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EDITORIAL

LUKE HEEMSBERGEN & SUNEEL JETHANI, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Robert Samuels has argued that "individual autonomy is now being generated through technological and cultural automation" where cultural histories are "dominated by the paradoxical combination of social automation and individual autonomy" along with technical automation and socio-political control (2009: ix, 3). In the thematic issue of PLATFORM: Journal of Media and Communication we provide a tangent to Samuels' work by linking concepts of automation and autonomy, and transparency and agency. In what follows, we present an explorations of themes through issues of social assemblage, public-privacy and the relationship between automation, impulsivity and compulsion.

Robbie Fordyce's contribution on Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks looks at the relationship between the idea of the automaton - which the author develops as a concept that questions life, agency, subjectivity and political dissent - and technological networks. Automation here is essentially a digital machine that acts with intentionality but without thought per se, and is considered in terms of its immanence in DDoS attacks by the online activist community, Anonymous. Fordyce argues that for "sustained political use of the DDoS attack, it is necessary to find a mix of automated code and social engagement", suggesting that within the idea of political automation, the articulation of political dissent through online networks sees the automaton "as part of a political machine of praxis, rather than an agentless drone of [an] ideology." Thus, the article surmises that networked political dissent is an "automatic, reflexive and unconscious activity".

Drawing on work occurring the field of "media archaeology", Jenny Kennedy and Esther Milne examine contemporary forms of publically private communication using the tension between "system[s], meaning[s]; form[s] and content" as means of interrogating the relation between automation and autonomy with their study of the zine, You, and the website, Post Secret (2004-2012). Contributors to the latter are encouraged to anonymously share a secret that they have never shared with anyone before. Kennedy and Milne develop a critique of public privacy centring around the anxiety one may feel over potential audience interpretations and desired forms of reciprocity in an initiated act of sharing; access to meaning through both content and contexts of production and reception; and control, or lack thereof, over potential transgressions of public privacy when the "distribution of content or

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information" is situated outside of the control of the "interlocutor who initiated the exchange."

Given the recent debate and introduction of legislation on pre-commitment for problem gambling in Australia, César Albarrán Torres' timely article looks at the relationship between gamblers and electronic gaming machines (EGMs) as Deleuzo-Guattarian "desiring-machines" and cross platform media which merge digital gambling procedures with videogame conventions to form what the author terms "gambling-machines". These gambling-machines, Torres argues, automate the desire to bet by communicating at two levels, one being through aesthetic configurations of immersion and gameplay inciting a desire to win and define destiny, and then on a deeper level, to "spell out discourses derived from wider socioeconomic arrangements" that revolve around "desire intermingled with hope." Further, the article shows how aesthetics of automating desire in game form draw from and rearticulate post-colonial discourses and class related aspirations.

Jenna Benson's article on media violence presents a critical analysis of The Hunger Games. Benson specifically questions the appropriateness of the levels of violence depicted in the texts on audiences aged 9-17 years of age, the context of such violence, and the pertinent question, "is the metaphorical nature of the text's overall message something that should be introduced to the leaders of tomorrow, before they actually experience the world as adults?" This question unfurls the consequences of automated regimes of culture creation that position youth as audience to serialised popular fiction that, in each new iteration, acts but does not think through its constituting role in fandom and violent, yet emancipatory, social norms.

PLATFORM was fortunate able to interview Dr. Suelette Dryfus on themes of digital automation and resistance, the power of automating transparency, and how the political space is ripe for resistance and new forms and functions of the whistleblower as a pathway to find autonomy in automation. With the WikiLeaks Party's failed foray into the 2013 Australian election, this timely interview provides prescient insight into the art and state of transparency in media and politics.

**ANZCA and PLATFORM Collaboration**

We are pleased to present papers from our third collaboration with ANZCA, a professional association for researchers, students and teachers working in the broad field of communication and media studies. To support the work of new and emerging scholars, ANZCA provides post-graduate students with opportunities to publish the best papers submitted to the annual ANZCA conference. In this issue we present six papers from the 2013 conference held in Perth.

Finally, our thanks are due to all our contributors, without them we do not have a journal and we appreciate their support. We would also like to thank our anonymous reviewers for the time they have taken to develop the articles included in this issue. Special thanks are due to Diana Bossio of ANZCA for her continued support and to Dale Leorke, Luke van Ryn, John Stowell, Timothy Smith and Nadia Navie for assistance in putting together the issue.
DDoS Attacks as Political Assemblages

Robbie Fordyce, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This article seeks to unpack the idea of the automaton as a figure of political dissent within technological networks. The idea of the automaton is that of a body where the concepts of life, agency, and subjectivity are in question; these questions have made the automaton into an important element in the projects of Enlightenment humanism and as an unspoken element in posthumanist examination of the cyborg. The figure of the automaton is an expression of Cartesian mind-body dualism that reverses the idea of cogito ergo sum, by questioning the intentionality that lies behind the acts of another body. The body exists, but does it think? This article is not concerned with the idea of the automaton as an object of transcendental dualism, but rather aims to investigate this idea in terms of its immanence within network communication. The automaton is an idea that deliberately complicates the relationship between machines and individuals within a network, without prioritising either perspective. As Alan Turing shows, we cannot predict whether a computer on a network (or other machine) is being used by a human agent, or whether the machine is simply programmed to act autonomously. The issue is then, are the actions of political dissent of a single node on a computer network the product of an independent agent working in tandem within a democratic framework? Or, is it the reverse: are these acts of political dissidence the automated actions of a small number of individuals exploiting systems of automation in order to achieve political goals? If we use the automaton to stand in as a figure that is neither entirely human nor entirely cyborgian, then certain concerns of network politics and assumptions about the democratic nature of network communications become destabilised.

When the idea of networked political dissidence is compounded with the automated functions of software and hardware devices that are necessary to mobilise in networked political dissent, then explicit human subjects start to disappear. The loss and confusion of subjects and subject categories within network communications will not be laid to rest here; instead these instabilities should be kept alive and well, because it is exactly this complication of the individual that I wish to highlight in the discussion of networked political action. This idea is useful because it begins to question the relationship of the individual to the group within the context of political use of network technologies. At the outset, it should be noted that, in discussing an idea of political automation, this article is not posing the actions of political dissent as an automatic, reflexive, or unconscious activity, but rather highlighting that from the perspective of technological networks, intentionality in online dissent is

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doubly elusive relative to non-network instances. Instead, a perspective that highlights the role of the automaton prefigures the problems of ascribing intent, and acts as a collective category based on action rather than ideals. To this extent the automaton is a part of a political machine of praxis, rather than an agentless drone of ideology.

The figure of the automaton can be meaningfully demonstrated in the context of the "Distributed Denial of Service attack", or DDoS attack. The methods for DDoS attacks are variable, depending on the various computational or social mechanisms used, but the methodology for disruption remain true for many different types of communication network. Everyone is familiar with the sight of an overfull email inbox, the proliferations of meetings and obligations and phone calls that prevent one's time and space from being productively useful. The methodology of the DDoS attack operates on the same set of principles irrespective of the technological device: flood a target with information beyond its ability to respond to that information. In the case of computer networks, this means utilising multiple machines to automatically send data packets at a target computer in excess of the network's ability to sustain communication. The weak point does not need to be the victim computer itself. The same effect is achieved if it is the network local to the victim computer that shuts down and becomes unresponsive. The numbers of attacking computers can range into the thousands, and the network's functionality can quickly be disabled as many thousands of computers add additional requests to data processing queues. The DDoS attack methodology thus targets inherent limitations of network structures, by exploiting asymmetries in the network that are not based on the victim's processing power.

The DDoS attack is not solely a methodology of political dissent, but produces network disturbances that can be utilised for political or economic purposes. As a result, the DDoS attack is regularly utilised by criminal organisations for financial gain and governments for the suppression of particular networks. Furthermore, because this attack is based on structure, rather than specific code exploits or platforms, its nature is low-tech. At times an inadvertent product of social tendencies in HTTP-based internet browsing. For instance, if a single link to a minor website is highly promoted on a more popular website, then, with enough individuals visiting a particular website, the effects of a DDoS attack are replicated without a political or economic purpose made by the users to cause a disruption.

DDoS attacks are a regular tool in the arsenal of the politically active 'non-group' Anonymous. Anonymous is a particularly fruitful point for comparison because of the extended rhetorics that it uses to undermine the attribution of individual intent within its own collective, and deliberately complicates its own internal social logics so that members are unknown to each other. 'Anons' refuse to acknowledge any form of internal hierarchy or leader figures for Anonymous, although there are internal groupings that utilise hierarchical organisation. The groups coordinate common dissent through calls for action distributed throughout various web-forums and IRC channels. Gabriella Coleman, an anthropologist of Anonymous, notes that even within Anonymous the user-base membership in various DDoS attacks is inconsistent. Coleman believes that this points to internal collectives that share common sympathies within their operation, but little in the way of overall structure. As such, Anonymous, and its method of DDoS attack, act as an exemplar for examining the automation of political dissent - as well as for examining the correlate subject of automated dissent: the automaton. It should be noted, however, that this article is not attempting to offer an anthropological or ethnographic assessment of Anonymous - instead, Coleman's research provides great depth along these lines. Within this framework, this article addresses the problem of over-prescribing intent to DDoS attackers, without resorting to the issue of ideology. The idea of the automaton bridges the gap between the actions of a social political network, and a political network practice of dissent.
Developing the 'automaton' as a concept for investigating network politics contributes to system-side perspectives of computer politics. This allows for new understandings of subject collectivities that emerge from the architectures of networked communication, and an understanding of methodologies of political activism that arise within these collectivities. When we consider the network on its own terms, then some forms of political behaviour are made more open to critical approaches. What becomes at stake when we consider the role of the automaton as a subject of automated dissent is the question of intentionality and organisation for the use of networks for political purposes. These different understandings of the role of dissent will also open up the language of Marx's Grundrisse further in its ability to speak of new media concerns.

In order to develop this idea of the automaton, this article will engage with the idea of the communication network as a machine operating as an assemblage of tools, individuals and knowledges, in a framework provided by Raunig, Marx, Deleuze and Guattari. This context will form the basis for understanding the historical nature of the automaton as a subject of technology, before discussing the nature of the automaton in the context of DDoS attacks, and Anonymous more generally.

MACHINES

Karl Marx provides us with the basis for understanding the automaton's role in network communications, by way of an understanding of the relationship between human beings and technologies. In the section of the Grundrisse commonly referred to as the "Fragment on Machines" (1973, 690-712), Marx comments on the changing relationship between an individual labourers and the means of production. Marx describes this change as a strange reversal of agency in the relationship between machines and people. Initially labourers utilise tools relatively autonomously, as in the manner that artisan labourers utilise individual tools that they control the use of; the change in this case that Marx identifies is when human beings become implicated in the systems of machinery. In the "automatic system of machinery" (692) the human worker no longer engages with the machine as a means of labour, insofar as engagement with the machine is not the means to the production of commodities, or a means to an end in itself. Instead the machine system utilises individual workers as a means to "matières instrumentales" - that is, its needs for care through maintenance, as well as things such as materials such as coal, oil, and electricity. The object of labour for the worker is the machine itself. Marx expands from this to discuss the arrangement of people and the various means of production that result in a machine that is no longer solely technical, but also a total social assemblage:

"[O]nce adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the machine, or rather, an automatic system of machinery (system of machinery: the automatic one is merely its most adequate form, and alone transforms machinery into a system), set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages. [...] In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker's means of labour." (692) By including Marx into the discussion we have mobilised three specific cuts through society that highlight the machine perspective. First there is the automaton, the social individual as subjectified by the system of machinery. Second are the means of production, which are the mechanical apparatuses used in the production of goods. Third, is the machineline social system, which implicates the individual labourers into labouring on the machinery. These cuts through the machine perspective map onto the problem of technological networks and their automation. First is the user - the individual
who utilises an individual computer, second is the computer itself - acting as the node on the network, third is network as a whole - the total assemblage of machines and users that organises labour into production, and organises leisure time into labour.

Raunig informs us greatly by expanding on the relationship of immaterial labour in the context of machinic production. In "Machine Fragments" he states "The workers operating the apparatuses are just as much a part of the machine as the intellectual, cognitive labour of those who have developed the machine and make up its social environment" (22-23). Here the human has become an automaton, not simply as the meaty apparatus of a clunky mechanism, but as a real, objectified investment of human knowledge in the machine itself. The intellectual power of those people who conceptualised, designed, and produced the machine are invested in the machine in the ossified form of the general intellect. In this sense, all machines and tools are expressions of the individual intent that designed and constructed them, and have taken on a life of their own. As Marx states, they are "organs of the human brain, created by the human hand; the power of knowledge, objectified. [...] to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it" (706). This 'general intellect' is one of the primary problematics that motivates arguments over the labour theory of value that have emerged recently around the issue of immaterial labour (for example, the dialogue between Fuchs, and Arvidson and Colleoni).

In their role as the conscious linkages between machines, humans are explicitly described as machinelike by Marx, because, in terms of their effects on the machinic systems of both the means and mode of production, a human being is the moving power which moves itself, but totally subject to the imposition of the conditions of their labour and to the mode of production - in other words, "an automaton" (692).

**The basics of DDoS attacks**

The Distributed Denial of Service or DDoS attack is a methodology for functionally removing a node from a network. Yuan and Mills define a DDoS attack as "a simultaneous network attack on a victim (e.g., a Web server or a router) from a large number of compromised hosts, which may be distributed widely among different, independent networks. By exploiting asymmetry between network-wide resources and local capacities of a victim, a DDoS attack can build up an intended congestion very quickly at an attacked target" (2005, 324). The end-to-end structure, first argued for by Saltzer, et al., as the most efficient and effective means of structuring a computerised network, has since become the crux for a successful DDoS attack. A large number of attackers sending information to a victim computer, with the information framed either as requests for data, or as messages or instructions to be processed. These messages become a part of a process queue which has the capacity to deal with a limited amount of tasks. Once the queue is full, the system will not respond until it has finished processing at least some portion of the information - hence 'denial of service'. As long as an attack continues, the victim is unlikely to be able to process information at a sufficient rate in order to complete the queue, so the target may remain offline for as long as the attack continues. Large numbers of requests are necessary to fill process queues, and in order to achieve the necessary number of requests, the attack has to come from a number of attack vectors - hence 'distributed'. With large numbers of attackers, and a small range of targets, the ratio of attack nodes to victims in an attack will tend to approximate a many-to-one relationship, which leads to the asymmetry in computing resources that Yuan and Mills refer to. Even if the target computer has a very high processing speed, it is difficult to deal with the sheer number of requests from the larger DDoS attacks. Because data packets are not generally acted upon between their source and destination,
other than to read addressing information, DDoS attacks are difficult to detect and prevent at locations other than at their target.

Despite that, DDoS attacks are not fool proof, and are able to be defended against. As Yuan and Mills point out, it is necessary to first detect the existence of an attack before a defence can be mounted. Because the nature of DDoS attacks involves great volumes of traffic, congestion occurs across the whole of the network, so to some extent the best defences occur upstream of the victim node. This is not always possible, as it requires coordination between the victim and their service provider, so it is necessary to have local measures that can deployed once a DDoS attack has begun. While a common enough response is for a victim to switch their operations to another more secure server, this is not always possible, particularly for small operations. In almost every other case, the defence protocols involve suspending or refusing connections with other nodes on the network, either by ignoring particular compromised servers, or certain ranges of IP addresses. By electing to refuse certain IP address ranges, this effectively still results in the server being removed from the network - a type of voluntary, rather than enforced exit. Modifying network settings to ignore particular IP ranges will still result in non-attacking IP addresses from being excluded. Even then, any attack program other than the most basic DDoS implementations will generally provide IP spoofing and other techniques for subverting defence mechanisms. Security firms and academic researchers are regularly involved in producing new techniques for defending against DDoS attacks. These are, at least somewhat, a proprietary service. At this stage, the DDoS attack remains a somewhat effective means of mobilising a large number of computers towards various types of political dissent, although the outcomes of the specific DDoS attacks themselves still leave a lot to be desired in terms of political relevance.

The DDoS attack has many differing effects on the victim - for instance, increasing the costs in telecommunications charges, removing an institution's ability to communicate over networks, shutting out clients for businesses, disrupting financial transactions, loss of trades for commercial organisations, and so on. In political terms, it can show the vulnerability of corporations and nation states to the power of various collective practices. At times it can lead to the automated reset of servers, which opens the server to various security vulnerabilities for breaches by 'genuine' hackers. At the same time, corporations and nation states are more than capable of deploying large resources to disrupt the communications of individuals or political groups. Garnaeva and Namestnikov have an extensive analysis of DDoS attacks in 2011, and note that servers for the Israeli Defence Force, the Mossad, the Oakland police department, Mastercard, and Hong Kong Stock Exchange were high-profile targets of denial of service attacks.

In the context of a network operating on computerised network protocols, the DDoS attack methodology bases itself on the principle that a large number of attackers can consume the information processing resources at a target IP address. Because these targets are either individual servers or server clusters, whose function is dedicated to dealing with incoming requests, the attack needs to be coordinated to some extent. The DDoS attack is unique among network attack methodologies because, rather than requiring a vast amount of technical competency with the minutiae of computer network protocols, operating system vulnerabilities, or other activities described as hacking or cracking, the DDoS attack works through simple brute force. This means that, at times, it is the result of actual democratic usage of the structure of the network in a manner that attacks the structure itself. From a Marxist perspective, that is a periodic and temporary mechanism for causing the machine of network capitalism to operate in its own terms against itself. A highly specific and short-lived self-destruction from which the system will eventually recover.
Because of these considerations, the DDoS attack methodology has the appearance of a form of post-political democratic protest - however it is precisely this appearance that this article seeks to undermine. The fact that the machines are used to engage in dissent in a representational form means that the DDoS attack methodology tends towards a non-democratic form - one could even say republican form, in the sense that certain well-connected individuals possess a disproportionate percentage of representative power. The reason that the system is not inherently democratic is because one user may mobilise multiple computers in the DDoS attack, and may automate this procedure over the network.

When the DDoS attack methodology is democratic is in its ability to allow self-representative dissent to occur over a network. That is, when one individual activates one computer as part of a political protest based on an effusion of presence. This has led various communities of dissent to refer to such acts as forms of 'digital sit-ins', a move that resurrects the political rhetorics of the civil rights movement. Such an analogy is duplicitous, as the purposes are different - the lunch counter sit-ins during the civil rights movement were geared towards allowing persons of non-European descent to be treated as equal consumers, with equal access to the space of the cafeteria. For 'digital sit-ins' the spaces are already fully accessible by all, and it is only with the disruption of the DDoS attack itself that access begins to be disrupted. Furthermore, the analogy has similarities to the idea of 'cyberspace' - an idea with little theoretical purchase. The target of the DDoS attack is a machine, not a space, and as such, the sit-in should be reconsidered as sabotage.

Here the DDoS attack acts as a new take on the old processes of sabotage. Rather than throwing one's shoes into the machinery, the political DDoS attack takes the form of an aggressive amount of attention to shut down the means of communication and subjectification. In the space of network communications in postindustrial capitalism, for sites that are totally dependent on the mechanisms of networks for their existence, this can be a substantial threat to continued operations. Sites such as eBay and Amazon, or transaction sites like PayPal and Mastercard could face serious financial consequences if their businesses were disrupted for even a short amount of time.

There are two ways to organise a DDoS attack - the first is social, the second is technical. In the social case, the sole requirement is that enough individuals are induced into making data requests simultaneously. This is something that can happen accidentally. For instance, the computer tech website Slashdot is a news-based link forum that holds many millions of members. When a link is posted to Slashdot by an editor, many hundreds of thousands of individuals often try to visit the site. When the hosting server is assigned only a moderate amount of data capacity, or data bandwidth, such as a hobby site, a small university or business, or similar, then the website can be shut down the internet fairly quickly. This is called being "slashdotted". Various other large sites have equivalent names, but the mechanism is usually the same. The result is an unintentional DDoS attack. Because this is not a deliberate attack, the site will usually only be offline for a matter of hours. In comparison to deliberate technological DDoS attacks, Garnaeva and Namestnikov point to the longest intentional attack of late-2011 within their data as lasting over 80 days. In terms of organisational techniques, the social method of engaging in a DDoS attack by Anonymous is mobilised through short lived operational briefings, called "ops".

The technical method for engaging in a DDoS attack usually involves two things: a command and control, or C+C, server, and a set of compromised machines. Compromised machines are computers connected to the network that have been infected with some form of malware. By virtue of this malware, an external source can give instructions to the computer, most likely outside the knowledge of the computer's owner or users. C+C servers op-
erate to control vast numbers of compromised machines by acting as a host or source for instructions. Individual compromised machines are referred to as 'bots' and the network that is controlled by the C+C server is referred to as a 'botnet'. While a botnet can be deployed for any number of computational tasks - password cracking, spamming, deploying further viruses, and so on - our interest is in its role in DDoS attacks. It is also worth noting that botnets do not strictly require a C+C server for functionality, and control of the botnet can be achieved by means such as P2P network protocols; however, for our purposes this is functionally equivalent to the centralised form of control offered by a C+C server. The botnet receives instructions for attack vectors from the C+C server, and operates to attack their chosen targets. The processing power of a botnet can be massive: in 2010 Weaver estimated that the Conficker-C botnet, named after its infection malware, had over ten million compromised machines involved in its network. The potential power of such a network is sufficient to overpower many target computers several times over, which leads to the interesting case where botnets can, at times, be rented from their owners for the purposes of brute force password cracking, DDoS attacks, and other similar tasks.

For a sustained political use of the DDoS attack, it is necessary to find a mix of automated code and social engagement. Software is required to sustain a DDoS attack for longer than a few hours, so that the data requests that render an IP address unusable remain consistent over time. The element of social engagement means that the quantity of invested individuals is increased to the point where the number of requests is sufficient to have an impact at the target computer.

One of the main parties that utilises DDoS attacks politically is the loose collection of individuals known as 'Anonymous'. Anonymous is a group that does its best to completely avoid any form of identity politics, and members usually make reference to themselves as 'anons' or in the third person as 'Anonymous'. Part of their slogan explicitly defines themselves as such: "We are Anonymous. We are Legion." Anonymous is mainly known as a decentralised online activist community with a strong free speech stance and a dislike of intellectual property laws, and a secondary position of anti-identity politics. While there are tensions between their dislike of "hate speech" and their advocacy of free speech, their general political position is roughly a form of anarchistic liberalism. Politically, Anonymous lacks a central tenet or principles for political activism, although there are many ad hoc social practices that fade in and out of relevancy. Although its inception was as an anti-Scientology collective, this later expanded to include attacks on the Westboro Baptist Church, before contributing to the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. Along the way, they have targeted organisations such as PayPal and Amazon, cyber-bullies and child pornography rings. Organised solely over networked communications, Anonymous generally engages in three forms of political activism: online and offline demonstrations, defacement or intrusion server hacks, and a presence in news media and social networking. Anonymous' members are diffuse, in the sense that individuals can join and leave at any time, and the success of any individual political action is roughly proportional to the number of members who subscribe to the political principles of the action. The individual political goals of members vary, and if the rhetoric that is deployed amongst their users is to be believed, they include all ranges of political position, including anarchistic, radically neoliberal, and communistic perspectives.

Anonymous' collectivity claims to be so broad as to include any and all individuals that are willing to become a part of it, or so they claim. The extent to which they attempt to achieve this is found in the "#OpNewBlood" project. This "operation" is a document that contains all the seed information for any individual with an internet connection to begin to communicate within the channels utilised by the Anonymous group. They have several
open access documents - released without any form of copyright license - that are designed to aid newcomers to their group. For instance, the "#OpNewblood Super Secret Security Handbook" details a number of techniques and basic information about HTML-based browsing security, Virtual Private Networks, and the use of virtual machines. The document "OpNewblood Guide for IRC Chat Setup & Anonymous Internet Browsing" provides basic information about joining Internet Relay Chat, or IRC, discussion groups. Tellingly, with regards to their open and free relationship to membership, their document ends with a reversal of their slogan: "Welcome. You are now Anonymous, but you were already. We are legion. Do not forgive. Do not forget. We were expecting you."

While there is a fair amount of internal political activity going on, in the sense of extensive IRC discussions on all manner of concerns, the main connection between Anonymous and the outside world is in terms of their disruption of computer networks. While often described as a 'hacktivist' group, the term is problematic and many of its members lack a great deal of prowess when it comes to actually engaging in sophisticated intrusion techniques. To this end, the group utilises a software application known as the Low Orbit Ion Cannon, or LOIC, to aid its less technologically advanced users in their protests. The application has a number of versions, usually recognisable due to their similarity in naming conventions: HOIC, JSLOIC, GOIC, LOIC2, and so on. The variations between each version are less important for this article, as the interface remains roughly the same between variations. When deployed by a user, the LOIC requires simply that a few details be inputted with regards to target IP addresses, frequency of attack, and a status window that declares the relative level of 'success' of the attack. While attacking, the application either sends simple messages or makes requests for data from the server. Each individual user contributes only a small amount to the greater portion of the DDoS attack, and a large number of individuals are required to contribute before the attack reaches the point where it effectively achieves anything. It is only when the number requests exceeds the rate at which the server can cope with the requests that the server is effectively pushed off the internet.

A technical analysis by Mansfield-Devine examines the nature of the LOIC application and its derivatives. Mansfield-Devine notes that most variants of the application lack any form of user protections, in the form of IP spoofing or other methods for hiding data about the LOIC's users. Pras (8) also notes that the instruction guide to the LOIC application distributed by Anonymous includes specific claims that the users of the tool will have a degree of protection that simply is not present. In fact, Pras et al note that one of the few protections that the users of the LOIC might have is the limits of legal jurisdiction to prosecute internationally.

To some extent, Anonymous' DDoS attacks are centrally orchestrated - some versions of the LOIC allow users to simply follow the 'hivemind' and follow attack instructions from specialised IRC threads. For the most part, individual involvement is spurious, and many attack attempts do not have sufficient levels of members involved to sustain successful attacks. Despite this, Anonymous continues to utilise DDoS attacks in political protests, and will likely continue to for the foreseeable future.

**The Automaton**

The purpose of using the idea of the automaton as an interrogative device is twofold. It conjures both the idea of a metastable machinic subjectivity that is distinct from - almost opposite to - the idea of the cyborg that dominates science fiction metaphors of post-industrial capitalism, and, also, as a product of this particular form of subjectivity, it fixes a particular relationship between the worker and the mode of production. Broadly, an
automaton is a form of machine, digital or otherwise, that generates an appearance of autonomy from any external control. At times this is the result of a sophisticated series of mechanisms - digital codes, hydraulic devices, moving weights, or clockwork gears - at other times it is the result of subterfuge. Numerous automata have existed where the device is not controlled by an internal series of mechanisms, but rather are powered by an individual hidden inside the machine; indeed all automata require an external motivator because no mechanism within the universe, whether mechanical, biological, or physical, is a totally self-contained system. Rather than state that these are somehow invalid or illegitimate automata, I would instead suggest that this is a central element to the concept of the automaton - the simulation of a machine subjectivity whose exact nature we cannot necessarily interrogate. In a computerised format, I would point to assemblages such as the artificial intelligence Cleverbot, as comparative examples of this phenomenon. Cleverbot is a chatterbot program that is designed to mimic human conversation; however, its database of conversations is not programmed into it. Instead, when a user interacts with it, it responds on the basis of the conversation habits of individuals it has communicated with previously. There is a machine in play, but it is only mobilised by the actions and behaviours of those that have come before, and any semblance of a subject emerging from the machine is only a product of these structures.

The etymology of automaton itself stretches back to antiquity, with its etymon emerging in ancient Greece. An automaton was a type of marionette, for the theatre or entertainment. In this role, the marionette was one whose operator was hidden or obscured from the view of the audience. In terms of its components, 'auto-' refers to the self, while '-maton' is cognate with 'mind'. The automaton is a type of synthetic entity that appears to act and move unbidden by external forces. The key, here, is 'appears': the source or cause of the automaton's movements is not immediately clear to the observer. Where the marionette was controlled by a puppeteers's strings, automatons were eventually developed to become internally controlled, whether by a series of complex clockwork gears powered by wound springs, or hydraulic systems that produced responses on the basis of ratios of water pressure.

The first independently mechanical devices to be called automatons were the devices of the first century inventor, Hero of Alexandria. These were simply, as Stafford and Terpak describe them, "early examples of complex machines" which held no resemblance to a human (266). But to those unfamiliar with the ideas of early science, they implied an unseen operator controlling the individual elements of machines. The idea of the automaton received new life in the 17th century, with the emergence of simple mechanisms added to the magnificent clocks of European cathedrals. Tom Standage writes, in The Mechanical Turk, that "these clocks often had astronomical features (such as the phase of the moon) and in some cases entire mechanical theatres that sprang to life on particular occasions" (3). Over time, these accoutrements became an attraction in their own right, and clock-making techniques were modified to produce wind-up mechanisms that operated on the basis of elastic energy potentials contained in spring systems inside the toy. These new developments became the basis for a thriving economy of jewel-encrusted devices that Britain exported in great quantities. When the eventual glut in the market arrived in the latter portion of the eighteenth century, museums opened in London to display all manner of automated "elephants, griffins, and obelisks" cast with opals, ivory and gold, along with other articles in a cabinet of curiosities that was open to the public (Stafford and Terpak, 269).

In the more modern appearances, an automaton is no longer simply any machine, but is instead a mechanical being that often simulates life. At times this simulation is a simple act of aesthetic representation; for instance, the 15th Century statue, known as the
Rood of Grace, was a crucifix that had a mechanical Jesus that could be controlled into turning its head, smiling, and giving the appearance of crying - but nothing more. In other cases automata involved a more sophisticated arrangement of mechanics or computer code to develop a behavioural semblance of a living being, or perform more pragmatic tasks. This includes a handwriting machine programmed by spindles, developed by Friedrich von Knauss, who is credited with being the inventor of the typewriter. Automata have increasingly, over history of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, increased in their diversity of form. Records exist of mechanical eagles and lions, a brass fly, a jewel encrusted elephant, dancing ballerinas, harp-players, winged angels and more (Standage 3-5).

While being a consciously man-made mechanical device, whatever limited functional purposes the automaton is set to, some effort is made in its production to morphologically resemble a biological being. At times this meant that some automata were designed or built with rudimentary organs. Standage refers to Jacques de Vaucanson as designing three automata that had some semblance of internal organs: an automaton of a young boy that had functioning bellows that would allow it to play a flute, a second flute-player that also played a drum, and finally, a feathered metal duck that could eat grain and digest it in a rubber alimentary system (8-9).

Some models of automata took this idea of the emulation of a conscious being somewhat further. The famous Mechanical Turk that Standage has named his book after, is an interesting case in point. The Mechanical Turk was an automaton that was designed to play chess against a human opponent. Built in 1770 by Wolfgang von Kempelen, the machine featured a turbaned mannequin seated above a large wooden box filled with gears and cabling. By way of a mechanical hand, the 'Turk' would move pieces across the chessboard. The idea of a robot made from simple springs and cogs being as successful at chess is perhaps too fantastic to believe, especially when, for decades, supercomputers, such as Deep Blue, were required to play successfully against the top ranked human players. Indeed, the idea is too fantastic - the machine was designed such that it could accommodate a human player within the contraption, and gave them access to a control for the mechanical arm. Von Kempelen's deceit was not unusual amongst automata - Standage notes at least one other instance where a harp-playing automaton was found to contain a 5-year old child.

The Turk has since re-emerged as an un-ironic metaphor for the outsourcing of labour from machines to humans in Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk marketplace. Those using the Mechanical Turk marketplace are directly renting the computation power of human beings by passing large amounts of problems from a dataset into the Turk. Ten percent of the wage paid by the purchaser is passed on to Amazon, with the remaining portion going to the labourer. In this case the automaton houses not one, but thousands of human subjects. The purpose for this process is not simply to an imposed alienation of the labourer from the capitalist: certain organisational or mathematical problems are particularly difficult for a computer to resolve, and are best resolved by human operators - such as identifying images or the transcription of audio recordings. This has led to many interesting uses of the Mechanical Turk marketplace, although one in particular acts as a modern curiosity: Matt Richardson's 'Descriptive Camera' art project. The mechanics of the descriptive camera include a webcam, a thermal printer, and a network connection to Amazon's Mechanical Turk, combined into one apparatus. The project involves the camera sending photographs to the Turk with an instruction for human operators to textually describe the scene, and the description is sent back to the camera, which then prints the statement on the thermal printer.

A primary concern of early observers of these automata was the 'truth' of the mecha-
anism - that is, whether the automaton held an unseen individual, or was truly a man-made simulacra of a living being. This concern is one that has become unnecessary or uninformat-
ive in the context of network communications. Alan Turing famously proposed an imitation
game wherein an artificial intelligence emulates human qualities in order to convince a hu-
man player that they are talking with a flesh-and-blood being (1950, 433-436). Turing's
game has spawned a variety of attempts to produce machinic subjectivities that have re-
markably high 'pass rates' of convincing players that they are talking to a human being. In-
deed, the authors of Cleverbot claim to have achieved a 59.3% 'humanity score' in a test
against human players, where the human players only achieved a score of 63.3%. Notably,
the judging committee has decreed score of over 50% is distinguished as 'human'. This does
not mean that it is worthless to attempt to discern whether a subjectivity on the internet is
human or otherwise, simply that the process of interrogation is rarely necessary for regular
interaction, or for academic social theory. Artificial intelligences themselves are, after all,
programmed by an author, and to this end are simply another layer of machinery between
an author and an audience. Along this line, we can see the cohesion between the idea of the
human being and the automaton, and can expand on this via a short examination of
Descartes.

As early as 1630, Descartes argued that animals and other biological phenomena
were nothing more than complex automata. According to Descartes, these "brahe machines" -
'beast machines' - were the product of God's mechanistic capabilities that would go un-
matched by human beings (Cottingham, 551). This was not to deny that animals felt noth-
ing, or that their pain was somehow illegitimate, but rather that they lacked what would be
declared in contemporary contexts as a subjectivity or psyche. The nature of an automaton
was nothing less than an understanding of all biological beings in the light of a Cartesean
mechanistic understanding of the universe. Descartes' use of the term 'automaton' operates
to define much of the modern understanding of automata as synthetic and mechanical
but also capable of generating affects in observers through their representations of alterity.
Descartes believed that, although these automata were beyond the capacity of humans to
create at the time did not mean that they were any less an automaton than one made of
mechanical parts. What distinguished the human being from all other biological automaton
was the presence of a divinely created soul, tied to the body through the pineal gland, and
acts as the basis for a form of theological humanism. Descartes would later expand on this
when he states:

"The key point to grasp, to my mind, is that no motions can take place, whether in
animals' bodies or ours, unless these bodies contain absolutely all the organs or instruments
by means of which the same motions could also be produced in a machine. So true is this,
that not even in ourselves does the mind move the external limbs directly: it only directs the
animal spirits that flow from the heart through the brain into the muscles, and determines
them to specific movements, since of themselves the spirits are applied with equal facility to
many different actions." (Descartes, 2008, 147) This is one perspective into Descartes' mind-
body dualism, where subjectivity and psyche originate outside of the body, leaving the ma-
chinic automaton of the meaty body to act according to the whims of the spirit. Spirit, ac-
cording to Descartes, is a quality that can only be held by human beings, whereas animals
are left to an uncritical stimulus response with their environment. The presumption that hu-
mans and animals were both mechanical beings, but were somehow fundamentally differ-
ent by virtue of a psyche exterior to the body, is something that the philosopher Eugene
Thacker refers to as the "notorious analogy" (2010, 25). This, for Thacker, is emblematic
of the notion of "superlative life" - where the category that defines what life is, is somehow ex-
ternal to the bodies in which life is expressed. This causes a split Superlative life seeks to be
life as "generosity, as proliferation, as excess" and points to ideas of spirits and souls that are
external to social spaces (28). Superlative life is a transcendent idea of life that exceeds the system of the social world, and is difficult to utilise effectively in discussions regarding communication and subjectivity. Descartes' idea of the automaton pushes the individual subjects beyond the more material social concerns of networked political communication that I wish to examine.

Descartes' work has rhetorical and conceptual similarities to the position I am seeking to discuss, insofar as the subject's existence in the world is machine-like, but Descartes moves to transcend the subject/psyche to a position superior to the body in a manner that is difficult to utilise. Following Hayles' writing in the context of cyborgian humans, we should "turn Descartes upside down", and note that "conscious thought becomes an epi-phenomenon corresponding to the phenomenal base the body provides" (1999, 203). Perhaps Deleuze and Guattari can enlighten us, with their quote from Lewis Mumford: "If a machine can be defined more or less in accord with the classic definition of Reuleaux, as a combination of resistant parts, each specialised in function, operating under human control to transmit motion and to perform work, then the human machine was a real machine" (1987, 504-505). My approach, unlike Descartes, wishes to be totally immanent to the world of networks, and in order to do this, we will turn to the works of Karl Marx.

Marx shows the automaton as a framing device for political subjectivities in networks in the pages of the Grundrisse, where humans have been reduced to the meaty parts of machine networks. There is an alternative, but compatible, position in the works of Deleuze and Guattari - particularly developed in Guattari's works in the early 1980s - and a contemporary framing in the work of Gerald Raunig, that deals with the expansion of these network ideas from a purely mechanical network, into a social use of the idea of the automaton. These four thinkers develop the idea of the automaton, not as a larvatus prodeo subjectivity of the ghost in the machine, but instead as a totally immanent machine within the machine.

