling dervish) describes how the commercialization of this practice in the tourist industry has resulted in the performance of more compressed and less complex ceremonies (UNESCO 2008a). During the secularization of the country in 1925, legislation was enforced that led to the closure of all the private spaces in which the Mevlevi Sema Ceremony took place, known as tekkes (dervish lodges), zaviyes (central dervish lodges), ziyaret (places
of pilgrimage), and shrines. In 1953 the Mevlevi Sema Ceremony was rekindled, with the restriction that it could be performed only in public settings conceded to by the Turkish government. Despite these restrictive conditions, ceremonies were still held privately (And 2005: 103). In the 1990s fewer limitations were imposed on the ceremony. Nonetheless, during the thirty years that this ceremony was held and practiced in secret, there was a greater focus placed on music and songs than on its spiritual and religious aspects, which have divested the performance of a significant part of its religious implications (UNESCO 2008a). The Sema Ceremony has since been further modified to make it an appealing spectacle for tourists. According to UNESCO, “Consequently, many sema ceremonies are no longer performed in their traditional context but for tourist audiences, and have been shortened and simplified to meet commercial requirements” (UNESCO 2008a).

**Establishing Hierarchies and Divisions**

To safeguard the world’s intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO has identified and proclaimed certain living heritages as masterpieces, of which the Mevlevi Sema Ceremony is an example. These masterpieces have been listed in its *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, tabled in 1998 (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 13) and revised in subsequent lists set forth in 2001, 2003, and 2005. In November 2008 *A Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* was drawn up, which features ninety cultural forms, including the intangible heritages from the previous list of masterpieces (UNESCO 2008b; Aikawa-Faure 2009: 36). Aikawa-Faure asserts that the Proclamation of Masterpieces program and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention were interconnected: the Proclamation of Masterpieces program acted as a stepping stone for the development of the 2003 *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 14). The process of setting up lists of intangible heritage as well as the content of these catalogues themselves reproduce an understanding of global culture that fosters hierarchies and divisions. The *Proclamation of Masterpieces* as well as its continuation in the 2008 *Representative List* place various cultural forms above others both within the contexts of particular nations and across the globe. Although the value of living culture in actual circumstances is generally determined by the people involved in its production and performance, UNESCO (which is made up of boards, committees, and delegates from numerous member states), has determined the quality and stature of the world’s culture. The change in name from a *Proclamation of Masterpieces* to a *Representative List* in 2008 is an attempt to move away from the hierarchy that is imposed by referring to specific intangible cultures as “masterpieces” (Hafstein 2009: 108). Nonetheless, the *Representative List* incorporates the masterpieces from the earlier *Proclamation* and is still based on a criterion of selection – that of representativity.
which, according to Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, is even more uncertain than the former criterion of excellence (108). These lists of intangible heritage create global and universal standards and in turn become a metaculture that stands outside the lived manifestation of culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 56). The cultures featured on these inventories become recontextualized into national classifications with regard to other practices within the same nation as well in relation to other “masterpieces” of the world featured on international lists (Hafstein 2009: 105). These lists remove specific cultural practices from their contexts and freeze them into either superior or representative artifacts to be preserved and admired. The idea that intangible cultures can be concretized into objects counters the very nature of culture, which is a living process and performance, constantly transforming and changing. Culture is not a fixed product that we attempt to take hold of, such as a text, code, paradigm, essence, or substance, but as Jonathan Friedman states, “a relatively instable product of the practice of meaning” (Friedman 1994: 74). Texts, codes, paradigms, essences, and substances are merely abstractions from lived productions and practices (103).

These lists of masterpieces generally distinguish culture along national lines since individual intangible forms are credited to specific nations. At the same time, these catalogues do take into account that a particular culture can be part of various nations. For instance, in the 2003 List of Proclaimed Masterpieces (by country) the language, dance, and music of the Garifuna are registered under the nation of Belize, with a supporting role assigned to Honduras and Nicaragua (UNESCO 2004). In the 2008 catalogue, this same intangible cultural heritage is equally accredited to four nations: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Other examples include the Baltic Song and Dance Celebration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; the Processional Giants and Dragons of Belgium and France; and the Kankurang, Manding Initiatory Rite of Senegal and Gambia (UNESCO 2008b). These classifications do recognize that a singular culture can be multinational, evolving in nations that are geographically close. However, they do not acknowledge the highly global nature of cultural forms that may have developed through extensive migrations of people and cultures across vast territories and regions and that could also be experiencing contemporary changes as people, commodities, and cultures move around the world.

UNESCO’s lists of masterpieces further reinforce the hierarchy between the West and the other areas of the world. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes: “By admitting cultural forms associated with royal courts and state-sponsored temples, as long as they are not European, the intangible heritage list preserves the division between the West and the rest” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 57). Examples of such forms in the 2001 and 2003 lists to which Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers include the Royal Ballet of Cambodia and Royal Ancestral Rite and Ritual Music in Jogmyo of Korea (Republic of) (UNESCO 2004). Although the lists do include European culture forms such as the Mystery Play of Elche (Spain) and Opera dei
Pupi, the Sicilian Puppet Theatre (Italy), the high cultures of Europe are not included as part of the world’s intangible heritage. The elite cultures of the West retain their privileged status in the sense that they are not characterized as oral, a quality that has been stereotypically connected with less developed cultural forms. The top and upper-class intangible arts of western Europe – for instance, classical ballet or Buckingham Palace’s Changing of the Guard – are rarely regarded as oral expressions. The underrepresentation of western European “elite” culture in the 

**Proclamation of Masterpieces** and the 

**Representative List** could be a means to counter the bias on the side of western European culture in the World Heritage List (UNESCO 2009), a classification that dates to the 

**Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. According to many developing nations, the World Heritage List favoured western European nations by privileging the monuments and sites of industrial Europe (Aikawa-Faure 2009: 15; Skounti 2009: 79; Hafstein 2009: 101). The Eurocentric composition of the World Heritage List has been extensively noted (Arizpe 2000: 36; Cleere 2001; Yoshida, 2004: 109; Smith and Akagawa 2009: 1). Despite their potential to redress this imbalance, both lists of intangible heritage – the 

**Proclamation of Masterpieces** and the 

**2008 Representative List** – exclude the high arts of western Europe from the domain of oral culture.

UNESCO’s establishment of lists to preserve and safeguard intangible heritage is part of its praiseworthy projects to protect the heritage of the world for future generations. But the hierarchies and presuppositions established through these lists as well as the definition offered for “intangible heritage,” which presumes a clear division between traditional and commercial practices, do not accurately reflect the way culture operates in lived circumstances. By using the example of a specific intangible form of culture featured in the 

**Proclamation of Masterpieces** – namely the 

**tumba francesa** of Cuba – I will show how cultural practices are not necessarily circumscribed within national or even regional boundaries nor clearly divided between the “high” culture of the West and the rest of the world. Furthermore, intangible cultural forms that may appear traditional could have incorporated commercial elements in their development.

**Dismantling Hierarchies and Divisions: The Tumba Francesa**

The 

**tumba francesa**, which UNESCO added to its 

**Proclamation of Masterpieces** in 2003, is a music and dance dating back to the 1700s that still exists in Cuba today. It refers to the dance culture created by Haitians of African descent who were brought to Cuba as enslaved peoples by the French colonials (Daniel 2002: 33). Known as 

**franceses blancos** in Cuba, the French colonials left Haiti either before or during the Haitian revolution; others came to Cuba to escape the United States’ rule of French Louisiana and New Orleans (1803) (Daniel 2002: 31; León 1974: 8). These French immigrants and their enslaved Haitians settled in eastern Cuba, particularly in Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo. Haitians of African
descent, referred to as franceses negros, performed imitations, often light parodies, of the eighteenth-century court dances of France, such as the contredanse, quadrilles, minuets, and cotillions, to the accompaniment of drums as opposed to the string and wood instrumentation of the European tradition (Daniel 2002: 33). French colonial families introduced an aristocratic dance culture to Cuba patterned after court dancing in Europe that has been transformed into the tumba francesa. These French court dances, which had also previously been brought by the Spanish, additionally included the contredanse, quadrilles, minuets, and cotillions. Unlike the Spanish, who favoured the zapateo, a southern Andalucian dance tradition, over the court dances, the French settlers chose to emulate the luxuriance of the French court by maintaining these European social dances in the New World and performing them in the courtly style of a half-toe position, in which the body weight was centered on the ball of the foot (Daniel 2002: 32). Whereas the dances of the eighteenth century eventually became unfashionable in the ballrooms and salons of wealthy white Cubans, for more than two centuries among franceses negros they thrived in their modified forms in the tumba francesa (Viddal 2007). In the contemporary performances of the tumba francesa, which include four dances – the masón, yubá, frenté, and cinta – performers continue to don eighteenth-century attire. The masón, for instance, is performed today by a minimum of six or eight couples who incorporate various figures from the minuet and contredanse (Santos Gracia and Armas Rigal 2002: 160). Couples parade while executing curtesys and bows as well as ceremonial and constrained dance steps. This embodied formality is set off by energetic and driving percussive music (Viddal 2007).

In combining instruments of West African origin with the dance vernacular of the elite court of France, the tumba francesa brings together the dance culture of “high” European society and the “low” culture of enslaved Africans brought to the New World. Tumba francesa is a Cuban tradition whose roots encompass diverse areas of the world that extend well beyond a particular nation or neighbouring nations: western Europe, especially France; Haiti; and Dahomey, West Africa, which is today the Republic of Benin. The tumba francesa is considered a traditional dance of Cuba, yet if we look closely at its history, commercialism is intertwined with its development. The French dances integrated in the tumba francesa were not “traditional” dances according to UNESCO’s description of this masterpiece of intangible heritage: “It embodies one of the oldest and most tangible links to the Afro-Haitian heritage of Cuba’s Oriente province and developed from an eighteenth-century fusion of music from Dahomey in West Africa and traditional French dances” (UNESCO 2008c). As previously mentioned, a traditional culture is often passed from one generation to the next within the community setting and outside of formal instruction and commercialization. Being part of the elite culture of the court of France, the dances incorporated in the tumba francesa were generally not handed down from
the older generation to the younger. These dances were transmitted through the
global migration of culture. The European dances that arrived in Cuba and the
Caribbean originated in Paris, the international capital of fashionable dances.
Parisian styles spread throughout Europe and then to the Atlantic, first reaching
the major port of Havana, Cuba (in addition to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires),
and eventually spreading to other cities, towns, and villages. Although European
dances were initially learned by the upper class, they eventually trickled down to
the lower social strata (Chasteen 2004: 116). They were often disseminated from
the world’s center of fashion, the court of Paris, to cities in Europe and eventually
the New World via the dance lesson.

The instruction of European dance, according to John Charles Chasteen, has a
deep history in Latin America. One of the first known teachers from Europe was a
Spaniard called Ortiz the Musician, who gave dance lessons in Mexico City as
early as 1519 (Chasteen 2004: 117). During the colonial period, dance masters
taught international elite styles from Europe, such as the minuet and the
contredanse, in urban centers in Latin America. Although they started providing
lessons only to the wealthy in their homes, dance masters in nineteenth-century
Havana also eventually gave studio classes to those who could not afford private
lessons (117-18). Affluent whites were not the only ones who danced the
European courtly styles: well-to-do blacks who could bear the expense of learning
the upper-class fashions performed styles from Europe. Chasteen furnishes the
example of a formal ball among prosperous blacks in the 1840s where dancers
performed quadrilles and waltzes while paying careful attention to European rules
of convention and etiquette (131).

Researching the history of the tumba francesa provides insights into the way
this practice, regarded as a traditional form of culture, developed in part through
the commercialization of the elite dance culture of Europe. Conducting research
on culture blurs the clear distinction that has been set up between the traditional
and commercial. Most “traditional” cultural forms have probably been intertwined
with commercialism, at varied levels, at some point in their historical and/or
contemporary developments. Similarly, the tumba francesa today is maintained
by only three tumba francesa societies (funded by UNESCO and the Cuban
government), whose audiences are primarily tourists. These societies’
performances, which specifically embody the traditions of Oriente province in the
eastern part of Cuba, are commercial spectacles marketed to tourists. As Grete
Viddal notes, “Tumba Francesa societies are potential tourist attractions and may
help the eastern region capitalize on its distinctive cultural patrimony” (Viddal
2007). Tourism and UNESCO’s Proclamation of Masterpieces (as well as its
Representative List) are in fact unofficially interconnected. One of the key reasons
why states nominate traditional practices for inclusion in the Proclamation of
Masterpieces is to promote tourism. An advantageous byproduct of these lists is
that tourists are able to arrange their travel plans around given UNESCO
Just as intangible arts regarded as traditional expressions may incorporate a certain level of commercialism, the commodification of popular intangible arts could reinterpret tradition. Conducting research on commercial intangible arts can dismantle the opposition between the traditional and the commercial by illuminating the way commercial cultures include tradition in their historical development and/or contemporary contexts. Hence commercial performing arts that incorporate the traditional may also be worthy of preservation. The value bestowed on commercial intangible arts often lies in their link to their traditional heritage rather than in their commercial aspects, which are often viewed in a negative light. As mentioned above, the process of selling culture is believed to lead to increased homogenization and simplification of traditional forms, which are often beheld as more complex and original expressions. Despite this assumption, research on culture reveals the way that the commercial and the traditional often fuse, blurring the distinction between these two categories. To place traditional culture above commercial forms becomes to a certain extent meaningless, as tradition and commodification may intertwine during the development of particular cultures.

**Fusing Traditional and Commercial Culture: The Cuban Casino**

To illustrate how popular commercial practices interconnect with traditional forms, I will use the example of the historical development and contemporary performance of a specific Cuban dance, the *casino*, which is regarded as the Cuban form of salsa. Despite its Cuban roots, the *casino* has been disseminated to the world and is performed in cities throughout the globe. The commercialization of this form has led to its global status. Cuban *casino* has become a worldwide phenomenon through dance lessons promoted at studios and clubs in cities around the world; it has also reached areas outside of Cuba via various forms of media, such as videos, film, television, and the Internet.

The *casino*, or Cuban salsa dance, has been flourishing and evolving in Cuba since the 1950s (Linares 1974: 200; Balbuena 2003: 43). The *casino* is today a Cuban dance disseminated to the globe as a fun commercial pastime and “sold” in the form of dance lessons to tourists visiting the Caribbean nation. This highly commercial dance, nonetheless, combines aspects of Cuban culture that could be regarded as traditional. Traditional cultural forms, as previously mentioned, are defined as practices that have been passed on from one generation to the next and that express the identity of a people – in this context, the African-derived heritage in Cuban culture. The *casino* is a genre that absorbs a diversity of forms from the rich repertoire of dances that thrive in Cuba. Various choreographic patterns from dances of Afro-Cuban origin, for instance, have also been integrated into the *casino*. Influences from Santería, the Yoruba-derived religion of Cuba, such as the
elegguá, ogún, and ochosi, are expressed in the casino (Balbuena 2003: 96). These dances embody the orishas, or spirits, of the Yoruba pantheon (Gillon 1984: 240). The ogún, for instance, is a traditional Afro-Cuban ceremonial dance that evokes Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron and war (Gillon 1984: 247). Elements from the rumba dances columbia and guaguancó have been absorbed into the casino (Balbuena 2003: 96). The rumba is an Afro-Cuban secular music and dance genre that summons African musical and dance vernacular and contains neither European melodic influences nor chordal instruments. The rumba was developed in the early nineteenth century by diverse peoples from West and Central Africa who were brought to Cuba as slaves (Pietrobruno 2006: 33). Movements and steps from the makuta and yuka have also been assimilated into the casino (Balbuena 2003: 96). The makuta and yuka were performed by enslaved people from the Congo and by their descendants (Santos Gracia and Armas Rigal 2002: 51). Furthermore, movements from other dances that preceded the casino, such as the mambo, chachachá, and conga, have also been integrated into the casino (96). The mambo and chachachá were popular in Havana and New York in the 1950s, yet their roots are in the late-eighteenth-century fusion of an elite French court dance – the contredanse – and an African-derived movement vernacular (Pietrobruno 2006: 38-47). The conga and comparsa are collective processional dances that originated in secular celebrations during the time of slavery (Martínez Furé 1974: 87) and were later used in colonial marches to display the heritage of ethno-cultural societies, called cabildos (Daniel 2002: 34). During the nineteenth century, black Cubans in towns and cities were given the right to form cabildos, composed of distinct “nations” or African ethnic groups, such as congos, yoruba, and mandingas (Martínez Furé 1974: 87). The cabildos offered a venue to preserve the sacred and secular traditions of diverse African groups, particularly the ancient traditional dances, which the onslaught of slavery had tried to obliterate through a brutal process of deculturation (Guerra 1993: 93). Despite being deeply rooted in the Afro-Cuban tradition, the casino is also linked to the elite French court dance of the late eighteenth century: the basic step of the casino stems from the European contredanse.

Research on the history and development of the tumba francesa and the casino reveals that they share some common characteristics. They both combine traditional and commercial culture, blurring the boundaries between the two. Their roots extend well beyond the borders of Cuba to France and numerous regions in Africa. These dances cross national and regional divisions as a result of extensive migrations that have marked the history of Cuba and the Caribbean in general. For instance, “traditional” African-derived culture was combined with the elite dance fashions brought to the New World via the transmigrations of Europeans. These extensive cultural shifts may seem to be a specific characteristic of the Caribbean and hence cannot be generalized to culture in general. Rex Nettleford elucidates the way that, during the past five hundred years, the
Caribbean as well as the Americas have been marked by a “history of migration(s)” (Nettleford 2004: 78). Nonetheless, the idea that there could have ever existed traditional cultures that are solely the product of a uniform and bounded group is doubtful. Most cultures have been influenced by others. The belief that cultures endured that were not influenced by outside forces is for many a myth (Tomlinson 1999: 128-129). Arjun Appadurai questions whether there could have once existed a people who were completely sheltered from any foreign connection: the “native” as pure and isolated is a creation of the Western imagination (Appadurai 1992: 37-38).

By showing the similarities between the tumba francesa (an intangible culture that has been appraised by UNESCO as one of the “masterpieces” of the world) and the casino (a popular, commercial, global Cuban-derived dance that has not accrued much cultural capital at the international level), I have tried to question the value system that places one cultural form above others. I do not wish in the process of challenging the classification of masterpieces established by UNESCO to deprecate the artistry of the tumba francesa. It is a beautiful, intricate performance that emulates the creativity of black peoples of the Caribbean who created vital and original art forms by fusing the elite European court cultures with their African-derived heritage. The tumba francesa furthermore stands as a living embodied record of the cultural fusion between Afro-Cubans and Afro-Haitians resulting from the immense Haitian-Franco immigration to the eastern part of Cuba at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century (Boudreault-Fournier n.d.). From another perspective, perhaps one of the reasons the tumba francesa should be esteemed and listed as a masterpiece is to ensure that it is safeguarded. The tumba francesa is an endangered tradition that may disappear forever. Whereas the casino, as a worldwide commercial genre, is disseminated around the world and maintained through global practices, performances, media, and businesses, the tumba francesa, which achieved prominence at the end of the nineteenth century, is today nurtured and kept alive by only three tumba francesa societies, all founded following the abolishment of slavery in Cuba in 1886 – Tumba Francesa Society Santa Catalina de Riccis, referred to as La Pompadour; Tumba Francesa Society La Caridad de Oriente; and Tumba Francesa Society Sagua de Tánamo (Boudreault-Fournier 2005) – as well as a dance ensemble, the Ballet Folklórico Cutumba (Viddal 2007). The vitality of this intangible heritage would be at risk if not for the funding supplied by UNESCO. As Grete Viddal asserts: “In 2003, UNESCO partnering with the Cuban government proposed a six-figure funding package to help ‘ensure the viability of La Tumba Francesa’ under the auspices of the ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’” (Viddal 2007).
Commercialization and the Issue of Permanence: Salsa Dance

As a dance full of history, artistry, and beauty that incarnates the melding of European and African performances in Cuba, the *casino* is also one of the living treasures of the world’s intangible heritage. One of the reasons perhaps why a dance such as this one does not figure on lists of masterpieces and is not funded by formal preservation projects is because it is assumed to be kept alive by commercial global media and by businesses. Protected by commodification and technology, its viability is not imperiled. This Cuban popular dance is nurtured by the worldwide demand for its performance as well as by the commercial organizations that foster it. Nonetheless, the question that needs to be raised is whether the assumption that the commercialization of a tradition ensures its sustainability is indeed valid.

The example of salsa dance illustrates how the commercialization of a performing art does not always ensure its continued existence. Salsa dance, as it is known today, developed in New York in the 1960s and 1970s through the involvement of people from diverse Caribbean and Latin American nations, most importantly Puerto Ricans as well as Americans of diverse backgrounds. During this period, salsa became an expression of Puerto Rican identity. Salsa from New York also transculturated first to the nations of the Caribbean basin – Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela – and then to Latin America in general, eventually becoming an expression of pan-Latino consciousness. Salsa dance is a traditional practice that first expressed the identity of Puerto Ricans and now expresses that of Latin peoples more generally. This dance and music have always been distributed through forms of media, the music industry, and dance institutions (Pietrobruno 2006: 49-53). The styles of salsa in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were far more varied than they eventually became beginning in the 1990s, when salsa was standardized into various key global styles – New York, Los Angeles, Cuban, and Puerto Rican – primarily for commercial purposes (64). Lise Waxer points out, for instance, that the salsa dance performed in Venezuela in the mid-1970s and the 1980s was so diverse that each working-class barrio had a different style of dancing (Waxer 2002: 230). It could be argued that the increased commercialization of the dance has led to its standardization. Nonetheless, salsa has always been a commodified practice performed in commercial venues, clubs, and dance schools. The salsa that was danced in the 1970s and 1980s was commercial despite having strong roots in Latin identity. The varied and diverse styles of dancing from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s have to a large extent disappeared from public performances. Only very few records store these periods in the history of the dance. The documentary film *Beats of the Heart: Salsa*, directed by Jeremy Marre, is a rare example that features vintage footage of the street-style of salsa in the New York of the late 1970s (Marre 1979). Commonly considered to be of low culture, salsa dance has not been valued enough to be preserved in official archives of moving images nor extensively documented in
print media. Consequently, the performance styles of salsa from past eras are held only in the bodies and minds of the dancers who once performed the steps and patterns of bygone days. The commercialization of culture therefore does not necessarily guarantee its staying power.

Performing arts that comprise the living cultures of the world are constantly in flux. They are forever changing, drawing from and reinterpreting past traditions. Their developments can combine traditional culture with commercial processes, as the commodification of culture is often interwoven with traditional heritage. Organized preservation projects such as that facilitated by UNESCO’s lists of masterpieces have the potential to support only a few select cultural forms and thus could merely preserve specific national culture rather than sustain the processes and environment that enabled these heritages to originate, develop, and thrive in the first place. For instance, UNESCO’s financing of tumba francesa safeguards this cultural form, but it does not necessarily nourish the cultural terrain that has enabled the creation of Cuban intangible performing arts. Cuban popular dances that have originated from the fusion of diverse heritages are continuously changing. The tumba francesa, whose performances are primarily showcased for tourists, may become a relic, surviving as a memorial of the past. The casino, by comparison, is an example of a contemporary performing art that evokes the rich and diverse heritage of Cuban culture while continuing to develop in contemporary circumstances. As previously mentioned, the casino builds on numerous past dance traditions, such as the ogún, makuta, yuka, conga, mambo, and chachachá, while constantly recreating new forms and patterns that reflect the contemporary world of its dancers. Preserving intangible culture as static performances in the hope of sustaining cultural diversity may do very little to foster the processes of change and regeneration that are needed to ensure cultural vitality and heterogeneity. As Yola De Lusenet asks: “Can a cultural process or an event that is continuously recreated actually be safeguarded without ‘fossilizing’ it?” (De Lusenet 2007: 176).

Video-Sharing Sites and the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage

In this century, intangible arts are being preserved outside the jurisdiction of official centrally structured organizations such as UNESCO. The participatory and social medium of Web 2.0 is providing a means to safeguard and preserve intangible arts that can capture their dynamism and diversity without necessarily rendering them static. According to UNESCO, “safeguarding” refers to those measures taken to assure and guarantee the viability of intangible heritage, measures that comprise “identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage” (UNESCO 2003). Through the social medium of Web 2.0, users are disseminating popular performing arts from the Caribbean in ways that echo
various safeguarding measures proposed by UNESCO. On video-sharing sites, in particular, users are uploading videos of countless performing arts. By uploading and viewing videos of Caribbean dance, the YouTube community, for instance, is unwittingly taking actions to safeguard global performing-arts heritage (Pietrobruno 2008: 3). Given its dissemination of intangible culture, and specifically the performing arts, YouTube could be viewed as an unofficial archive that preserves Caribbean dance (as well as countless global intangible expressions) through processes of identification, documentation, and transmission within the nonformal education medium of a video-sharing site. Whereas recognized institutions and organizations manage collections through set processes and practices and have the authority to acquire, appraise, and preserve their contents, online repositories of moving images operate with few structures in place to shape and direct their collections. Countless users create the online archive and determine its contents and value. The growing dance archive of moving images on YouTube is produced by the users themselves, who upload and download dance videos, tag uploaded videos with keywords, and link them to relevant and affiliated clips, as well as add to the documentation of clips by providing comments on featured dance videos (Gracy 2007: 184). Through online discussions, users become the curators. They are not consciously creating an archive of moving images; rather, through their engagement in other social activities and, in this case, dance-related practices, online collections are being formed. This archive of moving images on YouTube is therefore self-generating (196).

The collection of popular performing arts burgeoning on YouTube and other video-sharing sites is also a living archive that is continuously in flux, thus reflecting the nature of the intangible culture that it stores, documents, and disseminates. The intangible performing arts of the Caribbean, such as the Cuban casino (or salsa dance), are in continuous motion, building, changing, and adapting to the needs and creativity of the dancers. Living dance cultures can not be fixed and frozen but are constantly in transformation. Since the archives of popular performing arts produced through video-sharing sites are created by users themselves, these archives also have the potential not to become static. The new videos of popular actual performances that users from around the world are continuously uploading to the Internet can capture the diversity and fluidity of global performances. William Uricchio, for instance, has noted a convergence between the digital sphere and the oral circumstances in which intangible cultures thrive. He envisions both as “decentralized, networked, collaborative, accretive, ephemeral and dynamic” (Uricchio 2007: 20).

The following example of a selection of YouTube videos showing the Cuban version of salsa, the casino, as well as its roots provides an example of the variety and fluid nature of intangible performing arts captured on video-sharing sites. The Cuban salsa, which is less globally popular than the North American versions,
such as the New York and Los Angeles styles, is unique because it is danced in a
diversity of ways: in couples using the closed social dance position; in two rows
divided by gender, the male and female partners facing one another in a position
called *en formacion de calle* (the formation of the street); and in the *rueda* (circle)
(Balbuena 2003: 92). These variations of the Cuban salsa can be found archived
on YouTube. For instance, the video “Salsa Cubana Dance Competition –
Santiago, Cuba,” uploaded by boogalu productions in July 2007, focuses on an
outstanding couple dancing in the closed social dance position who exhibit the
fluidity of the Cuban *casino* style while performing in a competition in Santiago
in 2003 (“Salsa Cubana Dance Competition – Santiago, Cuba” 2007). Dancing in
a circle in the *casino de la rueda* can be seen in the instructional video “Salsa:
Rueda Cubana,” uploaded by mmmdubudubu in July 2007 (“Salsa: Rueda
Cubana” 2007). This video illustrates the nature of popular Caribbean dance,
which is continuously evolving. Not only does this popular practice change at the
level of corporeal movement, but the names given to particular dances also reflect
current local and global social and political contexts. For instance, one of
the names of a particular pattern that is announced by the caller of the *rueda*,
who shouts out all the different dance moves and patterns, is “bin Laden.” Since Cuban
salsa, or *casino*, has evolved since 1959 in almost complete isolation, it is distinct
from salsa performed in North America and Latin America. The *casino*, as
mentioned above, has absorbed a variety of dances from the African Cuban
heritage (Balbuena 2003: 96), an example of which is a dance of Santería (a
Yoruba-derived religion of Cuba) called the *ogún* (or *oggún*) (Santos Gracia and
fideo62 in February 2007, features in Havana a Santería performance of the *ogún*
that has been incorporated into the *casino* (“Changó, Oggún y Ochún” 2007). The
instructional video “Orisha Dance: Oggun,” posted by garitrek in April 2008,
provides a more detailed dance demonstration of the *ogún* (“Orisha Dance: Oggun” 2008).

Does the safeguarding of intangible culture on the Internet counter the very
essence of what renders a heritage “intangible”? It would seem that the criteria
ensuring that an intangible culture remains “intangible” is that it is not concretized
in media, which transform the ephemeral into fixed objects such as films, videos,
DVDs, and CDs. Prior to the rise of digital media and specifically the social
medium of Web 2.0, numerous intangible popular performing arts could primarily
be viewed only in living circumstances. The emergence of YouTube in 2005, for
instance, has brought about a change in the dissemination of intangible culture.
Countless popular performing arts that have been neither widely transmitted in
texts nor extensively recorded in other forms of media are being saved as online
moving images by users and dance practitioners themselves. Many intangible arts
were previously accessible only in live circumstances because they were not
valued highly enough by the governing bodies of archives and libraries to be
considered worthy of preservation. This is the case for many Caribbean popular dance cultures, of which salsa dance is one example. In the contemporary cultural context, marked by the rising use of new media, intangible performing arts have become inextricably intertwined with the tangible. Both practitioners and fans are taking it upon themselves to unwittingly identify, record, preserve, and transmit these arts via their involvement in Internet-based cultural communities.

This fusion of the intangible with the tangible has not necessarily arisen with the recent developments in social media. Intangible culture has always been interlaced with the tangible (Munjeri 2004: 18). In its *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, UNESCO brings to the fore “the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO 2003). Furthermore, this convention includes “the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces” as part of the expression of intangible cultures (UNESCO 2003a). The material and intangible always coincide even within expressions as impalpable as the performing arts: the movements and patterns of a given dance are stored and retained in the human mind and body (Skounti 2009: 77). Connections between the performing arts and tangible structures exist. For instance, the orishas – the spirits of the Yoruba pantheon embodied in Afro-Cuban dances such as the ogún – also find expression in African artistry far beyond the borders of the Caribbean nation. Werner Gillon illustrates that in Ekiti, in north-eastern Yorubaland (i.e., Nigeria), those whose livelihoods or pastimes involve iron still worship Ogun, the god of iron and war. To commemorate this god, for example, they create masks that are used in Ogun rituals (Gillon 1984: 247). Intangible performing arts also take place in buildings that may be historic sites. The Ballet Folklórico Cutumba, for instance, performs the *tumba francesa* in Santiago de Cuba’s Teatro Oriente, a dilapidated theater whose past luxuriance emanates through the faded velvet curtains adorning the stage and the intricate architectural work decorating the decaying walls (Viddal 2007). In the contemporary context, performing arts unfold in tangible actual places as well as in the cultural space of the Internet.

**Conclusion**

The arguments presented in this study demonstrate that unearthing the deep history and contemporary circumstances of cultural forms counters prevailing ways of viewing intangible culture. UNESCO’s categorizing of intangible heritage within the list of masterpieces and the representative list, as well as the definition of “intangible” advanced in the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, produces assumptions and hierarchies that do not inevitably capture the way culture thrives in actual circumstances. These stances include the division between the “high” culture of the West and the rest of the world, the separation between the traditional and commercial as well as the circumscribing
of cultural forms to national and regional borders, without a consideration of global influences.

One of the key presumptions analyzed in terms of detailed historical and contemporary perspectives is the separation between traditional and commercial as a means to distinguish culture. The tumba francesa, which was deemed a “masterpiece” in 2003, is regarded as traditional through the intangible heritage classification. An overview of tumba francesa’s historical and contemporary manifestations in Cuba reveals that in both its past and current performances, it has integrated commercial elements. To further illustrate that the distinction between traditional and commercial does not invariably apply to lived cultural forms, the example of the Cuban casino is put forward. Although the Cuban casino is generally considered to be a commercial practice perpetuated throughout the globe by media and businesses, it incorporates elements of the Cuban dance heritage that are considered to be traditional. Practices such as the Cuban casino and tumba francesa do not systematically fall into the grouping of either a commercial or traditional form. Yet the classification of cultures in terms of this division persists. The sorting of culture as either commercial or traditional is one of the criteria used by UNESCO to determine whether a practice is in need of safeguarding. Traditional cultures are deemed more fragile than commercial ones. The example of salsa dance is proposed to demonstrate the way that the commodification of culture does not necessarily assure its perseverance. Since its inception in the 1960s, salsa dance has been a popular commercial practice linked to dance and music industries. Nonetheless, the commercialization of salsa did not guarantee the longevity of its varied and diverse styles, which proliferated in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, renditions that have largely vanished from present-day public performances.

The details provided of various Caribbean popular performing arts illustrate not only that in lived circumstances intangible cultures do not as a matter of course conform to the division between commercial and traditional but also that performance cultures are constantly in flux. Contemporary arts are continuously interpreting past traditions to create current renditions. For popular performance arts to change and metamorphose into new forms, they require an environment that can sustain their development and transformation. Organizations such as UNESCO support the safeguarding of “masterpieces” or “representative” forms, of which tumba francesa is an example, which does not necessarily foster the cultural ground that enabled the creation of Cuban intangible performing arts in the first place. Preserving select intangible performances without the maintenance of the culture as a whole from which they stem could freeze them into static renditions, jeopardizing diversity and change. The preservation of intangible heritage through the participatory and social medium of Web 2.0 currently offers a vehicle by which to safeguard performance practices that can sustain their dynamism and potential for variation. Video-sharing sites, of which YouTube is a
pivotal example, provide an unofficial means to store intangible heritage. YouTube, for instance, becomes a living archive of Caribbean popular performances that can capture the continuous revision and multiplicity of forms that are an inherent part of intangible performances in lived circumstances. The preservation of fluid intangible heritage within the tangible means of fixed new media objects, specifically online videos, appears to counter the essence of intangible heritage itself. The standard by which a performing art should be deemed “intangible” is that it is not concretized in media, which reshapes the fleeting nature of performance into a palpable object. Intangible heritage is nevertheless inextricably intertwined with the tangible. Performing arts have been transmitted and stored through the physical body and mind, combined with artifacts and performed in designated buildings and sites.

UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage largely disregards popular commercial culture as intangible heritage worthy of preservation as well as the pivotal role played by current collective safeguarding measures through Web 2.0. This research uncovers that the criteria for what constitutes intangible cultural heritage and its concomitant conservation strategies need to include popular commercial culture and media practices if the world’s intangible practices are indeed to be preserved for future generations. Many of the world’s intangible cultures are transmitted through popular intangible arts distributed through businesses, industries and diverse forms of media. Consideration needs to be given to their preservation, as commercialization does not necessarily guarantee their endurance. In addition, countless forms of intangible heritage are being preserved through online videos featured on video-sharing sites. These videos have the potential to capture the heterogeneity and fluidity that are intrinsic to intangible culture, attributes that are often compromised through the formal safeguarding measures proposed by UNESCO. The incorporation of the unofficial archiving of intangible heritage currently materializing through worldwide video-sharing services could enhance and enrich officially sanctioned safeguarding measures.

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References


Urban Signs/Signs of the Urban: Of Scenes and Streetscapes

By Geoff Stahl

The window on the street is not a mental place from which the interior gaze would be following abstract perspectives. A practical site, private and concrete, the window offers views that are more than spectacles. Perspectives which are mentally prolonged so that the implication of this spectacle carries its explanation. Familiarity preserves it as it disappears and is reborn, with the everyday life of inside and out. Opacity and horizons, obstacles and perspectives are implicated, for they become complicated, imbricate themselves to the point of allowing the Unknown, the giant city, to be perceived or guessed at. With its diverse spaces affected by diverse temporalities—rhythms. (Henri Lefebvre 1996: 224)

Let me set the scene for this thematic section of *Culture Unbound*, a collection of essays dedicated to signs in the city/city of signs, by drawing on a personal reflection on aspects of two streets I’ve lived on: Montréal’s Boulevard St. Laurent and Berlin’s Kastanienallee. In both cases, they speak to issues that are germane to the semiotic power of the city, and do so in ways that frame many of the issues this section explores in number of different ways.

Between 1997 and 2003, I lived on Blvd St. Laurent, the “Main”, just north of Pine Ave, which put me at the lower end of the Montréal’s renowned Plateau. For those unaware of this part of Montréal, this particular intersection can be read as a symbolic and material incarnation of the social and economic life in Montréal for a number of reasons. During that time, the shape of the neighbourhood changed gradually but dramatically. I witnessed these changes through my office window, from which I could gaze down onto St. Laurent. From there, I watched the steady rotation of shops, with old stores replaced by new restaurants, discount computer shops, book stores, and clothing shops. I lived in an area (briefly) nicknamed “Little Asia”, an appellation that referred to the many Asian fast food joints that had appeared on the Main in recent years. Some people lament the disappearance of the mom and pop shops, delis, kitchenware stores, and bakeries while others see a street reinvigorated by new waves of immigrant entrepreneurs which have moved in to stake their claim to the mythical promise the Main has consistently offered newcomers to the city. Whether negative or positive, these sentiments reiterate the rich history inscribed into the both the built and imaginary landscape of St. Laurent.

From my vantage point, further lingering over the streetscape gave up more evidence of the changes begin wrought on the Main. Although I couldn’t see them from my window, the three buildings just south of where I lived spoke to the street’s history and its myths as well. Abandoned as apartments, their first floors--
all commercial spaces--eked out an existence that seemed astoundingly resilient given the apparent lack of interest in their wares. The apartment directly adjacent to mine was, when I moved in, a punk squat, its first floor occupied by an antique dealer. About ten years ago, it was renovated, the punks had to find a new home and the first floor has since become a jewellery shop. Two doors down was the Pecker Brothers’ kitchenware store, a modest yet cluttered shop filled from floor to ceiling with poppy seed grinders, teakettles, mops, espresso makers, and other sundry domestic items, many of which catered to the European shop owners who used to be regular customers. When Louis Pecker, the last surviving brother and a man who would gladly regale you with stories of life on the Main during the thirties, retired in 2001, rumours of renovation and condo conversion circulated rapidly among the neighbours (which proved to be true). Some years ago, three doors down, above the now-defunct Mr. Falafel, with its iconic neon sign, the two-storey apartment abandoned for nearly twenty-five years was gutted by fire, the result of the ad hoc wiring used to electrify a marijuana “grow room” (run by yet more squatters). These and other changes are often read as signs, portents some would say, of things to come for the Main.

After living on St. Laurent, I moved to Prenzlauerberg in Berlin’s former East, where I settled onto a remarkably similar street. I lived for a year on Kastanienalle, once a modest residential strip, but a street that has lately come to symbolize the strength and vitality of the city’s cultural, entrepreneurial economy. From this new window, I could see the goings on at the gallery across the street, the bar life on Schwedter Str., and catch the city’s fashion parade as young people came and went from local bars, cafés, flohmarkt (fleamarkets), and second-hand shops. My room was in an old set of flats, the neighbours, former East Berliners (often called Ossis, or “Easterners”) who could sometimes be seen peering out onto the street, in seeming awe of the pace of its almost daily transformation. Many of the other neighbours were involved in the city’s vibrant cultural life, running record labels, offering graphic design services, curating gallery shows, or making art and music, such that the building itself seemed to house a microcosm of the competing and complementary life stories and living ideologies found in post-Wall Berlin. Even in its layout, the building spoke to the diversity of the street and by extension the city. The Hinterhof, the rear section of the Mietzlerkaserne which formed the other side of the building’s courtyard, was home to an odd religious group, who performed shadowy ceremonies on select evenings. In the front, the cycles of the city’s entrepreneurial economy played out in the café below and the tiny shop directly beneath my room, changing hands a number of times in the brief period I was there, the shop transforming itself from tiny record shop, to a craft shop and most recently to a Vespa store (which it remains). Next door, on the ground floor still sits a brothel, nestled next to an Asian Imbiss. To this day, new and used record shops sit alongside cafés that neighbour industrial design shops which bump up against galleries that sandwich the few remaining
squat, a density of activity exemplifying the furtive spirit of entrepreneurial capitalism (and resistance to it) that has marked Berlin for nearly two decades after the fall of the Wall.

In this respect and others, Kastanienallee and St. Laurent provide the space in which large and small-scale histories entwine to give spatial and social expression to the distinctive sensibilities of their home cities. It is possible to frame many of the stories found on the Main and Kastanienallee as parables which resonate with a similar affective charge, edifying tales that tell us about the resilience of the immigrant entrepreneur, the travails of up-and-coming designers, the tenacious story of French/English or the tensions found in lingering Communist/Capitalist relationships, or, more pointedly, the economic ups and downs of both Montréal and Berlin in which the figure of the divide exerts In different ways, these two streets are emblematic of the social and cultural life of each city. St. Laurent, for example, while it has historically served as the major immigrant corridor in Montréal, also houses a number of cultural institutions (S.A.T., Musée Juste Pour Rire), performance spaces (Cabaret, Jupiter Room, Barfly, La Sala Rosa, Casa del Popolo, among others) and acts as one of the city’s primary channels for cultural promotion, with the street’s mailboxes, lampposts, abandoned store fronts and sundry blank spaces thickly layered with handbills and posters advertising a range of cultural events, from music to theatre to films to book launches, among others (Allor 1997).

By contrast, Kastanienallee has a more modest history. It originated out of a vineyard, and ran through what was once a modest residential portion of Prenzlauerberg and part of neighbouring Mitte. It played host to cultural institutions as well: the German cinema pioneers the Skladanowsky brothers aired some of their early movie projections here, just prior to the Lumière brothers in Paris, metres away from one of the Prater Biergarten, one of the city’s oldest which itself sits alongside well-established theatres, communes, etc. It was the main artery during the latter part of the twentieth century that cut through the GDR’s bohemian and political underground, housing dissident presses as well as facilitating tales of Stasi intrigue and acts of terror (Brady and Wallace 1995: Boyer 2001). After the Wende, it became, along with neighbouring Mitte, a febrile site of renewal, as thousands of young Germans, Europeans and others moved in to colonize empty and abandoned spaces (many vacated by East Berliners forced out due to retrenchment and outward push of industry), and not long after the Wall came down, it was singled out as a site for gentrification by the city of Berlin. Prenzlauerberg as a whole was subjected to a staggered process of renovation that has gradually seen many of the neighbourhood’s bullet-ridden facades give way to pastel-hued Mietzkeren (Strom 2001). This vigorous renewal finds an analogue in its young and educated population, as the area has one of the highest birth rates in all of Europe and plays host to many students, artists and entrepreneurs, and wears its fecund youthfulness ostentatiously. Vestiges of socially progressive poli-
tics persist in what few squats remain on the street (one of the most tenacious, 68 Kastanienallee, has been embroiled in legal battles regarding occupancy; the anarchist bar, Morgenrot, is another site of communal activity with music and cheap vegetarian/vegan food), but its current guise is as a polyglot commercial strip, dotted with design stores, cafés, bars, second-hand clothing and record shops and restaurants, well-trodden with tourists from around Europe and elsewhere, a shining symbol of the “New Berlin” as cultural consumer’s paradise (Till 2005; Binder and Niedermüller 2006).

These narratives of decline, rejuvenation, renovation and gentrification are hardly stories indigenous to Montréal or Berlin; any city will tell these tales. What is perhaps more significant about these particular streets is their semiotic value as repositories of unique histories and experiences which have left their traces on each. Their nicknames are worth noting in this respect: St. Laurent is “The Main”; Kastanienallee is “Casting Alley”. St. Laurent and Kastanienallee can be figured as temporal and spatial junctures that tell unique tales about Montréal or Berlin, sites at which numerous trajectories, narratives and biographies meet to produce an area dense with social, temporal and spatial significance for the “giant city”, as Lefebvre suggests. The Main, for instance, instantiates and concretizes a number of aspects of social, political, economic and imaginative dimensions of life in Montréal. Martin Allor has described St. Laurent as a chronotope, following from Bakhtin, a text through which can be read “‘the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented’” (Allor 1997: 46). He suggests “the Main can be read as both a central production of the past and present politics l’identitaire of Montréal and as a way of specifying questions of the politics of place...” (ibid.). More pointedly, Allor claims that

(1)he places and practices of cultural activity on the Main can function as an exemplar of the relations between the private and the public, the local and the global. Indeed, Augé’s oxymoron of intimate alterity should ideally sit alongside Raymond Williams’ own oxymoron of mobile privatization as a naming of the structure of feeling of leisure-cultural activity. (51)

The street’s structure of feeling is evident at the intersection of Ave. des Pins and St. Laurent, where with a studied gaze one can discern in the hustle and bustle the competing and complementary rhythms that characterize the social life and underpin the broader urban ambiance of Montréal. The built environment and commercial life reveal the economic cycles of Montréal, as do the periodic movements of immigrants who have left countless traces along the Main. Alongside St. Laurent’s Arab fruit stand, the Hungarian bakery, the Spanish grocer, the hammock store, the Slovenian deli, the dance clubs, cafés, the piercing and tattoo salon, the Thai take-away, and the noodle shops, you could find here examples of what Lefebvre notes are cyclical and linear rhythms of street life. The cyclical, he suggests, is “social organization manifesting itself”, and the linear is “routine, thus the perpetual, made up of chance and encounters” (Lefebvre 1996: 222). The micronarratives of everyday life bump up against the metanarratives of the many
histories found on St. Laurent, a productive tension that allows the Main to serve as an index of the city’s exuberant night life, a barometer of its economic state, as well as a measure of its cultural vitality. In all of this, one can find on the Main the complex layering of the rhythms that underscore the variegated tenor of Montréal’s cultural and social life taking the form of myriad scenes, extending from well-worn bar to flashy café, from august cultural institution to seedy nightclub.

Berlin’s Kastanienallee also lends itself to being read as a chronotope, a locus upon which “l’identitaire” of the city unfolds, where the twentieth century’s ideological struggles have played themselves out in more dramatic and more quotidian forms, a site of local politics, resistance, and at points forced capitulation (consider the exodus of thousands of Ossis, due to job loss, for example). It is now the site also of a vibrant cultural scene, in which all that came before persists as a palimpsest upon which the current cultural economy of Berlin draws its semiotic force. Kastanienallee, in its role as “Casting Alley”, is a significant locus for the city’s new culturalized economy. Following from Lefebvre, I have suggested elsewhere, you can find here a street “where past and present narratives combine to produce a peculiarly urban arrhythmia”. (Stahl 2007, 314). Not unlike St. Laurent, the undulations of entrepreneurial capitalism are clearly evident as part of the street’s façade. A litany of shops, bars, restaurants, and cafés open and close with unfailing regularity, stops and starts that speak to larger cycles and histories and give the street what I have referred to as an “ectopic energy” (ibid.). Kastanienallee is a streetscape dotted with “visible acts of subcultural consumption”, (ibid.) the social life of the street scene demonstrating what Blum refers to as being “private in public” (Blum 2003). The city’s various scenes spill ostentatiously onto its sidewalks, their robustness barely contained by the many bars, restaurants, cafés, Imbiss, and shops that define the street’s character.

In this capacity and others, scenes help to enunciate what Doreen Massey, following from Barthes, has referred to as a city’s “cityness” (Massey, et al. 1999). This is a suggestive way to begin to think about the signifying power of the scene and its relation to the city. Recent work on scenes has attempted to redeem the social power of the scene as a cultural space that cultivates a certain orientation towards the city, to others, and to one’s social well-being (Blum 2003; Stahl 2007, 2008; Straw 1991, 2004). While it is possible to read Kastanienallee’s scenes as only so much “ornamentation”, it would be disingenuous to render them as a wanton or useless, which is often how scenes are dismissed. There is a play of surfaces found in the scene, emphasizing at one level display and performance, gestures and qualities confirm the scene’s more ostentatious impulses. However, following from Blum and Janet Ward (2001, 2004) who both engage with the long fascination with urban surfaces exemplified in the work of Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and others, the study of scenes can give way to more substantive urban issues. Framing scenes as spaces bereft of clear purpose and well-
defined politics ignores dimensions of scenic life that only serves to further diminish their social relation to the city:

(C)haracterizing it as only superficial, filled with the seductive pleasures found in its surface effects, only disparages scenes without getting at why they continue to erupt and effloresce in the way and the places that they do. The scene should not be read as an extraneous urban detail, as frivolous or as mere spectacle, as its detractors would have it, as though there were a truer, more authentic, way of being in the city. (Stahl 312: 2007)

The view that scenes are an effect born out of the dominant logic of capitalism that drives urban economies fails to address certain social facts. To read scenes and their signs in this way suggests, following from Blum, a reductive reading of cultural activity as a superfluous consequence of the larger economic imperatives of the city, a way of classing them as forms of “false consciousness”, thereby dismissing them as hollow crucibles for the misguided and alienated and where politics meets its inevitable attenuation (this is, in part, what Blum suggests Sharon Zukin’s work does; though the antidote does not necessarily reside in the bohemian indices put forward by Richard Florida (2005) either, for example). The rise over the past decade of the “creative city” gives scenes and issues regarding the culture of cities more salience (O’Connor and Wynne 1996; Scott 2000; Landry 2004). The significance, in a social, semiotic, economic and thus ideological sense, of scenes to cities that have come to rely upon entrepreneurial economies provides us with plenty of examples of the power of culture to sell cities, but also the cultural power borne by artists, entrepreneurs as avatars (and opponents) of neoliberalism (Hall 1997; Hannigan 2003; McRobbie 2004). Scenes in the “creative city” bear, as well as obscure, an ideological baggage in terms of their role in the instrumentalization of culture. We may well view scenes in this context as symptoms of the “creative city” in such a way that their real and imagined virtues and vices invite further analysis, able to enrich our readings of the cultural life of cities as it exists, for example, under new economic orders. The social power of the scenes flourishing on Kastanienallee and St. Laurent cannot be dismissed out of hand, in other words. What has been referred to as their semiotic excess and intensity point towards a complex set of relationships (Shank 1994; Straw 1991). This is a constellation bound up in attachments to place, and to others, as well as to cultural, social, aesthetic, economic and political practices which cannot be easily discounted in terms of their ability to ratify the diversity of individual and collective life possible in the city.

The streetscape and its numerous scenes remain an urban trope, topos and part of its typology that can be made to say a great deal about a city, its people, its histories and its culture. The socio-semantic value of St. Laurent and Kastanienallee may also be better understood by putting them into relation with one another. There are social, material and symbolic resonances that allow contrast and comparison. This is not least because they often figure as centres of creative life in their respective national imaginaries. They can be thought about together through
the persistence and semiotic power of the figure of the divide. I have alluded to St. Laurent, for example, in its capacity to act not only as an immigrant corridor. Its more significant status is its iconic role as the divide between the city’s west and east, which in the urban imaginary means Anglophone and Francophone, respectively; Kastanienallee represents the frontier of the New Berlin, where another kind of occupation unfolded, the triumph of Capitalism over Communism, the point where East meet West, Ossi meets Wessi, and where tensions and resolutions grand and small announce themselves every with decreasing frequency.

More to the point, as someone who has lived for various stretches of time in each city, I came to realize that living in Montréal was a good way to think about Berlin, and living in Berlin a good place to think about Montréal. We are inclined to think of places relationally, what’s different or what’s the same, as one way of testifying to our allegiance to this place over that, or as a means to help ameliorate our sense of longing for “home/Heimat” if away. Spending time in each city provoked thoughts of the other. The question of how to put these two streets and their cities into some sort of relationship that captures their unique urban identity cannot be easily reduced to a straight comparison. Each of these places is too large, too amorphous, too vast in scale, population and the product of profoundly different histories such that bringing them together for the purpose of comparison seems theoretically suspect and prone to truncations which do both Montréal and Berlin a disservice. As Blum has suggested, however,

we do compare cities: it is part of social life, a form of life. We compare cities, frequently, typically, and in many ways. The comparison of cities remains a popular activity. Should we say of such an activity that, while popular with the ignorant, it is inaccurate, or impossible, or dependent upon an illusion of mastery that can never be realized? (Blum 2007: 16)

We feel compelled to compare cities, constantly. As Johanne Sloane (2006) has suggested, we speak of cities in shorthand, and do it often by making appeals to pop sociologies, citing national surveys based on proliferating indices of lifestyle, affordability, culture, or claiming a stake in the intimacies born of local knowledge and experience of a city and its secrets. We think about them anecdotally, in fragments, through polling (quality of life, best bars, etc.), through their myths, skylines, icons, public transit, restaurant service, café culture, etc. They come back to us as characters in mediated forms, in newspapers, films, photographs, television shows, and the stories of others. Cities become signs of difference and similarity, resolving in some way into what Rolf Lindner (2007) has referred to as the “mythographies” native to any city, an elaborate web of cultural textures within which a city’s population are enmeshed. As a semiotic gloss on the city, these textures serve to paradoxically elucidate and obscure city life. Streetscapes, monuments, bars, stores, etc., are made to matter, making up an urban lexicon that conjures up multifarious associations, memories, experiences, histories that together signal the city’s distinctiveness. The signs of the city sediment out along local contours, and prove elusive and allusive in ways that further seduce us into
desiring much more of cities. More layers means more unveiling, the city experienced as a form of revelation. As streets like Kastanienallee and St. Laurent suggest, city signs and signs of the city coalesce to form an important part of the discursive prism refracting the mental and mattering maps through which we imagine, and live, in cities.

**City of Signs/Signs of the City**

> What kind of meaning is connected to the city and by what kind of mechanisms?
> (Martin Krampen 1979: 2)

> What is the nature indissolubly, of the city as reality, as image, and as symbol?
> (Hubert Damisch 2001: 19)

This special section of *Culture Unbound: “City Signs/Signs of the City”* is a collection of essays that deals with the semiotic push and pull of cities, or what Roland Barthes has referred to as the city’s “semantic force” (Barthes 1986: 91). It gathers together articles that deal with the city of signs and signs of the city, in the broadest sense of these terms. Each in their own way works through the city as a repository of signs and resident sign systems, as a signifying vehicle itself. As these essays attest, by virtue of its promiscuous generation of meaning the city has long existed as an object constituted by and constitutive of the modern gaze, a communicative device, social medium, and pole around which a diverse range of practices, meaningful acts and acts of meaning, can coalesce.

In terms of the contemporary city, with its shifting value, function and meaning, Lewis Mumford’s by-now famous rhetorical question “What is a city?” still resonates as a starting point when it comes to interrogating the city (Mumford 1996). The answer, or answers, can of course only ever be provisional, of the moment, and only provide insight into certain dimensions of city life. As many of these articles indicate, signification in the contemporary city has acquired a different kind of resonance, particularly around issues of culture, urban branding, policies, planning and development, heritage and histories, tourism, media forms, mediated spaces and technologies. This is such that Mumford’s question, and those posed by Damisch and Krampen above, are still germane to current debates, discussions and interrogations of urban culture, helping to enunciate in their own way what Alan Blum has referred to as the city’s “fundamental ambiguity” (Blum 2003).

While the authors gathered here do not address the topic of urban semiotics directly, this thematic section recalls some of the works collected by Mark Gottdieker and Alexander Lagopoulos’ *The City and the Sign* (1986). As an inspiration for this current section, this collection of seminal essays on urban semiotics offers a cogent, and critically reflective, foundation for the study of signs in the city. The work of Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, A. J. Greimas, and Raymond Ledrut, among others, forms the basis for what the editors refer to as a socio-semiotics of the city, in which power congeals into a range of sign systems, from monuments,
to street girds, advertising, film and literary representations, etc., media forms and practices dealt with in this collection: As Ledrut reminds us:

The city is a symbol, and there is symbolization of the city, but it is in the image itself, apprehended through and by discourse, that what the city represents for man (sic) is revealed and expressed, and that the city and its aspects are manifested in various figures, i.e., symbolized…. (Ledrut 1986: 223)

As a symbol system, the city and its images are produced, in Lefebvre’s sense, according to a host of interests whereby denotative and connotative levels of signification are entwined and new species of urban mythologies, mythographies and place-images emerge (Lefebvre 1991, 1996; Lindner 2007; Shields 1991). These representations generate yet more valences, signifying practices flourishing in the city in what Lefebvre refers to as lived, conceived and perceived prisms, or, more specifically, as, experiential, imagined, and ideological frameworks (1991). Within these frameworks, and amid the busy ness of urban semiosis, powerful vested interests and myriad practices of resistance work to encode, decode and recode the city’s sign systems. Semiotics in this sense acts as an entry point for a focused ideological analysis, out of which can emerge a carefully considered examination of the city and its multifarious signifying practices and systems, aspects of signification tied to power, both top down and bottom up, that are taken up in the following essays.

Culture in the city is the primary object here: lived culture, cultural production, and the consumption of culture. Working through these miscellaneous dimensions of culture, material and symbolic, the authors included in this thematic section have provided a range of approaches to the semiotics of the city. Luc Pauwels offers the first foray into the city, via a photo essay that ruminates on the nature of urban discourse and signification. His semiotic reference points give us a consideration of the links and disconnects found between sociology and photography, two practices which are historically linked to the representation of the modern city. Pauwels provides a snapshot, many in fact, of the tension between detachment and investment in terms of how the city is framed as both utopia and dystopia.

Christopher Kelen’s reflection on poetic representations of Macau grapples with the residues of Portuguese presence in China. As he notes, while generally not understood as a colony and more as an enclave, the ways in which space is represented and negotiated in a literary context are telling ones, and he draws upon Auge’s notion of “non-place” to explore the distinction between what he calls “Macao space” and “anywhere space”. The figures of the gambler and the beggar, as they come through in a selection of poems depicting urban life in Macau, Kelen uses as a preface to a discussion of the specificities of these spaces and the way in which they express a new order of consumption (of images, things, places).

A different, but related form of investment is considered in Sophie Esmann Andersen and Anne Ellerup Nielsen’s conceptual framework, designed to address the
role of stakeholders in the city. For them, the way in which various stakeholders conceptualize the city helps to outline how certain vested interests, such as those tied up in policy making and politics, are founded through the elaboration of select relationships made between the different parties interested in shaping urban experience. This can be best exemplified as test case through the study of climate changes issues in Aarhus, Denmark, where it is suggested stakeholder theory can best grasp the complexity of urban networks and the various agents, institutions, groups and individuals which seek to utilize them to suit their purpose.

Christoph Jacke’s piece, “Locating Intermediality: Socialization by Communication and Consumption in the Popular-Cultural Third Places of the Music Club and Football Stadium”, draws upon Ray Oldenburg’s idea of “third places”. By this is meant spaces that facilitate sociability, in contrast to the shopping mall, or either sites that have a primary directive wedded to consumption over pure sociality. Jacke takes this term and applies it to the music club and football stadium, framing each as a site of communication and consumption, ripe with visual as well as verbal signifying gestures that complicate what might otherwise be what he refers to as a “culturally pessimistic” reading. Jacke offers a detailed analysis of these two spaces, noting that their transformation into sites of consumption as well as communication ensures that their social value is not entirely overwritten.

The nature of mediation and technologies in the city are taken up in various ways in a number of essays. The first of these, Jason Wasiak’s “Being-in-the-City: A Phenomenological Approach to Technological Experience” uses Heidegger and others to consider the nature of technology, embodiment, mobility and the media in the city. The production, distribution and consumption of technology in the city are taken up through the framework of phenomenology. Wasiak argues that urban space is negotiated space, wherein a mass of technologies, a “technological ecology”, is at work in ways that insist that “being-in-the-city” must be navigated in particular ways. He highlights, for example, the changing bodily relationship to urban space and mobility affected/effected by different modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and driving.

Martin Zellinger also deals with mobility, in the form of driving, walking and mass transit in the city, examining filmic representations of L.A in “‘Quit Stall-ing…!’: Destiny and Destination on L.A.’s Inner City Roads”, albeit in addressing a different, but related, set of concerns. He considers the different takes on the legendary city found in Michael Mann’s Collateral and Joel Schumacher’s Falling Down. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, Virilio, Baudrillard and others, Zellinger explores the tensions between state-based, controlled space versus the motorized discrete “liberated” individual, as played out in what we may well see as ironized and urbanized versions of the classic road movie.

Another form of urban mediation is dealt with in Yasmin Ibrahim’s “City Under Siege: Narrating Mumbai Through Non-Stop Capture”. Here she details the use of new media and technologies in the wake of the 2008 bombing of Mumbai.
The creation of a spectacle of terrorism in that country’s film centre, responsible for producing hundreds of movies a year, is examined in relation to the elaboration of a “media event”, utilizing Dayan and Katz’s terminology. The interventions by members of the public countering the privileged spectacular reading of the event by the mainstream media, done through microblogging tools such as Twitter, create an alternative to the dominant readings put forward by the country’s media conglomerates. The decentralized resemanticization of such an horrific event means that it takes on a different register for those on the ground, whose use of technology offers an important counterpoint to the monolithic, and preferred, reading produced for mainstream consumption.

Thinking about mediation of urban space on a different scale, Zlatan Krajina’s article, “Exploring Urban Screens”, looks at the phenomenon of ambient media, as manifest in a variety of urban screens in London. What he refers to as an “anthropology of illumination” guides part of his analysis of the way in which the proliferation of screens shapes city space. He suggests that “(u)rban space is a field of ever-complex spatial relations between its designers and users in a continuous interplay of continuity and flux”. Urban screens are multi-purposed and take many different forms, a taxonomy explored by Krajina. Not unlike Wasiak’s reading of urban space and mobility, the way movement and experience can be guided according to the tensions found between public and private space in the city points to a spatial order governed by a logic fraught with competing interests and investments.

The monumental finds another analogue in the politics of cultural memory in Agata Lisiak’s “Disposable and Usable Pasts in Central European Cities”. She addresses the sometimes cavalier and often contested demolition or denigration of public monuments and institutions in Berlin and Warsaw. The erasure of histories is a loaded gesture in cities that are more prone to swoon at the novelty of corporate architecture than contend with the contradictions of history (Calle 1997; Huysssen 2003; Till 2005). The elision of unsavoury or problematic histories either through the renaming of streets or districts, or the transfiguration of Communist or Nazi-era buildings into contemporary institutions in post-Communist cities, does not entirely do away with their residual signifying power; instead, they take on the character of what Lisiak refers to as “urban palimpsests” and thus can persist in different, often troubling or unsettling, ways.