Before continuing onto the discussion of networks, it is worth discussing the limitations of the idea of the automaton. To use the automaton as a figure of the post-industrial subject of capital in this manner is to reduce the individual conditions of work to the lowest common denominator, and - in the context of an immanent approach - limits the notion of agency by almost removing it entirely. Doing this rides roughshod over the differences in the conditions of labour within post-industrial capital - that is, the concept of the automaton can conveniently apply itself to industrial and agricultural labour, and primarily ignores affective forms of labour, it does so at the cost of analytical scrutiny of these important issues.

These drawbacks are opposed to the strength that is finding a means of discussing labouring subjects within social machines in terms of a common grounding that allows us to examine collectivities without subsuming individuation any further. This means that the issue of identity politics is removed from the equation. Identity politics is a difficult beast to deal with in online spaces, in the sense that the technologies of communication obliterate physiological distinctions between individuals. Once these distinctions begin to disappear, there is no strong categorical system for defining individuals communicating over a network. 'Disappear' is used advisedly here: the disappearance does not equate to an end to the politics of identity, but rather a terrain that poses problems of visibility for identity. This is the issue that Turing's imitation game brings to the fore - we are always less than one hundred percent certain of who we are communicating with over the internet. Once categories based around identity have been disappeared, various forms of patterns can be seen to emerge that are temporary and shifting that are otherwise interpreted as elements occurring within a particular form of politics, when, instead, they are open and unconstrained by
rigid boundaries of particular forms of physiological identity.

Reconciliation

So then, to what end does an informal, open, and vulnerable group like Anonymous, and the crude means by which it engages in DDoS attacks have any use for an analysis through the automata? In order to understand this, it is first necessary to understand that the open and collaborative organisation of the political actions that Anonymous takes part in appears to be a ruse, and that probably many members are unaware of this fact. As Mansfield-Devine notes, the ability for members of Anonymous to communicate effectively within such an anarchic structure is all well and good, but majority of the most successful attacks seem to be organised outside of the input of the community itself. When an attack bulletin is released, many members will simply accede to the instructions. Because these bulletins are often released or redistributed 'in the wild', the only quality that officiates them is a particular aesthetic approach - this has led to the Westboro Baptist Church covertly releasing attack documents in the same style as Anonymous' regular releases, ostensibly in order to obtain attackers' IP addresses for purposes of litigation (see "Message to the Westboro Baptist Church, the Media, and Anonymous as a Whole."). In the gap between the discussions that occur within the Anonymous communication channels, and the actual attack instructions, there is a space for manipulation, and Mansfield-Devine suggests that this is a space that is employed by the organisational core to Anonymous, which effectively manipulates the community's desire for action into specific tasks. Some of these individuals have already been arrested since Mansfield-Devine's publication. Eighteen year old Jake 'Topiary' Davis was famously arrested at his home on the extremely isolated Shetland Islands for running multiple Twitter accounts for a group closely associated with Anonymous, while Hector 'Sabu' Monsegur turned as an informant for the group after being arrested for hacking by the FBI. Sixteen people were arrested mid-2011 for their alleged involvement with Anonymous and - contrary to popular expectations that they would be all teenagers, their median age was 24 (Winter, 2011). Mansfield-Devine's assessment of a central organisational core to Anonymous suggests that the majority of the members are simply part of an ablative attack vector for a central command that designates the actions of the group.

To this extent, if we speak with an analysis that addresses the functionality of the social machine of Anonymous, rather than as a conspiracy, then Anonymous operates to draw in large numbers of politically committed individuals who have little capacity to identify other individuals within the group. Furthermore, they will operate in terms of the instructions given out through the organisational documents, simply pointing their LOIC applications at the appointed target, and clicking the proper button. When the political dissent is so systematised, controlling a large number of compromised computers in a botnet is not altogether different from organising a large number of individuals to accomplish the same task. The functional difference between a C+C server that mobilises a compromised computer to make spurious data requests of a target, and an online manifesto that mobilises an individual to do the same, is very small when it comes to the victim.

Given that, under these conditions, the individual members of Anonymous are largely unimportant and undifferentiated, they have no strict identity of their own beyond the few traces that they leave on the network, their political influence on the network is largely a product of already-defined manifesto materials, and their subject presence outside of the network is not connected to the mechanisms of their online presence, then they are an excellent example of the automation of political dissent.

A DDoS attack by Anonymous is not the only political action that can be addressed
through this paradigm of the machine/automaton, nor should it simply be used to analyse democratic or capillary instances of dissent. As Goncharov reports, in Russia in late 2011, anti-Putin political protests were being organised over Twitter under a particular set of hashtags. These hashtags, and others like them, were soon rendered unusable as pro-government activists mobilised bot accounts to post to these hashtags at a rate of up to 10 posts per second. Twitter quickly became unusable for political organisation of democratic protest. Here the machine of political oppression exploited the mechanisms of dissent to its own ends.

The extent to which a paradigm of automated dissent ceases to be useful is exactly the same point where political dissent stops being mobilised over technological machines. For the remaining cases of digital activism, the paradigm is informative when it comes to analysing the production of particular forms of subjectivity in the context of network politics that attempt to exist outside of other forms of politics.

REFERENCES


PUBLIC PRIVACY: RECIPROCITY AND SILENCE

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In his 1958 poem 'Dedication to my Wife' TS Eliot proclaims "these are private words addressed to you in public". Simultaneously written for his wife, Valerie Fletcher, and to the implied you of a discourse network, Eliot's poem helps to illustrate the narrative voices and silences that are constitutive of an intimate public sphere.

This paper situates reciprocity as a condition of possibility for public privacy. It shows how reciprocity is enabled by systems of code operating through material and symbolic registers. Code promises to control communication, to produce neutral, systemic forms of meaning. Yet such automation is challenged by uneven and fragmented patterns of reciprocity. Moreover, examining the media of public privacy reveals historical trajectories important for understanding contemporary socio-technical platforms of reciprocity.

To explore the implicit requirement of reciprocity in publicly private practices, three sites of communication are investigated framed by a media archaeology perspective: postal networks, the mail-art project PostSecret and the anonymous zine 'You'.

Keywords: Public privacy, reciprocity, epistolary, postal networks, access, control, code

Keywords: interactive television (iTV), trails, barriers, regulations, Internet, business models

INTRODUCTION

This paper deploys a media archaeology perspective to analyse the discursive and material practices framing contemporary understandings of 'public privacy'. With its focus on "unnoticed continuities and ruptures" (Parikka and Huhtamo, 2011, p. 3) media archaeology provides a productive method to demonstrate how emerging forms of "socially mediated publicness" (Baym and boyd, 2012) are techno-historically informed. In addition, media archaeology approaches seem particularly pertinent for examining how reciprocity is coded.
in complex and perhaps contradictory ways. Inflected by German media theory, media archaeology persistently negotiates the tension between system and meaning; form and content or, indeed, automation and autonomy (Parikka 2012). Code promises to control communication, to produce neutral, systemic forms of meaning. Yet such apparent automation is challenged by uneven and fragmented patterns of reciprocity.

We situate reciprocity as a condition of possibility for public privacy through an investigation of three sites of communication: postal networks; You zine; and PostSecret. The paper begins by defining the use of the term 'public privacy' before moving to a brief survey of the key literature on 'reciprocity' in media theory. We then introduce the case studies framed by what we are calling 'the media of public privacy'. This phrase gestures to the affective and material relations of reciprocity that operate across historical and contemporary platforms.

The term public privacy is employed in this paper to describe narratives of intimacy which are personally significant and are conducted through modes of communication considered to be public, potentially making the meaningful exchange public. Public privacy assumes risk. Conducted in 'public', public privacy may be witnessed and reciprocated by indeterminable others who also have access to the exchange. To counter this, the personal exchange may be coded or obscured (Marwick and boyd, 2011) or the other to whom the communication is directed may not be specifically identified. The positioning of a reciprocal other is a required element in public privacy. Rhetorical strategies are employed to position the reciprocal other, specific to the socio technical setting. As the examples discussed in this paper demonstrate, the exchange may be directed to a subjectively positioned public, addressed as 'you'.

Public privacy is a process which holds expectations of reciprocity. Enactments of public privacy have received considerable attention in regard to the actions of social network users where intimate, private narratives are conducted in public (Marwick and boyd, 2011; Hjorth, 2011; Lovink, 2011). As Daniel Solove states "our activities often take place in the twilight between public and private" and "[p]ravity is a complicated set of norms, expectations, and desires that goes far beyond the simplistic notion that if you're in public, you have no privacy" (Solove, 2007, p. 166). This paper builds on the acknowledgement that public privacy is not a new phenomena nor is it confined to social media practices (Marwick and boyd, 2011; Solove, 2007). There is value in demonstrating the traces of these practices in other media forms. Practices of public privacy have been newly defined against technological developments in social media which risk supplanting an understanding of the existence of these practices in other media forms (Tufecki, 2008). Each of the examples discussed in this paper demonstrate a negotiated balance between privacy and public disclosure suggesting that as Tufecki argues, privacy is a "process of optimisation between disclosure and withdrawal" (2008).

This paper questions the role of reciprocity in public privacy. We ask how reciprocity is implicitly positioned in such exchanges by means of a purposive selection of case studies that demonstrate examples of public privacy across different media forms. For each case study we focus on the rhetorical strategies by which public privacy is situated and to which reciprocity is conditional. To both contemporary and historical case studies we ask whether legibility and publicness are mutual. We question whether public privacy is possible without legibility and consider the importance of access to both text and context.

**Brief Survey of Existing Literature on Reciprocity**

For Kate Crawford (2009) the process of reciprocity is captured in the metaphor of
listening which might represent a more productive term than 'reading'. 'Listening' opens analysis to the centrality of the reciprocal other whose active stance has been elided by deployment of the label 'lurker'. Such perjorative terms omit what we determine as the necessity of the reciprocal (if silent) other in public. Crawford views listening as a necessary participatory act; we also argue that listening is reciprocal as the act of listening is an engagement with the text or utterance that renders it 'heard'. What makes a private utterance public is that it may be heard by another, the silent other, otherwise termed the lurker. While listeners or lurkers do not contribute in the same manner as more visible or vocal participants, they play a contributing role. Listening is a receptive, reciprocal practice of dynamic attentiveness (Crawford, 2009, p. 527). Crawford defines reciprocal listening in Twitter as "hearing and responding to comments and direct messages" (2009, p. 530), associating background listening to the intimate reciprocity of private detail in public spaces such as that in social media sites: "the disclosures made in social media spaces develop a relationship with an audience of listeners. Further, those background listeners are necessary to provoke disclosures of any kind" (Crawford, 2009, p. 528-9 emphasis ours). The possibility of reciprocity is an enabling condition for disclosure.

Disclosures of public privacy have the potential to 'speak to' both an audience of listeners (the public) while disclosing intimate details or addressing a specific subject (the private). We identify specific rhetorical strategies by which audiences of listeners are identified and placed as necessary participants in utterances of public privacy.

As Lauren Berlant (2008) has demonstrated, reciprocity plays an integral role in the construction of 'intimate publics'. Indeed, her schema for the way reciprocity functions across technologically mediated publics is key to the political significance of a feminised mass commodity culture. In a sense it is the 'longing for reciprocity' (Berlant, 2008, p. 5) that calls into being these intimate publics although, paradoxically, it is also this desire that the intimate public sates. As Berlant explains:

an intimate public operates when a market opens up to a bloc of consumers, claiming to circulate texts and things that express those people's particular core interests and desires ... participants in the intimate public feel as though it expresses what is common among them [and] it flourishes by circulating as an already felt need, a sense of emotional continuity among women (2008, p. 5)

Berlant's work reveals in sentimental culture, 'the female complaint', an intimate public that is riven with political ambivalence and symbolic struggle. Since the texts produced by this public are often generically 'mainstream', the citizen participates in and contributes to the maintenance of normative regimes while simultaneously attempting to resist. Hence a double movement animates the intimate public as it adheres to an "absolute historical locatedness" and at the same time articulates "restlessness". It exhibits both a "rage for change" and "passivity"; and is underpinned by a "refusal of the terms of the conventional world" while also demanding that world "be reciprocal" (Berlant, 2008, p. 268). In a recent special issue of the journal Biography dedicated to "life writing and intimate publics" the contributors grapple with the apparent irreconcilable binary in Berlant's research. The essays argue that her writing posits a feminist agency but is nonetheless "deeply sceptical about claims for emotional belonging" because the public economies of reciprocity and intimacy are circular, presuming "connection in order to create it" (Jolly, 2011, p. v).

For us, the strength of Berlant's critique of reciprocity is the insistence on its partial,
fragmented and contrary nature. All too often the term is deployed as a motherhood statement that assumes its mere appearance in the relevant socio-technological exchange signifies unerring benevolence. Moreover, as we hope to demonstrate, reciprocity is not always evenly distributed or beneficial to all participants but is, rather, sensitive to language and its mediated paths of distribution.

An intimate public requires access to intimacy, it responds to the circulation of such intimacies by affecting a sense of normalisation which Berlant calls "fantasies of belonging and reciprocity" (Berlant, 2008, p. 66). This sense of normalisation is affected not by the content, but by the feeling of engaging with the content. Legibility here is not about the narrative conveyed but the formalisation of engagement with such content. The style of content must be legible in its homogeneity for an intimate public to exist around it. A zine reader recognises a zine tucked in the corner of a record store. The contents of the zines are emotionally encoded, but much like Ann Cvetkovich's work where she terms cultural texts as "archives of feeling", the practices of production and reception that surround them are similarly encoded and recognised (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 7). The content of particular postcards may be arbitrary and variable but the practices by which postcards are produced and distributed is of specific value. Social media such as Twitter and Tumblr use the form of the interface to be legible. A Twitter follower recognises a feed by the url and by the limitation of the text to 140 characters. Ilana Gershon refers to this as a shared media ideology, where there is an assumption of a common framework of referentiality within which the content is understood (Gershon, 2010). This assumption is problematic as it is not always the case, such as when a letter is circulated to those beyond the initial addressee.

**The Media of Public Privacy: Historical and Contemporary Platforms**

*Postal History and Public Privacy*

If, as danah boyd has demonstrated, "privacy in the public age" relies on forms of social steganography where interlocutors "hide in plain sight", communicating simultaneously with different audiences (boyd, 2010), then the postal system is a key site for historicising public privacy. Users of postal networks have regularly found ways to produce private, individual affect despite the fact their correspondence circulates across a public, standardised signifying system. As Bonnie Wilson argues postcard writers of the early twentieth century were aware that their words were "fair game to everyone" and so correspondents "hinted at feelings by their choice in scene - whether comic or romantic - and made oblique references to events that only the recipient would understand" (2004, p. 89). Similarly, Tom Philips has shown how courting couples who wish to avoid the curious eyes of parents, siblings or servants discovered "the final mode of obtaining privacy was a code". Such strategies of secrecy, he explains, include 'mirror writing' and the use of back-slang, shorthand or acronyms (Phillips, 2000, p. 13-14).

Indeed, the introduction of the postcard in 1870 was met with anxiety precisely because of its capacity to transform the public sphere by broadcasting hitherto private messages publicly. As a late nineteenth century commentator, G W Green, notes "my grudge against the postal card ... is the tendency to read, against your own will, postal cards, not addressed to yourself. There is a fascination about the thing which is very like kleptomania". The author recounts a compelling story in which he suspects a postal clerk of reading postcards in just such a manner, devising a plan to halt this practice and hence save the clerk from being sacked. Rather than to ask the employee directly to desist, Green conveys his cognisance of the postal transgression through the use of code:

I ingenuously dropped on the Postmaster's table ... a postcard.
addressed to his unmarried sister. As we were talking, he picked it up and read an impassioned declaration written by myself. He smiled; I tore up the card and the clerk was retained. (as cited in Carline, 1972, p. 55)

Postcard media enabled new concepts of privacy and anonymity to emerge, the cultural and legal framings of which were made visible through libel action. For a British newspaper of the period, the "hidden slanderer" was one of society's "worst enemies", yet the invention of the postcard had:

Placed a weapon in his hands which, compared with a common letter, is like a mitrailense by the side of an old-fashioned musket. It scatters the shot over a whole neighbourhood ... An anonymous charge for which there is no justification being written on a postcard, should carry with it a heavier punishment than one contained inside a letter (Manchester Courier, 1890, p. 3).

During the late nineteenth century there were more than 40 postcard libel' cases heard in British Courts with some of these attracting quite severe punishment. In 1899, for example, Edwin Aldridge was found guilty of 'atrocious' libel for a postcard he sent concerning a rejected marriage proposal he had made to a woman, Harriet Baxter. Experiencing extreme pique and anger following the rejection, Aldridge sent vitriolic postcards to Baxter's father and aunt for which he was sentenced to six months in jail (Worcestershire Chronicle 1899, p. 6). Another case, found a man guilty of libelling his own solicitors because they had unsuccessfully represented him in a real estate dispute. The defendant was charged 100 pounds for claiming on a postcard "I have been tricked and swindled in the whole business from first to last" (Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, 1895, p. 3).

However, in certain libel cases the potential anonymity of postcard media inspired feats of remarkable detective work. One such 1920s case involved a woman accused of circulating a great volume of postcards over a six month period, the contents of which contained language so 'indecent and filthy' these could not be read aloud in court. Since the cards were not signed, the police needed to prove their hunch of her illegal, libellous practices. So, with the assistance of the Post Office, they inscribed stamps with a secret code and then tracked the sale and subsequent passage of these stamps through the postal network. The woman suspected of indecency, Diana Langham, was closely monitored by the police as the news item explains:

Detective Sergeant Giles kept the accused under close observation. He got behind her, observed that while she was fidgeting with her pocket, part of a postcard protruded ... after waiting about for some time, the accused went to the pillar box and took something out of her hand and put it into the aperture. When the box was opened it was found four letters, and only one postcard, similar to the one the Detective saw protruding from the woman's pocket. The stamp upon it also displayed the secret marking (Nottingham Evening Post 1923, p. 5).

In a sentencing that conveys both the poignancy of the crime and the impact of this still relatively new media, the Judge found it an "outrage" that Postal workers and recipients were forced to encounter the indecent postcards. Langham's actions amounted to "shocking wickedness" and she was sentenced to six months jail (Western Daily Press, 1924, p. 8).
If postcard communication relies on a particular form of social steganography in order to speak privately in public, letter writers of the period also faced comparable conditions. The assumed privacy that postcard media threatened was, in fact, fragile and contingent. It was common practice during the Romantic and Victorian eras for correspondents to have their letters circulated, in some cases without the author's approval or knowledge. As the British writer, Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855) says of this epistolary custom:

A friend, to whom I have long been in the habit of writing very frequently, had a most whimsical trick of sending my careless letters round to half her acquaintance … in this manner travelled my unlucky epistles; and I, quite unsuspicious, wrote on as carelessly as ever, till at length one of my letters, written to Miss R in London, actually returned to me here, by the hands of a mutual friend to whom she had lent it (as cited in L'estrangé, 1870, p. 152).

This should not suggest that correspondents were always satisfied to have their letters read by a third party. One of Mitford’s closest friends, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 - 1861), for example, regularly expressed uneasiness about the potential for her letters to circulate publicly (Kenyon, 1897). What is highlighted by this cultural practice, however, is the complexity of the contours that shape and regulate public privacy. Indeed, Barrett Browning and Mitford often discussed the associated epistolary convention of literature - that of writing letters for publication. The two would raise this topic in relation to others' published correspondences, epistolary fictions and the possibility they would themselves achieve epistolary fame. Yet they disagreed quite forcefully about the role of epistolary publication in the construction of a public figure. This disagreement was particularly pronounced when talking of their literary friend and correspondent Harriet Martineau and the latter's reluctance to allow her private letters to be published. Mitford agreed with Martineau's decision while Barrett Browning viewed it as a kind of withholding a "selfish" action almost like a "death". According to Barrett Browning, the artist as a "teacher of the public" had an obligation to make public that which began as the "secrets of our daily lives and inner souls" (Kelly and Hudson, 1984, p. 77). In a series of letters exchanged between Barrett Browning and Mitford, the two raise some foundational questions of modernity: What is the relation between the private inner self and the public persona? Under what cultural conditions does 'celebrity' emerge? What role do the economies of writing and the technological regimes of circulation and publication play in the construction of 'image'? Maintaining her argument that the artist owes a certain debt to society, Barrett Browning writes:

The inconvenience of celebrity … which is the interest taken in you by the whole world is a noble tax to pay after all … When we are beloved in private life, our very headaches, our very smiles & the choosing of our ribbons are matters of interest to the persons who love us. Do we complain of the tax of this attention to minute things? (letter dated 16 January 1844, in Kelly and Hudson, 1846, p. 163)

Epistolary discourse traverses the public and private spheres. Historically, the genre includes works of fiction as well as, for example, letter collections of 'real people'. Indeed, it is thought the origin of epistolary fiction, that is, novels told through letters, can be traced to the letter writing manuals of the eighteenth century together with published letters of 'real' authors (Meltzer, 1982, p. 515-529). Part of the attraction of letter fiction as a rhetorical
strategy is its capacity to involve the reader in the ostensibly 'private' lives of correspondents. As Thomas Beebee puts it, "epistolary fiction is a function rather than a thing; it arises when an outside 'real' reader takes up the position of the fictional addressee" (1999, p. 8). The addressee - of epistolary discourse, social media, and postal projects - is a central figure in our argument concerning reciprocity and public privacy. We now turn to an analysis of how forms of address structure affective relations.

**Reciprocity: Narrative Voice and Forms of Address**

A common rhetorical strategy to indicate intimacy is the use of the designation 'you' or 'we', which determine a relationship to a specific other to whom the intimacy is addressed. There are occasions where the specific other is named, such as TS Eliot naming his wife as the recipient of his dedication and the addressees of personal letters; there are also occasions where 'you' is used to assemble an intimate public, who unnamed, are each positioned as the potential recipient of the utterance. The rhetoric of addressing a specific 'you' heightens expectations of reciprocity, though as we will discuss later, identifying as a potential recipient does not mean that the intimate intention will be available. Such strategies of the rhetoric used in letters, zines and social media sites demonstrate the author's imagination of a reader beyond the text.

Reciprocity in epistolary communication is produced, in part, by its reliance on the linguistic device of deixis, the ability to convey, at once, the acts of writing and reading; encoding and decoding, posting and receipt. As David Barton and Nigel Hall explain:

> As a genre, letters have specific forms of deixis, that is, ways of referring to the writer and the intended reader and to space and time. The writer is present in the letter, often through the use of the word I and in the signing of the letter. There is usually a specific reader, or readers in mind and they are invoked in the salutation and in the use of you. The writer constructs an intended reader in the text ... two worlds are invoked: the here and now of the writer and the here and now of the reader. (1999, p. 6)

Epistolary practice differs markedly in its deictic usage from other related modes of written communication. The diary, autobiography or memoir, for example, are often considered to resemble letter writing in their generic framing as 'authentic' and 'sincere' but differ in the modes of address through the use of first and second person pronoun. At the risk of stating the obvious, the epistolary form is distinguished by its relatively high use of second person pronouns. Where the 'you' of the diary and memoir remain implicit, in letter writing and email the addressee becomes foregrounded. As well as the high use of second person pronouns in epistolary language, the systems of distribution require that the identity of a recipient be made explicit. The law of the epistolary genre - its technological protocols, social conventions and economic structures - is underpinned by the assumption that communication is destined to an identifiable reader. This socio-material condition is, of course, what makes the epistolary form such a rich resource for theorists such as Jacques Lacan (1973) and Jacques Derrida (1987).

In addition to the manner by which deixis constructs reciprocity in letter writing, the expression of sympathy and empathy by correspondents is a related strategy. As a trope of Romantic sensibility, epistolary sympathy produces reciprocity through the constant oscillation between self and other, "a process of creating at once a personal and a shared identity" (McCarthy, 1997, p. 98). Writing to her friend's ailing father, Elizabeth Barrett Browning exclaims "into all that you must have felt I deeply enter" (Kelly and Hudson, 16
April 1838, p. 26). This phrase eloquently illustrates the close conceptual and affective link between sympathy and reciprocity since it focuses on the constant blurring of the boundary between self and other. As Thomas McCarthy explains the "profound involvement in another person's inner life" necessarily involves a high level of introspection. "Romantic correspondents knew implicitly that the self is affirmed by sympathising with another as much as it is by the sympathy of another" (1997, p. 98).

If 'you' functions as a signifier of reciprocity in epistolary discourse, this is not always the case for all genres of written communication. As proof of its contingency and mutability, use of the second person pronoun in narrative fiction, for example, differs markedly from the epistolary case. Indeed, as narrative theorists suggest rather than to increase reciprocity or empathy by 'drawing the reader and narrator close' the use of second person 'you' actually creates 'dissonance' because addressing the protagonist as 'you' distances the reader (Keen, 2007). Where the you of narrative prose is, relatively, uncommon and often 'experimental', in poetry, especially the lyric, second person address is conventional yet no less ambiguous. It may refer to an actual, individual person (as is partly the situation with TS Eliot's poem that opens this paper) or the address might be aimed at the reader (one could also identify Eliot's poem here too). This brief outline of the rhetorical and affective impacts of narrative voice provides the context for the following discussion of two epistolary-based projects at the heart of which lies the problematic of address.

You

The zine You is an ongoing project that began in 2001 edited by a zinester known only as 'Luke You'. Anonymously produced and distributed around the globe though predominantly in Melbourne, Australia it is packaged in hand decorated paper bags and secured with staples so that the locator or finder of the zine must open it for herself. The packaging both holds and obscures the contents so that the act of unsealing is an experience reserved solely for the initial receiver. The sealed wrapping, much like the envelope of a letter, signifies that there is a singular addressee who may open the package. This is reinforced in the familiarity of the opening address which is always 'Dear You'. Through the packaging and opening address the reader is positioned as the sole recipient. The closing statements similarly imply an ongoing relationship of familiarity with many editions of the zine closing with the words 'I'll speak to you again soon' signifying an expectation of reciprocation, and ongoing relations.

One particular example is dated Monday, 6 January 2003 2.50pm, and located "on the blue couch" which assumes a familiarity with the features of 'Luke You's surroundings. The letter also contains reference to others ("Nathaniel Dean" and "Sam") which implies the reader has either an awareness or acquaintance with them. These, together with the packaging and terms of address, situate the reader in a reciprocal role. The contents of the zines are frequently anecdotal, relating scenarios, thoughts and minutiae of every-day life. Through these disclosures of intimate details, You invites sympathy and empathy as effects of reciprocity.

The 'you' addressed in You is implicit. The system of distribution does not require identities of recipients to be explicit, and also allows for the identity of 'Luke You' to remain obscure. Indeed, there are editions of the zine in which the writer is identified as someone other than 'Luke You'. In one such edition, a person by the name of John recounts a wedding he attended and his reaction to what he refers to as the 'machination' of the event. In another edition Bridget writes the lyrics to four songs, including a description besides each one of its relevance to her. Both Bridget and John employ the same deictic devices as in the
letters from 'Luke You'. They each begin their letters with "Dear You" and though they end with different statements ("Til next time, my friend...Much love n' hugs, John" and "Well I hope all is well with you and I will talk to you later, Love from Bridget. XXX"), the sentiment of reciprocity is contingent with the format of You. This has an effect of dissonance: are these the persons to whom 'Luke You' has been writing? Has the reader assumed the place of a 'real' addressee or are they all fiction? Is this what Beebee calls the function of epistolary fiction (1999), positioning the 'real' reader as the fictional addressee?

Similar strategies are also utilised in another epistolary project called PostSecret. PostSecret is a useful site for discussion on public intimacy (Poletti 2011) yet the arguments put forth have been limited thus far to the literary sphere.

PostSecret

Frank Warren began the project PostSecret in 2004 by distributing in public spaces such as libraries and train stations a quantity of blank postcards. The recipients of these postcards were asked to "Share a secret?" Contributors were instructed to use the blank postcard to tell a true secret that they had never shared with anyone before. The telling of the secret would be anonymous, the sender had no requirement or expectation to provide identifying information. Postcards were sent to a specified address (Warren's) and contributors and potential contributors were invited to view submitted secrets at a blog set up to catalogue them. A proportion of the secrets submitted continue to be catalogued on the blog and a number of anthologies have been published from the project. A community has also developed around the site's forum. In mid 2011, PostSecret launched an iPhone application which provided another venue for the submission and circulation of secrets. It became one of the highest selling applications through the Apple Store but, as Warren has explained, a focus on "absolute anonymity" was the reason for its relatively brief life. In January 2012 it ceased operation due to complaints made to Apple and the FBI about offensive and "gruesome" uploaded content (Warren, 2012).

Participants in PostSecret identify themselves through the first person using phrases such as "I never told you that..." and "sometimes when I'm alone I...". As with You the reader stands in for a fictional 'you', except in PostSecret the disclosures and the people they concern are imagined to be real also. Not all occasions allow for the audience to position themselves as the 'you' being addressed. The intimacy about which 'you' is addressed at times identifies specificities of the relationship whereby the reader is made aware of the dissonance between their position as 'you' and the 'real' you to whom the secret refers.

While there are many different producers of the postcards, each postcard is understood to depict a subjective sentiment. The disclosures are fragile and precarious in that a producer might be discovered through the revelation of personally identifying information. Some use their own image in the creation of their postcards and speak in the community forum on the website of being recognised while out in public. Equally precarious is that the 'you', for whom the reader stands in, might be present in the intimate public to which the disclosure is made. Often it is not clear whether this is desired or feared. While secrets are certainly shared in PostSecret, they remain as secrets in a number of ways. The secret may only partially be disclosed, perhaps also coded. Though the secret is shared to an intimate public potentially accessible to a wider audience, there are other publics from which it is not directly circulated. The reciprocal audience are invited into an intimate party of secret keepers, reinforcing a bond of reciprocity. In addition, the producer of the postcard need not identify themselves. In PostSecret the intimate public is the reciprocal audience. The connection between the PostSecret community and the secrets disclosed is figurative rather than lit-
eral. Whilst the secrets might not be specific to them, readers may still find that particular secrets resonate with their own experiences. The experience is part licentiousness and part sympathy.

In line with a media archaeology approach, the material form of these texts must be acknowledged. Contributors to *PostSecret* are provided with three tips: "Be brief", "Be legible" and "Be creative". Anna Poletti in her discussion of how *PostSecret* shapes the form and content of submitted secrets calls attention to the instructions "Be brief" and "creative" but neglects the instruction "Be legible" (Poletti, 2011, p. 33). We would argue this exhortation is central for understanding the "media ideologies and idioms of practice" (Gershon, 2010, p. 21) that underpin *PostSecret*. While the instruction to "Be legible" appears as 'merely' a requirement of the technological form, this does not guarantee clarity. As we have seen, at the discursive level, language code may intervene to render messages inscrutable.

**SILENCES, INTERJECTIONS AND CONTESTATIONS**

**ANXIETIES**

Reciprocity is fickle. Authors have little control over audience interpretations and the desired form of reciprocity is not guaranteed. As Nancy Miller argues, anxiety "always threatens the enterprise of going public with private stories" (Miller, 2002, p. 137). Miller places this anxiety as fear, factoring that reciprocity requires interest in the individual and therefore a lack of reciprocity may be because (or may be feared to be because) there is no one who cares. This she claims is the universal fear of the writer (p. 137).

How might anxieties be acted upon? Authors may cautiously address the reciprocal audience, forewarning them of the private nature of the disclosures to be made. Authors also express doubt they may have in their reader's ability to empathise or understand, "I'm not sure if you'll understand this but..." or doubt as to the trustworthiness of the reader: "I'm not sure I should be telling you this..." Authors may also change their mind following disclosure, particularly if in retrospect they feel overexposed. Moments when users retract posts or tweets signify the fragility of public privacy. Public privacy is fraught with anxieties: that the utterance be misunderstood; that it be understood by too many; that what was thought to be ambiguous and intriguing is quite transparent and that this transparency may lead to detrimental consequences. While a producer of zines might retract their steps and remove non-claimed copies and letter writers might approach their addressees to return or destroy their letters, or stalk the mailbox and plead with the postman to return their relinquished letters, the retraction of Twitter and Tumblr posts matter most to the archives of the web - for once posted the record of their existence is irretrievable, though it may be rendered invisible. Retractions of any form signify fragility or discord in the expectations of the reciprocal relationship. Retractions are risk recovery measures, hasty actions demonstrating the possibility of internal conflict or rebuttal.

**ACCESS**

Access and context are key components of publicly private communication. The limitation of access is in part what defines privacy (Gavison, 1980, p. 421). To identify the private intimacy of a message requires the reader or listener to have access to a suitable context by which to determine the meaning. Context is also important to the writer, it is crucial for them to know the context in which their message will be read, shared or interpreted (Nissenbaum as cited in Solove, 2007, p. 165).

Access to content is distinct from access to context. Access to meaning requires access
to both content and a suitable context. The desired state of communication is access to meaning. Expressions of communication that are openly coded so that the interlocutors and content are visible and sufficient context is accessible, allowing any intimacy contained within the message to be publically observed, places the public as a potential interlocutor in the exchange. Other communications may be termed 'false phatic', for their meaning to be understood requires knowledge of context. To onlookers the communication appears to be a phatic or banal utterance of little significance other than its statement of existence which belies the intimacy of the private meaning. The public are equally placed as necessary in the exchange though their potential interlocutory function is purposively obstructed. Public obscure communication is partially coded, the interlocutors may be identifiable to a public and a meaning may be discerned though it may not be the intended meaning due to differing understandings of context. There are also exchanges where it might be deduced that an intimacy is being conveyed but the witnessing public have no access to the meaning themselves having insufficient context such as an absurd message between siblings on Facebook. Public obscure communications are like teasers, playing on a sense of intimacy while hinting at a further story which for the present moment is beyond the grasp of the general audience. To some this might incite a motivation to uncover the hidden meaning.

Public obscure communication incites a desire for access to meaning, where the onlooker (whether an intended one or not) is able to identify that they have only partial access or their contextual framework is insufficient. This may be evidenced in comments and replies such as "huh?", "what's going on?", "what's happened?" or "I don't get it?", often it is evidenced in silence though the lack of response may indicate a failure to incite such desire, playing on anxieties identified earlier by Miller (2002). It is this incitement or desire for meaning that nurtures and creates the relationship between each of the necessary interlocutors of public privacy - the addressee, the addresser and the audience.

CONTROL

Solove identifies that there is little recognition of the importance of control in discussion on privacy (2007, p. 185). As demonstrated in Madejski, Johnson and Bellowin's (2011) study on control of privacy settings in social media sites, there is an inherent risk in public privacy whereby lack of attention to, or competence of privacy settings, may render reading impossible by making the content inaccessible or potentially more hazardous and may make public privacy simply public by providing access to additional content whereby the context for understanding a publicly intimate message is widened (Madejski et al, 2011). Control of access is shown to be of greater importance and risk to privacy than content.

Transgressions of public privacy arise when the distribution of content or information is out of the control of the interlocutor who initiated the exchange. The distress felt by Elizabeth Barrett Browning about the possibility her letters might circulate without her consent foregrounds the sentiment of users of more contemporary media forms. Public privacy promises subjects the capacity to control context and to limit the opportunities for others to direct or distribute their content. Reciprocity is key to public privacy, therefore, since it is the gauge by which the control of content or access is measured. Public privacy relies on reciprocity in order to determine whether appropriate privacy has been sustained. Silence as a response may mean that the message has been too carefully concealed, while an unanticipated response may mean that the message is too easily accessible.

CONCLUSION

As Crawford argues in regards to reciprocal listening, studies on reciprocity allow for more detailed examination of the nuances of agency in online media (2009). The recip-
The recorder is shown to be a key interlocutor in communication practices, though one that is often overlooked (Solove, 2007; Tufekci, 2008). Acknowledging the centrality of the recorder(s) in the communication process opens up paths for analysis which operate beyond the initiating interlocutor to whom most attention is usually paid. While postal systems regulate and automate communication, through the standardised writing space of a postcard for example, reciprocity is not always a predictable process. By investigating diverse systems of code - narrative, material, affective, discursive and legal - used by different media forms, this paper demonstrates how uneven, fragmented patterns of reciprocity function within public privacy.

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Science, Columbia
GAMBLING-MACHINES AND THE AUTOMATION OF DESIRE

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This paper deals with the relationship between gamblers and Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs), which leads to the automation of desire through procedures. "Pokies", as EGMs are known in the Australian context, are both desiring-machines (Deleuze and Guattari) and cross-platform media where digital gambling and videogame conventions and procedures intersect. I make a case that, as desiring-machines (entities that are defined by their connections), pokies and gamblers form couplings that generate assemblages, which are "passional", "a composition of desire" (Deleuze and Guattari). I also argue that pokies share aesthetic and procedural similarities with videogames and that the gameplay’s objective is not always to merely win money, but to fulfil a desire to accomplish missions and embark on adventures. I also argue that these "missions" are related to chasing, the overarching procedure that defines EGM consumption and allows for the automation of gambler-pokie couplings. The aesthetics of most of these procedure-images can be traced back to a postcolonial disposition over foreign lands, peoples and cultures - faux Chinese and Aboriginal lore, exotic deserts, untamed jungles and Arctic landscapes that need to be conquered. This disposition echoes notions such as class-related aspiration (desire) and exotica. I analyse the imagery in some of the pokies that circulate in the New South Wales (Australia) EGM market.

This reading of Electronic Gaming Machines adds a ludic dimension to the analysis of a highly class-bound social practice that is part of a wider socioeconomic trend that points towards a new and contradictory consumption ethic. The application of videogame theory is absent in current discussions on poker machine interfaces and legislation, which generally focus on the figure of the pathological gambler and disregard the complexities of gambling platforms.

Keywords: Electronic Gaming Machines, desiring-machines, assemblages, exotica, videogame theory, chasing
"Of course, I live in constant anxiety, I play for the smallest stakes and wait for something; I make calculations, I stand for days on end by the gaming table and observe the play, I even see them playing in my sleep, but all that not withstanding I seem to have become numb, as it were, as if I’d become mired in some sort of mud."

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Gambler

"I guess it was a combination of sight, sound and the excitement of winning."

-Mr Stephen Menadue, problem gambler (in Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform, 2011).

INTRODUCTION

The Australian gambling industry automates the desire to bet through one of the most salient forms of digital gaming derived from traditional poker: Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs). The objective of this process of automation is to guarantee perpetual and increasingly intensified consumption. It is conducted on two levels. On a procedural level, EGMs adopt tropes present in videogames, such as the creation of missions and pyrotechnic audio-visual schemes that add excitement to an otherwise tedious activity (pressing a button, waiting for the reels to align). This excitement reaches such an intensity, that gamblers can enter into what Schüll (2012) calls "The Zone", a state of abandon demarcated from the everyday, yet embedded in the gambler's daily activities. On an aesthetic level, the designs of EGMs echo the imagery of postcolonial representations by displaying lands and peoples that are, from a Western perspective, exotic, and that run parallel to historical trajectories with which some gamblers can identify.

Together, procedures and aesthetics connect gamblers and EGMs and incite the production of what I call the gambling-machine, a derivative of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as desiring-machines. In turn, gambling-machines form assemblages that constitute markets where material and expressive goods are exchanged (DeLanda, 2006).

Most analysis of the interaction between gamblers and EGMs involve quantitative psychological tests that measure the control that gambling "addicts" (a contested term) have over their impulse/desire to gamble (see Monaghan and Blaszczynski, 2009; King, Ejova and Delfabbro, 2011). These studies are also conducted from the premise that these devices ultimately incite problem gambling: very few studies, however, analyse the nuances of the platforms on which these games are constructed. Nicoll (2010) and Livingstone (2010) identified the need to embark on such an analysis, but, to this date, have not explored the issue further. In order to fully comprehend poker machines as a conduit for human-machine interaction, we need to analyse the ways in which they automate procedures and incite the gambler's desire. This paper offers an alternative ontological approach to EGM-gambler pairings and to gambling markets. It also provides examples by analysing some the EGMs that circulate in the New South Wales (Australia) gambling market.

Known colloquially as "pokies" in the Australian context, EMGs are referred to in popular and academic literature in a variety of ways that reveal the conflicting nature of their consumption. For instance, in Japan they are called pachislot (a word derived from the combination of slot and pachinko, a traditional Japanese game), in Spain and Latin America they are accusatorily referred to as máquinas tragamonedas or máquinas tragaperras (coin-eating machines; peseta-eating machine) and in the United States they have been baptised as "slots", "slot machines", "fruit machines" and, most tellingly, as "one-armed bandits" (a pristine Wild West image). Through these names we can infer the performances of commu-
necative acts, of a continuous entering and exiting of information and objects. We can de-
duct the presence of a flow, of human-machine negotiations in which machines are "fed" 
with coins and non-human bandits "assault" consumers. The consumption of bets is thus 
being automated.

This automation is closely related to the technological development of gambling ma-
chines. Mechanical Gaming Machines, the ancestors of EGMs, were first originated in San 
Francisco (US) during the Gold Rush Era and in the midst of the expansion of traditional 
poker from the depths of the Mississippi to the vastness of the West, across the Nevada 
desert and into the Pacific coastal towns. Their origin is located in an epoch associated with 
new beginnings and the birth of a nation. Poker machines were introduced into the North 
American leisure market in 1887 as New Nickel Machines. To define winners and losers, 
randomness was then achieved mechanically through the spin of reels and the arbitrary 
pairing of winning combinations. From the United States, EGM markets expanded world-
wide and intersected with other gambling traditions.

Gaming Machines were first illegally imported and introduced to New South Wales 
clubs in the 1930s (Lynch, 1990, p.194), and existed in parallel with -and added to-
gambling cultures that have been present in Australia since colonial times (Two-Up, for in-
stance). Since their subsequent legalisation in 1956 (Walker, 2009), Gaming Machines have 
been both one of the cornerstones of the Australian leisure industry and, due to possible in-
stances of addiction, mainly among the working class (Breen, Hing and Weeks, 2002), the 
protagonists of one of the most hotly contested policy issues in regards to production and 
consumption ethics -particularly since pokies were introduced into everyday community 
spaces such as clubs and pubs (starting in the 1980s in New South Wales, and continuing in 
the 1990s in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania), taking over areas previ-
ously designed to host other leisure activities, such as music concerts.

As technological artefacts, current forms of EGMs are positioned at the centre of the 
mechanical/algorithmic spectrum, as they require the physical and repetitive action of the 
gambler and preserve some of the cultural and aesthetic conventions of their earliest ver-
sions, but perform algorithmic operations to simulate randomness through a Random 
Number Generator (RNG). EGMs are a connection between the mechanical past and the di-
gital future in the technological trajectory of gambling cultures. As Woolley and Living-
stone wittily point out: "These devices are a long way from the mechanical pokies they 
nostalgically invoke via their often quaint, folksy design. They are carefully constructed hy-
brids of sophisticated technology within a präsentement of folksy familiarity- like a 1960s 
Volkswagen equipped with a Ferrari motor" (2010). This contradiction allows EGM manu-
ufacturers and service providers to engage consumers by echoing past sociocultural discurs-
ive flows (such as postcolonialism and the pioneering drive of the early mining industry, for 
instance) and by inciting repetitive bodily actions, while keeping up with the latest tech-
ological developments that guarantee an advantageous situation for "the house". This con-
tradiction, however, has rarely been approached from a media studies perspective.

This is a huge area of research opportunities considering that the social role of EGMs 
has undergone a dramatic change through the recent and increasingly complex digitisation 
of their procedures. EGMs "have been transformed from simple stand-alone 'machines' to 
complex communicative and calculative 'devices' that are usually configured as nodes with-
in a network" (Woolley and Livingstone, 2010, p.45). EGMs are communicative devices. 
They establish communication patterns and flows between the subject and institutional 
structures (the State, class divisions, the financial system), between humans and artificial in-
telligence (machines) and among gamblers, as EGMs are generally installed in hubs for so-
cial interaction (pubs, clubs, casinos). EGMs also trigger biological and psychological responses within the gambler's organism and, in cases of extreme consumption, mediate the user's everyday life (Schüll, 2012).

**THE GAMBLING-MACHINE: AN ONTOLOGICAL APPROACH TO EGMs**

EGM markets can be conceptualised as an assemblage of what Deleuze and Guattari call "desiring-machines" (machines désirantes). In Anti-Oedipus (the first volume of Capitalism and Schizophrenia), Deleuze and Guattari lay out a challenging philosophical idea that questions past notions of the relationships between humans and technology, and the ways in which these interlock and form chains of relationships, which they call assemblages or "compositions of desire". I ascribe to Bogard's useful summary of the Deleuzian-Guattarian assemblage:

>'What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns - different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning; it is symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 69). Assemblages can be anything from chemical bonds to cultural patterns. Assemblages in their machinic form, above all, are 'compositions of desire' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 399). (2009, p.30)

Sociotechnical assemblages, such as EGM markets, are a collection of organic and non-organic elements, of biological and technical machines. What is philosophically challenging about this approach is that, akin to Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005; Law & Hassard, 1999), assemblages position humans and machines, and their organic and mechanical components, on the same ontological level (DeLanda, 2006). Therefore, assemblage theory calls for an understanding of couplings, of how desiring-machines interlock with other desiring-machines, as well as the social and cultural conditions in which these couplings occur.

It is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari do not ascribe to the general notion of the "machine" as a technological artefact, but consider all subjects (organic and non-organic) to be mechanisms that, in turn, can be formed by smaller "machines", such as the human organs. Humans are desiring-machines just as the artefacts (cars, computers, spoons, pencils) with which we form couplings are desiring-machines. For Deleuze and Guattari, everything, everywhere, is a machine. In this cosmology, Nature is a collection of machines that have the sole purpose of producing for production's sake. The world itself is a "continual whirr of machines"(2004, p.2) that is never appeased.

That said, in Deleuzian-Guattarian thought, a "machine" is "nothing more than its connections" (Colebrook, 2002, p.56). A machine is symbiosis composed by desire. It is this drive to connect that defines the existence of the desiring-machine. Colebrook concludes that for Deleuze: "A machinic becoming makes a connection with what is not itself in order to transform and maximise itself"(2002, p.57). Based on this notion, I argue that it is this desire for transformation and maximisation what drives gamblers to form couplings with EGMs, and that this transformation is sometimes related to social class and the insertion in particular historical trajectories (such as the myth of the Lucky Country or the sense of entitlement of the postcolonial self). As a desiring-machine, the gambler might connect to an
EGM to become something/someone different, and it is in this process of repetition (gambling) that they are also constructed as subjects. Alternatively, the subject might engage in EGM gambling to enter "The Zone", an existential plane momentarily separate from the predicaments of everyday life, as Schüll discovered in her extensive ethnography of slot users in Las Vegas (2012). Either to become something or to forget what one has become by remaining in "The Zone", human experience is transformed when interlocking with electronic gambling devices.

Deleuze and Guattari also define a machine as a "system of interruptions or breaks (coups)", as every machine "is related to a continual material flow (hylé) that it cuts into" (p.38). If we extrapolate this notion to the study of gambling, we can theorise that both gamblers and EGMs transgress diverse flows through their coupling. Deleuze and Guattari also state that a machine "functions like a ham-slicing machine, removing portions from the associative flow" (2004, p.39). In gambling assemblages, this slicing through is defined by the cultural and procedural codes shared by the gambler and the EGM. The EGM cuts into the flow of the gambler's everyday experience and alters the position of the gambler in other assemblages (the household, the workplace, the financial system), as witnessed by Schüll (2012) in Las Vegas. EGMs also slice into communities and into the flow of aesthetic discourses, such as kitsch and exotica, which define the identities contained within these communities.

When a gambler and an EGM interlock, something (a sociopolitical discourse, a monetary transaction, an aesthetic and/or bodily experience) is produced. Communication happens. When a gambler activates a pokie, the human organs function as desiring-machines that excrete stress hormones and sweat, and activate the pokie-desiring-machine, inciting it to produce a result. This coupling generates discursive, financial and aesthetic flows, allowing simultaneous and collective couplings to happen (this has been referenced in popular culture, particularly by critics of EGMs).

EGMs fulfil the destiny of the Deleuzian-Guattarian machine: to be the place "where flows enter or leave structures" (Bogost, 2006, p.143). Cultural, social, ideological and economic flows enter and leave the structures (social, cultural and financial) where EGMs work as a liaison among other assemblages and humans, as the baby's mouth-machine that attaches itself to the mother's breast-machine in the Deleuzian-Guattarian metaphor. Gamblers and EGMs suck on each other's nipples: they form an intricate mass of "assembled desire".

During a gaming session, the gambler as a desiring-machine also becomes a Body Without Organs, "le corps disperse" (Sasso and Villani, 2002, p.244), experiencing a fluidity that intersects with other fluidities. Cook (2009) analysed Internet Gaming Addiction through Deleuze and Guattari's notion of The Body Without Organs, and concluded that this practice allowed gamers to extend their existence beyond the boundaries of their skin. Through an array of other machines (chair, desk, keyboard, joystick, controller) players enter another world (a gaming-space) and establish organism-configurations that they strive to come back to over and over again so they can experience the "limitlessness and intensity associated with becoming" (Cook, 2009, p.196), so they can enter "The Zone" (Schüll, 2012).

In his film eXistenZ (1999), David Cronenberg provided a visual metaphor for such a coupling. The main characters immerse themselves in a gaming-space by literally connecting their machine-bodies to controller-bodies that have organic and non-organic components. This coupling provides them with the "limitlessness and intensity associated with
becoming”; through physical dispersion they acquire existential unity.

The metaphor so vividly constructed in eXistenZ is also pertinent as an audio-visual representation of the pokie-desiring-machine-gambler-desiring-machine coupling, which I will from here onwards call gambling-machine.

The gambling-machine presumably allows gamblers (albeit, somewhat self-deceitfully) to become, to maximise themselves through repetition.

CHASING: THE AUTOMATION OF DESIRE THROUGH PROCEDURES

How are gambling-machines generated? The procedures enacted in poker machine playing are seemingly simple, almost mechanical in nature: you insert a coin, you press a button and hope that the right symbols align to your benefit. If you run out of money, you can get more cash in one of the ATMs that are generally installed in gambling venues, automating the provision of funds. Woolley and Livingstone offer a concise explanation of this transaction: "The contemporary poker machine can be understood as an industrial artefact, a device for staging the sale of a particular good or commodity-the 'bet'" (2010, p.41). They elaborate further, stating that EGs are "hybrid devices, a composite of computer and video technologies, integrated alongside remnant mechanical components such as the coinbox" (p.45). Furthermore, "the assembly of digitally driven black boxes, pads, and insertion panels that cover the surface of today's gambling device embody the aim to keep players seated for as long as possible" (Schull, 2005: 68).

The internal processes are digitised (the reels spin algorithmically rather than mechanically), but the experience preserves the aura of past devices while also providing the allure of interactivity offered by videogames. I claim, thus, that pokies are cross-platform media in which digital gambling interfaces and videogame procedures intersect and trigger the player's desire by automating it.

The staging of the sale of bets is, however, increasingly complex, and it involves the work of professionals that range from mathematicians to computer software engineers and computer graphic artists. It also happens, by all accounts, in a black box (Latour, 1999), and it is in these hidden mechanisms that the rules of the game are established to automate desire. As Woolley (2007) states, a gambler "in the gaming room of clubs and hotels in Australia participates in a consumption market that is instituted through a systematic deployment of applications of science and technology throughout social space". Meanings in this social space are created around the mysteriousness of the device (Woolley and Livingstone, 2010). The illusion of chance is preserved through secrecy: "How do reels roll inside the pokie?"

Before exploring the procedural similarities between videogames and poker machines, we shall consider one basic question: what is the key procedural particularity of basic videogames? In Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System (2009), Montfort and Bogost recall the dawn of arcade gaming, and establish a clear and relevant distinction between early titles such as Pong and Spacewar, and current videogame systems: "The computer's ability to play against a person and to play somewhat like a person, rather than just serving as the playing field and referee" (p.5). Today, they state, developments have led to the creation of "crafty computer-controlled enemies" (Ibidem). In poker machines, the crafty enemy is the code itself, the Random Number Generator that prevents the gambler from hitting the jackpot (the chances of a top jackpot are approximately one in seven million). Journalist Bill Previti characterised the computer chip as "the little rascal that controls the random number generator, which controls where and when the screen will project a winning array of symbols" (2006). This "winning array of symbols" can correspond to two vari-
eties of bets: a 3-reel single game or a 5-reel 25-line game (multiple bets, a configuration that incites excitement and repetition, and has been subjected to scrutiny by anti-gambling advocates).

Some gamblers play for hours on end thinking that they have deciphered the code that defines the award patterns and that if they prolong their session they will eventually hit the jackpot. This is, however, highly improbable. The following is a brief explanation of how a Random Number Generator works. In a modern EGM, a central computer controls the outcome of each "pull" or "push" (in old mechanical devices it was controlled by the motion of the reels). The computer chooses one random number for each reel, maps the number onto a position on the reel, it then stops the reel at the appointed place and scores the outcome. The outcome is predestined right in the moment when the player presses the button: the rolling of the reels is just a representation of this automatic process, but it increases the sense of expectation (the vertigo or ilinx; Callois, 2001) and preserves the aura of the rituals associated with mechanical slot machines.

Even if the outcome is predetermined and fully controlled by "the house", or maybe because of this, EGMs have been provided with some characteristics, such as gameplay and graphic design, of prevalent screen-based entertainment technologies where unexpected results are the norm. These similarities have to do with the idea of the "challenge", which in pokies are presented, for instance, through the accumulation of jackpots and the "chasing" of loses. They also increase the intensity of desire. In a sense, the punter chases the computer, the aforementioned enemy represented by videogame-like villains, until they get the upper hand. Livingstone points out that:

You have to remember that machines are around 100 years old. Aristocrat tells us in its annual report that it spends something like $120 million a year on research and development, which is a significant amount of money. I presume they are not wasting that money. We can presume that they are doing a lot of work on trialling features which they hope will have success in the marketplace. Remember that success in the marketplace for a gaming machine means getting people who play them to spend more time and more money on those machines. (Proof Committee Hansard, 2 February 2011, p. 34).

In other words, vast quantities are being invested in the development of gameplay that guarantees the formation of gambler-pokie couplings based on continuous play, on the formation of the subject through repetition. This is achieved through "chasing". "Chasing" is "the attempt to recover one's gambling loses by further gambling" (O'Connor and Dickerson, 2003, p.360). This definition, informed by Lesieur's influential work The Chase (1984), sketches one of the prevalent cycles of gambling consumption (the other being the perpetual immersion in "The Zone"), of the automation of desire: gamble, lose, gamble some more to "chase" your loses. Although there are many social, psychological and biological factors that contribute to "chasing" (such as the ones explored by Blaszczynski and Nower [2002] in their Pathways Model), both the interface and the gameplay are designed in such a way as to incite the gambler to embark in "chasing" missions within one gaming session, which in turn constitutes one step in the longer, larger mission that envelops an ongoing relationship with the EGMs (this potentially results in problem gambling). The inability of the gambler to refrain from repetition is known in the medical literature as "loss-of-control" (O'Connor and Dickerson, 2003, p.361), but is encouraged by gambling venues through bonuses and loyalty programs.
Chasing is the primordial procedure of the poker machine as a desiring-machine. This concept also echoes one of the canonical notions in the Deleuzian paradigm: that "the subject is produced as an effect of repetition" (Neil 1998, p.420; cited in Cook, 2009, p.191). As such, continuous engagement with EGMs defines the individual as a gambling-subject.

Chasing is also related to missions and the presence of enemies in videogames. For example, one of Aristocrat's EGMs is based on the movie and television franchise Mission: Impossible. It belongs to the entertainment-style video-slot category offered by the EGM manufacturer. In this pokie the bet is staged by using footage and characters from the on-screen fiction. It combines the universes of gambling and undercover agents. Its promotional materials read: "Espionage meets excitement with six great bonus features" (Aristocrat). The player literally chases the money with guns and helicopters, and by participating in showdowns with the series' villains.

The "chasing procedure" also feeds into a misleading notion that through repetition and practice, the player will be able to pass levels and ultimately win the game. In the case of poker machines, "winning" equals acquiring a sudden amount of wealth by defeating an unjust financial and cultural system incarnated by the machine.

There are further ramifications, however. Like in arcade games money could potentially lose its economic value -at least momentarily- in the eyes of the gambler. In "The Zone", currency becomes a token, a gaming device. Gambling-subjects do not play for money: they play with money. During the human-machine coupling, losses are perceived as the price one has to pay to have a good time. Baudrillard phrases it eloquently, concluding that in gambling money is "no longer a sign or representation once transformed into a stake", and that "a stake is not something one invests", but "something which is presented as a challenge to chance" (1990, p.139; cited in Reith, 1999, p.143). Woolley and Livingstone put it this way: 'Money is a medium, not the object in chief of this activity. Certainly, the accumulation of money is not the 'purpose' of EGM play, although the exhaustion of funds terminates the journey. Rather, gamblers pursue an experience of deep meaning apparently unattainable from other sources" (2010, p.57). But what is the "deep meaning" that is attained by playing the pokies? It is the pursuit of hope, of the idea of financial bonanza and class mobility though the fulfilment of missions, which could provide the individual with a new identity, a new life, a fresh start.

This said, in EGM playing money equals a stake, the token that is necessary to challenge chance. The procedure of "chasing" perpetuates this notion and reveals the nature of the gambling-machine.

Caillois' categorisation of ludic practices, that has been constantly referenced by videogame theorists (Aarseth, 1997) and gambling researchers (Reith, 1999), is useful for analysing poker machines. Two of Caillois' categories of play are of particular importance in the analysis of EGMs as desiring-machines: alea (chance) and agon (competition). The balance struck by these two dispositions towards gaming is what defines both gameplay and the discussions around gambling (in particular around problematic consumption). As cross-platform devices, poker machines "produce meaning" (Montfort and Bogost, 2009, p.1) by striking an apparent equilibrium between chance and skill, and, through innovative interfaces, ultimately producing what Manzur (2009) calls "the gambler's illusion", the idea that consistent gambling will eventually lead to a "big win". Thus, alea and agon are bound together by what Lynch calls "vocabularies of hope" (1990).

In parallel to the procedural integration of EGMs and videogames, there are those who argue that the players' analogous videogame and digital gambling consumption could
shape the ways in which mediated gambling establishes a relationship between players and machines, particularly on the expectations of the gamer/gambler. As King and Delfsabro (2011) point out, "it is possible that video game playing may influence some individuals' gambling knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, strategies and/or gambling behaviours". Furthermore, they propose that this develops into false expectations from the player, in particular in relation to the possibilities of winning. As the authors point out: "video game playing leads some people to develop false expectations about the amount of player control within gambling activities, particularly electronic forms of gambling. Because many video games require skill and strategy, some people may develop a belief that, with sufficient practice, they can overcome and master the challenges of the game" (2011). The mingling of digital gambling and videogames extends beyond parallel consumption: videogame-like gambling is not exclusive to poker machines, but has extended into brick and mortar casinos, where, as if taken out of a futuristic techno-ecosystem à la Blade Runner, digital croupiers deal hands, or virtual hostesses spin the roulette. This adds to the culture of videogame-like gambling, where the player establishes a relationship with a digital interlocutor and engages with interfaces that provide intricate gameplay.

The gambler can engage in an adversarial relationship with the machine, which in policy discourse has been perceived as a separate entity, with agency and the upper hand in its liaison with the player. This antagonism is further exacerbated by the "opposition between the happiness of playing and the unhappiness of being played by the machines" (Nicoll, 2008: 117). There is a widespread belief among "digital" punters that as a human invention, the machine can be controlled, mastered, broken in (as Nature was broken in before). This dichotomy is exteriorised in the laying out of arrangements of postcolonial imagery that provide the machine with a personality, that coat it with a layer of ideas and preconceptions.

**Postcolonial discourses and the New South Wales EGM market**

The symbolic flows invoked by the gambling-machine and perpetuated through repetition are related to historical trajectories related to the shaping and re-shaping of the Australian ethos and to postcolonial discourses. As desiring-machines that are part of the chain of "machines-desiring-machines" (Deleuze and Guattari), EGMs are communicative devices on two levels. On the surface, through their aesthetic configurations (colours, sounds, themes, characters, gameplay and so on), they communicate contemporary consumer values (get more for less) and symbolical arrangements that incite the desire to win, to conquer the Other and to master destiny. Their "quaint, folksy design" (Woolley and Livingstone, 2010) allows gamblers to identify their own notions of entitlement, hope and aspiration in the fantastic universes displayed on EGMs. As I have explored in this paper, they do so through procedures akin to those of videogames. On a second level, through the patterns of their consumption, they have the potential to spell out discourses derived from wider socioeconomic arrangements and notions of labour, class, money and luck, all of which also revolve around desire intermingled with hope.

As EGMs are introduced into new assemblages, local, national and transnational markets generate around them. Echoing DeLanda's definition of markets (influenced by Deleuzian-Guattarian thought), I consider EGMs markets to be assemblages "made out of people and the material and expressive goods people exchange" (2006, p.27). The gambler-pokie coupling happens, precisely, in the core of that exchange. These consumption cultures are meaning-creating apparatuses in the sense that notions of economic, social and cultural values are constantly assessed, traded, commented on and created by the exchange of said "material and expressive goods". EGMs are both material and expressive goods. I will now
outline how their materiality and expressiveness comes about in a particular market: the New South Wales EGM assemblage.

As of 2009, there were almost 100,000 EGMs operating in New South Wales alone, out of a total of 197,820 in Australia (Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform, 2011). Aristocrat Leisure Limited, a successful company that sells EGMs to the Australian, North American and Japanese market, manufactures most of these devices. The company reports a constant exponential growth since the early 2000s (2011 Half Year Profit Announcement), and is among one of the most successful Australian companies, as it has a national and international captive markets.

Clubs, a traditional Australian community institution, are organised around gambling (primarily pokies and sports betting), as there are "no restrictions on the percentage of floor space that can be devoted to gambling (as opposed to catering or other recreational activities)" (Walker, 2009: 1). This reveals the emphasis that club owners and policy-makers give to the consumption of bets. These spaces dance to the rhythm of the "continual whirr of machines"! (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 2)

EGMs are not exclusive to casinos and massive clubs, or to cities. In urban and rural environments, their presence is as ubiquitous as that of hotels and pubs, as the majority of these establishments offer the possibility of gambling in their VIP lounges. The VIP Lounge is where chance, competition and vertigo are staged. A foreign visitor might think that something illegal is taking place in the backrooms of pubs, where VIP lounges are secluded from the rest of the space and lit only by glistening digital interfaces. They claim certain exclusivity and their designation (VIP Lounge) has a clear class-related connotation: entering them offers you the possibility of becoming a Very Important Person.

In casinos, clubs and VIP lounges avid gamblers embark in a sort of adventure, in what Simmel calls a voluntary "dropping out of the continuity of life" (1971b: 187; cited in Reith, 1999: 126). Lears (2002) recalls extreme cases of such "dropping outs" in the North American context:

In Niagara Falls, casino operators complain that slot machine players are urinating into the plastic coin cups supplied by the casino or onto the floor beside the machines. Some wear adult diapers. All are reluctant to leave a machine they are hoping will soon pay off. And in Louisiana, video poker players report trancelike out-of-body experiences, the feeling of "being sucked into oblivion." (p.1)

Extreme cases like these are the imagined scenarios that delineate the discussion around EGM markets and consumption ethics. The frantic, narcotised state that some players seem to experiment with serves as the measuring stick for regulation. These discussions focus on the notion that EGMs are primarily material goods. There are, however, other aspects of EGM consumption that so far have been overlooked and that relate to the expressive capacities of poker machines. This paper deals with these expressive capacities.

If you walk through one of the biggest pokie8 rooms in Sydney -such as the ones in The Star casino in Sydney (formerly Star City) or the Penrith Panthers Club, for instance, or even in small VIP lounges in the pubs that are sprinkled all over the city, you will notice how the aesthetics in many machines resembles that of certain action-based videogames. Punters engage in games in which missions need to be accomplished, adventures await and impossibly buff male characters (The Phantom, for instance) fight side by side with anatom-
ically generous female companions (such as the voluptuous protagonist of *Gypsy Moon*). Gamblers press buttons time and time again, courting their luck through repetitive, possibly compulsive, actions. They occasionally sip on glasses of warm beer and white wine. Cups full of golden coins lay by their side. At first glance, the images and fictional environments that the visitor encounters are not that different to what they would find in a videogame store or a game arcade. The user is engaged, however, in what psychological studies have termed "continuous forms of gambling" (O’Connor and Dickerson, 2003), in which players establish an ongoing engagement with machines (on short sessions or over many sessions in a prolonged period of time— which can potentially lead to addiction).

Most of the designs displayed on EGMs have an expressive particularity: their design shows exotic landscapes related to cultures or natural environments foreign to what is generally (and perhaps erroneously) considered as "Australian" and/or "Western" (there are exceptions, of course, some of which are described in this paper). *Faux Chinese* (Aristocrat’s *Imperial House*, for instance) and Aboriginal lore (*Big Red*), Gold Rush scenarios (*Where’s the... GOLD*), exotic deserts, untamed African jungles, chic European settings *à la* James Bond and Arctic landscapes lay side by side in these large halls, where technology and the commercialisation of the illusion of chance intersect. This expressive particularity is related to a postcolonial perspective; consequentially, the nature of the images that embellish poker machines adds a layer of complexity to the analysis of both the procedures enacted through the interfaces and to the analysis of the actual poker machine devices (the physicality of it, the graphic design, the bolts and circuits). When I talk about post-colonialism, I ascribe to the widely accepted definition offered by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin:

’Post-colonial’ as we define it does not mean ‘post-independence,’ or ‘after colonialism,’ for this would be to falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Post-colonialism, rather, begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is the discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being. (cited in Martinez-San Miguel, 2009: 188)

I am concerned with this "discourse of oppositionality" which sprouts from past and current historical trajectories, in Australia and elsewhere (the US market analysed by Schüll, for instance). EGM aesthetics rely heavily on postcolonial exotica, the discursive practice of making other cultures seem strange and uncanny, a curiosity, and sometimes an obscure object of desire. As Nicoll identifies, "the iconography of some of the most popular poker machines implicitly references unresolved sovereignty struggles in nations built on white settler-colonisation" (2008, p.115). EGMs intersect with the gambler’s own flows of identity and assimilated historical trajectories, and incite the coupling by providing a familiar representation of the unfamiliar. A 2002 study that attempted to detect the main demographic patterns of poker machine players in Sydney, concluded that:

The most important results indicate that the best predictors of per capita poker machine expenditure in Sydney SLGs were high proportions of the resident population who were born in Malta, Greece, Lebanon, China, Italy, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, India or the Philippines; have no vocational or tertiary qualifications; or are unemployed. Also important is that the profile of Sydney populations which spend highly on poker machines broadly supports the lower socio-economic profile identified in previous Australian studies. (Breen, Hing and Weeks: 310)
Apart from flows that sculpt the identity of gamblers in terms of class and ethnicity, other historical factors contribute to this automation of desire. EGMs are also deeply embedded in the Australian ethos. For Walker, "gambling, drinking and sport" are "three of the most important forms of recreation in Australian history" (2009, p.3). At once deemed as a social laceration and glorified as a source of national identity and community building, Australia’s relationship with gambling can be traced back -like its American counterpart (see Mazur, 2010 and Lears, 2003)- to the pioneering spirit of the first European settlers, who tamed a foreign and often violent territory that later became the "Lucky Country" (Nicol, 2010). On a symbolical level, Australian poker machines perpetuate the conquest of a territory and its peoples -they preserve various processes of colonisation and discourses of hope. They also prolong the taming of Fortuna: the imposition of human will over the uneasiness inspired by the unknown. This is one of the discursive flows that are invoked by gambling-machines as narrative devices. In the 2011 report written by the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform (led by Andrew Wilkie MP), Dr. Charles Livingstone briefly acknowledged the "symbolism on the machines", when stating:

We know a machine with particular symbolism in the artwork will be very attractive whereas the same machine with different artwork will be less successful in the market. It is likely that some of the symbolism actually works to provide a greater incentive for people to play the machines. (Dr. Charles Livingstone, Proof Committee Hansard, 2 February 2011: 34.; cited in The design and implementation of a mandatory pre-commitment system for electronic gaming machines: 41)

In a vast majority of poker machines, what Livingstone refers broadly as "symbolism", are echoes of postcolonial tropes. These postcolonial representations are connected to the sense of a "mission" to conquer foreign, exotic environments through the pursuit of "winning" and economic gain. These representations also bring to mind the simplistic "good conquers evil" and "civilisation conquers the barbarians" plots of Hollywood mainstream cinema. This iconography is made culturally familiar through its association with the narratives of well-known action movies and videogames, such as the Indiana Jones and Tomb Raider franchises, or cultural icons such as John Wayne.

By postcolonial aesthetics I mean that audio-visual constructions in EGMs typically reference a sense of differentiation from the historical Other, or what Said has alternatively (and not without controversy) called "Orientalism". Postcolonial aesthetics exteriorise the conflicts driven by historical colonisation and newfound relationships between peoples, and between humankind and the furtive, untamed natural world (a universe that Luck is also part of). In Australia, flows of postcolonial discourses and identities influence race, class and cultural relations. For immigrants and ethnic communities, postcolonial imagery could also be a reminder or a shady representation of their historical and cultural past.

Products such as More Chilli, Jackpot Catcher (Native-American theme), 5 Dragons and Mystic Panda certainly reflect a particular view of the world defined by class and ethnicity. Riches are paired with the conquest of other cultures and territories through missions. Or they coupled with the idea of a "big win", such as in EGMs with mining or Wild West motives. The postcolonial aesthetics of these interfaces could also be related to recent migratory patterns to and from Australia,12 and the new cultural notions and discourses of oppositionality that sprout from these.

Gamblers certainly notice the differences. As one Ms Julia Karpathakis, led by exper-
ience and intuition, explained it in her testimonial for a parliamentary report, recalling her
ordeals as a problem gambler and the influence that the imagery had on her choices:

There is a lot of trickery. That is what it looks like now. But back
then it had a romantic feel about it. The imagery is very ro-
mantic; I would play Sweethearts, Cleopatra, Jewel of the Nile
and all of those kinds of machines. I hated Shogun-I was never
attracted to the look of that one. So it was a bit romantic, not in a
romantic-romantic way but dreamy, if you know what I mean.
(Ms Julia Karpathakis, Committee Hansard, 1 February 2011,
p.15; cited in The design and implementation of a mandatory
pre-commitment system for electronic gaming machines, p.10)

Ms Karpathakis' testimonial is telling for a number of reasons. First, it serves as evi-
dence that for certain gamblers the symbolic arrangements of interfaces, the "trickery", as Ms
Karpathakis calls it, is one of the factors that draw them to play or choose one EGM over
another. She also describes the experience as "dreamy", which takes us back to the state that
Reith described as "oneiric" and which is one of the defining particularities of the gambling-
machine.

Alongside these images, poker machines emit sounds akin to those of videogames:
exploded, high-octane rock and roll music, and sound effects that would be at home in a
Hollywood blockbuster. If someone hits the jackpot, celebratory notes travel through the
room, and punters turn their heads momentarily to catch a glimpse of the lucky one who
got to experience the much sought-after "big win", the highlight of this form of consump-
tion.

I will now provide four telling examples. Firstly, Firelight, one of Aristocrat's
(www.aristocrats.com.au) EGM products, used in many pokie rooms across New South
Wales and the rest of Australia, is advertised as follows:

Travel to an ancient civilization where magic and the powers of
nature rule the world. The mystical Phoenix will cause your luck
to rise as the volcano erupts with multiplied wins!13

In Firelight, the mission is not merely to make money, but to make the volcano ex-
plode with "multiplied wins". It is also about visiting an "ancient civilization" and extracting
something (resources) out of it. The advertisement could also have a gender base connota-
tion: winning is the equivalent of a pyrotechnic ejaculation. The sexualisation of gambling
-that is, meaning-making through appealing to the realm of the erotic- is a common practice
among interface designers. Advertisements for online casinos, for instance, often show attrac-
tive women inviting potential clients. This has been referred to elsewhere; Nicoll, for ex-
ample, relates the following: "I also have a T-shirt purchased in Brisbane which displays a
cartoon symbol in profile of two men each with the handle of a vibrating one-armed bandit
or poker machine in his arse while coins pour out of his cock. Above the image are the
words 'WARNING POKIES'. Two points that struck me about the image are: its very literal
re-contextualisation of the 'money shot' with which traditional pornographic representa-
tions climax, and that its representation of poker machines erotically vibrating players is
very close to the truth. I'm not sure when this image was produced but in the past five years
pokies living subtle vibrations timed to 'go off ' with the animated and musical 'features'
have been installed in most Australian gambling venues." (2008, pp.104-105)

In Love of the Nile (Figure 4), Aristocrat pairs two of the main characters of its brand
mythology, a practice that shares similarities with film, comic or videogame cross-overs:

The love story between two of Aristocrat's most instantly recognizable game characters from the iconic games- Queen of the Nile and King of the Nile. The symbols in this 25 Line game are based on the original titles to provide the classic look and feel combined with an innovative feature extension. During the Feature when 2, 5 or 7 scatters are collected the BONUS WILD symbol is added to the reel, the BONUS WILD symbol combines the CLEOPATRA & PARAOH WILD characters onto one symbols bringing these two characters together at last.

Startman Sam, another of Aristocrat’s poker machines (Bonus Bank category) is not related to a postcolonial discourse, but exemplifies the videogamification of Electronic Gaming Machines. The interface presents an animated character that performs the outcomes of the player's forays with luck. Stuntman Sam, a circus artist, enacts chance in a flamboyant, pyrotechnic manner. The game is advertised in the company's website as follows:

In this daring new game, players meet Stuntman Sam, the latest hero from Aristocrat. Stuntman Sam attempts several heart-stopping, death-defying feats to give the player an entertaining gaming experience and a big win [...] This action packed game will have players cheering Stuntman Sam on as he attempts death defying stunts including getting shot out of a cannon, high dive, dodging the knife throw, bike jump an a risky plane stunt.14

Another one of Aristocrat's games, Hillbillions takes "players on an exhilarating journey celebrating the culture of mountain people with Billy, the Hillbilly". This constitutes another form of exoticism, one that alludes, perhaps in a condescending manner, to a rural segment of the population.

After performing this brief textual analysis of the sort of images that adorn these and other poker machines, and the spaces in which they are located, we can put forward the argument that this combination strives to produce what Reith calls "sensory maelstrom" (1999: 128). That is to say that the perception of time and space changes, and the player can enter a state that has been described elsewhere as "oneiric".

The fantastic worlds represented in poker machines aid in producing this oneiric state, a specific form of consciousness that gambling practices already induce. It would be counterintuitive to think, therefore, that the phenomenology of a gambler's experience remains the same regardless of the way in which the game is presented (if the pokies are not exciting enough, Stuntman Sam comes to the rescue!).