The thematic section is bookended with a final photo essay, taking us out of Europe to Australia, and at first glance away from the monumental via Megan Hicks’ consideration of the symbolic role of pavement in the city as site of ad-hoc memorialisation. As a testament to lives lived, a place for eulogizing those who have recently died, the pavement in her article “City of Epitaphs” acts as another monumental figure in the city, albeit more prosaic in form and content. Pavement, she reminds us, can act as both “witness and accomplice to fatality”, gaining another meaning as a site reclaimed for memorialisation. As an appropriative gesture
these kinds of memorials in the forms of graffiti sites, ad-hoc death notices and temporary shrines, Hicks contends, exist as markers of the inexorable drama that is the signature of city life.

This section of *Culture Unbound* represents a cross-section of the work being done around urban sign systems in a number of cities around the globe. The authors have presented articles that, directly and indirectly, grapple with what Gottdeiner and Lagapoulos have stated is the value of a socio-semiotic approach to the city, exploring “the articulation between semiotic and non-semiotic social processes in the ideological production and conception of space…” (14). From historical monuments to mobile technologies, from literary to filmic representations, from intimate reflections to theoretical engagements, and from immense outdoor screens to the ground beneath our pedestrian feet, these articles constitute a broad range of possibility with regard to reading the city of signs and signs of the city.

The final word on city signs and signs of the city can best be left with Roland Barthes. The amateur of the city he refers to here, he or she who loves cities, is, if I may speak for the authors here, us, writers and readers of the city. Barthes opens his essay on semiology and the city with a confession that this collection echoes in spirit:

> But I should add that whoever would outline a semiotics of the city needs to be at the same time semiologist (specialist in signs), geographer, historian, planner, architect, and probably psychoanalyst. Since this is clearly not my case… the reflections that I am going to present to you are the reflections of an amateur in the etymological sense of this word: amateur of signs, he who loves signs; amateur of the city, he who loves the city. For I love both city and signs. And this double love (which is probably only one) leads me to believe… in the possibility of a semiotics of the city. (Barthes 1986: 89)

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References


Street Discourse: A Visual Essay on Urban Signification

By Luc Pauwels

The contemporary metropolis is the site where vast numbers of people live their lives in a forced or chosen context of collectivity, but one that allows for individuality and even loneliness (often stronger felt in a crowd). To many the metropolis is a site of limitless opportunity, of continual change and growth, a utopian place, a site of constant renewal. However in actual fact in often turns into a dystopia, a boulevard of broken dreams. For there is no place where everyone’s desires can be met and there is no agreed upon state of completion of the utopian project. Cities constitute a constant "work in progress” of different actors with competing agenda’s. Cities are the dynamic result of prior necessities and choices and present day re-articulations and revisions of those. Thus cities invariably testify of past dreams and options taken which amalgamate with present projects that reconstitute and reclaim a territory partially occupied by former social, cultural economic, political and religious forces. Some artifacts of the past are simply torn down and replaced but many remain and are re-imbued or re-infused with new meanings, or at the least reframed as a materialized memory of past events and ways of living.

Thus the present inscribes itself on the past, layer after layer, and in an asynchronous fashion. In this respect the city can be thought of as a palimpsest which is constantly being rewritten, repainted, and re-populated by hurried crowds with a purpose.

The day-to-day metabolism of the city may be observed through its artifacts which are as much materializations of norms and values and functions as objects that are constantly being uploaded with new meanings, or redefined or re-appropriated to fulfill new functions. But the social fabric also becomes apparent through routine behavior, incidents, major events and the various signs and symptoms of how the city is "used".

The city can be looked upon as a huge, out of control, syntagma, a combination of numerous paradigmatic choices made by many semi-independent actors, with different, often conflicting interests. Some signs have lost their meaning but remain to send their obsolete message (to buy a no longer existing product of an out of market manufacturer). These remnants of the past together with the uncontrolled combination of numerous signs that are competing for attention create a visual data overload and "noise” that may prove highly confusing, while at the same time they may become a source of entertainment for the attentive observer.
Cities are genuine hubs of cultural expression and unusually rich exponents of visual culture. The ongoing process of urbanisation goes hand in hand with a growing diversity of functions and people. Urban (visual) cultures emerge from human imagination, ambitions and desires, numerous intentional and unintentional choices, concerted and rival actions. Buildings, streets, squares, parks, monuments, shopping malls and other urban artefacts – the new, the long-established or those that barely survive – eloquently testify to past and present ways of thinking and doing, and together with the multi-formed activities of its inhabitants and visitors constitute the complex human and material fabric of the city.

Cities serve numerous practical, functional, symbolic, ritual and ideological ends. Many of which have an undeniable visual dimension. Therefore the city can be literally looked at from different angles that often refer to different orders of signification: the use of space, the types, means and degree of control, mobility, fashion, cultural diversity, entertainment, tourism, commerce, personal, interpersonal and group behaviour, the public and the private sphere. Much of this materializes in numerous artefacts and behaviours. Cities are both emanations, and reproducers, of power and control. They are sites of planning, control and conformism. Yet at the same time the urban context is a token and a breeding ground for resistance, for loss of control, for renewal, for deliverance. These multiple intermeshing discourses – the historic, the political, the social, the multicultural, the commercial, the religious etc. – provide the city its unpredictable, multilayered, never fully graspable, character. Therefore cities constitute at once a battlefield for conflicting interests, a playground of ideas and a theatre for our senses, orchestrated by different agents with different temporal referents and audiences in mind.

**Reframing the City**

Sociology and photography represent distinct ”ways of looking” at society. But they are both about ”making the familiar strange”, about questioning the seemingly obvious and ”reframing” it (as social facts or processes or visual statements). Theories tend to work like looking glasses or lenses with their typical distortions and aberrations, and theory driven observations and recordings may ultimately embody a true merger of the photographic with the sociological. In an effort to read the plethora of signs, or to document and understand the awkward melting pot of messages that bombard the city dweller, photographers and visual researchers often record, in a more or less systematic manner, the various aspects of urban visual culture. Alternatively, they may focus on what is strange or edifying in its own right, or they may try to metaphorically reinforce, clarify, amplify or even try to twist (in a Situationist-like ”détournement”) the possible meanings of the ”ante-photographic” event through the expressive choice of a
particular vantage point or moment, or by skillfully employing one of the many but often unnoticed parameters or signifiers of the representational apparatus (framing, optical effects, tonality, texture). The latter approach may yield new ways of looking, which may help to reveal and explore the borderlines of that which is inexplicable or even hard to imagine.

Photographers and social scientists are often torn between being a detached (sometimes cynical) observer/reporter and a person truly engaged and involved with the field of observation. They are also pulled between some expression of realism (the default expectation of photography) and the expression of a unique view or one that transcends the purely physical nature of the depicted (the default urge of an artist or a theoretician). However both reveal the city as a structure and an experience, and these two aspects do not necessarily exclude one another.

These brief comments and the accompanying photographs which make up this visual essay reflect some expressions of the hybrid culture of big cities. They are not only a visual account of the struggle between the past and the present but also between different societal functions and centers of power: economic; social, cultural, political, aesthetic, ecological. They are more than an objective documentation of those visual artifacts and processes but also an effort to remould the urban reality without touching it. The present visual essay seeks to present metonyms and metaphors for those human interactions that have left their marks deliberately or inadvertently in the urban context.
THE URBAN PANOPTICON / Los Angeles, USA

HITCHCOCK MEETS MCDONALD’S / Los Angeles, USA
THE RIGHT WAY / Minneapolis, USA

CRACKED IDEALS / Antwerp, Belgium
FRAMING CLASS / Southampton, UK

CROSSROAD OF DISCOURSES / Cabourg, France
MATTERS OF THE HEART / San Francisco, USA

REIMAGED – REVIEWED / San Francisco, USA
COMMUTING / New York, USA

UPTOWN – DOWNTOWN / San Francisco, USA
UPWARD MOBILITY / New Orleans, USA

SILENT METROPOLIS / New Orleans, USA

All photographs by Luc Pauwels.
Going Begging: Casino Culture and its Contrasts as Revealed in the New Macao Poetry

By Christopher (Kit) Kelen

Abstract

Among the key themes of contemporary Macao poetry, chance and luck loom large, along with their figuration in Macao life through sites such as casinos and temples, through personae such as those of the gambler, the beggar, the prostitute. Macao as dot-on-the-map is likewise conceived as a site for all kinds of portal semiotics, as paradigm for cultural crossing and cultural shift. Macao may be regarded as a work enduring (in Brechtian terms) because it is unfinished. While this is a formula that could be notionally applied to any city, this view seems particularly apt given both the extraordinary pace of change in post-handover Macao (i.e. since 1999), and the present bubble-bursting effect of the 2008 “financial tsunami”.

Relating Augé’s conception of “non-places” to Eco’s notion of open (as opposed to closed) text, this paper observes that consciousness of place in contemporary Macao poetry appears to be dominated by two kinds of space, glossed here as “Macao space” and ”anywhere space”. Macao space is uniquely of an historical moment and place, something culturally positioned; in anywhere space (e.g. inside of a casino or an airport) subjects are hailed by consumption-oriented reifications of putative universal value. The contemporary Macao poetry typically values Macao space and sees it as under threat from the “non-negotiable” space of culture that could be anywhere.

Interested in the paradoxes, ironies and hypocrisies inherent in the present-day culture, politics and international position of Macao, the new Macao poetry reveals a place-based poetics deeply concerned with Macao identity, its evolution and potentials.

Keywords: Macao, poetry, place, space
Going Begging – Casino Culture and its Contrasts as Revealed in the New Macao Poetry

Macao – dot on the map and longstanding east/west portal – serves as a poetic symbol. Macao, the old city in south China, is a well inhabited territory – and so a place of poetic witness. Tension between conceptions of place implied by the Platonic as opposed to the empirical city is evidenced in contemporary Macao poetry. It is with such tensions and with the symbolic qualities of the imagined place this paper is concerned. This essay deals with a number of key themes in Macao poetry today; among these chance and luck loom large, along with their figuration in Macao life through sites such as casinos and temples, through personae such as those of the gambler, the beggar, the prostitute. The method of the investigation is to bring pertinent theory (especially concerning the postmodern city and cinematic space) into play in the consideration of contemporary Macao poetry (written in English or translated from Chinese or Portuguese). The reason for focusing on poetry in this manner is that this medium of witness has been uniquely suited to the fashioning of a subtle and on-going critique of the way things are and the powers that be in Macao.

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The “mountains” around Macao – the high hills seen from almost everywhere in Macao – are all in fact across the border, on what people in Macao call the Mainland (or da lu – the big land or nei di – the ground inside). These mountains do not belong to the territory; they are not controlled by Macao’s government. To get to them one must cross the border into China proper. These ranges are like the mountain backdrop of a Japanese garden – a convenient theft for aesthetic purposes. Macao’s mountains (some now windmill clad) are something borrowed by virtue of a vantage point. And yet surely a view is part of a place? Those high hills are a reminder that – for better and worse (richer and poorer, etc.) – Macao is a part of China.

Those mountains are only one of a number of local spatial illusions. Perhaps illusions of size are necessary to a place on Macao’s scale? The illusion of a sea is potent in this Pearl River port. And there is the illusion that Macao is an island, as demonstrated in Wong Man Fai’s 2005 poem, “I’m on an island”:

I’m on this island
I use my eyes to write about its stories
of course originally I planned to read it with my tongue
but now the story is not yet finished
because I can almost see my breath
when passing the alleys
one after another, the lost fear restrains
the songs in my throat
leaving my eyeballs prosthetic
and the net filled with blood
I’m constantly questioning
the island

AV & KK¹ (227)

Needless to say, Macao is not an island, or not simply, literally, an island. In geographic terms, it’s a peninsula and two islands. It’s part of China (PRC). It was possibly a Portuguese possession for four hundred and fifty years, though not really a colony – historians generally agree to call it an enclave.² And though this tiny territory was arguably never in law properly alienated from China – though it never properly belonged to Europe – still a Hong Kong handover style of treaty was signed between Beijing and Lisbon in 1987. As a result the Portuguese and the citizens of Macao found themselves with virtually the same benefits post-handover that London had negotiated for its crown colony across the delta. Those benefits principally include fifty years of guaranteed civic autonomy and protection for Portuguese language and Portuguese law. At the time of writing, ten years after the institution of the one country two-systems policy, one hardly hears the phrase mentioned. That might generally indicate that it’s working.

Why then call Macao an island? It’s a popular misconception. And certainly if one looks at the old maps, it is a very narrow isthmus that joined the peninsula of Macao to the rest of China. In the more distant past, before a sandbar silted into an isthmus, what is now peninsula Macao was in fact an island. Today Macao is nearly three times in area what it was at the beginning of the twentieth century; and land reclamation started hundreds of years before that. Nor is it hard to see what drove the reclamation. Despite its rapid expansion in area Macao remains the most crowded territory on earth, with a population density four times that of Hong Kong. It’s true that parts of Hong Kong – places like Mongkok and Sham Shui Po and Kowloon – are the most crowded square kilometres on the planet; Hong Kong’s overall population density is greatly diluted by the fact that more than 40% of the land area is country park (and in fact less than 20% of the total land area is fully urbanised). Macao is almost entirely lacking in “country” as such. Because of its small size, Macao presents as the paradigm case of place as the “point on the map”.

In Macao we witness the miracle of city space made more through the inexorable reclamation of the land from the shallow silty river – the city’s future (and the future of its capital) is not limited to the territory it seems on the ground to be. Returning to the map, we can see in Macao something akin to the figure suggested by Borges and Baudrillard – of the map exceeding the territory it might have been meant to describe. The map of what Macao will be – that imagination of Macao, the aerial view of empty space reclaimed (as seen from the old Macao-Taipa Bridge) – today tangibly exceeds the territory through which the population can freely move. It is because of the land reclaimed being earmarked for casino-
capitalist development, we can speak of the territory added as being something other than Macao-space.

The illusions on which Macao depends are not merely confined to someone else’s mountains and a river pretending to be a sea. Portugal too is part of Macao. It’s all of Portugal most Chinese people ever see and yet the impression – via food, via television, shop signs, announcements in theatres – can be very convincing. This is Portugal run at a distance by a skeleton staff.

In what sense then should we consider Macao to be an island? Note that other poets have employed the same conceit, for instance in Chan Sok Wa “the moment of waking” we have reference to “the island kingdom” (362). Is the miniature place (the place of miniatures) able to be set aside? Is Macao metaphorically an island in the sense, John Donne informs us, that “no man is”? Is Macao exceptional, unique? Do the rules of elsewhere not apply in Macao? Perhaps it’s not so much the answers but the questions that are important. To return to Wong Man Fai’s poem, I think the key is in the lines, “I’m constantly questioning/ the island.” This kind of questioning is then of a fundamental kind – it goes to the nature of existence and to the senses of identity that are possible in a place. With what measure of reality should a place be credited? The present day world – of postmodernity, of late capitalism – is one full of illusions of scale and pace. Perhaps these are more potent or apparent when they occur in the place which is a dot on the map.

Gambling, for instance, is a most potent of illusions – the idea that the punter can win is of course contradicted by the fact that s/he is entering a palace and someone’s money had to pay for it. The Wong Man Fai poem, the end of which is presented above, begins:

I’m on an island
tall buildings erect
fences surround the prison
inviting glances
charming nights one after another
staggering steps on the streets
we have a pit here

placing the bets with shabby souls
chaos, confusion – this compensation
like faces patched out of…

So the island is also a prison – like Hamlet’s Denmark – one in which gambling is the compensation for shabby souls. In the Wong poem the charm – as advertised – and the drunken stagger of the reveller provide an apt image of ambivalence. In the chaos and confusion, where identity is something patched together, we begin to recognise “the island” as floating signifier. Is it the case that Macao can be all things to all? Perhaps this is the beauty of the place with no extent.
Uniqueness – or Gambling with Macao Characteristics

Macao as metaphor is bi-directional, and reversible. In other words, disclosing the metaphor means that there are two distinct questions to be answered: What does Macao represent?/How is Macao represented? There are a number of planes on which these questions and answers can be tilted, confused. For instance, the question of representation has a political as well as a semiotic dimension. And so we can ask, for instance: Who has the right to represent Macao? And to whom? Nor, rhetorically, is it merely metaphor that is at stake here. We need to interrogate the various associations Macao brings to mind for the resident, for the tourist, for the prospective visitor. Here, marketing meets governance, corporate and otherwise. And there is the question of part/whole relations, the obvious shift in that instance being from participation in a European world empire to being a part of China again to being a part of a world capitalist experiment in the so-called pleasure of gambling. These foregoing are in outline some of the dimensions of connotation carried by the use of the word “Macao”.

Macao’s newfound prosperity is based on gambling and “the gaming industry” (as it euphemistically declares itself) is a focus and locus for many of the key contradictions. Prior to the financial tsunami of the second half of 2008, it had been apparent to all in Macao that the rich were getting richer and the poor were being marginalised faster than ever before. Widely read as an effort to forestall likely May Day demonstrations in 2008, the government was moved to give its citizens five thousand patacas each, one might disingenuously claim, to make tangible the idea that the new prosperity was being shared. With these circumstances in mind, one may match Wong Man Fai’s island metaphor with Debby Vai Keng Sou’s image of a house being offered to the citizen:

*a big house*

I am offered
a big house
the keys to the house
he keeps

I’m just a little woman
need a home
in this smalltown of mine
miraculously expanding by the minute
less and less space to breathe

a big garden in front
roses greeting me in pink and red
to grow
to pick
to smell

priceless furniture
mahogany
style
cool

a balcony to the sea
good view for a change
from there
to watch the world
to be watched

o, vanity

I am promised five thousand kisses too
dry on the cheeks
no love

May, 2008

In Sou’s poem, the “five thousand kisses” are easily recognised. Highlighted here is the contradiction inherent in Macao’s style of progress—more territory, less space to breathe. The new opulence is somehow vain and loveless; really it’s all about what one might call a local style of voyeurism—a “see and be seen” ethos.

The subject knows she is hailed; or in Stuart Hall’s “articulation” theory we might say: here is a subject who recognises herself as discovered by an ideological apparatus. She contends with—she contests—her interpellation by reading more into the government’s gesture than the innocent sharing of wealth it is intended to demonstrate. An ironic effect is achieved by attributing human affect in the form of a putative love to what’s offered. But no—there isn’t love; the cheeks are dry—the gesture was rote, was pragmatic; as Portuguese kisses might more generally seem to the casual Chinese observer.

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Macao’s sub-national identity entails some forms of identification unique to Macao. Things Macanese—like the patois (patua), like certain examples of Macanese cuisine—have the advantage, for the poet wishing to give local flavour, of being unmistakably of a place. In Macao’s case, being a territory with integral borders, laws, currency and telecommunications, some of the official aspects of identity usually thought national apply. This too has its poetic uses. Consider Hilda Tam’s
poem “tossing the old one pataca” (the pataca being uniquely the unit of currency in Macao).

**tossing the old one pataca**

between sense and nonsense
pots and pans in the brain –
that’s the speech of the self

because words won’t mean
I pick up a coin from the desk
two delicate pictures

one I call yes
and the other side no

so double the meanings
tire the mind

the lion nods –
that’s the signal

air flows
while the coin spins in it

it’s fate
falls into the palm

why are there
just two answers?

(325)

There’s mystery added by the fact that it’s the “old” pataca, not the coin currently in circulation. But there’s nothing else in the poem to link it with Macao; it’s this one central image – highly specified – that places this meditation on what must be admitted a very Macao conflation of themes – luck, choice, meaning, decision.

The gambling theme is one that has increasingly been given Macao characteristics in recent poetry. In the “blind” section of Pierre ‘Tai Pi’ Wong’s poem “mid-day images”, the reader is shown how everyone’s field of vision is diminished by focus on the object of luck and the moment of winning or losing.
blind
I see
busy midday moments
everyone stuck inside a can
one taxi driver, sometimes blind
won’t see the residents anymore
at the slot machine
I bump into that poor blind man
his eyes are so bright now
like Sands neon
gazing at the iron pearl of the Russian wheel
mumbling
‘18’, ‘18’, ‘18’, ‘18’
the iron pearl is like the losing gambler
after some emotional cramps
it falls on ‘0’
that poor man
is just like me –
he’s completely blind

AV & KK (270-1)

Blindness manifests in several related ways in Wong’s poem. The taxi driver is a danger to the pedestrian residents because he sometimes won’t see them crossing the road, and then there’s a real blind man in the poem (with blazing eyes to remind us of Dylan Thomas’ famous villanelle). The brightness of the blind man’s eyes is likened to that of Sands neon (i.e. the neon signs of the Sands Casino, opened in 2003, first of the new generation of casinos). This brings us by association to the object of the gambler’s gaze, which is the roulette ball. We hear the gambler’s prayerful incantation, his mumbled wish that the ball land on his number, which of course it doesn’t. All of this provides an unexpected analogy with the poem’s persona. We learn that s/he too is blind and that this surprise has the disturbing effect of suggesting that everything we’ve gleaned so far through the poem (images, associations, analogies) has been unreliable. So that we the readers are literally in the position of the blind being led by the blind. Implied here, I think is that there is no stable point of view available from which the city or anything in it might be viewed. Nor is this merely postmodern effect for its own sake. It’s a pattern of metonymic shift – glissement – driving through this poem that prevents the reader’s eye from resting on any particular image or any certain analogy. The effect overall is to simulate the infinitely distracted experience of the gambler – of the one obsessed with the win/lose evanescence of luck in the vanishing here and now. In case the reader might be tempted to look for hopeful signs, in the last section of the poem, “darkness”, the reader’s offered this conclusion:
darkness

darkness
spreading after noon
we’ve been searching
hoping to leave the lost
then you will discover
we are together
completely blind –
this century’s horrible disease

(271)

Here we read some of the ethical questions characteristic of the Macao casino poem and its overarching interest in the idea of an economy premised on the voluntary taxation of those who come from far flung places because they are addicted to chance.

**Whores, Beggars, Gamblers,**

Concomitant with the gambling interest (remaining with the theme of luck/chance), a fascination with beggars is widespread among Macao poets of recent time, for instance in this collaborative poem by Hilda Tam and Sidney Ung.

**pedestrian overpass,**
**Rua do Campo**

high over the street
of bosses passing
horns sounding from under
man half naked
and a little limbless
keeps kowtowing
*bom bom*
the forehead hits
the pavement
which is his platform
stage over the street
*bom bom*
for the punters
a coin or a note drops
they give or they won’t
he’s still a professional
nothing can break his calm
As in Freud’s “fort/da” game we see in outline the symptoms of a repetition compulsion. And this psychological dimension is mapped over the socio-economic conditions, simplified to the form of Hegelian master/slave relations. There are various questions we might ask about roles and reversals here. For instance – who is the worker and who is the workless in this picture? Who is deserving, who is undeserving? And who is kowtowing to whom? Or to what? One of the ironic fantasies the beggar’s figure inspires is that – having come still in the rat race chaos – s/he might be the one ahead of the game. In this sense the beggar is a figure of reversal.

Let’s turn now to an older example of the beggar portrayed, in part of a poem from one of the key Portuguese voices in Macao today, that of Carlos Marreiros. From a 1980 poem, “An Old Umbrella”:

wire’s bony frame
hidden by rag
a bit of skin
wind’s arms
belly is nothing

(328-9)
on the hill
of last night’s rubbish
empty hands of the beggar’s carcass
surrendered to its own condition
failure, inferior, unjust
after all the attempts
impossible yet
not yet thirty
but centuries past

... the point where everything begins
and everything ends
the condensation of all and of nothing, and all at once
where there is no history
neither does age make sense

LH & KK(113-4)

I think the beggar is a figure of fascination for Macao poets today because s/he embodies certain contradictions inherent in Macao’s new found gambling oriented wealth. The beggar can be seen as the negative figure of luck, the character cast on the street through bad luck – the very type of the aphorism “there but for the grace of God, go I.” And the beggar is suggestive of alms and so of religious obligation. In Macao the question will always be – which religion (?) – and so I think we can ask – which obligations (?). The beggar is also a figure of distrust – (Is s/he genuine? Is s/he part of an organised scam?). So this character is victim of the economy but also somehow an image of corruption or at least of doubt, of dubious morals. The point is that the beggar is a type/figure/character who begs questions about the identity of Macao and its inhabitants more generally. The figure of the beggar embodies questions as to whose place it is, as to who is deserving and who is not, questions as to who is the real thief – of time, of money, of identity.

The gambling oriented society producers all kinds of losers. In a general sense it’s been possible in the past to see the whole of the Mainland’s population somewhat in the light of Hans Christian Andersen’s little match girl – folk sadly excluded from the warmth and the fun of a capitalist economy. An example of that – no longer viable – thinking is in José Silveira Machado’s “The Rickshaw Man”.

he came
from the other side of the river
in the tide’s flow
held in waters of hope
night without stars
empty pockets
pedalling the hungry lanes
sipping at bowls of rain
sleeping under the cold awning
gone in the wind’s wings

lives alone
the rickshaw man

sits in night’s shadow
neither would gods comfort him

rot in the heart
of the life without hope
nothing in pockets
with holes

the rickshaw man
lives alone

LH & KK(24)

It would probably be fair to say that most of Macao’s population came from the “other side of the river” at some stage in the last century. Since the opening up of the eighties it has become progressively more difficult to look pityingly *en masse* at the population of China. Perhaps a more nuanced view of the state of play with winners and losers is presented in Hilda Tam’s “my whore at Rua de Cantão”.

I saw a whore
in an ad:
red hair
blue eyes
big tits
fat bum

I gulped
I felt in my pocket
I went into the sauna

and there she stood:
red hair
blue eyes
big tits
fat bum
I stepped back
back to gaze at my whore
in the ad

The winner’s prize may be easier to stomach in prospect and in virtual form than in flesh and blood.

**Depicting City Space**

Consciousness of place in contemporary Macao poetry appears to be dominated by two kinds of space; I will gloss these here as “Macao space” and “anywhere space”. In his 1995 monograph *Non-places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Marc Augé describes three “figures of excess…employed to characterize the situation of supermodernity”. These three figures are “overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, the individualization of references” (40–41). Augé writes of an “excess of space…correlative with the shrinking of the planet”:

> with the distancing from ourselves embodied in the feats of the astronauts and the endless circling of our satellites. In a sense, our first steps in outer space reduce our own space to an infinitesimal point, of which satellite photographs appropriately give us the exact measure. But at the same time, the world is becoming more open to us. We are in an era characterised by changes of scale — of course in the context of space exploration, but also on earth: rapid means of transport have brought any capital within a few hours’ travel of any other. And in the privacy of our own homes, finally, images of all sorts, relayed by satellites and caught by the aerials that bristle on the roofs of our remotest hamlets, can give us instant, sometimes simultaneous vision of an event taking place on the other side of the planet. (31)

Of the world’s computer screens, Augé writes:

> We can say of these universes, which are themselves broadly fictional, that they are essentially universes of recognition. The property of symbolic universes is that they constitute a means of recognition, rather than knowledge, for those who have inherited them: closed universes where everything is a sign; collections of codes to which only some hold the key but whose existence everyone accepts; totalities which are partially fictional but effective; cosmologies one might think had been invented for the benefit of ethnologists. (33)

Cosmopolitanism, since ancient times, has been the privilege of an elite capable of exercising the knowledges and recognitions required to transcend the ground on which a subject stood as particularly of a place and bound to place. It’s in such a sense Macao’s poetry today may be regarded as broadly cosmopolitan – i.e. constituted in overlapping universes of recognition, to which the poets in question and their good readers, hold the appropriate keys. But today’s cosmopolitan elite lacks the defined knowledge and identifications of ages past.
On the macro scale we can read Macao as an open door through which goods, capital, humans and their imaginary references all circulate, sometimes at a dizzying pace. A cinematic sense of the place (discussed a little below) then does perhaps convey an idea of (what Augé names spatial overabundance). Late noughties advertising for Macao as a tourist destination (as for instance shown non-stop on the jetfoil from Hong Kong) reveals the dot on the map as making available to its citizens and visitors every conceivable kind of space and concomitant activity – windsurfing, tower viewing, bungee jumping, heritage walks, leafing through ancient tomes in a library, dining in every style imaginable and of course placing bets on the gaming tables. On the ground though, during the boom years now passing, public transport had increasingly become an undesirable way to get anywhere. With no particular brakes on the acquisition of private vehicles by the wealthy citizenry, at peak hours a great proportion of the cars on Macao’s roads are there because their drivers are simply trying to park; leading to the maxim that to go anywhere in Macao one must first go everywhere.

For Augé, important characteristics of non-place include “an experience — without real historical precedent — of solitary individuality combined with non-human mediation (all it takes is a notice or a screen) between the individual and public authority” (117–118).

Clearly the word “non-place” designates two complimentary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces. Although the two sets of relations overlap to a large extent, and in any case officially (individuals travel, make purchases, relax), they are still not confused with one another; for non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes. As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality. (94)

It’s interesting to think of “solitary contractuality” in terms of a slot machine culture: the slow lonely process of making a fortune or losing the lot. And yet the crowdedness of spaces in Macao (in China/East Asia more generally) belies the sparsity and the inhuman aspect Augé associates with “non-place”:

But the real non-places of supermodernity—the ones we inhabit when we are driving down the motorway, wandering through the supermarket or sitting in an airport lounge waiting for the next flight to London or Marseille—have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their “instructions for use”, which may be prescriptive (“Take right-hand lane”), prohibitive (“No smoking”) or informative (“you are now entering the Beaujolais region”). (96)

Macao has such signage, to be sure, and yet the average citizen’s (or visitor’s) experience of it would be brief. In Macao – the particular paradox with regard to the signing of non-place space – is that what makes it particular is the fact of it being exoticized as incomprehensible. The street and shop signs compulsory in Portuguese cannot be read at all by the vast majority of the population; nor can Chinese tourists read the Portuguese; nor in general can western tourists read the Chinese or the Portuguese signage. Of course a Portuguese name, written in the
Roman alphabet, will serve for a name in English or in any other European language. But try telling such a name to a Macao taxi driver and – good luck. The main street of Macao is, to the population at large, San Ma Lo. Ask anyone about Avenida da Almeida da Ribeiro (the Portuguese name) and you’ll get a blank stare. The sign in Portuguese is something people simply don’t see (the way I don’t see the Chinese characters on the keyboard on which I’m typing this – because they are simply not relevant).

To return then to a distinction between “Macao space” and “anywhere space”. Macao space is uniquely of an historical moment and place, something culturally positioned; in anywhere space (e.g. inside of a casino or an airport) subjects are hailed by consumption-oriented reifications of putative universal value. In the terms Umberto Eco elaborates in The Role of the Reader, we recognize in anywhere space a “closed text”, i.e. a text in which the addressee is not invited to participate actively, but is rather offered a pre-determined role, open neither to interpretation nor negotiation. Macao space, being particular, is contingent. Having a history, it can have a future. The contemporary Macao poetry typically values Macao space and sees it as under threat from the “non-negotiable” space of culture that could be anywhere.

In Loi Chi Pang’s poem, “to Coloane”, we get a picture of anywhere space being added to Macao:

```
little city too cramped
so cramped that there is only space left for muttering
the many roads not taken knit into a helpless net
skims from my eyes
under the net there is such a stunning hope
a naming for all kinds of new things
simply
a word
“cold”

the autumn of September here is a book of sorrow more than sadness
so sad that the egret can’t stand any longer under the mangroves
holding up an oilpaper umbrella to Coloane
I can’t see rain
but only
ashes and stones of the cement trucks
flying past
and
the Cotai Strip
still under construction
```

HT & KK (290)
Here, witnessing the process of “reclamation” shows us that liminal space – green space in this case – cannot become a part of the known place. The egret will be deprived of its mangrove; instead the “new things” are worthy only of the word “cold”. This is anywhere space is the making; and it’s made of ashes and cement, of anything.

In Erik Lo Yiu Tung’s poem “the city starts to flee with the speed of the stars”, we indulge the fantasy of the city escaping a violence of growth even dreams can’t conceal.

the city starts to flee with the speed of the stars

grow up rapidly, the city starts
to flee with the speed of the stars
used to chase after each other in the park when young
one year the hand of the clock was sprained
even dreaming can’t conceal
the violence of growth

after dark the street becomes the future trenches of the children
they have been asking lots of questions that adults can’t answer
when I was young, mother fooled me and said those were just accidents
perhaps there are too many accidents beneath the sky, for example:
on the street in June or July, we might have
met behind the police tape
watching the city continually flee with the speed of the stars
it turns out that there are still lots of unanswerable doubts
within the distance that can’t be asked
I have long been used to that

EL & KK (324)

Where is the poetry in this? On which side of the police tape? Clearly accidents are suspicious; some transgression is indicated. Doubts are unanswerable, space and time as we knew them can no longer be relied on – the clock is sprained, the distance cannot be asked. In these circumstances the idea of the future is reduced to trench warfare.

In Xi Lan’s “it’s only in death we’re not foreigners” we get a skewed picture of the poet’s place:

the view through the mirror
is the reflection of contorted reality

I suddenly lost all hopes, but am joyful
I lie below the Ruins of St Paul – they’re under construction
drinking a beer once cold, following the whole city working hard
at being dispirited breathing in the air breathed out by others
as I understand it, poets have always tried to live well
in other people’s lives

JL & KK (379)

In the touristic city the ruins are under construction. Life is close. We breathe in
the air others have breathed. We see that even poetry is a compromised activity;
it’s essentially parasitic. Poets try to live well in others’ lives. Tam Chon Ieng’s “a
game”, by contrast shows us poetry as a kind of resistance to the house becoming
unknown:

the world can almost stop, the rotten sound of the bell
hasn’t submitted to poems
poets stand one by one next to each other
thinking with their eyes covered, they finish the game
in the midst of the singers

too many people enter, more and more stones in the house
can no longer be known

HT & KK (386)

Cinematic Un/consciousness of Space

What kind of a space is a city? Is the city in particular? Is any city anywhere?
What relationship obtains between the city in particular and any city anywhere? I
think there are useful terms of analogy with the relationship we can theorise be-
tween nation in general and a nation in particular. Benedict Anderson’s second
paradox of the national is that nations are particular instances of identity of which
all persons are – at least notionally – possessed (5). That is to say, nation is a kind
of universal difference: everyone’s nationality is not the same as someone else’s.
Along these lines, a key paradox of “anthem quality” (the soul stirring evocation
of national sentiment felt by those who stand for their national anthem) is a uni-
formity of differences. Every member of the series “nation” must have a national
anthem; as a consequence, though anthems are notionally intended to express the
differences between nations, reflection reveals that they serve also to illustrate the
consistency of national investments across international borders. In other words,
although people generally feel that expressions of devotion to flag or soil or an-
them or any other abstraction of national homeland are particular, and suggest
distinction from the devotions of others to other places, in fact dedication to na-
tions in particular is – as evidenced by the machinery-in-common – the shared
worldwide “spiritual” commitment of the modern citizen. In this sense we may
think of national devotion as essentially devotion to the notion of nation.
Devotion to a city (for instance the artist’s or writer’s commitment to the representation of his or her city) has a number of similarities with national devotion; and yet it is a less abstract devotion in that the city’s citizens are – relative to those of the nation – more likely to have met each other. They are also likely to have more in common: they breathe the same air, experience the same weather. So the connection is more natural, less manufactured.

In her 1995 volume *The Culture of Cities*, Sharon Zukin writes, “for several hundred years, visual representations of cities have “sold” urban growth… Images, from early maps to picture postcards, have not simply reflected real city spaces; instead, they have been imaginative reconstructions—from specific points of view—of a city’s monumentality” (16). Zukin tells us, “Cities impose visual coherence in many ways: by using zoning to impose design criteria for office buildings, by making memory visible in historic districts, by interpreting the assimilation of ethnic groups in street festivals, by building walls to contain fear” (77).

From the point of view of the current investigation, the point needing made is that a city’s poetry does not represent some kind of objective or independent witness of place. However obscure or difficult it may seem, poetry is not above or outside of the cultural processes by which places and peoples represent or symbolize themselves; rather it is – as other forms of culture are – bound by what we might think of as a culturally produced aura of the place, for which purpose the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. So poetry and the points of view it expresses are bound up with more general attitudes and opinions of places, with the everyday loyalties and doubts people have for the places they identify as theirs. And the poetry of a place, produced as it mainly is by a cultural elite, is naturally a vehicle for a critique, both of the culture in general, and of those specific representations – especially the official (for instance the touristic) representations – which impact on “the place in mind” experienced by inhabitants, by visitors and by outside observers.

In *Tourism and the Branded City: film and identity on the Pacific Rim* Stephanie Donald works through three case studies (Shanghai, Hong Kong, Sydney) to look at *inter alia* how “the tie-in between enhanced film locations and national tourism campaigns offers a perfect commercial and creative synergy between the digital media, the film industry and the tourism agencies” (2). Donald writes that it is:

no secret that the global narratives of cinematic affect and urban resonance are rooted in the pre-eminence of American and European cities. This is due in part to the academic and popular publishing power of those regions and also, need it be said, the phenomenal success of American film export over the past century. Everyone who sees films knows, or thinks they do, what a US city looks like. New York, San Francisco, Chicago and LA are embedded in cinematic consciousness, thanks to the many versions of those cities that populate the Hollywood screen. Even specific locations (the easterly view over the Hudson River, the running path by the basketball courts in Central Park) are recognizable to viewers who have never set foot in
the United States. Europe also has its cinematic cities: Berlin, London, Paris and Rome. (4)

Embeddedness of cinematic consciousness (and perhaps more importantly of cinematic unconsciousness) clearly prevails in the case of Macao, in a poetry that is written with cinematic ways of seeing space in mind. Take for example Siu Hey’s poem “developing a port – repertoire”:

**prelude, *xylophone concerto***

please switch off mobile phones  
for the purposes of historical reflection  
messages can’t be sent four hundred years back  
the church is a light-purple ticket  
gets you into Lang Bai Ao the moment the storm stopped

iron strikes against flesh composing a drum rhythm  
but the melody is sour  
now  
you command I order  
cruel applause  
and weeping

**second, *majestic march***

drums and cannons  
mate under the statue  
of Governor Ferreira do Amaral  
waving to you  
recruiting you to join the hero who destroyed opium

the lotus stone is for cutting open the belly  
so it’s redder than Christmas flowers

smiling need not entail frivolity  
blood is flowing in the east

heroes’ hearts beat slowly  

JL & KK (334)

The overt musical structure of the piece belies the filmic – it could almost be read as scenario (plus commentary) for a commercial-length film montage. Yi Ling’s 1989 poem, “filming in the residential district” avows the space of the poem as cinematic:
filming in the residential district

night darkens
glance at the middle of the street
a young man in a jumper, trainers and trousers
looks like he’s running
looks like he’s talking on the phone
looks like he’s walking a dog
looks like he’s making a deal with someone
his running legs
rely on an automatically extending dog belt
maintaining the link between human and canine
sometimes long sometimes short sometimes broken
the dog is in front
he follows behind
the dog is pulling him
then he runs
middle of the street
stops
his left hand moves the phone nearer his ear
the mouth starts to eject words, sentences
it’s like a dog that squeezes its work onto the street
the dog hasn’t finished
but the master pulls him away

a Macanese with his office smile
eyes up at the sky
night draining away
the rest of the day

5 September 1989

AV & KK (180)

And in Lou Kit Wa’s “inspirations of the chicken”, we likewise witness directed space.

of course, having a pair of wings
rather than a pill or a dance floor
makes the ears and eyes wild
angers the hair
and then
you forget your identity
your parents
guilt
forget about its iron cage
their bodies get close to each other
wiggling
falling to the ground
waiting for dark night to enter
directing a film’s plot
choking the city with sobs

AV & KK (301)

Who’s directing and who’s directed here would be somewhat more difficult to establish. As in Lou’s poem, one sometimes finds a surreal cartoon quality – an oneiric city of impossible transformations is conjured, as in Erik Lo Yiu Tung’s “sleepwalking”:

your world slims down, flowing along the river outside the window
little birds also fly away, you said
as if once you spread your hands you could touch
the edge of the sea

the bottle has been collecting the rain
recording restlessly just like a typewriter
hey! you naughty kid
you throw the bottle on purpose towards
the edge of the sea. you said
to step across time, we even step onto our own heads!

you’re a wolf, also a sheep
for example, if a hunter suddenly had to shoot you down
you would flee right across the swamp, the river, go through the forest
flee to the path that leads to the life of sorrow
finding the only entrance

hey! do you really need to pick the poison worm seed from the dream scheme?
that pair of devilish hands which direct fate will soon let
eyes drop into the ocean of lashes
you haven’t got over the sleepwalking
it doesn’t connect at all

EL & KK (323)

This cinematic un/consciousness of space is, in Macao’s case, despite the fact that Macao space – unlike that of New York or Paris or Rome or Hong Kong has
not been the object of a long tradition in film; nor would its landmarks be easily recognized by an international film-viewing audience. Macao’s space is however cinegenic. The fact that it has not much been depicted in actual cinema provides poets with both opportunity and responsibility. The place is changing so quickly, there is danger at every moment that a particular ambiance will be irretrievably lost.

Stephanie Donald writes, “there is a local sense of belonging that is particular to Hong Kong and which makes narrating the city-as-brand a delicate task. When this narrative task is tested against the work of filmmakers, arguably the strongest voices in Hong Kong’s cultural worlds, it emerges that the competing patriotism are not invariably commensurable” (5). The patriotisms to which Donald refers are, in Macao and Hong Kong’s cases, embedded in similar problematics: loyalty to the colonial past or the national future; to the East, to the West; to the local or the larger identity. A key difference is that in Macao’s case, filmmakers could not be argued to be strong voices in Macao’s cultural worlds. Theirs would be fledgling voices in Macao; there simply aren’t enough of them. Instead, poets, architects, visual artists, designers, musicians – these are Macao’s strong voices in culture today.4 Perhaps it’s the fact that in relative terms poetry need not be so time consuming activity that has allowed this perruque5 to be the favoured form of expression of so many Macao intellectuals. In a sense hitherto not much recognized, I think poetry has served as witnessing vehicle of choice because, in recent decades, it has had the critical mass of a tradition in Macao. Macao’s poets are free to play with what is poetic in the cinematic view of their cinegenic space and without needing to actually make films. And yet the Hong Kong cinematic eye is well at home in Macao and plays a defining role in the way Macao space is perceived. The strength of local talent in other areas suggests Macao’s is a cinema waiting to happen (one likely to be influenced by the city’s part-time poets when it does); and at the same time it needs to be conceded that Macao space is seen by its imaginative citizens through a lens of Hong Kong, Hollywood, Mainland and other cinemas.

Macao’s Symbolic Place - a Sleepwalker’s Macao

Seeing one’s own place with other eyes (detached observation) is a characteristically cosmopolitan and modernist malaise, lot of the flâneur for instance. Macao is a pedestrian-scale place and, because of what we now call “heritage”, peninsula Macao is one of the world’s great city spaces for walking. Walking in Macao’s Inner Harbour streets is making one’s way through decay, through remnants of past culture. In fact one may read miniature Macao as the paradigm walking city; it’s too small to see any other way. To walk is to observe, to understand and to leave traces of all of these processes. Walking is a kind of writing. Footsteps for de Certeau are like Chinese characters drawn with a finger on a hand: “they are
myriad but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and of kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces” (97). For de Certeau, the “long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them nor in conformity with them” (101). Noughties Macao does have its panoptic point – the tower and its view and its bungee-jumping spectacularism; things captured on film and offered the tourist.

The cinematic impression a city makes melds seamlessly into another (and closely related) mise-en-scène: that of the dreamer. In Lok Ka I’s “homesick on a soundless night”, the question of displacement stands ironically at odds with a personal sense of placelessness.

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closely related) mise-en-scène: that of the dreamer. In Lok Ka I’s “homesick on a
soundless night”, the question of displacement stands ironically at odds with a
personal sense of placelessness.

where is my home?
heaven knows
homesick thoughts of missing

no reason for a cheerful face
no footnote for a broken heart
on a swing
a dream of the future sways

‘can’t bear to climb high to look beyond
my hometown far away
I shed tears for bygone years
why does the pain remain?…’

on a bustling street
who wants to be a lonely walker?
I keep my own counsel
see afar
not going home, just passing

life is tedious
seeking reasons to set roots
clouds are stirring in the air
it’s difficult to breathe
got to find an excuse
to smash a glass plate
a good many times
order a cappuccino
don’t in a cube of sugar
together with the bubbles I swallow all that was clear
awake after

the coffee reminds me of the moon of my town
drinking alone on a moonlit night

DS, JH & K (368)

On a bustling street/who wants to be a lonely walker? “To walk is to lack a
place”, de Certeau tells us. In the city of pleasure and potent illusions (i.e. those
on which a gambling industry depends) the oneiric and the ambulatory can read as
views through the one miasma. For de Certeau – “the similarity between ‘dis-
course’ and dreams has to do with their use of the same ‘stylistic procedures’; it
therefore includes pedestrian practices as well” (102). In the city, as in the dream,
things needn’t make sense. The connection is already made in the last line of Erik
Lo Yiu Tung’s “sleepwalking”: “it doesn’t connect at all” (323). But things con-
tiguous with no appearance of connection are things which require interpretation;
as for the dream, so for the city.

***

Dreams are a major preoccupation in Macao poetry today. The idea of Macao –
the city or territory – as a dreaming entity or a sentience in itself capable of
dreams is the subject of the experiment in Fernando Sales Lopes’ poem “Macao”:

Macao

You’re open to the sea
inside
you want to escape
from your fate

Rough toss
and you reach
to conquer
the body
seized
by the earth

You dream…

You dream you are
what you were by chance
But your destiny
is written
in the smoke
that protects men
and appeases gods

The grand mother
holds
your body

And the soul
returns to her

LH & KK (139)

Here Macao, the sleepy outpost, is personified as a character wishing, but unable, to escape fate. This sleepy Macao image – so hard to sustain today – is an important reminder of what Macao has meant – especially to the Portuguese – for most of its modernity. Today’s Macao resembles some heretofore unknown cross between casino, building site, world heritage antique and a place where some hapless folk are just trying to get on with their lives. It’s a place sleep cannot be relied on. And when sleep won’t come? Terence Hun (Ling Gu) gives us the picture:

**insomnia**

thoughts
are
gangs of wolves
one gang after another

the field belongs to them
the waves in the grass belong to them
what you have is
only their howling
your breath has nothing to do
with wind through the grass or beat of the heart
they are having a race in any direction

if you think of
a starting point and a destination
all the wolves circling
breathing, motionless
mouths opened
biting each other

your life
is like this
hanging in the sky –
a perfect philosophy

AV & KK (251)

***

Casinos, luck, chance; beggars and gamblers and prostitutes; the water and what lives in it, passes through it; likewise the air; development and reclamation; border business, dreams, poetry, art – contemporary Macao poetry negotiates a range of related themes and images, as sampled above. Investment in the intercultural and its difficulties and possibilities provides a consistent backdrop for the development of these themes.

Local poetry has had an important investment in understanding Macao’s symbolic place – between east and west – and in understanding the nature of encounters across cultures here, likewise in accounting for intercultural misunderstandings. These interests are important also in the official culture (touristic and otherwise), and in contemporary Macao poetry we may detect cynicism, critique, annoyance with the official line. Take for instance, Eric Chau’s poem “the silent Macao”, footnoted with the author’s “ps. After Macao's successful inclusion on the world heritage listing, the

TV advertisements continuously repeated the slogan, ‘a world of difference, the difference is Macau’. It became the voiceover of my nightmare at that time.” Chau links this new official image with the handover. “A bitter fruit was swallowed for four hundred years”, we’re told, and now:

a lie that’s been spoken a hundred times – truth
(a world of difference, the difference is Macau)
why does the same phrase have to be repeated a hundred times?

a truth repeated a thousand times adds a bit more than the truth
just that little bit of absurdity
(a world of difference, the difference is Macau)
why does the same slogan have to be repeated a thousand times?
I’m silent

And why? On paper one may be struck by the apparent disingenuousness of the voluble protester claiming to be silent. However, what’s written may not be heard and in the case of poetry perhaps it is not unusual for loud claims in ink to go unheeded. In this case, Chau’s persona is silent because s/he doesn’t:

…know what to say
once hurt now I can only think of the scar, an ignorant violation
hegemony is not the creature of sin or desire swept along by the postcolonial
insensitively thinking of the past calamity
but saying that it’s for cultural exchange not knowing if there is such a thing
The critique is offered in local and international terms; what’s revealed is a cheapening of culture borne of the servitude expressed in the compulsory smile – the smile that is itself a kind of trickery, encouraging the gambler to think of himself as a winner.

perhaps
billions invested mold our firm smiling face
receiving the neither flesh nor fowl spirit of Morocco or Las Vegas splitting up into shining casinos for entertaining spirits in between dragon-riding Holy Mary and A Ma on waves shouting at “win them all” supporting our welcoming visitors from everywhere and not forgetting to smile

And so silence here is about the fact of being deprived of a voice; the theoretical underpinnings are unusually well articulated.

culture somebody sees it thinks that it’s a business someone feels a thorn
in the heart letting the graceful heritage be restored
our confidence is fake but we have swallowed something bitter that was not easy
I’m speechless I’m silent I don’t have a standpoint

I laugh
but I’m not happy
(a world of difference, the difference is Macau)
(a world of difference, the difference is Macau)

Baudrillard writes, “The irony of the facts, in their wretched reality, is precisely that they are only what they are” (1996, 98). It’s along these lines Chau captures a casino mesmerism, a circular logic and enigmatic logic – of tautology – that keeps the wheels of the gambling tourism economy greased.

The City Itself

The “city” is itself an important focus for poetry being written all over the world today and has been for more than a century. While Macao is in various ways a particular place, there are other senses in which it could be any city – any place – in south China, in East Asia, in the world. Macao itself should be regarded as a work enduring (in Brechtian terms) because it is unfinished. “How long do works last?” Brecht asks in one of his later poems. His answer? “As long as they are not completed. Since as long as they demand effort they do not decay” (193). The
work in process supposes a range of futures; imagining a future provides a van-
tage from which present conditions may be viewed. While this straightforward
aesthetic provides a formula that could be notionally applied to any city, such a
view seems particularly apt given both the extraordinary pace of change in post-
handover Macao, and the present bubble-bursting effect of the 2008 “financial
tsunami”. To the extent that poetry partakes of witness of the unknowable poten-
tial of a place, we come close here to Shelley’s claim about the poets being unac-
knowledged legislators. Through their engagement with dreams we apprehend the
Macao poets as hierophants of inspiration for their city.

How are city and poets – the space of the city and the “mindspace” of the poem
– connected or disconnected? How might they meet or not? One thinks of Plato’s
expulsion of the poets in Book Nine of the Republic; their banishment as undesir-
able s from the ideal city state on which Socrates expands so volubly. It was with
close reference to Plato’s attitude to and expulsion of the poets that W.H. Auden
wrote in his (1962) essay “The Poet and the City”, of a fundamental disaffinity
between poetic methods and goals and what he saw as the nature and the needs of
the city.

The whole aim of the poet, or any other kind of artist, is to produce something which
is complete and will endure without change. A poetic city would always contain the
same number of inhabitants doing exactly the same jobs forever… A society which
was really like a good poem, embodying the aesthetic virtues of beauty, order, econ-
omy and subordination of detail to the whole, would be a nightmare of horror for,
given the historical reality of actual men, such a society could only come into being
through selective breeding, extermination of the physically and mentally unfit, abso-
lute obedience to its Director, and a large slave class kept out of sight in cellars…
Vice versa, a poem which was really like a political democracy – examples, unfortu-
nately exist – would be formless, windy, banal and utterly boring. (in Scully, 179)

Playful hyperbolics aside, I think the conception of what a good poem could be
has moved on somewhat since Auden’s time. The multi-tasking – the “political
democracy” (what Bakhtin would call the “multi-accentual”) – is common in po-
etry around the world today and is well evidenced in contemporary Macao poetry.
We could describe Auden’s position above as classically modernist, at least radi-
cally pre-postmodern. The irony is that his description of the ideal poem is actu-
ally not a bad description of the city from which Plato was expelling the poets –
changeless because perfected, the opposite of Brecht’s conception. In fact I think
poetry today is much more like the cities in which it is practised than it is like
either Plato’s or Auden’s conceptions.

The identity, the self-image, the reflexive consciousness of the poet-as-dweller
in the particular place we call a city – these are key factors shaping modernist and
postmodernist poetry, its thematic/affective range and its ontological investments.
Conversely, the poetic image – like the cinematic – has been a formative influence
in our contemporary conception of what city space is, of how humans can or can’t
handle it. The poetic image of the city shapes a conception of how such spaces
conform with our utopic or dystopic views of humanity as a species capable of thoughtful dwelling; able to get it wrong, able to make it better.

Poetry of a place is important for making us look again and not merely take for granted the objects and the activities going on around us. The criterion is definitive in the sense that the poem which does not make us look again is not really worth attending to. There’s reflexive potential in that process of “re-visioning” because it maximises the chances of our seeing ourselves in the mirror which the poem-of-place naturally is.

Zygmunt Bauman writes of a sense of so-called “objective” space, of physical space arising from a “phenomenological reduction of daily experience to pure quantity, during which distance is ‘depopulated’ and ‘extemporalized’” (145). The poem anchored in the space from which it arises tells us of a place as subjective experience; it offers the reader eyes to see, a point of view from which get the sense of a location – so it offers motives for empathy and for identification.

Macao poetry proposes and it assumes an imaginative geography, in Edward Said’s terms, and in it we can recognise a tension between – on the one hand universalising and orientalising tendencies, on the other hand an engagement with the here-and-now of the place as it is lived. Then is “Macao” merely an orientalist construct of the western mind? Is there a “real” Macao being misrepresented through such means? Or is it merely a case of mutual misreading – of inevitable occidentalisms and orientalisms borne of an incomprehension which has the effect of producing “the other”?

A solution to these problems is offered in the idea of poetry as practice of “place-based aesthetics”, along the lines suggested by Raymond Williams’ “radical particularity” – in this case the effort to claim a place through the conscious effort of producing its culture. Poetry, in this productive sense, can be a paradigm case for Williams’ “structures of feeling”: in situating our knowledge of this particular poetry, we discover through analysis that things “taken to be private, idiosyncratic and even isolating” are in fact “emergent, connecting and dominant characteristics” (132). What was taken to be personal turns out to be very political, the basis on which a collective identity (for instance that of the dweller in a particular city) is unconsciously determined through views and assumptions in common, and through the common affect these imply.

Why has poetry, in particular, been an efficient vehicle, in Macao’s case, for the kind of work Raymond Williams prescribes? I think in Macao we can see poetry in operation as resistance, as witness, as perruque – in short, a kind of truth telling only possible from makeshift materials – those put to a use for which they were not intended.

Taken all in all, Macao has very few poets of the kind Plato would not have expelled for subversive activity. Some Macao poets lapse into jingoism now and then; in all but a few cases this is an aberration. The general posture is thoughtful, critical and self-aware. These poets write (and they read) as if everything were
open to question. It is often a painful duty. As Jean Paul Sartre would say, they write as if they were condemned to freedom. Perhaps the pain here is a postcolonial burden; however one considers it, Plato’s Socrates would have to acknowledge that Macao’s poets are leading the examined life.

Some are wiser or deeper or more biting than others, but I think we can say that there is a strong human rights agenda built into the poetry. It’s not any sledgehammer politics – it’s not some pointed campaign – rather it’s a case of leading by example. Macao’s word artists take it as a solemn duty and as a solemn kind of fun as well to criticize everything that needs criticizing in their city. And so they live out the ever-apt dictum spelled out in Auden’s 1938 sonnet “Macao” – that “nothing serious can happen here” (1945, 18–19).

Christopher (Kit) Kelen is a well known Australian scholar and poet whose literary works have been widely published and broadcast since the mid seventies. The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature describes Kelen’s work as “typically innovative and intellectually sharp”. He is also an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Macau, where he has taught Literature and Creative Writing since 2000. Kelen is the editor of the on-line journal Poetry Macao and poetry editor for the monthly lifestyle/current affairs journal Macao Closer.

Notes
1 Throughout this paper, translators’ names are given in initial form at the foot of the poem (or other text) where appropriate. Here is a list of the translators with their initials.
AK: Athena Kong
A: Lam: Agnes Lam
AL: Anita Leong
AV: Agnes Vong
CI: Christine Jeong
CW: Carmen Wong
DB: David Brookshaw
DS: Debby Vai Keng Sou
EL: Elisa Lai
HT: Hilda Tam
IF: Iris Fan
JH: Jacque Hoi
JL: Jenny Lao
KK: Kit Kelen
LH: Lily Han
ME: Maria Antónia N. Espadinha
SZ: Song Zijiang
Note that because much of the poetry cited in this paper originated in the anthology I Roll the Dice: Contemporary Macao Poetry [published by ASM in Macao in 2008], where only a page number is given in the in-text citation, the reader should assume that the extract is from that source.
2 In 1887 a Luso-Chinese treaty was signed allowing Portugal’s perpetual occupation and management of Macao. The Peking government, however, never ceded sovereignty over Macao to Portugal.

3 Coloane is the outermost (and larger) of Macao’s two islands (the other being Taipa); Taipa and Coloane are now joined by what is called the Cotai Strip, a Vegas style casino-row featuring the Venetian (second largest building in the world), a golf course and sundry other casino resorts.

4 One notes also the passing of hats among the personae in the case of particular individuals, a ‘Renaissance Macao man’ such as Carlos Marreiros being an apt example — architect, poet, designer, graphic artist, painter.

5 Michel de Certeau calls a *perruque* a resistance which suggests a need to imbue desire with a creative personality:

> *La perruque* is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job. *La perruque* may be as simple a matter as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ or as complex as a cabinet maker’s ‘borrowing’ a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room. (1988: 25)

De Certeau’s *perruque* diverts time ‘from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit’ (25). Its pleasure is in the cunning creation of gratuitous products, the purpose of which, in signifying the worker’s capabilities, is to ‘confirm his solidarity with other workers or his family.’ ‘With the complicity of other workers... he succeeds in “putting one over” on the established order on its home ground’ (26). In de Certeau’s estimation it is in popular tactics that order is ‘tricked by art’. The *perruque* is work which is foreign, homeless, by virtue of having no dwelling but time stolen from official consciousness.

6 Brecht made what we might consider an analogous investigation of city space, in the case of Berlin, in his 1920’s poems, ‘Reader for City Dwellers’.

**References**


The City at Stake: “Stakeholder Mapping” The City

By Sophie Esmann Andersen and Anne Ellerup Nielsen

Abstract

Studies of the city have been addressed from many different approaches such as law, political science, art history and public administration, in which the economic, political and legal status of the city have played a major role. However, a new agenda for conceptualizing the city has emerged, in which the city assumes new roles. By using stakeholder theory as a framework for conceptualizing the city, we argue that the city assumes a political-economic agenda-setting role as well as providing a stage for identity constructions and relational performances for consumers, organizations, the media, politicians and other stakeholders. Stakeholder theory allows us to conceptualize the city as being constituted by stakes and relationships between stakeholders which are approached from three analytical positions (modern, postmodern and hypermodern, respectively), thereby allowing us to grasp different stakes and types of relationships, ranging from functional and contractual relationships to individualized and emotionally driven or more non-committal and fluid forms of relationships. In order to support and illustrate the analytical potentials of our framework for conceptualizing urban living, we introduce a project which aims to turn the city of Aarhus into a CO2-neutral city by the year 2030, entitled Aarhus CO2030. We conclude that applying stakeholder theory to a hyper-complex organization such as a city opens up for a reconceptualization of the city as a web of stakes and stakeholder relations. Stakeholder theory contributes to a nuanced and elaborate understanding of the urban complexity and web of both enforced and voluntary relationships as well as the different types of relationships that characterize urban life.

Keywords: Stakeholder theory, concepts of the city, relationship, and climate change
Introduction

In the glow of post- and hypermodernity (Lipovetsky 2005; Maffesoli 1996), an alternative agenda for conceptualizing the city has emerged which is sensitive to the dynamics and participatory interchanges and relations between citizens and which supplements the notion of formalized city structures with a conception of the city as an emotional space for identity construction and social scene for image performance, at both organizational and individual level.

In this article we will pursue a dynamic approach to the city as we reconceptualize urban living as interactions and relations between stakeholders. Thus, the article is built upon the premise that cities and organizations can be perceived as parallel entities. Our mission is not to establish a model for managing the city within a frame of public governance, but to establish a framework for understanding the city as a dynamic space for constructions, negotiations and the performance of organizational and individual identity and image.

Based on a theoretical study of stakeholder theory within a modern, postmodern and hypermodern perspective respectively, we reconceptualize the city as a complex form of organization constituted by a diversity of relationships and relational formations. This is illustrated by the use of a climate campaign aimed at neutralizing CO2 levels that is being conducted by the Municipality of Aarhus, entitled Aarhus CO2030. Consequently, the article presents a conceptual stakeholder map of the city which accounts for the complexities and complementarities of stakes and relations in urban life.

The purpose of the article is two-fold: theoretically, it unfolds, differentiates and discusses different approaches to stakeholder theory, with the purpose of contributing to a more detailed understanding of the different types and forms of relationship, their construction and dynamics. Conceptually, the overall purpose of the article is to reconceptualize the city as a complex form of organization, creating insight into urban living as a complex web of relationships.

Stakeholder theory is studied from three positions: a modern, postmodern and hypermodern position. We do not claim that these positions have ontological status in the city; they are merely analytical constructs, allowing us to build an epistemological frame of thoughts for conceptualizing different aspects of the city and discursively construct different proportions of urban life. Hence, these perspectives can be seen as analytical keys for unlocking the complexity and multi-relational dimensions of the city.

The article follows a spiraling approach which synergizes theoretical constructs with conceptual case illustrations, resulting in the generation of ideas and opening of new entries to be continuously explored.

In the following we frame the city within the perspective of urban governance and recent conceptualizations of the city. We account for the theoretical premises
for applying stakeholder theory to a city setting, rooting the argument in the idea of the marketization of the city (e.g. Landry 2000) and new public management theory (e.g. Horton 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000).

**Urban Governance**

Urban studies have long paved the way for economic, social and cultural studies of the city and how to approach urban spaces from a planning and management perspective (e.g. Graham & Healey 1999; Healey 2004; Healey 2006a & Healey 2006b; Florida 2005; Laundry 2000 & 2006; Simpson & Kelly 2008). According to the classical approach of urban studies, spaces of the city are conceived from a centric perspective and the city is conceptualized as a “container”. Places and cities are approached from an instrumental perspective as single, integrated, unitary and material objects that can be managed by using physical and locational variables (Graham & Healey 1999: 624). This conception of the city goes back to the beginning of the 20th century with the appearance of the “Old Chicago School of Urbanism” (Simpson & Kelly 2008: 218). However, while the centric view of the city still leaves traces, it is widely acknowledged that global cities and urban life today call for new descriptions and models in order to understand and account for the functioning of cities and spaces in our time (Simpson & Kelly 2008: 219). In 2001 the “New Chicago School” was founded by urban scholars who approach urbanism in the light of the large-scale structural changes and globalization of the 21st century. Hence the rational, modern approach to urban planning and governance is replaced by a relational approach to the study and governance of cities and places. Rather than being regarded as centric unities within geographical boundaries, cities and places are seen as socially constructed, non-contiguous, diverse, dynamic and superimposed networks of social relations and understandings (Graham & Healey 1999: 628). Consequently, it is no longer possible to consider the city as a bounded, isolated and unitary economy that can be governed with traditional sectorial planning instruments. Only by establishing horizontal collaborative urban planning models that generate synergies between established and emerging stakeholder interests in the city can urban governors and city planners respond to the complexity of urban and regional dynamics. Urban governance hence relies on a broad and multiple conception of citizens and stakeholders involving actors not only from state and regional government bodies, but from businesses, NGOs, teaching and research institutions, the media and other relevant stakeholders, including nature and environmental constructs. As claimed by Healey, “strategy making with an appreciation of “relational complexity” demands a capacity to “see,” “hear”, “feel”, and “read” the multiple dynamics of a place in a way which can identify just those issues which need collective attention through a focus on place qualities” (Healey 2006a: 542). Academic interest in the
city has literally been vitalized as geographical borders have dissolved into urban living.

As demonstrated above, the shift from a centric conceptualization of the city towards a more dynamic, fluid and relational understanding of the city has gained ground in urban studies. From being a simple public administration planning activity, urban development and innovation has become a highly sophisticated strategic governance issue based on organizational innovation, business management and interorganizational networking since the end of the 1990s (Bovaird 2008). This also explains why the stakeholder concept seems to have entered the post-structuralist arena of public management including city planning and urban governance.

**Marketization and City Branding**

Within recent years marketing and management seem to have taken on a profound role within the public sector. Public administration and governance now involves disciplines such as branding (e.g. Virgo & de Chernatony 2006), corporate communication (e.g. Trueman et al. 2004), and marketing (Kotler et al. 1993) initiated by the Public Management Reform (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000) in which the public sector is ascribed market-oriented behaviour. Hence, we are witnessing what is known as a marketization of society at large and of the public sector and state-owned enterprises in particular – at both organizational and individual level. Corporations are conceptualized as citizens (and corporate citizens, Crane et al. 2004), and individuals are addressed as consumer-citizens (cf. Littler 2009; Ritzer 2008). Both within research and as a social practice, there has been a blurring of boundaries between the public and the market, staging the city (as part of public administration conceptualized from a political-economic perspective) as a marketized enterprise, involving complex organizational structures and mechanisms. Thus, the application of theories of management and organization to public administration and urban research seems reasonable and is not new: Virgo & de Chernatony base their city brand-building model on the premise of a multiple and complex variety of stakeholders, thereby arguing that city branding “involves complexities beyond those of product and service branding” (Virgo & de Chernatony 2006: 379). Trueman et al. take a similar approach in combining city branding and stakeholder management as they point out conflicting objectives of stakeholder groups as a basic reason for a complex brand structure dealing with multiple identities (Trueman et al. 2004). The references within stakeholder management and city branding, place marketing etc. are endless. However, all references (similar to Virgo & de Chernatony 2006 and Trueman et al. 2004) apply stakeholder management theory as a practical and/or analytical tool, e.g. in developing a city brand, measuring city brand equity etc. We see these practical/analytical approaches to stakeholder theory in opposition to the approach taken within this
article; that is using stakeholder management theory as a conceptual approach in framing the city as a complex form of organization, helping to reconceptualize the city as networks of compound relations between stakeholders entering different forms of relations and structures according to the stakes and the derived effects and values.

The existing literature demonstrates the relevance of applying stakeholder and management theories to urban studies. Our contribution is to provide a more nuanced and detailed picture of stakeholder theory as we unfold its conceptual potentials as a framework for urban living. In the following we present an elaborate overview on stakeholder theory, epistemologically framed from a modern, postmodern and hypermodern position respectively.

**Stakeholder Theory: Mapping the Field**

The introduction of the stakeholder concept has helped to redefine the way organizations are conceptualized and managed. Applying a stakeholder approach to managing an organization implies that its managers are perceived as agents for stakeholders and not only for shareholders. The organization is defined in terms of a grouping of stakeholders, and its purpose is to manage these stakeholders’ interests, needs and attitudes (Friedman & Miles 2006: 1). The stakeholder concept has gained ground from the mid-1980s following the appearance of an increasing number of books and articles including special issues on the subject in notable journals such as Business Ethics Quarterly, Critical Perspectives in Accounting, Academy of Management Review and Academy of Management Journal (Friedman & Miles 2006: 3). The stakeholder concept has grown in popularity not only in academic circles but also among policymakers, regulators and NGOs – and in business and the media. For the same reason the stakeholder concept is not a clearly defined concept. It is a multiple concept which covers a broad spectrum of interests and meanings, including schools of thought ranging from political economy to institutional and management theory. Philosophically speaking, stakeholding represents a general sense of social inclusion in a community in which every citizen is a valued member who contributes and benefits. From a participatory perspective, stakeholding assumes active participation in processes of accountability; and financially speaking a material interest in the well-being of an enterprise is what legitimates such participation (Clarke 1997: 211).

**The Traditional Approach to Stakeholder Theory**

The stakeholder approach to understanding an organization in its environment has paved the way for a broader perception of the roles and responsibilities of organizations beyond profit maximization than the perception of the traditional shareholder perspective on organizations. The mission of any organization is not only to provide for the benefit of shareholders and owners. Hence from a stakeholder
perspective, managers should integrate interests and claims from other groups into the strategic management of their business (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997: 853). Stakeholder management gained a good deal of ground during the 1980s. According to one of the fathers of stakeholder theory, Robert E. Freeman, stakeholders are defined as “groups and individuals who can affect, or are affected by the achievement of an organization’s mission” (Freeman 1984: 52). Freeman pointed out that no group must be left out just because it may prevent a company from achieving its goal. In Freeman’s rather broad definition, groups who do not have a direct legitimate interest in a company (terrorists, for instance) are to be considered as stakeholders along with other more legitimate groups. Stakeholder management thus refers to the necessity for an organization to manage its relationship with particular stakeholders on an action-oriented basis (Freeman 2005: 122).

Traditional stakeholder mapping has the organization at its centre, surrounded by its stakeholders as shown in figure 1.

The approach to organizations as presented by Freeman’s stakeholder theory (1984) subscribes to a paradigm of modernity, claiming that the universe is causally linked to a structured and ordered whole (Brown 1995). Transferred into an organizational logic, organizational structures and relations are instrumental, stable and consistent, constantly referring to an acclaimed essence. The organization is an ordered, predictable and measurable unit structured across a rationale of economics, politics and power. Value creation is first and foremost of an economic nature. Metaphorically speaking, modern organizations can be conceptual-
ized as machines (Weber 1947). These thoughts are in opposition to a paradigm of postmodernity, claiming that the world is chaotic and complex; merely to be grasped momentarily and only as an interpretive stance (Lyotard 1984). Hence, postmodernity replaces the universal and global Truth with several individual, local truths. Applied to a management and organizational context, postmodern organizations can metaphorically be conceptualized as living organisms (Weick 1995), assessing the organization as chaotic, unpredictable and unstable. The postmodern turn has equally had a profound influence on stakeholder management theory (Friedman & Miles 2006), as demonstrated in the following section.

**The Postmodern Approach to Stakeholder Theory**

The most significant exponents of the postmodern perspective on stakeholder theory are Calton and Kurland (1995), who replace the concept of “stakeholder management” with “stakeholder enabling” in order to emphasize the shift from the static instrumental perception of stakeholders who can be “managed” towards a notion of stakeholders as groups who are in a dynamic interaction with the post-bureaucratic networked organization (Friedman & Miles 2006: 71). Collaboration between the organization and its stakeholders is hence unfolded in concepts such as interdependency, co-responsibility, co-decision making and emergent collaboration processes (Friedman & Miles 2006). Consequently, in more recent research on stakeholder theory both the stakeholder concept and the concept of power are approached from a broader and more nuanced perspective. The stakeholder concept hence embraces groups who are momentarily dormant and notions such as non-stakeholder, stakekeepers and stakewatchers, etc. appear in new stakeholder models (Fassin 2008; Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997) along with alternative stakeholder groupings based on salience, urgency, and legitimacy. These alternatives are established in order to adapt stakeholder theory to a more contextualized and emergent approach to stakeholder management (e.g. Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Therefore, in a postmodern perspective the stakeholder-oriented organization is one which is part of a stakeholder network connected by mutually linked relationships as demonstrated in figure 2.
Transparency, dialogue and mutual understanding (not between the organization and its stakeholders but between stakeholders within the network) are core elements. Stakeholder management thereby becomes a question of how communication amongst stakeholders is perceived, practised and interpreted. Defined by what is meaningful to each of the stakeholders, value creation comes to embrace emotional as well as rational elements. Inspired by Grunig and Hunt’s model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt 1984), Morsing and Schultz (2006) established a framework of stakeholder communication, arguing that stakeholders can be approached using various strategies that take into account the contextual and dynamic features of specific communicative frames. These strategies ranging from linear to interactive ways of addressing stakeholders are devised as a means to approach stakeholder communication from a more strategic and sense-making standpoint, enabling businesses to intensify stakeholder dialogue and incorporate relevant stakeholder response and feedback into their business strategy. (Morsing & Schultz 2006: 142). However, the strategic reflection on how to confront stakeholders bears witness to a change of focus in stakeholder management. Postmodern stakeholder management theory focuses on meeting rather than managing stakeholders. Meeting stakeholders is not practised from a centric position. Meetings emerge crisscross between members of a network in which the organization

Figure 2: Postmodern stakeholder mapping
does not constitute a power centre as in the perspective of modernity. Hence, the organization as a centre has dissolved and fragmented into a network of individual stakeholders, whose positions are continuously reflected upon.

The Hypermodern Approach to Stakeholder Theory

According to contemporary philosophers and sociologists, we are entering hypermodern times (Lipovetsky 2005; Maffesoli 1996); a society characterized by the embracing of multiple juxtapositions of oppositions and paradoxes – or as formulated by Lipovetsky: “le bonheur paradoxal” (Lipovetsky 2006); a paradoxical happiness. Hence, while Giddens defined the project of late modernity (or postmodernity) as a search for local and individual coherence and stability for the self (Giddens 1991), the project of hypermodernity has transformed into a project of pragmatics: Truth is no longer an issue, but has been dissolved into a question of eclecticism and pragmatics, thereby being paradoxical, self-contradictory but meaningful (Lipovetsky 2005). Coherent identity is no longer the ideal frame of reference, but has been superseded by a chain of images (Cova 1996). These hypermodern tendencies can also be traced within organizational and stakeholder management theory, in which the organization assumes both intended and non-intended roles in an ever changing and dynamic web of relations as illustrated in figure 3.

![Figure 3: Sector of a hypermodern stakeholder mapping](image-url)
In the perspective of hypermodernity, corporations do not demonstrate coherent and consistent behavior. Managing stakeholders is hence a contradictory and paradoxical activity, breaking down the idea of constructing unambiguous and meaningful relationships. Consumers are unpredictable, consuming hyper-luxury goods while engaging in ethical projects at the same time. Corporations demonstrate ethical concern in some stakeholder configurations (saving the rainforest), while doing harm in others (e.g. corruptive bargaining). Acknowledging that stakeholder groups sometimes compete against and sometimes complement each other becomes a non-existing issue (Neville & Menguc 2006: 377). New concepts are entering the arena of stakeholder management in hypermodernity such as stakeholder multiplicity, fluidity and infinity, as elaborated below.

**Stakeholder Multiplicity, Fluidity and Infinity**

The classical conceptualization of stakeholders as human beings or entities that are aware of their power towards organizations (Driscoll & Starik 2004: 58) means that non-human beings cannot be part of an organization’s stakeholder groups. In this perspective “nature” is excluded as a stakeholder, for the reason that the natural environment supplies resources to the organization but usually not through economic exchange relationships. But from a hypermodern angle, the stakeholder concept is extended to include non-human beings. As stated by Driscoll and Starik, the reason why “nature” has been excluded as a potential stakeholder until recently is that the legitimacy and power of stakeholders to help or hurt organizations is more or less anchored in a political-economic framework. They argue that since the natural environment holds coercive and utilitarian power over businesses and industries as an important part of the business environment and through super-storms, hurricanes (and more recently global climate change), there is no reason why the role of stakeholder should not include non-human nature (Starik 1995: 209). Moreover, the natural environment cannot be said not to contain any instantiation of economic authority – for instance, extractive industries in particular depend on the natural environment to provide economic benefits. Finally, the stakeholder concept is said to articulate both ethical and socio-emotional connotations. Moral obligation pointed out by Carroll (1989; 1993) as an important stakeholder value together with the aesthetization of particular natural phenomena (e.g. rare species) are fundamental examples by which nature is praised and attributed aesthetic and expressive value (Starik 1995: 211). In this context value creation is neither political-economic nor emotional. Wrapped in a paradigm of social responsibility, value creation becomes a quest for aesthetic expressivity and symbolic games within infinite and abstract types of relations.

The acknowledgement of the necessity to account more actively for the natural environment as part of the business environment and as a moral and socio-emotional stakeholder for and in itself brings us to the conclusion that, rather than engaging in functional relationships with organizations, stakeholders in the
hypermodern perspective enter into aesthetic and visually expressed relationships. These relations are volatile and momentary, following the idea of relationships as tribes. According to the French sociologist Michel Maffesoli, we are entering the time of the tribes and thereby entering a new social order; a sociality characterized by disindividuality and the formation of increasingly fluid and unstable social relations in society (Maffesoli 1996). Just like the stakeholder, the tribe is “without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind” (Maffesoli 1996: 98); and just like unstable stakeholder relations, tribes are “characterized by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal” (Maffesoli 1996: 76).

A postmodern stakeholder perspective forefronts the empowerment of the individual and places an analytical interest on the individual stakeholder (being the individual consumer, the media, individual corporate citizens etc.) as the object of study; unlike a hypermodern stakeholder position, which holds an interest in stakeholder interactions and interrelationships as it upholds a disindividuated (or tribal) analytical focus.

From a hypermodern perspective corporations no longer have the control and power to manage or even to meet and simply relate to their stakeholders through appropriate networks and communities. They must recognize that stakeholders are multiple, fluid and infinite, forcing corporations to navigate in uncontrollable situations of decision-making, planning and action.

Summing up, we have demonstrated that stakeholder theory has played an important part in determining the way in which organizations interact with their environment, and more specifically how they conceptualize the relationships with various groups to whom they are closely or distantly related. From a modern perspective stakeholder relationships are framed as a political-economic contractual understanding of what an organization’s value creation is, how it is generated and for whom. Stakeholder models are based on functional and rational transactions, and stakeholder relationships are perceived as stable centric relations between physical actors and the organization as a constant authority. Postmodern spectacles bring a broader perspective on the stakeholder framework in which stakeholder relations have a more network-based structure and the relations between members are more equal and organized around emotional values, offering a more central position for the individual than a modern perspective. Value creation is not only a question of economic contractual understandings; value creation is generated from emotional sense-making interaction between the stake and the individual stakeholders, providing a dyadic focus on relations. Within the perspective of hypermodernity, stakeholder relations draw on aesthetic values, forefronting relations as flows of expressed images between stakeholders: it is about stakeholder positioning and the exchange of images within a dynamic web of non-committal relations.
Enter the City Enterprise

Below, we unfold the city as a complex form of organization and its consequences perceived within the frame of stakeholder theory as presented above, in conceptualizing relational structures. These theoretical generic conceptualizations will be exemplified by an illustrative case, which will be introduced subsequently. Stakeholder theory covers a wide range of approaches which we have structured within a modern, postmodern and hypermodern perspective respectively. Consequently, we might ask how the city emerges from these three stakeholder approaches.

When framing an object within a specific perspective, some features and structures appear more clearly than others. A narrative perspective on the city foregrounds tales of the city (cf. Finnegan 1998); while a synergetic perspective highlights the city as a self-organization (cf. Portugali 1999), for instance. Framing the city within a stakeholder perspective makes the city appear in the form of structures and patterns of manifest and latent relations and interests.

When reconfiguring the city within a modern frame of stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984), the city appears in the form of a political-economic enterprise: The city is the sum of its political and economic governance, constituted by stakeholders who affect or are affected within this political and economic centre of power. The city perceived within this modern stakeholder perspective is based on the premise that relations within the city are to be managed, measured and operated as mainstream machinery fuelled on economic power. Hence, we might perceive the city as a structure of oppositional differentiations drawing lines between those who have political-economic power and influence and those who are subordinated to this power, mirroring a classical demarcation between production as power and consumption as eroding what is good for society.

Firat & Venkatesh deliver a cultural critique of modernism and “the modernist distinction between production and consumption and the privileging of production over consumption” (Firat & Venkatesh 1995: 239). They argue that postmodernism is framed by a logic of consumption and emphasize that the consumer is an active producer of self-images in the consumption process (Firat & Schultz 1997; Firat & Venkatesh 1995), constantly striving to construct a coherent narrative of the self (Giddens 1991). Thus, power is primarily performed through consumption, staging the citizen as a consumer-citizen enacting his/her power through consumer behaviour.

Empowerment of the consumer(-citizen) and stakeholders in general is a main characteristic which differentiates a modern from a post- and hypermodern stakeholder perspective on the city: The city’s centre of power has dissolved. The city as static and dyadic relations between a political centre and its stakeholders is transformed into a network of interdependencies and emergent formations. Power is no longer inherent to the city, but is constituted by the amount and quality of relations (cf. Neville & Menguc 2006), forefronting new alliances and stakeholder
synergies (e.g. social partnerships, strategic alliances etc.) Consequently, any clear-cut line between each group of stakeholders is suspended. Using a postmodern approach to stakeholder theory as a frame of reference, the city is constantly emerging as modern (political-economic) and centric values are dissolved into a marketized flux of commodified stakeholder identities (cf. Featherstone 1991; Lury 1996).

Hence, in conceptualizing the city as a postmodern enterprise, power and authority are delegated – the city is individualized. The institutionalized city centre is transformed into a city-scape, inhabited by autonomous individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups, striving to construct their own stakeholder identity.

A hypermodern stakeholder approach to the city redefines the nature of stakeholder relations, which we argue correspond to the notion of tribes (Maffesoli 1996). The concept of tribes opposes the notion of social relations in classical sociological terms and notions of premodern Gemeinschaft and modern Gesellschaft (Tönnies 1957). In this perspective, post- and hypermodernity are two polarized critiques of modernity; while the postmodern perspective replaces the modern alienation and loss of community by a self-reflexive and autonomous individual, forefronting a non-sociality par excellence, the hypermodern approach reinstalls the individual (and individual stakeholder groups) in new social reconfigurations.

In continuation of the theoretical view on hypermodern stakeholder theory, which instantiates nature as a pivotal point and persistent stakeholder (or stake role), the city enterprise should no longer just be conceptualized as a grand unified whole (cf. a modern perspective) or a fragment inhabited by autonomous stakeholders (cf. a postmodern perspective); instead, it simultaneously manifests itself in volatile gatherings constantly focusing on which role to perform in the emergent web of infinite relations.

If we return to Freeman’s core concept of the stakeholder as someone who affects or is affected by an organization’s mission, it is necessary to align the concept to the urban context in order to understand how the stakeholder conflates with the “citizen”. As we have demonstrated in the section above, the stakeholder concept is conceptualized differently in the modern, postmodern and hypermodern perspective respectively. From a modern perspective, stakeholders of the city are conceptualized as sectored groups that are mapped as generic and established aggregations of members in the city in terms of their public administrative affiliation, e.g. corporations, consumers, the media, NGOs, research and educational institutions etc. conceived as citizen groups. Their stake in the city is their gain or loss from urban life seen from a cost-benefit perspective. In the postmodern scenario stakeholders are specific and fragmented individuals and organizations operating as citizens in urban life. Their stake in the city is concerned with the creation of the authentic self, and is therefore guided by narcissistic and emotional interests. The hypermodern position conceptualizes the stakeholder within a reso-
cialization of individuals and organizations in specific citizen communities and networks of non-sectorial nature (sports groups, women’s networks, Facebook groups, etc.) Blurring the boundaries between these groupings and between inner self-reflection and outer appearance, the hypermodern approach opens up for a more non-obligative position than the former approaches. In order to relate in communities and networks, citizens put on (or take off) convenient masks according to the specific roles they perform in these urban settings. The stake in this position is therefore not the benefit or threat represented by the city enterprise, nor the authenticity or emotional self-construction, but the relational and interactional performance of the citizen.

Case presentation: Carbon Neutralizing the City

As a response to the persistent climate-change challenges and with reference to the hosting of the COP15: United Nations Climate Change Conference in Denmark, Copenhagen in December 2009, several Danish cities are endeavouring to become CO2 neutral within a relatively short period of time. The Municipality of Aarhus has initiated a campaign entitled Aarhus CO2030, expressing the vision of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2030.1

The Aarhus CO2030 initiative was launched at a four-day exhibition (March 2009) in downtown Aarhus which invited citizens to interactively engage in the climate debate (see picture 1).

![Picture 1: The CO2030 exhibition](image)
The exhibition covered a wide range of events and activities, including an interactive game board inviting citizens to actively share their everyday behaviour and constantly face dilemmas in which their own behaviour was measured and compared with other game players depending on its impact on the natural environment (see picture 2).

![Picture 1 The interactive game board](image)

The CO2030 game has subsequently been on a public city tour and placed at local hot spots (e.g. the city hall, public library etc.) for the use of all. Aesthetic and artistic sound installations, corporate initiatives on sustainable innovations, exhibitions of sustainable designs by educational institutions, and political speeches and public discussion were all an integrated part of the exhibition.

The main feature of the exhibition was the installation Co2nfessions/Co2mmitment which was entirely constituted by citizen-generated content projected onto bus shelters throughout the city of Aarhus and on a large scale using a prominent building in Aarhus as a backdrop.

Co2nfessions/Co2mmitment is an advanced video installation that puts a face on the struggle for climate improvements and gives the citizens of Aarhus a voice to be heard – and seen – throughout the city (cf. [www.co2030.dk](http://www.co2030.dk)). In short, the installation features a compartment or cubicle where individuals (and small groups) are invited to “confess” their climate sins and “commit” to future climate-responsible behaviour in front of a digital camera recording their confessions and displaying them on digital screens placed throughout the city (see picture 3).
In the following section, we will frame the Co2nfessions/Co2mmmitment installation within modern, postmodern and hypermodern stakeholder positions, allowing us to grasp the complexity of city life and urban relations, exemplified by the climate-change challenges in urban living.

**Stakeholder Mapping the City**

Climate change and the complex of problems related to it have challenged urban life. The environment and the climate have been put on the agenda as a primary priority: corporations are met with demands for social responsibility and sustainable productivity; politicians are met with demands for environmental priority, consumers are increasingly addressed with a demand for climate-conscious behaviour (Stohl, Stohl & Townsley 2007; Carroll 2008) etc. In other words: A new actor has entered the stage: Nature. And as an omnipresent force, she sets the agenda for urban life as well as for how to conceptualize urban living. Nature has become a premise of urban life. The Aarhus CO2030 exhibition is a manifestation of the way in which a wide variety of stakeholders enter into complex forms of relations as they negotiate, participate in and make sense of one of the most challenging issues of recent times: how to fight global climate change in a local urban setting.

In this section we will exemplify the different forms of relations, stakeholder interactions and visions as we draw on a modern, postmodern and hypermodern perspective, thus illustrating how the complexity of the city can be conceived.

**Modern City Relations and Climate Change**

A modern stakeholder perspective on the Aarhus CO2030 forefronts Aarhus as a municipal authority and its stakeholders, who are all obliged to take responsibil-
ity; urban life is conceptualized as a life of obligations. Stakeholders are obliged to take part in solving climate problems, not least because these problems can be seen as a result of stakeholders’ general abuse of natural resources in the past, causing serious climate damage for the present and the years to come. Participating in neutralizing energy consumption and helping to fight climate change are thus framed as a civic obligation. The more environmental injury citizens are likely to cause, the more they compromise the balance of natural resources and provoke cost-intensive investments in new energy. The stakeholder value in the modern perspective is generated by “good citizenship”, which can be unfolded as the actual actions and behaviour of the stakeholders in obeying predefined responsibilities of being concerned for and caring for the climate by engaging themselves in urban and regional agendas. Having set the goal of neutralizing CO2 emissions by 2030, the Municipality of Aarhus expects its citizens to contribute and cooperate with this climate agenda from a contractual, co-responsible stakeholder perspective, assuming that any stakeholder who has a citizen’s rights (e.g. social benefits such as social aids, voting at local elections, having access to public schools, creating a business) must prove themselves willing to engage in civic goals, i.e. neutralizing or reducing energy consumption. Stakeholders legitimate their formal licenses to learn, live and operate in the city by contributing to the climate agenda in Aarhus (e.g. focusing on the issue of climate change in educational institutions, setting up energy plans in industries, getting involved in sustainable living programmes, reducing private energy use etc.) In this respect, the Aarhus CO2030 exhibition can be seen as a response to these formal expectations. Citizens’ failure to respond to the “glocal” climate agenda enables the local government to resort to legal regulation on energy consumption and carbon footprints, emphasizing the authority and legal power structure within a frame of modern stakeholder theory.

The CO2030 case of Aarhus exemplifies this stakeholder accountability to the authorities. Within this perspective, the CO2nession/CO2mmitment box takes on the meaning of a classical confession box with the Municipality of Aarhus representing the civic authority of “power” in control of citizens’ absolution. The camera which projects the confessions and commitments plays a crucial role in the metaphorical universe of absolution. It symbolizes the “pastoral authority” of the priest who has the power to give absolution to the confessing citizen, who must publicly confess his sins as a form of penance. Hence, the public transmission and broadcasting of citizen sins becomes the pillory of present times.

A modern notion of stakeholder relations in the city is built upon the philosophy of quid pro quo. It is based on mutual understanding and fairness. From a rational economic perspective, the stakeholders of Aarhus are supposed to have mutual interests in responding to the climate challenge by lowering energy consumption because saving energy and being innovative at municipal level also allow individual stakeholders and citizens to lower their own energy costs. Even
though the Municipality of Aarhus is in a position of authority and can set the rules of the climate agenda, the climate project is posed as an exchange of rational stakes, in other words as a win-win project.

**Postmodern City Relations and Climate Change**

A postmodern stakeholder perspective on the Aarhus CO2030 case constitutes stakeholders as self-reflexive citizens. The stakeholder is not obliged to take action in fighting climate change (cf. the previous section on modern city stakes and actions), but is self-regulated. Actions helping to neutralize energy consumption and fight climate change are reasoned within the individual stakeholder himself. He is not driven by legal regulations or subjugated to any authority ethics, but rather constitutes his own self-righteous ethic. The postmodern self-reflexive stakeholder accounts for his own actions according to his own stake, viz. a constant striving to create and maintain a coherent sense of self; to construct his own identity, whether it is a quest for organizational or corporate identity, individual identity or other stakeholder identity. Climate-conscious actions are rooted in narcissistic motifs.

What is accentuated from a postmodern stakeholder perspective is thus a focus on the dyadic relation between the single stakeholder (individual consumers, the media, government, politicians, organizations, NGOs etc.) and the stake (nature/climate/environment), expressing an interest in how stakeholders make sense of and add meaning to this relationship; not in the sense of duty, but as a virtue.

The case of Aarhus CO2030 demonstrates an interesting aspect of this relation in that it thematizes climate-conscious behaviour as a self-reflexive process, implying that the individual stakeholder constructs his identity based on good deeds; meaning that when the individual stakeholder saves energy as an intentional choice of behaviour, he is simultaneously constructing himself as a caring, responsible and ethical individual, corporation or organization. Hence, nature is transformed into a commodity to mirror yourself in; an extension of the individual or corporate self and hence a resource for providing meaning and coherence for one’s self-identity.

When conceptualized within a postmodern frame, the engagement of the city of Aarhus in fighting climate change captures integrative and unifying significance: It is about creating and understanding the organizational self. Climate-conscious initiatives take on inclusive dimensions as they aim at constructing the city around ethical values and responsible self-images, hence including city members within these values: We, as a city, are socially responsible and ethically caring, providing a frame for urban life.

The individual stakeholder of the city (corporate citizens, media citizens, consumer citizens etc.) adopts similar narcissistic motifs in their climate-conscious behaviour as explicated in the CO2mmitment/CO2nfession installation, where individuals are invited to confess their climate sins and commit to future climate-
conscious behaviour. From the perspective of self-reflexivity and self-identity, the installation provides a space for the stakeholder to negotiate his own self; the negotiation is played out as an emotional relation between the individual and the camera, symbolizing one’s own guilty climate conscience. The camera becomes a mirror to reflect one’s deeds. The confession box thus becomes a mental space for self-reflection and self-negotiation of an ideal and desired self-narrative based on responsible behaviour.

**Hypermodern City Relations and Climate Change**

From a hypermodern stakeholder perspective, relations in the city are based on expressiveness: actions leading to climate-conscious behaviour are performed in order to stage a certain image for a community of shared beliefs. Whereas the postmodern stakeholder perspective adopts an individual and emotional focus on city relations, a hypermodern perspective upholds an interest in exposed relations: it is about looking good, rather than feeling good. From a hypermodern perspective, ethical actions of being good are conceived as a quest to look good, so the ethical valuation of actions is socially negotiated within specific communities rather than being self-regulated. A hypermodern conceptualization transforms the notion of emotional, identity-seeking citizens into performing citizens who use climate-conscious behaviour as a symbolic resource or commodity for appearance performance.

From a hypermodern perspective the self-reflexivity of the city gains expressive dimensions as the city initiates and organizes climate-change responses in order to exhibit an ethical image. From a market perspective, climate-conscious initiatives are performed as brand values; the city of Aarhus has turned into a climate-conscious brand.

The expressive and stage-performing dimensions of climate-conscious actions, which we argue characterize hypermodern stakeholder relations, are prominent in the case of Aarhus CO2030. The exhibition offers both a way of seeing (i.e. learning and reflecting upon) how to act responsibly according to the norms of ethical behaviour, and a way of being seen, per se. The exhibition exhibits the responsible performances of the citizens.

In the case of the CO2nfession/CO2mmitment installation, the mental confession box is converted into an online stage for image performance, transforming the intimacy and internal dimensions of self-reflection and construction of self-identity into a focus on exterior relations. Here, the camera symbolizes the community of fellow-citizens in relation to whom citizens constantly stage their good deeds with a view to being recognized and acknowledged as citizens with a good appearance: It looks good to be good. Climate-conscious behaviour is performed and judged according to a socially negotiated code of ethical behaviour. Interestingly, climate-conscious behaviour from this perspective takes on a social and performative character rather than entailing physical environmental consequences.
What is at stake is not the climate but the image of the citizen – or rather: The stakes are intertwined. When enacted front stage and literally when performed online, the citizen puts himself on the line and becomes a part of a social game. This is mostly evident in situations where the image performance is obviously nothing but a performance detached from actual actions. The following example bears witness to this. A young woman enters the confession box along with her 10-year-old child. Listing examples of her own exemplary energy behaviour, the woman stages herself as a responsible mother and citizen. However, this good stand is compromised when her daughter exclaims that the mother’s good deeds are false, hence being nothing but a sugar-coated image performance of ideal good behaviour. The woman exhibits herself – she has not displayed good behaviour but has been exhibited – thereby revealing that citizenship can be a game of civic performance and role play.

The Stakeholder Concept and Urban Living

When approaching the city from the three perspectives of stakeholder theory, opposing notions of the citizen, of citizenship and of relations emerge, as summarized in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The city metaphorically</th>
<th>Modern stakeholder perspective on urban living</th>
<th>Postmodern stakeholder perspective on urban living</th>
<th>Hypermodern stakeholder perspective on urban living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machine</td>
<td>Network of autonomic individuals</td>
<td>Infinite network of performed roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder focus</td>
<td>Centric: the authoritarian city</td>
<td>Fragmented: the individual citizen</td>
<td>Re-socialized: the expressive citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizing stakeholders as</td>
<td>Obligated citizens</td>
<td>Self-reflexive citizens</td>
<td>Performing citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizing the relational bond as</td>
<td>Contractual</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Performative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder value</td>
<td>Living up to good citizenship</td>
<td>Creating a coherent self identity</td>
<td>Staging and performing an image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder vision</td>
<td>Being good (duty)</td>
<td>Feeling good (virtue)</td>
<td>Looking good (aesthetic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical legitimacy</td>
<td>Authority ethic</td>
<td>Self-righteous ethic</td>
<td>Socially negotiated ethic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Three conceptual stakeholder perspectives on urban living

The case of Aarhus CO2030 has exemplified the complexity of urban life and emphasized that these relational complexities, oppositional structures and stake interests all exist simultaneously. Citizens are conceived of as parts of both empowered and obliged relational structures; they are both peripheral, being affected by an authoritarian agenda, and the main characters in creating their own personal storyline. They chase emotional coherence and meaning as well as performing non-committal role play.

A post- and hypermodern perspective on the case of Aarhus CO2030 illustrates stakeholder sovereignty and authority as the stakeholder enacts his own individual
agenda, i.e. self-identity constructions and image performance, thus framing climate-conscious behaviour within a discourse of emotional and casual relations respectively. Urban actions leading to climate change are nothing but narcissistic games and role playing. The individual stakeholder is liberated to perform climate-conscious actions according to his own agenda – and is empowered to formulate his own agenda. From a postmodern perspective, the individual holds himself responsible for his own actions, discursively constituting the citizens as autonomous, self-regulated and liberated stakeholders. From a hypermodern perspective, the individual stakeholder is responsible for his behaviour according to a non-committal social game.

Hence, a post- and hypermodern stakeholder perspective on actions for climate change in an urban context emphasizes relational behaviour framed within a discourse of empowerment and stakeholder sovereignty. However, a modern stakeholder approach challenges this notion as the stakeholder is subordinate to the demands of an authority, formulated in this case by the Municipality of Aarhus. Hence, the stakeholder is subject to an obligation of ethical behaviour and thereby inscribed in a stakeholder map of citizen responsibilities and ethical duties. From this perspective, actions for climate change as a means of identity construction and image performance do not demonstrate stakeholder empowerment but rather ways of coping with citizen obligations.

Concluding Remarks

Stakeholder management has gained terrain in businesses, research and education since the mid-1980s, with an increasing impact on how private and public corporations are conceived and governed. The conceptualization of stakeholder management from three perspectives has proved useful for two reasons.

Firstly, focusing on the relational aspect of managing organizations, stakeholder management helps us to grasp the complexity of relations and networks which imbue organizations of all kinds in the age of globalization (Castells 2001). For the same reason, stakeholder management reached beyond business research and practice a long time ago, and is now recognized in many areas including urban studies and sectors such as public and non-profit organizations. Consequently, it is natural to consider “the city” as a complex corporation that needs appropriate models of business excellence in order to respond to citizen stakeholders’ needs, expectations and obligations.

From an urban governance perspective, the classical stakeholder approach to conceptualizing the city seems to offer a fruitful entry point to consider the functional structures and systems of relations between urban stakeholders and citizens, while a postmodern and hypermodern approach allows us to focus on the playing, image constructive and performance-creative dimensions of these relations as an integrative part of urban life.
As emphasized above, the adoption of the three different approaches to conceptualizing the city is not an attempt to analyze urban life within an evolutionary framework. Rather than describing an evolutionary process, we have attempted to illustrate the way in which the types of relations between citizens co-exist, enrich and supplement each other, ranging from binary resource-dependent relations to inner, intimate relations with one’s self and performing and stage-setting relations between and among citizens. The triple conceptualization thus enables us not only to identify types of functional relationships between citizens. It also seems to offer a platform for nuancing different types of relationships and being sensitive to contradictory relationships and stakes in the city.

Second, the concept of “stake” has proved to be relevant in the sense that it encompasses a wide range of individual stakeholders’ agendas, interests, needs, expectations and desires with which a municipality is faced. Business corporations, higher education and research institutions, local NGOs and the media do not necessarily have common interests, needs, expectations and obligations in the fight against climate change. For instance, when researchers at the Centre for Digital Urban Living at Aarhus University chose to cooperate with the Municipality of Aarhus by setting up a confession box at the climate exhibition in the city hall, this should not alone be conceived as an obligation and co-responsible initiative for citizens to fight climate as a goal for an in itself. Furthermore, this initiative becomes a means of staging the act of seeking support and funding opportunities vis-à-vis members of the municipality in another type of discourse-relational setting in which researchers must use impression management strategies in order to receive grants to do their research. Similarly, the fact that large corporations have volunteered for the climate project by giving presentations, setting up installations, offering free consultancy on energy reduction, etc. does not only reflect their eagerness to live up to their climate obligation. It is also a performance aimed at gaining influence in the political environment and a means of stimulating their image and reputation in the eyes of local government members. Finally, the initiative does not only involve consumers complying with their civic obligations by using less energy. It is also important that consumers reflect on how, why and for whom they are staging themselves as good citizens in terms of energy consumption.

As shown above, it has not been our intention to make a detailed analysis of the relationships and types of relations established around the Aarhus CO2030 case. The case has only been introduced as an illustration of how a multifaceted stakeholder approach to conceptualizing a complex system such as a city can serve as a productive framework for understanding how citizens approach urban living. However, future research on stakeholding the city must be undertaken in order to produce empirical evidence of the value and contribution of our conceptual framework, and to generate further insights into how stakeholder relations are constructed, maintained and dissolved in a setting of urban living.
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Notes
1 Aarhus is the second-largest city in Denmark with a population of more than 300,000, of whom approximately 13 per cent attend higher or further education courses. This makes Aarhus at heart the youngest city in Denmark, which is reflected in a rich and varied cultural and business life, characterized by innovation and new thinking. For instance, Aarhus has the largest concentration of important media enterprises and higher education institutions in Denmark. These characteristics are communicatively embraced by the city’s core brand value, which is “Pulse”. In relation to climate, Aarhus has been made the Energy Town of 2009 by the Danish Ministry of Climate and Energy, thereby serving as an innovative front runner with regard to the climate. The city of Aarhus has previously taken initiatives and acted as a front runner in responding to climate and environmental challenges, e.g. by initiating public campaigns such as “Clean City”.
References

Locating Intermediality: Socialization by Communication and Consumption in the Popular-Cultural Third Places of the Music Club and Football Stadium

By Christoph Jacke

Abstract

Based on two different case studies in the realm of popular culture, my contribution will clarify the mechanisms involved in the (symbolic) production and consumption of space. The music club and the soccer stadium function much in the same way, as interfaces between producers and consumers of places, prompting “pro-sumption of space” (Raumprosumenten). A loss of function in such “third places” cannot be linked to the transition from informal cellar clubs to (soberly designed) regional discos outside the city – or from the national-league stadium to the World Cup arena (also outside the city). Nor can it be attributed to the mediatization of these spaces by technology. On the contrary, we find an exponentiation of what third places had always already been, spaces of “intermediality” (between work and leisure, between seriousness and play, between young people and adults). In the World Cup stadium, unique events, experiences and communicative propensities are produced in a highly consistent manner by means of communication on different levels in series. In such cases, the spectators in the stadium, just like visitors to music clubs, rarely behave as passive consumers of what is staged, yet both groups contribute by their presence and symbolic activity to the success of such productions in the stadium and the club.

Keywords: Communication, consumption, stadium, club, mediatization, third places, Localizing Intermediality
Locating Intermediality: Socialization by Communication and Consumption in the Popular-Cultural Third Places of the Music Club and Football Stadium

In an email interview with curator Doris Rothauer on the occasion of the art project “Third Places” against the backdrop of the 2004 steirischer herbst festival, the American sociologist Ray Oldenburg explains his criticism of consumer worlds such as Disneyland or the shopping malls: These have no value for the social in a society, but are merely servants of consumption, in stark contrast to something like the good old marketplace.

Disneyworld and -land, and American shopping malls in addition, are designed to discourage interaction between customers. As the primary activity of third places is interaction, the contrast could hardly be more extreme. … Marketplaces have social as well as monetary value but shopping malls have no social value (Oldenburg/Rothauer 2004: 17).

Oldenburg (1999) had made similar arguments in his much-discussed study on those “third places”. Those third places – mediated by the many little episodes of personal interactions between guests, mediated by dialogue as well as visual contact, by bar-room slogans as well as sophisticated conversation – they are symbolic and signifying forms and worlds of socialization, mediated by communications of all kinds, thus fulfilling a social objective. Oldenburg was thinking thereby of little corner bars, local cafés or the old established bookstore, at whose sofa table one looks at new books after work or on Saturday and in the process starts talking with other customers or especially with the local book dealer—and not only about the new novel by Umberto Eco. Now, one does not have to be a social romantic like Oldenburg or the son of a bookseller to be able to observe and describe such third places. What Oldenburg defines as third places of socialization between family and work as well as their modes of socialization have changed over time. Here types of (mediatized) communication play a large role, so it seems like a proper thing for scholars of communication and media culture to deal with these places and their symbolic transformations. Changes can clearly be observed in the old third places as in new third places that have developed and proven themselves in the course of the media’s evolution and that are increasingly interconnected with media products.² Not only coffee houses, pubs, etc. mentioned by Oldenburg are meeting places for getting informed and communicating. There are also commercialized, professionalized, and institutionalized third places such as shopping malls or theme parks, as Gernot Böhme (2001) has noted, which are sensed directly, theatricalized and stage-managed – but as something much greater than purely pragmatic, socially insignificant collection sites for goods.³

Oldenburg’s focus was on sites that were not at first centered on classical shopping. If we want to discuss Oldenburg’s ideas in current contexts and possibly make them productive, a social domain presents itself that (to some extent)
meanders back and forth between those old third places (the beer garden, pub, the café) transfigured nostalgically by Oldenburg and those sharply condemned “centers of commerce”: popular culture. Heavily consumer-oriented and increasingly commercialized and mediatised, virtually provoking communication, necessitating communication from conversation to entertainment and (in the truest sense of the term) space-appropriating – all these things comprise popular culture. In the following, this domain will first be described more precisely as our underlying field of investigation. Then, using the examples of the popular-cultural place of music club and football stadium, we will work out different modes of communication, mediatisation and commercialization, describing the structural transformation of third places. These thoughts will finally be summarized in the conclusion to the essay.

**Popular Culture as a Field of Third Places**

Here we understand popular culture as that commercialized social domain that produces content in industrial fashion and that is conveyed by the mass media and by numerically predominant groups – no matter what stratum or class they belong to – and that gets used with pleasure and processed further in the form of new self-produced media products (see Jacke 2004: 21). The agents of popular culture are under a great deal of pressure to innovate, and thus under time pressure as well. In mass-medial communication, this applies on the level of production and distribution as well as that of reception and processing. Agents in popular culture are particularly imaginative in matters of the economy of attentiveness – driven by the mainstream and the dissidence necessary to it, i.e., by the ongoing, procedural opposition between innovation and tradition.4

Both the commodification of subjects, objects and actors in popular culture and the strategies and tactics involved in the everyday production and reception of communication products are what make popular culture so appealing today to researchers on motivation, marketing and advertising (see de Certeau 1988). Popular culture, especially in the advertising and consumption industries, serves as a seismograph for developments across society (see Jacke 2005, 2006). The continuous interplay between production and consumption, between art and commerce, and the intermingling of these levels – all this is typical in popular culture and all this forms and necessitates places which not only resemble Oldenburg’s transfigured third places but also those similarly defined transitional places that French anthropologist Marc Augé (1994) has compellingly described.

Popular culture takes place as an “compulsory elective event” [*Wahlpflichtveranstaltung*] (Keller 2003: 116), as a completely serious game, a momentous simulation or pioneering exercise. Popular-cultural places are particularly well suited to experimentation that is social, to trying out consumption and communication. Here boundaries can be tested and transferred: third places “are commer-
cial institutions that combine shopping, dining and entertainment in targeted fashion, blurring existing boundaries between high, popular and consumer culture” (Weh 2004: 31). As a result, the curator of the aforementioned art project “Third Places” sees these places themselves as a metaphor “for the trend toward event culture even in the field of art [and] for the convergence of high and low culture, of elite art and everyday culture” (Rothauer 2004: 9). Processes of demarcation and exclusion take place here as elsewhere by means of communication, in spite of Oldenburg’s fears.

Popular culture, as it is understood in the present essay, can only be thought of in connection with (mass) media and is thus framed in terms of media culture (for more detail, see Jacke 2004). Contrary to widespread reservations about this form of culture, mass-mediated popular culture is not necessarily associated with passivity on the part of its consumers. Consumption and reception can also be production, or re-production. And even those who just seem to be simply subjected to it can possibly do so in an active way, that is, tuning in in order to tune out.

When the British cultural scholar John Storey (2003a: 148) speaks, for instance, about "shopping as popular culture”, this means that shopping is actively fun and that it can even be processed subversively, but in any event it is pursued and experienced with others. On the one hand, the mode of socialization changes in its assessment of indoctrination (“Buy or die!”) toward a socially-oriented organization of the self (“Express yourself!”). On the other hand, the mode of consumption itself undergoes a shift. We are not merely asked “to buy what is on sale but to consume the public space” (Storey 2003a: 150). This consumption of popular-cultural places is highly concerned with communication. Opportunities to do so are clearly provided by media, and consumers go on to process these in completely different ways and at different levels of productivity. Here, not only what is consumed but also the way it is consumed, is constitutive of identities.

Consumption is a significant part of the circulation of shared and conflicting meanings we call culture. We communicate through what we consume. Consumption is perhaps the most visible way in which we stage and perform the drama of self-formation. In this sense, then, consumption is also a form of production (Storey 2003b: 78).

Storey’s account must be supplemented by our present deliberations: “We communicate by how we consume!” And this mode of consumption always played an important role in the construction of identities – both individually and collectively – at third places. Even in the corner bar or bookstore (to follow Oldenburg), there is a balancing of socialization between individuality and sociality, between private and public spheres, between inclusion and exclusion (along the categories of age, gender, class, group, etc.). In short, it is a matter of constructing identity. “The imaginative hedonism of the urban setting in its theatricality is employed as a way to stage-manage oneself. . . . Urban ‘third places’ today serve less as places of communication than as stages for cultivating one’s image”(Gau 2004: 26). Such a self-presentation, however, occurs precisely in the bookstore as well.
as in the football stadium by means of a communicative orientation to others. Images can only be created by communication and are not “swallowed up” by or at places. In such a way, constructing and cultivating images are highly communicative processes, particularly on the practice fields of popular culture.

An extremely productive, pop-cultural processing of third place communication offerings takes place in the person of those non-professional experts in image-making and social orientation, i.e., the fans who receive, consume, use and modify media goods. In his ethnographic study, Henry Jenkins (1992), following Michel de Certeau (1988), has identified ten creative ways how various fan groups process media products: recontextualization, temporal extension, character-refocusing, moral distortion, genre-switching, crossing-over, character-positioning, personalization, emotionalization, and eroticization. Clearly, not exactly every fan is a productive or even subversive *bricoleur*, as suggested by many of the fan studies emerging out of Cultural Studies. With respect to de Certeau’s ideas, the literary scholar Jörg Dünne (2006: 300) reminds us: “It is nonetheless critical to ask whether everyday spatial practices can only be conceived as supporting existing orders and whether they cannot be assigned at least a constitutive function in relation to spatial order.” Even Storey (2003a) explicitly points out that not every recipient is capable of dealing independently with media products:

Consumption, therefore, is always an encounter between the materiality of a cultural commodity and the cultural formation of a consumer, which takes place in a particular context. Whether the outcome is manipulation or resistance, or a complicated mixture of the two, is a question which cannot be answered in advance of the actual encounter (Storey 2003b: 112).

In the person of the fan, then, producer and consumer come together. Fans are in some sense “extreme consumers”, and perhaps this is what makes them so interesting (not only) from the viewpoint of sociology of consumption.

Two pop-cultural third places that until now have hardly been illuminated in communication or media studies are examples well-suited for illustrating our observations: the music club and the football stadium. Both places function similarly, as interfaces between seller and customer, between producer and consumer (typically as a fan) and between anonymous industry (control, public sphere) and individual needs (imagination, private sphere). They thus represent a relevant field of investigation for an analysis oriented on Oldenburg and de Certeau. Are there opportunities for authentic interaction only in the basement club and not in a large disco, only in the regional stadium and not in the World Cup arena? Below, we will take a more exact look at these places, their specific media and their opportunities for collectivity (socialization / communalization / control) and individuality (self-imagination / self-control).
The Music Club

An almost prototypical popular-cultural place of intermediality [das Dazwischen] and consequently of mediation is the music club. In general, we are talking about clubs or (formerly) discos, regardless (for the present) what style of music is being played or performed there. Clubs or even “clubbing” (most comparable with the rather subdued term ausgehen in German) are places and activities positioned between diverse poles. With respect to time, people move in clubs between day and night (and day), between work and sleep, between the private and the public (materially and spatially). Socially, people move between being alone, with friends and in intimate anonymity (“we know each other”) as well as between having it together (“sober”) and not having it together (“ecstatic”): “This is resistance found through losing your self, paradoxically to find your self” (Malbon 1998: 281).

Clubs are, in a manner of speaking, institutionalized places of the ephemeral. The British geographer and promoter Ben Malbon (1998, 1999) in his studies on clubbing sees them as compensating for the loss of socializing in public places or for those places having generated non-places (the end of the market square): “Public spaces in the city often seem designed more for traveling through than for socializing within – more fleeting spaces than meeting places” (Malbon 1998: 267).

Clubs, however, hold onto these travelers for a few hours without fixating the visitors. However, what Guido Zurstiege (2008) has shown in his essay on shopping malls also applies to clubs: that efforts involving a great deal of personnel and media are needed to create the illusion of an atmospheric club flow. The clubs themselves are equally fleeting, but nonetheless make stopovers again and again, orienting themselves to trends and every few months moving around Berlin to new locations (e.g., the WMF Club) as Anja Schwanhäußer (2005) and Geoff Stahl (2007) have documented in subcultural movements and their “spatialization” [Verräumungen] (as meant by Christian Schwarzenegger [2008]). The communities formed there may only meet temporarily, but they do so in serial fashion.

The music played there has a decisive influence on the club atmosphere as the basis of various types of consumption (alcohol, tobacco, drugs of all kinds, media products, sound, and communication). Or again in the words of Malbon: “Yet in each case, it is the ability of music (and sound more generally) to create an atmosphere (an emotionally charged space) which is of crucial importance, for it is largely this atmosphere that the clubbers consume” (Malbon 1998: 271). This music, the sound of a club, is responsible for the framing of the atmospheric mentioned by Böhme. In these ways, in fact, popular music has structured and marked even public spaces and thus itself has become an everyday phenomenon. At the same time, music is the most important media product of the club in three respects:
1. **Narrative machines and the prompting of subsequent communications:** As an unending fabric of constantly renewed and repeated narrations, which many people take part in (see Gauber 2006), the sounds and their stories animate consumption on the dance floor, but possibly afterwards as well, in the repeated consumption of tracks or songs near the dance floor and at home. They provide the basis in theme parks or temples of consumption that is necessary for making the “shopping machines” into less suspecting “narrative machines” and their production of non-binding reality landscapes (see Legnaro/Birenheide 2005).

2. **Communicative relief:** As a release from unreasonable demands, exciting sounds also reduce one-track conversations, thus relieving people from making small-talk, with the help of dancing: “Shake your booty!” “Dancing might be seen as an embodied statement by the clubber that they will not be dragged down by the pressures of work, the speed and isolation of the city, the chilly interpersonal relations one finds in many of the city's social places” (Malbon 1998: 271).

3. **Social Orientation:** Finally, the sounds serve as a way of reducing complexity, by suggesting a (often) clearly defined path through the nocturnal music jungle: Here they are playing minimal techno and not heavy metal, etc. It is mainly by consuming music in specific clubs that rather distinct groups of visitors emerge, making the situation a communicative interplay of various actors. “The clubbers consume each other – the clubbing crowd contains both the producers and the consumers of the experience and the clubbers are consuming a crowd of which they are a part; the club space comes to resemble a scene 'in which everyone is at once both actor and spectator’” (Malbon 1998: 277).

Besides the central media product, music, there are other media offered in the various clubs. And these media are important in subsequent communications: the flyer about the next party the same evening, the schedules of the other clubs, the posters of the coolest concerts, the visuals, or the flickering television screens with music clips, movies or announcements of upcoming events.

In the way these media products are made available, we can see how the disconnection of production from consumption, in the course of role differentiation (as noted by Kai-Uwe Hellmann [2004]), is turned upside down when the distinction company / household is made. In the club, producer and consumer become completely intertwined in individual persons. While still a consumer (for example) of a long drink, one is already in subsequent communication a producer in the form of a DJ, dancer, or storyteller. In short, clubs appear to be almost typical
hubs for what Hellmann (2004: 146) calls second-order consumption in the marketplace of subtle differences:

Consumption culture is thus characterized by a replication of needs and wishes, which successively undermine every expectation of resistance and finiteness and which increasingly move the moment of fantasy and stimulation into the foreground of orientation (Hellmann 2004: 151).

What would probably have to be discussed is Hellmann’s suggestion that we no longer talk about subcultures but more generally about consumption culture since the first term is not confronted by a dominant culture:

What speaks, however, against speaking at all about subcultures of consumption is the lack of a dominant culture without which there can be no subcultures. Because what nearly all forms of consumption we encounter nowadays have in common is that they involve second-order consumption. This is evident especially with Harley-Davidson riders, who are thoroughly acting in front of an audience, of the ingroup as well as the outgroup. To that extent, all (sub)cultures of consumption reflect at once this central feature of the prevailing consumption culture. For this reason, it is clear that we should be talking about consumption cultures, just as on the production side we are talking about company cultures (Hellmann 2004: 153).

Along with Storey (2003a, 2003b), Schrage (2003) and Jacke (2004), we could introduce this dominance in the form of mass media and mass culture “as a compensatory means of preventing a potential revolution, as a cultural dislocation, or as a cultural democratization” (Schrage 2003: 66). Within this dominance, however, reorderings are again possible. And even the sociologist of space, Martina Löw (2001, 2008), confirms in her pioneering studies that the spatial creation of specific institutionalized order(ing)s is an event that runs counter to the dominant culture and is thus countercultural. Particularly with regard to music clubs, such subcultural “spatializations” [Verräumungen] are fundamental; particularly these are constantly working on the spatial, social and communicative inclusion and exclusion of certain groups.

Especially with respect to socialization in clubs, there is the matter of being there (“in the house!”) or being outside (“out of bounds!”). This boundary is mediated by clothing, sounds, drugs, and (if nothing else) the bouncer. Within these consumption cultures, there are (in Hellmann’s sense) very likely subcultural as well as countercultural groups that are quite easy to identify, which distinguish themselves from each other or also from whatever is mainstream, thus actualizing themselves in the course of the movement itself. Hence, the Love Parade in Berlin, at one time a demonstration, has been differentiated as a changing club into a commercialized large-scale event (“alone together”). In reaction to it, there are individualizing markets from which we can distinguish some smaller counter-movements with stronger group character, such as the Fuck Parade or Hate Parade. The playful rivalries go on to become further differentiated in sub- and main branches within cultures of consumption.13

For precisely these changes, clubs are essential observational platforms. How resistant, for example, a musical style and (in relation to it) a club itself can be

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depends on the management of latently changing products by the music industry as well as the expressed needs of club visitors. In short, everything depends on differences in popular-social trends. Consumers in clubs appear especially oriented to consuming consumption as a presentation platform for the self and the collective:

It is here, in this creation of a space of their town, that we find resistance, not as a struggle with a dominant, hegemonic culture ... or even as the fact of clubbing itself, but resistance as located in the most minute subtleties of clubbing, the ways of clubbing – its *arts de faire* (Malbon 1998: 280).

If, following de Certeau (1988), we look at these kinds of everyday (consumption) activities as potentially subversive on the micro-political level, then we can understand Malbon’s argumentation (not atypical for Cultural Studies) that there are uprisings on the small scale. Clubs seem predestined for such alliances and struggles. There identities that are collectively oriented and individually constructed can repeatedly be tried out and tried on in a playful manner. In the club, as a space full of signs and itself a sign, everything begins with the “I” on the dance floor (see Bonz 2006) – and, going beyond Malbon’s arguments, not only on a small scale such as dancing to a single song, but also in continuously constructing both one’s own and the group’s identity.

Music clubs, as we can maintain provisionally and generally, are third places where consumption and communication are regularly taking place in very different ways, although both types of activity are motivated by media products around the nucleus of music. At the same time, there is both a trend to serialize music clubs, thus building in every town or county a regional disco, making it predictable and available, as well as an opposing trend of opening individual, highly specialized clubs for a short time (and sometimes illegally), where it is not at all clear to outsiders what exactly goes on in these places. Each one clearly has a different clientele. But especially in contrast to the domestic consumption of music in the living room, both possibilities appear to possess high levels of ritualization and physical presence. These “generate effects of a corporeal grammaticalization (a limited number of rules producing an infinity of forms, all of which share certain basic characteristics)”, as the literary scholar Hans U. Gumbrecht (1998: 202) has observed concerning the consumption of American football in the stadium and on television. Gumbrecht’s reflections can be applied both to music clubs as well as to football stadiums, thus addressing our second example of popular-cultural third places.

**The Football Stadium**

The link with ritual in Gumbrecht’s argument and with the productivity of fans in Storey’s and Malbon’s thinking is made in the following detailed passage by Roman Horak (2004: 56f.), the Austrian scholar of culture and the sociology of art,
in reference to Chas Critcher’s (1976) early social-scientific studies on “supporters” (football fans) in the 1970s:

In terms of football, a member of the supporters . . . is classically someone who sympathizes and suffers with his club in victory and defeat. To him, it is not just a familiar ritual (though it is also that) to attend regularly the games of “his” club on site (at the stadium); it is also one of his obligations. Yet he sees the players of “his” club as equally obligated, if not to win every game then at least to do everything possible for the success of the common institution (of the “Rapid” [working-class football club in Vienna, CJ], for example) and to make the greatest possible effort. The customer, however, is someone who is not familiar with a club that he says he belongs to. To him, the main thing is a great game, some action in the Fankurve [the section with the wildest fans, CJ] or – perhaps – the atmosphere in the football stadium. If not granted what he wishes for, he can switch clubs, sports or his leisure behavior in general. . . . For the consumer, the spectacle of football is one among many; the disappointment experienced by customers is not something he knows, other than at best dissatisfaction with the product offered. He makes choices – if at all possible – according to rational categories.

The distinction first made by Critcher and taken up here by Horak between fans, customers, and consumers can be applied to current observations in football stadiums, such as those of the German National Football League [Bundesliga]. The visitor type of fan, the classical “kutte wearing fan” [Kuttenräger-Fan] is being pushed aside by new types of visitors such as families and business customers, who are becoming increasingly important to the marketing departments of the clubs. Overall, the way we deal with football has changed, as described for example by Horak (2004: 57). Football has long since become a part of popular culture, and in this respect, the stadium is also a place of communication, of media production (as a space full of signs and itself a sign) and, in general, of intermediality [das Dazwischen].

Just like music and sound in the club, the game in the stadium also forms both the frame and center of the atmospheric: “In fact, the events on the pitch, in the grandstands and in the media behave like a foreign body against the background of our cultural and political institutions. It is a strange world in the midst of our everyday life” (Gebauer 2006: 9). Here, too, visitors are immersed in a completely different environment in which they can try on – and try out – many things. Here, too, identities are performed even if they are more clearly defined than in the club. Otherwise, we are falling into the role of the unpopular neutral or undecided observer – “The main thing is a great game!”

In temporal terms, the premier league matches (as is well-known) mainly occur on Saturday afternoon – right between the beginning of the weekend / last workday of the week and Sunday as a family day. Materially and spatially, football stadiums are the intermediality [das Dazwischen] between living room, bar and sports pitch. And socially, they operate as institutions between players / clubs and fans / spectators as well as between family, friends, fans and foes: “What? You're a Bayern fan?”
Horak (2004: 61ff.) speaks of three different games that are taking place when one is watching a football game: the actual game, the game on the grandstand and the televised game. The interaction between these three levels helps results in the formation of temporary “communities” and a sense of active participation on the part of fans, customers and consumers:

Here [when attending a football match in the stadium, CJ], between mutual joy or outrage, shared sorrow, despair and hope (on the one hand) and ironic detachment or self-distancing (on the other), there are small private spheres fed by two sources: the certainty of a time limit – a game does not last much longer than 90 minutes – and the shared hope of being able collectively to shape the game on the green pitch (Horak 2004: 60ff.).

In the football stadium, new trends become visible among fans. In addition, this place is both a reflection of and a trendsetter for larger societal developments between subversion and commercialization. The good old stadium is full of stories that have to be discovered [gefunden], or at least re-covered [wieder-gefunden] in their commercialized manifestation: “What is businesslike organizes the framework in which private emotions can thrive. Football today is a business world, inside of which emotions seethe” (Gebauer 2006: 133). These feelings as well as the actions that articulate them are increasingly stimulated by media products.

The major attention in the football stadium may still hinge on the ball and the players. Yet there are, especially in the new arenas, more and more media products before, after, and during the game. On closer inspection, the following three aspects fulfill the functions already named in the case of the music club:

1. **Narrative machines and the prompting of subsequent communications:** From a club’s magazine to fan merchandise, from jerseys to the big screen / scoreboard, stories are narrated and repeated, such as those about a club’s tradition (“Borussia Moenchengladbach”) or the stars (“Michael Ballack to Chelsea?”). Yet besides the image-building associated with them, these stories also motivate the buying of more tickets, fan memorabilia and ultimately the products or services of sponsors.