Conclusions

The interactive images that engage players turn poker machines into storytelling devices. Procedure-images add a layer of narrative complexity to the analysis of the discourse rooted in poker machines. How procedures are enacted is as important as the procedure itself. The worlds represented on the poker machines (on the graphic design of the hardware) and on the screen interfaces influence the nature of the adventure that the gambler/player embarks in.

Playing a boring, dull version of video poker does not incite the same procedures, or
connect with the same cultural and historical flows, as an adorned interface. The purpose of this paper has been to discern the nature of those procedures and discourses in the controversial poker machine market in Australia, for as Nicoll identifies: "The shape of modern gambling not only reflects the nature of social relations in any society, but also powerfully determines new social and political outcomes" (2008, p.103). These social and political outcomes are the factors that have fed the fire of political discourse over poker machine policy, and define the opposing ends of the spectrum in policy discussion: State intervention versus industry self-regulation.

This paper does not intend to dehumanise the gambler or disregard the psychological dimension of pokie consumption or its social repercussions. Rather, I abstract the EGM-gambler coupling to initiate an academic discussion of the peculiarities gambling-machine and its media specificity.

ENDNOTES

1: In The Gambler, Fyodor Dostoyevsky narrates the wanderings of Alexei Ivanovich, a persistent, compulsive gambler. This short novel is widely referenced in gambling studies (Reith, 1999; Schüll, 2012) as an accurate, thoughtful representation of repetitive gambling, such as the one provided by EGMs, and provides a useful example of what Schüll describes as "The Zone".

2: Caldwell (1972) argues, however, that their introduction could date back as far as the 1890s.

3: Medical literature has constructed the figures of the "problem gambler" and the "pathological gambler" based on the intensity of the gambler's desire and its subsequent fulfilment.


5: Others, however, simply want to remain in "The Zone", as one of Schüll's respondents explained: "Today when I win -and I do win, from time to time- I just put it back in the machines. The thing people never understand is that I'm not playing to win" (2012, p.2).


7: There are also numerous online casinos that offer online pokies, such as www.noble-casino.com, www.slotmachinesonline.com, and www.playonlinepokies.com, among many others. There is also a plethora of smartphone and tablet apps such as Slots Journey, Casino Master Slots, Slots-Pharaoh's Way, Slots by Zynga and Slots of Gold.

8: It is worth acknowledging that there are also numerous poker machines (or slot machines, as they are commonly known in the web) in online casinos. They replicate the procedures and feel-and-look of physical pokies.

9: I conducted informal ethnographic observation in these sites.

10: To watch a video of the images displayed in this EGM, visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgGd2udr76c (accessed April 5, 2012).

11: The Tin Tin comic book series, created by the Belgian artist Hergé, is an example of exotica: a European-centred view of other continents and peoples, it has recently been deemed as a somewhat crude, uninformed view of the cultures that Europeans encountered during and after the processes of colonisation.

12: For instance, in the suburb of Cabramatta, NSW, the Vietnamese community is deeply invested in poker machine gambling. The Stardust Hotel is one of the highest-gross-
ing venues in New South Wales (Vanda, 2010). Analysing the Fai...kness' most disadvantaged region. And yet Fairfield is at the heart of Sydney's...it as Sydney's most disadvantaged region, and yet Fairfield is at the heart of Sydney's poker machine industry and the licensed clubs that dominate it."


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VIOLENCE IN POP-CULTURE MEDIA AND THE HUNGER GAMES AS A PRIME ARTIFACT

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This paper uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology to analyze the meanings conveyed in relation to violence in Suzanne Collins' popular novel The Hunger Games and its film. As a representational popular-culture artifact marketed to young adults and teens, it is a primary example for the exposure of this age group to the levels of violence regularly displayed in contemporary popular media. This analysis seeks to critique the assertion that the types of violent exposure in the novel and the film are possibly inappropriate for the audience targeted. A new wave of attention and awareness on the part of producers of popular media and people of contemporary society alike is necessary.

Keywords: violence, pop-culture, Hunger Games, desensitization, children, parenting

The impact of two of contemporary pop culture's most consumed current artifacts; Suzanne Collins' novel The Hunger Games, and its film adaptation have been monumental. Both artifacts are marketed to the audience often referred to as young adult, but the content in both the film and the novel could be argued to be inappropriate for such audiences. There are distinct references to death, dismemberment, and gladiator-style fighting that expose the nature of contemporary popular culture and the texts it is producing.

The Hunger Games novel has amassed a large amount of controversy in media circles. Most articles are quick to cite Dr. Michael Rich, who claims that the movie and the book are entirely different. According to Nina Metz of The Chicago Tribune, "...what a child is able to envision is limited to the boundaries of his or her imagination. 'But when you put an image or an idea into a movie, someone else has translated that.' And quite suddenly, the picture a child has created in their mind is augmented by the more vivid and sophisticated imaginations of savvy Hollywood filmmakers" (Betz, 2012). The idea is that the book is reliant upon the child's imagination on an individual level and the interpretation

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varies. The film, on the other hand is created from another’s imagination. Therefore, the imagery is interpreted on the creator’s level. Since in this case, the book was extremely graphic and violent, the film would therefore be even more vividly graphic for the viewer. The issue with this is that if the book was gory, then the film should likely not be rated PG-13 or 12A.

A parenting guide to movies is provided by a site called Parent Preview. The site watches popular texts and then grades the text on certain aspects that the people might be concerned about. The film *The Hunger Games* received a D+ for violence. According to the site, a D means, "Excessive violence deemed gratuitous, unnecessary, or which serves only as an entertainment attraction. Violence is used without any consideration for non-violent conflict resolution. Explicit scenes of death, destruction, injuries or mutilation would also be assigned this grade" (Parent Previews.com, 2012). A D+ means this is the general consensus, but that the film is not quite this terrible. C ratings include much of the same aspects; however, "Some justification in preserving life, liberty, or fundamental laws of society or an attempt to solve a situation through reasonable negotiation or conflict resolution must be evident" (Parent Previews.com, 2012).

The film modeled after the popular book, *The Hunger Games* received a PG-13 and 12A rating. Ratings are a major component of debates that are currently circulating in academic and political arenas alike. Recent studies have noted that a phenomenon called *ratings creep*, coined by Johnson & Yokota (2004, as cited by Strain, 2010) may be a real issue to be studied further. The hypothesis suggests that ratings have become more lax as time goes on for the MPAA. Strain (2010) posits that the ratings are indeed becoming more likely to allow certain behaviors and scenes to be rated with a PG-13 whereas the same content would have warranted an R rating just ten years ago. (2010).

Further, Potts and Belden (2009) devised their own study to test the hypothesis and confirmed that the ratings were indeed being subjected to a change in content-driven restraints that are in place to inhibit the consumption by children of movies with violence. They found, "Collective results of the present study and those of Thompson and Yokota confirm that American children are exposed to more mature content, most notably violence, sexuality, adult language, and substance use, in today’s G, PG, and PG-13 movies than they were only a few years ago" (p. 14). Considering the UK granted the film a 12A rating, this phenomenon could be occurring internationally. The most important concept to take from this controversy is that kids are consuming it on a grand scale, and in order to understand the relationship between violent content consumed and the reactions from the young adult cognitive mind, an analysis of the actual content must be performed. This is one way to get to the actual heart of the argument; is *The Hunger Games* providing a spectacle of human violence and marketing it to a young audience? Also, what are the implications of allowing the younger audience to be exposed to it, and is there a real consequence to being exposed when one is forming a social self, as teens and pre-teens are trying to do?

The novel is the prevalent text for this discussion and analysis, but the film, as a related text will also be considered. An analysis will be conducted to identify where the overlap is and how the evidence exemplifies the use of violence as a screen by which the audience is exposed to the levels and effects of the violent artifacts that make up the whole. In the later discussion, the theories that have been presented in the introduction will be used to interpret the text using the critical discourse analysis method.

The term *text* is referred to often in this paper and should be defined first. A text is any presented object for consumption that can be interpreted to discover meaning from its many parts or *artifacts* which make up its whole (Foss, 2004). The texts in this discussion
then, are the novel, *The Hunger Games*, and the film sharing this name that has recently been presented by director Gary Ross and produced by Nina Jacobson and Jon Kilik. Throughout this paper, this group will be called *the filmmakers* for convenience.

There are several functions of this analysis that will be introduced, studied, and discussed in depth to fortify the overall thesis. The violent content in the novel and film is the main problem that will be addressed here, with particular attention being paid to the nature of the rhetorical and especially the cultural discourse of the content and artifacts within the two texts discussed. The questions to be analyzed and answered in this paper are as follows: First, is the level of violence and how it is presented in the book something parents should be alarmed about if their children between the ages of 11 and 17 are reading it? According to Joni Bodart from Scholastic, the book's target readership group is between the sixth and eighth grades, but is compared to Twilight's audience, which includes teens. This means the target age group communicated by a children's book publisher is situated between 11 and 13 years. Second, is the lens through which violence in its many forms in the book and the film are presented appropriate for children? Finally, is the metaphorical nature of the text's overall message something that should be introduced to the leaders of tomorrow, before they actually experience the world as adults?

As with any critical discourse analysis, the author of this paper does have some biases that should be disclosed. First, I am a middle-class, white, thirty-something, mother of two young children. However, that context helps actualize my assumptions that violence presented by popular media does not cause detriment to the masses in general, while allowing insight to evidence that marketing *The Hunger Games* to a young adult audience may have some negative connotations and should be considered as a cause for concern in Western society.

**Violence and the Current Debate**

Violence in the media and its impact on children and their cognitive processes engenders debate within academic and scientific arenas. Joanne Cantor (2002), a scholar of note on violence and exposure contends, "Today's youth have greater opportunities for desensitization to media violence than ever before. We now have so many television channels, so many movies on video, and so many video-, computer-, and Internet-based games available, that media-violence aficionados have a virtually limitless supply and can play intensely gruesome images over and over, often in the privacy of their own bedrooms" (p. 2). The effects violence has on the impressionable ages of the young adult group is an earnest concern to popular culture analysis as the reach and access of media texts are introduced in the news, books, films, the internet, and television (2008).

One reason for this phenomenon of violent content assisting with the popularity of mainstream texts is posited that consumerism is behind the "ratings creep" currently being enacted on American pop-culture texts, stating "...the MPAA, an organization whose primary function is to maximize the financial success of motion pictures... may have intentionally invoked guidelines that resulted in increased frequency of assignments of unrestricted ratings, especially PG-13 ratings, to movies with adult content that would have received R ratings in previous years" (p. 15). If this is a realistic summation of the contemporary guidelines in young adult and teen exposure to violent acts in movies, and in particular, *The Hunger Games*, there is real cause for societal alarm. (2009).

**Social forming in children.** Bandura, Ross, Ross & Ross postulated that violence in mediated communication could possibly produce a real-life reaction wherein aggressive behavior is mimicked because the subject has been exposed and while forming the social self,
reacted to that exposure by emulating a behavior (Bandura et al, 1963). Lasch-Quinn (2003) would have the population of contemporary Western society recognize that the world has changed, and with it, ushered in by the manipulative tactics of advertisers and marketing campaigns, a perfunctory and inevitable downsizing in sensitivity and self-image that is healthy for the development of America's children. Lasch-Quinn writes that "One of the glaring effects of...desensitization to violence is the tendency to objectify human beings—to see them not as living, breathing, persons...but as replaceable objects" (p. 50). Further, she posits that the day-to-day exposure to violence in popular media produces a twisted mixture of self-loathing, fear, and aggressive reactions which young people feel can be tempered or even abolished through consumerism by "...getting customers to scrutinize themselves ruthlessly and measure themselves against a manufactured image" (p. 53).

Katniss, the main character of Collins' *The Hunger Games*, is by default a role-model character for young women, simply because of the popularity of the novel and as such holds a very real power in just 'being' because she is the object for consumption. Her character provides the attitude, the reactivity, and the desensitization to violence that inspires young people to push themselves to reflect a toughness that combats the fear and a negative self-image that society promotes them to feel.

**Instinctual aggression theories.** According to Christopher Strain, (2010) another argument often presented suggests that the popularity of violence in media is largely due to human instinct and an instinctual need for posturing and aggressive behavior to promote acquiescence in others. In other words, we as humans are aggressive in order to be the most powerful within the social arenas in which we function. Strain cites, "Since our animal ancestors were instinctively violent creatures, and since we have evolved from them, we bear the genetic imprint of their violence and act accordingly" (p. 20).

Strain (2010) discusses the debate in detail and comes to the conclusion that while natural science can indeed illustrate evidence that suggests human beings have a natural tendency toward violence bred from instinctual fear and desire, the social sciences have illustrated that the instincts are generally promoted to action by the influence of violence in popular media. Strain insists that while the biological cannot be dismissed, the cultural influences should be calculated as well; influence through cultural social norming is a part of the hegemonic rules of a society and this has impact upon reactions and actions in relation to violent deeds.

**Cultivation effect.** Another point of contention as presented by other research is that the violence presented by pop-culture mediums in contemporary society is specifically aimed to create a panic response. The argument here is that panic and fear are sewn through the many forms of violent behaviors and actions fed to the masses through popular culture artifacts like *The Hunger Games* and its descendent film. Another take on this theory assumes that the consumers are driven to buy to things they believe will represent safety in response to what they feel can be harmful. (Cantor, 2002; Wilson et. al., 2002).

Consider the argument made by Gerbner, in his multiple studies throughout the years, (1976; 1986) which posits the theory of the cultivation effect, which produces a fearful response to media that depicts violence. (Cited by Kunkel & Zwarun; 2003). Kunkel and Zwaren (2003) maintain a definition for the cultivation effect as follows: "...viewers exposed to heavy doses of television violence come to believe that their world is a violent and scary place...leads to an exaggerated fear of crime or victimization that persists over time" (p. 206). Violence has been researched in connection with public fear or panic at length. In considering the dystopian nature of the future world depicted by Panem in *The Hunger Games,
fear is the ultimate goal of the powerful Capitol; the power that decides the names of the children who will be sacrificed to the cause of keeping the nation under control is ultimately inducing fear in the population.

Further, psychologists and sociologists argue the points that violence seen and read or consumed in any other form are precursors to violent acts and behavior directly. Scholars have researched this particular facet at length and concluded that there is a link, often associated or sprung from the ground-breaking research and what is referred to as The Social Learning Theory, coined by Bandura in the 1960’s. (Gerbner, Signorielli, & Morgan; 1995, Bandura; 1963, etc.) This argument assumes a sort of monkey-see-monkey-do type of ideology.

Contemporary empirical social sciences research presents the consumption of films and novels to evidence the theory that violence consumed begets violence in real life by the age groups discussed. An interesting study published in Science, by Johnson et. al. (2002) suggests through quantitative and qualitative evidence that the exposure of violent acts causes an increase in aggression from the age of consumption at 14 to the stage of acting aggressively at 22. ] The information gathered suggests that:

"In the male subsample, television viewing at mean age 22 was associated with subsequent assaults or fights resulting in injury. In the female subsample, television viewing at mean age 22 was associated with subsequent assaults or fights resulting in injury, robbery, threats to injure someone, or use of a weapon to commit a crime, and any aggressive act against another person. The association between television viewing at mean age 22 and any aggressive act against another person was significantly stronger in the female subsample than in the male subsample" (p. 4).

What is fascinating about this research is that it is not primarily focused on male aggression, as most studies are. This study demonstrates that female viewers or readers are also impacted by the violence they consume and that young girls may indeed be impacted negatively by the violence they are exposed to in the novel and the film.

**Methodology**

The methodology used to analyze the texts The Hunger Games and its descendent film is commonly referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Its use is qualitative in nature and function and uses the interpretation of artifacts within a larger text to illustrate meaning and contextual reliability. This paper will assist the likelihood of its thematic discovery of meanings and possible interpretations using violence as a lens through which the audience assembles that meaning is accomplished through criticism and identification of certain themes and presentations of information to the viewer or reader.

**CDA**

The methodology used to analyze the novel and the relevant parts of the film, is described and defined by Teun A.van Dyk in his article, "Discourse & Society: Principles of Discourse Analysis" (1993). van Dijk claims, critical discourse analysis "is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis...their critical targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice" (p. 252). What this means for the purposes outlined here, is that within the consumption of pop-culture texts, the power struggles in-
herent within the contemporary society from which the text is written and enacted reflect realities of power and marginalization.

If exposure to morally ambiguous actions and deeds promote the actions themselves, as Bandura suggests then the texts individuals consume are overtly important to understanding the social motivations behind their consumption. Schrobsdorff et. al. suggest that the activity of priming is directly responsible for constructing ideas that support the hegemonic structure of the Western culture. Priming is a manner in which the commercializing powers that target consumers can create social norms and ideologies for a society (Schrobsdorff et. al., 2012).

The effect of priming is an answering hegemony; one for which commercialism and consumption can be mechanisms, and specific messages can be communicated to the masses to assert control of social and cultural conventions. Media are priming the population that consumes them for some purpose or other. The effect has a vast power of influence over the population. The people of Western society are being primed (Schrobsdorff et. al., 2012). We consume; therefore we must consider that there is a cognitive and psychosocial reaction to this priming, not unlike Pavlov’s dog (Myers, 2004). These are some of the integral considerations of Critical Discourse Analysis.

If this is true, then the specific people that control the content overtly control hegemonic structures as well. There would be a balance of power then, not unlike Katniss’s Panem. While people of Western civilization may believe they can consume what parts of popular culture texts and artifacts they wish, the underlying truth is that those whom control the content control the messages, and this is the main issue. This awesome power wielded by a few, when compared with the screening of specific content as controlled in Panem in the book and film are not so different. If there is actually a relationship in power dynamics, then Panem could become far less a point of Science Fiction and far more a reflection of modern day society. According to Mckee, "...by analyzing a text you can find out about the sense-making practices that were in place in a culture where it is circulated as meaningful" (p. 49). What Mckee suggests is that the context of a text, when it was made, how it influences the audience, and what it communicates is as important as the messages within it.

Critical Discourse Analysis uses a mixture of Rhetorical critical methodology and the newer, more targeted cultural studies which are concerned with the way culture shapes attitudes and ideas through the use of messages and meaning in order to influence or shape that culture to be something. Most often in CDA, those messages and meanings are associated with the dynamics and relationships that shape the interactions of people with a larger force such as the products of those who hold the power to create the messages themselves.

A Critical Discourse analyst looks at questions that people rarely take the time to consider in the store and looks for the messages in each of these questions using a method called coding. (Foss, 2004). This is the primary method in this paper used to discern the messages and meaning of them to form conclusions. Foss (2004) contends that the collection of symbols and their meaning form a rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation combines the reasons, ideas, attitudes, and codes that each of the symbols in any text come together to semiotically form a single concept.

**THE CODIFIED MESSAGES**

Another consideration in how to gather the kind of intelligence required to discover the meanings in a text and how the messages presented fit together to make that meaning is dominance. In the case of this analysis, the use of dominance is analyzed in detail by coding
the primary texts, The Hunger Games book and film for several specific categories of messages. These include: (1) Exposure to violence, (2) reactions to exposure, (3) recognition of violent acts and ideals, (4) emotive responses (or lack thereof) to the violence, (5) power and associative oppression, (6) literary archetypes, (7) binary relationships, (8) metaphorical meanings conveyed, and (9) resulting reactions and attitudes. Using the 9 categories of codified messages, this paper will seek to answer the two main questions that were related in the introduction. The analysis has a certain subjective tint to it. This is why bias is important to a CDA.

THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE AS A LENS

Violence is not simply the use of one person's physical force to hurt another person. Rather, for the purposes defined here, there are several types of violence. In other words, the action is causal to the effect of misery or pain being experienced. The Hunger Games is teeming with all three types of violence and its repercussions. By using the coding methodology described, this paper will seek to illustrate the relationship between the defined recognition of what violence is, and the connection with the questions raised.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this paper is to inform the reader about the different types of violence and its repercussions, attitudes, ideologies, and uses, and the issues incumbent to allowing the intended audience of violence to be exposed to it in The Hunger Games and popular culture texts as a whole. The society that produces violent content in its most base and brutish formats must be held accountable for the effects caused that could include desensitization and increase in violence in children's lives.

The texts analyzed here will illustrate the types of violent relationships in the socio-political and economical conceptions of a fantasy-based world that contains a metaphorical comparison to current American society. The overall allusion in the story is that in the current state of technological literacy, access, and advance, social norms are being mutated to allow more accessible forms of violent behaviors and situations available for consumption.

ANALYSIS OF THE HUNGER GAMES

The Hunger Games is the name of the annual spectacle for which the novel is titled in which 24 children between the ages of 12 and 18 are chosen in a lottery to compete against one another to the death. The contestants are called tributes and there are two for each of the outlying 12 Districts. These tributes are offered against their will to maintain peace in the country of Panem, which is ruled over by a Capitol located where Denver is in the real world. The main character, Katniss Everdeen is the narrator and the female tribute from District 12. The poorer an eligible girl or boy, the more names they have in the lottery as they can trade more names for yearly surpluses of grain and foodstuffs. Despite her name being in the bucket 24 times, her sister Prim who has only 1 is chosen and Katniss volunteers to save her.

The story evolves to capture Katniss's viewpoint as she experiences being one of the tributes who must win where the absolute object of the game is to kill all of the other contestants and reign in the end as the single victor. The main characters consist of the tributes from each of the Districts and the few people in Katniss's life who have made an impact on her. Many of the tributes are barely mentioned but there is a group called the Careers, which includes the District 2 male, Cato, District 1's female, Glimmer, and District 2's female, Clove. These are the volunteers. The other tributes who are discussed are Peeta, who
is Katniss's male counterpart from her District, and Rue and Thresh who are the tributes from the African American District, 11. The only other character that is discussed often is the one referred to as Foxface, who is a clever girl who works alone and often outsmarts the others, from District 5. Finally, Gale, who is Katniss's hunting partner is often mentioned throughout the story, although he is not a tribute.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

The novel's title is three simple words, and yet linguistically, the meaning can be interchanged to refer to several different themes in the story. First the word *Hunger*, can mean literally starving, or it can mean yearning or wanting. If it is taken by the first meaning, it likely refers to an individual or a group being hungry for food and sustenance. Katniss is often conscious of the need for food as she refers to being hungry many times. Perhaps the word stands for the need for food by Katniss, the main character of the narrative. She mentions that starving is one of the key motivators for her routine law breakage, (which is hunting).

There is an inherent quality of violence by the Capitol on the smaller socio-economies within its borders as each of the Districts must adhere to the rules imposed or face punishment. The quality of fear is violence in itself because the Capitol uses it to control the masses in general. Hungry, weak people cannot be acknowledged as the type of threat healthy, well-fed and strong ones are. Therefore, the imposed hunger is a form of oppressive physical and emotional violence constructed by the Capitol to exert its dominance over its residents in the outlying Districts. According to Katniss, the further the District from the Capitol, the more oppressed its inhabitants.

Perhaps the word *Hunger* denotes a feeling of yearning or wanting. Reality TV is a function of voyeuristic tendency in humankind. The audience number surges when someone is punched, hit by a car, or attacked by wild animals. The violence itself is not the main concern if this meaning of hunger is the intended one; but rather, the ideal that human beings actually hunger for others' deaths in the most violent manners possible. Consider also, the word *Games* and how it fits within the current analysis of the meanings for *hunger*. The concept of gladiatorial competition is representative of this type of hunger.

The games were all the rage in ancient Roman times. Several times a week the arena was used for something that did not involve the gladiator competitions. These events were actually titled, *The Games*. Any citizen was invited to watch the executions of that week's criminals. In fact, the citizens were encouraged to attend the Games for entertainment purposes. Since the Roman gladiator times, popular media culture seems to have adapted the use of violence for entertainment purposes as well in contemporary books, movies, and television. Because of this phenomenon, the alarms of academics and critics have been raised that the inherent political message is anything but oblique; society is allowing too much violent media into the accessible homes of today's contemporary families and its children, who are impressionable and should be entitled to their childhoods.

*The Hunger Games* functions rather akin to the earlier blockbuster, *Gladiator* (2000). It has been proven that people are fascinated by violent acts (Weaver, 2011). Whether the masses enjoy watching or are simply drawn to the shock, an emotion that is in constant decline due to desensitization and objectification of the human body, or are responding to the arousal researched in the brain's response to violence watched has yet to be determined, (Lasch-Quinn, 2006; Kostas et. al., 2009). Something draws people into wanting to watch. The voyeurism of watching what appears to reality is a contemporary fascination revived in much the same manner as *The Games* of Roman times. It has been suggested that
the fascination of voyeuristic reality TV watching is a prevalent habit of today's American pop-cultural fascination. (Biltereyst, 2004)

Researchers struggle to understand what motivates human beings to watch the gore in horror movies. As violence presented by various types of media is intrinsically rife with conflict and suffering, the masses tune in or read it in such numbers that the widespread sociological fascination with it becomes inarguable. Wilson claims, (2002), that "Delighting in the reign of reason and law as in the display of combat and will to carnival excess, Coliseum spectacle paradoxically circulates to empower the state and ruler at the expense of the actors and citizens" (p. 68). The significance of power and manipulation is no less apparent in the novel than in the movie Gladiators, which was given a deserved rating of R while The Hunger Games receives a PG-13. The same ideals and political agendas are present in The Hunger Games, portraying the same concepts but even in a more ruthless fashion because it involves the deaths of children. Consider a thematic, allegorical comparison of The Hunger Games to the remnant empire-driven Roman spectacle of long ago. Wilson (2002) notes that the gladiatorial contests, "...served to entertain, elicit support for, if not to ratify their own power on the pulses of their amazed and terrorized populace" (p. 66).

The use of Games in the title and central spectacle itself in the book suggests that this quality of control is present and used to excess to prove the very point Wilson makes. The Capitol's opening speech at the beginning of the reaping is paramount in proving this ideology. During the Capitol's speech, the audience is made aware of the motivation for the Games. The reason this merciless competition is in existence is because over 8 decades ago, the people of Panem rose up against the Capitol in rebellion. All 12 Districts were punished and the outlying District 13 was destroyed.

Collins, the author, admits a kind of desensitization of herself, however, in an interview, stating, "...there is so much programming, and I worry that we're all getting a little desensitized to the images on our televisions. If you're watching a sitcom, that's fine. But if there's a real-life tragedy unfolding, you should not be thinking of yourself as an audience member" (Interview, 2008). A concern for desensitization was a motivational factor in creating the story. She seems to imply that real-life violence such as that on the news, or in blogs and podcasts during situations of conflict is wrong, while blatantly communicating that a fantasy-based moment of violent conflict is fine.

The Archetypal Women and Girls

The opening pages of the book immediately construct the relationships of several binary constructs which ultimately lead the reader to inclined approximations of good and evil within the contextual arena of Panem. For example, consider the names and character traits of Katniss Everdeen and her sister, Primrose. The clothing Katniss wears is generally dark, deeply colored, or black. Her demeanor is often referred to as being dark, somber, or sullen as well.

Katniss's whole consciousness is completely interwoven with violence in all of its forms. She is oppressed and displays the consequences of being traumatized, and yet this quality gives her the best shot of winning the games and becoming a celebrity, which in turn affects the welfare of her helpless sister and mother if she wins. She breaks the law at every turn, uses her ability to hunt to provide for her family, cannot admit any emotional attachment to anyone but her sister, and cannot accept help or guidance from others. She is stubborn to a fault. This set of personality traits has inspired young girls around the country to take up the bow and learn archery, proving Katniss's character represents a role-model for girls to mimic, (Grimm, 2012).
Grimm mentions that the archery teachers are concerned because of the use of the bow to hurt people in the books. However, they are happy about the increased interest that has not ever been mirrored. Rambo inspired an interest in archery, as well as the Lord of the Rings, but it generally was most inspiring to men, not women. (2012). The sister, on the other hand represents the archetypal damsel in distress and allegorically calls to mind the traditional softer side of girls from the late nineteenth century, in its purest most used traditional storybook form.

Primrose’s character resonates with the light, fresh connotations associated with love and perfection. Prim is described by Cat, saying, "Prim’s face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named" (p.3). The lingual use of fresh, raindrop, and lovely denote that the girl is innocent and good. The connotations connected with that description are suggestive that she cannot protect herself and is inherently feminine in the traditional literary sense that generally includes the ideal that girls are breakable, innocuous, and require protection. Katniss reiterates this point further as she claims, "I protect Prim in every way I can, but I’m powerless against the reaping” (p. 15). Prim is the feminine damsel who requires protecting and Katniss rejects her own femininity perhaps in order to face the violence, the brutality of her life. She will always step up to protect those who cannot, however. It’s in her nature as the hero to do so. Levels of privilege and power are inextricable woven through the levels of archetypal and metaphorical representations in the novel, and primarily represented by female characters.

**Callous or Desensitized?**

The level of desensitization in Katniss’s character is nearly comprehensive, as she narrates, "It’s the first time I’ve ever kissed a boy, which should make some sort of impression I guess, but all I can register is how unnaturally hot his lips are from the fever" (p. 261). Peeta’s character seems almost irrelevant other than to give Katniss an edge in attracting voyeuristically masochistic sponsors. She intentionally romanticizes the relationship with Peeta in order to attain the upper hand in the Games and receive gifts from sponsors.

While she feels a connection with her hunting partner Gale, she is quick to deny any emotion stating, "...the way the girls stare at him...It makes me jealous but not for the reason people think. Good hunting partners are hard to find” (18). Katniss appears to be a textbook case of the effects of desensitization. According to Fanti et. al. (2009), "after prolonged and repeated exposure across a person’s lifetime, the psychological impact of...violence ...reduces or habituates; the observer becomes emotionally and cognitively desensitized to...violence across time" (p. 179). This World, Panem condones the loss of compassion as it televises the Games to be sure everyone watches the violent punishment for rebellion. Katniss then, is a product of her environment in that she appears desensitized because of the violent trauma that has been imposed upon her by her own socio-political status and the keen economic hardship bred from it.

**Killing**

One of the staunchest examples of the repercussions of violence and its impact can be found in the methods and motivations that create the killing scenes in the novel. There are several types of killing that are described by Katniss in her adventure. Some of these are killing for revenge, killing out of necessity, killing by accident, and even compassionate killing. All of which are creatively written situations in which murder is excused and considered necessary for survival.

Also, all of the murder done in the arena is justifiable, which is one of the main argu-
ments within the current debate about violence portrayed by popular media. Weaver (2011) cites this paradigm saying, "...violence that is justified and perpetrated against unlike characters may be more enjoyable than violence that is unjustified and perpetrated against liked characters (Raney, 2004; Weaver, p. 15). Research shows that the justification of violent behavior in popular media constructs a platform for both desensitization and traumatization for children. (Cantor, 2003). Further, If the perpetrator, or the character committing violent acts, is "engaging or attractive," this can increase the likelihood that viewers will be negatively affected by such a violent portrayal, specifically increasing the chances that viewers "will learn aggression" from that portrayal" (Timmer, 2011; p. 31, citing Wilson, et. al.; 2002). Regardless of the author's nonchalant admission that violence in real-life media is devastating to children, she considers the violence in fantasy stories to be less damaging.

The levels of violence interwoven into the narrative and the plot line of the novel are synonymous in many ways with the killing that takes place throughout the story. The metaphorical meaning is reconciled through murder in this book rings with a real-life sense. Consider the first death of the story. The death of Katniss's father is inherently the fault of the Capitol that forces the District 12 men to work in the coal mines if they want to support their families. The nature of his death, being blown up inside the mine to the point that there are no remains is a very violent end to meet, and to consider as a young girl.

The Capitol forces the men to mine and so, in Katniss's perception, her father's death is in fact the direct fault of the oppressive government which facilitated the means by which he died. The Capitol, which to her signifies the enemy, is therefor at the center, responsible for all of the killing. It almost seems that throughout the ordeal of the arena, the Capitol is blamed for the killing because otherwise Katniss would die herself. Following this logic, all killing in the world of Panem is in some degree, the Capitol's fault, and therefore, justifiable in the eyes of the reader who identifies with the hero girl who is forced to do the work of death dealing in order to survive.

There are several ways to be killed in the arena, each described in vividly realistic detail. In the first moments of release into the Coliseum-like area of the arena, the death and dismemberment are described realistically as a bloodbath. Eight die in the first 10 minutes. Katniss describes the scene in garish detail recounting, "...then he coughs, splattering my face with blood. I stagger back, repulsed by the warm, sticky spray. Then the boy slips to the ground. That's when I see the knife in his back...All the general fear I've been feeling condenses into an immediate fear of this girl, this predator who might kill me in seconds" (p. 158). This is the first moment Katniss relays to the audience through her viewpoint of the opening seconds of the Games. Not only is she afraid, but she is sprayed by blood, someone attempts to kill her, and she begins to associate the tributes with the word, "predator". She has no real reaction, however to this boy spraying her with blood as he dies, except to recognize that the blood is warm and sticky and repulsive. His actual death moves her character philosophically no more than watching a rabbit die.

Consider the words of warning from Lasch-Quinn (2003) as she states, "Psychologists agree that the basic minimal requirement for the formation of moral conscious is empathy for others. Thus, it is possible that the objectification of human beings in popular culture acts directly against basic requirements for moral development" (p. 50). Consider the pop-culture exposure the residents of District 12 have with the world they live in. Only the Games are televised without fail in her area. Therefore, as a product of her environment, Katniss cannot have a conscious as she was never truly exposed to the moral requirements in her society to form one. What is fascinating here, is that the very goal Collins cites, mentioned earlier in this paper for having written the story; that she felt violence was too pre-
valent in society because of popular media, is exposed as a central theme to the story she wrote. The metaphorical value of such a comparison cannot escape notice; that the reader is literally being exposed to the violent acts of morally underdeveloped children who were exposed from birth to the consequences of being the victim turned predator if he or she was picked to compete as tributes.

CAPITOL CONTROL AND POWER DYNAMICS

In the novel, who is truly in control? Is it Katniss or Effie Trinket, the promoter that represents District 12? Perhaps it is Haymitch and the sponsors he is supposedly talking to while Katniss and Peeta fight the battle alone. Consider the word, "sponsors". These are the people of the Capitol. These are the privileged, the powerful, those who hold the potential for life or death in the form of gifts they can pay to have sent to the tributes depending upon each tribute's success, popularity, and potential for remaining entertaining during the long days of the battle for their lives. These are the population of Panem with the money. They are the rich, the elite, not unlike the Aristocrats from the Roman Republic who were known to bet upon certain Gladiators and send them gifts for winning. Within the confines of the novel, the audience must construct its own interpretations of the Capitol's people. This inner circle and its strange customs are beyond Katniss's removed conception of it. However, constructed within the negative space, the audience can visualize a group of elitist, well-fed and spoiled people who have all of the comforts in life that the outer layers of the Districts do not.

The film allows the audience some small glimpses into the Capitol's world; one which is very different and unknown to Katniss in the novel. The Gamemaker is profiled in the film and he has strange facial hair and an odd composure in the face of either complete success or complete failure. The power dynamics are made known in obvious ways to the audience as the Gamemakers are shown manipulating the arena as Katniss suspects they do, but does not hit on the actual level with which they have control from the technologically advanced game room. The reader of the novel must construct the implications of the political repercussions of Katniss's final rebellious act in the arena to kill herself or live if Peeta was allowed as well when the Gamemakers rescind their rule that would allow two tributes from one District to survive together.

The Capitol is presented as the precise technological opposite to the District 12 earthiness the reader is subjected to in learning the personal realities and trials of the people who live there. The hunger, the lack of heated water, and the loss of power at certain times are all completely and binarily presented from the descriptions of the Capitol. For example, Katniss notices the grandeur upon entering the city saying, "...the magnificence of the glistening buildings that in a rainbow of hues that tower into the air, the shiny cars that roll down the wide paved streets, the oddly dressed people with bizarre hair and painted faces who have never missed a meal" (p. 59). She also proliferates upon the technology the Capitol has at its disposal that have helped to slaughter District 13 as she relates, "Since the rebels had to scale the mountains, they were easy targets for the Capitol's air forces!" (p. 59). This level of technological advance to include sky-scrappers and jets is far beyond the novel she equates with the idea of home.

The metaphorical meaning could be suggestive of the power that technology yields in a richer country as opposed to less advanced cultures, which the colonist ideologies prevalent in the first Americans boosted over the centuries to create a powerful autonomy over the less advanced cultures of the world they had intended to settle. The message then, is that whoever wields the technology has the power over those who do not have ready access
to it. Following that logic, America, which the country of Pamen is said to represent in the far future equates power with technology and so, the Capitol has the right to create the ideals and the social hegemony of its people that will provide for the most control. This is one of the key factors for how the elitists of the Capitol dominate the Districts. This concept innately ties back to who has the money. The money equals technological advance to use for the objective of totalitarian dominance, which in turn leads to the effectual grip of control over the less fortunate or the subjects of this regime.

**Conclusion**

Throughout this paper, the main thesis questions to be analyzed were, (1) is the level of violence and how it is presented in the book something parents should be alarmed about if their children between the ages of 11 and 17 are reading it? (2) Is the lens through which violence in its many forms in the book and the film are presented appropriate for children? And (3), is the metaphorical nature of the text's overall message something that should be introduced to the leaders of tomorrow, before they actually experience the World as adults?

Through research, deep reading, and CDA methods, it seems that the answers to the questions asked are: (1) Yes, the depth of violent content should be considered further when marketing is conducted. Despite a rating that has been produced by those who are stakeholders in the revenue a specific text can generate, the content should be pre-screened for the best screening of material. (2) No. This paper has argued that the violence presented in the book and film is inappropriate for the teen audience to which it is marketed. (3) Possibly. The overall metaphor of *The Hunger Games* appears to be that the film industry is promoting desensitization, exposure, and oppression.