2. **Communicative relief:** At the same time, media products tied to a club and its players provide relief from unreasonable communicative demands. People are basically in agreement, and nothing requires a great deal of negotiation, even if one must agree to disagree. In addition, attending a football game in the stadium can be a release (to a certain extent) from social labeling – “here I can let it all hang out!”

3. **Social Orientation:** Lastly, in the football stadium as well, complexity is greatly reduced by the game along with its intertwined media products. And communication is ritualized: we know that there is one’s own, the
other team, and the (as already noted) less pleasurable option of staying neutral.

Against this background, consumption and the socialization associated with it takes place on different levels of consumption cultures. “Even if the football community is a distorting mirror, it shows the contours of social formations that allow experiences of self and community to emerge that are different from those in ordinary life” (Gebauer 2006: 63). Football, this means, is popular culture. Unlike feared, the individual does not disappear either in the Allianz Arena or in the Love Parade. The spectators, customers and consumers – and certainly the fans – are concerned with the articulation of the self and less with its disappearance. In the stadium as in the club, the articulation of the individual always takes place in groups and is communicated through signs and symbols, which is why it is socially monitored. For this reason, every attempt (including even the most risky) at trying out a new role, every impulsive acting out of repressed emotions, takes place in a safe setting. Again, this has not been lost in the wake of the ongoing commercialization of football, in spite of all the prophecies of doom.

In the stadium itself, there are a variety of possibilities for realizing oneself individually and being integrated socially (see Legnaro/Birenheide 2005). Besides the traditional division into football players and spectators, (in a sense) into actors on the stage and recipients in the audience as well as into the familiar us versus them – and hence into various supporter and fan groups (not by chance, people used to speak of fan communities), there are additional differentiations within and across groups. What twenty years ago distinguished specific groups of fans in Bundesliga stadiums – standing room or in seats, single- or season-ticket holders or groups in bulk seating – is now even more strongly distinguished by different areas in the new arenas. Between normal seating and VIP lounge areas (including full service meals), there are more than subtle differences. The customers and consumers mentioned by Critcher and Horak appear to have access to other areas within the stadium than the fans.

As a result, the stadium audience today coalesces only rarely into a community as in the case of the 2006 World Cup – “Thank you, Germany!” Furthermore, the stadium as a third place increasingly offers space for very different motives to communicate. No longer does the arena – as Gunter Gebauer (2006) describes it with surprising nostalgia in his “poetics of football” – belong to the fans. By means of fan representatives, blogs, and other initiatives, these express themselves (even protest) against the expropriation of “their” football by commercialization on the part of club leadership, sponsors and the stadium management. It was not just a ticket shortage during the aforementioned World Cup that led the often talked about “public viewings” of the games to become a new form of collectivity to those football fans and friends who were left outside (see Rötzer 2006):
Sports and the media are ... linked in a special way, by requiring or generating a technological means of mass dissemination that increasingly compress social communication. The same applies to early printing and photography, then (to a great extent) for film, radio, television and (more recently) the Internet (Leggewie 2006: 114f.).

These media products have not for a long time been just about football itself – stadiums are enormous narrative machines (see Legnaro/Birenheide 2005):

A new stadium as a gigantic entertainment machine for the whole family, for the whole weekend if possible. According to this concept, football is only the occasion for multimedia recreation in one’s free time – for entertainment products, sale of memorabilia, for advertising and “experience shopping”. In an architecture completely focused on emotions, the ideal of the shopping mall predominates, for which many spectators are needed with a lot of money and a lot of enthusiasm (Gebauer 2006: 131).

In their presentations [Inszenierungen], stadiums, clubs and of course players – in the meantime, even referees and spectators – become part of the presentation [Inszenierung] and ultimately a brand: “The Red Devils from the Betzenberg.” Yet this has nothing to do with passivity on the part of spectators: “From football and popular culture, young people obtain experiences of voluntarily assumed obligations even if these make a superficial and ridiculous impression on their environment” (Gebauer 2006: 111). In consideration of these obligations, real (but also imaginary) communities develop out of many individual egos by means of cognitive, communicative and (very importantly) affective negotiations. These consolidations happen on the spot and are “live on TV”. But they cannot take place on site or “live on TV” in cases of “public viewing” at home in the living room or when recounting past games.

Even football stadiums, we can confirm at this point, are “third places” in which consumption and communication transpire differently today than in the past. And football stadiums also generate unique events in series. Furthermore, the new, large arenas (particularly) represent places where an organizational balancing act takes place between originality and seriality. Much here appears to be organized in a highly professional manner, clearly foreseeable and ritualized, and yet every game is a new and completely unpredictable one. The next opposing team can be the occasion for unplanned surprises, just as the next DJ can make a night at the music club completely different from the last.

**Conclusion**

The socializing of individuals via communication and consumption ought to be undeniable for the two examples discussed here of clubs and stadiums. Communication, consumption, and socialization are changing in these places precisely to the extent that these places themselves are also changing in the course of their ongoing commercialization. However, this “structural and symbolic transformation of third places” does not automatically lead to a comprehensive loss of func-
tion or even the disappearance of these places as prophesied by Oldenburg. The representations discussed above should have made clear what Oldenburg's third places and so-called “non-places” have in common. In both, room for play in perception and action is enlarged and restricted, although in the case of non-places those spaces are clearly made standard and anonymous (temporally, materially, and socially).

Do music clubs and stadiums of today somehow represent the other “culturally pessimistic” side of the media coin, the predecessors of which were less standardized, more intimate places with “better” opportunities for socialization? “No” would be the preliminary answer: Neither standardization nor mediatization destroy these places. And the individuals and groups who visit them cannot fundamentally be understood as cheerful but unreflective consumers in the sense of Mathias Stuhr’s “cheerful economy” (2003).

The media revolutionize third places. Yet they do away with them just as little as they do away with (often criticized) commerce, instead making them “only” more into what they always already were: places of entertainment, communication, consumption and socialization.

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**Notes**

2. I am limiting myself to places that, in Böhmé’s sense (2001: 53), can be “sensed”, places whose atmosphere and spatiality appear to us directly and which we, as observers, can experience by means of “affective concern” [affektive Betroffenheit]. Current discussions on virtual worlds and media spaces are thus bracketed out to the greatest extent possible. For an introduction to theories of social and media spaces, see the articles in Dünne/Günzel (2006) as well as in Lindemann (2002).
4. This definition has been worked out in diverse studies in media culture and communication (for example, cf. Jacke 2004) and appears to be productive in relation to the commercial, mass-communicative transformation of signs (for a general discussion of the idea of ‘popular culture’, cf. Storey 2003b).
5. On delegating pleasure and consumption and the inter-passivity accompanying it to a different, more critical point of view, see the studies of Pfaller 2002 and Jacke 2009a. In this connection, Weh (2004: 32) maintains: “The paradoxical logic consists in the fact that it more economical for the individual to delegate feelings onto the setting of a ‘Third Place’ than to
commit oneself emotionally.” What remains is to make clear to what extent this delegating can be assessed as active and passive.

6 This shift in perspective from the production to the reception side as an investigative field for research on consumption was introduced (among others) by Dichter; see Cohen/Rutsky 2005; Cubitt 2005; Trentmann 2006. In the meantime, even standard works in economics talk about the second reality of the consumer; see Kroever-Riel/Weinberg 2003: 570ff.

7 On the potentials of guerrillas or protesters against communication and media, as seen from a theoretical perspective on media culture, see Liebl et al. (2005) as well as Kleiner (2005).

8 On the association between music and soccer as realms of popular culture, see also Theweleit (2004) and Gebauer (2006).

9 These observations are based on personal experiences and conversations with promoters, artists, referees, marketing associates, fan representatives and sponsors in seminars on club and soccer culture. The aforementioned art project “Third Places” dealt with the very similar phenomena of video games, music videos and soccer stadiums; for an introduction and theorization, see Rothauer 2004, Gau 2004, Weh 2004.

10 In cultural terms, there is a range of third places where socialization makes use of popular music; in general, see Negus 1996: 164-189, Fairchild 2008: 17-34. For an example of a street (King’s Road in London) as the place of popular music, see Décharné 2006; on virtual sites, see Kibby 2006 and Nakamura 2002.

11 It should be discussed to what extent the visitors of clubs and soccer stadiums contribute to the atmospheres of those places as unpaid workers and how this is calculated on the production side. On these considerations with respect to the Disneyland amusement park, another thoroughly commercialized third place, see Legnaro 2000.

12 For an informative outline on the development of popular music in the framework of industrialization and urbanization, see Wicke (2001); for a concrete account of music and space, see ibid., 22ff.

13 For more on “being there“ [Dabeisein] in culture and its various levels, see Jacke (2004).

14 Even if individualization becomes extreme and the “Pimp Generation features itself like hell” – to paraphrase a special topic of the German-language music and cultural journal De:Bug from November 2006 – people will still be marketing themselves on MySpace while nonetheless still hoping to put together a circle of friends, go out and experience a musical presence. For a criticism of this increasing self-mediatization, see Jacke 2009a. On visualizing music in clips and the possibilities of analyzing them, see Jacke 2009b.

15 The fact that these “struggles” always involve the appropriation of local and acoustic space in a thoroughly political sense is shown in the club events of queer groups; see the contributions in Haase et al. (2005). On club culture generally, see the contributions in Redhead (1997) and in the Kunstforum International Vol. 135: Cool Club Cultures.

16 Proceeding from art and literature, Gumbrecht (1998: 207) discusses the dialectic between originary provocation and canonized convention in the case of sports. This thread of his discussion is particularly prevalent in discourses surrounding popular culture; see Jacke 2004.

17 A kutte is a denim or leather vest, onto which the insignia of one’s favorite football team and allied clubs and fan clubs has been sewn, and which (out of superstition) is worn by fans to the games. It marks and delimits them as fans, and distinguishes and demarcates them from men wearing suits, for instance.

18 Yet in Weh’s research, even the consumer does not exist prototypically as a set quantity but instead appears to be changeable: “Today the so-called ‘Gruen Transfer’ signifies that instant in which a single-minded consumer looking for a certain item becomes a spontaneous consumer. It is the transformation registered in a sudden change in the person’s way of moving: Purposeful walking gives way to a motion that is meandering” (Weh 2004: 36). The same applies to customers, less so to classic fans. In addition, to this day there have hardly been any studies on female football fans, who have now been observed more carefully and are regarded as a target group in Germany particularly since the 2006 World Cup.

19 See, for example, the studies in Jacke/Keiner 2006, 2007.

On the overwriting of a place with a history using the example of the newly formed Times Square of London, see Gau (2004).

In the shift from the fan in the kutte to the posh fan, we can make a noteworthy observation about soccer that Storey has made for the realm of opera (2003b). Events that used to be popular culture are increasingly being appropriated by social strata that are financially better heeled; these events are directed (or re-directed) at them and are thus in the course of time rendered elite, canonized into “high culture” events. Will the soccer stadium, then, perhaps become the opera hall of tomorrow?

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Being-in-the-City: A Phenomenological Approach to Technological Experience

By Jason Wasiak

Abstract
This paper examines dynamics surrounding the negotiation and articulation of the body-technology relationship necessarily characterizing the experience of being-in-the-city. Nowhere is everyday experience more mediated by technology than in the city. Being-in-the-city involves being embodied by technology at levels ranging from micro to macro. Despite the fact that technologies are constantly evolving in city space, relations with technology tend to become quickly normalized — mundane — transparent. Given this normalization as well as the sheer pervasiveness of technology in constituting city space it is important to examine the ways in which technology comes to shape the experiential contexts of everyday life. In urban space, technologies result in new sights to be seen, sounds to be heard, smells to be smelt, textures to be felt, as well as altogether new modes of experiencing the everyday. In exploring the dynamics surrounding the ongoing, multi-layered negotiation and articulation of the body-technology relationship necessarily characterizing the experience of being-in-the-city a phenomenological perspective is adopted. Heidegger’s writing on technology, Merleau-Ponty’s writing on embodiment and perception, and Don Ihde’s writing on the body and technology contribute to a theoretical framework for a phenomenological examination of the experiential implications of being-in-the-city, a technological ecology.

Keywords: being-in-the-city, technology, embodiment, perception, phenomenology, technological ecology
Introduction

Nowhere is everyday experience more mediated by technology than in the city. The city is an inherently technological environment, largely constituted through technology, and serving as a focal point for the ever-widening production, distribution, and consumption of technology. Thus, it might be said that what is fundamental to both the “city as sign” and “signs of the city” is technology. Technology is and always has been central to the city as reality, as image, and as symbol. In the broadest sense the city itself might be thought of as a technology that one is embodied by through inhabitation. By merely occupying a location within city space one is inherently enmeshed in a vast array of technological relations. In this sense, being-in-the-city necessarily involves a perpetual, multi-layered negotiation with technology at levels ranging from micro to macro. The most immediate site of this negotiation is in the relationship between the body and technology as one navigates everyday life in the city. The way in which this body-technology relationship is negotiated and articulated involves a constant reshaping of perceptual regimes, which holds profound implications for all other aspects of experience. Perceptual horizons are constantly being reworked in variety of ways through the everyday bodily engagement with technology, and this is particularly heightened in the technologically constituted environment of the city. The negotiation and articulation of the technology-body relationship in the everyday navigation of the city holds profound implications for the experience of space and time as well as all aspects of sensation. An overwhelming amount of what enters the senses within city space is a by-product of technology. In the city technology results in new sights to be seen, sounds to be heard, smells to be smelt, flavors to be tasted, textures to be felt, as well as altogether new modes of experiencing the everyday.

Despite the fact that technology is constantly evolving in city space, at the micro level our technological relations tend to become quickly normalized through everyday engagement—rendered mundane—receding into the background of day-to-day experience. This tends to conceal their import. As such, this paper examines dynamics surrounding the ongoing, multi-layered, negotiation between body and technology necessarily characterizing the experience of being-in-the-city. While it is acknowledged that interactions with technology in city space are vast and heterogeneous in nature—culturally variable and shaped by one’s social location—what is focused on here is the primacy of the negotiation and articulation of the body-technology relationship necessarily characterizing the navigation of everyday life in the city. To this end, a phenomenological perspective is adopted. In particular, Heidegger’s writing pertaining to technology, Merleau-Ponty’s writing pertaining to embodiment and perception, and Don Ihde’s writing pertaining technology and the body contribute to a theoretical fra-
framework for a phenomenological examination of the experiential implications of being-in-the-city, an inherently technological environment.

**Conceptualizing Technology**

As technology is being upheld as an essential feature of the city, and as it is being suggested that the negotiation and articulation of the body-technology relationship is primary to the experience of being-in-the-city, it is necessary to unpack the term technology before proceeding further. As a word, technology tends to be used in everyday discourse with such ubiquity that its particular meaning often remains quite vague. Its roots are those of the Greek *technē*, often referring to art or craft knowledge (as distinguished from *epistēmē*, or theoretical knowledge), and *logos*, referring to discourse. Thus, in this sense technology refers to discourse or knowledge of art or craft production. However, Heidegger (1977) notes that for the Greeks *technē* belongs to *poiēsis*—a bringing-forth out of concealment. As such, *technē* refers not to art or craft knowledge but rather means “...to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way” (Heidegger 2001: 157). In its most everyday usage, technology tends to refer to those non-naturally occurring things resulting from the discourse or knowledge of art or craft production—that is, those built things that have been made to appear in particular ways and which serve as means to ends.

Kline (2003), in observing both the ubiquity and vagueness surrounding the usage of the word technology, points out that it has come to refer simultaneously to “...things, actions, processes, methods, and systems” (210). He draws attention to four predominant usages of the word technology. The first, and perhaps most common usage (as mentioned above), is in reference to *non-natural hardware or artifacts* manufactured by humans. The second usage is in reference to *sociotechnical systems of manufacture*, including all elements that go into the creation of any given artifact (labour, machinery, physical, economic, political, legal environments). The third usage observed is in reference to *knowledge, methodology, technique, or “know-how”*. And the fourth usage that Kline (2003) points to is its reference to *sociotechnical systems of use*, which include combinations of artifacts and people (among other elements) that allow humans to perform tasks that they would otherwise be unable to, thus extending their capacities. Kline (2003) suggests it is of particular importance to understand technology in terms of *sociotechnical systems of manufacture and sociotechnical systems of use*, for it is within these overarching systems that particular *techniques* and *artifacts* are embedded.

Very often technology is thought of as simply a means to ends (instrumental definition); however, the true accuracy of this characterization as a linear relationship has been contended. As Jonas (2003) notes, with modern technology this means-ends relationship is less linear than it is circular. He observes that as a
process, modern technology tends not toward equilibrium, but rather ceaselessly generates new directions for subsequent innovations, and that innovation tends to spread rapidly facilitated by technology and insured by competition. These processes are particularly accelerated by the proliferation of communication technologies and felt most intensely in city space. Jonas (2003) suggests that as a result of these features “progress” is an inherent drive of technology, not merely an ideological concept, insomuch as it builds on that which came before. Stiegler (1998) echoes this writing: “Technical progress consists in successive displacements of its limits” (33). He goes on to write: “Innovation accomplishes a transformation of the technical system while drawing the consequences for the other systems” (Stiegler 1998: 36). With both Jonas (2003) and Stiegler (1998) attention is drawn to fundamental ways in which technology opens up new possibilities for further innovations with new sets of limits and consequences (some which are intended and/or foreseen while many are not).

Heidegger (1977) interrogated the fundamental accuracy of the instrumental definition of technology as merely a means to an end in The Question Concerning Technology. He observed that while the instrumental definition of technology is at some level correct it does not yield the most accurate insight into the essence of modern technology. The essence of modern technology, for Heidegger, is itself nothing technological, but rather it is a process of “challenging-forth” the “standing-reserve” (Bestand) of nature. This is perhaps put most simply in Heidegger’s (1966) Memorial Address where he writes: “Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry” (50). For Heidegger (1977) the essence of modern technology cannot be reduced to mechanics and individual human activity. It is rather the all-pervasive process of “challenging-forth” into “ordering” as a particular mode of “revealing”. It is a preoccupation with “unlocking”, “transforming”, “storing”, “switching about ever anew” and “distributing” that which is concealed in nature and might be put to use. Heidegger (1977) uses the word Enframing (Ge-stell) to describe the type of ordering that sets about this “challenging forth”. Stiegler (1998), echoing Heidegger, characterizes the move to modern technology, writing: “Technics commands (kbernaô, the etymon of cybernetics) nature. Before, nature commanded technics. Nature is consigned by technics in this sense: nature has become the assistant, the auxiliary; in similar fashion, it is exploited by technics, which has become the master” (Stiegler 1998: 24). Implied here is the double meaning of “ordering”: “to command” as well as “to arrange”. We can conceptualize the city as a space that is most exemplary of these processes of “challenging forth” into “ordering”, where processes of “unlocking”, “transforming”, “storing”, and “switching about ever anew” manifest themselves in the densely layered technological networks through which one navigates everyday life.

Heidegger’s (1962) earlier discussion in Being and Time of “The Being of the Entities Encountered in the Environment” also yields numerous relevant points of
Heidegger discusses dynamics surrounding our relationship to equipment [Zeug], as we encounter it in our everyday experience. He notes that in our everyday dealings we encounter equipment for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement, etc.; and that at the most fundamental level equipment is “something in-order-to”. In this “in-order-to” structure resides an assignment or reference of something to something else within a referential whole. The oft-quoted example he gives is the use of a hammer for hammering. In discussing this example Heidegger points out the extent to which “putting-to-use” “in-order-to”, constitutes the type of being that equipment possesses as a “readiness-to-hand” [Zuhandenheit]. And furthermore, that the more one grabs hold of the hammer and puts it to use, “the more primordial does our relationship to it become” (Heidegger 1962: 98). Dreyfus (1990), in his commentary of Being and Time, further notes that: “When we are using equipment, it has a tendency to “disappear”. We are not aware of it as having any characteristics at all” (64). In what Dreyfus calls absorbed coping, the awareness of equipment recedes into transparency as one becomes absorbed in the task at hand with the skillful implementation and smooth functioning of that equipment.

Heidegger (1962) goes on to point out that when equipment breaks down or is somehow found to be unusable (“un-ready-to-hand”), that it is at this precise moment that the equipment in relation to the referential whole is made conspicuous. We are made aware of our relationship to the equipment and its relationship to the referential whole, an awareness that had receded into the background in the skillful implementation and smooth running of the equipment. As he writes: “When equipment cannot be used, this implies that the constitutive assignment of the “in-order-to” to a “towards-this” has been disturbed... when an assignment has been disturbed—when something is unusable for some purpose—then the assignment becomes explicit” (Heidegger 1962: 105). Dreyfus (1990), in further characterizing this writes: “Temporary breakdown, where something blocks ongoing activity, necessitates a shift into a mode in which what was previously transparent becomes explicitly manifest. Deprived of access to what we normally count on, we act deliberately, paying attention to what we are doing” (72).

In light of the above, a number of premises might be established for the present discussion: a) being-in-the-city is characterized by a ongoing negotiation with an ever-expanding relational totality of equipment, which one necessarily engages with as a part of everyday coping (or merely occupying a location within an urban space for that matter). This ever-expanding relational totality is a result of dynamics observed by Jonas (2003) and Stiegler (1998) as an essential feature of technology; b) one’s necessary engagement or negotiation with technology in city space is something that becomes increasingly normalized, transparent, and primordial through everyday use, familiarity, or habit; and c) insomuch as one is
necessarily surrounded by technology at every turn in the city, the breakdown or otherwise un-readiness-to-hand of equipment (at levels ranging from micro to macro) is also an everyday aspect of navigating the urban landscape, where otherwise normalized/transparent/primordial relations render themselves conspicuous in their un-readiness-to-hand.

Don Ihde’s (1990) phenomenology of technics, which builds on insights from Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, provides further points of relevance in prefacing a discussion of the dynamics characterizing the navigation of the city. Here Ihde defines technics as: “...the symbiosis of artifact and user within a human action” (Ihde 1990: 73). In his phenomenology of technics, Ihde puts forth several existential relations that we have with technology, including: embodiment relations, hermeneutic relations, alterity relations, and background relations. Embodiment relations describe the way in which technology comes to be taken into the body and factored into one’s experiencing of the world. An example he gives is the relationship one has to eyeglasses: the “I-glasses-world” relationship, through the normalization of experiencing the world through the eyeglasses, comes to be re-written as “(I-glasses)-world”. As Ihde (1990) writes, with embodiment relations, “...I take the technologies into my experiencing in a particular way by way of perceiving through such technologies and through the reflexive transformation of my perceptual and body sense” (Ihde 1990: 72). Insomuch as this experiencing through technologies becomes increasingly normalized the technology becomes increasingly “transparent”. Furthermore, the better fit the technology is in relation to the body and the task at hand the more likely it is to recede into the background of awareness. Ihde’s notion of hermeneutic relations is where technologies are understood as something to be read and interpreted. As he writes: “Readable technologies call for the extension of my hermeneutic and “linguistic” capacities through the instruments, while the reading itself retains its bodily perceptual location as a relation with or towards the technology” (Ihde 1990: 88). He later writes: “Through hermeneutic relations we can, as it were, read ourselves into any possible situation without being there” (Ihde 1990: 92). With alterity relations technology becomes the other or quasi-other to which one relates. In addition to these three variations Ihde (1990) also discusses background relations, noting that when technologies operate in the background the “withdrawal” of its overt presence manifests itself as a sort of present “absence”, where the technology operates as if it were “to the side”. It is, however, still part of one’s experiential field albeit, by definition in the background.

Ihde’s phenomenology of technics and the genealogical line of thought from which it was derived (namely Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty) provide a very rich point of entry in thinking about the experience of being-in-the-city, which at any given moment is characterized by a complex, multi-layered texture of these relations, and which in their familiarity often come to be normalized and rendered transparent. What could be extended in Ihde’s account is the nuanced
way in which these relations are constantly being negotiated and are in constant flux. The navigation of the technologically constituted environment of the city necessarily involves dense layers of these relations at any given moment, and we often slip between them from one moment to the next. These relations may be more or less complex and densely layered at any given moment, and may appear to vary as such depending on the way in which they are viewed. Very often awareness of these relations recedes into the background of everyday experience in their normalization.

One last point of contextualization with respect to conceptualizing technology: As Nardi and O’Day (1999) point out the very language we use to describe our relationship to technology tends to colour our perception of it. At the most general level they note (as many others have) that to a large part discourse surrounding technology tends to take place along a utopian versus dystopian spectrum. Furthermore, they point out the extent to which the metaphors that are commonly used to describe our relationship to technology come to shape our perception of that relationship in a variety of ways—at times illuminating it and at times obscuring it. Among the more common metaphors observed are: technology as tool, technology as text, technology as system, and technology as ecology (all of which were operating implicitly in various places above). They suggest that describing technology as a tool involves viewing it as a means to an end (the instrumental definition) and tends to imply one’s control or mastery over it. Technology as a text involves viewing technology as carrier of meaning—something to be read and interpreted in order to understand its imperatives in different social settings. Technology as a system tends to involve the perception of the inextricable and relentless quality of technological change, and the sense of being caught up inside of it. And the metaphor that they are in most favour of is that of technology as ecology. As they note this metaphor tends to promote the view of being “...surrounded by a dense network of relationships in local environments”. (Nardi & O’Day 1999: 27). The metaphor of technology as ecology, thus, tends to afford a greater degree of agency among all actors in the environment and is somehow fitting with the notion of technics as the symbiotic relationship between body and technology. The notion of technology as ecology also seems particularly appropriate in thinking about being-in-the-city—for what is a city if not a technological ecology? Implied in this term is both the organic and mechanic—the movement of bodies with, within, and in relation to technology at a variety of levels within the multi-layered technological environment that is the city.

Building and Dwelling: The City as Technological Ecology

Insomuch as ecology deals with the relationships and interactions of organisms with each other and their environment, it seems appropriate to think of the city as a technological ecology. The environment of the city is comprised
overwhelmingly of technology, and thus being-in-the-city necessarily involves being enmeshed in a complex, multi-layered, symbiotic relationship with technology that is constantly negotiated and in constant flux. As Lash (2002) notes: “I operate as a man-machine interface—that is, as a technological form of natural life—because I must necessarily navigate through technological forms of social life” (15). As the environment of the is city is overwhelmingly a technological one, practically every bodily movement involves layers of relations with technology that are more or less to the foreground of one’s awareness at any given moment. Kittler (1996) speaks to the multi-layered-ness of the city in terms of networks, writing: “In a city, networks overlap upon other networks. Every traffic light, every subway transfer, and every office, as well as all the bars and bordellos, speak for this fact” (719). The city is comprised vast layers of networks—economic networks, social networks, political networks, transportation networks, information networks, plumbing networks, electrical networks, etc. All of these networks are, in some way, part of what Kline (2003) observed as sociotechnical systems of manufacture and sociotechnical systems of use. Manufacture and use correspond roughly to what might be among the most primary activities governing city space: namely, building and dwelling.

The city as a technological ecology is fundamentally characterized by building and dwelling. Heidegger (2001), in his essay Building Dwelling Thinking, examines the relationship between these activities, asking: “What is it to dwell?” and “How does building belong to dwelling?” (143). He observes that dwelling is something attained through building, and that building has dwelling as its goal. In this sense he provisionally notes that building and dwelling are related as means to ends. However, in a similar wariness exemplified in The Question Concerning Technology, where the instrumental definition of technology as simply a means to an end was interrogated as to its essential accuracy, here too the means-end schema is seen to obscure the essential relations of building and dwelling. For as Heidegger (2001) notes: “to build is in itself already to dwell” (Heidegger 2001: 144). He suggests that while not all buildings are dwellings, that they belong to the domain of dwelling. While things such as bridges, hangars, stadiums, power stations, railways stations, highways, dams, market halls, etc. are not dwellings (in the narrower sense), that: “These buildings house man” (Heidegger 2001: 144). Nowhere are building and dwelling more concentrated than in the city, and the way in which building and dwelling are articulated in city space necessarily shapes one’s experience of the city.

As an organic body dwelling in the technological ecology that is the city, one is necessarily engaged in an ongoing, multi-layered negotiation with technologies from the very moment waking. As Ihde (1990) writes: “It is likely that we are called into waking consciousness by a technology, be it the ringing of an alarm, the beeping of a quartz clock, or the sounds of a clock-radio” (1). Ihde goes on to note the vast array of mundane technological objects that we are likely to engage
with in the first hour of waking alone: beds, blankets, bathrooms, plumbing systems, kitchen appliances, moving outward to transportation systems, automobiles, etc., all of which are the genesis of particular technological trajectories, embedded in *socio-technical systems of manufacture* and *socio-technical systems of use*, and all of which in our interaction with them involve a negotiation. Implied in the term negotiation, is the way in which interactions with technology are inherently two-way relations. Ihde (2002) points to this, writing: “...all human-technology relations are two-way relations. Insofar as I use or employ a technology, I am used by and employed by that technology as well” (137–138).

As city space is comprised overwhelmingly of technology, this negotiation is particularly unavoidable. Moving around in the city necessarily involves navigation amidst the technologies that comprise the landscape, such as: buildings, sidewalks, streets, bridges, traffic lights, streets signs, street lamps, telephone poles, electrical and telephone wiring, advertisements, TV screens, etc. It is also a negotiation with those technologies that one grabs hold of and implements in everyday dealings such as keys, doors, tools, pens, books, computers, bags, mobile phones, maps, etc. There are also those technologies that are taken into one’s bodily experience of the environment, such as shoes, clothing, eyeglasses, and various other prosthetics. And there are those technologies operating in the background at all times, such as: electrical grids, information networks, plumbing systems, thermostats, etc.

My own present mundane experience exemplifies one particular articulation of this multi-layered technological negotiation. Right now I am sitting in a room, in a building, in the city. In this sense, I am literally inside of technology at a variety of different levels. Practically every aspect of my perceptual field is currently engaged with technology and my bodily posture and movements are shaped by the negotiation with things such as my clothing and the chair that I am sitting on in relation to the table that I am sitting at and the computer that I am typing on. I am currently listening to music with headphones; however, the volume is quite low and thus it is rather unobtrusive. This aspect of the soundscape seems to meld with the low white noise of the ventilation system, whose cool air currents make themselves known to my bare arms. At a certain point the coolness of the air circulating within the microclimate of the building prompts me to put on a sweater. I am sitting directly in front a large window and the view consists almost entirely of concrete, steel, glass. The vast majority of the frame is dominated by building structures. In the upper right portion of the window frame there is one building that has been embodied by an exoskeleton of scaffolding, and to the far right a large mechanical crane pivots in and out of the window frame, exemplifying the city’s fundamental preoccupation with building.

I am necessarily engaged in a multi-layered negotiation with technology. The most immediate site of my negotiation amidst these dense networks of technological relationships is the body, and the way in which the body-technology
relationship is negotiated involves a constant reshaping of perceptual regimes, which is simultaneously both mundane and profound. Merleau-Ponty (1962) implicitly articulates both mundane and profound aspects of this relationship, writing: “Habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments” (166). It is through our everyday engagement with technologies that our relationship to these things comes to be normalized, rendered mundane, habitual, familiar, and transparent; however, the way in which this relationship is negotiated involves a reshaping and dilation of our particular way of being-in-the-world.

Moving Around In The City

Being-in-the-city involves movement. The dilation of our being-in-the-world through the appropriation of instruments can be exemplified by examining the negotiation between technology and the body in the various modes of moving around in the city. This negotiation takes place at various levels of awareness, with varying degrees of foregroundedness or backgroundedness and may be more or less complex and multi-layered at any given moment. The variety of ways in which bodies move throughout the city exemplify technological variations that are simultaneously mundane and profound. The way in which the technology-body relationship is negotiated and articulated in one’s everyday going about the city holds significant perceptual and thus epistemological implications. Kingwell (2008) acknowledges the link between epistemology and lived urban spaces writing: “...epistemology and philosophy of mind are further linked to the real grids and spaces that we conscious entities occupy, the streets and places of actual cities. Epistemology is architecture, and architecture epistemology, because both concern our experience of the world as space” (24). Kingwell (2008) attends to the way in which the bodily experience of urban space comes to shape consciousness, while acknowledging the mutually constituted nature of this relationship. As he writes: “Consciousness shapes cities. They are built places, the results of human imagination and planning... Cities also shape consciousness then, becoming the places of our dwelling and occupation and love affairs. They house our thoughts and guide our flow” (Kingwell 2008: 136).

In thinking about the various ways in which the technology-body relationship is negotiated in moving about city space we can juxtapose several common modes of travel that are mediated differently and to greater or lesser degree by technology. Among them: walking, cycling, driving, and riding the subway. In doing so perceptual, experiential, and epistemological implications (all of which intersect with one another) are revealed. The particularities of any city space in terms of layout, geography, and infrastructure lend themselves more or less to particular modes of moving around, and this is certainly a major consideration and point of contestation for urban planning. At a more primary level, however, an account of
technological variations of moving about the city yields insight into perceptual implications surrounding the negotiation of the body-technology relationship.

When one is walking in the city movement is, to a large part, shaped by the negotiation of things like sidewalks, streets, traffic lights, cars, buildings, other people, the city’s layout, geography, etc. It is also a negotiation that takes place with such mundane (but nonetheless technologically sophisticated) things as shoes and clothing and the appropriateness that they hold in relation to my body for the task of walking, as well as the relative distance between things, and the ease or difficulty of geographic features in relation to the suitability of one’s body to get around this way. Walking in its slowness holds different perceptual possibilities for the experience of the urban landscape. The potential ability to attend to micro-level details of the environment in the slow scrolling cityscape is vastly expanded when walking as opposed to faster moving modes of transportation. Things may be noticed that would otherwise be perceived only as a blur or not at all with different modes of travel. Details from street level detritus to insects or birds on the sidewalk to the endless stream of signs and advertisements seeking one’s attention are all available in a way that may be obscured by different modes of movement. Attention is freed to a greater or lesser degree based on immediate obstacles such as density of other walkers, car traffic, cyclists, etc. One’s body is vulnerable to the natural elements (wind, rain, snow, hot or cold temperatures, etc.), mediated only by clothing. It is also more vulnerable to other hazards such as traffic. Walking as a mode of perception has different temporal and spatial limits than other more technologically mediated forms that extend the bodily potential in terms of distance and speed. Walking in the city, while certainly a less technologically mediated or extended as an articulation of the body-technology relationship, still very much involves a complex and multi-layered negotiation with technology at a range of levels.

Moving around the city by bicycle steps up the level of integration between body and technology, mechanically extending the natural capacity for movement of the body. As McLuhan (1967) famously observed: “The wheel is an extension of the foot” (31-32). One’s body is no longer in direct mediation with the street but now by shoes on pedals attached to a crank, moving gears that turn wheels encased by inflated rubber tires—the new point of mediation with the street. Bodily capacities here are greatly extended as speed and distance are relativized accordingly. There is a speed and flexibility afforded to riding a bicycle that in many instances prove advantageous to either foot or car travel in crowded city spaces. There is still a certain unmediated intimacy with the environment but the technological extension of speed results in a very different perceptual experience. Visual details that are perceptible while walking pass by in a blur on a bicycle; and one is necessarily drawn to attend to different things while cycling than walking. There is a bodily vulnerability that is possibly increased from walking in that one is often dealing more intimately with car traffic. There is still an
immediate contact with the environment that is further mediated with other forms of travel, though the experience of that environment is quite different than when walking. The coupled increase in speed and intimacy with the environment changes the way one experiences the air—the air is tangible as a thickness directly correlated to speed.

When fully absorbed in the act of cycling there is a truly remarkable symbiosis between body and technology. In the skillful navigation of city streets by way of bicycle one’s awareness of the relationship to the technology tends to recede into the background when all things are functioning fluidly. This relationship may be rendered conspicuous in the instance of some form of equipment failure (which may range from subtle to drastic). However, when things are functioning smoothly there is a remarkable unity between bicycle and body—the bicycle becomes an extension of the body. What is further remarkable about the body-technology negotiation in the instance of cycling is the extent to which it exemplifies a very deep type of bodily memory that is much more about movement than conscious retention. The popular simile “It’s just like riding a bike” pays testament to the fact that one seems to retain a kind of deep-rooted bodily memory of how to ride a bicycle even after the passage of extended periods of time. Merleau-Ponty (1962) alluded to a similar kind of bodily memory in his discussion of habit, with the example typing. As he writes: “It is possible to know how to type without being able to say where the letters which make the words are to be found on the banks of keys” (166). In both cycling and typing (as with many other body-technology relationships) there is a type of bodily memory at work that is very different from that of active conscious recall.

The symbiosis of body-technology is differently exemplified in driving a car. This variation of technologically mediated movement yields further insight into the perceptual implications in the negotiation of this relationship. In a car, as opposed to walking or cycling, one’s body is literally inside the technology, and thus there is further technological mediation one’s experience of the environment. There exists a microclimate within the car that can be manipulated in ever more sophisticated ways. In this sense there is an inside and an outside lacking in the previous variations. Driving a car involves several of Ihde’s (1990) relations with technology layered simultaneously. Being-in-a-car is an *embodiment relation* insomuch as one is embodied by the car, experiencing the space through the car. There are at once a number of *background relations* (the thermostat, the smooth running of the engine, suspension, etc.); *hermeneutic relations* are exemplified explicitly in the numerous gauges on the dashboard that are there to be read; and my relation to other cars on the road is certainly one of *alterity*. Furthermore, it can be said that these relations are anything but static—they are complex, multi-layered, and in constant motion. Depending on how the body-technology relationship is being negotiated one may slip between these relations from one moment to the next. For instance, there is a move from *embodiment relation* to
**alterity relation** in stepping out of the car. Furthermore, in the instance of breakdown, the transparency of **embodiment** and **background relations** in the flow of skillful coping and smooth running of the technology immediately become **alterity** and **hermeneutic** as the point of failure requires diagnosis.

When driving in the city there are an astonishing number of considerations—one must attend to a great number of variables and the margin for error is very little. However, the more one drives in the city the more these complex layers of variables recede into the background as a result of an absorbed skillful coping. One is able to navigate remarkably tight parking spaces and dense traffic that tend to characterize city driving. Again this speaks to a certain unity achieved in the technology-body relationship, where the body here has taken on the exoskeleton of the vehicle extending it dramatically in terms of bodily capacities and temporal-spatial relations. Merleau-Ponty (1962) alludes to the ability to navigate space intuitively with bodily extensions in his discussion of habit, specifically citing the example of driving. As he writes: “If I am in the habit of driving a car, I enter a narrow opening and see that I can ‘get through’ without comparing the width of the opening with that of the wings, just as I go through a doorway without checking the width of the doorway against that of my body [107]” (165). Here, Merleau-Ponty (1962) notes that one’s experience of space is not that of objects with specific measurements (volume and size), rather one experiences these things as “potentialities of volume” in relation to “the demand for a certain amount of free space” (165). Again, we see a certain symbiotic unity achieved between technology and body. This too relates to Ihde’s (1990) notion of technological transparency achieved in **embodiment relations**, which itself was much related to Heidegger’s discussion of familiarity and the skilful coping with equipment in the environment.

Another variation of technological movement about the city, which further exemplifies the perceptual implications of the negotiation of body and technology, is that of riding the subway. Being-in-the-subway one is once again embodied by technology, although unlike driving a car one relinquishes control over the vehicle’s movement. As a result there are fewer immediate demands on one’s attention than when cycling, driving, or walking. As a result of these different attentional demands, and the fact that one is travelling below ground, moving about the city this way has whole different set of perceptual implications. When riding the subway one enters at a particular point in the system, negotiating turnstiles, token slots, card-swiping machines, crowds of people (which ebb and flow depending on the particular time of day). One descends beneath the ground where one is denied perceptual access to the above ground geography; thus, this mode of travel is characterized by large blind spots in above ground geography.

In thinking beyond the specific negotiation and perceptual implications of these particular modes of moving about the city, the related concepts of familiarity (Heidegger) and habit (Merleau-Ponty) further illuminate the way this body-
technology negotiation takes place in time. Aside from the particular mode of travel, it is certainly a very different experience to navigate an urban space for the first time as opposed to those routes that one takes on a regular basis. Navigating unfamiliar city space is usually hermeneutic relations (maps, directions, signs, etc.) contributing to one’s spatial orientation, while navigating the familiar spaces of the everyday tends to happen almost unconsciously. Insomuch as the city itself may be viewed from the macro level as a technology that one is embodied by and in constant negotiation with, what Heidegger observes with his hammer example (that the more one grabs hold of it and puts it to use the more primordial does this relationship become) might also be extended to the way that we experience everyday movement within the city in terms of familiar or unfamiliar spaces. The more we put the city to use as a technology in our everyday dealings with it, the more primordial does this relationship become; and the more the equipment that are involved in the everyday navigation of the city recede into the background. In navigating unfamiliar urban space, the city as a technology is experienced as an “un-readiness-to-hand”. Relationships that recede into transparency as a result of their familiarity (through the everyday usage of specific routes and modes of transportation) are rendered conspicuous in the un-readiness-to-hand of unfamiliar spaces.

**Experiencing Architectural Space**

In the city everyday movement is the movement within and between architectural structures necessarily involving the negotiation of thresholds. As Kingwell (2008) writes: “The threshold is an ontological anomaly, a space outside of space, existing only in its vanishing... The function thus of the threshold, therefore, is not to be wide but to separate, and thus to be crossed” (158). Architecture, at a fundamental level, is about the construction of boundaries that delineate and thus create space. Structures themselves have thresholds that are more or less permeable to different things (i.e. bodies, light, sound, air, etc.). They determine what constitutes the private vs. the public and often due to the permeability of boundaries this distinction is blurred or intruded upon.

Kingwell (2008) acknowledges the extent to which the concept of the threshold is one that governs not only the creation of architectural structures and thus meaningful space, but also the fundamental way in which it is a feature of consciousness itself. He writes: “The logic of inside and out belongs to us all—not only because we all must live with and in buildings, those monuments to human desire, but also because, and more profoundly still, it structures consciousness itself” (Kingwell 2008: 93). Thus, we can think of the perpetual crossing of thresholds not only in terms of something that characterizes ones bodily movement in space, but also in the way that this is closely related to the experiential dimensions of communication, perception, and consciousness.
Kingwell (2008) sees the act of crossing thresholds, something that we are doing all the time in moving about the city, as being closely related to Heidegger’s notion of *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand). As he writes: “Indeed, the mundane act of unself-conscious crossing is a good example of what Heidegger means by Zuhandenheit, the readiness-to-hand of potentially revealing acts or spaces, whose revelatory possibilities are held in check by their very everydayness” (Kingwell 2008: 158). The myriad of structural thresholds that mark out and create space at every turn in the city is certainly exemplary of the vast and complex technological infrastructure that is the physicality of the city in terms of its architectural space. It is also very much true that at the most fundamental level in our everyday going about the city the conspicuousness of these architectural boundaries tend to recede into the background of awareness—particularly in those spaces most familiar. Again, Heidegger’s notion of the readiness-to-hand [*Zuhandenheit*] speaks to the experience of crossing thresholds in architectural space. Just as it was noted that the more the hammer is put to use the more primordial and transparent is one’s relation to it become, so too might this be said about the navigation of thresholds in urban space. Heidegger’s observation of the conspicuous of breakdown or otherwise un-readiness-to-hand also shows itself here. Familiarity and habit tend to result in the transparency of thresholds in the everyday navigation of city space. These thresholds render themselves conspicuous in breakdown or otherwise un-readiness-to-hand (ie. broken lock, misplaced keys, etc.).

There is also the permeability of boundaries in city space. The proliferation of communications and communication technologies in city space tends to result in the increasing permeability of boundaries that delineate private from public—communication spills. This is something that has become increasingly apparent with the proliferation of mobile phones. Conversations that prior to this technology would have been more contained within the private space of the home or office spill into public space. And in terms of the home, sounds from the street or noisy neighbours, unwanted telemarketers, etc., permeate the boundaries of private space illuminating the differing types of thresholds. Again here, the way in which the technology-body relationship is negotiated reshapes the types of things to enter into one’s perceptual field and the modes through which one perceives them.

**The Mediated City**

The movement of information throughout the urban environment is constantly reshaped by technology holding profound implications in terms of one’s experience of space and time. As McQuire (2008) observes: “The intermeshing of digital technology with urban terrain has produced a new set of pressures with both centripetal and centrifugal trajectories” (McQuire 2008: 20). One’s movement and experience of the city is increasingly characterized by an engagement with a wide
variety media—both those that are part of the cityscape as well as those that accompany the body in the everyday going about the city. Kittler (1996) goes so far as to note the extent to which the city as a whole can be seen as a medium. As he writes: “MEDIA record, transmit and process information—this is the most elementary definition of media. Media can include old-fashioned things like books, familiar things like the city and newer inventions like the computer” (Kittler 1996: 722). At the micro level, being-in-the-city involves the ongoing negotiation with and navigation through increasingly mediated spaces. The ever-increasing plethora of communication devices that people tend to engage with comes to characterize, texture, and give shape to everyday experience in the contemporary city. The way in which one interacts with media in the city necessarily involves a reshaping of perception (both in terms of those things to be perceived as well as opening up entirely different modes of perception), which profoundly impacts the experience of space and time; however, this experience tends to be quickly normalized, again rendered transparent, through regular engagement.

The increasing proliferation of communication technologies, most heightened in urban space, is a manifestation of what Jonas (2003) observed as the circular means-end relationship of modern technology and its capacity to generate ceaseless new direction for innovation. Also, communication technologies themselves are unique in that they allow for the capacity to accelerate the spread of innovation, further accelerating these processes. A result of the ever-increasing proliferation of communication technologies has been a qualitative shift in the nature of information. Borgmann (2003) observes this drawing the distinction between information about reality, information for reality, and information as reality, noting: “Traditionally, information has been about and for reality. But through the technological developments of the past century and a half, information, though still about and for reality, also has begun to rival reality, itself; and has emerged virtually as reality” (Borgmann 2003: 573). Information as reality it would seem has resulted from the genesis of both information for and information about reality and has become perpetually expansive. The experiential implications of this hold significant considerations in the navigation of urban space.

The contemporary city is, as McQuire (2008) notes, a media-architecture complex that profoundly reshapes perceptions of time and space. McQuire (2008) testifies further to this writing: “Dwelling in a space-time framed by a proliferation of media technologies fundamentally alters human sensory and perceptual parameters, sustaining a range of encounters which questions the limits of the body and the authority of embodied perception” (McQuire 2008: 10). Here McQuire (2008) attends to the primacy of the body and the perceptual implications involved in the negotiation of the body-technology relationship within increasingly mediated city space. McQuire’s (2008) broad argument is that the pervasiveness of media in urban space coupled with tendencies of convergence, mobility and instantaneity “become a constitutive frame for a distinctive mode of
social experience” (vii). As he writes: “...the spatial experience of modern social life emerges through a complex process of co-constitution between architectural structures and urban territories, social practices and media feedback”. (McQuire 2008: vii). For McQuire, the proliferation of media in the urban environment results in the creation of “hybrid spatial ensembles”. The ways in which the body-technology relationship is negotiated in relation to ever-expanding forms of media comprising the cityscape holds profound perceptual implications for how we orient ourselves in space and time. As McLuhan (1967) was apt to point out: “Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one of these senses alters the way we think and act—the way we perceive the world.” (26-41).

Conclusion

The city is an everyday environment constituted through technology and characterized by the continual proliferation of technology. As such, the city, more than any other space, might be thought of as a technological ecology, where one’s relationship to the environment (and increasingly to others) involves a myriad of technological relations. In the city one is necessarily enmeshed in a complex and densely layered set of technological relations that are in constant flux as one moves about the city and as a result of perpetual technological changes in the urban environment. These relations may be more or less complex and densely layered and more or less foregrounded in one’s awareness at any given moment. The most central argument that has been put forth in this paper is that fundamental to the experience of being-in-the-city is an ongoing, multi-layered, negotiation with technologies at levels ranging from micro to macro. The most primary site of this negotiation is the body-technology relationship, which is constantly being renegotiated as one moves throughout urban space amidst and with a variety of technologies. The way in which the body-technology relationship is negotiated and articulated holds profound perceptual implications both in terms of those things that enter one’s perceptual field as well as the very mode through which they are perceived. The everyday engagement with technology in the urban environment tends to result in a normalization and transparency of body-technology relations, receding into the background of awareness, rendering themselves explicit, manifest, or conspicuous in the instance of breakdown or failure. Insomuch as being-in-the-city necessarily involves the navigation of complex and dense layers of technological relations at every turn it has been suggested that what is fundamental to both the “city as sign” and “signs of the city” is technology—that technology is and always has been fundamental to the nature of the city as reality, as image, and as symbol.
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Notes
1  The room that I am sitting in is on the 4th floor of the Toronto Reference Library, and the table that I am sitting at is in front of a large window overlooking the cityscape facing Yonge Street, which currently holds the title of the “longest street in the world”.

References
"Quit stalling...!": Destiny and Destination on L.A.'s Inner City Roads

By Martin Zeilinger

Abstract

If driving has today really become a Western "metaphor for being" (Hutchinson), then common roadside signs proclaiming "Right lane must exit" or "Through traffic merge left", inventions such as the automatic transmission, and the agreeable straightness of freeways can all be understood as symptoms of an ongoing socio-political struggle between the driver as democratic agent, and the state as institutionalized regulatory force. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the context of urban traffic, where private motorized transportation represents both the supreme (if illusory) expression of personal freedom, and official efforts to channel individualism by obliterating its sense of direction and ideological divergence. On the concrete proving grounds of the clogged inner-city freeway, “nomad science” and “state science” (Deleuze & Guattari) thus oscillate between the pseudo-liberatory expressivity of mainstream car culture and the self-effacing dromoscopic “amnesia of driving” (Baudrillard). Are a city’s multitudes of cars resistant “projectiles” (Virilio) or, rather, hegemonic “sites of containment” (Jane Jacobs)? This essay approaches the complex tensions between “untamable” democratic mobility and state-regulated transit by way of two Hollywood-produced films that focus on traffic in Los Angeles: in Collateral (2004), a cab driver comes to recognize and transcend the hopelessly directionless circularity dictated by his job; in Falling Down (1993), a frustrated civil service employee abandons his car on a rush-hour freeway and decides to walk home, forced to traverse the supposedly unwalkable city without the “masking screen of the windshield” (Virilio). As they “quit stalling”, both protagonists become dangerous variants of the defiant nomad – one a driver who remains on the road but goes "under the radar", the other a transient pedestrian whose movement becomes viral and unpredictable. My analysis of the films’ metropolitan setting and of the incessant movement that marks both narratives links political and philosophical economies of motion, speed, and transit to a discussion of the various bandes vagabondage (Deleuze & Guattari) that are formed between city and driver, driver and car, and car and pedestrian. In this discussion, the inner-city road emerges as a primary site of conflict between civic rule and individual subject, and the flow of urban traffic comes to represent the tensions generated in spaces where movement is understood as both liberating and as a form of control.

Keywords: Traffic, Urbanism, Los Angeles, Falling Down, Collateral

“Quit stalling…!”: Destiny and destination on L.A.’s inner city roads

The time has come, it seems, to face the facts: revolution is movement, but movement is not a revolution.

(Virilio 2006: 43)

In her 1961 study of the socio-political structure and overall livability of American urban centers, Jane Jacobs famously detailed how the material circumstances of our living environments influence social relationships and inform our “sense of connection to the world” (Jacobs 1961: 19). In this essay, I expand Jacob’s dictum with the assumption that cars, too, are part of the circle of material circumstances that constitute our homes, and that car-centered politics and economies of transportation, therefore, strongly influence our sense of belonging and situatedness. By pairing two relatively recent mainstream feature films with prominent commentary on ideological regimes of mobility (by Deleuze, Virilio, and Baudrillard), I will discuss how driving serves a double function of manipulating our interaction with the world around us, and simultaneously of veiling this restrictive mediating function. Given the specifically cinematic context of two narratives that primarily deal with experiences of urban mobility, a further subtext of this essay will be the implication that an ideological critique of the ways in which the windshield frames our perception of the world might be productively extended to cinematic experiences in general.

Similar to the collective experience of life in the urban neighborhoods discussed by Jacobs, the use of cars and our dependence on them shape a strong sense of our lifeworlds and of our ways of interfacing with them. All kinds of movement – and especially motorized transit – may consequently be understood as multi-faceted metaphors for “being” in general. Based on this understanding of the car and its inhabitants as more or less autonomous vectors, the sociologist Sikivu Hutchinson, for example, has argued that “the automobile has not only destroyed meaningful experience with and attachment to ”place” in the city, but has played a big role in effacing its history” (Hutchinson 2003: 110). Despite the fact that they help us traverse space, cars can thus effectively blind drivers to the material and social realities they move through – a function that has a clear political dimension insofar as it is maintained through a state-regulated system of roadways, traffic regulations, and public transportation services.

This essay is based on the assumption, then, that an urban population’s interfacing with the realities of its lifeworlds is impacted not only by the parameter of “location”, but that it is, furthermore, strongly inflected by the processual circumstances of how connections between such locations are realized and experienced. As the most prominent state-controlled modality of private transportation, driving is, in other words, an ideal site for investigating how the material and po-
political realities of contemporary urban life are generated, manipulated and obscured. In what follows, I thus scrutinize the tense and precarious relationship between driving and civic agency in two Hollywood films that focus on the complex struggle between driver and road, and that centrally hinge on the suggestion that the sense of "freedom" that driving is said to give us may be a mere simulation — a by-product of a highly efficient system of control. In Michael Mann’s *Collateral* (2004), a L.A. cab driver (Jamie Foxx) comes to recognize and ultimately transcend the hopelessly directionless circularity dictated by his job; in Joel Schumacher’s *Falling Down* (1993), a frustrated civil service employee (Michael Douglas) abandons his car on a grid-locked L.A. freeway, and decides to traverse the supposedly unwalkable city on foot, thereby pushing through what Paul Virilio calls the masking screen of the windshield (Virilio 1998: 11-22). Both films are set in Los Angeles, and acknowledge the city as a site that stereotypically represents both the utopian vision of democratic motorized liberty and its dystopic opposite of a smog-polluted, four-wheeled abyss that enslaves its inhabitants in the name of mobility, rather than freeing them. Both *Collateral* and *Falling Down* thus invoke L.A.’s omnipresent web of freeways, on- and off-ramps and filthy roadides as major antagonists vis-à-vis the lead actors, and posit driving and traffic as the primary sites of the ideological and socio-political conflicts played out in the narratives.

As I will show, both films portray road and car, as well as more abstract notions of the ordered flow of traffic, gasoline and capital as zones of never-ending conflicts between the vague cipher of the state (or law) and its mobile subjects. On the road, varied constellations of a hegemonic power structure are constantly being generated, openly put in question, and surreptitiously reconfirmed — and both *Falling Down* and *Collateral* are in this sense representative of the fluid ideological constellations that continuously play out in the unceasing, yet always-impeded flow of traffic. Drivers are thus perpetually faced with the following problematic: at what point does a drive to the movies, to the pier, or to the mall cease to represent a volitional, deliberate activity, and become, rather, an act of "being-driven" towards these somewhat disingenuous symbols of democratic liberty? If driving has truly become a metaphor for being, then common roadside signs proclaiming "Right lane must exit" or "Through traffic merge left", inventions such as the automatic transmission, and the agreeable straightness of freeways can all be understood as symptomatic of ongoing realignments of the power dynamics between the driver as democratic agent and the state as an institutionalized regulatory force. How, then, are the ordered and controlled structures of mobility that comprise our experience of driving constituted and deployed? How are they utilized by State apparatuses, and subversively appropriated by resistant democratic subjects? Is driving ever "a way out", or are more radical measures required — perhaps what the A.L.A.R.M.A. group of activists and media artists has called the performance of the unimaginable: walking in L.A. (Gonzalez, Ramon & Chavoya
1998: 82)? How, finally, might such a metaphor be extended to the experience of cinema more generally? Are the Hollywood films discussed herein flattened representations – like the roadside attraction seen through a windshield – that invite or that obstruct “walking in L.A”?

In “Dromoscopy, or The Ecstasy of Enormities”, Paul Virilio reflects on the spectacle that unfolds before the eyes of the driver of any automobile, and describes it as a “dromoscopic simulation” – as the projection of a plethora of moving images into the interior of the car, a simulation that creates, for the driver and passengers (who remain stationary in relation to the vehicle), the sensation of being moved.¹ On the screens of windshield, rearview mirror and dashboard, the observers of this great picture show of driving – the “voyager-voyeur[s]” (Virilio 1998: 13) – behold the virtual movement and animation of the inanimate objects they are passing by. “So long as the dromoscopic simulation continues”, Virilio writes, “the comfort of the passenger is assured” (1998: 13). Yet this comfort, founded on the illusion of autonomous movement, actually “depends upon being immobile while moving”, a state imposed on driver and passengers by the regulated system of transportation (1998: 14).

This state of comfort, of course, is that of utter immobility at the heart of a moving machine, a fact that driver and passengers may remain unaware of. Virilio’s argument thus points to the already-mentioned tension between standstill and motion (or progress) on which both Falling Down and Collateral focus: it implies that behind every drive we go on, there is present a concealed ideological force that creates and perpetually recreates the spectacle of individual freedom that is embodied in the seemingly unlimited mobility of the passengers. Collateral’s protagonist Max, therefore, initially embraces his job as cabdriver as one that gives him access to the ultimately illusory freedom of always being on the road. The protagonist of Falling Down, on the other hand, is deprived of the safe, manipulative haven of his car’s interior right from the beginning, and as a result is forced immediately to perceive his surroundings differently. As will be seen, Virilio’s arguments throughout “Dromoscopy” thus approximate the premise of both films discussed in this paper – namely the drivers’ paradoxical “mobile inertia”, i.e., their passivity vis-à-vis the dromoscopic simulation that focuses their attention on a distant goal, blinds them to their surroundings, and strengthens their belief in the inevitability of the modalities of driving. The fact that this simulation largely goes unnoticed suggests that its state-controlled staging contains a mechanism which enables it to veil itself from the driver’s view (who will be distracted by traffic lights, construction sites, and the flow of traffic in general), while the conditions of the driver’s exposure to the spectacle are perpetually reproduced and maintained. Again, this argument tentatively links the “projection” of a car’s exterior onto the windshield to the viewing of film: as Virilio expands our concept of driving by describing it as the stationary perception of “moving” images, so the event of movie-watching can be compared to the activity of driving. The cinema-
machine, it could be argued, imposes – or tries to impose – a set of parameters on
the completeness of the audience’s experience that is not unlike the range of con-
ceptual and practical limits that govern motorized transit. The implied suggestion
that cinema, whether as ideological or technical apparatus, veils as much as it il-
luminates is, of course, by no means new; but in the context of Falling Down and
Collateral, it brings up the interesting question of how mainstream “driving films”
in general may engage (or ignore) this issue.

Most of Collateral is a literalization of the above-mentioned comfortable state
of unrecognized immobility, and it is only towards the end of the movie that the
cabdriver Max abandons his vehicle and is thus able to break through the surface
of the fraudulent sense of freedom that driving had previously provided him with.
In Falling Down, on the other hand, the dromoscopic screen of the windshield is
removed at the very outset, and the rest of the film is a violent meditation on its
function as a veil covering up the actual on- and off-road realities outside the car.
But what are the specific political functions of such an elaborate “spectacle”?
Most literally, it would seem, they rest in the fact that movement, as an exertion of
physical force, holds the promise of violence, resistance and chaos. As Gilles De-
leuze and Félix Guattari note in A Thousand Plateaus, it is therefore “a vital con-
cern of every State … to control migration and … to establish a zone of rights
over an entire ”exterior”, over all the flows traversing the ecumenon” (Deleuze &
Guattari 1987: 385) “There is”, in other words, “a need for fixed paths in well-
deﬁned directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement,
and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects” (1987:
386).

Beyond the institution of traffic rules, this containment of mobility is also
achieved by Virilio’s dromoscopic simulation, which he primarily describes in
appropriated aesthetic terms, reminiscent today of the act of interfacing with a
virtual reality. Based on Virilio’s notion that “[t]he driver’s seat of machines of-
fers a political image of the future” (Virilio 1998: 20), the car becomes – in line
with Deleuze and Guattari’s argument – a prosthetic, naturalized (and thus invis-
ible) extension of contemporary human beings’ sense of their surroundings. In
equating the windshield, rearview mirror, etc. with screens, Virilio consequently
posits the car as a “machine of surveillance” (1998: 20), rather than as a machine
that subjects its users to state surveillance. This implied complicity of driver and
passengers again points to the fact that their continuous subjection to the spectacle
of driving serves to obscure its own double function of creating, on the one hand,
a sense of liberty and mobility, and, on the other hand, of blinding them to the
anti-dynamic and circular nature of the ”spectacle” in which they continuously
participate.

Driving the LA freeway system, then, may well be a way of performing indi-
vidual, “untamable” democratic mobility, and thus of asserting one’s sense of
freedom; but simultaneously, the same act of driving always feeds the ideological
machine that continues to direct, control, and (literally and figuratively) immobilize all drivers. Both *Falling Down* and *Collateral* are shot through with implied references to stereotypically American notions of “Manifest Destiny” and a “Westward Ho” mentality that have helped to purport and consolidate a very particular set of myths of the limitless opportunities a motorized, mobile America holds in store. But like most road movies that most prominently engage such myths, neither *Falling Down* nor *Collateral* formulates a conclusive strategy for successfully breaking down the windshield-screen, and for the most part, both films’ protagonists struggles (reflecting, again, those commonly picked up in the popular road movie genre) acknowledge the bounds of the greater regime of autonomous mobility, rather than conquering them.

Yet since both films are set exclusively against the geographical setting of Los Angeles’ network of roads and freeways – not exactly known to represent “progress” – the films nevertheless manage to strongly (if inconclusively) challenge the idea that driving embodies freedom. The road emerges as the most immediate point of contact and conflict between the state and its subjects. Forced to engage this conflict, *Collateral*’s protagonist Max thus slowly comes to terms with the deceptive myth of motorized mobility’s freedom, which he himself perpetuated by driving his taxi through the nocturnal city for twelve years. Once he realizes the extent to which he had fallen prey to the illusory spectacle of the freedom of mobility, the narrative allows him to finally transcend what Jean Baudrillard, in *America*, has called the state-induced “amnesia of driving” (Baudrillard 1988: 9). He does so by actively resisting the stasis of his immediate environment, wrecking his car, and, notably, by getting on the subway. *Falling Down*, as noted, sets out at a different stage in the power struggle between lawful road and defiant driver: here, a former employee of the Ministry of Defense abandons his car on a congested freeway and embarks on a westward journey home on foot. Having penetrated the ideological façade of allegedly liberatory motorization, the protagonist then performs a series of violent outbursts – fierce acts of resistance directed against the dominant ideologies that restrict and regulate his movement – that call to mind the phrase ”road rage”, but that cannot fit the category simply because he is no longer driving.