The truth is, as long as violence sells, it will be created and promoted. While the target audience cannot have the intellect to really comprehend the gravity of power and dominance dynamics in our society, the ethos is communicated that suffering, oppression, control through fear, and purposefully implementing social control mechanisms that marginalize a certain population are wrong. However, the serious amount of violence in the texts could be said to border on obscenity, and a parental guidance factor should be seriously considered.

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WHISTLEBLOWING AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: AN INTERVIEW WITH SUELETTE DREYFUS

LUKE HEEMSBERGEN, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Luke Heemsbergen: Suelette, you’ve held a long interest in whistleblowing and digital technologies. There seems to be a building renaissance for ‘digital whistleblowing’ as automated, digital knowledge-gathering technologies proliferate new possibilities of control and disclosure. First, do you see the current leak-scape as a technologically determined moment, and a product of its time? And second, are these leaks necessary and are they sufficient to find autonomy/freedom in what seem to be increasingly automated systems of control?

Suelette Dreyfus: The current whistleblowing landscape is a convergence of a number of things: technology, war and public distrust of institutions such as government, politicians, the Catholic Church, some large corporations. The technology involved is more than just the technology used in whistleblowing systems, it’s also online publishing technology, security and privacy technologies and, of course, mass eavesdropping technologies.

I study both the technology and the humans - and how they interface - in order to understand this. It is not technologically determined and a product of its time, so much as human determined, as humans are a product of their time. Human ingenuity and resilience are terrific renewable resources. Both have played a role in changing this landscape. For instance, the US is quite amazing. Here, on the one hand, is a very well resourced army of military and intelligence apparatuses running a surveillance state. More than a million and a half people have security clearances - there are more people with top secret clearances than there are citizens of Washington DC. And on the other hand, there is a growing cabal of remarkable citizens who have just said ENOUGH. These citizens have few resources other than voice but they do have a good ability to ask rational questions and organize using online technologies.

These are the people who are, for example, behind recent campaigns such as ‘Restore the Fourth’ on the 4th of July. They want to restore the Fourth Amendment of the US Constitution, which they say has been cast aside as a result of the rise in the surveillance state. These are the thousands of Americans on Twitter, essentially saying "stop spying on us and treating us as criminals."

That is paraphrased of course, but the sentiment is about right. They are moving to-
ward a tipping point.

The irony of the situation was recently splashed across the front page of the Washington Post. One lead story disclosed more on the revelations of the surveillance state, while a second story described how American children are going hungry. In places like rural Tennessee, more than one in four children need government food assistance, a record level according to the Post. School buses are running during holiday periods to deliver food to families that just don't have enough money to eat. The holiday deliveries fill in the gap - because there is no school, there is no lunch provided to the children. So they go without food. In the United States, adults come out to greet the school bus asking if there are leftovers.

One story (vast surveillance projects steeped in secrecy and the military state that is attached to this) represents a contributing cause of the second story (visible hunger in the streets of the United States). States need security. However, if a state spends huge amounts of money spying on its citizens and waging a 'war on terror' more generally, there often isn't enough left over to do things like providing jobs programs to get people back to work, or providing good, free education to increase the likelihood of getting a job, or balancing the budget so cities and states don't have to lay off employees or declare bankruptcy. Children may go hungry. That is the trade-off.

The importance of whistleblowing in this context is that it reveals when and where this alternative, secret world produces illegal, immoral or wasteful behaviour. The secrecy means that it is possible to hide very substantial wrongdoing and corruption before it may burst, like a boil, into the public arena. Whistleblowing may yet save the patient and restore them to good health.

LH: Edward Snowden was working for the contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton, which in a statement concerning his leaking activities wrote, "If accurate, this action represents a grave violation of the code of conduct and core values of our firm." This is a remarkable quote that begs the question, what are the core values of such firms? Looking at what Dana Priest and William M. Arkin have described as the 'Top Secret' industrial complex as a cybernetic system, what are we to make of this network of retrenchment that seemingly perverts ideas of national interests into the norms of secrecy?

SD: Based on the Priest-Aarkin story, it seems no one in the US even actually knows how many tentacles this octopus of a secret state has. Public interest organisations like the Government Accountability Project (GAP) in the US cannot determine or find out simple things like "what is the total budget for the NSA and the rest of the surveillance state?" We don't really know what they do and we don't know what they cost. It's all secret. These things need to be public so that the public can decide if this is how it wants its money spent. This seems an obvious, if missing, feedback system for democracy.

Running a functioning democracy when the people do not have oversight of how their money is spent on the massive surveillance and security state (in even in the most broad-brush way) calls into question the legitimacy of that government.

We're heading toward a positive public tipping point. One of the most worrying recent developments is the flip side to secrecy networks, namely the new powers of propaganda that are available to the government. With barely a peep issued by the US mainstream media, in the middle of 2013 the US Government began unleashing a large channel of propaganda inside the US. While the government has used propaganda effectively against other nations - notably in Europe during the Cold War - laws had prevented it from turning that formidable propaganda machine on its own people domestically. Con-
The result is deeply disturbing 'perfect storm'. The surveillance state no longer just spies on citizens, it now can quite legally tell them what they should be thinking as well. While existing government media outlets such as Voice of America may generate good reportage, these government media outlets were always intended to be used as a communication tool from the US government to the rest of the world, not a propaganda tool to sway the American people that things such as the 'War on Terror' are a 'good thing.' A big part of George Orwell's '1984' is not just about government watching the citizenry, it's about government brainwashing them. The blandly named 'Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012', which Congress approved as part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, has the potential to push the US much closer to Orwell's '1984' than most people realize. Yet few media carried this story in July 2013, when the changes came into effect.

**LH:** Julian Assange has suggested that as one's political-institutional power increases, so too should transparency into their affairs. That is to say the general online user should be able to remain anonymous while political representatives should be held to a more open standard. Is online anonymity, and transparency in power, a possible and beneficial way to live and govern digital life?

**SD:** This philosophy of institutional transparency and individual privacy is definitely doable and can be translated to the real world. All it takes is the political will to demand it, and then the will to do it. And it's certainly beneficial.

One of the key elements within a whistleblowing relationship is, invariably, power. The whistleblower is almost always lower down the totem pole than the powerful that he or she is blowing the whistle on. Further, when the institution tries to block and then blame the whistleblower (as often happens) the relationship changes to become the entire institution versus one person. That is a very disproportional relationship in terms of power and resources.

I suspect that the reason that Assange espouses that the more power/less privacy philosophy is important is that it rebalances the above power relationship. Things often work best when there is a tension in the wire, a peaceful balance based on a suitable level of tension. The level of that tension at the moment is out of whack, pushing some democracies toward a state of either dangling loosely or snapping. When there is a proper balanced tension in the wire, the cost of those in power being involved in wrongdoing is reasonably high. This creates a disincentive toward committing fraud or other serious wrongdoing, because it might easily be exposed in the public arena.

**LH:** Your research has also focused on 'hacking' culture and activities that are performed for autonomy, but use high levels of technological automation and surveillance. Clandestine and automated surveillance here is useful for whistleblowers, hackers and their counterparts trying to protect secrets and snoop on populations or catch digital intruders. It is a fascinating dynamic. What available modes of resistance are sustainable in this context of increased automated monitoring?

**SD:** First, cryptography. Strong cryptography for everyman. That ensures individual privacy. Presently, the learning curve is reasonably high for an average person but once you know how to use it, it is definitely sustainable.

Second, using open-source software where available. It's clear now that a number of tech companies have non-transparent and very close relationships with the US intelligence
agencies. Are Apple products backdoored? Who knows? Snowden's revelations this year suggest that what was once in the realm of high-end computer security experts (inside knowledge), and conspiracy theorists (hypothesis) is now very much more in the realm of reality. It is quite reasonable to hypothesize that secret arrangements between government and entities like Microsoft and Apple may involve handing over any number of hacking backdoors to government. With open-source software this is harder to do since the code is transparent for all to see. So, where privacy for the citizen really counts, using open-source operating systems like Linux is sensible.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has an excellent free online resource called 'Surveillance Self-Defense'.

LH: I want to turn now to the culture that surrounds groups like Anonymous, and the tools that are preferred to crowdsourcing online attacks (e.g. The Low Orbit Ion Cannon that creates DDOS attacks). Within this space there are levels of automation, which allow script kiddies or 'clicktavists' to engage through the inactivity that accompanies automation. How have you seen this line between (in)activity and automation breached in hacker culture, and do you see those types of active political moments filtering into more widespread modes of political engagement?

SD: First, I think it is important to differentiate between the Hacktavists, and their desire to be positive social change agents, and the script kiddies. There are some script kiddies who are Hacktavists and vice versa but it is not a matched set.

Second, I don't agree that clicktavists are 'engaged in inactivity' so much as 'engaged efficiently'. They spend their most valuable resource - time - reading about a cause and then participate in the most time-efficient manner for them by exercising voice. It is highly efficient for them to contribute in a common format that matches the format of others they agree with because this sends a simple, unified message of what is demanded to decision-makers. Automated technology allows this 'opt-in conformity'. In doing so it also has the added benefit of providing a fairer voice to those who may be unable to exercise voice by, say, choosing to march in the streets (the single mother home with a baby, the elderly person who is disabled, etc.).

Script kiddies are another story. They are also maximizing efficiency, but differently. They do so because it would be too hard and take too long for them to learn how to develop and to use particular exploits they originate. So they 'buy it' off the shelf, so to speak. There can be lots of motivations at play here, from fraud and gangster behavior down the spectrum to civil disobedience based on a high moral ground, and further down to hacktivism and whistleblowing. It is a spectrum with many different points on it.

LH: Finally, I wanted to shift gears from the hacker activity to journalistic activity. As a publisher, WikiLeaks changed perceptions about how newsworthy information should be obtained, mediated and published. How do you see roles and models of publication evolving? Will journalistic freedom be a creature of the light feeding on open data? Or will it be a creature of the shadows, pecking away at what is hidden?

SD: Journalistic freedom will be both. But feeding on the open data may pry open more hidden data in the long run because it will revolutionise thinking for the next generation. The open data movement is shoveling the secrecy culture - so symptomatic of the War on Terror - backwards. Prying open secrets is coming from both the inside and outside.

For example, whistleblowers that reveal serious wrongdoing provide the evidence
for more need of accountability (and fewer secrets). However, the open data movement is pushing very much from inside organisations outwards. Good people inside corporations, government - any number of institutions - are gently coaxing their organisations toward a culture of open data from the inside out. They are slowly replacing the crusty Mandarins, with their rigid old-think attitudes that the public must be kept in the dark, and that information should be kept confidential unless there is a good reason to release it.

This is starting to happen around the world. The new paradigm is arriving. Representative sample surveys - which I have been involved in - have revealed that half of all Australians believe too much information is kept secret in organisations. Indeed only about a quarter or so of people think the right amount of information is kept secret. That’s a pretty good indicator that people want a change. They don’t necessarily want to fling open the doors of every government office to everyone. Most people are sensible and balanced. But they also seem to be saying, "Hey, we are at the wrong point in this spectrum."

Even more tellingly, more than 80 percent of people in Australia want whistleblowers to be protected rather than punished for revealing serious wrongdoing, even if the whistleblowers have to publicly disclose inside information. There are similar or even stronger figures out of the UK and Iceland. There is significant empirical evidence that shows this. The large majority of citizens in these countries want whistleblowing to be a protected activity.
ANZCA Section
ANZCA EDITORIAL

DIANA BOSSIO, VICE PRESIDENT, AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

It always gives me great pleasure to introduce the ANZCA special issue of PLATFORM Journal of Media and Communications. This issue is a reminder of the vibrant presence of postgraduates in the Association, both as executive representatives and as contributors to the annual conference.

This ANZCA issue of PLATFORM showcases the best research contributions by postgraduates who submitted papers to the ANZCA conference in Fremantle this year. These papers were judged by independent peer review to be the best examples of postgraduate research at ANZCA this year. The authors represented in this issue were invited to extend their conference presentations into journal articles and we now celebrate the diversity and innovation in media and communications research in Australia and New Zealand with this publication.

ANZCA has always sought to develop strong links with postgraduate researchers in the "broad church" of media and communications disciplines - perhaps the wide-ranging contributions from postgraduates in this issue of PLATFORM are testimony to this. In this issue, Jonathan Hutchinson completes an analysis of the now defunct publishing experiment, ABC Pool. Hutchinson argues that the ABC's use of "cultural intermediation" - where cultural workers mediate the interests of commercial stakeholders and creative workers - is a productive method for organisations engaging user-generated content in their publishing outputs. Kim Barbour also analyses creative work online. Barbour's paper analyses the online profiles of two street artists in order to problematic the otherwise positive academic discussion of online identity and creative work.

Edwina Throsby analyses the phenomenon of the swinging voter in Australian politics and its representation in the media. Throsby's approach is particularly interesting in that she analyses the swinging voter as both media subject and media user. She argues that voter engagement and knowledge needs to be expanded to wider use and representation in political media. Continuing the theme of politics and representation, Caitlin McGregor utilises a case study of newspaper representation of a proposed Mosque development in Newcastle to illustrate contemporary manifestations of Edward Said's "Orientalism" thesis in politicised media.

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Finally, two authors in this issue consider communications strategies for businesses in problematic or crisis environments. Dashi Zhang analyses the crisis communications strategies put in place by dairy companies following the tainted milk powder crisis in China. Meanwhile, Ying Wang’s paper contributes a more theoretical framework for business communications, using virtue ethics to create good organisational representations.

I must extend my gratitude to PLATFORM editors Luke Heemsbergen and Suneel Jethani for putting together such a fantastic issue and for their diligence and enthusiasm in maintaining a relationship with ANZCA. I look forward to many more productive collaborations and more importantly, more innovative research from the Australian and New Zealand postgraduate community.

As the incoming President of ANZCA, I am thrilled to be able to continue to encourage postgraduate participation at our annual conference in Melbourne in 2014. At the conference from the 9th to 11th of July, the conference registration will give postgraduates the opportunity to attend the annual early career researcher pre-conference event. There will also be a special postgraduate dinner, networking and other social events available. For me personally, being a member of a professional association like ANZCA has assisted my professional development immeasurably. It is not simply the ability to present research in a friendly environment of peers; being part of ANZCA gives you opportunities for networking at free social events and mentorship at workshops with some of the pre-eminent communications scholars in the field. I hope to be able to welcome PLATFORM contributors and readers to the ANZCA conference in Melbourne next year!
COMMUNICATION MODELS OF
INSTITUTIONAL ONLINE COMMUNITIES:
THE ROLE OF THE ABC CULTURAL
INTERMEDIARY

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The co-creation of cultural artefacts has been democratised given the recent technological affordances of information and communication technologies. Web 2.0 technologies have enabled greater possibilities of citizen inclusion within the media conversations of their nations. For example, the Australian audience has more opportunities to collaboratively produce and tell their story to a broader audience via the public service media (PSM) facilitated platforms of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). However, providing open collaborative production for the audience gives rise to the problem: how might the PSM manage the interests of all the stakeholders and align those interests with its legislated Charter? This paper considers this problem through the ABC’s user-created content participatory platform, ABC Pool and highlights the cultural intermediary as the role responsible for managing these tensions. This paper also suggests cultural intermediation is a useful framework for other media organisations engaging in co-creative activities with their audiences.

Keywords: Cultural intermediation, ABC Pool, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Community manager, user-generated content (UGC), co-creation

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technologies within organisations have enabled new modes of communication between staff and online participants. In some cases, groups of online participants have formed 'institutional online communities' that are governed by the rules of the organisations that develop, resource and host the participant platforms.

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(Hutchinson, 2012). Unlike online communities within the Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) movement, institutional online communities are not independently facilitated and rely on the focus of their hosting organisation for creative direction. Axel Bruns (2008) and Clay Shirky (2008) have noted the benefits of Web 2.0 technologies within organisational communication: they enable decentralised activities, are cheaper to resource, egalitarian, highly innovative, and are based on a meritocracy system that empowers participants with skills and experience of management and coordination roles. Henry Jenkins (2006) and Yo-chai Benkler (2006) suggest participatory culture activities within organisations provide highly innovative production solutions, along with decentralised non-hierarchical governance arrangements that promise a 'level playing field' for all participants. The technological affordances and benefits of participatory cultures provide the rationale for organisations to engage in production activities with institutional online communities.

However, the affordances of Web 2.0 technologies within organisations complicate the traditional governance models by challenging the control mechanisms of production activities associated with group complexity. Shirky (2008) notes that group complexity is the difficulty of making decisions for a large group of individuals when considering all of their interests. Thomas Malaby (2009) highlights that online participants engaging in collaborative cultural production reject top-down hierarchical models of governance in favour of heterarchy and meritocracy. Daniel Kreiss et al. (2011) remind us of the benefits of centralised governance: secure, rigid and consistent organisational structures. The challenge for a corporate organisation incorporating online participation within its production activities is to create a governance system that encourages the skills of its staff and online users, while developing an open governance model rigorous enough to promote user-led innovation while maintaining the organisation's focus.

Institutional online communities exist in many areas of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) including the Self Service Science forums, its Twitter community associated with the television program Q&A, and its more recent national digital literacy project, ABC Open. ABC Open seeks to promote digital literacy in regional Australia and "is an exciting initiative which provides a focal point for Australian regional communities who want to get involved in sharing their experiences through the ABC via websites, radio and TV" (ABC, 2013). This paper investigates the institutional online community associated with ABC Pool. ABC Pool is an opportunity for Australian audiences to contribute media (audio, video, photography and writing) to an ABC platform developed and maintained by the ABC, which operates under a Creative Commons licensing regime. "ABC Pool is a social media site where you can share and engage with creative work and collaborate with the people who make it" (ABC, 2013). Users have access to the media and cultural expertise of the ABC staff, access to a selection of archival material for rework and remix and can co-create broadcast programs with the professional Radio National (RN) producers. ABC Pool has approximately 8000 registered members, has produced over 450 co-creative projects and has over 25,800 contributions. Given ABC Pool's diversity and approach to open participatory cultures, it is a suitable case study to examine the problem of managing the interests of multiple stakeholders of an institutional online community engaging in the production of cultural artefacts.

This paper draws on three years of ethnographic action research of ABC Pool to demonstrate the significance of the cultural intermediary within co-creative cultural production. During the research, I was embedded as the community manager of ABC Pool to conduct research of the community to answer the questions: who is involved in institutional online communities, what are their interests and how are those interests negotiated? The results indicate that there are several cultural intermediaries who are responsible for the in-
termediation of communication between the online users and the public service media (PSM) organisation. These cultural intermediaries enable an effective communication to maintain the core goals of the ABC while integrating the perspectives of the online users. The cultural intermediaries must understand and negotiate the needs and requirements of all the stakeholders engaging in cultural artefact production. These findings are demonstrated in the case study of the collaborative production of the 53-minute radio documentary, New Beginnings, broadcast on Radio National's 360documentaries. Finally, this paper proposes a new organisational communication and governance framework, cultural intermediation. Mediation "occurs across actors such as technological devices, programming, code generation and design. The combination of all of these human and non-human actors as they negotiate cultural artefact production is described as cultural intermediation" (Hutchinson, 2013 forthcoming).

**Methodology**

In gathering these data for this research project, it became clear that I was required to investigate three stakeholders: the ABC Pool team located in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne; other ABC staff attached to the Pool project, physically located at the ABC headquarters in Ultimo, Sydney (approximately a hundred people); and the online participants of ABC Pool (approximately seven thousand registered users). I required an adaptive methodology that could employ a mixed methods approach of the co-located research subjects, that is those physically located at the ABC sites and those online participants of ABC Pool. Therefore, the data for this research was gathered through an ethnographic action research methodology, a successful methodology for other research projects investigating media focused online communities (Banks, 2009; Baym, 2000; Bonniface et al., 2006; Malaby, 2009).

I employed a two-phase approach for the methodology. The first year was the ethnographic action research phase where I was embedded at the ABC as the community manager of ABC Pool. Ethnography is the process where "the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know people involved in it" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 1) to "understand and interpret everyday life" and "analyse the broader contexts though which cultural texts and scripts are produced and reproduced" (Horst et al., 2012, p. 87). Action research "means integrating your research into the development of your project" (Tacchi, Slater and Hearn, 2003, p. 12), which improves the research project while attempting to improve the research field. I was able to observe, understand and participate within the research field through my ethnography, which provided rich, textured data of the environment and the participants of ABC Pool. I was then able to action my knowledge through my community manager role to improve the participants' practice who were also engaged in the research (Herr and Anderson, 2004). I would participate in the platform, management meetings and would also consult on the direction of the project. While conducting the ethnographic action research, it was not simply a case of switching between the two methods, but a coordinated approach to employing the combined methodology. In my case, it was useful to employ the action research after the ethnography as I had data to 'action'.

Ethnographic action research is an iterative process that is constantly making sense of the research environment, realigning the research focus given the emerging data and requires the researcher to reenter the research field to test the their hypotheses. I used grounded theory as a tool to assist me in the analysis process of the data I was collecting on a daily basis. "By adopting grounded theory methods you can direct, manage, and streamline your data collection and, moreover, construct an original analysis of your data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). For my research, it was a matter of collecting my data, aligning these with my
sensitising concepts, applying a coding process to extract the reoccurring themes and synthesizing those against the four categories of the community manager activities I had constructed. Those categories are project design, community engagement, community administration and interaction with the ABC. Grounded theory and the four categories focused the research, made sense of the emerging data and defined meanings in them without "constructing theoretical presumptions of the research while ignoring a developed sense of the research problem" (Hutchinson, 2012, p. 127).

Having constructed a theoretical framework of the relationship between the stakeholders of ABC Pool from the year of ethnographic action research, I entered the second phase of research to gather additional data and quantify the theoretical framework. I used a mixed methods approach of surveys, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The survey was a method of "reaching people who regularly use the Internet" for them "to provide data about their media use and communication motives" (Chen, 2011, p. 758). The survey received 34 responses, which, while broadly considered marginal, confirmed most of my hypotheses with the highly engaged users. I conducted two focus groups to extract "the most important themes, the most noteworthy quotes and any unexpected findings" (Breen, 2006, p. 472) from the users. The first focus group was unsuccessful as only one Pool team member participated, however the second was successful with 12 participants engaging in the event, consisting of ABC users from three Australian locations and ABC staff based in Sydney. Finally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 ABC staff, including staff from the ABC Pool team, legal, archives, developers, designers, Innovation and Multiplatform and Content Development. Interviews "are an invaluable method for exploring the feelings and reactions that audience members or fans have for their preferred pleasures" and "for obtaining oral histories" (Long and Wall, 2009, p. 265). The combination of these methods quantified my research findings, while some of the interviews were crucial in developing the cultural intermediation framework.

It is worth pointing out at this stage that I was a paid employee as the community manager of ABC Pool during my second year of research. My official role complicated the reflexivity of my research while providing opportunities uncommon to researchers of the ABC. The complexity of my role poses the question "how does the researcher both observe objectively and be part of the problem they are observing?" (Hutchinson, 2012, p. 112). Many ethnographic scholars have written on this subject (Fine 2003; Madden 2010; Watson 1987), and agree the participation of the researcher within the field should not be seen as the "marginalia of ethnography" (Madden, 2010, p. 23). As an ABC employee I had increased access to people, situations and information of the ABC, which provided positive implications for the research. Reflexivity in this project then became a way of "managing the influence of 'me' on the research and the representation of 'them'" (Madden, 2010, p. 23).

**Cultural intermediation within ABC Pool's New Beginnings**

Keith Negus (2010) reintroduces and builds upon the term first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), cultural intermediary, to describe the role within the "practices that continue to proliferate in the space between production and consumption" (Negus, 2010, p. 501). He notes the "central strength of the notion of cultural intermediaries is that it places an emphasis on those workers who come in-between creative artists and consumers (or, more generally, production and consumption)" (ibid, p. 503). Negus's inquiry of the cultural intermediary centres on three core areas: how creative they are, what strategies they use to address the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy of users in open collaborative production processes, and how they bridge the production/consumption gap of cultural artefacts. His findings suggest the cultural intermediary "reproduce rather than bridge the distance
between production and consumption" (Negus, 2010, p. 509). I have returned the opposite in results to Negus and have proved that cultural intermediaries do in fact bridge the gap between production and consumption of cultural artefacts through a combination of creative strategies. This section builds on Negus's conclusions and uses the case study of the co-creative project facilitated by ABC Pool and operated through RN, New Beginnings, to demonstrate how the cultural intermediary is managing the blurring boundary between production and consumption of cultural artefacts.

New Beginnings was a project designed and developed by an RN producer, Mike Williams, and was facilitated by the ABC Pool team during 2011. Users are mobilised through a call-out, which is an invitation to the ABC Pool participants to contribute their media to a specific theme that is then usually collaboratively produced, by the project's producer and the contributors. The call-out for the New Beginnings project was:

ABC Pool wants to hear your New Beginnings story!

Starting something new can be exciting, refreshing and stimulating but also very daunting and scary. Whether it's a new job, new family member, new home, or maybe even a new love interest, we're often faced with the challenge of having to start afresh in a new situation.

This project is about expressing your stories, your experiences and your emotions when you've gone through a new beginning.

And your stories don't have to be real! You can interpret this project fictionally - get creative and think up something brand new!

Stories can be told from all perspectives using all forms of media: text (please keep to a 600 word limit), video, audio, pictures... or any combination of these.

Some of your written and audio contributions may be selected and produced into an upcoming 360documentaries feature. Images and video may find their way into an upcoming 'In The Dark' listening event taking place in Sydney early next year!

Over the five months that the project was open for contributions, it received 86 contributions from 44 project members. Williams then entered into a process of curation of the contributions to select the most appropriate and interesting pieces in relation to the call-out. With a final selection of contributions, he was then able to begin the co-creation production cycle with the contributors to produce a 53-minute documentary to be broadcast on 360documentaries, RN's documentary program. Williams recalls of the process:

So I put the call out together: anyone can contribute, anyone can comment on anything, that's a normal standard Pool thing. The next phase is recording the people who write the contributions themselves which hasn't happened in a Pool project to my knowledge. What's the difference between getting my next door neighbour to read a line of a piece of poetry for me and getting the person who wrote the story to read their own story? They are worlds apart, especially for a 50-minute feature. That's a chal-
length, making it harder for myself because you have to make it hit that bar, but you have to work with someone who's never talked into a microphone before - to make him or her hit that bar. So how do you do that? The next thing is to record all these people reading their own stories and edit it with them. The next phase is to throw it back on to Pool and get anyone to comment and give ideas on the sound design. So at this stage, anyone can say anything about any piece and it can be changed, no guarantee it will be changed but the idea will be taken on board and we will talk about why that should or shouldn't happen.

Instead of creating the content on his own, or rerecording the contributions from the participants as was the modus operandi of co-creation within Pool, Williams wanted to bridge that gap between the production and consumption of cultural artefacts. He invited some of the contributors into the ABC recording studios located around the country, directing them to literally tell their story while a group of professionally trained ABC staff recorded them. The significant concept to focus on here is that although the co-creation process occurs, there is still a clear, professional ABC 'voice' present within the editorial decision-making. Although the co-creation has been minimally hierarchical to this point, the final production and its quality relies on Williams's knowledge of documentary making at the ABC. His facilitator and directorial skills, along with his creative strategy, are the underpinning practices associated with the cultural intermediary role. These specific skills also align the role of the cultural intermediary with the focus of the open governance system that can promote user-led innovation while maintaining the organisation's focus. It is also worth highlighting that the curatorial and co-creative production process was done in consultation with the executive producer of 360documentaries.

New Beginnings was broadcast on RN's 360documentaries on Sunday 8 April 2012 and was critically acclaimed by the ABC audience. Williams had successfully bridged the gap between cultural production and consumption by mediating the co-creative production process to satisfy the interests of the three ABC Pool stakeholders: the Pool participants, the ABC Pool team and the ABC as institution. The 360documentaries audience members celebrated the production:

what marvellous listening...true story telling. A most enjoyable hour that I will want to hear again and again. thanks to all ... tremendous contributions & production. (360documentaries website, 2013)

Simultaneously, the contributors provided feedback to the ABC Pool team which not only justified the open, collaborative process of New Beginnings, but also shores up the project with the ethos of the PSM remit. Stuart Cunningham (2013) convincingly argues that the role of the public service broadcaster (PSB) in a post-scarcity media environment is one of distinctive innovation. He argues "a commitment to innovation in the provision of new products and services can be defined as distinctive" (Cunningham, 2013, p. 65), where the distinctive innovation present in this example is demonstrated through the shared knowledge exchange of skills with Australians working within the creative industries. One contributor reflected on the benefits of participating in the New Beginnings project:

Of all my writing achievements, I have to say hearing my words float out on Radio National, in City Nights and New Beginnings, is by FAR what I'm proudest of. Thank you so much for allowing
me to be part of this; it’s really something to put on my resume, and make me feel better whenever I get a rejection from a publisher. (Name withheld, email, 10 April 2012)

**Locating the cultural intermediary**

The success of the New Beginnings project highlights the significance of the cultural intermediary within cultural artefact production by identifying who the stakeholders are, their interests and how to negotiate those interests. Within the co-creative process of documentary production on ABC Pool there are three stakeholders: the ABC Pool team, the ABC Pool participants and the ABC as institution. The cultural intermediary is ideally located within the middle of these three stakeholders and interacts with them by incorporating the interests of the other two stakeholders. For example, when the cultural intermediary is interacting with the ABC Pool participants, he or she is bringing the interests and concerns of the ABC Pool team and the ABC as institution to that negotiation process. Figure 1 indicates how this relationship operates.

![Figure 1: The location of the cultural intermediary between the ABC Pool stakeholders](image-url)

Figure 1 also indicates that each stakeholder has a core activity that the cultural intermediary engages in with that stakeholder. Project design is the principal activity of the cultural intermediary as they design, develop, facilitate and engage all the stakeholders in the collaborative cultural production projects. Community engagement refers to the interactions the cultural intermediary has with the community members, including answering correspondence, offering feedback on their contributions and engaging in collaborative...
practice with them. Community administration is generally the activities the cultural intermediary engages in to maintain the platform, such as deleting spam, site design, moderating content and attending meetings to evaluate the day-to-day activities of the site. Interaction with the ABC relates to any other type of interaction the cultural intermediary will have with ABC staff not directly related to the platform such as meeting with legal or archival staff, working through issues with the editorial staff or attending meetings with larger departments on strategic projects that include ABC Pool.

Within New Beginnings, Williams filled the role of the cultural intermediary as he interacted and negotiated the interests of all three stakeholders. He would interact with the community to stimulate their contributions and feedback on their work, interact with the ABC Pool team to ensure the project aligned with the platform and interact with the ABC as institution through the executive producer of 360documentaries to align the project with the focus of the program. In this capacity, Williams actively negotiated the interests of the three stakeholders and obtained consensus. The result was a nationally acclaimed cultural artefact: a 53-minute radio documentary that satisfied the desires of the stakeholders of the ABC Pool platform. Additionally, the documentary aligned with the regulatory organisational focus of the ABC (ABC Act, 1983) to "inform, educate and entertain" by engaging audiences in new and exciting ways and deliver content over new media platforms (Department of Broadband, Communication and Digital Economy, 2008).

Conclusion

ABC Pool has experimented with multiple forms of intermediation since its conception in 2003. The New Beginnings example above demonstrates the multiple cultural intermediaries model that incorporates the ABC Pool team, one RN producer, some additional ABC staff and the contributors engaging in an institutional online community governance model. However, my observations during my time at the ABC indicate the role of the cultural intermediary manifests across the corporation in different capacities. For example, the intermediary is present within the moderators of online forums of The Drum, the moderator of the Twitter feed of Q&A, the social media producers who manage the social media accounts within the broadcast divisions of the ABC, the ABC Open producers and the ABC Pool team. This develops the earlier observations of John Banks (2009), who suggests a similar role, the community manager, which operates as a representative toward the institution on behalf of the online community. Extending this role, cultural intermediaries represent the interests of all stakeholders within all negotiation processes across an entire media corporation.

This New Beginnings example fails to outline two other models of institutional online community governance: the single point of contact and the community editors models. The single point of contact model operates through one singular cultural intermediary that is responsible for all forms of communication between the organisation and the online users. This model provides the greatest amount of control over the activities the institutional online community can engage in, but is also the slowest method of governance and the most inhibitive of user-led innovation. The final model for institutional online community governance is the community editors model. The community editors model seeks to promote the users of the platform to become facilitators and moderators of the institutional online community, by engaging the lead users of the site in position of authority. This model is the most open and the fastest communication model of the three, but is also the most problematic for the organisation to manage. An example that emerged from ABC Pool that also engaged the community editors model surrounded how community editors might moderate and manage material that could be considered offensive without having done the offi-
cial editorial policy training an ABC staff member completes. They are perceived to be an ABC official by the community more broadly, yet they perform their duties in a voluntary manner and do not have the same level of skills as an ABC employee.

Collectively these three models can be described as suitable forms of institutional online community governance models that emerge over time. As an institutional online community establishes, it requires someone to manage and facilitate the platform. In this instance, the single point of contact governance model is suitable. If the cultural intermediary in this role is successful at their position and the community grows, the platform will more than likely move to an institutional online community governance model that engages the skills of multiple intermediaries as they collaboratively produce items. If the multiple cultural intermediary model works successfully, the online community may be in a position to activate a community editors initiative that empowers its online community to facilitate the project. Figure 2 demonstrates how the three models of institutional online community governance operates over a scale of decentralisation.

Figure 2: Three models of institutional online community governance over a scale of decentralisations

These three models have successfully operated within ABC Pool. Most times they operate in conjunction with each other where the formation is dependent on the type of project activity. This research has indicated how multiple forms of institutional online community governance models have worked simultaneously within one platform operating at the ABC, and is indicative of how other ABC platforms may engage governance models as they evolve and expand. As such, the collection of these governance models are referred to as cultural intermediation and provide a framework for institutions when engaging in collaborative production activities with their online users.
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HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: STREET ARTISTS ONLINE

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Identity and privacy concerns related to social media are the subject of widespread academic enquiry and mass media reporting. Although in most circumstances academic research tends to present identity play and online self-presentation as positive, media reporting in Australia makes much of the risks of identity theft, privacy breaches and online predators. This research explores the phenomenological experience of creating an online persona, focusing particularly on street artists. For street artists, the threat of unwanted exposure has to be balanced with the positive implications of sharing their creative work outside its geographical and temporal constraints. I argue that street artists use complex persona-creation strategies in order to both protect and promote themselves. The two street artists discussed in this article experience their engagement with social media and digital networks in ways that offer new insight into the opportunities and problems associated with the presentation of a persona online.

INTRODUCTION

Identity and privacy concerns online are the subject of both academic enquiry and mass media reporting, particularly in regards to engagement in social media. Although academic research tends to present identity play and online self-presentation as positive in most circumstances (boyd, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Pearson, 2009; Tufekci, 2008), media reporting in Australia makes much of the risks of identity theft, privacy breaches and online predators (Wroe, 2013, Cyber criminals target mobile users, social media, The Sydney Morning Herald; Social media sites erode privacy: study, 2013, The Age; Farrer, 2010 When it comes to online privacy, Facebook is not the only problem, The Sydney Morning Herald Online). While there is a diversity of opinions and findings in the literature around social media and online persona, this research fills a gap by exploring the subjective experience of creating an online persona.

Although biography, self-promotion and life-writing are not new within the creative and cultural industries (Barthes, 1977; Becker, 1982; Fine, 2003; Kris and Kurtz, 1977), the growing ubiquity of online artistic presence has created new challenges (Arthur, 2009). For
an increasing number of street artists, the threat of unwanted exposure has to be balanced with the positive reputational implications of sharing their creative work outside of its geographical and temporal constraints. This paper will present the case of two street artists that use digital networks to promote and document their work, collaborate with others and engage with the growing international street art communities online. Specifically, the experience of creating an online persona is explored using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)\(^1\) of interviews conducted with the two artists, and analysis of their presentations of self in social media. This analysis is drawn from my doctoral research into the creation of online persona by artists that are from outside the 'traditional' art world.

I argue that street artists use complex persona-creation strategies in order to both protect and promote themselves. The emergent themes discussed here are self-protection: the need to keep images of the artist separate from the images of their work; reputation management: the implication of the widespread sharing of images which quickly leave the control of the artist; and documentation: the creation of a body of work which is ephemeral and geographically fixed. These themes are explored using extracts from interviews I conducted with each artist. At very different points in their artistic careers, coming from different backgrounds and countries, and with very different styles, the commonalities and disparities between strategies of -creation are of particular interest. The two street artists involved in this research experience their engagement with social media and digital networks in ways that offer new insight into the opportunities and problems associated with the presentation of their online persona.

**Play, Impression Management, and Online Identities**

Academic research tends to present identity play and online self-presentation as positive in most circumstances (boyd, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Pearson, 2009; Tufekci, 2008). The mediated, digital nature of social networking sites allows those who engage with such sites to have significant control over the information presented to their audience. Through choices of imagery, text, links, friends and likes, the person building an online profile or presence can bypass distracting elements of their own personal appearance, geographical location and, arguably, their gender identity.

Studies of online identity-creation began in the early 1990s. Turkle (1995, pp. 260, 263) discussed the benefits of playing with identity, stating, "virtual personae are objects-to-think-with", that "having literally written our online personae into existence, we are in a position to be more aware of what we project into everyday life". The anonymous nature of many of the early public uses of the internet, including blogs, listservs and games, now sits alongside the anonymous social networking sites on which the potential for - and acceptance of - identity play is more limited. This has led to a shift away from the tendency to 'play-act at being someone else or to put on different online personae' (Zhao et al, 2008, p. 1818). Rather than becoming someone else entirely or letting out a risky or socially-deviant identity, Zhao et al. (2008, p. 1819) argue instead that online environments are peopled with "socially desirable identities an individual would like to establish", what Mehdizadeh (2010) terms hoped-for possible selves. This construction of identity can be seen as a positive form of impression-management, less deceitful than aspirational.