The ideological conflicts that both films locate in the tension between driving and being-driven also figure importantly in Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of nomadology. If, as they state, it is indeed a “vital concern of every State [to] restrict speed, regulate circulation [and] relativize movement”, then the road is, undoubtedly, an ideal site for the deployment of a complex set of organizing and controlling mechanisms. As an important point of contact between a state’s laws and surveillance apparatus and its subjects (citizens who feel free because they can drive wherever they choose), the street-grid thus functions to uphold law and order, since uncontrolled movement would constitute the threat of potential resistance. Ideally, Deleuze and Guattari point out, a state must subordinate its subjects
in ways that make movement manifest itself as a naturalized law. In an interesting analogy to the realm of physics, they thus argue that “it cannot be said that a body that is dropped has a speed, however fast it falls: rather it has an infinitely decreasing slowness in accordance with the law of falling bodies” (1987: 371). Cars, in this sense, do not speed along a freeway of the driver’s own volition. They are, rather, hurled along by the authorities and by the rules that regulate direction and pace of all motorized movement. Virilio, accordingly, describes cars as “projectiles” (Virilio 1998: 17), a term that again stresses the passivity of all vehicles in relation to the laws that govern their movement.

In Collateral, the protagonist for the most part willingly assumes this position of subordination. Falling Down, however, posits an interesting alternative that works well within the argumentative framework proposed by Deleuze and Guattari as well as by Virilio: once the film’s protagonist has abandoned his car, he becomes an uncontainable threat to the state’s rule of law as embodied by the rules of the road. By arming himself, he becomes, in fact, the “driving force” of the movement around him. No longer is he contained in a projectile-car bound by the naturalized laws of the state; rather, he is now the commander of his own arsenal of projectiles (at one point even a portable rocket launcher), and thus poses a nomadic threat to the order he has more and more disturbed ever since his seemingly straightforward act of deserting his vehicle. This transmutation is also reflected in the naming of the protagonist: not knowing who they are dealing with, the police identify the man by his car’s license plate, which, appropriately, spells “D-Fens”. Throughout much of the film there is, consequently, a sense that he is a vigilante actively defending his personal rights in lieu of the freedom of all drivers. In an added twist, it finally emerges that he is a former employee of the Ministry of Defense, so that the desertion of “D-Fens” begins to look even more like a politically motivated form of resistance. By abandoning his car, and by repudiating the dominant deterritorializing strategy of the never-ending, circular drive (something that Collateral’s Max only achieves towards the end of his journey), D-Fens is able to tentatively resist internalization by the state order, and to evade its sphere of control while spatially remaining within it. After abandoning his car in the clogged arteries of L.A.’s freeway system, he acquires the elusive distinction of a viral organism on an infectious rampage – infectious but at the same time contaminated with the poison of the system he seeks to undermine; a nomad who can for a limited time freely roam the otherwise clearly regulated strata of Los Angeles.

Whatever the motivation, D-Fens’s unruly and uncontainable movement, which becomes possible only once he leaves his car behind, strongly works against the state’s scheme of what the political scientist James Scott calls “the making legible” of space (see Scott 1998: xiv, 445 p.). Yet while Scott discusses the project of “legibilization” (again a control measure designed to channel the position and movement of the public into a manageable order) in primarily static terms (such
as "forest hygienization" and strategies of restricting the rezoning of urban regions), the concept is relevant also in terms of a more dynamic mobility, as evidenced by Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of the long history of state-ordained repression of bandes vagabondages (1987: 368), or by Virilio’s extensive discussion of the politics of mobile warfare (see Virilio 2006: Chapter 2). All ideological ordering schemes of making urban space legible for the state, then, may be seen to simultaneously serve the function of rendering the socio-political realities of the street-grid illegible for its inhabitants. Arguably, naturalizing particular modes of transportation such as motorized private transit, which can easily be bound by constrictive systems of rules and regulations, is very useful for upholding the integrity of Virilio’s dromoscopic spectacle, which works to remove the possibility of friction between subjects. And indeed, as Hutchinson points out in Imagining Transit, the propagation of private mobility has in many contexts eliminated the necessity for contact between urban dwellers, and has erased social awareness in large parts of urban and suburban populations (Hutchinson 2003: 111). The metal veil of the chassis, Virilio’s windshield-screen, and the appendant impact that driving has on the human faculties of vision and peripheral perception thus all prevent passengers from encountering, seeing, feeling, smelling, or touching the urban "Other", and may indeed shroud all problems related to it.

The spectacle of driving keeps intact, then, an unwittingly selective and yet whole vision of that which lies outside the vehicle, and conveniently enables the mobile population to live, consume, and converse on the figurative "diamond lane" (on North American roads often the only, reserved lane affording the privilege of speedier transit), rather than facing exposure to the material and ideological reality of urban environments. Yet the system may be liable to falter and fail when drivers break through the dromoscopic simulation’s "fourth wall". In the first half of Collateral, the critical difference between the car’s interior and exterior is strictly upheld and foregrounded. Early in the film, Max agrees to take on a single passenger, Vincent, for the entire night. Max’s compliant and even grateful-ly submissive position vis-à-vis the law and order of driving quickly becomes obvious when compared to his passengers’ radically different type of mobility: Vincent constantly exits and re-enters the car, and is able to conceptualize it as a quasi-nomadic tool useful in countering the rules of the road (and the rule of law in general). For Max, on the other hand, the cab is a vehicle of complicity. This is strongly conveyed, for example, on the level of sound: as soon as Max starts his engine, calm and soothing pop music usually starts playing in the background, giving him a feeling of freedom and peaceful, content unity with the streets. Whenever his car stops, on the other hand, the unwelcome and threatening noise of the exterior immediately shatters this harmony of the seemingly peaceful and open city that otherwise unfolds upon the screen of his windshield. Driving, then, subjects all passengers of a vehicle to what Baudrillard discusses as a hyperreality that is manifest, again, in dromoscopic simulations. Like Virilio, Baudrillard, too,
Culture Unbound observes that the drivers “have no sense of [this] simulation” (Baudrillard 1988: 28); caught in a self-perpetuating system of the observation of channeled movement, “they are themselves simulation in its most developed state, but have no language in which to describe it, since they themselves are the model”, and therefore constitute part of the model’s continuous reproduction apparatus (1988: 28).

The way in which the music playing on Max’s car stereo blends into the extra-diegetic soundtrack strongly evokes this concealed nature of the control system of transit; it emphasizes the functions of the windshield as veiling device, and together with the observed speed of driving, it induces – in Baudrillard’s argument – a paradoxical immobility of the mind that can easily be exploited by dominant ideological forces who have the power to influence general experiences of driving. With the soothing music and the tentative goal of his passenger’s destination before him, Max is thus relaxed and content, and filled with the joy of the felt meaningfulness of driving. Fittingly, it is also at these times that he likes to dismiss his current job as temporary, as something that he is only doing until the realization of his dream project – a limousine company. This make-believe company, appropriately called “Island Limo”, is envisioned as the perfect fulfillment of Max’s impossible dream of attaining freedom by driving through a street-grid of state-controlled mobility: “You won’t want to get out of the limousine”, he says, “because the ride is so comfortable”. In the imaginary pursuit of this dream, the real Sisyphean character of Max’s profession – as a cabdriver, he is constantly under way but never arrives at a final destination – is lost on him, and instead he feels encouraged to recede still further into the hyperreal simulacrum of a perfect dromoscopic simulation.

Falling Down, on the other hand, abandons the myth of the liberated motorist from the very beginning. The film opens with the breakdown of the barrier that conceals the system of automated movement, shown in what amounts to a powerfully executed reversal of the soothing interior soundscape of Max’s cab. In Falling Down, the hero’s car is never seen to move – it is always already stuck in a traffic jam near a construction site. Quickly, the overwhelming heat and dust, a malfunctioning A/C-system, and a plethora of minor but obtrusive exterior images and noises that crowd the immobilized driver’s audiovisual field amalgamate into a hellish song that raises the protagonist’s awareness of what Virilio calls the state’s “vehicular prohibition”, i.e. its prohibition of mobility (Virilio 2006: 51). Had the deceptive spectacle of driving been left intact, D-Fens would not have noticed any of this. Once he is exposed to the hostile environment of the obstructed street, however, he realizes, with a pang, that immobility indeed equals death, and is prompted to do what Max does not achieve until the climax of Collateral: he quits stalling and sets out on foot.

Streets, roads and freeways bear the institutional mark, then, of the government agencies that build and maintain them. But sometimes, the private, itinerant mark of the individuals navigating them may also inscribe itself on them – most likely,
perhaps, at the accidental sites of traffic jams, blown tires, missed turns, or ticketed parking. And while large parts of the mobile population are effectively assimilated by the self-perpetuating and self-veiling apparatus of private transportation, occasionally resistant drivers (or pedestrians) may indeed be established as Deleuzian "nomads", representing a threat to the state power because they continue to traverse state territory while remaining on an ideologically exterior plane of deterritorialization. As noted, *Falling Down* and *Collateral* each revolve around the conflicted relationship between nomad and state, and portray the resistance against sedentarization in different stages of development. In both narratives, the male hero’s story is embedded in typical mainstream narrative conventions (in *Falling Down*, loss of social and professional status interfere with everyday life; in *Collateral*, a happenstance buddy narrative provides the background for an emerging "rags-to-riches" story). Yet by way of these conventions, both films posit the breakdown of the flow of traffic as a proto-nomadic moment of crisis.

This reading again brings into play the related question of how "driving films", with their common focus on the uncertain link between mobility and autonomy/independence, engage their own complicity in a visual regime that dictates and channels perception as much as the dromoscopic spectacle does. In the cases of *Collateral* and *Falling Down*, it must be noted that the films do not challenge this problematic implication. In fact, the narrative logic of both films hinges on the integrity of the system of rules that controls mobility as well as our perception thereof. In *Collateral*, this regime is implicitly acknowledged, but not explicitly defined, and is needed as the backdrop for the protagonist’s moral awakening; similarly, in *Falling Down*, the law of the road serves as an abstraction of the protagonist’s adversaries, so overpowering that his travails take on a noticeably quixotic character. Ultimately, both films’ protagonists become aware, to some degree, of the dromoscopic spectacle’s artificiality. However, neither of the two manages to overcome the power that hides behind the screen; Max simply shifts his position, and comes to term with the realities of quasi-autonomous mobility by ultimately choosing the subway over the car, while D-Fens, eventually, accepts the powers he provoked by breaking through the windshield-screen as insurmountable, the and admits defeat. Both films thus work with the dromoscopic spectacle as a useful image that becomes, it seems to be assumed, an universally understood reference point for the wrongs done to their protagonists. This does not mean, however, that awareness of the powerful visual regime that rules over drivers and passengers is pushed to extend to the Hollywood cinema-machine itself.

Like the resistant drivers of *Collateral* and *Falling Down*, Deleuze and Guattari’s nomads are ideologically positioned at the threshold of the state and pose a threat to the established order because they have access to a "minor science" – a nomad science of resistant mobility that must continually be “barred,” inhibited, or banned by the demands and conditions of State science” (1987: 362). State power’s aim must be to immobilize, to “limit, control [and] localize nomad
science" (1987: 363), so that it cannot become an alternative model to the state-regulated mobility that keeps in check the flows of individual movement while upholding a vision of democratic freedom. The ideological double function of controlled movement as a mode that simultaneously liberates and controls a subject is thus realized when the “State does not give power, [but] makes [its subject] a strictly dependent organ with an autonomy that is only imagined yet is sufficient to divest those whose job it becomes simply to reproduce or implement of [sic] all of their power” (1987: 363). Because “the State never ceases to decompose, re-compose, and transform movement, or to regulate speed”, in regulating traffic it therefore manages to reverse and delay the formation and realization of (urban) nomad resistance (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 386).

How well this scheme works becomes obvious in Max’s resistance to giving up the mind-numbing lure of a sanitized, aestheticized driving experience. As it turns out, his passenger Vincent is a contract killer, and while Max loses himself in the picture show of the limousine he will likely never be able to afford, Vincent commits his first murder of the night – and blows apart Max’s dream when the dead body, hurled out a window, smashes the roof of the cab. This is the decisive moment that marks, quite literally, the first showing of cracks on the screen on which Max’s dromoscopic simulation plays out; from now on, Max will be forced more and more to take on nomadic qualities, to act on his own volition; more and more, he will have to violate the system of rules and regulations by which he usually lets himself be guided through the well-maintained network of streets, signs and traffic lights. When the passenger Vincent continues on his mission to drive through the city and kill a total of six stationary victims, he also continues to repeatedly expose Max’s dream as unrealistic and illusory, and, like Falling Down’s D-Fens, the cabdriver is severely shocked by the narrative literalizations of Virilio’s dictum that to drive is to remain immobile, and that this immobility equals death.

Almost exactly halfway through the film, Max is finally forced to take a more active role of resistance vis-à-vis both Vincent and the spectacle of driving. Now, he is pushed hard to take initiative, to transcend (speed)limits and to veer off the orderly straightness of the road – and when Vincent provokingly yells at the cabdriver to “QUIT STALLING!”, Max finally embraces the potential of nomadic mobility. Forced upon the realization that his low-paying and dependent job is nothing but a perpetual deferral of his actual plans, Max recognizes that during the twelve years of his “temporary” job, he was driven rather than driving of his free will; that for him, motion equaled immobility rather than progress, speed equaled deceleration, and even the straightest roads eventually led him back to his starting point. From this moment onward, Max’s driving assumes a more subversive quality, and when he finally rebels against the order of the street, he does so by purposefully crashing his car. While earlier, his mobility had no direction, his speed is now no longer decomposed by the state’s regulatory schemes, and he can,
for once, really be on his way. As the movie’s showdown commences, Max chooses Los Angeles’ public transit system over the street – a choice that represents an individual act of defiance which will allow him, within the film’s diegetic logic, to evade the controlling reach of the never-ending circulatory flow of steel, capital and time on the inner-city road.

In *Speed and Politics*, Paul Virilio, too, outlines the potential of speed and movement to empower public forces against a dominant ideology that in turn seeks to contain it, and states that “[t]he masses are not a population, a society, but a multitude of passersby” (Virilio 2006: 29). Virilio thus defines the road as a primary site of political conflict, historically used to forestall unruly and uncontrollable mobility. When the state succeeds with these schemes of mobility-management, the opposition of “stasis to circulation” (2006: 31) gains significance not merely in relation to the practical usefulness of organizing the flow of motorized vehicles, but, again, also in relation to the containment of all political, resistant movement. Speed limits (which, ultimately, fail to contain Max’s rebellion) are exemplary for these schemes, and represent a practical state intervention designed to limit “the extraordinary power of assault that motorization of the masses creates” (2006: 51). Ideally, however, the control of traffic and of the general economic role of motorization turns the democratic “freedom to move” into an “obligation to mobility”, a forced and controlled mobility (2006: 53). The road then ceases to be what Deleuze and Guattari identify as the traditionally proletarian site of traveling laborers and craftsmen, and instead turns “every social category, without distinction, into unknown soldiers of the order of speeds – speeds whose hierarchy is controlled more and more each day by the State” (2006: 136f.). For Virilio, the authorities’ control over the modes and modalities of individual movement is hard to reverse – “the more speed increases”, he concludes, “the faster freedom decreases. The [vehicle’s] self-propulsion finally entails the self-sufficiency of automation” (2006: 158).

A somewhat less negative picture of the relationship between controlled space and motorized movement is painted by Baudrillard, who, while acknowledging the positive all-importance of American popular myths of speed, nevertheless describes the experience of driving in ways that are reminiscent both of Deleuze and Guattari’s gravity analogy and of Virilio’s projectile analogy. Baudrillard’s view provides, perhaps, the best approximation of the conceptual overlap between the spectacle of driving and the allure of mainstream cinema, when he states: “movement which moves through space of its own volition changes into an absorption by space itself – end of resistance…” (1988: 10). What distinguishes this account of the politics of driving (and of the effects of partaking in the spectacle of driving) from Virilio’s theory is that here, the sense of freedom felt when driving is, by all accounts, taken to be ”real” (if deceptive) – and perhaps it is this potentiality of real freedom that accounts for the temporary success that *Falling Down*’s D-Fens has with his quasi-nomadic resistance.
Ultimately, however, D-Fens must fail. Throughout his trek on foot, it becomes obvious that he cannot overcome the pull of popular American myths of westward movement, pastoral settlement, and individual freedom, which are just as much part of the dominant ideology as is the discourse of motorized mobility that he aims to abandon. While Max the cabdriver eventually realizes that driving his taxi confines him to a never-ending circular motion with no way out, *Falling Down*’s tragic hero arrives at a literal dead end: when the film has him winding up on a pier out on the Western-most shore of the continent, the protagonist must irrefutably accept that Los Angeles really is the end of his world. Interestingly, prior to this tragic climax the defiant act of walking seems no less alien to police and city authorities than it is to D-Fens himself. Even though notions of “moving on/up” and of “just passing through” permeate the entire narrative (and, temporarily, become more plausible because D-Fens is able to walk where no one else can drive), the protagonist’s nomadic mobility immediately forces him to acknowledge a new set of emerging obstructions: the dead ends of routes blocked by construction, of line-ups at gas stations and fast food restaurants; the downtown and gangland frontier of run-down housing projects, dying immigrant businesses, and looming drug- and poverty-related crime; and, last but not least, the suburban frontier of indifferent employees and alienated customers. D-Fens must navigate them all, and for a little while, it appears that without the mediating interface of his car, he now is able to see them in a new light – but in fact, it is due to the film’s representation of walking as abnormal that its implied critique of the myth of seemingly liberating motorized mobility is never realized.

The freeway section from which D-Fens escapes cuts through a bad neighborhood, and thus the irritated and baffled pedestrian has his first violent encounters (one with a frustrated, uncooperative corner store-owner, and one with two gang members on the prowl). The disputes that immediately flare up concern territory and propriety: in a city in which life has adapted to the rule of motorized vehicles, in which most people try never to stop, and in which the relative safety of a car’s interior has obliterated most residents’ awareness of social, ethnic, and political issues, everything must remain in its right place and retain its proper pace. Transgression of boundaries will necessarily result, it seems, in violent conflict. Once D-Fens is deprived of the protective frame of his car, the narrative thus constructs him as being on the brink of realizing that only to walk is to see, whereas to drive is to remain blind to the outside world. Yet in Hollywood’s extra-diegetic logic, the critical suggestion that acceptance of one’s position as a mere viewer (whether as driver or as moviegoer) means giving in to an oppressive visual regime is perhaps too self-critically radical – and the truth of D-Fens’s existence, in this sense, seems to fleetingly dawn on him when, in a poignant scene, the smoggy cityscape of L.A. is re-framed yet again, visually bound no longer by the chassis of his car, but by a hole in the sole of his shoe, held up to the eye in angry disbelief.
From now on, the protagonist experiments with what to him appears like a new kind of mobility; in a car, his navigational, evasive, even offensive options had been severely limited. “If everyone just cleared my path”, he declares repeatedly, “everything would be alright”. But once on foot, D-Fens finds that it is becoming easier to clear his path, and he begins to do so by force. Paralleling Virilio’s portrayal of the car as a useless bullet rather than a gun, D-Fens updates his armory, acquires a baseball bat, a knife, an arsenal of semi-automatic weapons, and finally a bazooka. Now that he is no longer bound to a projectile but rather commands a whole arsenal of them himself, this weaponry is supposed to assist him in the fight to get ahead. Accordingly, the protagonist’s opponents mistake him for a rebel with a political mission, and cannot see that D-Fens is merely a citizen on the defensive, an individual who insists on his right-of-way and who, quite tellingly, only attacks stationary objects that block his way. D-Fens’s rather irrational acts of resistance culminate in blowing up a section of freeway: after encountering yet another construction site, he recalls that the route had been perfectly passable the day before, and confronts a worker. The anti-hero’s distrust in the state-controlled system of organized movement finally erupts in all its force, and before firing his bazooka, he paranoidly accuses the city authorities of deliberately interfering with the residents’ choice of where to go and of how to get there.

In the film’s safe narrative logic, this, of course, is madness, and D-Fens’s fatal trek ends, accordingly, in Venice Beach, one of Los Angeles’ western-most neighborhoods. Marking the impossibility of the popular American theme of perpetual westward-expansion, for D-Fens the pier quite literally represents the end of the world. But motorized mobility, it is intimated, is not bad per se, and for the film’s other characters, it is not advisable to follow the protagonist’s example and begin traveling on foot. In this sense, D-Fens’s ex-wife (the ultimate goal of his pursuit) puts herself at high risk when she walks out onto the pier and the open water, entering what in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical model is understood to represent potentially empowered nomad resistance because water is a sphere exterior to the state’s ordering reach. Since the street-grid of control that is imposed onto the city does not reach out this far, the woman is in grave danger – and to the audience it must be clear that fleeing her troubled ex-husband in a car would have been safer, after all.

It is at this moment that *Falling Down*’s narrative most powerfully squares off the critical difference between Deleuze and Guattari’s “sedentary” and “nomadic” mobility, which is, by implication, also the difference between passive viewing and empowered, interactive observation. For a moment, it seems that D-Fens has finally reached a place that might allow him to transcend the oppressive structure represented by the urban freeway system. After the protagonist’s initial crossing over from Deleuze and Guattari’s “conceptual” state science of metrical, ordered movement to the “ambulant” nomad sciences that choose to cope with problems by way of “real-life operations” (1987: 374), the former civilian scientist of war-
fare has ceased to partake in the reproduction of the abstract organizing scheme of the road. D-Fens’s pedestrian mobility has taken on the viral and rhizomatic qualities of nomad movement, and confronts the arborescence of sedentarized space, here embodied by the ex-wife’s house with its lush garden, and by the danger of stasis that the viewer has begun to associate with it. Yet, true to the conventional narrative arc we have come to expect from films such as *Falling Down*, the film will entertain the possible success of this radical mobility no more than it would entertain the suggestion that its own structure of visualization supports (or challenges) such a mobility.

A similar notion is played out in *Collateral*, where the cabdriver’s bedridden mother is bound to the hospital, grounded and artificially ”rooted” by tubes going in and out of her body, and who thus becomes, at one point, an easy victim for the angered killer Vincent. But Max, too, has by now understood the passive projectile-nature of his cab; while the assassin passenger assumes that Max is still playing by the state’s rules – which had earlier facilitated his immobility, and which had veiled his subjection to the routines of endless, circular driving – the cabdriver is now able to withstand the aggression of his nomadic passenger by responding to it from outside of his car. More successfully than D-Fens, Max has thus broken through the simulacrum of seemingly liberating mobility, and understands that cars are machines that may well render the outside world more beautiful and easier to cope with, but that also obstruct his view of the exterior, and create a sealed, fantastic world of deceptive orderliness and visible yet unattainable freedom in the interior. No longer, therefore, does Max act in favor of “automation”, which equals “the absolute miniaturization of the political field” (Virilio 2006: 164); no longer does he unwittingly accept himself as merely a prosthetic extension of his cab, incapable of critical thinking or individual decisions. Until his nomadic rebellion, Max’s only hope of breaking free was to ”upgrade” his vehicle – a superficial change that would not have constituted a real change of his life’s overall direction. It is only now, when he can conceptualize a real, radical change of his modes of transportation that he can fight the nomadic killer-passenger Vincent and, quasi by the way, change his own life. Interestingly, however, *Collateral* structures this supposedly life-altering change as the transfer from car to foot to subway – and thus posits, at the film’s happy end, a mode of transportation that tends to be regarded (not only in Los Angeles) with much suspicion, and that is frequently understood as reserved for those who have, thus goes the popular perception, not managed to realize their dreams of independence and liberated mobility.

In my reading of *Collateral* and *Falling Down*, both films speak to an awareness within the sphere of popular culture of the existential conflicts that perpetually erupt on the road, which is treated as a prime site of interaction and conflict between state and subject. Both films thematize the paradoxical tensions generated in a place where mobility is posited as liberating, but where it is also heavily
regimented. Incessant movement and itinerancy thus constitute both a tool of control and a potential threat. In both films, the protagonists break through the “screens” of their windshields, abandon the reassuring guidance of their dashboards and automatic transmissions, and ultimately flee the drive-in theatre of the car, which generates Virilio’s dromoscopic simulation. Transcending their status of voluntary subordination, Max and D-Fens become urban nomads, and in the course of their journeys overcome the immobilizing localization that the state had heretofore subjected them to. Nomad resistance, here, does not emerge on the never-changing scenario of daily commutes, but in the singular and extraordinary event of the faltering of the state-governed spectacle of driving. In both films, as noted, this event is triggered by the malfunctioning of cars and the cessation of the orderly flow of traffic. As a “metaphor for being”, driving eventually fails to satisfy the two protagonists, and once they are no longer locked in the belief that driving is indeed liberating and an expression of individual freedom, they can shed the blinding mask of the chassis. While at the outset, both characters are subject to the blinding mechanism of orderly mobility and the organized “drive to no end” that prevents them from realizing their subordinate position in relation to the state, ultimately both narratives concern the process and consequences of penetrating the metal veil of the car.

Yet – both within the diegetic logic of each film, and in the broader context of comparing the spectacular visual regime imposed by the windshield-screen with the one represented by “driving films” more generally – Collateral and Falling Down do not stray too far from the path that ultimately upholds, rather than challenges, conventional opinion about that which can happen when non-participatory notions of viewing (and driving) are challenged. In Collateral, as noted, Max claims the freedom of a resistant urban nomad by crashing his car; in Falling Down, D-Fens’s self-liberating actions are less successful, and finally constitute an ungraceful fall from the only power that the former civil servant continues to recognize, that of American pastoral myths of independent, liberate mobility. While the fate of Collateral’s Max remains unclear, and is taking a not entirely unequivocal turn for the better when he mounts the often distrusted public transportation system, D-Fens’s claim of the nomad status ultimately results in absolute alienation, and stigmatizes him as a miscreant who in the end can only find certain death. His resistance is a mere “experimental surge” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 367) that fails to ultimately gain autonomy.

As distinct narratives and as examples of films that thematize driving in general, both Collateral and Falling Down largely follow the straight road prescribed by countless other films that take up this subject; they deviate from it only in so far as they more thoroughly develop (but never fully realize) the radical potentiality of nomad mobilities that negate the order of the road and the visual regimes it imposes. In this sense, both films stay true to the implications of their narratives to the extent that the circularity, open-endedness, and uncertainty related to popular
urban experiences of driving posit the conventional happy ending as unattainable. Yet in neither of the two films, this unattainability appears as a success: D-Fens is killed, and Max’s final subway ride is marked by a new type of uncertainty that is all the more unsettling because it more strongly communicates itself to the character, who still feels unsafe outside of the "screening room" of his cab’s steel chassis.

While the two films conclude that ”going faster” cannot be the answer to the state’s schemes of regimenting movement and of subjecting drivers to the deceptive experience of motorized liberty, they also implicitly reinforce the systems that their protagonists oppose. The anger and resistance of Max and D-Fens is portrayed as justified; yet the dubitable success of the two protagonists’ actions provides no tangible clues as to how one might irreversibly break through the dromoscopic simulation’s ”fourth wall”. To walk in L.A., in other words, remains ”unimaginable” – as Max’s final subway ride and D-Fens’s troubled experiences as a flâneur imply, a full recovery from the “spectacular form of amnesia” that is both driving and moviegoing is far less likely than continued complicity in this limited physical and imaginative mobility, in which “everything is to be discovered, everything to be obliterated” (Baudrillard 1988: 9).

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Notes

1 Virilio’s dromology derives its name from the ancient Greek root dromos, which signifies a straight paved avenue, but simultaneously implies acts of lucidly traversing it in a speedy manner, i.e. of running and looking.

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City Under Siege: Narrating Mumbai Through Non-Stop Capture

By Yasmin Ibrahim

Abstract
When Mumbai became the target of terror in the 26/11 attack in 2008, the events in that city, like other tragic global events in recent years, were narrated through new media platforms. The increasing convergence of technologies and mobile telephony enabled new forms of gaze and the ability to bear witness through these new media technologies. The non-stop capture of events through recording equipment embedded in mobile phones and their connectivity to the World Wide Web constructed Mumbai through civilian narratives and images, and this phenomenon was described as the "coming of age of Twitter". Conversely the event raised fundamental questions about the role of broadcasting and protocols in live telecasts of terrorist attacks which have consequences for national security. In narrating the city through the civilian gaze and traditional media the spectacle of suffering in postmodernity becomes an open-ended exercise where the city is both a canvas for showcasing the risks of modernity and new forms of visibilities which emerge from social media and the "act of sharing" content on global platforms.

Keywords: Social media, modernity, terrorism, India
Introduction

The attack on Mumbai on the 26th of November 2008 has been described as India’s very own 9/11 whilst other press headlines have termed the 60-hour-long siege of the city as nothing short of “the longest running horror show” (Khallur 2008). The terror attack which struck at the heart of the financial and tourist centre claimed at least 172 lives whilst wounding 250 in a series of gun and grenade attacks. A group called Deccan Mujahedeen claimed responsibility for the attack which targeted multiple sites simultaneously including hotels, a Jewish Chabad centre, a café which was popular with foreigners, hospitals and a railway station. Mumbai, after the terror attacks in December 2008, was narrated as a “bleeding city” where hundreds “lit candles to remember the dead and to help deal with the trauma the city suffered” (Dodd 2008).

Suffering, terror and trauma in the urban space, and the non-stop consumption of mediated suffering have become dominant features of postmodernity. Media narratives of suffering have the potential to both personalize and de-personalize suffering to their audiences and in the process they can re-frame proximity and distance, our sense of connection and disconnection as well as temporality. The audience’s ability to understand suffering as a phenomenon enacted on a global stage and the media’s ability to invite moral gaze and engagement is a recurring phenomenon in postmodernity. The city in postmodern memory becomes a backdrop for terror where the unexpected and volatile can unfold before a global audience. The city since the turbulence of 9/11 in America represents an instable space which contradicts the order, stability and security it is supposed to impose through its form and structure.

Iconic landscapes of a city often function as a symbol of that city. Drawing parallels with 9/11, the Rand study (2009:11) on the 2008 Mumbai attack reiterates that the “the attacks on landmark properties amplified the psychological impact”. Additionally, the selection of multiple targets – Americans, Britons and Jews, as well as Indians _ suggests that the terrorists intended the attack to serve multiple objectives that extend beyond the terrorists’ previous focus on Kashmir and India and to globalise their struggle and illuminate it through international media coverage (Rand Corporation 2009). These religious, political and cultural values were chosen in order to make a statement. According to the Indian Subcontinent Practice of Risk Advisory, the well-planned operations were carried out with an anti-Western aim with the ”deliberate selection” of foreign hostages (The Economic Times 28/11/2008).

The attacks on Mumbai extends tropes of visible trauma inflicted on urban spaces since the iconic images of destruction witnessed by the world with the 9/11 attacks in America. Witnessing trauma in urban spaces through live coverage and instant updates constructs trauma as a space of global spectacle where trauma in urbanity has become a television genre that constructs cities as vulnerable targets.
for both terror and spectacle. It reiterates Ulrich Beck’s (1992) risk analyses that the events of distant and disconnected places can have consequences in our backyards where risk is not contained or responsive to the boundaries of the nation state. The anti-Western and anti-Jewish sentiments of the attackers in Mumbai again brought to fore the vulnerabilities of an interconnected world where chaos and carnage can explode without warning in urban cities and spaces of spatial power.

Zygmunt Bauman (2006), in Liquid Fear, terms it “negative globalization” where “there is nothing the others do or can’t do of which we may be sure that it won’t affect our prospects, chances and dreams” (99). He polemically asserts that “we are all in danger, and we are all dangers to each other and there are only three roles to play – perpetrators, victims and collateral casualties” (206:99). Bauman misses out the fourth role the rest of humanity play which is the role of the post-modern spectator who bears witness to mediated trauma and suffering. The liveliness and immediacy of trauma captured through broadcasting and social media (global platforms such as the Internet) seek to democratise suffering and equally construct event creation as an open-ended phenomenon where accuracy of reporting and authenticity of reporting (or witnessing) may be compromised for immediacy characterised by our need to share and locate information in public networks.

During the 60-hour siege of Mumbai, many of the eyewitness accounts emerged from social media including social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. The explosion of reports in new media networks and the narration of terror as it emerged prompted many media critics to describe it as a "social experimentation" for new media and a coming of age for these new forms of media (See Heussner 2008; D’Amour 2008; Beaumont 2008; Lewis 2008). The event also became a crisis point for traditional broadcasting where there was a public controversy over the reporting of the event. The broadcasting media was charged with irresponsible and sensationalist reporting where each network had succumbed to “market tyranny” by trying to outdo each other with exclusives and inside reports without exercising a sense of self-restraint or respect for those killed in these attacks. The live reporting by broadcast media was also seen as compromising the national security of the nation and anti-Pakistan sentiments amongst the general public.

Urban studies on Mumbai have profiled the different social and economic problems in the city including the issues of housing, infrastructure, development, globalisation, governance, the provision of social amenities, land use and environmental issues (See Tiwari et al. 1999; Mehta 2005; Kamini et al. 2006; Weinstein 2008). Whilst technology has a role to play in both enabling better mobility as well as social and economic divides in the city, this paper departs from conventional urban studies perspectives to construct the city through an act of terrorism
where the role of technology is both seminal in creating communion and fissure in the city.

This paper examines the ways in which the trauma of Mumbai was captured, constructed and narrated during the attack. In particular it profiles how eyewitness accounts and the civilian gaze constructed the city as the terrorist attacks and the ways in which the local and global community related to the narratives of suffering. Equally, the paper explores how the mainstream broadcast media came under intense criticism and scrutiny after the incident. The public and political backlash against the coverage of terror in the city raised the need to install new protocols in the reporting of terrorism or events which can compromise the national security of the country and the rescue operations of the authorities.

Narrating the City of Mumbai

The city of Mumbai is a financial as well as a tourist centre but more importantly it is a dream factory where its film industry provides escapism from harsh reality for millions of ordinary citizens. In recent years Mumbai has been frequently targeted by terrorist attacks blamed on Islamic extremists and these have included a series of bombings in July 2007 that killed 187 people (Fox News 26/11/2008). In the 1993 Mumbai attack 257 died in 13 bomb blasts across the city. The city of Mumbai is not unused to terror. Terror in the urban space is undeniably a space of spectacle and often it becomes a media event where television plays a central role. The act of bearing witness to global events through the broadcasting space has been well documented in media literature (see Dayan & Katz 1992; Scannell 1989). In post-modernity the "media event" captures the ability of the media to construct events, reframe temporality and to consolidate the construction of memory through its televisual spectacle. In our recent past, the new media has become inextricably conjoined with traditional media to construct the media event. The media event, whether it is the 2004 Tsunami, 9/11, the 7/7 bombings, the War in Iraq or the Saffron Revolution in Mynamar has been increasingly constructed not just through the vantage point of traditional media but through new media platforms. As Jan Roscoe (2004: 363) points out, as "interactive media opportunities have arisen, content is now being produced, delivered and consumed in new ways and content can be delivered across various platforms, utilising television, the internet, mobile phones and digital and interactive screen services". Roscoe argues that instead of our viewing being controlled through the flow of schedules, which Raymond Williams envisaged, it is now clustered around events. In Mumbai, mobile telephony and new media platforms such as Twitter provided new ways to bear witness to the events and to disseminate them to the global community moments into the attack.

When the city came under siege in December 2008, new media provided an insight into events as they unfolded in the city. India ranks as the third top country
in Asia (after Japan and China respectively) and is fourth largest in the world in terms of internet penetration rates (at 7.1%) with 81 million users as of November 2008 (www.internetworldstats.com). In terms of the population of users in Asia Indians account for 12.5%. The majority of users in India tend to be between 19 and 40 and there is a digital divide between urban and rural areas as well as male and female users with the latter only comprising 15%. Significantly, the city of Mumbai has the largest number of Internet users at 3.24 million in 2008 with chatting and social networking sites being very popular amongst these users (www.indiabroadband.net). This high degree of internet penetration and media literacy was important in showcasing the role of social media when simultaneous attacks occurred in the city.

In the Mumbai attacks Twitter in fact became a stream of snippets from observers on the ground with details of casualties, sieges, gunfights and even the suspected name of terrorists (Lewis 2008). It is estimated that around 70 “tweets” or messages tagged under the label of “Mumbai” were posted every five seconds when the news of the tragedy first broke, according to some estimates (Beaumont 2008). These minute- by-minute details included an update of events, calls for help, as well as a dissemination of emergency numbers. In this sense these sites, which emerged hours within the attack, provided the public service of diverting users to vital contact information such as foreign offices and helpline numbers. Within hours Google documents were created containing lists of the injured and killed whilst others solicited blood donors for those injured and needing emergency care.

Beyond informing the immediate and global community of the events in the city, spaces such as Twitter and Facebook provided a means for people to convey their situation to friends and family. Mumbai Help, a blog which updated information on the Mumbai attack, offered to locate people in Bombay for friends outside the city (Bell 2008). Besides Facebook and Twitter, blogs and file-sharing sites provided accounts and images from the ground. These conversations in the new media landscape also provided a signposting function providing the best news reports appearing on the web (Lewis 2008). These reports compiled by new media users got to the news more quickly than the television reports and newspaper websites. In many instances these twitter and blog reports actually questioned the veracity of mainstream media accounts.

In addition to discursive accounts on the internet and those disseminated through mobile telephony, images played an important role in conveying the terror of the attacks. The convergence of technologies and the embedding of recording equipment in mobile phones and the ability to upload images onto the internet from personal mobile recording devices meant that events could be captured as they unfolded. Photos on Flickr uploaded 90 minutes after the attacks revealed the bloodied streets of Mumbai and helped to communicate the gravity of
the situation. Some of these were viewed at least 110,000 times in the next 48 hours (CBS 2008; Lewis 2008).

The ability to convene audiences and communities through real events and to create and share information through such events has become a predominant feature of how we engage with mediated events. A few hours into the attack, a Google map was created to show the location of buildings and landmarks at the centre of the incidents with links to news stories and eyewitness accounts (Beaumont 2008). Similarly a Wikipedia page was created within minutes of the news breaking and updated thousands of times, providing a vast amount of background information often in real time about the attack and these were detailed and corrected as the event unfolded (CBS 2008; Beaumont 2008; Lewis 2008). These different sources of information created connections to other stories by providing url links and as such they provided means to navigate the information that emerged on the nebulous internet. Dedicated blogs were created to update the events in Mumbai and these included the Metroblog set up by a group of bloggers based in Mumbai. Blogs became a site for information as well as commemoration and as such functioned as therapeutic devices to deal with trauma and terror and to equally share nostalgic accounts of what the city meant to its citizens. The Mumbai Heroes blog, for example was created to honour the victims of the attack (CBS 2008).

In addition to informing the outside world of terror attacks in Mumbai, Twitter also provided people who were trapped inside the affected hotels during the siege to communicate with the outside world. The hotel guests trapped in the affected hotels logged onto Twitter to find out whether they were under attack and to get an idea of the chaos that had engulfed them. Twitter captured the drama through conversations and information exchanged between people affected by the situation and those who were observing and engaging with the trauma through traditional and new media platforms. Event creation in the new media age is a complex exercise where there is an intricate enmeshing of information between traditional and new media sources. Mainstream media (both local and foreign) such as print and broadcasting used information that occurred on the Internet in their reports. News stations including CNN used video clips sent in from people on the ground in Mumbai to illustrate their reports and many traditional media outlets including broadcasting stations and newspapers monitored Twitter and blogs in compiling their reports (Beaumont 2008).

The Mumbai attacks come in a long line of events in which the new media accounts have helped build a mediated event for the public. The eyewitness accounts and images published on new media platforms have become a vital part in composing the media event. They provide new forms of visibility and civilian narratives which are often conjoined to mainstream media narratives both through the links in web pages and also due to the fact that mainstream media are increasingly using these reports and accounts in their event creation often asking civilians
to send in their reports and photos to construct the event. Twitter, Flickr and other file-sharing sites became places to both bear witness and engage with the event. This invariably contributed to the creation of the "media event" where the rituals of narrating, consuming and engaging have a functionalist Durkheimian objective of creating communion, patriotism and nationalism.

The accounting of both natural and man-made calamities has become an open-ended phenomenon enabled by the convergence of technologies and the embedding of a vast array of capturing and communication features in mobile telephony. This enables the civilian gaze, which maps events through its own vantage points, to become part of event creation and then to contribute to the media event. In contrast to the mainstream media it is difficult to underpin this gaze to questions of authenticity or truth. Just as the photograph has been subjected to long-running debates on the validity of representation, the civilian gaze whether enabled through image or words is a problematic device in representing and corroborating an event. The gathering and exchange of information on new media sites during crises or watershed political events from politically engaged or civic-minded citizens or those who want to partake through conversations is a much more intricate process that cannot completely be addressed by the term "citizen journalism". Social media such as Twitter enable the ability to engage with "imagined communities" during crises and materialise these imagined communities through conversations and the exchange of information. Twitter technology was seen as "coming of age" and described as a "social media experiment in action" (D’Amour 2008) mainly due to the fact that people were drawn to produce, gaze, and disseminate information whilst connected with the rest of humanity within the city and outside during a crisis. New media platforms such as websites and blogs function as memorials and as performance where they provide spaces to partake in the event (Helmers 2001).

Like placing flower bouquets and notes at accident sites and places of commemoration of tragic events, new media spaces enable audiences to participate discursively with events and to watch and read events beyond the "liveness" of the media event on television. Video platforms enable audiences to view video images and footages disembedded from the media narrative. This decontextualization of events from live broadcasts and seamless narratives re-negotiates the media event as both a collective and fragmented experience in postmodernity and in the age of convergence. New media spaces, by enabling the creation of content by audiences, broaden event creation and in the process interactive media platforms double up as therapeutic sites for recovery and individual and communal meaning-making.

Beyond the functionalist paradigms of new media, the insatiable trading of information presented various challenges. These blow-by-blow Twitter accounts traded at a rate of 50-100 posts a minute in a message were nevertheless fragmented and sometimes false (CBS 2008). Valid and inaccurate accounts were thus
strung into streams of conversation and information on the event mirroring both new forms of empowerment and vulnerabilities evident in the ways in which Mumbai was narrated during the attack. One report on the internet claimed that the Indian government was trying to shut down the Twitter streams as people were using to spread news and information. This story was picked up and reported by the BBC without verifying the validity of the report. The BBC came under criticism for its use of live reports from Twitter in its coverage of the attacks, prompting its news editor Steve Herrmann to acknowledge that the corporation would have to take more care in how it uses "lightening fast, unsubstantiated citizen posts from Twitter in future" (Guardian.co.uk 5/12/2005). On the Internet information can spread very quickly and this gives people the opportunity to spread sensitive or compromising information (Bell 2008) without pausing to understand the implications of such publicised information. Equally, with a plethora of information flowing through these new media platforms it is often difficult to discern what information is credible and often there is a trade-off of accuracy for immediacy (Leggio 2008).

Ironically, whilst technology helped communicate the events to a global audience in this instance, mobile telephony also played a crucial role in enabling the perpetrators to execute their trail of terror in Mumbai. According to the Rand Study (2009) the attackers reportedly used cell phones and a satellite phone - both their own and others taken from their victims - to co-ordinate their activities. The report found that the perpetrators also carried Blackberries and communicated with each other during the siege to discuss their manoeuvres. They made contact with the news media via cell phones to make demands in return for the release of their hostages and this led to some confusion in the Indian authorities who believed that they were dealing with a hostage situation, posing further challenges for their tactical response (Rand Study 2009). The role of telephony during the 2008 Mumbai attack was inevitably double-edged, presenting new forms of empowerment and vulnerabilities in accelerated modernity. In the aftermath of the attacks in Mumbai, when the public perceived that the situation was mishandled by the government, much of the urban middle class vented their anger against the government in new media sites including blogs, social networking sites such as Orkut and Facebook, and text messages (Lakshmi 2008). These media also became the platforms in which to raise objections against the traditional media’s coverage of the events and to protest against the government. Internet-savvy protestors also turned to social media platforms to organise protests against the government in the aftermath of the attack.

Television "Terror"

With the recurrent emergence of terror in the ordered spaces of the city, the live coverage of terror has become a familiar genre in our contemporary conscious-
Menaheim Blondheim & Tamar Liebes (2002: 271) note that "when major debacles occur, television interrupts its schedule for the live, open-ended ‘celebration’ of the momentous event, featuring the disaster marathon”. This "disaster marathon”, according to them, is defined by natural disasters, high-profile accidents such as the failed launch of the *Challenger* space shuttle, or purposive public acts of major violence such as terrorist attacks.

Dayan and Katz’s conception of the "media event” (1992: 196-7) captured television’s ability to mark an event or moment in history through the interruption of routine broadcasting. The suspension of usual routines to carve a moment in time where the nation convenes over the tevisual space evokes both the power of mass media to create events but equally the conceptualisation of national spaces to mourn and commemorate. The medium’s predominance in a public event, Blondheim and Liebes (2002:274) argue, should be situated through electronic journalism’s adoption of the live coverage format which positions it in an intermediary role as a storyteller, negotiator and movable stage on which the drama is enacted.

Live coverage is a significant aspect of narrating terror in our accelerated modernity where the "liveness” creates both immediacy whilst impressing the interconnectivity with the wider world. Often when terror happens it is a ritual for the world to watch the terror as it unfolds. At one point during the siege TV news channels in South Mumbai were blacked out for forty-five minutes following an order by the Deputy Commissioner of Police and this created more panic and unease amongst the people (Khallur 2008) emphasising our insatiable need to watch events live and without disruption. In the case of the Mumbai attack, the live coverage in constructing the media event became an issue of contention. More significantly, the aftermath of the Mumbai attack proved that the televised “media event” is not an unproblematic device in forging a collective consciousness. The construction and narration of the event became a point of contention, adding to the public’s loss of faith in the government.

The live telecast of the attacks was 60 hours long and the extended coverage of the events which occurred in different parts of Mumbai posed many challenges for broadcasters. The event became a watershed moment for live broadcasting in the country for various reasons but primarily it was deemed as compromising the security of the nation and inciting passion against its neighbour Pakistan with whom it has a tumultuous historical and political relationship. The Indian government liberalized the broadcasting market in the early 1990s by dismantling state controls, encouraging privatization and relaxing media regulations (Thussu 1999: 126). The liberalization of the market and new communication technologies saw a dramatic growth in the number of television channels and transformed the television landscape radically (See Thussu 2007; Butcher 2003). Daya Thussu points out that this ushered the arrival of global media conglomerates into what used to be one of the most closed broadcasting systems in any democracy. Presently, India has seventy-seven 24-hour news channels on the air fighting for the attention...
of 80 million Indian homes and 130 licences approved resulting in extraordinary pressure to sensationalize and claim exclusives (Magnier 2009). India is one of the world’s largest television markets with an expanding Westernized, middle-class audience of 300 million and this is an attractive lure for transnational media corporations to gain a slice of the lucrative Indian market (Thussu 2007: 594).

Inevitably, the 60-hour long coverage of the events prompted an intense competition amongst channels to outdo each other’s reporting. Television channels were criticised for capitalising on human trauma and turning it into a “reality show” (Gupta 2009; Khallur 2008). Additionally broadcasters were criticised for sensationalising their reports but more importantly sabotaging the rescue operations and the national security of the country by revealing sensitive information without restraint or reflection. A media study undertaken by Newswatch, a media watchdog based in New Delhi, shortly after the attack, found that the government-run TV channel DD was the least sensational and most restrained compared to commercial stations (cf. Thakuria 2008). It also found that many channels were overtly sensationalist in their coverage. The survey included 9,906 responses and 74% felt that the reporting was theatrical. The TV coverage of the incident, especially by 24-hour news channels, was criticised as ”TV terror” (Pepper 2008). The media was also accused of over-simplifying and dichotomising a complex situation by portraying ”Pakistan is the enemy” or ”politicians are villains” (cf. Chandran 2008).

In the days following the attack there were robust public discussions on the extent to which the media should be regulated in the public interest and the interests of national security (Gupta 2009; Thakuria 2008; Divan 2008). The live reporting came under scrutiny in parliament as well and it was noted that ”live feed of air raids on the rooftop of Nariman House (where the Israeli hostages had been held captive) had taken away the element of surprise which is critical and crucial in rescue operations”. There was also fear that live coverage could have been used as free intelligence by the planners of the attacks located far away from the incidents and allegedly guiding the attackers by means of satellite and mobile phone communication to take appropriate emergent measures against security forces (cf. Thakuria 2008).

Criticism of mainstream media was evident in blogs and amongst viewers and became a point of national discussion with politicians questioning the role of the media in such situations. The media was also accused of pointing the finger towards Pakistan without understanding the full nature of the attacks. The stations portrayed the commandos sent to rescue the hostages as brave whilst repeatedly showing Indian flags. In the days following the attacks, the Indian flag was often used by broadcasters as a visual backdrop with viewers’ text messages expressing anger at politicians or Pakistan scrolling at the bottom of the screen (Chandran 2008). Such cultural references were seen as irresponsible in influencing and inciting public opinion against Pakistan given the state of tension between the two
Prominent film director Mahesh Bhatt criticised the CNN-IBN news channel of encroaching on his territory after the channel played Bollywood songs from movies about wars between India and Pakistan during news updates;

It’s what we do in the movies – whipping up passion – and what was at stake, but a nuclear holocaust (referring to the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan). You use the same tools – you keep the audience on a continuous high (cf. Pepper 2008).

Pakistan’s media duly criticised Indian broadcasters of being in a “race for propaganda” and “providing unsubstantiated” charges about the origins of the attackers (D’Amour 2008). With the coverage of the media coming under intense public scrutiny, a parliamentary committee expressed concerns over the repeated display in the media of human corpses during natural calamities, accidents, bomb blasts, arson etc. (Thankuria 2008; Pepper 2008). A few weeks after the attack the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting mooted a proposal to amend the existing Programme Code under the Cable Television Rules of 1994 by introducing 19 new amendments. These included proposals to introduce restrictions amongst other things on live coverage of war or violent law and order situations, disclosures about security operations, live interviews with victims, security personnel or perpetrators of crime (cf. Divan 2008). Additionally, the South Asia Media Commission (SAMC) in its report “South Asia Media Monitor 2008” slammed the media both in India and Pakistan for promoting hysteria (Gupta 2009).

The broadcast media were not seen as abiding by the self-regulatory code of ethics and standards adopted by the New Broadcasters Association comprising of 14 networks. Whilst the attacks illuminated the role of social media in such a situation, the print and broadcast media were seen as immature and not exercising the kind of self-regulation which was felt to be warranted in a highly explosive environment where they could have incited further violence or communal riots. The media on its part felt that the authorities did not have proper protocols in place in reporting on emergency situations. The Indian Broadcasting Federation and the News Broadcasting Association which represents many of country’s top news channels criticised the government for “failing to keep up with the developments in the media industry” and not being proactive in “creating a procedure for the coverage of national emergencies” (cf. D’Amour 2008).

The authorities were seen as failing to protect the public as they lacked a clear information and communication management strategy. The lack of orchestration in feeding information to the media was raised as another important factor that led to uncontrolled and chaotic reporting. In the post-event discussions about the role of the media it was pointed out that the authorities such as the Navy themselves fed details to the media without restraint. In addition to this, different authorities gave separate and contradictory accounts and versions to the media. The absence of a concerted media management by the authorities was seen as contributing to the chaotic nature of reporting. Besides irresponsible reporting TV stations were also seen as elitist in their reporting where they concentrated on the hostages at
the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi hotels, which are the domains of the country’s wealthy and ruling elites, whilst largely ignoring Chhatrapati Shivaji train terminus which was the site of the largest number of casualties and where a total of 58 people were gunned down (Pepper 2008). TV stations were also accused of other forms of bias beyond class divides. For example, the British and American media focused largely on their own citizens.

In response to the criticisms from the general public and from the members of parliament, the National Broadcaster’s Association, which represents many of the country’s top news channels, announced a new set of rules for the industry in December 2008. These new guidelines ban broadcasting of footage that would reveal security operations and live contact with hostages or attackers (Pepper 2008). The guidelines also request broadcasters to avoid unnecessary repetition of archival footage which might agitate viewers (televisionpoint.com). Many of these guidelines still hinge on self-regulation as the guiding principle. Undoubtedly the effectiveness of these guidelines and their ability to fully resist the "tyranny of the market" may well be tested if another such incident were to occur in India.

The broadcasting of the disaster marathon in Mumbai prompted the public to question the construction of the "media event" by mainly 24-hour news channels. Unlike the new media, which was seen as reaching a new maturation point with the terror attack, the broadcast media was perceived as regressing and failing to observe a role that was ethical or responsible in protecting the national interest of the country.

**Conclusion**

The city of Mumbai, with its famous film production facilities, is a place for myth- and dream-making. In November 2008, when terror gripped the celluloid city, the urban space of accelerated modernity was transformed into a site of chaos, carnage, suffering and media spectacle. The postmodern city is a vulnerable space prone to violent disruption through acts of terror and where global communities can convene and consume terror through the media space. The 60-hour siege of Mumbai in became a testing ground for new media technologies and their role in responding to long and sustained periods of crises. The potential for both new forms of empowerment and risks were highlighted by the new media technologies where immediacy rather than authenticity became primary. On the other hand, the political economy of news making in India has raised serious concerns about how chasing exclusive deals and sensationalising terror attacks or rescue operations can be detrimental for the country. The broadcast media through its engagement with the Mumbai siege has been forced to review its role in a crisis and to abide by new protocols. More importantly, the siege of Mumbai showed that the "media event" is not an uncontested terrain where broadcast media can tell a story through freeze-framing of images and seamless narratives. In Mumbai
audiences engaged with the mediated accounts of terror provided by the media and duly questioned the media event. The media’s power to be the supreme storyteller or to appropriate and subsume an event through its production codes came under intense scrutiny. In the process the power of the media was questioned and the will of the audience was reasserted in demanding a more responsible broadcasting space.

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Notes
1 Evidence suggests that Lashkare-Taiba (LeT), a terrorist group based in Pakistan, was responsible for the attack (Rand Study 2009:11). The Rand study elaborates that the Pakistan-based terrorists see India as part of the “Crusader-Zionist-Hindu” alliance, and therefore the enemy of Islam. “Muslim” Kashmir ruled by majority “Hindu” India, provides a specific cause, but LeT has always considered the struggle in Kashmir as part of the global struggle, hence the specific selection of Americans and Britons as targets for murder, and the inclusion of the Jewish Chabad center as a principal target (2009:11).

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Exploring Urban Screens

By Zlatan Krajina

Abstract

There is a tautological tendency in the widespread claims that urban space is ‘mediated’. Never before has the citizen, it is argued, been confronted with such an unprecedented array of signage. I depart from the rhetoric of ‘biggest-ever-saturation’ as not necessarily untrue, but as insufficient in exploring the diverse spatial operations of urban screens. I examine some contemporary cases of animated architectural surfaces, informational panels, and advertising billboards, with reference to much longer standing cultural practices of spatial management in modern cities, such as illumination, to suggest that the contemporary display media do not mediate the city anew but re-invent urban space as a field of ubiquitous mediation. From that standpoint I suggest exploring urban screens as a) both singular visual agents and indivisible items in plural structural assemblages, b) complementary forces of public illumination, and c) complex perceptual platforms in visual play of scale and distance.

Keywords: Urban screens, media, light, city, architecture.
Introduction

It has been commonplace in media studies to discuss contemporary media abundance, whereby display media in urban space have come to serve a handy proof that it is becoming harder and harder to escape the exposure to media. With every new study on the contemporary media landscape we hear, repeatedly, that “the old television set has morphed from a small-scale appliance – a material object primarily associated with domestic space – to become a large-scale screen; less a piece of furniture than an architectural surface resident not in the home but in the street outside” (McQuire 2008: 130). At the same time, the agreement about the fact that media messages are now everywhere is also where discussions related (even remotely) to urban screens terminate. It is time to turn the mere recognition of urban screens into a point of departure, rather than arrival, and to move forward by addressing possible pathways towards exploring particular communicational modes of urban screens. The occasional specialised studies in the technological advances in display electronics (e.g. Schoch 2007, Schoch 2008), perceptual effects (e.g. Offenhuber 2008), and potentials for the community belonging and socialisation (e.g. Struppek 2006) notwithstanding, the less obvious spatial practices associated with urban screens, such as their luminous activities, are rarely given detailed inspection. In this article I take a grounded view to offer some preliminary guidance in studying urban screens as spatial agents in the ubiquitous play of visibility and distance, which is as old as cities themselves.

Circulating the idea of a ‘media-saturated’ world (cf. Bird 2003; cf. also Newcomb 1988), especially in terms of audience research, media studies have made only passing, if any, specific reference to the urban display media (cf. Ang 1996; Moores 2000; Bird 2003; Livingstone 2005; Couldry 2005). Moores in his Media and Everyday Life in Modern Society, for instance, asks “what position have television, radio and other electronic media like telephones and computers come to occupy in people’s day-to-day lives and social relationships?” (2000: 1). Crucially, his important discussions thereof remain centrally anchored in the realm of home. Even a reference to “urban neighbourhood” indexes a broader social context for discussing media consumption in urban households (ibid.). To take another example, Gitlin’s media studies tour de force Media Unlimited addresses the increasingly mediated city more explicitly, but goes no further than ascertaining media abundance as a fact of (contemporary) life in the cities. He suggests that contemporary enquiries into everyday media usage, being particularly sensitive to the possible “contraband” in media consumption, risk overseeing its essence, which, for him, is “the immensity of the experience of media, … the devotions and rituals that absorb our time and resources” (2001: 4–5). If in one culture more than in another, never before has the citizen been confronted with such an unprecedented array of signage, whereby we are “bathing ourselves in images and sounds” in response to the media’s “promise of feeling” (ibid. 4, 6, 14). Accord-
To Gitlin, the “baffling media totality”, with its “shimmering multitude of images and sounds”, makes “[the] iconic plenitude … the contemporary condition” (ibid. 11, 14). However, the condition of “media saturation” (ibid. 9) in its seeming self-explanatory nature in effect finds itself trapped in a deterministic prism of continually hungry media users. The specific operations of urban screens in the public space of streets, squares and passages, side by side with myriad other sources of stimuli, remain under-explored.

If urban screens appear as formative substances to everyday scenographies in (post)modern cities (McCarthy 2001; McQuire 2008: 146, 25; Wilken 2006: 31), we can only explore the screens with a sound sensitivity to their principal context: the broader tension between the strive of the planners to create urban space according to coherent maps drawn from macro vantage points, and its lived realities taking place fragmentarily, at the mobile pedestrian vantage points (cf. de Certeau 1984). Media have been utilised in this tension on both ends of the micro – macro divide, so that one could almost read off the dynamic changes in urban space from the media-related activities: at first it was the photographs and the cinema that helped in making sense of urban pace and spatial growth, and now it is technologies such as geospatially responsive mobile phones and large scale urban screens. McQuire approached the initial complication of making sense of the myriad forms of mediations in the city in terms of media – city conjunction that “emerges through a complex process of co-constitution between architectural structures and urban territories, social practices and media feedback” (2008: vii). Fornäs, similarly, ascertains that “cities are from the start mediated as well as mediating machines, and media always already co-construct urban settings” (2006: 9). However, when confronted with the need for a closer inspection of particular cases, such as urban screens, these relevant theorisations inevitably sound tautological. The confirmation that the intertwining nature of city and media is fated by the fact that the two realms share an intrinsic structural logic of fostering communication within and across socially organised space is a helpful framework but an insufficient tool in scrutinising urban screens.

One important way out of the ‘saturation’ blind alleys is, as I seek to illustrate, in investigating the screens in terms of urban spatial dynamics that the screens are tied into, which lie behind the easily recognisable functional uses. For that purpose, we must approach the screens (as pedestrians often do), so to say, from a side street, being suspicious of their taken-for-granted positions and operations, rather than from the main road, from where the specialist literature ardently updates its taxonomic catalogues. Thereby the screens are public display media that either convey information (news and transport information overlays), allow exchange of information (street kiosks), advertise (billboards), or serve architectural design (media façades) or public art (installation screens), all in a number of forms (textual information, moving or still images), and in variable scale. Urban space is a field of ever-complex spatial relations between its designers and users.
in a continuous interplay of continuity and flux. In order to scrutinise its dynamic practices, we need a spatial epistemology with the grounded eye-level approach that investigates the screens as they appear across different scales and individual forms.

Conceptually, I would broaden Moores’s concern with the place of media-saturation in everyday life, Gitlin’s call to recognise saturation as “the contemporary condition”, and McQuire’s notion of the ubiquity of the “media city” with Couldry and McCarthy’s assertion that media saturation in fact means saturation with “images of other places and other (imagined or real) orders of space” (2004: 1, my emphasis). This is precisely the rationale that I propose for a study of urban screens, that is, their physical occupations of public space, image-based deliveries of various ‘elsewheres’, and territorial augmentation by the means of light. If we agree that “it is ever more difficult to tell a story of social space without also telling a story of media and vice versa” (ibid.), rather than ‘mediated’ anew in the spirit of the ‘everywhere-mediation’ from the beginning, the city is in terms of display media better seen as re-mediated along much older spatial vectors and practices.