The development of an online profile is not limited to adding content to a site. It must also involve the development of connections within the network, both to other people's profiles and to products, interests and groups. Weber and Mitchell (2002) discuss the way that young girls construct their identity through their connections with friends, family, online groups and links to celebrities and products. They consider this as related to
the idea of 'bricolage', commenting that it "involves improvising, experimenting, and blending genres, patching together contrasting or even contradictory elements, creating and modifying meanings to suit the context" (2002, pp. 43-44). The challenge is to ensure the person creating the profile does not become lost within the network, reduced to a landing page from which to go elsewhere; a balance must be maintained between the presentation of a public version of the self and that self's place within the network. Livingstone (2008, p. 400) makes this explicit, stating 'social networking is about 'me' in the sense that it reveals the self embedded in the peer group, as known to and represented by others, rather than the private 'I' known best by oneself'.

Early research into online identity (such as Turkle's seminal Life on the Screen) saw this type of impression-management or role play (Goffman, 1959/1990) as largely independent from the corporeal self. However, more recent research argues instead that the digital representations of the self are intertwined with the body in complex ways. Weber and Mitchell (2008, p. 30-31) discusses this in relation to young girls, and state:

The posting of photographs extends their bodies into cyberspace; their sites bear their 'fingerprints', the traces of their activities, the imprint of their inventive spellings and font choices, the visual evidence that they exist, a signpost to who they think they are or who they want you to think they are or who they would like to become.

boyd (2008, p. 129) takes this further, describing a social networking profile as "a form of digital body where individuals must write themselves into being", linking the creation and editing of profiles as a form of Goffmanian impression-management.

The thinking and research into online identity-creation and play have developed significantly within academia over the past two decades. Technological changes, the increase in accessibility and mobility of social networking, and changes in usage patterns all contribute to the complexities involved in presenting the self in digital networks. However, despite the range in focus, methodologies and participant groups, the vast majority of academic research implicitly or explicitly accepts the presentation of a version of the self online as a largely positive for those involved.

**RISK, FEAR, AND ONLINE IDENTITIES**

In contrast to the largely positive descriptions of online identity-creation in academic work, the mass media discourse around online identity is much less favourable. Newspaper articles reporting both specific events and editorial opinion focus largely on issues of identity theft, predation of children, and other risks of over-sharing by posting large amounts of personal information and images through social media websites. For example, an article in the San Francisco Chronicle stated that "Along with wonderful new capabilities, new technology often ushers in opportunities for abuse" (Temple, 2012, n.p.) and detailed several cases of paedophiles contacting minors and engaging in either digital or physical sexual assault. Another article from the same publication stated that "More than half of adults 45 and older who are on social networks like Facebook could be in danger of becoming victims of identity theft or other crimes because they share too much private information" (Evangelista, 2010, n.p.). The Sydney Morning Herald warns "Mobile phones and social networking sites have become the new frontier for cyber criminals who are stealing passwords and personal information by taking advantage of people's cluelessness" (Olding, 2012, n.p.), while the New Zealand Herald reported that in New Zealand, "Two-thirds of online adults have fallen victim to cybercrime" (Wade, 2012, n.p.).
This discourse of fear and risk associated using with social media to share personal information is not the only discussion of social media technology in the news media, but does tend to be fairly pervasive and by no means new. In 2005, when the media focus was on the social networking site, MySpace (rather than Facebook), danah boyd critiqued the tendency towards what she describes as "perpetuating a culture of fear under the scapegoat of informing the public", stating "The choice to perpetually report on the possibility or rare occurrence of kidnapping/stalking/violence because of Internet sociability is not a neutral position - it is a position of power that the media chooses to take because it's a story that sells" (boyd, 2005, n.p.). By highlighting the potential negative consequences of online identity play and reporting on extreme cases of violence and predation as if they are examples of normalised behaviour, the mass media skews the debate and sets up a discourse of distrust against those who choose not to use their legal identities online. This is in contrast to much of the user-led discussion of pseudonyms, summarised by boyd in response to the growing prevalence of 'real name' policies by social networking sites. Some of the reasons given for using a pseudonym include being stalked previously, avoiding a conflation of work and personal identities (where a connection between the two could lead to the loss of employment) and identifying as homosexual online while not being 'out' offline. boyd believes that "The people who most heavily rely on pseudonyms in online spaces are those who are most marginalized by systems of power" (2011, n.p.).

Here lies the inherent contradiction in much of the popular media's reporting of online identity concerns: you need to prove you are who you say you are (by using your real name), while also protecting yourself from predators and identity thieves online (by not giving away too much personal information). This contradiction is actively engaged through discussion of two street artists below. By exploring how the two artists subjectively experience their online persona-creation strategies through the filter of their pseudonymous artistic identity, we gain insight into the process of balancing public and private disclosure through social networking.

**Offline and online - artistic lifewriting**

Lifewriting, autobiography and biography have long histories in the arts, as has a tradition of artists writing about the work itself for the education of the prospective audience. Belshaw (2011, p. 124) comments, "whilst artists have routinely written on art since the Renaissance it has been the characteristic burden of the modern artist to explain the work as satisfying his or her own unique intentions". For those artists whose work is exhibited in galleries, a short biography and a description of the intention behind the work, called artists' statements, are required in most cases for publicity materials. Drawing on the theories of both Judith Butler and Jacques Derrida, Belshaw claims, "With neither a beginning nor an end...artists' statements are performative and non-narrative acts in which the self is re constituted at every moment" (2011, p. 129). However, Belshaw’s discussion is limited to lifewriting and artists' statements through contrasting "artists' letters, interviews and articles -- those texts that constitute the staple source of anthologies -- with journals and diaries" (2011, p. 125) and does not attempt to deal with the considerable quantity of digital writing of self.

The use by artists of virtual galleries, social networking sites and personal websites is almost ubiquitous in the developed world, and artists now find themselves released from the style constraints and word requirements of the printed platforms. In addition, the opportunity to create a strong artistic identity is immensely attractive for those artists who operate outside of the representative structures of the traditional art world that function through gatekeepers such as gallery owners, critics and collectors. Through the use of free
software, mobile technologies and comparatively low-cost data connections, artists are able to represent themselves to a geographically, culturally and socially diverse audience by constructing a persona that functions to validate their self-identification as 'artist'. This is particularly important for the two artists whose work I consider below, as their artistic practice necessitates physical distance from the work they produce. I argue that by creating an online persona, these two street artists not only tap into a network of fans, followers and fellow artists, they also construct a mediating layer between their often-illegal artwork and their physically present selves.

**Street art**

As a creative practice, street art has a long history drawing on a range of historical developments from murals, performance and public art to the graffiti subculture that stemmed from 'tagging' and subway art in 1970's New York. The street art practice discussed in this paper has closer ties to the spray can-based graffiti movement of the end of the twentieth century than older art forms. Although tentative connections can be made based on aesthetics, mediums and location, the street art subculture is as diverse as the range of work that can be seen within the more traditional gallery-based art world (Lewisohn, 2008). The broadest definition would include tagging, murals, stencils, paste-ups, posters, stickers, performance and 'pieces' (large format, muralistic tags), along with slogan writers, yarnbombing, scratchititi and chalk drawing (Young et al., 2010). Street artwork is predominantly figurative or text-based, but there are also artists working in abstract formats, and pieces can appear in both legal and illegal spaces.

Defining an individual as a street artist can be problematic. Lewisohn (2008, p. 15) commented on issues of categorisation, stating that "artists, as a rule, don't welcome external categorisation; they prefer to be looked at as individuals. Street artists are by definition rule-breakers, so if you attempt to categorize them, they'll simply go and break the rules that have been set to define them". In addition, people who see themselves primarily as taggers (graffiti writers) may strongly object to being defined as artists, both because of the implication that they are concerned with aesthetics, and because the essential aims of graffiti writers and street artists are different: graffiti writers speak to each other, whereas street artists speak to the public as their audience. For this reason, self-identification as an artist, in addition to the practice of placing work on the street, was sought from the informants in spoken to.

Much street art is illegal and all of it has an element of the ephemeral; at any time the work can be destroyed by weather, painted over (buffed) by authorities or altered, added to or covered up by other artists. This is an essential part of the movement's development. Bowen comments "Taking risks was sometimes the initial attraction to graffiti for young artists. They made conscious choices about whether they should break the law, knowing the consequences involved" (1999, p. 26). As a creative practice that as often as not is illegal, making a living from street art adds an extra layer of complexity. The subway writers of the 1970s and 1980s were briefly accepted into the traditional art world, sponsored by galleries and collectors hoping to find the 'next big thing'. However, these co-options did not survive past a year or so of collaboration before the market lost interest (Lachmann, 1988). The *Pictures on Walls* collective - formed by artist Bansky and his friends - has created an income and what amounts to a self-contained art market, selling numbered limited-edition prints of their work online (Dickens, 2010). In Melbourne, street artists have begun moving back into gallery spaces, creating canvas versions of their stencil works and selling stickers or posters to a growing body of collectors. Although some street artists stay with their street aesthetic, others use gallery exhibitions to explore new mediums and styles, and a smaller group will
work only in legal spaces. Worldwide, a number of street artists accept commissions to work on walls, fences and buildings, while others work concurrently in graphic design or other commercial creative roles. Despite this range of practice, Lewisohn (2008, p. 127) believes that "the best street art and graffiti are illegal. This is because the illegal works have political and ethical connotations that are lost in sanctioned works. There is a tangible conceptual aura that is stronger in illegal graffiti: the sense of danger the artist felt is transferred to the viewer".

**GHOSTZz and MIKE MAKa**

In this case study, I analyse the online personas and interview responses of two street artists. The first is a Melbourne based artist known as Mike Maka, or by his tag, 'Makatron.' Mike is an established artist in the street art community, and has worked extensively in Australia and Brazil, with additional stints painting in Europe, the United States and South Africa. Mike's distinctive illustrative freehand style uses recurring motifs of animals, insects and planets, often blending the inanimate and the animate to create characters and images that are simultaneously appealing and monstrous. Employing the skills gained from his formal fine art training, Mike also produces gallery work, utilising the imagery and style of his large-scale street work to create domestically-scaled paintings and prints.

The second artist is known here as 'GHOSTZz.' At only 18, GHOSTZz has been working as a stencil artist in Edinburgh and surrounding areas for three years, and is now beginning to have a real impact on the street art scene within Scotland. Specialising in stylised portraits, GHOSTZz creates detailed multi-layer stencils with digital tools, then hand-cuts each layer before spraying the work on the street. More likely than Mike to work in illegal spaces, GHOSTZz must carefully manage the relationship between his digital networks and his physical presence to ensure his ongoing anonymity in the eyes of the street art-hostile Scottish police.

Both Mike Maka and GHOSTZz have a presence on a range of digital platforms, including Facebook, Tumblr and their own blogs and websites. They utilise complex persona-creation and impression management strategies in order to both protect and promote themselves. The themes discussed here are self-protection, reputation management and documentation, which are explored using extracts and interpretation of the interviews I conducted with them, as well as analysis of their online personas.

**Self-protection**

Consideration of self-protection is a requirement for artists whose work is oftentimes illegal. This is undertaken by distancing the artists' legal identity from their personal identity. At the most basic level, this distancing occurs through the choice of a name or tag. However, with the image-based nature of both the artistic work and most social media platforms, another form of distancing occurs in the choice of images of the artists themselves. Although it is possible, it is difficult to find pictures of either GHOSTZz or Mike Maka at work - with spray can in hand or linked with their artistic practice - in any of the social media or blogging tools they use. Where these images have been posted by the artists themselves (as in the images below), their identities are hidden either by obscuring the face through the use of computer software such as Photoshop, as with GHOSTZz, or by covering the face with a protective mask, as with Mike Maka. This choice of images reflects the artists' offline behaviour of obscuring the face from the public when working. GHOSTZz recalls a time when, pushing his own comfort zone, he went out painting in the early afternoon, saying, "I just put my hood up, [sprayed the stencil] then went flying off". He also comments that he now prefers to work at night, saying, "I like it to be dark, but not too
dark).

Figure 1: Dundee Graffiti Jam (GHOSTZz, 2012); Figure 2: Mike Makatron (Deniz, 2012)

This contrasts with what can be seen in Mike Maka's image, where although the protective mask obscures his face, it is still clear that he is working in broad daylight. In this case, the photo shows him working in Brazil, which has a different street culture to GHOSTZz's hometown of Edinburgh. Mike says that other artists have told him that "they just paint in the day, even if it's freeways or main streets, because...it's just more dangerous at night...Here [in Melbourne] it's the opposite, you wanna paint at night because there's less people around, and less chance of getting caught". Therefore, the inherent physical danger that is associated with being a street artist creates a need for self-protection that is contextual to the geographic area in which the artist is painting. However, the need to distance one's legal identity from one's artistic identity online is more fixed: the international audience of the online persona determines a faceless self-presentation.

**Reputation management**

The need for self-protection must always be balanced by a reputation management system. As artists, GHOSTZz and Mike Maka produce original imagery that is signed with a tag rather than a legal name, hiding any clear connection to the legal identity of the artist. Because of this, it is sometimes difficult to claim work exclusively as the artists' own, especially after photographs of the artwork have been spread across multiple online networks. GHOSTZz recounted an experience of a 'kid' claiming to have produced a wheat-paste stencil piece that GHOSTZz hadn't signed and, although he found the situation funny, GHOSTZz did produce the original stencil for the kid to see in order to prove that it was he who was the artist. He comments that he almost always signs his work now, "because of people claiming my work as theirs and things like that". Mike's situation - as a more prolific and established artist - is somewhat different. Mike comments "I don't always sign my work, and sometimes it pops up where not necessarily people are taking credit for it, but it would be a good idea if I did sign it, or if other people credited it". He recounted a story of an image of a wall-sized piece that was shared on Instagram by an aggregation account without credit to either himself as the artist or to the original photographer. The photographer commented in the Instagram stream that the image was his own and that Mike was the artist. However, this comment appeared almost 300 comments down the comment stream, and it is therefore unlikely that anyone would see it. Mike explained that "it's awesome that 17, 18 thousand people like it, ...but no one's going to read all those comments
...so if they did it in the first line, 'work by Mike Maka', ...some people would follow you, check out your website or whatever". This is a reactive form of persona-creation in both physical and digital spaces, where the artist tries to claw back control of the way his work is shared, credited and presented to the audience.

**Documentation**

Impression management and reputation management occur not only in the self-claiming of artwork but also in the image-selection process each artist undertakes when they upload photographs to their online portfolios. These portfolios of images provide the viewer with an understanding of the artist’s career, style(s), skill and experience. Both Mike Maka and GHOSTZz are involved in ongoing management of the impressions given by their portfolios. When I spoke to Mike, he was going through a period of culling images from his website, which he described as "getting rid of all the stuff I don't really need people to see". GHOSTZz is also selective with his choices of images, deciding not to upload pictures of his early work that he saw as "really really bad, and it was rough and horrible". As someone whose international street art career spans more than a decade, the images Mike has uploaded over that time period speaks not only to his capacity for work but also to his international reputation and experience. About images of his older work, he comments "I look at that stuff and the only thing that I really like about it is that it shows that I’ve been to a lot of countries, worked in a lot of places. And I guess that's one thing that I have that other people don't". This documentation of his career through digital photography provides an opportunity to "put your art in the space" where the audience is, especially through Facebook, whose strength is that "everyone's looking at it". This mirrors the street art practice itself, which connects the artwork to the audience through the use of public space. As an emerging artist, GHOSTZz not only documents works that he is happy with after it appears on the street, "almost like a diary", but he also documents ideas, digitally created drafts and stencil development. Of his development work, he says that he'll "upload it just to see what reactions, to see if people think it's good or what". More recently, GHOSTZz has trialled live streaming his work process by filming himself cutting stencils and documenting the labour that goes into his final product. The live streaming of the creation of an artwork by GHOSTZz is equivalent to the stop-motion videos produced by Mike Maka and released on YouTube. These short films show the labour and skill involved in the painting of a public wall. This production of moving images of the artist at work supports the claim of the work as one's own, as the audience can see the artist making it. However, in order to maintain self-protective distance from the artist's legal identity, it is still necessary in these pieces to obscure the face of the artist as they work.

**Conclusions**

The various ways that Mike Maka and GHOSTZz create, control and distribute their online personas provide us with new ways of understanding the experience of engaging with digital technologies for the purposes of identity construction. While much academic research concentrates on the ability to play with or trial new identity constructions (Turkle, 1995; Weber and Mitchell, 2008; Livingstone, 2008; boyd, 2008) or to engage in impression management (Goffman, 1959/1990) to present a hoped-for possible self (Mehdizadeh, 2010), this research shows that the primary concerns for these artists are self-protection, reputation and documentation. The personas created through Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, blogs and forums are deliberate creations that work as tools to demonstrate that the artist is, in fact, an artist, while allowing them to maintain some form of symbolic distance from their physical/legal selves. Contrary to mass media reports, the use of pseudonyms and the hiding of faces do not occur to deceive the public or to engage in criminal behaviour such as online
predation or identity theft. Rather, this behaviour functions to maintain both the artist's personal safety and because, as Mike Maka comments, "there's a bit of mystery if you don't know the person's face".

By expanding the discussion of online identity to focus on experience as well as behaviour, particularly through the use of an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis approach, we can investigate not only what people do when they go online, but also what that experience is like. Here I have explored the relationship between traces of behaviours seen in GHOSTZz's and Mike Maka's online personas and their subjective descriptions of experiences in both physically and digitally networked spaces. This allows us to understand the complexity of the identity of the street artist, which extends beyond a person's physical/legal self and becomes somehow separate (to a greater or lesser degree depending on the artist), an experience that GHOSTZz describes as being like "a little person in his own little world". This persona is not false, deceptive or a form of play, but instead a particular role that is played by each artist in a particular way; a role that must be protected, maintained and documented to ensure the continued success of the artist who plays it.

ENDNOTES

1: IPA is a "qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (Smith et al, 2009, p. 1), by examining experience in its own terms as opposed to according to predefined categories. For a thorough explanation of my use of IPA in my PhD research, see Barbour (2013).

2: GHOSTZz changed his tag shortly after I interviewed him, following a run-in with the police. After discussion, we decided to keep his original tag for the purposes of this research.

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ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED:
SWINGING VOTERS, POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION AND MEDIA IN
AUSTRALIA

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It is a feature of contemporary western democracy that in order to win an election, very often capturing the swinging vote becomes a priority. This is especially true in Australia, where voting is compulsory. However despite it being a term that is commonly used and popularly recognised, there is no academic consensus on who "the swinging voter" might be in terms of demographic characteristics. The data that does exist suggests that undecided voters have a low interest in politics and consume media that are not widely considered political. In this paper, I will focus on the swinging voter as both subject (of media commentary and political targeting) and audience (of campaign and media messages). In doing so, I will critically examine ways that the key notions of political knowledge and engagement have traditionally been measured which, I will argue, are bound up in normative ideas of civic virtue. I will propose that the ideas of engagement and knowledge need to be reconceived to reflect the central role of media in the way that politics is performed, experienced and understood. Not only can media use reflect a citizen's level of political interest and engagement, media themselves can be sites of political participation. Expanding this, I will argue that what constitutes "political media" in much of the debate needs to be expanded beyond broadsheets and six o'clock bulletins to include sources such as satire, soft news and online spaces. By re-thinking media's role in engagement and knowledge, and broadening the definition of political media, established definitions of swinging voters as low-information, disengaged citizens have the potential to shift.

Keywords: Swinging voters, political engagement, participation, political knowledge, media, elections.

The term "swinging voter" is used frequently and confidently by political journalists and commentators, and by politicians and their operatives, in most developed democracies. That swinging voters are electorally important is a given. Aggressive targeting of swinging
voters in marginal electorates worked well for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in the 2007 "Ruddslide", especially with the "Your Rights At Work Campaign" (Spies-Butcher and Wilson, 2008). In his infamous leaked "47 percent" speech, US presidential candidate Mitt Romney said, "What I have to convince is the five to ten per cent in the center that are independents..." (Corn, 2012). Commentators tend to regard swinging voters as low-information, disengaged and uninterested in politics. ALP elder John Faulkner has criticised his party’s tendency to conduct focus groups of "uncommitted voters hand-picked for their lack of belief" (Hartcher, SMH, 10 September 2011). In an analysis of the 2010 Federal election, George Megalogenis echoes Faulkner’s sentiment, excoriating "Gillard and Abbott, and behind them their poll-obsessed teams, [who] were so terrified of offending the disengaged that they forgot to inspire the voters who were paying attention." (2010, pp. 2-3). During this same campaign, the then treasurer Wayne Swan was memorably asked by reporter Laurie Oakes whether the line "Moving Forward" was purchased from a company called "Slogans for Bogans" (Cassidy, 2010, p. 144).

It is worth considering how much this popular idea of swinging voters is represented in the academic literature. William Mayer comments that it is a term found a lot in the media but rarely investigated by academics (2008, p. 1). In fact Mayer’s book, The Swing Voter in American Politics (2008), is one of very few in English entirely devoted to the subject. Most scholarly examinations of swinging voters tend to be part of bigger studies, for example of specific elections, or of voter behaviour. What literature exists employs a variety of definitions, often interchangeably, to describe voters who are undecided, including swing(ing) voters, floating voters, persuadables, independents and switchers. This is in addition to terms used by political campaigners and strategists, which include soft voters, target voters and shifters.

It is a troubling thought, the idea that the group least interested in politics is the group most interesting to politicians. The primary aim of this paper, therefore, is to explore some different ways of thinking about and addressing this problem. In doing so, it will seek to define more clearly the idea of a "swinging voter" and ask how this electorally-important cohort might use media sources to obtain political information. It will argue for an expansion of the traditional notions of political engagement and knowledge beyond relativity to institutions, or broad normative ideals of civic virtue. Instead, it will be proposed that media use and interaction need to be recognised as a central indicator of political engagement and source of knowledge, and that what is regarded as "political media" must be expanded to reflect a changing media environment.

Swinging voters have been discussed, under various guises, in much of the classic literature of political science, and the way they are characterised is strikingly similar across studies. They are generally defined as possessing low levels of political information, not being interested in seeking out information about politics, and being disengaged from civic life. In their landmark study of the 1940 presidential election, Paul Lazarsfeld et al (1944) identified the "undecided" voter as potentially pivotal in an election result. However, in investigating the way that this voter seeks political information, Lazarsfeld’s findings were surprising. Intuitively, it follows that a voter who knows very little about politics would seek out information from available sources, like the media; similarly, it might seem obvious to conclude that those with strong partisan views would not need to access further information, as their opinions are solidly formed. However, Lazarsfeld discovered quite the reverse:

At any one time, the people who already knew how they were going to vote read and listened to more campaign material than
the people who still did not know how they would vote. In other words, the group which the campaign manager is presumably most eager to reach - the as-yet undecided - is the very group which is less likely to read or listen to his propaganda. (1944, p. 124)

Lazarsfeld's study, and later classic studies including that of Angus Campbell et al (1960), suggest that the swinging voter is disengaged from political media. He concludes that the "more interested people are in the election, the more opinions they have on political issues, the more actively they participate in a campaign, and the more they expose themselves to campaign propaganda." (1944, p. 43). Or, to put it another way, the less people are interested in politics, the less political media they are likely to consume, and the less engaged they will be.

In his seminal 1962 article, "Information flow and stability of partisan attitudes", Philip E. Converse takes further the idea that there is a link between political knowledge, political engagement and partisan attitudes, with his observation:

Not only is the electorate as a whole quite uninformed, but it is the least informed members within the electorate who seem to hold the critical 'balance of power', in the sense that alternations in governing party depend disproportionately on shifts in their sentiment... 'shifting' or 'floating' voters tend to be those whose information about politics is relatively impoverished. (1962, pp. 578-9)

Here, Converse identifies the central paradox of political communication, one that continues to flummox campaigners: the people you most want to reach are probably not paying attention.

VO Key (1966) makes a similar observation. He acknowledges the existence of a group of "independent" voters, which he describes disparagingly:

It is not an impressive lot. On the average, its level of information is low, its sense of political involvement is slight, its level of political participation is not high (1966, p. 92)

Only a few others have written about swing voters in an American context, with Kelley (1983), Zaller (2004) and Mayer (2008) being the most prominent. Remarkably, all scholars are fundamentally consistent in their findings. Whether they focus on rationality, or persuadability, or develop a scale for identifying swingers, they all refer to a cohort of citizens whose vote is neither stable nor predictable; a cohort with low levels of political information and knowledge, and which is disengaged from politics.

The Australian electoral context, in which voting is compulsory for all adult citizens, casts a different perspective. In the American system, the swinging voter is at least sufficiently engaged to vote; those who are disengaged or uninterested simply opt out of the political system altogether. In Australia, regardless of a citizen's levels of political knowledge or interest, s/he is required by law to turn out to vote. This creates the potential for a larger number of voters, compelled to vote, but without a strong opinion. However, even though Australian scholars are writing about a different voting environment, the same central characteristics of swinging voters - as being disengaged and uninterested - are observed.
In his book *The Australian Voter* (2011), Ian McAllister compiles the results of decades of Australian Election Studies (AES), the post-election surveys conducted by the ANU, which remain the most comprehensive source of voter data in the country. Within the framework of the AES, the swinging voter is defined as one who leaves it very late in an election campaign to decide whom s/he will vote for, or the voter who changes his/her vote from election to election. Considering the electorate as a whole, McAllister identifies four types of voters. There are early deciders, whose vote is decided before the campaign begins, or near its start. Then, there are those who are broadly disengaged from the campaign but make up their minds early. The third category is of late deciders who spend the campaign gathering information, carefully considering it in order to make an informed decision that best suits their individual needs or beliefs. Finally, there are voters who do not follow the campaign and make up their mind at the last possible minute based on very little information. McAllister calls the four types Partisans, Disengaged, Calculating and Capricious. Partisans are the biggest group, comprising 64 percent of us. The other three groups are all equal at 12 percent. (2011, p. 103) This means that one-third of Australians lack a strong political opinion, and 24 percent are generally uninformed about politics.

Ernie Chaples (1997) divides swinging voters into four sub-categories. There are the "rationalists", who cast their vote according to a consideration of who serves their best interests. Then, there is an anti-major party group, which flits around between the minor parties and independent candidates. Third, there are the protest voters, who vote to "punish" (1997, pp. 361-2). The final group is described by Chaples in such a way as to warrant extensive quotation:

> The airheads and drongos are the apoliticals of our society. They do not know much about politics, and they care even less. If it were not for compulsory enrolment and voting, the airheads would hardly matter as they often would seldom be enrolled and would hardly ever show up to vote. But in the Australian system, airheads do vote. (1997, p. 363)

This vivid and unflattering portrait of the low-information voter, disengaged from the political system, is reflected in the "swinging voter" of the public imagination.

Three factors align with significant frequency in both the academic literature and popular commentary: swinging voters tend to have low levels of political information, they don't consume what is traditionally regarded as political media, and they are less likely to be engaged in traditional civic groups and activities. What is striking about most of the literature and media commentary around swinging voters is that it casts the low-information voter as inadequate, irresponsible and even stupid. The assumption made by these scholars is that our political systems are functional, interesting and worth engaging with, and that citizens who don't participate or fail to seek information from traditional sources are deficient. Citizens, according to these models, have a duty to fully inform themselves of the issues and vote accordingly. The concern that citizens are more ignorant and less engaged in civic life has spawned a literature worried that this is leading to a crisis in democracy.

The most influential prosecutor of this thesis is Robert Putnam (2000). His theory of social capital emphasises the desirability of people forming social connections that create a polity rich in civic virtue and cohesion. In considering America at the turn of the millennium, Putnam laments the loss of social capital. As evidence, he points to the declining voter turnout, declining trust in government, declining membership of civic groups and the breakdown of the traditional "mom, dad and the kids" families (2000, p. 277). However, the
most important factor in this decline in American civic virtue, Putnam argues, is the introduction of television into the majority of American homes. Putnam sees television as eroding community, citing figures that explicitly link large amounts of television consumption with low levels of group participation (2000, p.228). Putnam's thesis that excessive television consumption correlates with a lack of engagement is not unique and can be found in the work of many other scholars (including Skocpol and Fiorina, 1999). The argument has also been made in the Australian context by Federal Labor MP and former research assistant of Putman's, Andrew Leigh (2010).

However, the ways that the concepts of engagement and knowledge are measured are often in relationship to formal institutions, and do not acknowledge the possibility for other forms of participation and acquisition of information, for example in or via media sources. Traditionally, the most common way of measuring voter participation is in simple terms of turnout at election time. While in Australia there are debates about the decline in enrolment, especially among young people, when considering the engagement of the broad population this isn't such a useful barometer. Ideas of civic engagement are also commonly measured in terms of membership in bricks-and-mortar political or civic institutions such as trade unions, political parties and community groups. (McAllister, 2011; Lazarsfeld, 1944; Campbell, 1960; Lipset, 1960). Other forms of engagement, for example online activity, are not recognised. Political knowledge is often measured with a test of civic knowledge. For example, the AES asks its participants True or False questions like "No-one may stand for federal parliament unless they pay a deposit." (McAllister 2011, p. 58). Citizens typically perform poorly in these tests, which do not address issues like the recognition of political figures, or awareness and comprehension of policy. That the measuring sticks of our understanding of knowledge and engagement don't reflect a contemporary political environment is significant, especially when it is considered that the AES data is the major data source for Australian scholars that consider these issues. It must also be noted that the AES requires participants to fill in a long survey with pen and paper, and then post it back to the ANU, a mode of delivery that has the potential to exclude significant demographic groups, for example the young.

The thesis that television is largely responsible for political disengagement has other flaws. Pippa Norris points out that Putnam and others assume that there is one television experience, where the same content is broadcast to a homogenous audience (1996, p. 475). She concedes that there is a correlation between a high number of hours spent watching television with a low level of membership of civic groups. However, she goes on to observe that:

If we turn to the content of what people watched the picture changes. Those who regularly tuned into network news were significantly more likely to be involved in all types of political activity and the relationship between watching public affairs programs on television and civic engagement proved even stronger. (1996, p. 476)

Norris' study suggests that media consumption (of a certain type) is an indicator of political engagement, and therefore, an avoidance of political media might indicate a tendency to swing vote. The notion that political interest and engagement can be directly measured in relationship to media habits is further explored by Sally Young (2011), who argues that media are a central information source in the decision-making processes of Australians and, by extension, in the way we learn about and involve ourselves in politics (2011, p. 26). Young creates a theoretical model whereby the media that a person consumes is directly re-
reflective of their real-life political behaviour and engagement. This model is backed up by studies that explicitly link consumption of political media (for example, watching presidential debates) with turning out to vote (Kennamer, 1987; Franklin, 1994).

I propose to take this idea one step further and argue that the media themselves can be places of political engagement. Contemporary western society is now "highly mediated" (Dalhgren, 2009, p. 81), and media is becoming central to the way politics is not just communicated to a mass audience but also learnt about, experienced and engaged with by individuals. This increasing co-dependence of media and politics is highlighting the limitations of some of the traditional ways of measuring participation and knowledge. It is less relevant now to consider participation only by asking about one's relationship to an institution, when one's interaction with media can itself be a political expression. Live tweeting a television broadcast such as Q&A, for example, denotes an active engagement with politics. Increasingly, Twitter is a place that people visit during times of political crisis or high activity. For example, during the leadership spill of 26 June 2013, there were in excess of half a million individual tweets related to the events posted to Twitter between 12pm and 12am (Christensen, 2013).

In a small but influential study, Nick Couldry et al (2007) asked people to keep media diaries and then spoke to them about their political interest and involvement. Not only did Couldry find a relationship between media consumption and political behavior, he also saw that a shared media experience creates a type of public sphere in which political interactions can occur. Underpinning this argument is Jürgen Habermas' notion of the "public sphere", which "may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as public" (1989, p. 27). Perhaps the most important theory informing much of the literature about civic engagement, Habermas' public sphere is an idealised place where public opinion is deliberatively formed. For Habermas, the mass media that are used to communicate within the public sphere are controlled by elites. He regards digital media platforms as being useful insofar as they allow citizens in oppressive regimes to communicate uncensored information. But in Habermas' view, within liberal democracies, the Internet simply fragments mass political audiences (2006, p. 423).

However, this overlooks the potential of online environments to deliver an interactivity that allows the public sphere to be realised in a media context. Stephen Coleman (2006) argues that politicians could learn from the contestants in the television program Big Brother about the way they communicate with and mobilise mass audiences. Coleman sees media as providing a public sphere, which is neither exclusive nor elitist, in which people can perform politics. The interactive voting tools of television reality shows are, Coleman argues, democratic and non-exclusive. (2006, p. 463). Coleman, of course, is being deliberatively provocative, but there is a broad point to be made here. These sorts of popular television programs engage a different type of voter in what is an inherently political activity, and point to a potential for media platforms and spaces to effectively function as places that political behaviour can be practiced.

Similarly, a citizen could well eschew party membership but be part of a large online community which engages indirectly with politics by posting on forums and arguing with others in the community; or directly by lobbying government. Online groups such as GetUp! explicitly mobilise citizens to participate in politics by facilitating the lobbying of government (Vromen and Coleman, 2011, p. 76). These organisations have built communities that do not conform to the traditional idea of bricks-and-mortar civic groups but which nonetheless allow people to politically engage. Furthermore, while it is premature to be heralding in a new "golden age" of online participation for all (Vromen (2011), Norris (2001)
and others note that many people, especially in developing nations, still don't have access to these modes of democratic expression), the sorts of media spaces provided by new communications technologies point to emerging possibilities for greater engagement, and the huge potential for media platforms to facilitate and host political activity.

By expanding upon what is regarded as political activity, citizens who would otherwise be categorised as disengaged might now be recognised as more participatory. This applies to swinging voters, as they are typically defined. Similarly, challenges can be made to traditional views regarding the acquisition of political knowledge. Just as the characterisation of swinging voters in popular and academic literature implies that they fall outside of an ill-defined boundary of virtuous, engaged citizenship, it also suggests that they are below an arbitrary benchmark of knowledge that would make their vote informed and therefore worthwhile. However, there are questions around how much knowledge is actually necessary to cast a vote that reflects the voter's basic attitudes. Alexander Downs (1957), for example, argues that becoming highly politically informed is actually a waste of effort, because an effective vote can be made on relatively scant information. The paucity of this reward is even less for someone who does not care about the election result. If the voter doesn't care, then s/he has nothing to lose: there is no 'wrong' vote and so no return on a right one. Subsequent scholars have used Downs' idea to argue that you do not need a lot of information, or high levels of engagement, in order to vote meaningfully. Samuel Popkin (1991) argues that we form informational shortcuts, in which "gut decisions" are made based on simple messages. Arthur Lupia (1994) conducted a study in which citizens were asked to vote on some complicated changes to insurance reform. He found that citizens were able to effectively use information shortcuts, such as the opinions of friends and colleagues, or the position of the insurance companies, to place a vote that represented their beliefs (1994, pp. 63-76). John Zaller (1992) recognises that partisanship is our best shortcut to opinions about a range of other topics. Michael Schudson (1999) talks about the "monitory citizen", where people pay passing attention to politics, much like a parent supervising children in a pool. It might be that despite lacking a thorough knowledge of political debate, policy and position, swinging voters are capable of voting in a way that does genuinely reflect their own attitudes and ideologies.

At the heart of this debate is a struggle with normative ideas of civic responsibility, adequate knowledge levels, and their effects on political participation. On one hand, there is a desire to be more inclusive and non-elitist when considering what might be an "acceptable" level of political knowledge among voters. However, that inevitably clashes with a concern that political and media messages are being "dumbed down". Lindsay Tanner in Australia (2011), and Thomas Patterson (1996) in the US, are particularly strong critics of what they regard as an increasingly populist, intellectually flabby political media. While it could be argued that an ignorant voter is more susceptible to misinformation and fear campaigns, it is unrealistic and unhelpful merely to chastise the populace for failing to consume serious political media, or lambast media organisations for simplifying their content in order to attract audiences. Just as platforms for media delivery are evolving, so the types of media content that can deliver political information are also changing.

Political satire, comedy and non-mainstream (often online) news sources are changing the nature of political media, and are attracting wide audiences from demographic groups that do not consume what has been regarded as "political media" (Chaffee and Kanihan, 1997; Norris, 2000; Prior, 2003). "Soft" news is now attracting and informing viewers (and voters) who would not necessarily seek out political information from more traditional media sources. For example, Matthew Baum found that a significant proportion of viewers gathered information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from watching The
Oprah Winfrey Show (2002, pp. 91-97). Similarly, the Lewinsky scandal of the late 1990s has been cited as changing the way that politics and media were played together (Williams and Delli Carpini, 2000; Zaller, 1998). The scandal was first broken online by blogger Matthew Drudge, and despite the best efforts of Clinton's communications team to contain the damage of another "bimbo outbreak", the scandal became a full-blown media spectacle. Soft news, serious news, satirists, bloggers, chatrooms, professional journalists and non-professional commentators all contributed to make this the biggest news story of the final years of the twentieth century. The traditional gatekeepers of the media and political machine were sidestepped, borrowed under and ultimately steamrolled by these new players.

The legacy of this media frenzy was a fundamental change in the way that politics is not just reported, but conceived of. For example, in the lead-up to the 2012 US Presidential election, a debate between newscaster Bill O'Reilly and comedian Jon Stewart attracted an online audience of such scale that the video servers temporarily collapsed, unable to cope with the demand (Lederman, 2012). Jon Stewart's comedy program The Daily Show has been shown to increase political knowledge among audience groups not typically interested in politics, for example young voters (Hollander, 2005, pp. 402-4). In Australia, television programs like The Chaser: The Hamster Decides, Gruen Nation and The Project all package political content in non-traditional, often satirical ways, and all enjoy large audiences and repeated commissions.

Media interaction is now the most common and frequent form of political activity engaged in by the most number of people and popular media has become so entwined with politics that the two can no longer be separated (Jones, 2005, p. 8). Jeffrey Jones writes:

Media are our primary points of access to politics, the space in which politics now chiefly happens for most people, and the place for political encounters that precede, shape, and at all times determine further bodily participation (2005, p. 17)

Jones updates the idea of political participation to allow for a thoroughly mediated culture and recognises consumption of and interaction with political media in its many forms as a political act. In doing so, he allows for an expansion of what might be regarded as engagement, to better reflect a contemporary, media-centred world.

The political indifference of swinging voters, as they are traditionally regarded, seems to indicate that the group most crucial to political outcomes is poorly equipped to make sound political judgments. But traditional measurements of key concepts like engagement and knowledge have failed to take into account a changing media landscape that allows for different types of political activity and different ways that information can be conveyed. This, in turn, has affected the way that political knowledge and engagement are considered and understood. Media has become central to the way that politics is performed and learnt about. The types of media that can deliver political information have changed, with soft news, satire and new communications technologies providing information to audiences/voters in non-traditional ways. Further, media have become central sites for practicing politics, and need to be acknowledged not just as reflections of one's political engagement, but also as places of participation in themselves.

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REPORTING ISLAM IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS: THE CASE OF THE PROPOSED ELMORE VALE MOSQUE

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This paper uses the local case study of a proposed mosque development in the Newcastle suburb of Elmore Vale as an example of how Islam has been reported in the Australian media. The media reports analysed were published in Newcastle’s local newspaper The Herald between February 2010, when the Newcastle Muslim Association purchased the land for the proposed development, and March 2012, when the Land and Environment Court ruled against the proposal. The discourses evident in the newspaper content reveal a clear undercurrent of racism within the local reporting against the Muslim community and, it may be argued, are representative of a larger trend of Islamophobia in the West. While the key community protest group Elmore Vale Community for Appropriate Residential and Environment Strategies (EV CARES) attempted to discuss the mosque proposal by raising planning issues appropriate property development matters, anti-Muslim sentiment was clearly evident in many of the articles. Illustrations of Edward Said’s (1978, 2004) concept of ‘Orientalism’ emerged through the reporting, where Islam, and by extension the Newcastle Muslim Association, was portrayed as being different, strange and threatening to the local community. The fact that this kind of anti-Muslim sentiment can be identified in local media products is indicative of the challenges for local media groups covering local media events, as it represents how a local matter can become contentious due to globally recognised concerns. In this instance, those concerns are the perceived threat of Muslim fundamentalism and Islam to the West. Discursive analysis of The Herald’s reports demonstrates that discourses of power, religion, ‘the Other’, ‘community’ and ‘the victim’ are prevalently portrayed. Furthermore, these portrayals contribute to anti-Muslim attitudes communicated by key parties in the articles, who use the Islamic religion as an identifier; the marginalisation of the Muslim community as ‘Other’; and an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dichotomy to manifest perhaps more nationally-held concerns at a local level.

Keywords: Islam, Discourse, Cultural Politics, the ‘Other’
INTRODUCTION

This paper forms part of a larger research project investigating the reporting of Islam in Australian newspapers through three case studies. This paper concentrates on the first case study, the proposed mosque development in the Newcastle suburb of Ellemore Vale. The media reports analysed were published in Newcastle's local newspaper The Herald between February 2010, when the Newcastle Muslim Association purchased the land for the proposed development, and March 2012, when the Land and Environment Court ruled against the proposal.

The research is underpinned by ideas of discourse, power, reception studies and Orientalism. The research was conducted as a longitudinal case study and is mainly qualitative in nature, using discourse analysis; however, some content analysis was also used to quantifiably represent power relations. The analysis revealed discourses of power, religious affiliation, 'the Other', the community and the victim evident in these media reports. The preliminary results of this research point to a necessary discussion surrounding the ethics of reporting on Islam for a Western audience, both in Australia and a wider international context.

Discourse analysis is crucial to this research as both a method and a conceptual framework. Paltridge (2006, p. 1) defines discourse analysis as "an approach to the analysis of language that looks at patterns of language across texts as well as the social and cultural contexts in which the texts occur". This approach allows the investigation into what types of knowledge are being presented to an audience and who is constructing and presenting these discourses, raising issues of power. Michel Foucault wrote extensively on discourse and power, "maintain[ing] that representations of knowledge are developed through types of discourse - discussions that are framed by the current accepted norms of institutions that are in positions of power within the intellectual establishment" (Walliman, 2010, p. 24). The media are currently the institutions hosting these discussions and infusing media messages with discourses that define media representations. Therefore, the media are also responsible for power relationships developed in terms of inclusion and exclusion, and what Stahl locates as Foucault's interest in "the criteria according to which specific views are considered legitimate contributions" (Stahl, 2004, p. 4330), or in other words, "how it is that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (Foucault, 1972, p. 27). This concept of selection of contributions was key in the research, in order to identify whose voice The Herald was presenting to the community in an attempt to discern power relationships and potential coverage bias (D’Alessio and Allen, 2000) from journalistic choices. Five distinct discourses were identified for analysis, those being power, religious affiliation, 'the Other', community and the victim. These discourses reveal a clear undercurrent of racism against the Muslim community within the local reporting and, it may be argued, are representative of a larger trend of Islamophobia in the West.

The key theorist currently writing on representations of Islam in Western media, as referenced for this paper, is Anne Aly (2007, 2010). Aly's 2007 article entitled 'Australian Muslim Responses to the Discourse on Terrorism in the Australian Popular Media' found that in the Australian context this discourse has emerged as one which implicates Australian Muslims, constructing them as a homogenous monolith with an underlying implication that Islam, and by association Australian Muslims, is secular resistant and at odds with the values of the liberal democratic state (Aly,
2007, p. 27).

She found that Australian Muslims were not given a voice amongst the dominant discourse of terrorism in Australian media and this marginalised them into the position of 'the Other'. These findings are supported by Rane and Hersi (2012, p. 138) who found that "post 9/11, the media frames used in the coverage of Islam and Muslims have been based on Orientalist depictions of a religion and people as a different, strange, inferior and threatening 'other'".

Orientalism was the theory of Edward Said, who argued that it is representations of Islam in the media that creates issues in society, rather than the many practices of Islamic faith and culture themselves. This is partially due to the power imbalance in media representations of authoritative sources, whereby Muslim people "cannot represent themselves, they must...be represented by others" (Said, 1985, p. 7). Said argues that Western reporters intentionally include ideas of terrorism and fear in their reporting on Islam to reinforce the dominant discourses in society surrounding this religious group (Aly, 2007; Aly, 2010; Dunn, 2001; Rane and Hersi, 2012). This research found that The Herald is continuing to reinforce these dominant discourses of 'the Other' in their reporting.

Local media organisations such as The Herald play an important role in local communities in terms of information development and the maintenance of power relations. Hindman (1996, p. 708) argues that "local newspapers are integral components of the community that tend to reflect both the agenda and the tactics of the local power structure". Local newspapers therefore work to preserve power relations in society and maintain cohesion. The importance of The Herald is represented on the newspaper's website, where it is stated that The Herald is "the largest local media organisation" in the Newcastle region (Fairfax Media, 2012) and "the only Newcastle-based newspaper serving the entire Hunter and Central Coast regions, six days a week" (ibid). Being the largest and only locally-based newspaper, The Herald therefore holds an important position in the Newcastle community, and is well trusted by the local readership, highlighting the importance of ethical practice.

The Newcastle Muslim Association proposed to build the Elermore Vale mosque after the Muslim population of Newcastle outgrew the existing Wallsend mosque. The Association purchased the land for the proposed development in February 2010 and were immediately met with opposition by the wider community, particularly by the Elermore Vale Community for Appropriate Residential and Environmental Strategies (EVCARES) group. The plans for the mosque were sent to the Joint Regional Planning Panel and were denied in August 2011. The Association appealed with the NSW Land and Environment Court and were ruled against in March 2012, bringing the issue to a close.

**Methodology**

The research was conducted as a longitudinal, qualitative case study comprised of newspaper articles published by the Newcastle publication, The Herald, on the proposed development on the Elermore Vale mosque between February 2010 and March 2012. In total, 58 articles were examined in the timeframe, which were a combination of 47 news articles and 11 editorial/opinion pieces. The news items were chosen through theoretical sampling wherein "the idea is to select materials for conceptual or theoretically relevant reasons" (Altheide, 1996, pp. 33-34), which allowed the issue to be covered comprehensively. Case study methods have been criticised for being ungeneralisable, and whilst it is true that they are not generalisable statistically, Yin (2009, p. 15) argues that "case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical prepositions". For example, if the same theoretical concepts are found to hold up in numerous case studies then it is likely that those theories are accur-
ate. In this way, a successful case study may provide a basis for other case studies to expand upon.

As stated previously, the general findings of this case study indicate that there are underlying connotations of racism against the Muslim community within the reporting. Close inspection of the newspaper content yields qualitative data centering on discourses of power, religious affiliation, the ‘Other’, community and the victim. Given the complex inter-relationships between these discursive categories, no distinctive sequencing of the analytical discussion has been intended on the part of the researcher. Rather, the thematic analyses that follow demonstrate in detail how predominant discourses of ‘Otherness’ (Kothari, 2013) prevail by being inextricably embedded in The Herald’s content in various ways.

**DISCOURSE OF POWER**

The power of individuals to represent events and ideas on behalf of their communities is partially represented in the articles through the selective use of source identification and titles. The choice by The Herald to identify three residents by name in an article from 9 December 2010 highlights the residents’ significance as sources in terms of the proposed development. By identifying residents specifically, The Herald gives them authority and lends authenticity to their cause. Authenticity is defined here as "implicitly a polemical concept, fulfilling its nature by dealing aggressively with received and habitual opinion" (Trilling, 1972, p. 94). Authenticity therefore involves value judgements regarding how we distinguish people in society. By identifying residents by name and singling them out, The Herald increases authenticity by giving the reader a specific person they can isolate as holding these opinions, rather than vague ideals held by an unnamed collective.

The choice to not identify individuals by name was used to deduct power from the EV CARES group, when their president Geoff Byrnes was referred to as "local business man Geoff Byrnes" (Sme, 23 February 2011, p. 7). This incorrect identification of the source is at odds with basic journalistic practice and code of ethics, whereby all sources must be attributed unless they negotiate confidentiality. This can also be related to pragmatics, which "is interested in what people mean by what they say, rather than what words in their most literal sense might mean by themselves" (Paltridge, 2006, p. 3). In this instance then, the exclusion of Byrnes' official title could arguably undermine his authority with the readership and does not reveal his alliance with the EV CARES group, potentially undermining the power of the EV CARES voice in these articles. Alternatively, however, The Herald later used identification and titles to increase the perceived authority of EV CARES vice-president Steve Beveridge, referring to him as "EV CARES vice-president and semi-retired academic Steve Beveridge" (Gregory, 14 May 2011, p. 5). The reference to Beveridge's status as a semi-retired academic could build his authority, and make him seem a more credible source, giving him increased power in the eyes of the reader. His identification being linked directly to the EV CARES group then passes this perceived power on to them.

The way The Herald reporters used figures in their articles also develops the power relationship between the two key parties. In one article, it is written "Connell said he had received many calls in support of the development based on the concept of 'freedom of religion'" (Thompson, 11 December 2010, p. 5) and then stated "there are believed to be between 900 and 1000 objections to the development" (ibid). By stating the number of people opposing the mosque development The Herald quantifies the opposition, whereas the "many calls" of support is very vague. The audience could interpret many calls as 10 or 100 dependent on numerous factors, whereas the use of "900 and 1000 objections" is more concrete and powerful to the reader.
The content analysis conducted over the whole period (2010-12) revealed that the Newcastle Muslim Association received more media attention than the EV CARES community group. Whilst the Newcastle Muslim Association was quoted only 17 times compared to the community group’s 20 times, they were mentioned in the articles 106 times compared to EV CARES being mentioned just 44 times. This shows more than double the representation for the Association, and represents increased opportunities for their pro-mosque message to be heard. By analysing this data in relation to ‘coverage bias’, which involves "measuring the physical amount of coverage each side of some issue receives" (D’Alessio and Allen, 2000, p. 136), it can be seen that balanced reporting was not achieved. D’Alessio and Allen argue that "it is reasonable to assume that half the coverage should be accorded to one side and half to the other, and that deviations from this pattern are consistent with a coverage bias of some kind" (ibid), and in this case balance clearly did not occur.

However, this trend was reversed within the articles that quoted residents, with the wider community members quoted 14 times, whilst only one quote was included from someone identified as a Muslim. Additionally, opponents of the mosque were mentioned 20 times and supporters seven, showing almost triple the representation in favour of the mosque opponents. Therefore when it came to representing the community’s point of view, The Herald was again unbalanced, but this time favouring the wider community and denying the Muslim community "the 'right to reply'" (Hafer, 2002, p. 226). Therefore the Newcastle Muslim Association, the EV CARES community group, the wider community and the Muslim community were given mixed opportunities to portray their arguments through The Herald’s selective use of sources in the reporting.

Power is also portrayed through the images accompanying the articles, in particular two articles regarding protests in December 2010. The first image shows three anti-Muslim protestors with seven anti-racism protestors behind them. The anti-racist protestors outnumber the anti-Muslim protestors more than two to one, visually representing the power imbalance. This power relation could be interpreted as an extrapolation of the divisions in the wider community, showing that the anti-racism protestors may actually represent a larger proportion of the community than the anti-Muslim protestors and, therefore, a larger proportion of the power. The second image is from 9 December 2010 and shows many people at a residents meeting standing with arms folded and unsmiling. The group image expresses power in numbers and visually communicates the formidable opposition to the mosque. This idea was reinforced within the article, with the "agitated residents" (Davidson, 9 December 2010, p. 2) described as being "out in force" (ibid).

Overall from 2010-12 there were six pictures printed portraying members of the EV CARES group and 11 of the Newcastle Muslim Association. It must be noted that this majority was reached in 2012 when there was a change in focus of the articles, to be discussed later. The trend was reversed again in the images of the wider community, with four images of opponents compared to just one image of supporters, showing almost equal coverage overall of both sides visually, and the achievement of coverage balance.

**DISCOURSE OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION**

A discourse of religious affiliation emerges through the articles, partially due to the use of the term 'Muslim' as an identifier. The content analysis found that the word 'Muslim' was used 66 times across all articles (2010-12), compared to 'Islam' being used just 30 times, showing double the usage and the level of importance placed on religion as an identifier by The Herald. In this way, protests against the mosque development were often referred to as 'anti-Muslim' instead of 'anti-mosque'. It can therefore be argued that the reporting aligned
the opposition to be against the people who would use the mosque rather than the mosque itself. At times, the use of religion as an identifier was seemingly irrelevant, such as when a resident commenting on the proposed development was identified by The Herald as "Rah's fellow Muslim Bikash Paul" (Thompson, 11 December 2010, p. 4). The UK's Press Complaint's Commission's Code of Practice says the media "should not provide details of an individual's race, colour or religion unless genuinely relevant to the story" (Keeble, 2009, p. 174). Other residents that were quoted in the articles were not identified as 'Christians' but simply as 'residents', so it seems unnecessary and exaggerated on the part of the journalist to identify this man according to his religion.

The frequent referencing to religion as an identifier in the articles reveals an undercurrent of racism, through the clear distinctions made throughout the reporting between what are viewed to be "legitimate concerns" (Connell in Thompson, 11 December 2010, p. 5) and objections which are "undeniably...born of prejudice" (Corbett, 16 September 2010, p. 8). Various positions became apparent in the reporting which represented a shift from concerns about the mosque causing traffic congestion to the possible growth of a concentrated Muslim population in the suburb as problematic. The Herald frequently reported the idea that traffic concerns were being used as a cover for religious prejudice. As one editorial article suggested, "traffic seems to be the dominant concern...traffic is ubiquitous and a convenient hook for objections...traffic is a mask for the real concern" (ibid). Traffic congestion is therefore reported by The Herald to be a strategic device to oppose the mosque whilst avoiding the religious elements that people may find unseemly. This view is again represented through a headline from 2011 titled "Flash Point: Why are people really worried about the mosque" (Gregory, 14 May 2011, p. 1). The word 'really' in this context suggests an ulterior motive to the opposition. A clear religious intolerance can be seen through reported statements from a Joint Regional Planning Panel meeting, which described how "a woman who took her place in the gallery told reporters before the meeting she hoped they would 'make sure those hanky heads don't get that temple'" (Connell, 23 August 2011, p. 2). It could be argued that The Herald attempted to bring this undercurrent of racism to the surface by reporting on it so frequently and making people aware of it. This is supported by other articles that present a more pro-Muslim point of view, particularly during the coverage of the Australian Protectionist Party's attempted anti-Muslim protest, which was reported as a "non-event" (Davidson, 4 December 2010, p. 7) with just four people participating. This would suggest good ethical practice by The Herald in their attempts to achieve balanced and fair reporting on minority groups.

**Discourse of 'the Other'**

The discourse of 'the Other' is primarily developed in the articles through consistent references to Muslims being extremists or terrorists. Edward Said argues that in modern society it is impossible to use words such as 'Islam' or 'Muslim' without invoking negative connotations in the audience's mind. This is evidenced by numerous articles, one of which used phrases such as "unimaginable brutality" (Corbett, 16 September 2010, p. 8), "slaughter" (ibid), "evil" (ibid) and the "horror of the World Trade Centre slaughter is burnt into Western consciousness" (ibid). The Bali bombings were also referenced in this article by saying "bombs exploded among holidaying Lower Hunter people, and it seemed that everyone knew one or more of the victims" (ibid). This reference to the bombings that killed many Australians - that specifically killed Newcastle residents - locates the incident closer to home and gives the issue more impact to the local readers.
Raising these examples and drawing on connections to global events encourages the readers to call on their mental models, those being "subjective representations of specific episodes" (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 6). Mental models come from personal experiences but are influenced by communication and socialisation, "hence, models constitute the unique interface that combines the personal and the unique, on the one hand, with the social and the shared, on the other" (ibid). Therefore, by referencing instances where extremist Islam has impacted the consciousness of readers, the audience is encouraged to call on these mental models and recall how they felt when those events occurred, making links between what happened in the past and the current mosque development. As Dunn has argued, "Islamophobia may circulate globally but it impacts locally as opposition to Islamic places of worship" (2001, p. 305). This supports Said's belief that journalists intentionally include discourses of terrorism and fear in their reporting on Islam, linking the ideas in the audience's minds.

This purposefulness was obvious in a 2011 article concerning a public meeting (that was supposed to be about general community issues) being overtaken by discussions about the mosque. The wording used by The Herald reporter was "the meeting was 'hijacked' by residents' concerns about a proposed mosque development" (Smee, 16 February 2011, p. 11). The word hijacked will draw specific connotations for the readers and normally this would be avoided, however, the word was placed in inverted commas suggesting the author had used the word on purpose, perhaps to make a pun. This deliberately draws on the idea of Muslims as terrorists, bringing the ideas to the fore of the reader's mind, as shown in mental models, and is representative of poor journalistic choices.

Also referenced in an editorial article by Corbett were comments previously made by Sheik Taj el-Din Hilaly regarding Western women and other cultural issues. The author of this article states that there is "no doubt in my mind that the brand of Islam [Hilaly] represented was a savage, primitive religion that had no place in Australia...there is no indication that the leaders of the Newcastle Muslim Association share Hilaly's interpretation of Islam" (Corbett, 16 September 2010, p. 8). In his phrasing, the author is careful to distinguish between different manifestations of Islam and acknowledges that not all Muslim people are extremists. Another example of this distinction was displayed in a 2012 article, where the Muslim people involved in the war on terror are titled "militant Islam" (no author, 5 January 2012, p. 10). This word choice shows a distinction - encouraging the wider community and readership to also make this distinction - between the militant, fundamental Islam and the moderate, religious Islam represented by the Newcastle Muslim Association. These word choices show an effort by the journalist to accurately represent different elements of Islam, showing responsible reporting on their behalf.

There are attempts made by Newcastle Muslim Association spokeswoman, Diana Rah, to mitigate the 'Otherness' of the Muslim community in an opinion piece published by The Herald titled "Mosque Neighbours Can Look to Peace" (Rah, 10 September 2010, p. 9). In the article, Rah lists a number of ways in which the Muslim community contributes to the wider community, stating "a large number [of Muslims] are professionals such as engineers, doctors, academics and educationalists, managers, tradespeople and mariners among others" (ibid). Through this list Rah aims to show that the Muslim community is important and already integrated into the wider community. Some pro-Muslim attitudes are then put forward by The Herald, with one article arguing "anti-Muslim sentiment is a sometimes pervasive force in global politics, but it has no place in deciding the merits of a development application in suburban Croudace Road" (no author, 4 December 2010, p. 19). Altering the perception of Muslims as 'the Other' is shown to be important, as "discussion of the fate of the Ellemore Vale mosque is not going to be confined to Newcastle, but will feed into per-
ceptions of Muslims in Australia" (McGregor, 21 November 2011, p. 11). The implications drawn from this case study could potentially alter the way that the discourse of 'the Other' develops nationally and even internationally across future news articles, so it is important that the journalists recognised the potential impact of their reporting and act accordingly. The increasing pro-Muslim attitudes beginning to be represented in the articles are therefore important in striving towards fair and balanced coverage of the issue.

**Discourse of Community**

A discourse of 'community' as a location or cultural geography emerged out of the attempts to paint Elmore Vale as a "suburban centre" (Connell, 23 February 2010, p. 5) and "village" (Byrne, 4 December 2010, p. 20). *The Herald* described the locality of both the existing Wallsend and proposed Elmore Vale mosques with phrases such as "why should our quiet way of life and village be subjected to this" (ibid) and "for more than 20 years the mosque has been settled into Wallsend suburbia" (Thompson, 11 December 2010, p. 4). The choices of reporters and opinion piece authors to use terms that denote the suburb as 'basic' and 'protected' represent an attempt to portray Elmore Vale as an innocent suburb, untouched by issues of religious contention. This idea of 'innocence' is contrasted against the mosque development, as EV CARES president Geoff Byrnes argues "let us not be deluded - this is a large scale regional development set right in the middle of Elmore Vale" (Byrne, 4 December 2010, p. 20). The comparison of the "large scale" regional development with the "village" of Elmore Vale attempts to portray the two as being incompatible.

The discourse of 'community' also develops a 'sub-community', consisting of the EV CARES community group. EV CARES is an acronym for Elmore Vale Community for Appropriate Residential and Environmental Strategies, and Byrnes writes that the group was "formed to develop strategies consistent with the scale and character of the area" (ibid). *The Herald* picks up the usage of the word 'appropriate' in the groups' name and this becomes a buzzword in the articles, with reference to the mosque as being inappropriate for the local area. EV CARES vice-president Steve Beveridge "said the group objected to the mosque because of its inappropriate location, scale and social impact" (Gregory, 14 May 2011, p. 5) and "community group EV CARES president Geoff Byrne said the development was a major regional amenity and unsuitable for Elmore Vale" (Smee, 23 April 2011, p. 15). This argument allowed the EV CARES group to oppose the mosque based on arguments separate to religious and racial issues, and *The Herald* largely reported it as such.

**Discourse of the Victim**

The discourse of 'the victim' emerged in the 2012 articles following the rejection of the mosque development by the Joint Regional Planning Panel, and after the violent attacks on the existing Wallsend mosque. *The Herald* reported that these attacks, which saw two men throw objects and kick the door of the mosque while people were inside, had "left the city's Muslim community feeling 'vulnerable and scared'" (Speight, 5 January 2012, p. 1). Links were made by many in the community, including *The Herald*, between the timing of the attacks and the proposed development. "Ms Rah said...since the association had made plans to establish its mosque at Elmore Vale, the incidents had increased and were 'starting to become a pattern'" (Speight, 5 January 2012, p. 4). These attacks were reported as being extremely violent, with the phrase "mosque attack" being used in the headline of three articles published on the 5th, 6th and 7th of January 2012. Following these attacks and the official decision to deny the mosque development, *The Herald* began to portray the Muslim community as the victims in the situation. This represents a significant identity shift from previous articles where Muslims were portrayed to be a dangerous and menacing 'Other'. It
could be argued that this change in coverage occurred because once the danger of the Newcastle Muslim Association being able to build the mosque was mitigated, they were viewed as less of a threat to the community, and reporting could therefore side more in favour of the association. Another possible argument is that journalists at *The Herald* realised they had gone too far in their portrayal of the Muslim community as dangerous and menacing, and therefore changed their reporting due to a moral conscience.

**Conclusion**

Discursive analysis of *The Herald*’s reports demonstrates that discourses of power, religion, ‘the Other’, ‘community’ and ‘the victim’ are prevalently portrayed, as shown in the analysis of the 58 articles which were chosen through theoretical sampling (Dancygier, Sanders and Vandelanotte, 2012; Jensen, 2011). Furthermore, these portrayals contribute to anti-Muslim attitudes communicated by key parties in the articles, who use the Islamic religion as an identifier; the marginalisation of the Muslim community as ‘Other’; and an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dichotomy to manifest perhaps more nationally-held concerns at a local level. The fact that this kind of anti-Muslim sentiment can be identified in local media products is indicative of the challenges for local media groups covering local media events, as it represents how a local matter can become contentious due to globally recognised concerns. In this instance, those concerns are the perceived threat of Muslims and Islam to the West that arguably results from a failure, on behalf of both the journalist and the community, to understand Islam. Further research into this case study will involve interviews with journalists and editors in order to give a deeper account of their representative practices. Two additional case studies will also be conducted across Sydney and Melbourne to compare data and test these results.

Journalists can attempt to combat the concerns raised in this paper through education for themselves which they can use to inform the public, as well as being more mindful of their word usage and the powerful effect this can have in respect to the readership’s mental models. Journalists should also attempt to expand their source base, seeking out minorities, including Muslims, to comment on stories in which they are principally involved, helping to combat any suggestions of coverage bias. Although the reports analysed were from a local newspaper, the reporting is both influenced by and has the potential to influence future reporting on Islam in a national and international context, highlighting the need for ethical practice when reporting in these cases.

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COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF THE CHINESE DAIRY INDUSTRY MANUFACTURERS TO REBUILD REPUTATION AND MAINTAIN A QUALITY RELATIONSHIP

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After the Sanlu tainted milk powder crisis in China in 2008, the entire powdered milk manufacturing industry, and in many ways the food industry as a whole, faced a crisis of reputation and consumer confidence. Through a study of the organisation and public relationships of dairy companies, the crisis communication strategies they used, and how they cultivated relationships, this paper explores how companies within the milk industry rebuilt their reputations to a point where customers and other key elements of the public once again felt confident about their products. This study explores the organisation-public relationships (OPRs) cultivation strategies of the dairy companies and the communication strategies they used to rebuild the industry’s reputation after the Sanlu crisis. The author interviewed dairy company personnel and consumers in China (N=18) and conducted secondary document research. The communication strategies that dairy companies used to maintain their relationship with the public are analysed. This study develops the theory of relationship management and provides suggestions for other companies to utilise should they face an industry crisis in the future. The cultivation strategies the dairy companies use to maintain their relationship with the public is hard to separate from communication strategy employed after the crisis.

Keywords: Organisation-Public Relationships; Crisis Communication; Dairy industry; Sanlu; China; Relationship management

INTRODUCTION

After the Sanlu (三鹿) tainted milk powder crisis in China in 2008, the entire powdered milk manufacturing industry, and in many ways the food industry as a whole, faced a crisis of reputation and consumer confidence. After the Sanlu crisis, the author ex-
explores how the companies within the milk industry rebuilt their reputations to a point where customers and other key elements of the public once again felt confident about their products, through a study of the organisation and public relationships of the dairy companies and by examining the crisis communication strategies that they used and how they cultivated those relationships.

According to J. Grunig's speech (2001), the 'public' here "consist of social groups who respond to the consequences that organisations have on them and in turn try to participate in management decision in ways that serve their interests." Examining the OPRs assists an analysis of the communication strategies employed by the dairy companies after the crisis. Dairy companies use international authorisation and special advertising campaigns and strategies to promote their product and build reputation. Social media, point of purchase (POP) communication and interpersonal communication are effective tools for the dairy companies, which use a differentiation strategy wherein ethical principles are essential.

**Case History of Sanlu's Crisis**

"Sanlu" once was one of China's biggest and most prestigious dairy brands (a New Zealand dairy cooperative, Fonterra, used to share part of its stake). China Central Television (CCTV) had broadcast many advertisements and programs to show the 'good' quality of its products. After the summer of 2007, the Sanlu Group began to hear reports from customers that their babies had been stricken by illness after consuming its infant milk powder. In June 2008, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of P.R.C. (AQSIQ) received customer complaints about Sanlu. Actually, Sanlu had already gotten the reports and know its products were infected by melamine, but they keep it secret. On 8 September 2008, the first newspaper report emerged, stating that Sanlu baby milk powder was contaminated with melamine and that many babies were poisoned and specifically, that the milk caused kidney stones. On 11 September 2008, Sanlu denied to the media that its products had any problem. Later that day, the Chinese Health Ministry said it was investigating the Sanlu case and confirmed that the company's products contained melamine. That same evening, the pressure of these statements forced Sanlu Group Co. to confess the truth and to recall all products produced before 6 August.

A large majority of customers returned their products to the producers and supermarkets. Several executives were arrested - including the general manager of Sanlu, Tian Wenhua - and the people who put the melamine into the milk before it was sold to Sanlu. At the end of 2008 the Sanlu Group Co. was shut down. The reason the suppliers put melamine into the milk was apparently to increase the protein content, which could make dairy companies more likely to buy their milk. The Chinese government and World Health Organisation took this situation very seriously. The State Council of Information of PRC held a press conference regarding the crisis. On 22 September 2008, AQSIQ Director Li Changjiang resigned. The mayor of Shijiazhuang city, where the Sanlu group is based, was sacked. Sanyuan Dairy Group Co. bought the equipment, rented the workshop, and hired the former Sanlu employees. In this crisis, contaminated infant milk powder made thousands of babies sick, and caused the hospitalisation of 12,892 babies and the deaths of four babies. The Chinese government began to check all dairy products and found 64 contaminated brands, including Mengniu and Yili, the leading Chinese dairy giants. As Sanlu used to be a test-free product, AQSIQ announced that food products would no longer be free from inspection and that more inspection programs and centers would be founded. The police confiscated the suspected poisonous chemicals.

**Theoretical Framework**
This paper tries to analyse the OPRs in order to explore the communication strategies employed after the Sanlu crisis. This section will first conceptualise the cultivation strategies of OPRs and then explore crisis communication strategies and reputation management. The relationship of the concepts will also be discussed in terms of conceptualisation.

**Organisation-Public Relationships**

J. Grunig (2001) pointed out that public relations function within the social environment of organisations rather than the economic environment. Stakeholders of the dairy company in this paper are the 'public' in the social environment of OPRs. Stakeholders are "any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by the achievement of a corporation's purpose" (Freeman, 1984: vi). According to Gronstedt (1996), stakeholders can be divided into ten categories which this research supports: "government, financial stakeholders, media, scholars and industry opinions, employees, interest groups, communities, distributors, suppliers, and trade and professional organisations and competitors" (p. 292).

After clarifying the concept of 'public' of OPR, the definition of OPR needs to be discussed and clarified in order to build the theoretical framework of this research. Huang (2008) summarised that OPR could be seen as: subjective reality (Duck, 1973, 1986), objective reality (Katz and Kahn, 1967; Miller 1978; Laumann, Galashiewcz, and Marsden, 1978; Van de Ven, 1976; Van de Ven & Walker, 1984; Oliver, 1990; Klijn, 1991; Broom, Casey, and Ritchey, 2000), combination of subjective and objective reality (Huston and Robin, 1982; Gerst and Carter, 1985, 1994; Millar and Roger, 1987; Hinde, 1988; Surra and Ridley, 1991; Cappella, 1991; Anderson, 1993; Sexton and Whiston, 1994; Kerns, 1994). Besides these conceptual definitions, scholars have given OPR an operational definition by describing its state which this paper used. Hung (2005, p.396) defines organisation-public relationships: "OPRs arise when organisations and their strategic publics are interdependent, and this interdependence results in consequences to each other that organisations need to manage constantly." This definition gives the reader a detailed description of what OPR is; this holistic scope matches my research. This definition is the foundation of this research.

**Organisation-Public Relationships Cultivation Strategies**

Based on the literature of 'maintenance' strategies (e.g., Dindia & Canary, 1993), Grunig suggested using the word 'cultivate' instead of 'maintenance' (Hung, 2007). The relationship types could determine the use of cultivation strategy (Hung, 2007). Figure 1. shows the relationship cultivation strategies in the literature. Hon and Grunig (1999) and Grunig and Huang (2000) conceptualised seven symmetrical relationship cultivation strategies from public to organisations as follows: access, openness or disclosure, assurances of legitimacy, networking, sharing of tasks, some dual concern strategies of the public, and organisation. Nowman (1995) identified another three symmetrical strategies: cooperative, being unconditionally constructive, and stipulating win-win or no deal. Hung (2002) identified promise-keeping strategies after researching multinational companies in Taiwan. Cooperative strategies, assurances of legitimacy and access are used mostly in exchange relationships (Plowman, 2007). Being unconditionally constructive means the organisation should do whatever is necessary for the relationship (Hung, 2003), which could be used in the covenental/win-win relationship. Stipulating win-win or no deal, cooperative, and unconditionally constructive are also negotiation tactics added to the conflict model for public relations by Plowman (1995). The author finds that some parts the crisis communication strategies overlap with relationship cultivation strategies.

Asymmetrical strategies (used mostly in exploitive, manipulative and symbiotic relationships) include: contending (organisation tries to persuade the public); avoiding; accom-
modating (which also is a crisis communication approach when an apology is made) (LERBINGER, 1997); compromising (used when neither the organisation nor the public are totally satisfied); and distributive (HUNG, 2002, 2003, 2007). Some dual concern strategies are asymmetrical, as they pay much more attention to the organisation's interest than the other but, according to PLOWMAN (2007), two-way symmetrical communication also can include elements of compromise and accommodation. This paper does not participate in the argument regarding symmetrical or asymmetrical but focuses on the usage of the strategies. HUNG (2004) also contributed family orientation, guan-xi and relational orientation to the factors that could influence the multinational companies' relationship cultivation strategies in Chinese culture.

Table 1: Relationship Cultivation Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symmetrical</th>
<th>Asymmetrical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>access</td>
<td>contending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positivity</td>
<td>avoiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness or disclosure</td>
<td>accommodating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assurances of legitimacy</td>
<td>compromising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>networking</td>
<td>distributive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharing of tasks</td>
<td>Some dual concern strategies are asymmetrical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some dual concern strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooperative</td>
<td>NOWMAN (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being unconditionally constructive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stipulating win-win or no deal</td>
<td>HUNG (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promise-keeping</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reputation is the overall evaluation of a company by the people (DOWLING, 2004). This definition is congruent with other scholars' definitions of reputation as a cognitive representation (YANG and GRUNIG, 2005; BROMLEY, 1993; FOMBRUN and RINDOVA, 1996). According to the relationship principles of crisis communication (GRUNIG, 2001), a good and long-term relationship could help an organisation withstand a crisis. Therefore it is necessary to explore crisis communication strategies. Based on previous studies of crisis response strategies (BENOIT, 1995, 1997; Brad and Garrett, 1995; COMBS, 1995; COMBS and SCHMIDT, 2000; RAY, 1999; STURGES, 1995; ALLEN and CAILOUT, 1994; HUANG, LIN, and SU, 2005), ten crisis communication strategies are identified: (1) denial or nonexistence; (2) evasion of responsibility or excuse, and the sub-strategies include provocation, de-feasibility, and good intention; (3) justification: bolstering, minimization, and reframing; (2) and (3) are grouped as distance strategy in Combs' study (1995); (4) concession: correction action and changing corporate public policy, and in Huang's study (2006), concession also includes admission and apology; (5) information providing; (6) diversion: showing regards/sympathy (without apology), building a new agenda, and differentiating which states (HUANG, 2008); (7) ingratiating: praising others (COMBS, 1995, p. 452); (8) suffering: act as a victim which aims to gain sympathy (COMBS, 1995, p. 453); (9) mortification: remediation, rectification, and repentance; (10) reducing the offensiveness of the act. (1), (2), (4), (9), and (10) are Benoit's (1995) image restoration strategy to rebuild the reputation of the organisation. These strategies are summarised into three styles: response strategies as reactive, dynamic, and adaptive styles in some literature (Martinelli and BRIGGS, 1998).

The literature shows that bolstering (58.8 percent) and denial (56.9 percent) are the two most frequently employed crisis communication strategies. Full apology (71.4 percent) is the most effective strategy, while denial (13.8 percent) is the least effective (Kim, Avery,

Inspired by the literature, this study explores the OPR cultivation strategies and crisis communication strategies of dairy companies to build reputation, which I will conceptualise next. The literature review suggests the following research questions:

**Research Question**

After the Sanlu crisis, what communication strategies were used to rebuild reputation and maintain a good relationship with the public?