Detouring episodically from historical accounts to contemporary cases, in this article I look for most helpful multifaceted junctions, seeking not a set of definite formulas but a specialised consideration of broader analogies through which the publicly displayed screens might be understood. My methodological rationale thus finds its most suitable expression in Morley’s (2006: 33) “multidimensional model” of theoretical synthesis, “which builds new insights on to the old, in a process of dialogue transformation which, if necessarily at points selective, is none the less synergetic and inclusive by inclination”. I adopt what Qvortrup calls “a pluralist ontology” (1997: 169) in exploring visual activities in the city as spatial activities (cf. Soja 2003). In the first part of the paper I make some preliminary points through contributions from extant literature on how urban and architectural design makes use of visual media in their arrangements of public space, and the pioneering attempt at deciphering the out-of-home television, Anna McCarthy’s “Ambient Television” project. In the second part, drawing on my current research, I discuss three key aspects of urban screens that I suggest for exploratory strategies of future studies. Firstly, I argue that urban screens can best be understood as both the singular display media and as indivisible properties of urban structures in complex local contexts. Secondly, I suggest that the vector persisting through epochs of urban change and everyday habituation, relevant for a study of urban screens, is that of illumination, not necessarily as leading, but as one important dimension of a continually (re)mediated city. By extension to understanding the urban screens as forces of artificial light, I finally consider how the illuminative effects of urban screens are configured in distancing the source of emanation from its output, that is, of separating the material background electricity from the resulting imagery.
Preliminary Points

Visual Dynamics of Urban Space

Visual media have played the key role in urban spatial ordering. The cities of antique, medieval and renaissance ages articulated “the hierarchy of social and political relationships … and collective memory” by achieving visual supremacy of religious or monarchic edifices, whilst fencing the town with walls or gates (McQuire 2008: 17). Thereby, the fluctuation of citizens was readily available by sight (ibid.). By the mid-18th century the rapid growth of cities required more sophisticated technological means in securing order. The system of ‘reflector lanterns’ (réverbères) made the lit zones of the city perceived easily as all there is of the city (cf. Schivelbusch 1995: 93, 95). The Parisian riots needed only to smash individual lanterns in order to ‘erase’ the lit territories (ibid. 98, 106-107, 142). With the proliferation of the public system of electric lighting by the end of the 19th century, the idea of “[artificial] light as a guarantor of public morals, safety and order” persisted (ibid. 134). Soon, photography lent a useful ‘mapping’ tool in rendering the city space as “available to perception, cognition and action” (McQuire 2008: ix). ‘Capturing’ the bodies in the streets with the image-based media heralded the public visual culture that will later take shape of surveillance systems and heated debates about privacy. Hence the visually apprehended urban terrain operates in a double logic of urban image circulation: that of collecting visual data and projecting images publicly. Acknowledging the paralleled ubiquity of the former, I attend to the latter by looking at a different set of important processes.

The swift development of industrial urban areas from the late 19th century onwards went hand in hand with the advent of a set of transport and communication technologies, such as trains, cars, electricity, telephones, elevators, radio, photography and film (cf. McQuire 2008: ix, 56-57). At the turn of the century “the urban-industrial life-world was transformed beyond recognition in little more than a generation” (ibid. 57). The contemporary “megalopolis” in the contexts of post-industrial society, globalisation and speed (ibid. 88), as Gitlin suggests, “sprouted communication technologies, cultivated discontinuities and interruptions, invited simultaneity, demanded an omnidirectional, all-purpose alertness” (2001: 84), which, if only briefly, takes us back to the starting point: the abundance of (predominantly visual) stimuli in the city. Following Nead (2007: 109), what is at stake in the current discussions about the experiential dimensions of urban life as sensational shocks is an uncritical generalisation of what Georg Simmel initially witnessed in the 1900s as “the rapid telescoping of changing images, pronounced differences within what is grasped at a single glance, and the unexpectedness of violent stimuli” (2002: 11). As Nead details, the difficulty is “when Simmel’s work is adopted literally”, particularly having “cinema … drawn into this narrative as … the form that most nearly expresses the pace and discontinuities of
modern life” (2007: 109). To take the case of London, the then largest city in the world, perhaps more caution would be advisable in making such generalisations. The city has been, since its earliest modern development, a place of diversity, particularly in terms of density of urban stimuli (ibid. 109–130). This is not to deny busy fluctuations of bodies and goods through the city traffic, but to acknowledge a paralleled “individual anecdote and character” (ibid. 110–111), or, in Massey’s current update, “a field of multiple actors, trajectories, stories with their own energies—which may mingle in harmony, collide, even annihilate each other” (2007: 22; cf. ibid. 29–52). The double logic of the urban image circulation thus homes a dynamic field not of constant movement nor stillness but their individually and institutionally motivated interchange. It is principally in this elementary context that the urban screens must be examined. The cultural analogies of mobility and change hand in hand with stasis and continuity have found their most articulate expression in singular architectural practices.

**Animated Surfaces**

As I indicated above, the modern terrain of the city is increasingly difficult to be conceived of in any other way “except in bits and pieces” (Harvey 1989: 66, 69), which owes much to the contemporary history of architecture. Towards the end of the 20th century, architecture pursued an epistemological distinction between, albeit not a final break with, the inheritance of modernist functional “planning”, as a solution for urban crisis (ibid. 66-69), and the postmodernist “design” of “singular objects of architecture” (cf. Baudrillard and Nouvel 2002) as, by intentions of the architects, a challenge to the macro planning strategies (cf. Hays 2003: 129, 130; Hays 1995: 42; Wilken 2006: 137). The latter tendency has in recent years been increasingly mobilised in implementing moving image screens in designing façades. The outer skin of a building is said to be animated by the means of display technology covering its entire surface, or even challenging the very notion of façade as a solid plane of construction with the notion of a node of information circulation.

In architectural terms, the two key purposes essentially assumed for buildings, those of providing “shelter” and “symbol”, are in that process separated to the maximum, at the expense of “shelter” (Bouman 1998b: 62). The shelter/symbol conflation is not new: “baroque domes were symbols as well as spatial constructions, and they are bigger in scale and higher outside in order to dominate urban setting and communicate their symbolic message” (Venturi et al. 1977: 13). However, in the case of contemporary urban screens (either as add-ons or as entire front façades), the physical separation of the emanating surface from the surrounding carrying walls makes evident, creates two different regimes of signification, one primarily symbolic and the other formal. In that sense, buildings with urban screens are most helpfully recognised as “decorated sheds”, as Venturi et al. suggest for much of the mediated architecture in Las Vegas, and not merely as
“symbols” themselves (ibid. 87), as the current industry of media façades would have it (cf. Bouman 1998b). I return to the architectural cohabitation of the ‘virtual’ and the ‘real’ in the case of urban screens later. The afore-mentioned Bouman’s contention, which confirms Venturi et al.’s standpoint, is a practical way around otherwise lengthy debates about the status of the electronic signage in architectural outfit. The value-laden question of whether electronic signs are “inevitable and good” in otherwise historical architecture’s practice of enhancing the building’s appearance (Venturi et al. 1977), or whether they merely serve “escapist” architectures that have nothing to do with the “traditional task of cultural symbolization” (Harries 1988: 38), is not to be taken up here. I am more interested in looking at the formal play of the built environments, individual buildings and display technologies.

Architecture and urban design are commonly seen as disciplines “strongly focused on the intentional processes and practices of place-making” (Wilken 2006: 137), much of which is still yielded both to the modernist thrive towards efficiency and productivity as well as the postmodernist advocacy of excess. Amongst the architects of the 1970s who foresaw “the tail end of “paper architecture””, such as Koolhaas, De Portzamparc, Liebeskind and Tschumi, Elisabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio pioneered the usage of “electronically mediated presence as a creative working principle, a means of interrogating the contemporary built environment and the visual culture that surrounds us” (Goldberg 2003: 46, Dimendberg 2003: 67; cf. Betsky 2003: 24). Against the utopian modernist promise of technology as a guardian of controllable efficiency that discursively heralded a better future, Diller and Scofidio’s projects of moving images façades “us[e] technologies generatively rather than representing them formally” (Schafer 2003: 97), with, as Diller once explained, the aim of “interrogating spatial conventions of the everyday” (quoted in Park 1996: 92). For the artistic interventions in public space, be they on a large scale of façades or on a small scale of individual monitors, the usage of screens “is a matter of the right tool for the particular job” (ibid.), in critically displaying the contemporary ubiquity of display (cf. Betsky 2003: 23).


Whilst the industry works to perfect the display technologies to suit the customers' needs in achieving satisfactory ‘brand recap rates’ in transient exposures to the screens, postmodernist philosophy pursues theoretical critique. It sees electronic representations of ‘elsewhere’ in built public space as totalising in their alleged blurring of the real and the simulated (Baudrillard 1994). Public places like airports or supermarkets, where the electronic screens proliferate, allegedly become uniformed “non-places” (Augé 1995). Centrally, the idea of the image-drenched quotidian has served as a staple for certain streams of Marxist critique of the capitalist society. Debord’s famous viewpoint, originating in the particular post-1968 critique of consumerist culture, understands the contemporary society as “society of spectacle”, whereby “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation” (1995: 12). However, the situation has gotten much more complicated than that. If “representation” is one obvious feature of the spread of digital technologies in the city, its ubiquity also, by a rule, reproduces the importance of physical place, which is, moreover, an “essential” category in “pervasive computing” (McCullough 2004: 98, 103). To take the example of “geodata”, as advanced contemporary forms of the classic spatial mapping, “information is taken from places to remote centers of compilation, architecture, and analysis, from which it is then sent back into the field to let people know about where they are” (ibid. 105). As McCullough put it,

There is no escaping the fact that the world around is being layered with digital systems. ... Whatever our desire for “sense of place”, we seem destined to get “places with sense”. ... Smart spaces recognize at least something about what is going on in them, and then they respond (ibid. 172).

Rather than merely assuming that, with modern capitalism, as Marx and Engels posited, “all that is solid melts into the air” (1848/2005), an enquiry in contemporary public cultures should not loose sight of the fact that “people still stretch for solid ground” (Gitlin 2001: 127), or, the variably “digital ground” (McCullough 2004), where social life continues. This is particularly so with the heterogeneous spatial agency of outdoor screens.

**Ambient Screens**

Anna McCarthy’s pioneering study “Ambient Television” investigated out-of-home placements of television across public places in North America and examined the medium in the light of its complex spatial operations (2001: 14). The
complexity here is essentially in the fact that ambient television as an object semantically fuses with its surrounding so that it is at times rather difficult to be readily distinguished from its surrounding, and operates as a distinctly suggestive interface between its images and the moving subjects. McCarthy is essentially confronted, as this study is, with the immense variability of forms and uses of television in public places, whose initial complication she embraces as the foremost characteristic of ambient television and offers a helpful short route in understanding the out-of-home screens as “site-specific” media.

McCarthy examines ambient television through a range of cases of ambient television’s ‘site-specificity’, such as the post-war masculine setting of the tavern, the feminine discourses of consumption in department stores, the subversive potentials of installation art, points-of-purchase and waiting rooms. The variety of spatial operations of the medium in particular cases can be drawn together between its institutional placements (next to the cues, in the waiting rooms, on the shelves), local appropriations (such as momentary escapist ‘travels’ to other sites) and standard television’s audio-visual grammars of expression (programme flow, pre-recorded material in loop, textual layout next to physical objects, etc.). To sum up,

Diverse site-specific practices of television convey the spatial complexity of the medium, its ability both to position people in physical locations and to render visible the entwined domains of contest, control, and consumption that define such places within broader cultural logics of space (ibid. 3).

McCarthy’s micro-macro perspective on ambient television in semi-public and public places urges us to tune any exploration of urban screens to whatever situational contexts the screen embodies or occasions when displayed in the street, square or a passage. The field of city streets where many more agents compete for attention requires that McCarthy’s implication of centrality of the screens in public space, which assumes as well a central role of television in “shaping public and private space” (ibid. 117), is rethought. McCarthy’s interest is with the power interplays in “what the TV set does outside the home – what social acts it performs, or is roped into, … and which subjects it silences or alternatively gives a voice” (ibid. 1). While I find these questions important in investigating the contemporary television cultures, I am wary of seeing the screen simply as “an object around which a number of everyday human activities are focused: not only viewing but also eating, drinking, exercising, waiting, reading, and many other routine aspects of daily life besides” (ibid. 225). This proposition could reductively install the spectacles of technological determinism which can prevent us from recognising, quite simply, that many other routines in public space, especially walking, remain less directly related with the presence of a screen, or that they even, of course, are carried out regardless of it. Although the experiential sensorium of a passer-by is not the concern of this paper, it is, however provisionally, important to keep in mind how institutional organisation of public space might impinge on bodily fluctuation, especially through the example of space designed for waiting.
Despite the continuing mysteries of the consumer’s ‘black box’ (cf. Mattelart 1991: 169), advertising in public waiting space appeared as a problem-solving tool for the shortcomings of home spectatorship and its possibility to “zap” their messages with the remote controls or power switches (McCarthy 2001: 99). Ambient television gave advertisers reasons to imagine the final “captivity” of the audience enabled by a “lack of competitive separation” (quoted in McCarthy, ibid. 99) in the remote control-less zones of televisual viewing, whereby audiences are “immobilized by necessity within a particular place for a particular amount of time” (ibid. 100). This is perhaps why McCarthy had no other way of dealing with ‘ambient television’ but in terms of ‘site-specificity’ and to claim, in turn, that every place gives way to distinct institutional screen positionings and local appropriations. While this, as I am to illustrate, remains true in urban space, the assessment of urban screens in the city will have to account for many more agents that take part in the dynamic field of the street.

This is particularly evident in the case of JCDecaux’s LED display screen with 18m² of advertising surface on the Old Street roundabout in London, where the eight-second long still images of advertisements interchange with the Sky News headlines and weather (see Figure 1). As the executive from the company David Lambert told me, they chose the location based on the satisfactorily high traffic count, and decided to use quick still images in response to the perceived transitory nature of the site. The company rented the wall on the London Underground’s generator building to offer space for the advertisers who seek to address multiple audiences: the ones on the bicycles, the walkers, people on the buses, in the cars, the underground passengers, etc. The junction, where the commercial City borders the continuously regenerated East End, is a place of passage for many, and of temporary stopping for others. The large size of the screen and the its position above the heads of pedestrians require sufficient distance to be taken if the images are to be grasped clearly. The images interchange in a seamless flow that runs in parallel to the heterogeneous rhythms of passing subjects: some talking on their mobile phones, or with their friends, or carrying the groceries, others waiting on someone, or reading the free newspapers distributed nearby.
In the midst of other stimuli, such as traffic, nearby construction work and other printed posters, the screen in Old Street is also surrendered to the atmospheric conditions. In the afternoon, the setting sun hits the surface directly, which makes it hard to read off the messages projected (despite its strategically constructed black frame). In the early morning, the rising sun shines from behind the screen so brightly that it causes the passers-by to turn their heads away. The rain, on the other hand necessitates using umbrellas, which cover not only the atmospheric, but also luminous spillage from above the head. In the evening, the screen sheds light on the pavement so that it secures a well lit place which friends use to meet at nights out – one situational outcome of the fact that with the rented two-dimensional wall space urban screens occupy much larger, three-dimensional territories. Although its standard formula was pre-figured in response to the rhythms perceived at the site, the screen is kept on constantly, emanating indifferently at all times. However, despite the local spatial structurings such as passage design, fencing, etc., the site remains relatively open to the situational poetics of circumstance: looking at the screen to avoid eyesight of others, leaning on the fence whilst waiting on someone, etc. The combinations of myriad elements in the situations of public mediations are endless, however much their meanings are attempted to be closed, the urban screens being one agent therein.
In addition to illustrating the need to broaden McCarthy’s rationale of site-specificity to the contingency of public urban space, my brief spatial analysis of the screen in London’s Old Street also signalled a set of key aspects that a study of urban screens could account for – the plurality of local contextual elements, the clashing forces of light, and the dimensions of distance and size. These three key dimensions respectively form the premises that I propose for a study of urban screens and I shall now expand on them one by one, by asking:

On which premises can we most helpfully make sense of the individual panels with respect to the multiple contexts in which they operate?

Which possible underlying spatial dimension connects the screens in different places, forms, usages, and scales?

Which visual vectors allow the urban screens to perform the suggestive appeal towards winning incidental pedestrian attention?

**Exploratory Premises**

**Singular and Plural**

Although it might seem that researching urban screens means ‘reading’ them as singular objects of mediation, we must keep in mind that display media rarely appear as entities separate from other elements in environmental inventory. Urban screens can be found in what Bausinger called “media ensemble[s]”, whereby the everyday technologies are explored “conjuncturally” with other items (1984: 349, 346). Sadin’s more recent travelogues from a number of world megalopolises suggest, identically, that an urban screen “is rarely isolated and is almost always displayed inside a larger ensemble … according to an almost uninterrupted continuum” (2007: 68-70). Thus what is seen in the city is far from simple. Technologically, the screens proliferated into “daylight compatible LED billboards, plasma screens exposed in shop windows, beamboards, information displays in public transport systems, electronic city information terminals, holographic screen projections”, etc. (Struppek 2006). In response to the growing variability of their forms, sizes, and uses, I refer to urban screens in grounded spatial terms rather generatively, as the display media exhibited across urban surfaces. Urban screens are incorporated in the urban space through diverse practices such as architectural design or advertisement, but in grounded terms, I would argue, it remains more urgent to understand the ways in which the screens, whatever technological ‘type’ they may be identified with, compose broader structures with their surroundings. It is in this sense that we must consider an *environmental character* of urban screens.

On the face of it, such a viewpoint bears some agreement with McLuhan’s determinist orthodoxy, at the centre of which is the famous viewpoint that “new media are not bridges between man and nature: they are nature” (1969: 14). In other words, the media’s presence in the common milieu is, in its ubiquity, tantamount
to being imperceptible, which, according to Lister et al. (2003: 89), marks the “elevation of the media above the message”. From that point of view, Schivelbusch is right to notice in his social history of the industrialisation of electric light that “in light-based media, light does not simply illuminate existing scenes; it creates them” (1995: 220). McLuhan similarly has no doubt about the fact that “a light bulb creates an environment by its mere presence” (2001: 8). It is, in that respect, true that, as I will demonstrate later with the illustrations from London’s bus stops, “it is not till the electric light is used to spell out some brand name or message that it is noticed as a medium” (ibid. 9). However, behind McLuhan’s media-as-environment rationale there consistently lurks the tenacious idea of media as autonomous agents in the broader social “change”, which implies users as somehow devoid of agency. On that point I diverge from his famous technological determinist media-as-message motto, whereby the “social and cultural change” is causally linked with “the way media work as environments” (McLuhan and Fiore 1967: 26). Should we accept the micro mediations from the users of technologies such as mobile phones, urban kiosks, or laptops, which always individually complicate the macro urban lighting vistas (see Figure 7), we must position the media-as-environment premise side by side with the media-in-environment assumption.6

The singular-and-plural premise I propose nears us to the frame of analysis proposed by Debray to examine media in their “technology-culture interactions” as “intermediary procedures” that are “at once technological, cultural and social” (1996: 12, 17).7 From the vantage point offered by Debray, McLuhan’s idea of media-as- environments is released of its techno-determinist cargo and is supplemented with Debray’s urge to take into account the contents of communicated messages and systems of meanings, side by side with the domains of apparatuses and power relations (ibid. 18). However, it may potentially be unending to investigate all these aspects exhaustively by following Debray’s proposal to study “the mediasphere, or middle ground, setting or environment [milieu] of the transmission and carrying [transport] of messages and people” (ibid. 26, original emphases, original insertions). Ours is an interest in the visual operations of display media across this all-encompassing frame. But let us give the “middle ground” idea, proposed by Debray, some more attention, although with a different pair of spectacles.

If we agree that a medium connotes “something that is intermediate between two qualities or degrees” (Nead 2007: 1), or, if we, more rigorously, posit media as “spaces of action for constructed attempts to connect what is separated” (Zielinski 2006: 7), we might be able to examine urban screens without denying their environmental embedded-ness. Recalling Gitlin’s recognition that the display screens shine “bright, brighter than ordinary reality” (2001: 20), we may find useful Schivelbusch’s historical account on the industrialisation of electric light, whereby the inventors counted on the fact that “the more brightly a picture is lit and the darker the position from which it is observed, the more distinct it appears”
It was upon this principle, that the 19th century theatre saw the opportunity of having the viewers focus on the stage more than the auditorium and to transform the theatre from “a social place … into a mystical one” (ibid. 206, 210). The logic behind darkening the auditorium before the brightly lit stage was in the fact that “the power of artificial light to create its own reality only reveals itself in darkness” (ibid. 221). Accordingly, the electronic displays as spatial agents may preserve high potential in attracting the incidental spectatorship when positioned in darkened surroundings. Thereby, the display is discerned as an object in relation to its background, of which it simultaneously forms a part. Although assuming the dichotomy light—darkness, that is, artificial light—natural darkness, this principle does not exclude the fact that, as Venturi et al. (1977: 52) remind us, an electronic sign may be effective during the day as well:

“It works as a polychrome sculpture in the sun and as black silhouette against the sun; at night it becomes the source of light. It revolves by day and becomes a play of lights at night.”

Before I consider the “play of lights” (ibid.) more closely in the next section, I want to give more attention to the atmospheric and other environmental conditions in which the designers situate the screens. Increasingly, the creation of a single urban screen in close concert with the surrounding assemblages of signification and stimuli, is becoming a professional prerequisite for success. Most commonly couched in terms of "contexts", the specialist circles increasingly show awareness of the complexity of "culture, climate, background, audience and built pattern" on the ground (Schoch 2007: 576). As Offenhuber summons, design strategies take on board both the planned imagery (that the local population is assumed to be "familiar" with) and the screen as a material object, which may “imitate” other physical objects in close surrounding, such as a bus schedule (2008), or a concrete façade.

Ag4 bureau, for instance, outlines to its potential customers their system of media façade as a) interactive, b) autoactive, and c) reactive, all three qualities designating the manageability of projected contents in relation to the changing environmental conditions (see Figure 7). ‘Interactivity’ signposts the possibility to constantly update the imagery with news feeds and hence facilitate interaction with the passers-by in terms of immediacy, ‘autoactivity’ points to the possibility of automated image generation that reduces the need of live controllers, whilst ‘reactivity’ allows generating images that “mirror” the conditions in the surrounding area, such as weather or traffic conditions, recorded by sensors (ag4 2006: 20, 70, 108). In that sense, urban screens in form of responsive media façades are practically integrated in the plural surroundings by being highly responsive to their “contexts”. On the other hand, their seamless mediation can render them insufficiently distinguishable on the eye-level of the potential pedestrian audiences. In effect, the need to blend the screen with the immediate environment by the means of changing images, appears as self-defeating. Facing the risk of ca-
cophony that communication specialists would refer to as the “cocktail party problem”, that is, “the ability to listen to, and follow, one speaker in the presence of others” (Cherry 1957: 278), the designers must ensure that their display stands out from the environment as well. The designer’s intent is, then, not only in establishing close relations with the surrounding environment, as Offenhuber suggests (2008), but, at the same time, in making the screens as objects distinguishable and their visual operations evident. Thus just as the moving image panel becomes a strategic material in designing the façade, the contextual urban flux remains its principal environment. The imagery, as it were, is not inserted merely in a building’s surface but in the local environment of which it forms part. The moving images fuse with the exchange of a series of movement and stasis in the street traffic. But in order to achieve that, the displays, as I suggested, must mark their presence in their own distinct modus operandi, by which they occupy a location in urban scenographies, as well as a place in individual sensory microenvironments. Thus ranging from the macro scale of the heterogeneous contexts to the micro scale of individual urban screens requires a consideration of their possible communicational modus operandi.

In response to McCarthy’s (2001) call to explore what the screens ‘do’ to invite attention of the moving subjects, we could try to locate urban screens in the "cultural circuit" (cf. du Gay et al. 1997) of “producers, consumers and the communicative forms”. Thereby “broadcasting” is commonly considered “an institutionalised feature of cultural consumption” (Moores 2000: 12, my emphasis; cf. Ang 1996: 21-26). The sheer circumstantiality of communication in the city space, constituted by a multiplicity of actors and forms, resonates with the standard of the cultural circuit only remotely. McCarthy instructs us to explore “the physical position [that the screen] occupies within a space”, because it suggests “the spectator positions” that the ones found “within eye- and earshot of a particular screen … are encouraged to occupy” (2001: 118, 119). But how to relate broadcasting in terms of consumption, which counts on intentional usage with transience that essentially characterises individual encounters with screens in series of hardly avoidable distractions coming from, say, other people’s mobile phone conversations, other printed posters, traffic, etc.? For the same reasons, it would be, on the other hand, incorrect to identify the screens merely as part of “infrastructural requirements” of the street, such as electricity, water and gas supply, whereby “the kinds of behaviour expected of inhabitants or users of a premises on the street” are standardly pre-calculated in bureaucratic procedures (Fuller 2005: 90). Preliminarily, I suggest following Fuller’s idea that “all objects have a poetics” in that “they make the world and take part in it” (ibid. 2). Fuller underlies that “objects [of media ecologies] have explicitly become informational as much as physical but without losing any of their fundamental materiality” (ibid. 2). Let us take this idea further and recognise that whilst occupying physical space in urban infrastructures, urban screens shed light onto environment and invest the immediate
surroundings with meanings that are best understood through the anthropology of illumination. The artificial light is thus best seen as urban screens’ spatial force *sine qua non*, by which their producers make additional territorial claims of public space. Such concoction of materiality and virtuality is the next exploratory premise, to which I shall now turn more closely.

**Displaying Illumination**

When almost four decades ago American architects Venturi *et al.* set off to explore the symbolic architectures of Las Vegas, they faced the problem of mapping the intensely mediated territories faithfully. The old architectural representation techniques in relation to the mediated space of Las Vegas suddenly appeared “static where it is dynamic, contained where it is open, two-dimensional where it is three-dimensional. … Architectural techniques are suitable for large, broad objects in space, like buildings, but not for thin, intense objects, like signs” (1977: 75-76). What the researchers required was a way of charting “intensity”, a category that appeared to them so strongly relevant that they suggested introducing “twin phenomena”, with “archetypal … rather than specific buildings” (ibid.). My usage of the term ‘urban screens’ as a generic designation for the display media in the city similarly privileges recognising patterns in the sea of variability. However, the dimension of space of mediated communication is in Venturi *et al.*’s account unfairly dismissed. Signs flood the space of Las Vegas, which means that “communication dominates space”, but for Venturi *et al.* this means that such architecture is "antispacial" (ibid. 8, my emphasis). I would rather, conversely, assume that all architecture is spatial, but in a double sense: in terms of space that the signs acquire physically, as built instalments, and space they occupy visually, as a consequence of their luminous ‘spillage’ on the environment. In this way, we can chart what I would tentatively term *screen territories*, by tracing the light from the screen-source to the surface of reflection.

From the Platonic standpoint that “nothing is self-evident, including truth”, light which fundamentally “is only visible when reflected by objects”, has been regarded in many parts of the world as a metaphor of “transcendence, the good, truth, and power” (Hillis 1999: 34; cf. Smith 2003: 121). Since “it is not of the matter it reveals … like space, light articulates relations between this and that, here and there” (ibid., original emphasis). By tracing in our exploration of urban screens not *lux*, “our psychological experience of light”, but *lumen*, the “radiance passing through and illuminating space” (ibid. 36), we can study spatial relationships, which in their immaterial nature enclose much of the otherwise inaccessible power dynamics. Consider the following.

The shining reflection on the silver iron panel that dominates the right half of the photograph (Fig. 1) cannot be giving trace of the daylight coming from the exit seen on the left half, because it is, obviously, located on the opposite side of the source of the outer sunlight.
Two distinct sources of light add up to the visibility of the entire space of the London Underground foyer, covering its corners with light. The source of the phantom light is a set of advertisement screens (Fig. 3 and 4) placed opposite the silver board, emanating their messages with such excessive light that the board on the opposite becomes itself a reflector screen.

Thus before they ‘inform’ or ’advertise’ – urban screens ‘glow’, shedding light on the surrounding built surfaces, by consequence of being electronically ‘fu-elled’. I suggest that the proliferation of urban screens can then be explored within broader developments in the management of space by the means of light.10

As Bouman reminds us, “in the past, architecture also needed sunlight in order to be seen. As soon as darkness fell it … vanished, cloaked in shadows” (1998a: 63). Pawley takes the case of gothic church stained windows in a more rigorous examination to suggest that the structures of the walls of the churches were built in order to support the tall wide coloured windows (1990: 115).11 “Windows ceased to be simple penetrations designed to admit light, but became instead complex translucent coloured-image screens built from mosaics of stained glass” (ibid. 115).
In that way, the Bible had been, as Pawley suggests, narrativised, and the churches served as “public information buildings” of their own (ibid. 119), long before the contemporary displays have been heralded for their historic innovations or critiqued for their polluting effects on public space.

Different contexts and times offer different ways to think of the same kind of practice; once it was solely the management of natural, and later, in addition, of artificial light. As Tanizaki documents in his classic critique of the competing usage of artificial and natural light in post-war Japan, ancient Japanese nobility and religious authorities used to cover the entry surfaces of the buildings and the statues of Buddha with gold. The material was chosen “not [for] mere extravagance”, but for its spectacular reflective, screening effects (2001: 36). In such cases “the gold leaf of a sliding door or screen will pick up a distant glimmer from the garden … [and] light the darkness of the room” (ibid. 35-36). 12 In another case, deliberately chosen as very different, the journal Building Services publishes in 1979 a set of recommendations for “Working With the Small Screen”. Alleging that there are “special needs [that should be acknowledged] where small screens are introduced into existing premises”, the article takes up the idea of light as the key currency in negotiating work space’s “comfort and efficiency” (Wood-Robinson 1979: 45). Considering the brightness of display screens in work places as opposed to the reflective surfaces of surrounding walls, the daylight coming through the windows and even the reflective clothing of the workers, the workplace becomes a sort of a light battleground. The article recommended that, for instance, screens and windows should not be facing each other and the displayed figures on the screens should be given a dark background (ibid.). These apparently minute characteristics – as such easily overseen in current debates – say much about the potentially high relevance of detail in understanding proportionally larger structures. In my case, the management of reflective surfaces gains important consistency in discussing light as the key matter in negotiating of visibility. Re-
turning to the question of the display screens in the city, the attention is on what amounts to the visibility of a street, a square, or a passage.

By extracting for this purpose not the piece of display technology or its textual message, but the sub-textual medium of light that carries the projected text, we are able to attend the broader forces of signification that penetrate space on three-dimensional, rather than two-dimensional plane of pure textual messages. Since the urban screens encroach upon space both physically and visually, what can we learn about their operations by tracing the side-effect of spilt light? Further enquiries could ask which surfaces deliver light, which accidentally reflect it (and along the way fortify original source, especially in the case of advertiser’s rental of physical space solely to put up the screen), and which remain darkened, thus hidden (cf. Fig. 6). Before the advent of artificial light, the screening surfaces were used to reflect and point the light in desired direction, whereas with the electronic technologies the light is launched in environment, and is, in that respect more easily manageable as force.

![Fig. 6: Urban Visibilities](image)

Artificial light has been used to convey spatial relationships since the early practices electric lights as “light-based media” from the late 19th century onwards (Schivelbusch 1995: 220) played with “three-dimensional effects in the game of light and shadow” (Thomsen 1996a: 104-105; Ackerman 2006). With the grand demonstrations at World Fairs, electric light gained the strength of a new medium of expression, utilised across architectural avant-gardist projects, artistic experiments by the futurists, vorticists and expressionists, as well as commercial and urban practices, enhancing such forms as "floodlights", "outline lighting", "kinetic light", "light houses", etc. (Ackerman 2006: 12-13; cf. Ackermann and Neumann 2006). The messages of commercial entrepreneurs intertwined with the otherwise noisy space of the cities since the earliest stages in modern urban development. Soon after the new electric lighting technology was introduced, “in the marketplace, the electric sign, the spotlight and even the streetlight became economic weapons” (Nye 1994: 175; cf. McQuire 2005). With the increasing usage of electric light and experimentation with its suggestive power,
What emerge[d] in the electropolis … was a hybrid environment belonging to neither architecture nor sculpture as traditionally understood. Instead, the electric city [was] … characterized by the interpenetration of material and immaterial spatial regimes (McQuire 2008: 122).

More contemporary cases continue on that tradition in pop culture and, say, live concerts, whereby “light defines, cuts out, creates spaces with immaterial walls” (Thomsen 1996b: 115). However, all these occasions for urban visual spectacles appear to be resting on a much older principle that counts on a particular degree of bodily proximity with a display panel. The involvement with the urban displays assumes incidental attention, and necessitates, paradoxically, securing enough distance between the passing viewer and the viewed object.

Proximity with Distance

As Gitlin alleges, a display screen “delivers light, gleams with availability” regardless of its changing situational contexts. “Unless we click an off button or smash the screen, the images stream on, … They collect our attention but do not reciprocate” (2001: 20-21). Gitlin’s Kafkaesque observation, should it succeed in disguising the seamless image-ubiquity of the mediated urban space, bypasses its fundamental operational currency – space. The "stream" and "attention" occur in and take space, and however blind and deaf, the communicators in Gitlin's story are related. In the context of mediated urban space, their relation is necessarily spatial. Therein, critical proximity collides with necessary distance. This is the third exploratory premise I want to consider here.

With the rise of modernist relativity of individual time-space senses that are intrinsically "dependent upon the observer’s frame of reference”, as McQuire reminds us, “spacing … always implies relation” (ibid. 21, 22; cf. MacPhee 2002). Arbitrary spatial relations are always implied in design, yet again variously enacted by its users on the ground. Even more recently, “the “medialization” of a façade” is said to allow buildings to ‘move’ and facilitate “an emotional connection between the audience and the architecture” (multimediafacade.com 2008). German “mediatecture” company “ag4” advertises, as they claim, their own invention of “transparent media façade” (Müller 2006: 4), based on the LED system that orchestrates miniature bulbs on a steel net stretched across the outer skin of a building. The innovation, they explain, was a commercial response to “a rising demand for the number of projects requiring façades to act as communication interfaces” (ibid. 4). Essentially, the constructors rely on the power of scale and the potential of changeability inherent in moving images in facilitating the attention of the passers-by.
The “media façades” are advertised as exceptionally effective in incorporating moving images into the skin of the building in relation to the traditionally narrativised video clips (Kronhagel 2006: 166). The company explains that the continuous flow of images “is not limited in time by a beginning and an end but recreates a new [sic] each and every second” (ag4 2006: 108). In addition, the media façade does not employ a black frame to separate the projected images from the surroundings. This all gives us reason to think of the virtual and the physical domains of built space as constituent parts of urban space. In turn, moving images on a large scale complement the heterogeneous rhythms in public terrain. The passing pedestrians and vehicles interchange. Although the images move as well, their source, the building, remains static.

If we attempt to understand what enables a façade to be perceived as a display screen and how that may be helpful in understanding the broader media-saturated world, we must isolate, once again, the “contextual” features and focus on the screen’s visual operation. The media façade is constructed upon the LED technology and consists of an iron net of tiny bulbs, which blink in various colours (fig. 8). When looked at from a certain distance, the pre-programmed system of lighting gives the illusion of moving images (fig. 9).
What is easily overlooked (particularly in much of the determinist appraisals of the new projection technologies that allegedly make the buildings ‘move’) is that the logic of communication seems to be based on a much older principle. An example can be found in medieval stone art. Particular assemblages of small pieces of coloured stones constructed images. A view from a distance made the fragmented nature of the lines and shapes seem less obvious (fig.10).

Could it be said that the contemporary media façades operate in a similar logic? The mode is different: the stones are exchanged for bulbs. The pieces of mosaic are, as it were, electrified, and thus, made visually manageable. But in both cases there is an assemblage of small pieces of visual text that create the impression of an image when ‘read’ from sufficient distance. This confirms the famous Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) “remediations” theorem, whereby the enhancement of immediacy, that is, of the illusion of unapparent mediation, motivates particular improvements of media technologies. In our case the early electric floodlights matured to the more recent electronic display panels (notwithstanding the contemporary co-existence of both forms).
There is yet another kind of perceptual manipulation resting on the play of distanciation that allows the electric light source to be not merely visible but viewable. If we zoom into the very appearance of the display, we can notice that what distinguishes the billboard displays on Figure 11 is clearly an absence of cover that works as a separation of the backstage 'raw' light and the front stage visual spectacle.

Figure 11: Raw Light and Covered Light

This takes us, if only briefly, back to the history of the industrialisation of electric light. It is because, as Schivelbusch alleges, “the technical qualities of gas lighting and its impact on perceptions can be summed up in a single word: distance” (Schivelbusch 1995: 44). What was a problem of light insufficiency before gas was introduced became an excess of light when the open gas flames and electric lights lit up the spaces. The flames were so strong that they had to be covered, but in a way that the intensity of light was maintained. In turn, lampshades were invented, starting a new era in light perception. “From [then] on, it was not the flame that glowed, but the lamp shade, which allowed an amorphous, diffuse light to filter through” (ibid. 44). Mere light gained the meaning of “raw material that had to be refined by the lampshade before it could be admitted into the drawing-room” (ibid. 174). As the light surface took the role of the light source, the perceptions of light changed as well and the light was seen as more close, even and tender (ibid. 174, 54, 181). The sense of space changed accordingly. Because the bright electric light was perceived as so strong that it allowed no shadows in the rooms in which it was turned on, “a whole new culture … developed, based on indirect, reflected and focused light” (ibid. 180). “The monotony of electric light” needed animation through irregular shapes and various colours of glass (ibid. 182). As the “the uninterrupted, transparently sparkling surface” of glass was made technically available, the mirroring effects of glass and reflectors were exploited extensively in shop windows to attract the curious eyes of the passers-by (ibid. 146). The shop owners were perfecting the system all until there was enough light so that “the source of light itself [could] disappear from the view” (ibid. 148). Even daylight at once seemed “aggressive” and too direct, which, in
turn, gave rise to “a renaissance of medieval glass painting” on home windows (ibid. 182-183). In the case of urban mediations, one other contemporary example suggests that the premise distance-and-cover has to be thought in a wide range of options, including the converse: minimizing distance.

At a highly frequented site, the end point of the promenade, unlike in any other Mediterranean town with a strong evening stroll culture, the city council inserted the 22-meter wide moving image screen (fig. 12), as the then mayor told me, in order to foster socialisation and rehabilitate the long neglected site. The screen consists of 300 glass plates under which the LED lighting system works with the integrated converters of the sun's energy. A rather abstract (discothèque-like) play of lines and shapes invites the visitors to walk, jump, dance, or simply stand gazing closely at the innumerable patterns of moving colours.

Contrary to the afore-mentioned cases of urban screens, this surface is designed to suggest immersion, which is possible only by minimal distance and in the activity of walking over or lying on the images. This is, more generally, supported by where the screen is located. It covers the surface of the dock, which the constructor literally added by widening the previously much narrower quay, in order to incorporate the screen. In that sense, the installation is a screen-place, where all the other elements (such as the signs for the surveillance cameras, the benches for sitting) underline the fact of the screen’s presence, rather than screen-object normally found in a busy urban place, alongside many other elements that would compete for attention.

As I sought to illustrate, the designers of the display billboards in the city draw on the ancient principle of the separation of the lit surface and the light source as well as distance from the onlookers to achieve the suggestive appeal of their images. I would tentatively call it a front-back display paradox: in order to be perceivable, the textual display must be joined with an electric support, but in order to be readable the electric manufacture of the display must be covered and distanced. Future research can mobilise this premise by investigating how the subtle
positioning and design strategies suggest seamless mediation that works towards achieving the designer's communicative goals. In Zadar, the intention of the designer was to foster playful engagements with the screen, by working with distance on large scale. To wrap up, urban screens operate as individual sources of ‘raw’ light and ‘textual’ spectacles alike. Theirs is a sensational appearance immanent to the specific technological incorporation in the urban fabric.

Concluding Remarks

The growing presence of urban screens in world cities calls for closer inspection of the outdoor display media, especially in the context of their progressive changes in forms and usages. In response to a lack of scholarly engagement with urban screens, this article drew together the different texts in media and cultural studies to offer some recommendations for further explorations. Seeking the ways beyond the dominant assertions that media are now everywhere, and that media and city are inherently representative of each other’s communicative forces, I suggested a spatially informed epistemology sensitive to the ground details and overarching logics of structural conditions in which the urban screens operate, such as singularity and plurality of technologies and contexts, and the management of visibilities and distances. Practically, I suggested scrutinising the relations between distance, scale and size amongst the objects that compose the research site; the relations between the spatial claims of display media as material objects and illuminative forces; and the relations between passers-by, screens, and environments, that is, the observable ways in which the bodily movements relate with the built structures.

The three exploratory premises I suggested mutually overlap and should ideally be mobilised intertwiningly. This is even more important if the urban screenings are to be explored three-dimensionally, that is, not merely as texts being projected before us, but as moments of polymorphous spatial compositions registered from above, on the side, and right in front. Although the changeable appearances might present urban screens as sporadic immaterial discontinuities in the built assemblages (cf. Struppek 2006), from the vantage point of a spatially informed epistemology, the urban screens are better seen as physical occupants of space that exhibit changing representations of various ‘elsewheres’. As the screens continue to develop, and their producers continue to surprise us with new inventive forms and images, the exploratory premises I suggested should not be taken as final routes, but as options to be further considered in future research. To return to the beginning of the paper, “in our age of technological saturation, response to place becomes the most practical adaptation strategy of all” (McCullough 2004: 213). If the sole idea of an unprecedented saturation in making sense of the contemporary media environments in urban space cannot suffice, the (re)mediated city is better understood as a domain of perpetual continuity and change. Screens communicate
to passers-by, regardless of their immediate sensorial preferences. Images of ‘virtual’ places shine from metal surfaces designed with a strong sense of the ‘real’ place that homes them. In a study of urban screens, we are after what is in between.

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Please note that all illustrations are the authors unless otherwise stated.

Notes
1 I simplify this otherwise much more complicated architectural distinction for the purpose of illustrating the argument. See, for instance, Venturi et al. (1977) for a fascinating discussion about symbolism inherent in the forms of the modernist architectural programme.
2 Myriad public art projects make use of visual display media to interrogate the mediated quotidian, most notably in the works of Nam June Paik, Jenny Holzer, Krysztof Vodiezko, and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.
3 See, in that respect, Raynsford’s (1996) study about the construction of New York’s Grand Terminal on the turn of the centuries as a reinforcement of a long standing rationalist desire to orchestrate the fluctuation of individual passengers as crowds ‘manageable’ by “mechanised rationality”.
4 Compare with Morley and Silverstone (1992: 201).
5 See also McCarthy (2001: 119-121), Bouman (1998a: 55), and Bullivant (2002).
6 See Introna and Ilharco (2006) for a specialised phenomenological perspective on the essences of ‘screeness’ that, in the Heideggerian tradition, orient one towards display panels as “something that calls for or grabs our attention” (2006: 64) in a pre-existing ‘referential whole’. My preference of the luminous rather than textual activity of the screens is in agreement with this view of a "grounding intentional orientation" of screens, which might be said to signpost their "ontological significance beyond the mere content of their surfaces" (ibid. 58, 70).
7 See Vandenberghe (2007) for a broader consideration of Debray’s complicated ethos.
8 This viewpoint shares much with Silverstone’s classic postulate of the double logic of home television, whereby “the consumption of both, the technology and its content, define the significance of television as an object of consumption” (1994: 123).
9 I borrow this notion from A. Williams’s spatial currency of “the smallest spatial field[s] of human interactions and performances” (1980: 76-77, cf. ibid. 237).
10 Compare with Bille and Sørensen (2007).
11 I am grateful to prof. Bernard Sharratt for consultancy about this aspect.
12 In Tanizaki’s account should by no means be mistaken for an appraisal of visibility; in his critique the “hidden magic” of shadows is positioned against the “the evils of excessive illumination” that obliterate the particular beauty of a “visible darkness”, where always something seemed to be flickering or shimmering” (ibid. 46, 53, 55, original emphasis).
13 See Parkes and Ångeslevä (2007) for an account which views LED urban screens as "a hole in space" with "disembodied" material. The authors experiment with "breaking the frame (of the standard screen) with seamless content" of "embedded" screens that, for instance, form part of coloured windows with "thermochromic pigment" technology.

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Disposable and Usable Pasts in Central European Cities

By Agata Lisiak

Abstract
In Central European cities memories and material histories of socialist regimes remain particularly difficult to address and incorporate into the new democratic present. After 1989, city authorities in the region have chosen to emphasize some pasts and neglect others and, thus, (re)write their own versions of (urban) history and (re)shape their (urban) identities. In my paper I inquire into how post-1989 Central European urbanities are shaped by and communicated through various designations including signs and symbols on city streets, monuments, and buildings. Predictably, many material remnants of the socialist regimes have been destroyed or hidden from the public eye – my interest lies not only in which various designations on buildings and which monuments had to go, but also in why and how they disappeared. I discuss the most popular methods of hiding and/or effacing the remnants of socialism that range from subtle (surrounding of communist landmarks with tall buildings) through the obvious (renaming of streets, squares, metro stations; giving old communist buildings new names and functions) to the irreversible and, thus, most controversial (the razing of socialist architecture and monuments). The disappearance of the material capital of the socialist past has been accompanied by intense commemoration practices verging on memorial obsessions. New monuments, plaques, street names, and museums appeared almost as quickly as the old “disposable” ones were forced out from the urban landscape. The complexity of an urban identity as communicated through city streets, monuments, and buildings not only invites, but necessitates an interdisciplinary approach and, thus, my analysis includes elements from such diverse areas of knowledge as aesthetics, architecture, communication studies, comparative cultural studies, economics, history, and political science.

Keywords: Central Europe, Berlin, Warsaw, post-communism, cultural memory, urbanism
Disposable and Usable Pasts in Central European Cities

Although today's urbanities of European metropolises have been shaped by centuries if not millennia of turbulent histories, the recent pasts invariably arouse most public interest and controversy. In Central European cities in general and in Berlin and Warsaw in particular memories and material remnants of the communist/socialist regimes remain difficult to address and incorporate into the new democratic present. After 1989, the city authorities of Berlin and Warsaw have chosen to emphasize some pasts and neglect others and, thus, (re)write their own versions of urban histories. Importantly, as capital cities, Berlin and Warsaw represent not only their local heritage, but also that of whole nations; therefore, their identities are of crucial importance to the country's image and, as such, especially valuable. In what follows I look into which elements of the cities' recent pasts have been remembered and which have been forgotten. In the growing absence of the traces of the socialist past, the focus had to be shifted to other historical periods. The collapse of the communist regimes put an end to decades of silencing and/or misrepresenting uncomfortable pasts, especially the Second World War and the Holocaust, ethnic cleansings and expulsions, and people's revolutions repressed by Soviet and/or Soviet-imposed authorities. Consequently, after 1989, Central European capitals have witnessed an emergence of countless monuments, plaques, and museums, whereby, remarkably, the object of commemoration differs depending on which political party happens to rule the city and/or the country at a given moment. The complexity of an urban identity as communicated through city streets, monuments, and buildings not only invites, but necessitates an interdisciplinary approach (see Barthes 1967): the below analysis includes elements from such areas of knowledge as aesthetics, architecture, communication studies, comparative cultural studies, history, and political science.

Destruction of the Socialist Past – Impossible, Prevented, and/or Encouraged

The material remnants of the previous system that vanished in the first years after the 1989 revolutions were destroyed or changed for a number of reasons. First, many residents of (East) Berlin and Warsaw were simply embarrassed by omnipresent red stars, communist memorials, and statues of Soviet revolutionaries and supported their destruction (see Velinger 2005). Second, some of the communist symbols were of very poor artistic quality and, as such, generally (although until 1989 secretly) criticized for their grey concrete drabness; still, it is only realistic to assume that the new municipal and state elites used the aesthetic argument as one of the possible excuses to rid of the inconvenient symbols of the most recent past. Third, as Andreas Huyssen argues, the post-1989 treatment of the socialist herit-
age was “a pure strategy of power and humiliation, a final burst of Cold War ideology, pursued via a politics of signs, much of it wholly unnecessary” (Huysсен 2003: 54). Huysсен's explanation supports my claim that Central European capitals are (post)colonial cities. According to the definition I develop elsewhere, Berlin and Warsaw are (post)colonial cities because their politics, cultures, societies, and economies have been shaped by two centers of power: the Soviet Union as the former colonizer, whose influence remains visible predominantly in architecture, infrastructure, social relations, and mentalities, and the Western culture and the Western and/or global capital as the current colonizer, whose impact extends over virtually all spheres of urban life. Consequently, both cities are characterized by political, cultural, social, and economic tensions resulting from the condition of being postcolonial and colonial at the same time.

Despite the relative freedom with which new democratic authorities removed the remnants of the previous regime from the view, much of the socialist architecture proved impossible to destroy for practical and cultural reasons. The prefabricated apartment buildings in the outer city districts had been losing on popularity already in the 1980s – especially in Warsaw, where increasingly more people were allowed to build family houses in the suburbs (Murawski 2007: 94 – unless otherwise indicated all translations from Polish and German into English are mine) – and in the 1990s experienced an exodus of their residents followed by a ghettoization of whole neighborhoods. Despite the declining living conditions, however, razing prefabricated tenements has never been a serious option because of the tremendous economic and social costs such enterprise would entail. Similarly, prefabricated office and hotel buildings in downtown areas have been renovated rather than demolished and, thus, continue to exist in the urban landscape as reminders of the communist system. Moreover, some architectural objects of the gone era have been embraced by post-1989 popular culture, aesthetically rehabilitated, and reevaluated as “cool”. In Berlin, for example, many newcomers from West Germany found East German architecture exciting and exotic; consequently, the GDR became the new German pop (Cammann 2003: 285-86).

When it comes to socialist statues and memorials, a few survived either because they were overlooked in the general frenzy of the transition period or – which was especially true of Berlin – because community protest groups and activists prevented their demolition (Huysсен 2003: 54). Post-war Soviet memorials in Berlin, such as those in Treptower Park and Tiergarten, are special case as their preservation and maintenance were secured during the international negotiations preceding Germany's reunification (see Ladd 1997: 194). Nevertheless, most communist monuments in Berlin and Warsaw were destroyed primarily because the new political authorities viewed socialist monuments in strictly ideological terms and (dis)regarded them as propaganda tools of the previous regime (see Benning 1998). The prompt destruction of the monuments commemorating feared Soviet leaders produced various responses: while Warsaw residents generally welcomed
the disappearance of the reminders of Kremlin’s influence, in Berlin some struggled to preserve socialist monuments as part of the urban environment. The removal of Dzerzhinsky’s statue in Warsaw in November 1989 was enthusiastically greeted by the gathered crowd and the photographs documenting the event are among the most popular images to symbolize the fall of the largely unwanted regime. The demolition of the Lenin monument in Berlin in 1989 “was certainly the best-publicized case of post-revolution iconoclasm. This highly-symbolic event is remembered to this day in the city’s collective memory and was alluded to, for example, in the final sequence of the feature film Good-Bye, Lenin!” (Sigel 2008: no pagination). Unlike in the case of the Dzerzynsky statue, however, the Lenin monument in Berlin-Friedrichshain found supporters among local residents, politicians, and artists. The promptly established community initiative “Lenindenkmal” protested for weeks against the razing of the monument, but only managed to postpone it for a few days (see Strauss 2001). Where the Lenin monument used to stand, today there is an assembly of fourteen large rocks and fountains – an intentionally neutral ersatz that continues to be seen as alien by those who can still remember the previous look of the square (see Strauss 2001).

Next to the removal of communist monuments, changing of street names was a particularly widespread method of urban memory engineering in and right after 1989, possibly because it was relatively easy to execute and allowed for immediate substitutes. The street renaming in (East) Berlin may be seen as a (post)colonial practice since the new street names were “imposed” by West German politicians (Huysen 2003: 54). Huysen is convinced that much of the “often petty” street renaming was “wholly unnecessary” and only intensified the “political fallout in an East German population that felt increasingly deprived of its life history and of its memories of four decades of separate development” (Huysen 2003: 54). While the German capital witnessed protests against some of the changes imposed on the former East Berlin city text (Jordan 2006: 54), the residents of Warsaw seemed – at least in the first years of the transformation – rather content with what they perceived as liberating anti-Soviet developments. Generally, the choice of new street names in the Central European capitals was influenced by what political parties were in power in local and state governments at the time and the renaming process was often chaotic and lacked a bigger plan. In Berlin, many streets were given back their “presocialist” names, some of which were “decidedly antisocialist” (Huysen 2003: 54), while others received neutral city names: e.g., Leninallee became Landsberger Allee, Dimitroffstrasse became Danziger Strasse, and, similarly, the subway station Dimitroffstrasse was named Eberswalder Strasse (see Umbenennungen Berliner Straßen, Plätze, Bahnhöfe 1995-). Warsaw’s city text experienced a return to the interwar period and to more recent pasts that had no chance of being commemorated under the socialist regime. Consequently, ulica Marcélego Nowotki was renamed ulica Generała Władysława Andersa, aleja Karola Świerczewskiego became aleja “Solidarności”
Berlin and Warsaw as Urban Palimpsests

Keeping the above in mind, Berlin and Warsaw may be described as urban palimpsests, i.e. metropolises whose city-texts have been constantly reimagined and rewritten and where the same buildings or squares play diametrically different roles under various political regimes. As the examples below demonstrate, historical irony becomes particularly widespread in Central Europe after 1989. In 1991, the building where the Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (PZPR or Polish United Workers' Party) once had its headquarters was transformed into the seat of the newly established Warsaw Stock Exchange. Despite the decidedly non (or even anti) communist character of its post-1989 function, many (especially older) residents of Warsaw keep calling the building by its former name, i.e. Dom Partii (House of the Party) or Biały Dom (White House). Since 2000, when the stock exchange relocated to the newly constructed Centrum Giełdowe (Stock Exchange Center) at 4 Książęca Street, the 1952 building has been hosting offices of financial and banking companies.

Quite another trend in the treatment of the past has been the museumization of important socialist buildings. The headquarters of the Ministry of State Security in Berlin-Lichtenberg were turned into the Stasi Museum as early as 1990, soon after the building had been stormed by crowds seeking information and justice. Among other rooms, visitors have access to the offices of Erich Mielke, GDR's last Minister of State Security. Also the former Stasi prison in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen was preserved as a historical document and transformed into a memorial in 1994: “since the vast majority of the buildings, equipment and furniture and fittings have survived intact, the Memorial provides a very authentic picture of prison conditions in the GDR” (Stiftung Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen 2008: no pagination). Preserving the prison and opening it to the public not only makes it possible to learn about recent history in the place where it actually happened, but also commemorates the victims of the GDR regime and, as such, renders Berlin-Hohenschönhausen valuable both as a museum and as a memorial.

Although obsessed with monuments (Huysen 2003: 31), Berlin has also shown pragmatism in relation to its history: some of the buildings constructed under and for the Nazi regime were used during the GDR and then recycled again by reunified Germany. The most prominent example is the 1936 building of the former Reich Air Ministry at 97 Wilhelmstrasse, which – having suffered only little damage during the bombings of Berlin – was used immediately after the war as the headquarters of the Soviet military administration and served several functions under the GDR regime: first as the seat of the Volkskammer (People's Chamber),
where the GDR constitution was signed in 1949, then as the *Haus der Ministerien* (House of Ministries). On June 16, 1953, crowds of East Berlin workers gathered in front of the building and demanded economic reforms: their protests escalated to a brutally repressed revolution and ignited mass emigration from the GDR. In 1990, the Treuhand privatization agency moved in and in 1992 the building was renamed *Detlev-Rohwedder-Haus* after the former Treuhand director murdered by RAF terrorists in 1991. Ten years after the Fall of the Wall, the former House of Ministries became the seat of the Federal Ministry of Finance (Bundesministerium der Finanzen 2005). Similarly, the *Haus am Werderschen Markt*, built in 1935 as an extension of the Reichsbank and home to the Central Committee of the SED party in the GDR, was transformed into the Federal Foreign Office in 1995.

### Removal of the Berlin Wall and its Consequences

Karen E. Till argues that East Berlin buildings “were quickly closed or renovated because they were perceived as a threat to the legitimacy of a new Germany. … These sites were understood by Western officials as places of GDR memory that promoted Eastern values, pride, and truths” (Till 2001: 273). Although Till is right to observe that the treatment of socialist buildings in reunited Berlin has had a remarkably colonial character, it is important to differentiate between various intensities of those practices: assigning new functions and names to old buildings seems mild – if, at times, paradoxical or ironic – when compared to the more dramatic razing practices. The most obvious example of destroying the remnants of the previous regime is the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. International media reports turned the Fall of the Wall into a collective experience: the videos and pictures that traveled across the world showed cheering crowds tearing down the concrete slabs with whatever sharp objects they could lay their hands on. Despite the ensuing impression that the Wall was spontaneously dismantled by the city residents, the actual destruction of all border installations around West Berlin took two years and several political decisions to complete; the official dismantling works did not even start until June 1990. Right after the collapse of the socialist regime, the destruction of the Wall seemed the most natural thing to do not only because the concrete structure symbolized the Cold War and Germany's postwar division, but also because keeping it in the reunited city would be simply impractical. Only few observers argued in favor of keeping part of the border installations in place for the sake of future generations (Klausmeier und Schmidt 2005: 11).

Today, the Berlin municipality, city visitors, and some residents seem to regret the thoroughness with which the Wall was torn down – even if, presumably, for different reasons (Klausmeier and Schmidt 2005:11). Searching for the remnants of the Wall has become an urban obsession, a quest for contemporary historians, and a highlight of thematic guided tours. It turns out that despite the seemingly
minute destruction of the border installations, hundreds of remnants can be still found in Berlin today, some kept on purpose, other simply forgotten: they range from solitary concrete slabs covered with graffiti through random watchtowers and lampposts to desolate and rusty distribution boxes (see Klausmeier und Schmidt 2005). Despite their remarkable quantity, the traces of the Wall remain mostly overlooked or undecipherable to a layman's eye. Surprisingly, it took the city authorities a decade to realize the necessity of commemorating the former division. Among dozens of memorials, a museum, artistic installations, and exhibitions, possibly the most important attempt to revive the memory of the Wall was the creation in 1999 of a twenty-kilometer long stretch of a double-row cobble-stoned line built into the streets and sidewalks, where the inner city border used to run. The subtle yet clear outline serves as a tip not only to those Berlin visitors, who try to understand the topography of the former city division, but also to older generations of Berliners, who, among the constantly changing urban landscape, may not be able to remember, where the Wall used to stand. Immersed in streets, intersections, sidewalks, curbs, and bike paths, the line becomes part of the city body without posing any inconvenience for the residents.

Disappearance of Landmark Socialist Architecture

Whereas tearing down the Wall was generally applauded, the decision to demolish the Palast der Republik (Palace of the Republic) aroused controversy and resulted in protests, petitions, uncertainty, and, above all, chaos. The concrete and steel cube with an orange glass façade was open in 1976 as, primarily, the seat of the GDR parliament, but owing to its diverse functions quickly became one of the most popular buildings in East Berlin. The Palace of the Republic hosted a theater, concert halls, discotheques, restaurants, day care centers, stores, and a bowling alley and was visited by 15,000 people a day (see Bündnis für den Palast 2005), some even called it their second home (see Tangen 2006). Clearly, the political function of the Palace seemed secondary to its role as a meeting point and an entertainment center and the multifunctionality of the building emphasized its uniqueness: "perhaps nowhere else in the world did a parliament share quarters with a bowling alley" (Ladd 1997: 59). After the collapse of the communist regime, construction inspectors discovered that the building was contaminated with asbestos and ordered it closed. For years, the sealed Palace remained “in many eyes the symbolic legacy of a poisonous state” (Ladd 1997: 59), while others missed its socialist-day attractions. 1993 marked the beginning of a never-ending dispute between those advocating the preservation of the Palace as a natural and crucial element of Berlin's complex history and those in favor of its demolition and rebuilding of the Hohenzollern castle seriously damaged during the Second World War and then destroyed by the East German regime in 1950. In other words, “the empty GDR showpiece and the ghost of its baroque predecessor were
competing for the same site” (Ladd 1997: 59). Since both options found devoted followers and opponents, the heated discussion continued for over a dozen years. As if irrespective of the ongoing debate, between 1998 and 2003, the asbestos was removed at the great cost of DM 105 million (see Aldenhoven 2002) and in the summer of 2003 local architects, artists, and activists started using the Palace as a temporary art space (see Bündnis für den Palast 2005). Despite the popularity of the new cultural activities taking place in the decontaminated Palace, in November 2003 the Bundestag voted to tear the building down and – after taking into consideration protest statements and petitions issued by various non-government organizations, intellectuals, artists, urban planners, as well as some of the left wing and green parties – reconfirmed its decision in January 2006, after which demolition works commenced (see Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2008). For technical reasons, the Palace had to be deconstructed piece by piece rather than simply torn down – ironically, it has taken longer to destroy it than it took to build it.

Whereas the demolition of the Berlin Wall became an international historical and media event and the deconstruction of the Palace of the Republic triggered a decade-long nationwide debate involving politicians, architects, urban planners, activists, and artists, the destruction of valuable examples of socialist architecture in Warsaw took place among little to no media exposure. While large socialist edifices like the Palace of Culture and Science escaped razing, a number of small buildings such as cinemas and supermarkets were torn down despite protests of local communities, architects, and activists. Three of the destroyed movie theaters – Kino Moskwa (1948), Kino Praha (1948-49), and Kino Skarpa (1956-60) – were widely acknowledged relics of postwar architecture, rich in symbolism, and popular among the city residents (Pinkas and Kozak 2008). Kino Moskwa possessed a particularly iconic quality primarily because of the famous photograph showing a tank parked in front of the cinema in December 1981, right after the introduction of the martial law in Poland: the large neon sign on top of the building reads Moskwa (Moscow) while the billboard stretched above the pillared entrance advertises Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now. In the 1990s, despite its good technical condition, Kino Moskwa proved less attractive to new investors than the plot it stood on and, consequently, in 1996 the building was razed and soon replaced by a Silver Screen multiplex cinema. Similarly, Kino Praha was torn down in 2005 to give way to a new movie theater Nove Kino Praha (see Pinkas and Kozak 2008). Where Kino Skarpa stood until early 2008, a luxurious condominium will be built (see Kozak 2008). Interestingly, the official reasons for demolishing Warsaw's postwar cinemas were purely economic, not ideological or aesthetic as was the case of many socialist buildings in Berlin. Since the futures of Praha, Moskwa, and Skarpa were decided solely by the free market, the protesters pointing at the cultural, historic, and architectonic values of the cinemas used argu-
ments irrelevant to the interested investors and, therefore, were doomed to fail in their attempts to save the buildings.

The Palace of Culture and Science Controversy

Whereas statues and small buildings could be demolished at a relatively low financial cost, the removal of larger structures such as prefabricated apartment houses and office buildings has been in most cases – with the notable exception of the Palace of the Republic in Berlin – considered too expensive to execute. Also, some early socialist and/or Stalinist buildings have been classified as cultural heritage and, thus, saved from demolition. While the Zuckerbäckerstil (“wedding cake style”) buildings on Karl-Marx-Allee in Berlin, previously the object of ridicule and/or embarrassment, have quite unanimously become part of the post-1989 German pop (Cammann 2003: 285), the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw continues to arouse controversy. Hardly any other building in Poland's capital has been producing such extreme responses and engaging the public in equally heated discussions involving decision makers and respected figures from the world of art and entertainment (see Wajda 2008). Razing the Palace of Culture and Science has never been a serious option; instead, there have been numerous attempts to hide it among other tall buildings and, thus, degrade from its role as a landmark and the most outstanding element of the Warsaw skyline. While the decision of the Warsaw authorities to hide the Palace of Culture and Science behind tall office buildings may be influenced by financial rather than ideological factors, some public figures have been advocating the removal of the Stalinist edifice for – what they considered – aesthetic and cultural reasons. One of the loudest voices in the debate belongs to film director Andrzej Wajda, who claims to be personally offended by the Palace's presence. In his open letter published in Poland's biggest daily Gazeta Wyborcza, Wajda mockingly calls the Palace “the temple of Joseph Stalin” and reminds warningly that “works of architecture are the most important symbol of what the sovereigns want to tell their subordinates” (Wajda 2008: no pagination). Wajda demands “more courage” and adds that the Palace “has to disappear among other high-rise buildings so that, surrounded by them, it is no longer a symbol of those gruesome times, but rather an example of the 1950s Soviet architecture astray on the Vistula” (Wajda 2008: no pagination). Crowded with skyscrapers, the new Warsaw skyline envisioned by the filmmaker would resemble Manhattan and not “the village of Warszawa with Joseph Stalin's church” (Wajda 2008: no pagination). Also minister of foreign affairs Radek Sikorski would like the Polish capital to look like New York City and suggests the Palace be razed and replaced with an enormous lawn with a pond in the middle and, a Warsaw version of Central Park (Sikorski qtd. in Dziennik May 9, 2008).

The desire to get rid of the Palace of Culture and Science has been motivated by two forces: the embarrassment at and, in turn, rejection of the Soviet-imposed
In his commentary to Wajda's letter, urban planner Krzysztof Nawratek dismisses the proposal to copy the forms existing in the United States as “infantile” and, as such, characteristic of the Polish elites who “not only accept the imitational capitalism of the periphery that is being created in Poland, but are simply numbed by their fascination for it” (Nawratek 2008: no pagination). The “in-between peripheral” position of Central European cities (see Tötösy e.g. 2002) and their (post)colonial nature are clearly acknowledged in Nawratek's critique, even if not exactly expressed in these specific words. Nawratek interprets Wajda's appeal as merely a shift of directions in the center-periphery relations from East to West: “We are no longer to follow the example of the Big Brother from Moscow, but that of the Bigger Brother from New York” (Nawratek 2008: no pagination).

The attempts to hide the Palace of Culture and Science among modern skyscrapers have been partly successful. Still, the landmark position of the Stalinist high-rise remains not only unshaken, but also increasingly popular, especially among foreign tourists who come to Warsaw in search of the city's communist past (see Kowalska 2007). Just like Berlin's TV tower, the Palace has become an important inspiration for designers: its outline has been reproduced on t-shirts, mugs, calendars, and other types of souvenirs and, therefore, has become an internationally known symbol of Warsaw. Interestingly, both the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw and the TV tower in Berlin are more popular among the city visitors and residents than among urban planners and decision makers. The new development plans for Alexanderplatz – the central square neighboring the TV tower – foresee a construction of several high-rise office buildings, similar to those towering over Potsdamer Platz. East Berlin architect Bruno Frierl criticizes the plans as “stupid and dangerous … from the point of view of German unification … It's occupation and not unification” (Frierl qtd. in Harris 2006: no pagination – emphasis mine). Hans Kollhoff, the (West) German architect responsible for the new development plan for Alexanderplatz, dismisses the above accusations on what he claims to be aesthetic grounds: “the TV tower can be respected as a DDR monument in East Berlin, but it cannot be respected by any means as a great piece of architecture” (Kollhoff qtd. in Harris 2006). Kollhoff's judgmental stance implies that one of the city's most important architects is uninterested in the cultural implications of his designs and remains oblivious to the impact the hiding of the TV tower may have on Berlin's urban identity.

Commemorating the Victims of the Socialist Regimes

The disappearance of the remnants of the socialist past has been accompanied by intense commemoration practices verging, especially in the 1990s, on memorial obsessions (Huysssen 2003: 52). New monuments, plaques, street names, and mu-
seums appeared almost as quickly as the old “disposable” ones were forced out from the urban landscape. Berlin and Warsaw set on transforming their identities and chose new memory policies, among other tools, to achieve their goals. Despite local differences, it is possible to distinguish two main trends common to both cities. First, the most recent past has been commemorated only to a limited extent, primarily because of the proximity of these events and the difficulty to reach consensus on how the era of Soviet-imposed communism should be judged, if at all. The monuments and museums devoted to the postwar decades either pay long-due tributes to the victims of the socialist regimes or take on a Disneyesque form and aim at entertaining the viewer. Second, after 1989, the Central European cities bid farewell to the Soviet-imposed reading of the Second World War and started, if painstakingly, revising their pasts. Although countless war memorials had been built in Central Europe during the socialist regime, many of them misinterpreted, belied, or ignored the facts. The fall of communism and the subsequent withdrawal of the Soviet Army created a new opportunity to come to terms with the atrocities of World War II (see Judt 2006). In what follows I discuss the ways in which different pasts have been commemorated in the Central European capitals after 1989 and how the new monuments and museums have influenced urban identities and landscapes.

Berlin is home to several monuments and museums that focus on hitherto silenced aspects of the city's complex postwar history. The emergence of memorials devoted to (East) Berlin's socialist decades was prompted by the re-unification of 1989/1990 and remained “in line with the general memorial obsessions of the 1990s” (Huyssen 2003: 52). Importantly, the new memorials focus primarily on the uprising of June 17, 1953, the Wall, the Stasi, and their many victims. The 1953 demonstrations of East Berlin workers were commemorated in West Berlin as early as four days after the brutally repressed events: the large avenue between the Brandenburg Gate and the Siegessäule was renamed Straße des 17. Juni. It took nearly five decades to honor the victims of the uprising in the part of town where the protests actually took place. On June 17, 2000, right in front of the former House of Ministries on the corner of Wilhelmstrasse and Leipziger Strasse, a new memorial created by the Berlin artist Wolfgang Rüppel was unveiled: the artwork is an enlarged photograph covered with glass and depicting workers marching forward with their arms linked. Since it is incorporated into the pavement, the monument could have been easily overseen if not for the colorful mural on the façade of the ministry building that Rüppel's piece corresponds to both in its proportion and motif (see Schomaker 2000). Max Linger's propaganda wall painting depicts a crowd of workers cheerfully praising socialism. Remarkably, the mural was unveiled in January 1953, only few months before the East Berlin workers' rebellion. In the words of Germany's former finance minister Hans Eichel, the artworks “juxtapose the real and virtual socialism” and, as such, present a poignant combination (Eichel qtd. in Schomaker 2000: no pagination).
Similarly, the victims of the Wall had been commemorated in West Berlin already during the city's division, but it was only after the collapse of the socialist regime that more elaborate Wall memorials have been erected. Although the Wall has almost completely disappeared from the urban landscape, it is still possible to find original parts of the border installations scattered in the city. The most famous and longest (1.3 km) stretch of the Wall has been preserved in the (Eastern) district of Friedrichshain. In February 1990, over a hundred international artists were invited to cover the grey concrete slabs between the Oberbaumbrücke and the Ostbahnhof with their own interpretations of the then ongoing system change. The result, known as the East Side Gallery, may (and does) appear confusing to some tourists, who tend to think the graffiti and murals had been painted already during the city's division (as was often the case of the border installations facing West Berlin, but would have been impossible in East Berlin as that part of the Wall was constantly watched by border guards). The Gallery's exposure to changeable weather conditions, traffic, and vandalism has resulted in serious damage of both the artworks and the concrete slabs and, consequently, necessitated a thorough renovation that began in the fall of 2008 as part of the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the Fall of the Wall.

On the tenth anniversary of the Fall of the Wall, the former division of the city was commemorated in three different ways in Bernauer Strasse. Back in August 1961, the street witnessed some of the most dramatic and symbolic scenes from the first chapter of the city's division: the houses on Bernauer Strasse were located in the Soviet sector, but the street was already part of the district of Wedding administered by the French; when the Wall was built, the apartment buildings became part of the border installations with ground- and first-floor windows forcefully bricked up. Archival photographs and films document the escapes of desperate residents jumping out of the windows as well as the subsequent demolition of the borderland houses by East German soldiers. Today, Bernauer Strasse is home to the Berlin Wall Memorial (1998), the Berlin Wall Documentation Center (1999), and the Chapel of Reconciliation (2000). The Berlin Wall Memorial incorporates part of the border installations that survived in Bernauer Strasse: it consists of two concrete walls separated by the death strip and limited on both ends by large steel walls that are polished and smooth as mirrors on the inside (and, thus, symbolize infinity), but rusty on the outside and, as such, reminiscent of the backwardness of the “iron curtain” reality. It was only after years of debates on the “appropriate form and design of commemoration” that the Kohlhoff & Kohlhoff design was accepted as the winning project and even then it continued to arouse dispute: “The memorial is dedicated to ‘the memory of the division of the city from August 13, 1961 to November 9, 1989,’ but following vehement protest from people who had been personally affected by these events and from victim associations, the inscription on the memorial plaque was extended to include the words 'in memory of the victims of the communist tyranny’” (Gedenkstätte Ber-
Owing to its size, the Berlin Wall Memorial can be seen in its entirety only from above – an opportunity that the upper terrace of the neighboring Documentation Center conveniently provides. The third element of the Bernauer Strasse ensemble, the Chapel of Reconciliation, was built in 2000 in place of the 1894 Evangelical church that – located in the death strip and, thus, considered “Wall property” – had been blown up in 1985 during the renovation of the border installations. Parts of the old staircase and the altarpiece have been incorporated into the chapel while the original church bells hang on the scaffolding outside.

Not far from the Bernauer Strasse ensemble, on Invalidenstrasse, there is another memorial devoted to the former border: it is entitled *Sinkende Mauer* (Sinking Wall) has the form of a tilted rectangular block of concrete disappearing in the ground and calling to mind an iceberg or, more adequately, *Titanic*. The latter association is prompted by the cascades of water flowing down the top edge of the concrete wall. Interestingly, the 1997 monument was also built in place of a church (*Gnadekirche*) razed during the Wall construction works in 1967. Although both Invalidenstrasse and Bernauer Strasse are streets in Berlin's central district of Mitte, they are relatively far from other tourist attractions and, hence, do not attract as many visitors as they may have, had they been located closer to the Reichstag or the Checkpoint Charlie.

Most museums dedicated to the city's former division and the socialist regime focus on the victims of the Wall (e.g., the Berlin Wall Documentation Center, the House at Checkpoint Charlie) and/or the GDR secret police (e.g., the Memorial Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, the Stasi Museum) and, thus, fail to document other aspects of life in East Berlin. Apart from the city and historical museums (*Märkisches Museum* and *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, respectively) that occasionally feature exhibitions on various themes from Berlin's postwar past, the newest attempt at approaching East Berlin's reality – although not exclusively, but rather as part of a larger East German culture – has been the establishment of the DDR Museum at 1 Karl-Liebknecht-Strasse, right across the river from the cathedral (*Berliner Dom*) and across the street from where the Palace of the Republic used to stand. Advertised as “one of the most interactive museums in Europe” (DDR-Museum 2008: no pagination), the exhibition aims first and foremost at entertaining visitors by presenting well-known GDR products such as the *Trabi*, the *Plattenbauten*, the Free German Youth (*FDJ* or *Freie Deutsche Jugend*) uniforms, and the Wall, among many others. The concept and form of the museum are based solely on stereotypes about East Berlin and the GDR. Although on its website the DDR Museum claims to allow for “a hands-on experience of history” and an “opportunity to experience the GDR everyday life yourself” (DDR-Museum 2008: no pagination), it resembles a theme park or a toy store rather than a competent historical exhibition.
Despite its strongly anticommunist policy (especially under mayor – and later Poland's president – Lech Kaczyński, 2002-2005), after 1989 Warsaw has seen only two major monuments devoted to the victims of the communist regime, both focusing on the first postwar decade: the Memorial to the Martyrs of the Communist Terror in Poland 1944-1956 (1993) in Warsaw-Ursynów and the Memorial to the Victims of Stalinism (2001) in Warsaw-Praga. The former, located near the cemetery on Walbrzyska Street where the Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (UB, or Office of Security, as the communist secret police in postwar Poland was called) dumped the bodies of their victims, is an ensemble of large rocks with torn prison bars sticking out from one of them and a 10-meter tall iron cross in the back. Both the openly (Catholic) Christian symbolism and the choice of materials (stone and iron) follow the Polish tradition of monuments commemorating victims of communism (e.g., the Memorial to June 1956 Events in Poznan, the Memorial to the Dead Shipyard Workers in Gdansk, the Memorial to the Victims of Communism in Rzeszów). The Warsaw Memorial to the Victims of Stalinism has been heavily criticized as the “ugliest monument in recent years” and dubbed a “bugaboo from Praga” (Urzykowski and Majewski 2005: no pagination): it depicts a man captured between two gigantic walls, his arms are stretched apart – which lends his figure the shape of a cross and corresponds to the cross hanging around his neck – and his head slightly tilted forward as if from exhaustion; from one of his wrists hang prison chains while the other hand is resting on the bars sticking out from the wall. The monument is located on Namysłowska Street, previously home to the infamous “Toledo” prison where between 1944 and 1956 the UB and the NKVD interrogated, tortured, and kept soldiers of the Polish Home Army and members of independence and conspiracy organizations. Presumably, the monument aims at presenting a victim of the communist regime breaking away from the prison. To many locals, however, the statue resembles a drunkard trying to keep balance by holding on to the walls or a criminal waiting for his victim in a dark alley (see Urzykowski and Majewski 2005).

Warsaw's reluctance to commemorate its postwar past has been also visible in the difficulties, uncertainties, and delays surrounding the establishment of the Museum of Communism. The idea came from filmmaker Andrzej Wajda, satirist Jerzy Kawalerowicz, and architect Czesław Bielecki, who in the late 1990s started the SocLand Foundation and put together a traveling exhibition on communism in Poland. Their hope that the collection would find its home in the basements of the Palace of Culture and Science had been shattered many times for various reasons ranging from architectonic through financial to political. In the summer of 2008, the City of Warsaw re-embraced SocLand's idea, however, not without emphasizing that “locating [the museum] under the Palace is unfeasible as it would necessitate drilling through the fundament, which is technically very difficult. Besides the Palace is a historic building” (Warsaw's mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz qtd. in Urzykowski 2008: no pagination).
Commemorating the Victims of World War II

Andreas Huyssen repeats after Robert Musil's that “there is nothing as invisible as a monument” and concludes that the “memorial-crazed” Berlin clearly opts out for invisibility: the more monuments there are, the more the past becomes invisible, and the easier it is to forget: “redemption, thus, through forgetting” (Huyssen 2003: 32). Still, it is important to remember that after 1989 Berlin – as well as other Central European cities – had no chance but to rethink their commemoration practices in regard to the Second World War and the Holocaust. In the postwar decades the city built only few monuments related to its Nazi past. Aside from the mentioned Soviet war memorials and a few monuments devoted to the communist victims of Hitler's regime in East Berlin, only three other memorials in (West) Berlin attempted to thematize some of the aspects of World War II: the German Resistance Memorial on Stauffenbergstrasse (1953), the Topography of Terror (1987) on the grounds of the former Gestapo headquarters, and the information center in the House of the Wannsee Conference (initiated in 1987, but opened five years later), where the “Final Solution” was officially agreed on in January 1942. As German historian Götz Aly was right to observe in 2005, “Berlin's so-called memorial landscape [left] all the central questions unanswered” (Aly 2005: no pagination). Aly criticized not only the lack of thematic and organizational connection between the museums of terror, resistance, and persecution, but also their “mustiness and hostility to innovation”, stating bluntly that “they have become museums to themselves” (Aly 2005: no pagination).

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe that opened on the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War started a new trend in the commemoration practices in Berlin. The idea for the memorial surfaced as early as 1988, however, it was not until the reunification and the relocation of the federal government to Berlin that the project became “the subject of a fundamental debate concerning German people's historical self-awareness at the end of the 20th century” (Stiftung Denkmal 2008: no pagination). The unprecedented dispute aroused countless controversies and went on for over a decade before the parliament was able to pass a resolution that gave a green light to the construction of the memorial. The Bundestag chose Peter Eisenman's monumental design as the winning project, but stressed that the memorial “cannot replace the historical sites of terror where atrocities were committed” (Stiftung Denkmal 2008: no pagination). Furthermore, the resolution explicates what the parliament intend to achieve with the memorial, namely to “honour the murdered victims, keep alive the memory of these inconceivable events in German history, and admonish all future generations never again to violate human rights, to defend the democratic constitutional state at all times, to secure equality before the law for all people and to resist all forms of dictatorship and regimes based on violence” (Stiftung Denkmal 2008: no pagination). Whereas the intentions behind the project have been clearly expressed, the memorial itself continues to provoke controversy, confusion, and criticism.
Spread over 19,000 square meters (or the size of two Bundesliga football fields, as it is often explained in the media and Berlin guide books), the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe consists of 2,711 concrete slabs that vary in height and angle. Neither the number nor the shape of the stelae intentionally possess any symbolic value because, in the words of New York architect Peter Eisenman, “the enormity and scale of the horror of the Holocaust is such that any attempt to represent it by traditional means is inevitably inadequate” (Eisenman qtd. in Stiftung Denkmal 2008: no pagination). Instead, the memorial “attempts to present a new idea of memory as distinct from nostalgia” (Eisenman qtd. in Stiftung Denkmal 2008: no pagination). Whereas the intention behind the memorial may be unclear to those unfamiliar with its political and artistic background, the Information Center located underground provides information on the history of the Holocaust. The museum consists of several rooms that correspond architectonically to the memorial and incorporate various audiovisual techniques to convey the complex themes. Importantly, the exhibition relies not only on academic texts and original letters and photographs, but also includes video and audio recordings of testimonies by Holocaust survivors. The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has been also entrusted with supervision of the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime (2008), the Memorial to the Murdered Sinti and Roma (scheduled to be completed by the end of 2009) and, together with the Topography of Terror, the “Gray Buses” Memorial devoted to the victims of the Nazi-imposed “euthanasia” (2006-2008). Sadly, in August 2008, merely three months after the Homosexuals Memorial was unveiled, unknown offenders smashed the viewing window that is part of the cube-shaped artwork and through which visitors normally can see the film showing two kissing men. Survivors, gay activists, and Berlin's (openly gay) mayor Klaus Wowereit voiced their concern over the incident.

One of the first remarkable monuments to appear in the city after 1989 was the Book Burning Memorial on Bebelplatz that opened in 1995. Designed by Israeli artist Micha Ullman, the memorial is located precisely on the square where on May 10, 1933, members of the SA and the SS, together with students and professors of the nearby Humboldt University, burned thousands of books by authors considered “un-German” such as, for example, Sigmund Freud, Heinrich Mann, Karl Marx, and Kurt Tucholsky. The major part of Ullman's artwork is underground and can be seen through the glass plate incorporated into the cobbled-stoned square: the inside of the memorial shows empty brightly lit bookshelves. The second part of the memorial is located several meters away and consists solely of a bronze plate immersed in the pavement with a quotation from Heinrich Heine dated 1821 prophetically pronouncing “Dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen” (Where they burn books, they will also, in the end, burn human beings). Up to date, Ullman's underground library remains one of Berlin's most subtle memorials and, as such, speaks against Huyssen's
claim that “the notion of the monument as memorial or commemorative public event has witnessed a triumphal return” (Huysen 2003: 31).

In Warsaw, many World War II monuments had been built already under the socialist regime: the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorials (1946 and 1948), the Nike Monument to the Heroes of Warsaw (1964), the Little Insurgent's Monument (1983), the Umschlagplatz Monument (1988), and the Warsaw Uprising Monument (1989), among others. Still, because of the Soviet-imposed interpretations of history that were in force throughout the postwar decades, certain events and organizations of the Second World War – such as the Polish anti-Soviet partisan movement, the Battle of Monte Cassino, and the deportations of Polish civilians and soldiers to Russia – were allowed to be commemorated only after 1989. Remarkably, the Monument to the Fallen and the Murdered in the East was one of the first war memorials to open in Warsaw after the fall of the socialist regime. The monumental bronze structure includes railway tracks and a train carriage (reminiscent of those the Soviets used for deportations) filled with religious symbols: predominantly Roman-Catholic crosses, but also some Orthodox Christian crosses, Stars of David, and Islamic crescents, which reminds of the multiethnic and multireligious character of the former East Poland. The tracks are inscribed with the names of the cities and towns from which then Polish citizens were forced out (Grodno, Wilno, Białystok, Brześć, Pińsk, among others) as well as the names of the Siberian deportation and labor camps where they were delivered (Krasnoyarsk, Yakutsk, Irkutsk, etc.) Symbolically, the monument was unveiled on September 17, 1995 – an anniversary of the Soviet invasion on Poland, which had been unspoken of under the socialist regime.

Another tragic event that had been mostly ignored or downplayed by the local and state authorities before 1989 was the Warsaw Uprising of 1944: an enthusiastic patriotic rebellion against the German occupant that led not only to the murdering of an enormous part of the young Polish intelligentsia, but also to the complete destruction of the city. While the Warsaw insurgents and civilians alike were slaughtered by the German troops, the Red Army stood waiting on the other bank of the Vistula river, waiting for the city and its people to perish (see Davies 2006). Naturally then, the Soviet-imposed regime was not keen on commemorating the uprising in the postwar decades. After 1989, dozens of monuments, plaques, and street names devoted to the uprising appeared in the city. Moreover, each anniversary of the uprising is elaborately commemorated not only in Warsaw, but also in the rest of the country.

The Warsaw Uprising became particularly celebrated under mayor Lech Kaczyński. The Warsaw Rising Museum opened on the sixtieth anniversary of the insurrection; its goal is not only to conduct teaching and research, but also to “integrate veterans’ and military circles and educate youth in the spirit of patriotism and respect for national traditions” (Warsaw Rising Museum 2005: no pagination – it is unclear why the official English name of the museum features the word
“rising” instead of “uprising”). The patriotic education and commemoration of the victims dominate the concept of the multimedia exhibition, which focuses on the determination, idealism, and suffering of the insurgencies and Warsaw civilians alike. The museum is well integrated with the city: apart from constant cooperation with schools, historical institutes, and veteran associations, it initiates various entertainment and educational mass events for the residents of Warsaw.

Another important part of the elaborate commemorations on the sixtieth anniversary of the insurrection was the renaming of the Kopiec Czerniakowski (Czerniakowski Mound). The mound in the district of Mokotów was created from the rubbles and ashes of destroyed Warsaw: fragments of buildings, bricks, roof tiles – some of them mostly likely containing human remains – were piled up together in 1946-50 in an attempt to create a pantheon for those who died during the uprising (Warsaw Municipality 2008). For decades, the mound remained neglected and it was not until 1994 that the Home Army veterans initiated a monument on the top of the hill: a 15-meter tall symbol of the “Fighting Poland,” the so-called kotwica (or anchor). In 2004, when the mound was renamed in honor of the Warsaw Uprising, 400 steps and 40 landings (thus, symbolizing the year 1944) were added constructed to make it easier for visitors to climb uphill.

Whereas outside of Poland the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is often confused with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, in the Warsaw urban landscape the differences between the two are clearly marked and commemorated through separate memorials. Importantly, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorials (1946 and 1948) were among the first to appear in postwar Warsaw. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is scheduled to open on the site of the former Warsaw Ghetto in 2011. The “multimedia narrative museum and cultural center” – as its creators describe it – “will be a unique institution,” primarily because to date there is no other museum that focuses on the history of Polish Jews (Museum of the History of Polish Jews 2008: no pagination). The museum, which expects 450,000 visitors a year, is directed primarily at Jewish visitors from Israel, the United States, and Europe as well as Polish visitors, who “will discover that the history of Poland is not complete without a history of Polish Jews” (Museum of the History of Polish Jews 2008: no pagination). The curators ambitiously aim at demonstrating that “being a Jew in Poland was not limited to being a Holocaust victim” (Museum of the History of Polish Jews 2008: no pagination).

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is likely to resemble – both when it comes to the content and form of the planned exhibition – the Jewish Museum in Berlin located in Daniel Libeskind's world famous building. The exhibition on the history of German Jews opened on September 11, 2001 and had to be immediately closed for a few days in fear of terrorist attacks. The building has the form of a zig-zag and contains numerous voids that refer to “that which can never be exhibited when it comes to Jewish Berlin history: humanity reduced to ashes” (Libeskind qtd. in Jewish Museum Berlin 2008: no pagination). These aspects of
history that can be represented are exhibited along three axes: the Axis of Emigration that leads outside the building to the Garden of Exile, the Axis of the Holocaust that ends in the Holocaust Tower, and the Axis of Continuity that leads to the exhibition. Whereas the exhibition itself tells the history of German Jews in a rather conventional way, Libeskind's architecture, his use of light and air, the surprising angles of the walls, the heaviness and lightness of the used materials, among other devices, create an opportunity to “sense” the fate of German Jews and, thus, learn about it through empathy and imagination rather than through curatorial texts. Andreas Huyssen is among many to praise the Jewish Museum for its uniqueness and insightful consideration of Berlin's urban landscape and history: “Libeskind’s museum is the only project in the current Berlin building boom that explicitly articulates issues of national and local history in ways pertinent to post-unification Germany” (Huyssen 2003: 71).

Conclusion

The post-1989 urban identities of Berlin and Warsaw are (re)shaped by the cities' obsession with history coupled with their often uncritical willingness to absorb new, mostly corporate-driven, architecture. The remnants of the socialist past such as prefabricated apartment blocks exist side by side with modern office buildings and brand-new war memorials, thus, creating a fragmented as well as aesthetically and historically diverse urban landscape. The inescapable juxtaposition of the pre- and post-1989 elements creates surprising and ambivalently symbolic combinations such as the fake Statue of Liberty sitting on top of the former East Berlin watchtower (Huyssen 2003: 53) or the monumental McDonald's restaurant overlooking the neighboring Palace of Cultures and Science. One of the reasons why cultural differences between the East and the West – or between the defeated communist system and the victorious capitalist order – are so poignantly visible in Berlin and Warsaw is because of the war destructions. Whereas Budapest and Prague, for example, were able to keep large parts of their urban landscapes intact and, thus, preserve many elements of their long urban histories, Berlin and Warsaw had to be thoroughly rebuilt and, given the political situation, they had to follow the imposed image of what a city should look like; therefore, Berlin and Warsaw had to reinvent themselves in 1945 and then again 1989, which has lead to spatial confusion, countless architectonic and aesthetic hybrids, and a specific obsession with cultural heritage and its commemoration.
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Notes
1  Alt-Landsberg and Eberswalde are towns in Brandenburg, Danzig is the German name of the Polish (and previously German) city Gdańsk; Georgi Dimitrov (1882–1949) was a Bulgarian communist.
2  Marceli Nowotko (1893–1942) was a Polish communist politician, Karol Świerczewski (1897–1947) was a Polish general in the Red Army, Władysław Anders (1892–1970) was a general in the Polish Army before and during World War II and later a member of the Polish government in exile in London.

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City of Epitaphs

By Megan Hicks

Abstract

The pavement lies like a ledger-stone on a tomb. Buried underneath are the remains of fertile landscapes and the life they once supported. Inscribed on its upper side are epitaphic writings. Whatever their ostensible purpose, memorial plaques and public artworks embedded in the pavement are ultimately expressions of civic bereavement and guilt. The pavement’s role as both witness and accomplice to fatality is confirmed by private individuals who publicize their grief with death notices graffitied on the asphalt. To walk the city is to engage in a dialogue about death.

Keywords: Cities, pavement, memorials, public art, shrines, graffiti, Sydney
City of Epitaphs

Nothing exists except by virtue of a disequilibrium, an injustice. All existence is a theft paid for by other existences; no life flowers except on a cemetery.

Remy de Gourmont
1899

Green fields

I am visiting a colleague who works at Macarthur, on the south-western fringes of Sydney. At lunchtime we go for a walk. The landscape here is undulating and a grey concrete path links the university and the technical institute to the railway station. It curves across a wide, grassy recreation area that was once agricultural land established in the early days of the colony. Near the top of the rise – where the path becomes a footbridge over both the railway line and a creek-bed overgrown with saplings and bent shopping trolleys – neat inscriptions in black felt-tipped pen decorate the edges of the concrete. Alongside various jokes and romantic messages there are some dedicated to “Alex 1993-2008”: “Rest in Peace … Your our angel … I miss u so much babe!”.

Figure 1: Rest in peace Alex!, Macarthur, NSW, near the railway station.
On the opposite side of the station there is a shopping square, with a fountain, outdoor eating areas and café umbrellas. It is paved with synthetic granite tiles in geometric patterns, and set into these are long metal plaques carrying quotations cast in shining brass. “all the paspalum everywhere that would stick to your legs”, they read, “driving home with the sun setting in your eyes”, and “It was my father’s, and my father’s father’s, before that”.

I take photographs of all these things because I am interested in footpaths and roadways, plazas and parking lots. I habitually study their surfaces; I record any writing I find there; I am looking for revelations about the city. Gradually I am learning how the role of the pavement transcends mere functionality. And here in Macarthur, this green-field-development-becoming-a-city, I find evidence of something I have already suspected.

Now I revisit my photographs of other inscriptions, taken in different places, and I search through them for confirmation. This is what I have discovered – that the pavement is an active participant in city rituals of sacrifice, mourning, remembrance and guilt.1

Death sentences

To begin with, the pavement itself is an inscription, the script for a morbid ceremony performed at the formation of a city. This is apparent on development estates like Macarthur, where roads, kerbs and gutters precede other construction works. The interlocking strokes and loops of streets and cul-de-sacs form giant characters imprinted on the otherwise bare land. Translated, this lettering spells out sentences like "The pastures here have been flattened and the livestock removed. The orchards that once grew at this place have been felled. The woodland that covered these hills has been bulldozed.”

Two centuries ago, the formation of Sydney-town preceded any formal survey. Its layout was determined by the course of a little stream running into a cove of the harbour, around which the initial dwellings were clustered. But within a short time, the valley and its sandstone ledges would be branded by the same surveyor’s gridiron that was to mark the site of Melbourne and of other frontier towns of the New World. A seal impressed on the living landscape, the grid signified civilisation’s appropriation of wild regions.2

Burial

As Sydney developed from a town into a city, the Tank Stream would be covered over, becoming a stormwater drain and sometime sewer, running below the streets. Sydney Cove would be filled in and a semi-circular quay would be built in its place. By the late 20th century civic embellishments would see the original shoreline of the cove commemorated by an irregular arc of decorative brass studs set into the paving surrounding the quay. The course of the stream would be
marked by a series of glass and stainless steel pavement artworks, inscribed with quotations from the journal of First Fleeter, Captain Watkin Tench.³

On the streets themselves, footways would be paved with flagstones, and later the carriageways would be surfaced with woodblocks. Over time these materials would be replaced by asphalt, concrete and smart bluestone flagging. Beneath the paving lie sandy inlets, reclaimed marshes, hewn trees, trampled wildflowers, and the remains of exterminated animals. Beside these covered remains there also lie middens, rock carvings and other vestiges of the lives of Indigenous people, left behind as those people were driven away.⁴ All sacrificed in the name of progress.

In the 1890s workmen repairing a city street would dig up a paving slab and find it to be the gravestone of Boatsman George Graves, who had been a crew member of the First-Fleet ship the Sirius, and who had died in 1788.⁵ In 1936 road works would uncover an ironbark pile from a bridge built over the Tank Stream in 1802.⁶ These are just some of the archaeological relics revealed by repaving.

The making and maintenance of streets and footpaths in a city is a process of burial, disinterment and re-burial. The pavement is the ledger stone on a tomb.

**Civic monuments**

In graveyards we are accustomed to looking downwards to read because, among the standing headstones there are also horizontal slabs of stone or marble. We must bend over to study the life and death details inscribed on these ledger stones. It is the same in lawn cemeteries. As we walk the rows we bow our heads to read the plaques at our feet.

On city streets civic authorities, recognizing the tomb-like qualities of the pavement, have transposed the tradition of the funereal inscription from cemetery rows to cement sidewalks. So, although our eyes are generally drawn to shop windows, tall buildings and vertically mounted signs and advertisements, if we instead glance downwards we will find death notices beneath our feet. Memorial plaques and pavement installations in the city, whether miniature monuments, digests of historical information for tourists, or commissioned public artworks, are epitaphic. They have turned the pavement-as-ledger into a roll call of lost lives.

Let me offer some examples. Occasionally small memorial plaques are fixed to the pavement. These mark the association of a particular place with a local identity, a demolished building, a past event. Inconspicuously tucked against walls, they are probably only noticed by the most committed of pavement readers. Whatever the motivations and machinations that resulted in the production of any particular plaque, commemorative obligations are often discharged at the time of its laying.⁷
But not all memorial plaques are licenses to forget. One exception is located in Newtown, on the fashionable inner fringes of Sydney. Syd “Black Santa” Cunningham was a philanthropist who used to sit outside the Woolworths supermarket collecting money and toys for rural children. After he died in 1999 a bronze plaque was installed at the spot where he set up his folding table, complete with a depiction of his plastic money bucket. Syd’s plaque has since become the focal point for beggars who keep his memory alive by collecting for themselves.

The existence of such beggars is made more poignant by a set of five municipal footpath mosaics just around the corner in Church Street, all but one representing local churches in ceramic words and pictures. In essence, the four religious works memorialise the dead, whether victims of a shipwreck buried in St Stephen’s churchyard, or Baptists who are “Buried with Christ” and “Risen with Christ”. The incongruous fifth mosaic is a gaudy representation of two lizards in the style of “Aboriginal art”. Intended as a gesture of inclusion, it is supposed to acknowledge the original inhabitants of the district. Instead, it further marginalises Aboriginal people by committing them to the ground amongst the dead memorialised on the other mosaics.

Unlike small memorial plaques, pavement installations commissioned by city authorities are intentionally conspicuous, but whether their ostensible purpose is to provoke reflection, historical awareness, congratulation or admiration, the ultimate effect is the same. Wittingly or unwittingly, they are all obituaries.

Such is the case with the Writers Walk on the promenade at Circular Quay, the tourist precinct where day trippers catch ferries across Sydney Harbour. The stated purpose of this series of plaques is to demonstrate the “evolutionary process [that] continues to channel the thoughts and perceptions, the hopes and the fears of writers who have known this great city and its people”. Perceptions of the
lapidary beauty of the harbour recur on this trail of quotes from prominent authors past and present: “In Sydney Harbour … the yachts will be racing on the crushed diamond water under a sky the texture of powdered sapphires …”.10

But there are also regrets for the loss of some imagined innocence of spirit from the early days and, not coincidentally, latter-day expressions of remorse for the treatment of Indigenous people: “Sydney … was populated by leisured multitudes all in their short-sleeves and all picnicking all the day …”11, “I am born of the conquerors, you of the persecuted …”12, “… Until a treaty is agreed with the original inhabitants, I shall be homeless in the world”.13.

Figure 3: Jack London ... I would rather be ashes than dust, Writers Walk, Circular Quay, Sydney, NSW.
Here on the walkway at Circular Quay – and also in Kings Cross, where one hundred plaques eulogise that quarter of the city for its retrospective reputation as a bohemian and "colourful" place – bereavement for lives lost or left behind is the underlying theme, and the literary quotation is the secular equivalent of a reading from the scriptures.

In other pavement artworks, transcribed fragments of all-but-lost Indigenous Language substitute for the literary quote. There is such an installation beside the wall that separates Sydney’s Royal Botanic Gardens from the harbour. In it “figures from Sydney rock carvings – some of which no longer exist – are depicted in terrazzo and stained concrete … [and] along the kerb, the names of women, men, places, animals, tools and rituals from the many Indigenous clans in the Sydney area are etched in red”.14

Figure 4: Part of the Wuganmagulya pathway installation, Farm Cove, Sydney, NSW.
There is a comparable sculpture across the harbour at Manly Wharf, where the ferries from Circular Quay arrive. Radially arranged stainless steel plaques introduce seaside holiday-makers to Manly’s municipal self-image, with references to decommissioned ferries and dead historical figures. In a section of the sculpture that depicts now marginalised or invisible flora and fauna – the latter including “local clans (1788)” – rock-art motifs have once again been appropriated for public art. And once again, these ”Aboriginal” pictures are accompanied by nouns salvaged from the debris of European contact.

Figure 5: *darangarra ... cabbage tree*, part of the *Shell* installation, Manly Wharf, NSW.
Mortality

Sydney is not the only city where official decorations on the ground have an elegiac quality. Around the world, either deliberately or unconsciously, civic plazas, community mosaics, commemorative plaques, and interactive light installations mark the passing of previous existences. But in Sydney especially, the epitaph is a persistent feature of the pavement.

Reproduced on one of the “Writers Walk” plaques at Circular Quay is the quote: “The majesties of nature and the monstrosities of man have a cheek by jowl evidence in Sydney more insistent, I think, than in any other city in the world”.16 The beaches, the harbour, the remnants of natural bush are unavoidable reminders of what else has been destroyed by the city’s spread. It is guilt that drives civic authorities and commercial interests to memorialise on the pavement what the pavement itself has obliterated. Often praised or condemned by more sober cities for the fun-loving or shallow-minded lifestyle of its citizens, Sydney is in fact haunted by death.

It is significant that this city should have adopted as its motto the one-word sermon of an eccentric evangelist who chalked his message on its footpaths for 30 years. That iconic word, “Eternity”, flashed on the Harbour Bridge in 2000 Olympic fireworks displays, and now preserved in stainless steel on the pavement of Town Hall Square, offers the hope of redemption but only by calling attention to the certainty of death.17

Figure 6: Eternity, Town Hall Square, Sydney, NSW.
Public mourning

The role the pavement plays as tomb or cenotaph is continuous. The events commemorated on its surface may be distant in time or recent. In the city, public death is always a possibility and the pavement can be both witness and accomplice to fatality. We are reminded of this by the marks and stains that daily appear on the pavement’s surface – stencilled body-outlines at danger spots warning pedestrians to "Cross carefully", dreadful skid marks at intersections, spray-painted symbols where police have marked out accident sites, and perhaps even splashes of blood on cement or asphalt.

These marks extend to death notices posted by mourners after someone has died unexpectedly. With spray cans, chalk and felt-tipped pens, their private anguish is made a matter of public announcement. It is evident that the pavement’s epitaphic inscriptions are not only cast by commissioned artists – they are also scrawled by amateur graffitists who deliberately choose the pavement as their noticeboard.

Sometimes I have been able to learn the stories behind these public-private memorials. A few years ago, for example, a temporary shrine for Edison Berrio appeared in Sydney’s central business district near the place where he had been shot twelve months earlier. Suspecting him of theft, police had surrounded and fired on him before he could get out of his car. Angry at official inaction, Edison’s friends held a vigil on the anniversary of his death. They tied flowers to a tree and wrote messages on the asphalt: “Rest in peace Edison”, they chalked, “Cops kill … No justice!”. For several days the incongruously large letters chalked across the footpath drew the attention of office workers, reminding them of the unresolved fatality that had happened so close to the district’s legal offices and courthouses.

Figure 7: RIP Edi … Cops kill … Rest in peace Edison, King Street, Sydney, NSW.
A different kind of graffiti memorial, but with similar political intent, was chalked on Newtown’s shopping strip after teenager TJ Hickey died. A few kilometres away TJ had been impaled on a fence as a police car followed his bicycle. A protest riot broke out in Redfern, a largely Aboriginal suburb, and body outlines were drawn on Newtown footpaths, where local social activists would see them. Slogans written beside the body shapes read “Stop racist police brutality … Cops kill children … To kill an Aboriginal is to kill history”.20

Figure 8: To kill an Aboriginal is to kill history, King Street, Newtown, NSW.

Less ephemeral was an unofficial plaque fixed to the asphalt at another spot in Newtown’s main street. It lasted some years until the footpath was resurfaced with synthetic granite pavers. Just two words were engraved on this small oval sign, “Alison Gooch”. It marked the spot where Alison had been killed early one morning when a car mounted the kerb and struck her as she was walking by the shops.21

And again in Newtown, a district renowned for its wall art, one of the most enduring pieces of graffiti is a floral tribute, not on a wall but on a busy traffic island. The flowers were painted under the direction of Kathy Jones during a day-long ”Reclaim the streets” demonstration. Kathy was an artist and social activist who worked with disadvantaged people in the Newtown area. When she died a few months after the protest party her friends turned the island into a memorial, reasoning that she would have wanted local people to know why she wasn’t around any more. They cleaned what remained of the pavement artwork and coated it with marine varnish, and they taped a notice with her photograph to a light pole.22 Years later the flowers are only now beginning to seriously fade.
Death notices and spontaneous shrines appear on the ground in other parts of the city. If I have not written about them here it is because I have not yet found out their background stories. But it is clear that when mourners use the pavement to publicize their grief it is not simply because asphalt is a conveniently blank slate to scribble on. They choose the pavement for their graffiti because of its active role in the fatality or its aftermath. It is the site of that very public death (a city street, a suburban footpath); it is the conveyance that bore the vehicles involved (the cars, the bicycle, the police vehicles); it is the footway where members of a particular audience will pass by (the legal workers, the activists and
street people); it was once significant to the person who has died (the contested ground over which Reclaim the Street protestors struggled).

Or it holds importance, not for the death event or the deceased, but for the mourners themselves. Those felt-tip farewells in the sub-city of Macarthur were for former local teenager Alex Wildman. Alex had moved with his family to a distant country town, but committed suicide after being bullied at his new school.24 Denied the chance to attend his funeral so far away, his former classmates must have met on that footpath near the railway station to share their feelings. Judging from other graffiti on this pavement-over-a-paddock, it is a favourite place for teenagers to sit around and talk. It would have been natural for them to choose this spot to write their epitaphs for Alex.

Passage

Without the pavement there is no city. It both suppresses life and supports it. It is a durable slab that barely contains the dead, and its epitaphian inscriptions are a constant admonishment to the living.

Far from being a passive backdrop, the pavement is an active player in the drama that is the city. The symbolic importance of its role is appreciated by civic authorities who know that its appearance is a reflection of the city’s self-image.

When Sydney was preparing for the 2000 Olympics, central city streets were resurfaced, kerbs rebuilt, asphalt footways replaced with bluestone flagging. A series of sculptures was commissioned, several of them embedded horizontally in the pedestrian precincts of the city, the airport and the Olympic site. Reviewing this bloom of public installations, art analyst Susan Best noted her approval of those that engaged with the history of their site, remarking that “because many of the artists involved in these recent programs work with the space of installation itself, their work is most effective when it can enter into a dialogue with the surrounding space”.25 Indeed. Except that, with pavement inscriptions, there is no “when” or “if”. The pavement and the tracings upon it, from commissioned art to spontaneous graffiti, always enter into a dialogue with the surrounding space. Nor is that dialogue only between the pavement and its locale – the people passing by are included in the dialogue as well.

The pavement, the place, and the people of the city are engaged in a conversation, and the overriding topic of that conversation is death.

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Notes

1. This essay is dedicated to Noel Sanders, formerly of the University of Technology Sydney, who showed me how to see dead people.


3. Tankstream - Into the head of the cove by artist Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, described in City of Sydney (2005).

4. Woodford (2008: 55-56) writes: ‘Underneath your shoes, past the asphalt, concrete and ruins of buried colonial and twentieth century buildings lies a place called Weerong … From a few holes under one building have come a thousand stone artefacts. The implication is that under the whole of the central business district it is likely that a treasure trove of Sydney’s prehistory is entombed’.


6. Powerhouse Museum collection D10331 (Sydney).

7. Murray (2008:150) mentions how understandings of cultural history can be enhanced by knowing the story behind the erection of particular official memorials. She also asks whether the commemorative process of installing a memorial or plaque becomes “a self-fulfilling prophecy, externalising the memory so it can be forgotten”.


14. Wuganmagulya (Farm Cove) by Aboriginal artist Brenda L. Croft, described in City of Sydney (2005).

15. These plaques are associated with the mist sculpture Shell by Urban Art Projects, described by Manly Council Public Art Committee (2006).


17. For discussion of Arthur Stace and his ‘Eternity’ inscription see, for example, Kirkpatrick (1997) and Hicks (2006).


23. Santino (2005: 5ff) coined the term ‘spontaneous shrines’ for public memorials erected by mourners after a sudden or shocking death, and pointed out the political nature of these shrines.


References

City of Sydney (2005): The Sculpture Walk (Historical Walking Tours brochure), Sydney.
"I still met people in Dublin who claimed they knew Leopold Bloom personally.”
Franz Geiselbrechtinger

Abstract
James Joyce had decided that 16 June 1904 should be the one day in the life of Leopold Bloom, about which he wrote his 800 page novel Ulysses. In his book, Joyce actually followed Mr Bloom that entire day, from his getting up and having the nowadays famous kidney breakfast, to the late evening, when he had to break into his own house on 7 Eccle Street to have a drink with Stephen Dedalus, the other main figure of the novel. The centenary of that very day took, accordingly, place in 2004. I have borrowed the identity of Mr Bloom to describe some street scenes from the centennial celebrations of Bloomsday in Dublin. After this introductory presentation, part two of this article will attempt to analyse Bloomsday in terms of a Theatrical Event, embedded in an unusual and striking playing culture. In a third part, Mr Bloom will once more be allowed to make some concluding comments.

Keywords: James Joyce, Dublin, Ireland, Theater studies
Part One: The Appearance of Bloomsday

My name is Leopold Bloom and I will give you some short sketches from the centenary of Bloomsday. To be honest, there was no great reason for celebrations. Nothing of the things that Joyce wrote about in his book happened outside his fantasy. So, what is this festival all about? I am, of course, immensely grateful to Joyce for the book, otherwise I certainly would not exist at all. But what really happened on 16 June 1904 was something very different, and paradoxically enough, this is not celebrated at all. That day, the very young James Joyce had his first rendezvous with the likewise very young Nora Barnacle, his lifetime companion and mother of their children. They had a highly passionate relationship to judge from their intensive, outspoken and eroticised letters. Picking that date as the day he portrayed in Ulysses, which was not published until 1922, was Joyce’s way of commemorating his first lovely experience with Nora.

However, the celebration of Bloomsday has nothing to do with James Joyce and Nora Barnacle – so please excuse my little deviation – but is entirely devoted to me, Leopold Bloom, a major figure in Ulysses. Wandering about in the streets of Dublin on 16 June 2004, one could meet with a number of copies of myself, all wearing dark suits and bolder hats. According to a Frenchman by the name of Jean Baudrillard these fake Leopold Blooms could be called simulacra – even more so, since there seems to be no original. I mean, I am aware that I am a fictional, virtual figure out of Joyce’s imagination. By the way, there were a number of simulacra of James Joyce in the streets that day, too. Not only were there all these pictures of Joyce in papers, tourist brochures and shop windows, but there is also a life-size bronze statue of him at the corner of O’Connell Street and Earl Street North. Furthermore, one could meet him in person, i.e. performed by an imitator outside the Joyce Centre. This guy appears as Joyce every year on 16 June, while he works as a clerk the rest of the year. Well, what did people do on 16 June 2004? Before Mr Sauter will try to
explain this paradoxical, carnivalesque celebration of myself with his theory of the Theatrical Event, I would like to show some more pictures that Mrs Sauter had taken during the occasion.

One of my imitators is performing on a little platform, just some 10 inches high to make me a bit more visible to the crowd. In front of me, on the ground next to the platform, one can spot three girls in period costumes. Those of you who know the book Ulysses will immediately identify this embarrassing episode on the beach, where my eyes were hooked on that lovely Gerty girl. You may also notice that we enjoyed beautiful sunshine during Bloomsday 2004.

In front of the Joyce Centre in North Great George’s Street, not very far from my home in Eccle Street, people were waiting to get in to listen to a reading. The location of the Centre is a bit odd, because neither Joyce nor I had ever anything to do with that house, not even with the street. The school house up the road, where he spent a few years as a boy, is the closest one can come. The people standing on the steps are wearing straw hats and laced blouses, reminiscent of the fashion of the year 1904.

Another picture, although not a very good one, shows a bus that is meant to look like a streetcar from 1904. On the upper deck there is a young man in a yellow morning gown, performing as young Buck Mulligan, the guy who shaves on top of the Marcello Tower in the very first scene of Ulysses. More important, however, are the policemen – real Irish policemen – guarding the black limousine. Had Mr Sauter waited one more moment, he could have got a snapshot of Mary McAleese, the president of the Irish Republic. She visited the Joyce Centre, too, that morning.

Now we have moved back to the Joyce statue off-O’Connell Street. You see his sloppy hat and his glasses to the left in the picture. What happens here is that a group of people in the costumes of 1904 are photographed by
people in casual tourist clothes. If you have a closer look, you can even spot me, posing together with the bronze James Joyce.

After Buck Mulligan’s morning toilette, he and his companions go down to the stony beach of Sandy-cove to have a swim. Now, a lot of people are doing the same on 16 June, celebrating the day in the rather chilly waters of the Dublin Bay.

Turning around, one sees the mighty Marcello Tower. On the picture, we find Mr Sauter himself standing there, obviously trying to figure out why people are behaving so strangely during that day. It is, indeed, a remarkable day: a celebration of the centenary of an entirely illusionary day, populated with imaginary people that have never existed, and, furthermore, elevated to an occasion, in which even the nation’s (real) president is participating. How can it be that reasonable citizens engage in such a mock festival about “nothing”, that tourists are flying in from far away countries to visit the places where I roamed about during one day a hundred years ago, i.e. in case I had been a living person and not just the output of an avant-gardist writer of novels?

Part Two: Appearing as a Theatrical Event

A theatrical event can be described as a way of playing and, more exactly, as theatrical playing. Semantically, theatrical playing consists of an element of “playing” and an element of “theatricality”, and both of these elements need to be described as separate entities. In many languages, everyday expressions indicate that theatre is “played” – Theater spielen, le jeu du théâtre, ludi romani, etc. – and thus belongs to a playing culture. Playing is distinguishable from everyday activities and follows specified rules, which all participants need to observe. Playing culture is distinct from written culture by its here-and-now character, whereas writing mostly aims at future or retrospective use. Not all playing is theatrical playing, but it seems necessary to relate theatrical playing both to playing in general and to specify what makes it theatrical.

The word theatre has a long history in Western languages. What today is referred to as “theatre” was historically described as spectacle, comoedia, play or entertainment, and when the word theatre was used, it mostly meant a playhouse. But not only has the use of the terminology changed over the centuries, also the conception of what theatre is supposed to be has been negotiated from time to time. Even today the term “theatre” signifies different things in different cultures:
sometimes it is limited to spoken drama, for others it includes all kinds of theatrical genres such as dance, puppetry, music theatre, theatre sports, even circus and masquerades; in certain Asian languages the word theatre is reserved to distinguish the Western type of dramatic art from traditional domestic performances. In other words, the notion of what the term “theatre” designates is highly depending on the historical, geographical and semantic context, in which it appears. In the framework of the Theatrical Event, I will use the expression “contextual theatricality” to mark the open field of activities, which at a given time and place are termed “theatrical”.

A theatrical event has so far been described as a form of theatrical playing, which is related to a playing culture and to the dynamic concept of theatricality. All of these elements are at the same time embedded and functioning in a human society. Theatrical events are necessarily part of the cultural context.

This is not a very original observation. More than three decades ago, Erving Goffman developed his frame theory to describe the relationship between objects or events and the context, which surrounds them (1974). Goffman’s frame analysis as a tool of interpretation is always superior to the object of the encounter. Joseph Roach takes another approach when he describes the historical dependence of the Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans from a historical point of view (1996). The roots of this event are to be found in circum-Atlantic influences, expanding over centuries. Loren Kruger chooses a socially founded view when she describes the cultural activities of the inner city of Johannesburg (2007). The art work with and for the inhabitants is integrated with their social conditions. Another approach to public events is offered by Sue Ellen Case, when she illuminates the performative character of exhibitions, manifestations and appearances in public spaces (1995). Her direction of the analysis goes from the particular to the general. My own concept of the Theatrical Event attempts to include these various approaches by positioning a number of components in a non-hierarchical order.

I have suggested that the Theatrical Event could be understood as consisting of four components: Theatrical Playing – Playing Culture – Cultural Context – Contextual Theatricality. (2004, 2006) It is easy to observe that these terms also linguistically hook into each other. This pattern stands, however, for more than a game with words. On the contrary, it has been constructed to avoid a hierarchical relationship between the components. It is important to understand that these components are tightly interwoven and simultaneously active. Therefore, I have organized them as a circle: there is no beginning or end and it can be read clockwise or in the reversed order. The components are also related to each other according to the diamond-shaped lines of the following figure.
The circle of components is an attempt to represent the Theatrical Event as a holistic model. Although the Cultural Context happens to be at the top of the figure, it is in no way superior to the other components. “Cultural” is here understood as a broad concept, almost in the anthropological sense of all human activities. Thus, the Cultural Context includes not only high art and folk traditions, but also politics and economic enterprises, public discourses on a local as well as on a global level. Within the Cultural Context we also find social hierarchies, gender and class restrictions, religious communities, as well as all the mental and physical foundations, on which a society builds its public life. The way in which cultural activities are organized is called Contextual Theatricality, which is subject to change in the course of history. Who produces what in which circumstances depends on the norms and traditions that are established in the genres of a cultural field such as theatre, music, film, art, etc. Once a production reaches the public, I speak of Theatrical Playing, which is characterized by the interaction between performers and spectators. The audience is as important as the performance in order to create an interpretative interplay that carries meaning in the here-and-now encounter of a theatrical manifestation. Playing Culture, finally, indicates the free exchange of playful expressions that might or might not be observed from outside. The players transgress the limits of everyday life and engage in activities without “purpose” as the classical study Homo ludens by Johann Huizinga has stated long ago (1938).

Leopold Bloom has already described the appearance of various scenes in the streets of Dublin. Looking at them through the lenses of the four components I hope to show their appearing as well as their aesthetic, political and historical functions in relation to the overall event. (cf. M. Seel 2000). In the following four sections I will give examples of events that illustrate each one of the four components. Each occasion could be looked upon as a Theatrical Event per se, but my
intention is to show how these events are integrated into the greater event of Bloomsday, which I will argue is best understood as a Theatrical Event.

The President and the Cultural Context

It was a remarkable moment to see the President of the Irish Republic, Ms. Mary McAleese, make her way through the crowd on North Great George’s Street, heading towards the Joyce Centre to listen to one of the many readings of Joyce’s novel. This was of course not a private visit, but she lent the highest possible political authority to the entire Bloomsday celebration. Other public personalities of Ireland honoured other readings, such as the poet and Nobel Prize laureate Seamus Heaney. How political the centenary was perceived in Ireland is maybe best demonstrated by a decision taken in the Irish parliament shortly before 16 June 2004. The members of parliament voted for a change of the copyright law to ensure that an original manuscript of Joyce’s novel could be exhibited in the National Library. This, in turn, enraged the grandson of Joyce, Stephen Joyce, to such a degree that he refused to come to Dublin. Instead, he gave his reading in Zürich in Switzerland, where a large part of the novel had been written.

Bloomsday was, in other words, politically highly explosive. A lot of emotions and prestige were at stake. Some of the issues had become a national affair. This is an observation one frequently makes when observing festivals of any kind. No matter if the event is organized by a national body or if it appears as a flat organisation like in Dublin, in the end the political component always becomes prominent: Who is represented on “Bloomsday”, who has the right to claim Bloomsday as theirs, which groups have the power to make themselves heard? Power in terms of the Cultural Context is not restricted to political power, but it certainly has a political aspect. It may be exerted as legislation – like the copyright law mentioned above – or demonstrate its potential by abstaining from legislation: Joyce’s Ulysses was, contrary to many other countries, never prohibited in Ireland, not because the eroticism of the book would have been less offensive there, but the Irish assumed that nobody would read that strange book anyway. The legal aspect of power is paramount, but not its only function. The symbolic status of power is sometimes just as vital, as demonstrated in Foucault’s notion of the public discourse, in which the news and other media are most visible today (1975). Who has the power, the possibility and the influence as well as the “right” kind of arguments to speak through the media, to acquire a voice in the discourse? The media have the power to make an issue an issue, irrespective of their opinion about this issue. And Bloomsday really was an issue in the Irish media, long before 16 June 2004. Also during the week that followed Bloomsday, various evaluations could be read in the major newspapers; there were numerous reports from Bloomsday celebrations outside Ireland, for example from the Hungarian city, where the fictional Mr. Bloom’s father allegedly was born! Bloomsday was elevated into a national and international matter and treated with dignity.
A central aspect of power is usually money, the economic power, but in the case of Bloomsday there is no agency or body that assumes an overarching responsibility. In this sense, Bloomsday is not a commercial event. There are different institutions, sponsors, private enterprises and individual persons, all contributing in their own way. Looking at the model of the Theatrical Event, I now focus on the next component.

The Producers of Contextual Theatricality

The Joyce Centre, the Joyce Museum in the Marcello Tower, the world-famous brewery of Guinness, the numerous smaller sponsors, the amateur theatre groups on their platforms, the guy imitating Joyce – they are all producers. They contribute to Bloomsday, but they also compete with each other. Bloomsday offers a field in which the producers can become visible, but they have different ideas and different needs. Since Guinness held the position to offer Bloomsday participants a free breakfast with sausages, sandwiches and beer, other sponsors invited the public to participate in a free, Bloomian kidney breakfast on O’Connell Street already on the Sunday before the great day. More than 10,000 kidneys were eaten that morning! Other sponsors chose other treats. In the context of the Theatrical Event, the habitus that Pierre Bourdieu speaks of tends to be distinguishable through the different genres that are displayed in the field of theatricality (1992).

By genre I mean various cultural norms that have been established in order to differentiate particular ways of expression. In the theatre one could distinguish between comedy and tragedy or between spoken drama, opera, dance and mime. Each of these genres is at the same time organized in separate production facilities. Operas are produced at Royal theatres or other opera houses, comedies are shown in commercial theatres, fringe theatres sport avant-garde performances, etc. And the spectators usually know where to look for which kind of performances. The conditions are similar in other cultural areas, be it the podium on which music is performed – from symphony orchestras to techno discotheques – or the cinemas, in which various kinds of movies are shown. Also outside the traditional art establishment, genres steer the production of events.

The almost ceremonial breakfast eating mentioned above could be seen as one genre of the theatricality displayed on Bloomsday. Since the reader of Joyce’s novel meets Leopold Bloom in the morning, the peculiar breakfast that he prepares for himself – while his wife Molly still dwells in her bed – has become a signum for Mr Bloom and for Ulysses altogether. Bloom’s kidney has a similar status in world literature as the Madeleine cakes of Marcel Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu. To enact this particular moment of the novel became a specific genre of the Bloomsday celebration. The famous breakfast is performed by the participants of the festival. It lacks, however, the high status of literary readings. There is, after all, a hierarchy between the genres. The readings, organized by the institutionalized Joyce Centre and Joyce Museum, seemed to rank the highest.
That was manifested by the visit of the president, and that is why the reading of Joyce’s grandson in Zürich was meant to embarrass the Irish. There were other readings in Dublin, too, mainly in places where the novel situated Leopold Bloom during the day, but they did not have the prestige that the institutions had.

Another genre was constituted by the amateurs who performed selected pieces of the novel as a theatrical show. I will soon look more closely at these performances; what matters here is the fact that they were not well-established theatrical troupes but seemed to be a group of people who simply thought it was fun to embody Joyce’s fictional figures. Furthermore, there were all those private people who appeared in period costumes. These could be more or less elaborate, from full-scale dresses of 1904 to just a bow tie à la Joyce. This kind of organisational diversity will be easily recognized in the description of the components that will follow.

All of these participants – from the professional readers to the breakfast eaters – are included in the theatricality of Bloomsday. This loose organisation, allowing for all kinds of Joycean displays, was at the same time the condition for the playful interaction between readers and listeners, actors and spectators, participants and observers. Theatricality at this occasion can be seen as various degrees of participation in the overall Playing Culture of the day. Before we investigate more closely the general play atmosphere, I will point out some features of the Theatrical Playing that was going on in various places.

The Performers in Theatrical Playing

I have already mentioned the amateur status of the performers in front of the Joyce Centre. What the observers notice right away is the distance between the performers and the figures they present. Some period details in their costume are enough – the yellow morning gown, the bolder hat – and can be completed with a typical gesture, such as Gerty’s limping walk, or a way of talking, for instance in a particular dialect, to illustrate the figures of Joyce’s book. The players do not give a complete illusion of the figures they have picked, on the contrary, they only indicate them. Their amateurish playing is indeed very helpful in that matter. All the spectators have their own vision of these fictional characters, so it is neither necessary nor even desirable to present a fully identifiable interpretation of Buck Mulligan, Leopold Bloom, Molly or any others. So what I saw on the streets of Dublin were illustrations of fictional characters, rather than illusionary figures. This requires a certain style from the performers, which are more easily achieved by amateur actors than by conventionally trained performers. Bertolt Brecht has described the advantages of amateur acting in terms of the Alienation Effect and he would certainly have been very pleased with the street actors in Dublin.

In addition, this kind of street acting also required certain qualifications on the side of the spectators. Even as a bystander it was easy to distinguish the audiences according to two parallel parameters. There were those who knew their Joyce and
those who did not. The first category understood immediately what chapter of the novel that was performed, who the characters were and they also seemed to understand the irony towards the figures that characterized the presentations. But there were also the kind of bystanders who only watched without bothering about the novel’s personage. The other parameter concerned the familiarity with Ireland, even with Dublin. Quite a few of the scenes were presented in the local Dublin dialects, in which these figures were written or at least thought of. One of them is talking about Paddy Dignam, whose funeral Bloom will attend at 11 o’clock, speaking in a raw Dublin dialect. His monologue seemed to be highly entertaining for Dubliners, whereas the tourists – even native English speakers – only could watch the fun that the real Dubliners in the audience had. Depending on the knowledge and the familiarity of every spectator, the outcome of the Theatrical Playing turned out differently. A Dubliner, who had read Joyce’s novel, certainly enjoyed the performances differently from a tourist who never had opened the book.

There is, of course, also some theatricality attached to the readings, although different from the performers. The readers were professionals, either actors, writers or, like in the case of Joyce’s grandson, someone with close ties to the family. In every case, they were supposed to possess particular skills for interpreting Joyce’s text as text. Performing the text meant, at the same time, that the listeners were sharing the experience of a public encounter with this particular piece of literature, distinctly different from reading the text in one’s own armchair. The readings obviously were considered as a solemn form of celebration, the top of the hierarchy among the many expressions of Theatrical Playing.

At the bottom of this status hierarchy we find all those participants, who only had dressed up in period costumes. They marked another form of playing, foremost on the personal level, which nevertheless contributed to the overall impression of a cheerful participation in the events of Bloomsday. The costumes needed not to be perfect either: already a bow tie or a laced shawl indicated that its wearers wanted to share their enthusiasm for the occasion with others. These people usually did not present any text, but limited their playing to the outfit they were displaying.

The different degrees of acknowledged playing were all related to the text of the novel. According to my own grading, the readers of pure literature had the highest esteem, marked also by the visit of the President. The amateur players were less serious in their interpretation of the texts they presented, and the costumed participants only gave visual expression to their understanding of Bloomsday. This unofficial hierarchical order mirrored the status of the producers, described under the heading of Contextual Theatricality. Relating to the “words” was serious, doing without “words” already points to the next component.
The People and their Playing Culture

As the reader certainly has realised so far, Bloomsday carried a strong element of Playing Culture. Playing – from the playful behaviour of animals and the playing of children to the highly skilled performances of dancers and actors – has been described in many ways. The “without purpose” of Huizinga has already been mentioned. But the purposelessness of playing does not exclude various functions that playing may have – entertaining, aesthetic, didactic, ritual functions are more or less always present. The distinction between playing and everyday life is another important feature. During Bloomsday I could observe playful activities all over town and these can be characterized as a collective transgression of everyday life. In contrast to Theatrical Playing – albeit closely related to it – those who populate the Playing Culture of Bloomsday are not performing to a distinct audience. They merely give expression to their own cheerful feeling of participation. Victor Turner has suggested the notion of liminality as characteristic of rituals and ceremonies, in which the participants are separated from their ordinary life situation to experience a stadium of change, after which they return to a new position in their daily lives. (1982) Applied to Playing Culture, this concept would mean that the participants during a certain time – Bloomsday – allow themselves to identify with fictional figures and literary places in order to act out their textual experiences in playful exercises. I doubt, however, that Bloomsday constituted a rite de passage, through which participants enter a new stage of their lives. Let me just point out some locations in Dublin, where Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus and their friends were spending their time on 16 June 1904. A few examples might illustrate the relationship between people, places and the hours of that particular day.

Early in the morning of Bloomsday, the radio broadcasted a warning to drive to Sandycove, the beach below Marcello Tower. Of course, the traffic jam related to the opening chapter of Ulysses. After Buck Mulligan had shaved on top of the tower and chatted with the milk woman, he and his companions went down to the stony beach to have an early morning swim. A lot of Dubliners and tourists wanted to experience that very moment of the novel in their own lives, so off they went to Sandycove, bringing their period swim suits or just regular bath attires and jumped into the water. Others might not have had the intention to take a swim, but wanted to be in location at the right time. None of them necessarily intended to perform the situation for someone else; in that sense it is difficult to speak of Theatrical Playing. Nevertheless, there is a strong attitude of playing involved for both the swimmers and the watchers.

Another place of identificatory playfulness was Sweny’s Pharmacy at Lincoln Place. It is the very same pharmacy where Leopold Bloom bought a piece of lemon shaped soap. Mr. Bloom actually forgets to pay for it, which he becomes aware of ten chapters later, when he puts his hand in his pocket while watching the beautiful Gerty MacDowell on the beach. Now, on Bloomsday one or another visitor
passes the pharmacy and takes the opportunity to buy some lemon soap. There were no crowds outside the shop, but the owner had made sure to have these soaps in stock. Amazingly enough, the shop appeared not to have changed its interior a bit since Mr. Bloom stopped by a hundred years ago. The experience of being in this pharmacy on that particular day certainly gave a strong feeling of presence, of fictional identity, a playful interaction with Joyce’s novel. A number of other places around Dublin offer similar experiences: the Post Office, where Mr. Bloom picks up a secret letter, a men’s toilette beneath the statue of Thomas Moore, who had written the poem The Meeting of the Waters, 7 Eccle Street where Leopold Bloom lived, now demolished but with the same type of Victorian houses on the other side of the street, and so on. These places are frequently visited by Joyce enthusiasts all year around, but the exact point in time – the centenary of this particular day – certainly added to the excitement of the encounter.

Time and place are crucial elements of Theatrical Events of all kinds. The experience of the here-and-now feeling, the collectivity of the encounter, and the state of liminality are not exclusively limited to Playing Culture, but spread out into all components of the event. These overall aspects of the Theatrical Event as such will be looked upon in the ensuing paragraphs, namely reflecting upon the historical dependence of Bloomsday and the social composition of its participants.

Some General Reflections

The concept of the Theatrical Event is meant to present a holistic model of any event that is perceived in a theatrical way. Its components represent different aspects of the event, which are all simultaneously present during the event proper, but also in preceding and subsequent time sequences. The event is prepared long before and the impressions last long after the encounter between performer and spectator. In addition, there are factors that affect the event from an overall perspective, such as its history and the identities of the main agents of the event as well as its intertextual relationship with other events. These connections, symbolically represented by the diamond-shaped lines between the four components, can be seen as the general pattern of the Theatrical Event, which link together the components into one whole system. Some general factors of Bloomsday are highly significant for the understanding of it as a Theatrical Event.

The most obvious point in question is the history of Bloomsday. History is not to be understood as a “background” but as a very active aspect of the present. Without going into details, it can be mentioned that the first Bloomsday was celebrated in connection with its fiftieth anniversary, i.e. in 1954. Some Joyce enthusiasts decided to commemorate that day by inviting others to a walk through Dublin, visiting the places of the novel and reading from it publicly. It was an exclusively private initiative and I think this character of a private event, in which the public is invited to participate, has prevailed over the years. It has grown, it attracts large crowds, but it is still a predominantly private experience. This might
explain the flat organisation and the rather invisible engagement of official authorities. It is still open for private sponsors to invent their own events, such as the bicycle parade in period costumes that the sponsors arranged during Bloomsday 2004. Of course, the old-fashioned bicycles carried posters of their sponsors and the parade showed up in various parts of the city. And of course there is a commercial aspect to the entire festival in terms of increased tourist industry, including the marketing of any kind of Joyce items. Still, we are dealing with private enterprise, as it always has been during the last 50 years. These historical aspects are manifested in the loose relationship between the overall Cultural Context and the sphere of the private producers. It is not characterized by a strong flow of money – there are no entrance fees anywhere – nor do the authorities display their power through tangible decisions about organisational matters. There is, however, another aspect that might be just as important, and that is the legitimacy that state and city officials provide through their participation in the events. Hereby the private initiatives are sanctioned – Bourdieu would call it consecrated – and elevated to at least a semi-official status.

Bloomsday has, over the years, become a particular Irish event. Joyce is nowadays celebrated as an Irish writer, but this view has only developed during later years and has a strong historical bias. Joyce had left Ireland in October 1904 and from 1912 to his death in 1941, he never returned to his native country. His work was not acknowledged for a long time, neither in his home country nor in the European literary establishment. He does not belong to the four Irish writers who received the Nobel Prize. Bloomsday has effectively contributed to reinstall Joyce as the Irish avant-garde literary giant he is considered to be today. In that sense, the strong feelings that are displayed in the Playing Culture of Bloomsday have had a powerful impact on the pride that today is connected with Joyce’s name. I would say that Bloomsday has achieved a status of national significance, promoting the national identity of the Irish – irrespective of their personal interest in Joyce’s writings.

The identities of a Theatrical Event can be specified as the class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity of their participants – creators as well as spectators. It is difficult to know anything exactly about these factors as far as Bloomsday is concerned, because there were no concrete investigations that I know of. The only answers I can provide are the result of my own observations. I think it is a fair guess that the majority of the participants come from the educated middle class. Despite the fact that actually nobody was excluded, the attraction of the event is directed to those who by virtue of their education have some knowledge about the Joycean world. Not even the free breakfasts seemed to entice the less privileged groups of society. The gender ratio, on the other hand, seemed to be fairly well balanced. On the one hand, women in most European countries are the most active cultural consumers today; on the other hand, Joyce’s universe is a patriarchal world. Most of Ulysses deals with men, with the exception of some strong wom-
en, of which Leopold Bloom’s wife Molly is the most prominent (she could also be seen in the streets with her brass bed attached to her hips, mumbling her famous concluding monologue, “yes I will Yes”). To what extent female participants identified with feminine aspects of the novel is impossible to know. They were there and seemed to enjoy the events. Even less can be said about various sexual preferences among the participants. In this case I do not even dare to have a guess – any specific attraction to non-heterosexuals remains unclear. What was clearly visible, however, was the total dominance of white people in all the crowds. Except for a few tourists from Asia, it was an all-white-event. There were of course also differences between these white people in terms of religions, nationalities and cultures, but to know anything more, these aspects would need to be surveyed empirically.

White, middle class, heterosexual Christians – would that be a fair description of the vast majority of the participants of Bloomsday? If this statement would prove to be correct, what would it say about Bloomsday? Well, it mainly indicates what Bloomsday is not. It is not an intercultural or multicultural festival; it is not an occasion that brings out the working class into the streets; it is not an event that attracts a queer crowd. On the other hand, it is possible that the conformity of the participants is one of the conditions that create a strong sense of community and complicity among those attending Bloomsday. Victor Turner has underlined the experience of communitas during cultural performances and I think that Bloomsday is an excellent example of how such a feeling of community can arise among participants. This is another instance – and a particularly strong one – of connection between Theatrical Playing and the people engaged in the Playing Culture. Emotions of community, openness and knowing that we all play the same game, bind together the performers and the people in such a way that they are hard to distinguish. Players all, one could say.

Summarising this exposé over the Bloomsday celebrations 2004, I would say that the concept of the Theatrical Event provides a reasonable analysis of the paradoxes of this festivalised occasion. Compared to other possible approaches, it also might clarify how Bloomsday can be adequately described. It is not a ritual that usually is carried by its attempt to achieve spiritual benefits; but there are ritualistic elements to be noticed here and there during the day such as the swimming at Sandycove. Bloomsday is not a ceremony such as a graduation or the opening of the Olympics; ceremonial moments do, however, occur at certain moments such as the visit of the president to the Joyce Centre. It is maybe not even best described as a performance, because there is no centre stage and no basic organisation that would bring together performers and spectators; on the other hand, one can find a number of limited performances within the framework of Bloomsday. For me it is best characterized as a Theatrical Event, wide-open and inclusive, with a clear emphasis on Playing Culture. The playfulness of all partici-
pants leavens Bloomsday as a whole as well as its various ingredients all through. It is contagious, not only for those participating during the day, but obviously also for the producers and sponsors. The playing brings together the reality of the celebration with the fictionality of the object that is celebrated.

Within the concept of the Theatrical Event, the fiction of Mr Bloom unites in a playful way with the fantasies of today’s citizens, while its effects upon the nation nevertheless are considerable. In a Theatrical Event, the power of the Cultural Context spreads out to the producers of the Contextual Theatricality, who arrange never ending series of performances, both as Theatrical Playing and as a Playing Culture that is populated by performers, participants, spectators and onlookers. It is my hope that a holistic view of Bloomsday might have illustrated some of these features.

**Part Three: Mr Bloom’s Corrections of Appearance and Appearing**

*Mr Sauter’s theoretical outlook at 16 June 2004 might have its merits and it is not up to me, the poor advertising canvasser Leopold Bloom out of James Joyce’s novel, to judge such an exploration of Bloomsday. But since I am allowed to make some comments here, I would like to take advantage of my fictional status. In a way, as a character of the novel, I know more about my intentions and motives than anybody else – maybe with the exception of Joyce himself. Mr Sauter brought up the question of various identities and he briefly touched upon sexuality and gender. He was wondering whether Bloomsday appeals to homosexuals or some kind of queer people. I think the question has not been treated well from the fictional point of view. The novel is all about heterosexuals and it is so full of sexuality that it deserves a few complementary remarks. I have never felt any desire when looking at a man, but while I am thinking about it, I am, all of a sudden, not so sure of what the young men spending the night in Marcello Tower had in mind. Especially this Englishman, Haines, is an elusive type of man. But my own problems with women are just enough for me and in my view, Joyce could have been less indiscreet with my innermost feelings. I loved my wife Molly, for sure, but since the death of our son Rudy, it is true that “there has never been full carnal knowledge between husband and wife.” Early that morning of 16 June 1904, when returning from Dlugacz Butchers, where I bought my pork kidney, I found a letter to Molly from a man, that gave me a strong indication that he was her lover. In a way, one can say that his expected visit to Molly on that day kept me away from home and gave Joyce the opportunity to follow me to all the strange places I visited until late at night.

My own sexual desires increased during the day and were, I agree, satisfied in unusual manners. On my way to Paddy Dignam’s funeral, I passed by the central Post Office, where I picked up a poste restante letter from Martha Clifford. Our
correspondence was quite lively, at times, and I would very much have liked to get in physical contact with her. That morning, I was still quite hopeful and responded immediately to her letter, which excited me a bit. As only James Joyce knows, I never succeeded in getting even close to her. Well, there were other encounters during the day, the most famous of which were with three young ladies at Sandycove Strand. One of them, Gerty MacDowell, who I have mentioned earlier, actually seduced me with her blue eyes and her blue navy dress. From a distance, she saw that I saw her and she understood that my hand was moving in my pants and she enjoyed it. Joyce made my state of excitement, which coincided with firework rockets exploding in the evening sky, so explicit that the novel was banned as obscene in all the English speaking countries (except for Ireland, as mentioned before). Late at night I ended up with Stephen Dedalus in Bella Cohen’s brothel, but the poor boy had been badly hit by a soldier and I had my hands full to protect him from all the hallucinations that tormented his absinthe-soaked brain. All in all, my erotic encounters that day are nothing to boast about.

The last chapter of the novel is not about me at all, but about my wife Molly. She is allowed to speak for herself and about herself and all she has been doing in her life and during that day. There is a strong emphasis on women in that book, too, I would say. Molly is strengthening, confirming her own ego. “Yes,” she says, “and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.”

That is how the novel ends, but the “he” she speaks about is not me. What I wanted you to understand is how much a fictional figure like me can enjoy and suffer during one day – actually just as much as a real man. On Bloomsday people remember me and I wonder whether it makes any difference that I never really existed. In memory, fiction and reality seem to melt together. Maybe that is why historical events are so easily theatricalised all over the world. Theatrical events re-enact – playfully – what has once been or what could have been, on the streets as well as on printed pages. A theatrical event brings it all to life, here and now.

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References


Radical Hope or the Moral Imperative of Images in the Work of Susan Sontag and Jean-Luc Godard

By Idit Alphandary

Abstract

In the films *For Ever Mozart*, *In Praise of Love* and *I Salute You Sarajevo*, Godard's images introduce radical hope to the world. I will demonstrate that this hope represents an ethical posture in the world; it is identical to goodness. Radical hope is grounded in the victim’s witnessing, internalizing and remembering catastrophe, while at the same time holding onto the belief that a variation of the self will survive the disaster.

In *The Gift of Death*, Jacques Derrida argues that choosing to belong to the disaster is equivalent to giving the pure gift, or to goodness itself, and that it suggests a new form of responsibility for one's life, as well as a new form of death. For Derrida, internalizing catastrophe is identical to death—a death that surpasses one's means of giving. Such death can be reciprocated only by reinstating goodness or the law in the victim's or the giver's existence.

The relation of survival to the gift of death—also a gift of life—challenges us to rethink our understanding of the act of witnessing. This relation also adds nuance to our appreciation of the intellectual, emotional and mental affects of the survival of the victim and the testimony and silence of the witness, all of which are important in my analysis of radical hope. On the one hand, the (future) testimony of the witness inhabits the victim or the ravaged self (now), on the other hand, testimony is not contemporaneous with the shattered ego. This means that testimony is anterior to the self or that the self that survives the disaster has yet to come into existence through making testimony material. Testimony thus exists before and beyond disaster merely as an ethical posture—a "putting-one-self-to-death or offering-one's-death, that is, one's life, in the ethical dimension of sacrifice," in the words of Derrida. The witness is identical to the victim whose survival will include an unknown, surprising testimony or an event of witnessing. The testimony discloses the birth or revelation of a new self. And yet this new self survives through assuming the position of the witness even while s/he is purely the victim of catastrophe, being put to death owning the "kiss of death."

Keywords: Susan Sontag, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Derrida, Film studies, hope, testimony, the Bosnian war
Radical Hope or the Moral Imperative of Images in the Work of Susan Sonntag and Jean-Luc Godard

In the films For Ever Mozart, (Godard 1996) In Praise of Love (Godard 2001) and I Salute You Sarajevo, (Godard 2006) Godard's images introduce radical hope to the world. I will demonstrate that this hope represents an ethical posture in the world; it is identical to goodness. Radical hope—I suggest—is grounded in the victim's witnessing, internalizing and remembering catastrophe, while at the same time holding onto the belief that a variation of the self will survive the disaster.

In The Gift of Death, (Derrida 1995) Jacques Derrida argues that choosing to belong to the disaster is equivalent to giving the pure gift, or to goodness itself, and that it suggests a new form of responsibility for one's life, as well as a new form of death. For Derrida, internalizing catastrophe is identical to death—a death that surpasses one's means of giving. Such death can be reciprocated only by reinstating goodness or the law in the victim's or the giver's existence.

What is given—and this would also represent a kind of death—is not the thing, but goodness itself, a giving goodness, the act of giving or the donation of the gift. A goodness that must not only forget itself but whose source remains inaccessible to the donee. The latter receives by means of a dissymmetry of the gift that is also a death, a death given, the gift of a death that arrives in one way but not another. Above all it is a goodness whose inaccessibility acts as a command to the donee. It subjects its receivers, giving itself to them as goodness itself but also as the law.¹ (Derrida 1995: 41, my italics)

The relation of survival to the gift of death—also a gift of life—challenges us to rethink our understanding of the act of witnessing. This relation also adds nuance to our appreciation of the intellectual, emotional and mental affects of the survival of the victim and the testimony and silence of the witness, all of which are important in my analysis of radical hope. On the one hand, the (future) testimony of the witness inhabits the victim or the ravaged self (now), on the other hand, testimony is not contemporaneous with the shattered ego. This means that testimony is anterior to the self or that the self that survives the disaster has yet to come into existence through making testimony material. Testimony thus exists before and beyond disaster merely as an ethical posture—a "putting-oneself-to-death or offering-one's-death, that is, one's life, in the ethical dimension of sacrifice" in the words of Derrida. (Derrida 1995: 48) The witness is identical to the victim whose survival will include an unknown, surprising testimony or an event of witnessing. The testimony discloses the birth or revelation of a new self. And yet this new self survives through assuming the position of the witness even while s/he is purely the victim of catastrophe, being put to death owning the "kiss of death."²

In the films that I examine, Godard's images influence the relation of viewers to hope, too, by displacing the viewer's relation to the suffering of others through implicating her/him in the image. Viewers must determine the value of pain and
alienation, for both of these affects preside in the images, and Godard's cinema teases out precisely these emotions.³ Technically, images that have the power to make the viewer question the limits of her/his privacy—thus enabling an alteration in the viewer's relation to otherness—comprise empty signifiers. Such a sign or image carries significance even though its placement in the scene is random. Thus, empty signifiers may unravel the aesthetic and moral dimensions of representing and identifying with the pain of others.⁴ Radical hope presides in this gap between significance and meaning, between recognizing the pain of others and establishing moral commitment to reinstituting the wellbeing of the others.

An examination of Alain Badiou's analysis of the structure of hope reveals that hope is also what underwrites the gap between significance and meaning, the space in which identity is traversed by otherness. In Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism, Alain Badiou argues that hope comprises faith in justice. He then analyzes this relation of hope to power, and suggests that Saint Paul does not preach for the kind of hope that follows from the belief that the Last Judgment certifies that retribution will be visited upon the evil and that the righteous will be rewarded for their love and faith. Rather, according to Badiou, Paul sees hope as the obstinacy of subjective survival.

In Thessalonians I, faith is compared to striving (ergon), and love to grueling work, to the laborious, the troublesome. Hope, for its part, pertains to endurance, to perseverance, to patience; it is the subjectivity proper to the continuation of the subjective process. (Badiou 2003: 93)

Hope impels us to "go on". Hope is not "an evental connection" in the language of Badiou. (Badiou 2003: 94) The subject does not hope that a source of power from the outside will inflict punishment on those that destroy the subject's life, thus enabling the survival of the subject.

In this sense, hope belongs to the real. It is not primarily related to a future outcome desirable to the faithful, but to one's ability to maintain fidelity. Hope signifies the excess that presides in the real precisely because it is "charged with the real". (Badiou 2003: 96) The power of subjective hope emerges from the notion that it signifies the victory of an ethic of love as such:

Hope indicates that I can persevere in love only because love inaugurates the concrete universality of the true, and this universality subsumes me in return. This is the strong sense of the statement "If I...have not love, I am nothing" (Cor. I.13.2). For Paul, universality mediates identity. It is the "for all" that allows me to be counted as one. Wherein we rediscover a major Pauline principle: the One is inaccessible without the "for all". What designates and verifies my participation in salvation—from the moment I become a patient worker for the universality of the true—is called hope. From this point of view, hope has nothing to do with the future. It is a figure of the present subject, who is affected in return by the universality for which he works. (Badiou 2003: 97)

As I return to explaining Godard's and Sontag's thinking of radical hope, it is important to keep in mind that Susan Sontag brought Godard to America.⁵ She is the
most important theoretician of Godard's major, early films from the sixties. But in *Reading the Pain of Others*, Sontag’s focus is photojournalism rather than film. I think that Sontag reads the suffering of others similarly to the later Godard. For both, hope is an ethical position and the two worked with the aim of introducing radical hope into the world through studying and exploring the crucial role that images play in our lives. Sontag’s analysis of the art of photojournalism and the forms of observation that it makes possible and Godard's experimental uses of stills images within film, enhance our understanding of the power of observation in the lives of viewers. Both author and auteur attach seeing itself to mediums that thematize the gaze and turn the act of observing into a malleable sensation that is amenable to the different possibilities for change that the aesthetic and moral postures of images bring about.

Sontag states that the photograph is a unit of memory that registers a memorable piece of information or a unique fact: "The photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb." (Sontag 2003: 22) She finds that remembering is a moral act. More important, because photos enhance our ability to remember, photojournalism vouches for the morality of images obtained and printed. Magnum Photo Agency, founded by the famous photojournalist of the Spanish Civil War, Robert Capa, had a charter:

...moralistic in the way of other founding charters of the new international organizations and guilds created in the immediate postwar period, spelled out an enlarged, ethically weighted mission for photojournalists: to chronicle their own time, be it a time of war or a time of peace, as fair-minded witnesses free of chauvinistic prejudices. (Sontag 2003: 34-5)

Indeed, Godard's rhetoric of images unearths two characteristics vital to hope, not just to morality. First, representing their pain appeals to and affects the victims. Godard's images give testimony of the atrocities committed against the victims and thus (the images) may restore the survivors' connection to communication and life. The image as testimony gives a voice to the victims—it brings back to life visual and acoustic memory and reinstates in the victims the voice they were deprived of by the catastrophe. With this voice, victims may speak of the catastrophe and give meaning to the meaninglessness of violence and trauma. Second, the pain of others moves viewers. Oftentimes movie spectators do not have direct knowledge of utter devastation, and because Godard's cinematic language is eye-opening, it allows the viewer to see the self in the other. Godard’s images are directed at unmasking the suffering of others. Moviegoers may identify with, or internalize, the plight of the other. The spectators can feel the victims' triumphs, defeats and silences, and know them as if from the inside. Thus, the images on the screen assume the form of testimony and carry the burden of witnessing. In such cases, the spectators may emerge from a film equipped to protest against perpetrating war on civilians, and hopeful that their new vantage point may prevent future atrocities from taking place.
In Godard's recent films, which explore the Bosnian War specifically and catastrophe in the twentieth century more generally, the director demonstrates that, on the one hand, hope is an ethical stance during times of personal and/or cultural devastation. On the other hand, he cautions against allowing hope to become an illusion. We must neither repress the evil origins of human suffering during wartime, nor assume that victims might survive thanks to messianic intervention. This means that hope is compound. When the possibility of extinction appears likely—whether of self or of one’s larger culture/community—one hopes to survive seemingly imminent death. At the same time, one cannot hope to continue the existence of a known self, an ego ideal or a cultural tradition, for these are being destroyed by catastrophic events.

At this point I will take a detour to explore the structure of hope in psychoanalysis. Jonathan Lear, the American psychoanalyst and anthropologist, construes hope's relation both to the real and to reality. In his recent book, Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation, Lear studies the destruction of the Crow Indians by the White Man and tells the story of Plenty Coups, the illustrious Chieftain of the Crow Nation who died at the end of the nineteenth century.

Plenty Coups accepted the possibility that the future could hold goodness in store, even as the livelihood of the Crow Nation, its traditions and the subjectivity of every one of its members were being destroyed. At the outset, his biographical story foreshadows the loss of the Crow subjectivity using the expression: "After this nothing happened." (Lear 2006: 2) "This" signifies the event of the Buffalo's going away and "after" this happening history came to an end. Lear interprets this as an admission of utter passivity and finds that it enhances the possibility of narrating a biography that revolves around the loss of the narrating "I:" "This suggests that according to Plenty Coups, there is no importantly first-person narrative to tell of this period. It is as though there is no longer an I there" (Lear 2006: 3).

Hope became an empty signifier; it compelled the Crow subject to become flexible and to adapt to new realities in order to survive, even though her/his identity as a Crow Indian was being destroyed and depleted of its substance. Men stopped hunting the Buffalo—the primary commitment of the Indian hunter—and women stopped teaching the traditional code of duty and honor to their children, because the lore as such became obsolete. And yet Plenty Coups envisioned a future in which the Crow nation continues to exist, despite having undergone radical changes. Plenty Coups transcends the particular traditions familiar to the Crow nation, while maintaining his commitment to the idea of goodness that allows for the continued existence of a Crow nation, themselves committed to new and as yet unfamiliar modes of being. Lear writes:

There would be ways to continue to form oneself as a Crow subject—ways to flourish as a Crow—even though the traditional forms were doomed. This hope is radical in that it is aiming for a subjectivity that is at once Crow and does not yet exist (Lear 2006: 104).
Godard, Sontag and Lear show that radical hope inheres in one's ability to envision a future for one's selfhood, although the disaster is designed to annihilate the subject. They also demonstrate that the victim may choose to accept the fact that a new subjectivity will have emerged from witnessing disaster and giving testimony. In the same vein, Derrida—who explores the unknown aspects of autonomy retained under conditions of injuring randomness—finds that goodness comprises a gift of death. This means that the subject envisions or hopes for a continuation of life uniquely because s/he accepts the fact that a new subjectivity will have emerged from this giving. The gift cannot be reciprocated by the law, but it may reinstate the law, thus bringing the subject's autonomy back into existence.

One wonders what is the relevance of footage and photojournalism to the fictional scenes in Godard's films and to the aesthetic efficacy of the films, and how Godard projects the polysemy of hope on film? His films raise questions regarding how we choose to document the pain of others.

In *For Ever Mozart*, for example, Godard employs images in order to achieve two different goals: 1) produce drama; 2) enable spectators to internalize the pain of others, and introduce radical hope to the world. Godard's films about the Bosnian War, the besieged city of Sarajevo, and about the catastrophes of the twentieth century, suggest that there is a moral dimension to survival. His introduction of radical hope points to the possibility of a viable future for people whose lives have been ravaged by disaster.

*For Ever Mozart* is a philosophical reflection on the relation of images to war and hope. Scenes are peppered with imitations of photojournalism. In other words, the film combines beauty with remembering, thus arguing that beauty inheres in memory and in giving testimony about the pain of others.

In *For Ever Mozart*, visual happenings distil the multiple meanings of hope. The film is about staging a play in Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia, yet the actors never reach Sarajevo. In Bosnia they are kidnapped by Serb and Croat militia, and *Bolero Fatal*—the film within *For Ever Mozart*—documents the travails that the actors undergo. The actors suffer the horrors of war—they are stripped naked and tortured, are forced to dig their own graves, after which they are shot, their bodies left lying on the ground; meanwhile, the Muslim actress is brutally raped by her captors. But *For Ever Mozart*, a film that does not reproduce the reality of war, deepens illusions and emphasizes the power of posturing. Clearly, Godard is suggesting that through stylizing the war-narrative and imitating photojournalistic images of war, the film acquires moral authority and conveys hope. Thus, his films raise the question of how beautiful images alter our perception of violence, and how violence renders aesthetics a necessary means of restoring radical hope and a return of goodness to the world?

Sontag points out that the atrocities of war are depicted in paintings, not just in photos. The difference is that paintings are evocative while photographs focus on
deploring and condemning. Although the photographic image is not a made image, the photograph involves artistic decision-making. Photographs are not transparent, rather, they convey moral judgments. Sontag cites common wisdom: "The camera is the eye of history." (Sontag 2003: 52) Here, the photograph is aligned with realism. The only way to be in touch with History is through conserving the reality of an epoch in pictures. Godard would have agreed with Sontag, for indeed his images document History and evoke a particular zeitgeist. Godard's images convey History by opening up a gap between the signifier and the signified and introducing radical hope, i.e., the possibility that new significance might come into the world.

This use of the image needs to be explained in psychological and epistemological—aesthetical and ethical—terms that clearly articulate the dialectic of radical hope. I would like to briefly return to Jonathan Lear and study his explanation of what it means for hope to be an empty signifier.

One needed some conception of—or commitment to—a goodness that transcends one's current understanding of the good. Kierkegaard coined the phrase "teleological suspension of the ethical" to describe Abraham's response to God's alleged command that he sacrifice his son. That is, the ethical requirement to nurture one's children is to be suspended in the light of a higher call. What is so striking about Plenty Coups's situation is that it was a nonmythical, realistic, and plausible account of someone who experienced himself as receiving a divine call to tolerate the collapse of ethical life. This would include even a collapse of the concepts with which ethical life had hitherto been understood. (Lear 2006: 92)

The documentary elements of Godard's cinematography must employ signifiers from which specific ethical meanings are absent. These images become enigmatic; they enforce the films and the viewers' commitment to "a goodness that transcends understanding", in Lear's language (Lear 2006: 95). Indeed, this is the rhetoric of Godard's images.

In For Ever Mozart, Godard analyzes the gap between actual suffering during war and the images that document this pain. The camera focuses on a single militiawoman, on the battlefield, who is taking snapshots with a disposable Kodak camera, as do modern tourists. In the same scene, she shows a batch of family photos to a Frenchman. The two do not understand each other's languages. And yet the sequence is eloquent; the photos speak for themselves, twice depicting this woman's entire family. On the one hand, the family members seem to be looking into the eyes of viewers. On the other hand, once her parents and sister have been slaughtered, the moviegoers find themselves transformed into voyeurs as they stare at the bloody, mutilated faces of the corpses that the snapshots commemorate.

In this scene Godard argues against Descartes and articulates the sensation that people exist differently as matter and as numinous. The scene raises questions regarding Descartes' dictum "I think therefore I am", and instantiates radical hope
as that which burgeons at the interstices of existing and reflecting. Camille, the leading actress and a teacher of philosophy explains:

In "I think therefore I am", the "I" of "I think" is not the same as the "I" of "I am". Why? The relation between body and spirit has yet to be shown. Between thought and existence… The sensation of existence is not yet a "me". It's an unreflected sensation. It's born within me, but… without "me". (Godard 1996: chapter 6)

The subject becomes ethical or good when radical hope pervades the gap between "I" and my consciousness and inhabits the "me", a "me" that is coterminous with my movement and my freedom. Godard translates this intricate argument into images and depicts difference through his photos. The camera follows Camille and Jérôme as they are digging their mass grave and discussing philosophy.

Camille:
Philosophy will be our girlfriend. Forever.

Jérôme:
Day and Night.

Camille:
Even if she loses her name. Even in her absence.

Jérôme:
A clandestine friend. We respect what prevents us from getting close to her.

Camille:
As we sense that we're not awake…

And that which is wakeful in us, even in our sleep, is due to her difficult friendship (Godard 1996: chapter 6).

The hostages are then gunned down and a large image fills the screen, an image that imitates photojournalism in its depiction of violence: it portrays Camille's foot lying in the dark soil as if severed from her body.

Nevertheless, radical hope does pervade this scene, which captures the heroic dimension of survival and beautifies the act of witnessing the pain of others. There is an element of pathos, as well, as Camille and Jérôme confront the solemnity of their looming deaths. They realize that culture is undergoing an irreversible change, and that the face of death, too, is changing. Yet they believe that philosophy will endure, albeit under a different name. They trust that the circumstances that bar their access to goodness will be overcome and that culture will be subjected to the law. Viewers witness "Choc des corps et choc des cultures", in Serge Toubiana's phrase (Toubiana 1996: 12).

Through stylizing the violence, as in the image of the severed foot, and using aesthetics in order to set up this violence, the film perverts such images of mutilated bodies and makes them affective. The film renders meaningful the silence of the victims captured in the photographs. In fact, Godard restores to these horrific images the dimension of reflection, that which is un-self-identical in them and the
movement of difference. The entire scene is, indeed, not simply about violence but about the relation between violence and images, about the passage of the images through the violence and the passage of the violence through the images. Here we "protest suffering, as distinct from acknowledging it", as Susan Sontag's writes. (Sontag 2003: 24)

How may *Bolero Fatal* break free from *ressentiment* or the repetition of the same? How can Godard imitate Ravel's *Bolero* and cause the repetition of a basic theme or melody of death to evolve and become suspenseful, interesting and life affirming? A brief reflection on "The Exigency of Return (1969)", by Maurice Blanchot may help us to answer these questions.

Blanchot argues against the notion that the logos comes to an end every time that repetition is used to affirm it. He speaks against the "madness" of repetition. But because the eternal return, in Nietzsche's understanding of this concept, is related to the will to power, Blanchot suggests that when difference permeates into the self it produces pseudo-thoughts (dreams) to eliminate this difference. Blanchot concludes that nothing that comes back to the self is the same, "except, the return itself (turn, detour, overturning); and is it not the case that the affirmation of return leads to affirming together—but without constituting a whole—the difference and the repetition, thus the non-identity of the same?" (Blanchot 1995: 283)

*For Ever Mozart* utilizes precisely this principle of repetition that introduces difference to the film, when it articulates the significance of empty signifiers. The film enhances the movement of difference and brings about the deferral of meaning and of identity in favor of thinking. More important, the deferral and thinking that issue from introducing repetition as difference into the film are identical to radical hope. The old director of *Bolero Fatal* discloses that for him cinema contains profound sadness. "Both a possibility of expression and the trace of something essential, renounced." (Godard 1996: chapter 11) This sadness has something to do with the fact that the image may bring about hope only when it remains an empty signifier.

Godard's entire cinematic philosophy is grounded in the conviction that signifiers in which *something essential is renounced*, enhance significance. "It's what I like in cinema", the old director continues, "a saturation of glorious signs, bathing in the light of their absent explanation." (Godard 1996: chapter 13) Significance emerges from an image that neither enforces a particular explanation on the "me", nor precludes the meanings with which this "me" endows certain "glorious" signifiers. At the end of *Bolero Fatal*, facing the open sea, a beautiful, young actress is pronouncing a relentless, open-ended, life-affirming "Oui". (Godard 1996: chapter 13)

As I pointed out earlier, for Sontag "The photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb." (Sontag 2003: 22) Thus, we recall the needed photograph at
any given moment of our day-to-day-living. The Bosnian War is a good example of this phenomenon. Images of this war were anachronistic—they reminded Europeans of the Second World War. Yet Europeans thought that such images could never become a reality again. Because photos bring to mind other photos, journalists presuppose that only an agitating image is eye-opening. If this is the essential trait of the more important images that document and give testimony about the pain of others, then "The image as shock and the image as cliché are two aspects of the same presence", Sontag asserts. (Sontag 2003: 23)

In the same vein, I want to briefly examine a sequence from *In Praise of Love*, but in order to explain this segment I have to study the status of the proverb in language. In *The Storyteller*, Walter Benjamin asserts that the cliché or the proverb receives its authority from its relation to eternity. Benjamin states that the authority inherent in storytelling resides in death's relation to eternity and in the self's relation to the other. The dying man's story is conterminous with a lesson for life, precisely because he has achieved experience. The proverb is the limiting case of storytelling:

> In fact, one can go on and ask oneself whether the relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftsman's relationship, whether it is not his very task to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way. It is a kind of procedure which may perhaps most adequately be exemplified by the proverb if one thinks of it as an ideogram of a story. A proverb, one might say, is a ruin which stands on the site of an old story and in which a moral twines about a happening like ivy around a wall. (Benjamin 1968: 108)

On the one hand, the proverb is a dead element in language. Here the signifier is identical to its significance. On the other hand, the proverb is swarming with life. From this proverb the storyteller could fashion and elaborate a new relationship of storytelling to its material, "human life", and bring an expired world back to life.

*In Praise of Love* examines how the face of storytelling has changed in the aftermath of the *Shoah*. After the *Shoah* love may preside uniquely between people; it cannot be given to the state. "You say 'State,' but the state is the very antithesis of the image of a loved one, whose sovereign reason negates that of love." (Godard 2001: chapter 18) Here the screen fills up with the image of a black record and a needle turning on the turntable. Paul Celan's voice emanates from the speakers. In German, he is reading the following lines from *Todesfüge*: "he writes when it grows dark to Deutschland your golden hair/ Margareta". (Celan 1995: 31) Godard explicitly tells the viewers that the face of storytelling, too, has changed, not just the face of death. Testimony belongs to the pantheon of realism in literature. In the mind of Celan death, a "master from Deutschland", (Celan 1995: 31) has become a death fugue. Death has a constant presence in the life of the human race. The recurrence of testimony—in images and in poetry—cannot redeem the dead. But Celan intervenes with the work of death. He insists on the specificity of the history of death and sabotages the erasure of memory: he finds
images to depict this violence and resists such depictions at the same time. In Celan's *Deathfugue*, love or testimony and death or the immemorial past co-create "the ability to exchange experiences", in Benjamin's words. (Benjamin 1968: 83)

Thus, the conclusion of *In Praise of Love* introduces both documentation and radical hope to the framework. The voiceover states: "Image and sound are vital to History. And most important that basic element: not knowing how History will end." (Godard 2001: chapter 22) Because we do not know how History will end, images are morally binding: they tell us to be hopeful and influence historical developments.12

As I approach the conclusion of this paper, I would like to cite a short clip from *I Salute You Sarajevo*, in Godard's own voice. Here Godard turns photojournalism into motion-picture. He uses a harrowing image from the Bosnian War and comments on the war in Bosnia as motion is introduced to the image:

For there's a rule and an exception. Culture is the rule, and art is the exception. Everything speaks the rule: Cigarette, computer, T-shirt, TV, tourism war. Nobody speaks the exception it isn't spoken, it's written: Flaubert, Dostoyevsky. It's composed: Gershwin, Mozart. It's painted: Cezanne, Vermeer. It's filmed: Antonioni, Vigo. Or it's lived, and then it's the art of living: Srebrenica, Mostar, Sarajevo. The rule is to want the death of the exception. So the rule for cultural Europe is to organize the death of the art of living, which still flourishes. (Godard and Miéville 2006)

Susan Sontag was afraid that because we do not understand the Bosnian War this same image will reduce the pain of others to a mere icon. She made clear that "harrowing" photographs are very explicit but they do not make us understand the events that they depict. "Photographs do something else: they haunt us." (Sontag 2003: 89)

The *New York Times* published the image with minimal captions: "'The image is stark, one of the most enduring of the Balkan wars: a Serb militiaman casually kicking a dying Muslim woman in the head. It tells you everything you need to know.' But of course it doesn't tell us everything we need to know”, Sontag states,

From an identification given by the photographer Ron Haviv, we learn that the photograph was taken in the town of Bijeljina in April 1992, the first month of the Serb rampage through Bosnia. From behind, we see a uniformed Serb militiaman, a youthful figure with sunglasses perched on the top of his head, a cigarette between the second and third fingers of his raised left hand, rifle dangling in his right hand, right leg poised to kick a woman lying face down on the sidewalk between two other bodies. The photograph doesn't tell us that she is a Muslim, though she is unlikely to have been labeled in any other way, for why would she and the two others be lying there, as if dead (why "dying"?), under the gaze of some Serb soldiers? In fact, the photograph tells us very little—except that war is hell, and that graceful young men with guns are capable of kicking in the head overweight older women lying helpless, or already killed, in the head. (Sontag 2003: 90)

Sontag and Godard both add narrative to the image. Narrative establishes significance because it can make us understand that the subject is emerging from testimony as yet s/he is composing a eulogy to radical hope.
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Notes


2 I find reinforcement of this notion that hope is related to testimony in "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" by the American psychoanalyst Dori Laub. Laub's witness contends that four chimneys were blown up during the uprising at Auschwitz. This is historically inaccurate, for only one chimney was destroyed. Yet Laub argued that the witness's testimony was coherent because it showed that she remembered elements that were survival-inducing. These particular memory traces brought hope into Auschwitz. The testimony reenacted the woman's resistance to extermination and enhanced "the breakage of the frame of death" that presided in Auschwitz (Laub 1992: 62). Also relevant to this issue is the fact that in *Remnants of Auschwitz* Giorgio Agamben describes the opposite phenomenon of over-remembering as related to a radical desire to survive in order to give testimony about the utter destitution of the "under man" in the death camp. Agamben cites Primo Levi: "sentences in languages I do not know have remained etched in my memory… something anomalous happened to me, I would say almost an unconscious preparation for bearing witness" (Agamben 2002: 27).

3 In *The World Viewed*, Stanley Cavell argues that images in films stimulate the sensation that one's biography has come to life. Cavell experiences images on the screen in the company of other moviegoers, and these images seem to him like aspects of the lives of others, others who become relevant to the self. I remain faithful to responses I first had to movies … The events associated with movies are those of companionship or lack of companionship: the audience of a book is essentially solitary, one soul at a time; the audience of music and theater is essentially larger than your immediate acquaintance—a gathering of the city; the crowd at a movie comprises various pools of companions, or scattered souls with someone missing (Cavell 1979: 10).

4 In *Reading the Pain of Others*, Sontag, too, asserts that the reality of an image is equal to its ability to anchor the viewing subject in morality: "The photographs are means of making 'real' (or 'more real') matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore" (Sontag 2003: 7).

5 In the article "Godard's Vivre Sa Vie", Sontag addresses the question of Godard's use of the image as an empty signifier. See, for example passage no.5: *Vivre Sa Vie* … shows the inexorability of an event … Godard's films are drastically untropical. An art concerned with … topical issues can never simply show that something is. It must indicate *how*. It must show *why*. But the whole point of *Vivre Sa Vie* is that it does not explain anything. It rejects causality (Sontag 1961: 199).
The films of Godard examined in this essay do not clearly belong to the genre of testimony founded by Claude Lazmann in *Shoa*. Godard’s works comprise fictional integers, yet they do undertake the task of witnessing the devastation that the Bosnian War brought back to Europe, as well as testifying to the fact that the twentieth century was grounded in disaster. I suggest that the main idea expressed in Simone de Beauvoir’s "Preface" to the text of Lazmann’s, *Shoa* is also significant in Godard’s work: "In spite of everything we knew, the ghastly experience remained remote from us. Now, for the first time, we live it in our minds, hearts and flesh. It becomes our experience." (De Beauvoir 1995: iii).

Hope is effective in the world precisely as Plenty Coups turns his dream—the epistemological environment in which elements form the real become known to the subject—into a Historical grand narrative. This Indian *epos*—which I will discuss in detail hereafter—may capture the imagination of members of the Crow Nation and compel them to alter the history of their own existence. Yet the substance of the change is not defined by the dream, and will emerge only when the Crow Nation will insist on re-inventing its existence even while it is laboring to retain its identity. Here the double time of trauma or the structure of the subject—which always attains fulfillment in the future anterior—acquires national, historical significance.

Radical hope may appear in singular interpretations of one’s dream. This is precisely the lesson of Plenty Coups's dream that Lear examines. The Crow nation used dreams as carriers of information from the world of spirits. The information was enigmatic—because the spirits convey enigmatic messages—but the dream's interpretation had to be concrete, ready to be used as a tool with which to alter reality. Lear writes, "But young Plenty Coups's dream … did not predict any particular event, but the change of the world order. It was prophetic in the sense that the tribe used it to face up to a radically different future." (Lear 2006: 68) Plenty Coups dreamed that the plains of Crow land were covered with Buffalo-bulls. But the bellowing and the beef were not like Buffalos, “they were strange animals from another world…" (Lear 2006: 70) In the second part of the dream Plenty Coups sees an old man sitting in a tree and an image of a guide, the "man-person" tells him that he is this old man. He commands Plenty Coups to learn from the Chickadee, a weak bird that gathers wisdom. In that tree is the lodge of the chickadee. He is least in strength but strongest of mind among his kind. He is willing to work for wisdom. The Chickadee-person is a good listener … Whenever others are talking together of their successes and failures, there you will find the Chickadee-person listening to their words … He never intrudes, never speaks in strange company, and yet never misses a chance to learn from others. He gains success and avoids failure by learning how others succeeded or failed, and without great trouble to himself… (Lear 2006; 70-1)

Plenty Coups is advised to be like the Chickadee-man who listens to and learns from others. Lear shows that as Plenty Coups is pervaded by goodness he uses radical hope in the interpretation of his dream. Plenty Coups accepts an interpretation of the dream that indicates that the Buffalo will disappear and, at the same time, the white man's cattle will overtake the plains. The future of the Indians lay in learning from the White man, not fighting him, and in teaching the members of the Crow nation to find their livelihood in farming not hunting.

Stanley Cavell points out that things of the everyday are meaningful precisely because they are strong enough to show both that man is subject to doubt and that man achieves intimate knowledge of the world. In this context Cavell's understanding of the relation between Cartesian philosophical doubt and the medium of film as such is crucial. In his book *In Quest of the Ordinary*, Cavell states that his own philosophical endeavor is to make meaningful his "feeling that the ordinariness in question speaks of an intimacy with existence, and of an intimacy lost, that matches skepticism's despair of the world" (Cavell 1994: 4). This loss of intimacy between me and existence is well pronounced by Camille in *For Ever Mozart*, but is this loss inherent in film? And if so, could film be the medium that also lends intimacy to our perception of existence?
In Cavell’s masterpiece, "Naughty Orators: Negation of Voice in Gaslight", he specifically engages a film by George Cukor, in which Paula (Ingrid Berman) is reduced to the mad position in which all her most intimate knowledge of her own history and memory and of her present life is cast into doubt. Her husband Gregory (Charles Boyer) is bent on driving his wife crazy and he almost achieves his goal when he enters the attic unseen, and haunts the house like a demon. Paula is lapsing into hysterical fits when the gaslight is dimming precisely because she is feeling haunted, as if someone who is inhabiting the house is doing so in hiding. Cavell argues that the relation between the weakening brightness of the light and our vulnerability to madness is inherent in film. He shows that in Gaslight the projector itself is maddening and that film produces dreaminess that is grounded in Cartesian illusion. Am I awake or am I dreaming? is a serious question for moviegoers. But because Gaslight is about making someone mad through dimming the light, it can also use the changes of the light's brightness to restore Paula's ability to reason. If Paula could confirm with a third observing party, so to speak, that indeed the light is falling, she would gain hard evidence of what her eyes behold, and would thus truly know the world that surrounds her.

Upon the detective’s confirming the dimming of the light, the woman says, "You saw that too? Then it really happens …. Every night when my husband goes out…." She stops, startles by hearing her own words. The man continues for her, carrying on her words: "The light goes down. Then what?" And she is able to go on: "I hear things…. I watch…. Then the light goes up." A hesitation again, and again the man continues: "And he comes back." And again she can take the words on: "Yes, always quite soon after" (Cavell 1996: 57-8).

Cavell continues: "Only a human being could be prohibited … from subjecting herself to her own words, having her own thoughts" (Cavell 1996: 58). Here Cavell implies that the film turns this difference from an aesthetic posture to what enables ethical action in the world. I suggest that Godard does the same in For Ever Mozart but for him difference inheres in the image, not in the projector. That is, Godard is using imitations of photojournalism to both aestheticize horror and return power to horrific images: these are the images that carry violence into the world—a world that is blind to such imaging of violence. It is to this world, and to this blindness, that film buffs belong.

I am using John Felstiner's translation, "Deathfugue".

In Praise of Love also offers an interpretation of the concept of love. A woman, driving a car in the pouring rain, is asking her companion, the young filmmaker of In Praise of Love: "Do you know that saying by Saint Augustine: 'The measure of love is to love without measure?' – 'Yes'" (Godard 2001: chapter 22). Here Godard is affirming life-as-hope just like he did in For Ever Mozart. Godard also explains the movement of difference or the hope that empty signifiers bring about: "I am thinking about something," the young filmmaker is saying. When I think about something, in fact, I'm thinking of something else. You can only think about something if you think of something else.

For instance, I see a landscape that is new to me but it's new to me because I mentally compare it to another landscape, an older one, one that I knew (Godard 2001: chapter 22). Here, indeed, image of double-exposures of city-lights and the seascape fill the screen. This foggy observation turns to an attribute of the consciousness that survived disaster by the end of the film. The film ends with a citation from an unspecified novel: "Thus everything in my story wanes. As I am left with only images of what happened so quickly, I will go down to the Elysian Fields [Champs-Elysées] with more shades than a man has ever taken with him” (Godard 2001: chapter 22).
References


**Review by Gösta Arvastson**

*Nye kulturstudier* [New Cultural Studies] is the first introduction to cultural studies in Scandinavia and an impressive presentation of the subject. The book aims to explain how cultural studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field in humanities and social sciences. Other introductions to cultural research in ethnology and anthropology have been produced – but this one is different, since it is more comprehensive and ambitious.

*Nye kulturstudier* is the result of interdisciplinary collaboration between four colleagues from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Senior lecturer Anne Scott Sørensen and Professor Ole Martin Høystad are affiliated to the Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense. Professor Erling Bjurström belongs to Tema Q at Linköping University, and Professor Halvard Vike works at the Institute for Social Anthropology at Oslo University. The authors comment that they are oriented towards different subjects and educational programmes at their respective universities.

The book begins with a background to the theories and scientific traditions. This is followed by Cultural Analysis and Methodology, a chapter on Identity, Globalisation and Multiculturalism, one on Taste, Lifestyle and Consumption and, finally, by Nature, Body and Experience Landscapes.

Cultural studies as a subject was created at a pivotal point in the postwar era of the 1960s and 1970s, and had a strong impact on the fields of humanities and social sciences. *Cultural Studies* were introduced in the Nordic countries during the 1970s. There are several versions of how this took place. Researchers hold that the critical tradition of British and German sociology was adopted by Nordic universities and formed the foundations for the subject. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham (UK) was the model, although tracks also lead back to the Frankfurt School and the European sociology of the inter-war years. Very little is missing. The comprehensiveness is impressive.

With their expert knowledge, the authors take their readers on a scientific odyssey that spans over theories, methods and central themes in cultural studies. The journey takes paths that will be familiar to many readers, bridging different theoretical landscapes that could appear impossible to navigate, but that often turn out to be pleasurable if we follow the authors’ chosen route. They emphasise that cultural studies is a project, with vantage points, creativity and curiosity. While there is no doubt about renewing potential and legitimacy, it must be taken care of. And how far does curiosity stretch? The political task has become greater, cultural studies richer in perspective and the Marxist discussion has acquired exciting theoretical interpretations. Even so, the authors must have meditated on the actual narrative of this new cultural research; a score with many variations on the theme.

Where are the new challenges? Although the direct commitment to working-class culture and alternative movements of the 1970s may seem obsolete today, the questions and issues have not lost their significance but have become
more crucial than ever. The authors ask where the critical perspective is today (p.9), not to mention participation and experience.

In the introduction, the authors boldly explain that the international concept of *Cultural Studies* should be translated as *New Cultural Studies*, because it is easier to understand. This mystical title leads the reader astray. Emphasis on the *new* complicates the reading. The *new* in cultural research easily becomes a repetition of the *old*, although the authors doggedly maintain that they want to separate cultural studies from classical cultural subjects. Which demons they are trying to wrestle with is not clear. Why did the authors choose the Nordic slant? Perhaps the ambition was to establish the subject in the Nordic culture of belonging that was already in place? A real internationalisation is still to come.

Writing an introduction in which the different parts link together, and explaining where the structural lines are and how they can be combined into a holistic view of the subject, is no easy task. I would like to return to the “turns” that are a familiar theme to cultural researchers who seem to embrace their thoughts about breaches and settlements. The twists and turns are rooted in the academic discussion, the battles are fought on the home field and few risks are taken with system critique. As a researcher about to leave the university world, it worries me that social commitment is absent in this book: this radical tradition must be resuscitated.

Cultural research involves searching and penetrating. The researchers progress quickly through the methodological landscape and questions are seldom fully fathomed. The book makes it possible to stop and reflect. Cultural research is far from being a system in balance and the subject is constantly on the move. The book has advantages as a set book: The arguments and thought patterns are easy to follow and the reader gets the feeling of listening to an amazing lecture. Its pedagogic structure is clear.

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Review by Arne Ruth

According to recent European statistics, Swedish cultural policy has succeeded remarkably well in achieving its original objective: to promote popular interest in the Arts. Sweden (closely followed by our Nordic neighbors) tops the list when it comes to participation in cultural activities. The figures are included in a body of statistics that, together with commentary by Sten Månsson of the Swedish Cultural Council, make up the greater part of *Kultursverige 2009*.

To the uninitiated reader the tables seem a wonder of systematic comparative knowledge. But in his introductory essay Månsson expresses some serious caveats about the current state of cultural statistics. For one thing, they only register factors relating to the objects of public support, and even within that limitation, the picture is increasingly spotty. The statisticians at the Cultural Council have lost ground in the internal battle for resources.

Månsson describes an increasing destitution with laconic irony: “The turn of the millennium and new leadership at the Cultural Council meant a new and different interpretation of the Council’s remit with respect to statistics. [...] The Cultural Barometer was discontinued, as was work on the yearbook of cultural statistics [...]”. International influences [...] were accorded less importance, and contacts with the research community were cut back.”

Today, no fewer than 25 Swedish institutions gather cultural statistics in Sweden, which gives us the most fragmented organization for the purpose in all of Europe. In the name of invigorating competition, Statistics Sweden is now but one among many flowers in the field. But statistics produced with one or another interest in mind can lead attention in the wrong direction. Like a drunkard who searches in the arc of the lamplight for the keys he dropped in the dark.

In their essay, “If one can ‘do sports’, why not ‘do culture’? – a critical view of certain statistical categories”, Mats Trondman and Anna Lund show that the danger is more than hypothetical. “To do culture”, a concept of their own creation, exemplifies the problem they discuss. The word is just as legitimate as “to do sports”, but the fact that it has to be coined demonstrates an important difference in how activity in the two fields is registered.

In the statistics produced by the Swedish Children’s Ombudsman and the National Board of Youth Affairs, young people’s athletic activities are lumped into a single category, whereas cultural activities are recorded in several: music, drama, photography, etc. As a result, the material gives the impression that far more young people engage in sports than in cultural activities.

Trondman and Lund use data collected by Statistics Sweden on young people’s (aged 16-25) leisure activities to demonstrate the distortion. They find that 62 per cent of the age group “do culture” at least once a week, 25 per cent once or more a month, and 13 per cent not at all. The corresponding figures for sports are 35, 8 and 57. As the author’s comment: “the share of young people who “do culture” is far greater than the share who engage in (organized) sports”.

This opens up an entirely new perspective, and another of their revelations hardly lessens the interest to research:
Young women “do culture” more extensively than men. The difference between the sexes is far more marked than that between social classes. The finding is yet another component of a well-known pattern: women are the custodians of culture in Sweden.

Overall, class differences turn out to mean surprisingly little with regard to degree of cultural activity. Trondman and Lund’s conclusion, that cultural statistics need to be “a good deal more fair and truthful”, lends concretion to Månsson’s warnings.

In “The Power over Cultural Policy” Ants Viirman and Jenny Johannisson discuss an epistemological problem that further confuses the image statistics give: areas of cultural life that do not receive public funding are absent from discussions of cultural policy.

One of the most urgent tasks for research into the Arts would appear to be to examine the interplay between politically constructed subsidy programs and the areas of cultural life that are supported solely by active participants. I suspect that they may be more closely related than true believers in the Market are willing to admit. Commenting on the remarkable success of Swedish rock musicians some years ago, New York Times described it as the product of a fusion of bureaucracy and talent that was politically impossible in the USA. According to the paper, thanks to public financial support, the bands have had access to both instruments and places where they can rehearse (“Northern Lights of Rock’n’Roll Play Across America,” International Herald Tribune, Sep 18, 2002).

Sven Nilsson uses ecological imagery to describe the interdependency of various parts of the cultural system, noting extensive stretches of terra incognita that may very well harbor innovations of the future. Professional artists can work and perform the world over, amateurs more locally. Both, however, thrive on social interaction, and there is nothing to keep their practitioners from functioning at both levels. We are all dependent on individuals and groups in a tangle of branches and tendrils that might be called the ecology of culture. Musical performance, whether market-based or subsidized, cannot be separated from its deepest soil, the musicians in schools, youth centers and on websites. Cultural policy, Nilsson seems to be saying, needs to facilitate collaboration between the various levels.

Basing his argument on Richard Florida’s concept, “creative cities”, Nilsson calls for cultural policy based on the local and regional creative urge. His idea is seconded by Peter Aronsson in an essay on local versus national approaches to history. In Aronsson’s view, local definitions of “cultural heritage” are likely to be more enduring than any of the efforts of national museal institutions to shed the burden of being custodians of the national heritage.

But how to translate the cultural free play into policy? Rhetoric aside, the fact remains that subsidies do influence the scope of creative freedom. As Geir Vestsheim points out in his essay, “All cultural policy is instrumental”, politicians are oriented toward their voters. Partisan political standpoints are essentially utilitarian and address a national, regional or local “we”. The tendency toward instrumentalization is compounded, moreover, by an inherent paradox in policy relating to the Arts: the welfare ideology from which Swedish Arts policy springs implies a claim to be the antithesis of conservatism. But its political advocates (myself among them) risk being perceived as conservative when confronted with alternative interpretations of human circumstances. The welfare ideology makes a claim of goodness: of mutuality, a sharing of responsibility in the
Artistic creativity is a matter of being true to one’s bent of mind. The confrontation of the two is a contest, the rules of which emerge after the fact. Art can be cruel, it can challenge a democratic society’s notions of meaning. The artist experiments with new forms of expression, with no guarantee as to how they will be received. Nor is there any guarantee that the experiment will succeed. Interpretations in the longer term are molded by interactions and confrontations between artists, the public, and critics.

Right-wing populist organizations like the Danish People’s Party in Denmark, the Progress Party in Norway and Sverigedemokraterna here in Sweden exploit the gulf between sophisticated art and popular tastes; they would have the principles that guide public support decided by majority rule. (The recent controversies surrounding the University College of Arts Crafts and Design in Stockholm may be only a hint of what is to come, even here in Sweden.) Questions of taste are turned into party politics. Interpretations of immigration in cultural terms are a key element in the propaganda.

Two articles treat problems that have to do with ideas about multiculturalism, ethnicity and globalization. Tobias Harding analyzes the current contest between an individual-based concept of the nation and an ethnically defined multiculturalism, where group affiliation is central. Erling Bjurström analyzes modern racists’ innovative imagery: instead of race, they speak of culture as the differentiating factor. Bjurström also identifies another factor that may foreshadow a paradoxical nexus between nationalistic cultural interpretations and globalization, namely, the commercialization of sports, where the market, governments and civil society (not least the media) interact on a global level in an ongoing carnival of “banal nationalism”.

A central feature of a government study of the cultural sphere in Sweden, soon to be debated in the Riksdag, is the principle that public money should be used to promote goal-related utilities, i.e., activities that serve manifest policy objectives. Cultural policy is that part of the polity that is dedicated to the furtherance of “communication, social cohesion and (stimulating) experiences”. Inasmuch as “quality”, according to the study, eludes precise definition, the creative Arts are treated as but one utility among many others in an administrative whole. The study turns a blind eye to the economic phenomenon known as the Baumol Effect (a.k.a. the Baumol Cost Disease): that increased productivity in dominant economic sectors, which drives personnel costs up, tends to marginalize or rule out activities that cannot be industrialized or made more productive (the law of the inefficiency of Art).

The principle that decisions regarding public support should be taken at an arm’s length from the political sphere has disappeared in a bureaucratic fog. Objections to the instrumentalization of cultural support – raised by researchers like Ann-Sofie Köping, Jenny Lantz, Emma Stenström, Katja Lindqvist and Tobias Nielsén (all of whom have thought-provoking articles in the book) – are mentioned en passant, but otherwise ignored.

All creative development in the Arts presupposes rebellion against fixed rules. Formal steering fetters innovation. The same goes for cultural policy frameworks.

Take Vara, for example. Who outside the county, say, ten years ago had given the little town of Vara a thought? But a small group of enthusiasts, “local heroes”, launched the idea of building a concert hall dedicated to performances of chamber music. They campaigned...
doggedly until they had persuaded local politicians to support the project. Today, the Municipality of Vara has the second largest budget for culture in the whole of Sweden.

In retrospect the idea of building the hall appears a stroke of genius. It put Vara on the map. In terms of prospective risk, the idea was madness. The small group of enthusiasts provided the mania needed to defy the odds.

What kind of cultural policy is conducive to thriving diversity? There is no prescription. But its starting point must be a desire always to create circles that transcend the squares.

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Translation by Charly Hultén