**Research Method**

Because little information is known about the research question and, in the future, more and rich descriptions are needed, this study therefore interviewed the dairy industry and its key publics using an in-depth interview method. This study also used document research by examining the publications, television programs and some online documents (e.g. online videos and blogs relating to the crisis). This study interviewed the employees of dairy companies and the public by asking them to examine the existing eight OPR types, whether any new types of OPR existed in their daily operation, and what cultivation strategies they used. This study examined the crisis strategies they used to rebuild the reputation of the dairy industry in order to measure their effectiveness.

The contact procedure and access were conducted as follows. Firstly, emails were sent to request interviews with the large-scale dairy companies in China, however, no responses were received. Then this research used convenient sampling to conduct this study. The information for the eighteen interviewees' is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Info</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 employee1</td>
<td>quality inspector</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 employee2</td>
<td>marketing manager</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 employee3</td>
<td>quality and research</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 community member</td>
<td>of former Sanlu company</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 customer1</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 customer2</td>
<td>Shenzhen</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 customer3</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 customer4</td>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 customer5</td>
<td>Gansu</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 customer6</td>
<td>Shijiazhuang</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 customer7</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 customer8</td>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 customer9</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 customer10</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 financial analyst</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 public relations officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 advertising officer</td>
<td>used to serve for dairy company</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interviews lasted from ten minutes to three hours, depending on whether the interviewees were familiar with the interview questions and could give extensive details. The interviews were semi-structured. For the data analysis, this study follows the three stages of Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display and data drawing and verification. The data was firstly reduced by conceptual reduction to sort and categorise data into the different conceptual themes (Frey, Botan, and Kreps, 2000). Specifically, the data was categorised by two research questions and then was divided by the relation of the different publics of the dairy companies. Secondly, the author displayed the data on a draft. As data display is much more appropriate in drawing a cross-case analysis table, this paper did not show the details in this process; after considering the patterns and drawing tables on the draft sheet, only the representative quotations are provided in this paper. Third, conclusion drawing and verification are made after examining the differences and similarities of the data, while also considering the literature and secondary data.

**Results**

RQ: After the Sanlu crisis, what communication strategies were used to rebuild the reputation and maintain good relationships with the public?

According to the participants, the major methods employed by these companies to establish a good image were differentiation strategies, media campaigns, social media, other new media, point of purchase communication, and invitations to visit the company and sponsor the activities involving social responsibility.

Being open and ethical was the leading principle after crisis. As the journalist I interviewed said, "Sanlu crisis made people not trust each other. The whole nation's morality level should be increased." A manager of a dairy company said that they invited the government departments, schools, and institutions' customers to visit its factory. It even built a 'Disneyland' of dairy at the factory and many children and mothers came, along with a television station that was reporting this news. However, in the case of the Sanlu crisis, the company did not immediately confess. This deception was led by the short-term values of the Sanlu managers rather than by broader social values. The result was that the whole company was bankrupted. From the results of the research question, one participant said that although one media outlet had an exchange relationship with Sanlu, when the crisis broadened this was not enough to protect Sanlu. We could conclude that the quality of the product is the most important factor, even more important than the media relations.

In addition, the participant said that her company does not have a spokesperson at all. A manager from another dairy company stated that they have a public relations (PR) department, but he does not think they have a long-term crisis communication prevention system and he honestly felt that the PR department had failed. Not all participants know crisis strategies and tend to use image-building strategies deliberately. Two dairy companies in the interview only responded passively to what happened after the crisis. Fortunately, these two companies' products were not found to have melamine in their products. However, according to the public relations manager and advertising officers in the agencies, their customers from the dairy industry might be affected in the crisis.

The communication strategies were also focused on proving the social responsibility of the corporation beyond the tainted milk crisis. Yili donated RMB 3,000,000 Yuan to drought-affected areas in early 2010. Yili makes itself more credible by being one of the partners of the 2010 World Exposition, where the logo of the partner of the 2010 World Expo has been posted on many printing materials. Other activities include sponsoring a popular television show called 'Fei-cheng Wu-rao,' a Chinese version of the British social
experiment television show 'Take Me Out'.

Dairy companies such as Beinmate have also sponsored the activities of the television station 'Mother's Love.' They shoot many TV programs of touching stories of mothers and their children. Many celebrities and their mothers were invited to tell their stories. They also open their forums, letting cyber citizens talk about their own stories of their mother, and put their pictures on their activities' website. They also put the activities online, for example on the portal website, Youku. The activities include planting virtual carnations online and prizes awarded for 'achieving dream fund' to the winners of these activities.

Differentiation strategy. The marketing manager of a dairy company said that besides letting the public know about their good quality, stable milk resources, and the effectiveness of the whole production chain, the company uses the differentiation strategy to enlarge its market: to make their product special enough to communicate to the public, which means "what you have, I have; what you do not have, I still have," as he remarked, "for example, 'solid set style yogurt' or 'high-temperature instantaneous sterilizer' with which the consumers are not familiar." Experts might be invited to state that 'High-temperature instantaneous sterilized milk' would be better than the 'Pasteurized milk'. However, this is not actually the truth. The marketing manager also said that another dairy company use this strategy and even use this new terminology to promote old products. One dairy company has produced a new type of milk product, water buffalo's milk, which could inspire customers' curiosity to buy something different.

New media and social media. Dairy companies rebuild their reputation by using communication strategies through traditional media, new media and social media. An officer from an advertising company said "After Sanlu's crisis, we do not use directly the word "milk" in our advertisement of Mengniu ice cream." The company used the website of Kaixin.com, by putting in games called 'happy farms' online. For these strategies, we could find that it is important to communicate through the portals. Nowadays, the Internet makes communication of information very fast, which becomes the essential channel of public relations. For the usage of new media, especially social media, Yili Dairy Company used the renren.com website to promote its products, asking registered customers of renren.com to play online games involving the drinking of Yili milk to make them healthy. Mengniu accepted the consulting company's idea of initiating a composition competition of one product of milk ('Telunsu'). One winner's essay was titled "Mother's love: Telunsu." This dairy company also posted games online to promote their product and their brand. For example, it asked the people to write traditional a Chinese antithetical couplet starting with Niu, one character of Mengniu. They believed that there are many lonely netizens who are more likely to participate in the game. Immediately after the crisis, such advertisements were cancelled.

Point of purchase communication is another effective device. According to a quality inspector of a dairy company in Heilongjiang, "at the counter of the shops or super market, authorities put inspection reports next to the commodity to make use of the inspection authority recognized by consumers to re-establish the image..." The participants mentioned that these strategies and tags, that claim that products are 'not contaminated with melamine', are effective to them. A customer from Jiangsu said, "When you buy milk at the supermarket, the milk products would put a banner saying that their quality has been supervised by many people. For example, '33 citizens came to our factory to supervise us today.'"

Another customer from Jilin said that supermarket sales provide useful information
when she bought milk. She remarked, "They would say which products do not have melamine, and I would buy after considering the price..." In a similar tone, a customer also told me that after Sanlu she would still drink the samples of yogurt at the supermarket, and bought yogurt or milk tea.

International authorization. A public relations agency’s manager said that the agency asked their consumers of dairy products to get the international proof ISO 26000. The international proof is considered more credible than the local authorisation since the Sanlu melamine milk powder crisis in China. The media reported that other dairy companies used similar strategies to build their trust, such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), as a systematic preventive approach to food safety. However, one customer (who is also a netizen) said she would not care whether or not the product has international authorisation, she only believed in what the Chinese supervision department said, especially their safety reports of the dairy products.

Because Sanlu’s crisis was caused by the sources of the milk, the dairy companies put more staff working on the processes that deal with the source of milk. Third-party authentication - especially expert endorsement - is important and effective. At a listed dairy company’s press conference, experts on food or dairy were invited to talk on behalf of the company to make the customers confident of the products, which might be a useful strategy according to the participants.

**Conclusions**

This study analyses the relationships between selected dairy companies and the public. The cultivation strategies used by the dairy companies to maintain their relationships with the public are hard to separate from the communication strategies used after the crisis. Access, openness and disclosure cultivation strategies are used in the communication strategy of the dairy company: it is more open than before the crisis happened and it invited customers and media to visit the factory and gave more information to the public. Good practices of corporate social responsibility have been adopted and recommended to assist the dairy companies to rebuild a positive image. Appropriate rewards and the imposition of penalties to the employees, networking, sharing of tasks and some dual concern strategies between the public and the organisation are used in communal relationship of community issues and other social issues (e.g. earthquake). Besides the traditional media, the companies built their reputation and communicate with the public through new media and social media. Dairy companies used contending strategy: they intend to use many types of media to persuade the public and to make them feel confident of their products. "Assurances of legitimacy" is considered as a part of the legal relationship that the participants did not discuss as a frequent communication strategy.

Regarding crisis communication strategies after the Sanlu incident, the company used the denial strategy, which is one of the two most frequently employed crisis communication strategies, but the result was not good. To minimise the crisis, the dairy company used the justification strategy, saying that melamine would not affect adults. The dairy companies must change corporate public policy to pay more attention to milk resources. They provide more information of their production process. Differentiation strategy is similar with the building of a new agenda in the literature to rebuild the reputation of the organisation. International authorisation is another way to make consumers confident about their product.

Consumers believed what the experts and government said through the mass media. A good relationship with the government is suggested by the participants. The dairy com-
panies used the differentiation strategy to increase their volume of sales. The dairy companies’ advertising should focus on the content and authorisation of the quality of their products. The dairy entrepreneurs should behave ethically to produce high quality products and in communicating with the public. Interpersonal communication and point of purchase communication are very influential for changing people's attitudes. This point corroborated the risk principle of interpersonal media (briefings, community interviews, hotlines, open houses, and public meetings) (Lerbinger, 1997, p.280).

From this study, we suggest that the dairy companies should undertake an integrated communication strategy to communicate with their publics. Most dairy companies use their websites for symmetrical communication to communicate with their customers and other publics. The researcher suggests that a spokesperson should be designated and be a long-term part of the in-house PR department of dairy companies.

The limitations of this research include the fact that participants from the dairy companies were not the highest level managers, so they could not discuss some strategies of the companies. More leaders of the dairy company need to be interviewed in future research. The author tried to contact Mengniu and Yili, but got no response. Another limitation is that only one method was used, so the accuracy still needs to be tested. Furthermore, the participants might not tell the truth and potential nervousness during the interview also might affect the results. This research extended knowledge in relationship management and provided some suggestions for other companies to implement when they meet an industry crisis.

**ENDNOTES**

1: Members of the publics provide access to public relations people
2: Anything that makes public positive in their relationship with the organisation and could be used in the win-win relationships
3: Engage in direct communication in the relationship (Canary & Stafford, 1994)
4: Networking with the same groups as their publics, which is important in China (Hung, 2007)
5: Participating in mutual networks beneficial for one or both sides

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FROM VIRTUE ETHICS TO VIRTUOUS CORPORATION - PUTTING VIRTUES INTO BUSINESS PRACTICE

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This paper aims to contribute to a greater understanding of the theory of virtue ethics in its application in the business arena. In contrast to other ethics approaches, virtue theory emphasises the virtues and moral characters of the individual as moral agent. As such, the theory of virtue ethics provides a useful perspective in making sense of various business ethics issues through placing an emphasis on the moral character of the individuals, and its transformational influences in driving ethical business conduct. Drawing from van Marrewijk’s (2003) theory of agency and communion in understanding the corporate sustainability value systems, as well as Moore’s (2002, 2005 & 2008) conceptualisation of Alasdair MacIntyre’s philosophical approach to ethics, the paper presents a theoretical framework that seeks to explain how individuals, as moral agents, can serve to promote virtuous business conduct and help foster a moral and ethical climate in the organisation as well as society at large.

Keywords: Business ethics; corporate social responsibility; virtue ethics; social entrepreneurship; sustainability; sustainable enterprise; transformational leadership; value creation; value systems; agency; communion; practice-institution schema

INTRODUCTION

Thirty or forty years ago, Albert Carr's (1968) Is Business Bluffing Ethical, in which business ethics was compared with the game of poker, and Milton Friedman's (1970) The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits, whose title says it all, were reflective of dominant thoughts in the domain of business ethics. Today, sustainable development is among the top agenda not only in the political and social arena, but also as a commonplace discussion in the business sphere. Even John Elkington's (2001) ‘Triple Bottom Line’, now widely cited in academic literature and business documents, in which business is prompted to seek beyond the financial bottom line and pursue environmental quality and social equity, has been deemed by some as inadequate. One most notable example, is Norman Wayne and Chris MacDonald's Getting to the Bottom of Triple Bottom Line, published in

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2004, in which they heavily criticised the proposed framework, on the grounds that its operating principle is vague and that the method of social reporting is ineffective, to say the least.

The change of attitude, in respect to the understanding and expectation of business' responsibility, is indicative of an evolving social context. This provokes new challenges to the field of business ethics in understanding key issues such as what is considered as ethical business conduct, what drives such conduct, and how business should understand as well as act upon its place in society in aligning with evolving social moral and ethical values. In considering these issues, this paper seeks to make a theoretical contribution to the field of business ethics with a particular focus on the theory of virtue ethics. Drawing from both van Marrewijk's theory of value systems and Geoff Moore's study on MacIntyre's practice-institution schema, it proposes an explanatory framework that conceptualises the importance of individual values and beliefs in driving virtuous business conduct and fostering an ethical corporate and social climate.

The paper begins with a discussion on the changing social context for business, drawing primarily from van Marrewijk's theory of agency and communion in understanding the corporate sustainability value systems. Then, it discusses virtue ethics and its application in the business context, especially in understanding transformational leadership and social entrepreneurship. Next, it discusses further virtue theory and its application in the context of business ethics, drawing mainly from Geoff Moore's work on MacIntyre's practice-institution schema. Finally, it conceptualises the importance of virtue theory in business ethics studies by bringing together van Marrewijk's framework of value systems and Moore's discussion on business practice.

**THE CHANGE OF VALUE SYSTEMS AND THE THEORY OF VIRTUE ETHICS**

At the heart of changing social contexts and attitudes lies an evolution of social value and belief. Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003), drawing from Clare. W. Graves' thoughts on human value systems, argue that each value system will develop when the older system is no longer meeting the challenges and threats of its given life conditions. In response to changing circumstances and new opportunities, they state: "[I]ndividuals, organisations and societies develop adequate solutions, creating synergy and adding value at a higher level of complexity" (p. 109). In the context of corporate social sustainability (CSR), for instance, organisations' sustainability practices are oriented and sustained by different value systems.

Van Marrewijk and Werre provide a comprehensive framework, aligning six value systems to various levels of organisations' ambition towards corporate sustainability. On one end of the spectrum, when the dominant value system of an organisation ascribes to Energy & Power, it has no ambition towards corporate sustainability and is primarily interested in power and domination. The next two levels show higher ambition towards corporate sustainability but are either compliance-driven (Order), which is mostly subject to regulations, or profit-driven (Success), promoted by self-interest. While the Community level of existence consists of organisations that genuinely care for human potential and the planet, Synergistic organisations seek for solutions that balance the needs for all economic, social and ecological systems. Finally, the highest level of existence is a holistic system, in which corporate sustainability is fully integrated and embedded in every aspect of the organisation.

For van Marrewijk (2003), Arthur Koestler's concept of 'holon' and 'holorchy', further developed by Ken Wilber, provides a useful approach in explaining the complex process whereby each value system emerges and transcends the older system. A 'holon' is simultan-
eously a whole and a part ascribing to changing contexts. 'Holarchy', then, describes the process whereby holons transcend and include their predecessor(s) while forming a hierarchical system of constantly evolving whole/parts. Van Marrewijk further elucidated that each 'holon' has its *agency*, which expresses its wholeness with self-preserving and self-adapting capacities, and its *communion*, which expresses its partness with self-transcending and self-dissolving capacities.

A mainstream corporate response to issues surrounding corporate sustainability, for instance, is the advocacy of a voluntary approach which promotes business self-initiative and self-regulation. Organisations that adopt this approach demonstrate a strong exercise of their *agency* capacities in struggling to preserve conventional business order while adapting to a changing social context. However, subject to the growing dissatisfaction of the business voluntary approach, the *communion* tendency of business will then exercise its transcending as well as dissolving capacities and promote more substantive change in business practice. The conflict between rights and responsibilities therefore, according to van Marrewijk (2003), is a form of tension between *agency* and *communion*, while all four capacities constantly negotiate over, and struggle for, priorities, principles and values in response to changing circumstances.

This then begs the question: what motivates business to develop and move to a higher level of value system? Business ethicists have long strived to provide business with normative guidance, seeking stances on various moral and philosophical frameworks (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994). One of the ethics theories, which has received increasing attention from business ethicists, is the theory of virtue ethics. In *Evolution in the Society for Business Ethics*, Koehn (2010) notes that the recent movement in business ethics has shown more interest in virtue ethics (specific individual virtues or quasi-virtues such as integrity, trust and justice) and that ethicists have been "more willing to let the phenomena suggest possibly relevant standards or virtues instead of applying pre-existing frameworks to problems" (p. 748). According to Hursthouse (1999), virtue ethics, following primarily the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle (in particular), is a normative ethics approach that emphasises virtues and moral characters. Distinct from other moral theories, as noted by Arjoon (2000), virtue theory "grounds morality in facts about human nature, concentrates on habits and long-term goals, extends beyond actions to comprise wants, goals, likes and dislikes, and, in general what sort of person one is and aims to be" (p. 173).

In placing an emphasis on individual’s moral character, the theory of virtue ethics provides a useful explanatory framework in understanding how individuals in the business context act to promote virtuous business conduct. In CSR literature, for example, there has been growing interest in the application of virtue theory in understanding how individuals provide moral leadership in promoting a sustainable path for their organisations. These individuals, in van Marrewijk’s (2003) conceptualisation, promote substantive change in the organisations and therefore help foster the transcending process of the social value systems. The next section will look at some application of virtue theory in the business context, with a specific focus on transformational leadership and social entrepreneurship.

**VIRTUE ETHICS, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The theory of virtue ethics has demonstrated its applicability in the writings of many scholars from the field of business ethics, especially on the topic of leadership. Whetstone (2001), in *How Virtue Fits within Business Ethics*, argues that virtue ethics provide business managers and leaders with practical applications in promoting moral development and moral reasoning. This is because, he notes, virtue ethics is both *personal*, in focusing on the
motivations of the actor and the sources of action, and contextual, by highlighting the importan
tce of understanding the environment as it affects both the moral agent and the act itself. In addition to providing practical guidance for business leaders, virtue ethics has also become an important category in understanding the ethics of leadership itself. Price (2004), for instance, notes that distinct from a utilitarian point of view that focuses on overall utility maximisation and Kantianism's emphasis on universal principles, virtue ethicists would argue that ethical leadership depends more on developing habits or dispositions to act virtuously.

Evidently the theory of virtue ethics has been used by many business ethicists to advance the studies of leadership ethics. For instance, in the context of corporate sustainability, there has been growing interest in the role of transformational leadership in promoting sustainable business practice from the perspective of virtue ethics. According to James MacGregor Burns (1978), transformational leadership reflects the high moral and ethical standard of the leader where he or she seeks to "raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (p. 20). The emphasis of virtue ethics on individuals as moral agents, therefore, makes it a useful perspective in understanding the moral characters of transformational leaders and their practice (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). In considering virtue theory and its applicability to leadership, for example, Arjoon (2000) argues that what distinguishes a good leader is that "he or she is relatively more developed in the virtues and that person has a clear vision of the common good and the means to promote it" (p. 172). Thus from a virtue ethics point of view, according to Koehn (1995), the important ethical matter is that individuals must be able to make contributions of value to a society or communal enterprise and that the virtuous agent simply is the person habituated to desire to do what is good and noble.

Similarly, the theory of virtue ethics has also been applied to the studies of social entre
trepreneurship and sustainable enterprise. In understanding various aspects of social entre
tenrepreneurship, Sullivan Mort, Weerawardena and Carnegie (2003) argue that the key features of social entrepreneurship include not only its concern and commitment in the social do
tain, and the entrepreneur's leadership aptitude and exceptional capacity, but also the vir
tue and moral characters of both the entrepreneur and the enterprise. As Roper and Cheney (2005) point out, private social enterprises are often led by value-driven, charismatic leaders who style themselves and their organisations as both innovative and socially responsible. Using the examples such as the founder of the Body Shop, Anita Roddick, Roper and Cheney (2005) also point out the importance of the character of successful social entrepren
eurs. They argue that the reasons behind these successful social enterprises share in common the entrepreneurs' vision of socially responsive business and their ability of instilling such values in the organisation.

Indeed, as Pratt and Pratt (2010) put it, what is truly fundamental to successful social enterprises, those that end up transforming their business and society, is the virtue and moral character of these social enterprisers. In other words, a successful sustainable enterprise must be anchored in, and sustained through, a moral purpose: a deep and genuine concern for the environment and the society. Being a successful social enterpriser then, returning to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), is a way of embracing virtue and morality; and a way one engenders virtue in self, others and society through the example and virtuous con
duct of social enterprise.

Furthermore, the value of transformational leaders and social entrepreneurs lies not only in their success in creating a sustainable business, but also in the moral influence they place on others, their organisations and the society at large. In applying van Marrewijk's
(2003) framework, these social enterprisers can be seen as moral agents who promote the evolving process of social value systems by stimulating the transcending and dissolving capacities of the organisations and the society. Virtue ethics, in placing an emphasis on moral character, provides a useful way for understanding how individuals’ ethical and moral beliefs can transform conventional self-serving business practice into virtuous business conduct. Drawing from Geoff Moore’s work on MacIntyre’s practice-institution schema, the next section will discuss the intricate connection between the virtue of individuals and virtuous business practice.

FROM VIRTUE ETHICS TO VIRTUOUS CORPORATION

In presenting an ‘Aristotelian approach’ to business, Robert Solomon (2004) argues that key to the application of virtue theory to business ethics, is the consideration of “the place of business in society”. He proposes that we understand the place of business in society from a virtue ethics perspective, in which business is viewed as “a human institution in service to humans and not as a marvelous machine or in terms of the mysterious ‘magic’ of the market” (p. 1024). Using the Aristotelian concept of Polis (the larger community an individual belongs to), the author argues that an individual’s virtue and character is embedded in, and in service to, the larger community. As a member of the larger community, therefore, business excellence is characterised not only by its superiority in practice, but also its role in serving larger social purposes. Paramount to such conceptualisation is the recognition of the human features and aspects of business. For Solomon then, there is a clear, yet much denied, linkage between the ethics of business and the ethics of human virtue - after all, business is a human enterprise.

Echoing Solomon, Geoff Moore’s approach to business ethics also features a key emphasis on the influence of human behavior in the business world. Drawing extensively from Alasdair MacIntyre’s philosophical approach to ethics, Moore’s understanding of business ethics places a focus on how an individuals’ virtuous conduct can bring out the human aspects of business (see: Moore 2002, 2005 & 2008). According to Moore, MacIntyre’s practice-institution schema is a valid framework in understanding virtue ethics and its application to business. MacIntyre defines practice as:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established coopertive human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 187, as cited in Moore, 2002).

Central to MacIntyre’s conceptualisation of practice is the concern of ‘internal goods’, and to achieve that, one must appeal to the standards of excellence through the exercise of virtue. In MacIntyre’s notion of practice, simply put, the internal goods is about one feeling good about what he or she does and that such feeling of ‘good’ must be based on, and derived from, the virtue and moral character of the individual. Business as practice, then, is the consideration of business as a form of such practice, where individuals in business should strive to realise the internal goods about doing business and achieve excellence through virtuous conducts. The sustainable enterprises discussed above are vivid examples of business as practice.

In MacIntyre’s practice-institution schema, institutions, on the other hand, are con-
cerned with 'external goods' such as money, power and success. Institutions sustain practices by providing bearers for practices and at the same time, the internal goods of practices are always vulnerable to the competitive and corrupting power of institutions (Maclntyre, as cited in Moore, 2002). In Moore's understanding of the practice-institution schema, then, the institutions can be viewed as a collective mechanism that emphasises the functionality of business. In contrast, the practices of business focus on the process whereby the imperative of virtue brings out the human aspects of business through individuals' realisation of their internal goods and achievement of excellence. Whereas institutions act to constrain practices, the practices of business, through the pursuit of internal goods, have the potential to 'moralise' the institutions.

A moralised, virtuous corporation, in Moore's conceptualisation, is one that understands that the pursuit of excellence is ultimately a moral pursuit and hence seeks to encourage it. For Moore (2002), "it is precisely in the interplay between the practice of business and the corporation in which it is embedded, in the interplay between internal and external goods, that exciting possibilities exist for business and for business ethics" (p. 30). Moore's (2005) attempt of 'humanizing business' demonstrates an approach of understanding business and business ethics in focusing on the individuals in business and their moral capacity as well as constraint. In a similar vein, Hemingway (2005) has argued that personal morality is an important factor in considering corporate social practice because individuals' own personal values can become a catalyst that inspires and fosters responsible corporate behavior.

In van Marrewijk's theory of value systems, the struggle between an individual's as well as a corporation's collective pursuit of internal goods and external goods corresponds to the interplay between agency and communion. The next section will link the two conceptual frameworks and argue how together they strengthen the case of virtue theory in business ethics inquiries.

**Virtuous business practice and the transcendence of social value systems**

In linking the practice-institution schema to Marrewijk's value systems, the pursuit of external goods can one the one hand be viewed as a system exercising its agency capacities in preserving its old order and identity. On the other hand, the pursuit of internal goods can act to mobilise a system's communion tendencies that seek to dissolve older identity and transcend to a higher order. In the ongoing tension and interplay between agency and communion, the pursuit of internal goods and external goods constantly negotiate priorities and orders until these exercising capacities reach an internal homogeneity at a given level of complexity. According to van Marrewijk (2003), a social value system is destabilised when the social context changes and that it can no longer produce adequate solutions to its social problems. The increasing social and political pressure placed on the corporate landscape acts as such a catalyst to demand as well as promote change in the value systems in the business world. However, for a transcending process to occur, the communion capacities - the pursuit of internal goods - must exhibit strong tendencies to disrupt older value systems and beliefs. Further, such transcending process can only be stabilised when the agency capacities - the pursuit of external goods - adapt to the newer level of complexity.

While the pursuit of external goods is determined by business' institutional characteristics and its reliance on the market mechanisms, the pursuit of internal goods is derived from the moral and ethical character of the individuals in business. In the context of CSR, for example, as Smith (2003) put it, there is a 'business case' argument as well as a 'normative case' argument. The key difference between these two cases lies in the distinction between enlightened self-interest and a desire to do good. Whereas the 'business case'
premises on the evaluation of financial validities of CSR practices, the 'normative case' is based on concerns for ethics, value and morality. Interestingly recent CSR theorising has shown a growing tendency in linking the two cases together by constituting the business case arguments in terms of values and ethics.

For instance, Kurucz, Colbert and Wheeler (2008), in their chapter in The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility, have organised the existing reviews and models of the business case arguments for CSR into four modes of value creation, from trading, adapting, aligning, to relating. Each category of the business case indicates a company's involvement with and commitment to CSR activities, presupposed by the corresponding value proposition. At a more practical level as well, business CSR advocates such as Jackson and Nelson (2004), have sought to promote the integration of values into core business strategies and activities for "delivering value with values". Along with the increasing attention on value-based arguments, CSR studies have seen a growing popularity in the discussion of individuals' and organisational integrity. Integrity in CSR inquiries often appears alongside discussions of value, morality and ethics. For instance, some have argued that integrity is a significant ethical standard (Brown, 2005) and that organisational integrity exists when an organisation has a moral climate (Bowie, 2010). One notable feature of integrity-centered discussions has been the development of an integrity-based approach to ethics management and how such management and leadership can result in the nourishment of such moral climate and organisational integrity (Kaptein, 2003; Kennedy-Glans & Schulz, 2005; Palazzo, 2007).

The embracing of ethics and quasi-values in CSR studies reflects a changing social and business context. Paine (2003), in Value shift, asserts that we are in the midst of a fundamental value shift that is altering how companies are perceived and how they are expected to behave. In Kurucz, Colbert and Wheeler's (2008) study for example, what is fundamental in the shifts of the four value propositions, from trading to relating, is business' interpretation and definition of its place in the society, from business-centric (only consider CSR as a trade-off) to the view of business as an integral part of the society. In such a changing context, older corporate order and identity is no longer sufficient in providing solutions to its social problems and thus has to be dissolved and evolve into a newer system of orders and values. Thus whereas the business case highlights the business' preserving (agency) tendency, where the institutional pursuit of external goods is encouraged and presupposed by the mechanisms of the market, the normative case argument exhibits the transcending capacity (communio) of business, where the pursuit of internal goods finds rationales in normative narratives and intrinsic values.

The argument for a normative case highlights the importance of virtue theory because it places an emphasis on individuals' values and moral convictions in understanding business practice. The possibility of a normative case exists in our understanding of business as a human-based social entity or, as Solomon (2004) has put it, a human institution in service to humans. According to Arjoon (2000), the pursuit of internal goods corresponds with a state of 'being', whereas external goods correspond to a state of 'having'. The author posits that it is only under the state of 'being' that we can fulfill our true potentialities that cannot be accomplished or satisfied by a state of 'having'. Following this thought, at the core of the normative case then, is the return of the issue - how business should be - to the question of 'how people should be'. As demonstrated in the many examples of transformational leaders and successful sustainable enterprises, when individuals act as moral agent, not only their values and ethical pursuits weigh at the core of business sustainability decision-makings, but also their virtuous conduct help foster, and in turn be sustained through, a virtuous environment.
CONCLUSION

The paper discusses the theory of virtue ethics and its application in explaining the ascending power of the individuals in driving virtuous business conduct and fostering the transcending process of the corporate value systems. It shows that virtue theory provides a useful explanatory framework in making sense of various business ethics issues through placing a focus on the moral character of the individuals and its transformational influences in promoting ethical business conduct. A further implication of the virtue ethics theory, in its emphasis on human values and morality, lies in its conceptualisation of business as a human enterprise with embedded ethical and moral values. In such conceptualisation, the fundamental issue of business ethics becomes the question of how individuals, as moral agents, can serve to promote virtuous business conduct and help foster a moral and ethical climate in the organisation, as well as society at large. As such, we return the issue of business ethics - how business should behave - to the question of 'how people should behave' and how we can fulfill our true potentialities in our state of 'being'. As the individuals within business make their pursuits of internal goods, they realise the vision of business as 'a human institution in service to humans'.

In an evolving social context, business is placed under increasing pressure to incorporate social and environmental values in its practices. Lying with such a challenge, however, are many exciting opportunities for business to re-define its place in society and promote new models of practice that suit its changing social status as well as expectations. While business, as an economic entity, must strive to prosper, its social side of identity determines that it has to align with new or emerging social standards and norms that constantly change the conception of what is considered as excellent business practice. In viewing business as a human enterprise, we may focus our attention on exploring new ways of promoting an integrative capacity whereby human values and morality can be transformed into business practice in fostering a moral social climate and cultivating the transcending processes of social value systems.

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Book Reviews
BOOK REVIEW: HACKING: DIGITAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM (TIM JORDAN)

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In our increasingly connected global society, where digital media facilitate the distribution and creation of information and our reliance on technology becomes more prevalent, our attention turns to those hackers who create, manipulate and even break these technologies. Tim Jordan's Hacking: Digital Media and Technological Determinism suggests the hacker community is complex. For Jordan, that community is primarily centred around two differing forms of the hack, crackers and Free Open Source Software (FOSS) programmers, as well as a number of sub-cultures or periphery groups such as hacktivists and cyberterrorists. These forms merge, develop, interlink and compete within the virtual space to create a community of hackers that offer new and exciting questions to the debate around technological determinism.

In the first chapter of Hacking Jordan is quick to distance himself from the seemingly abstract definitions of hacking that have been popular amongst scholars and practitioners in recent years. Instead he suggests that hacking not only creates difference, but also must have "an engagement with some form of technology" (p. 16). Supported by anecdotes and analysis found later in the book, Jordan aims to create a definition of hacking that is based upon 'material practice', technologies, and community relations.

In the second chapter, Jordan focuses on the hacking sub-community known as crackers. Crackers are hackers that attempt to manipulate technology in order to gain access to private or previously inaccessible information. A cracker may, for example, write a virus that can breakdown government firewalls and provide the cracker access to sensitive information. Jordan suggests that the cracking community operates through a number of common traits including secrecy, masculinity, confrontation and technology. Further, the social processes of peer recognition and education are critical to the make up of cracking communities.

Jordan's next chapter is devoted to Free Software and Open Source programmers. This sub-group of the hacking community creates, manipulates and freely distributes software to the wider virtual community. In his analysis of various FOSS projects, Jordan maintains that this type of hacking is able to combine the two seemingly opposing positions on the question of technological determinism. While FOSS programmers are necessarily de-
terminated by the technology with which they are working, they are able to manipulate this
technology to produce, through a collective effort, new technology that is itself socially de-
termined.

In chapter four, Hacking the Social, Jordan begins his description of the hacking com-
munity. This community, as suggested by Jordan, is "technologically mediated" (p. 66) and
therefore is neither solely technologically determined or sociologically determined, but is in
fact a mixture of the two. This community is split into themes and sub-themes. For instance
the theme of "hacking the social" is summarized through hacktivism, cyberwar, cyberterror
and cybercrime. Whilst these summaries may be useful to readers who are unfamiliar with
the hack, Jordan offers little significant analysis of the operation or wider political/social
implications of these forms of hacking. As a result this chapter merely provides an exhaust-
ive summary of previously defined hacking groups.

In Hacking the Non-Hack, Jordan provides an overview of various groups who either
employ hacking techniques to non-technological situations, such as creative commons or
hackers who don't program, or use these programming techniques for employment pur-
poses. At first glance I feared that Jordan was beginning to enter the area of abstraction he
so passionately criticised in his opening statements. However, this chapter develops the
ideas of the non-hack in material and practical terms and provides the reader with interest-
ing and original arguments concerning the ideas of hacker sub-cultures.

The final chapter seeks to draw together the separate aspects of the hacker com-
munity Jordan delineated in earlier chapters. Many of his arguments concerning the notion
of community, membership, integration and movement, material practice and space-time
are solid and well constructed. Here Jordan is able to deliver a short yet concise introd-
tion to the workings of the hacker community.

An aspect of this book that led to some disappointment is that its strongest argument
is categorically underemphasised. Jordan sporadically returns to his hypothesis concerning
hacking and technological determinism, suggesting that social scientists have been overzealous in their critique of the theory. He proves, through his analysis of FOSS that the
hacking community or hacking values are able to create a middle ground in this argument,
with constant competition between technological determinism and social determinism.
Hackers are able to shift between these two determinisms and create difference. However,
Jordan's analysis of this phenomenon falls short. He admits that hacking poses a paradox
where "technology and society cannot be separated but nor can they be kept together" (p.
134), however further discussion of this claim through social theory or science and techno-
logy studies is lacking. Whilst drawing his conclusions concerning technological determin-
ism, Jordan relies almost solely on the theories of Ian Hutchby, and fails to integrate a wider
range of scholarly literature into his discussion. Thus the reader is presented with just one
section of a much wider debate concerning technology, society and humanity. However, an
in depth discussion of the theories of technology and society may be beyond the scope of
Jordan's book. His analysis of the increasing abstractness of the hack is cogent while his at-
tempts to re-define hacking in terms of material practice and community relations is useful
and well researched.

Hacking: Digital Media and Technological Determinism should be viewed as an overview
of hacking and an introduction to the concept of the hacking community. Students and
scholars who wish to gain a greater understanding of the nature, elements, and processes of
hacking will find this book to be a good introductory text.
BOOK REVIEW: SEARCH ENGINE SOCIETY (ALEXANDER HALAVAIS)

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This book commences with the assertion that Google, and search engines in general, are not as neutral as they may seem. The author begins with a comprehensive overview of the history of the technology, before proceeding to explain its technical organization. Essentially, he contends that the proliferation of information achieved through the use of algorithms, which rely on traffic via hyperlinks, amongst other processes, to determine what is most relevant to different searches. Commercial considerations also play a role; pages returned in searches favour advertisers' interests so that search engines can continue to be profitable.

Throughout the book, Halavais makes a brave attempt to explain the technological processes that underlie how search engines search. This said, without prior knowledge of such processes, some parts of this content can be difficult to follow. Although diagrams are occasionally used to allow readers to visualise the organisation of search engines, the written explanations of the technology are often complex. Beyond this, Halavais' analysis of the social processes of searching. He suggests that this requires a type of learned literacy, rather than innate skill or knowledge. The wide range of searchable topics, and the constant state of flux in which search engines exist, often makes this literacy a challenge to obtain and is often framed by a predominant American influence, as this is where the majority of search engine technology is situated. Majority groups are accorded power through the domination of Westernised Internet content, leading to a 'status quo' of information. Halavais draws on Barber's 1996 'McWorld' versus 'jihad' to explain how this influence is increasingly challenged by 'glocalised' internet content that reasserts local culture (p. 93).

Throughout the book, there is a strong focus on the 'sociability' of search engines, an aspect of the book that is particularly thought-provoking. As search engines permeate social life so thoroughly, their existence is rarely questioned. Dislodging the perceived neutrality of search engines, as Search Engine Society does, it opens an intriguing space for discussion and thought. While there are often more questions raised than answers given in this work, the book encourages the reader to consider their view of the role of search engines in contemporary everyday life.

These considerations come to the fore in the author's discussion of censorship and privacy, and the power that companies such as Google have in determining what is and is not censored or made accessible. In turn, governments also have power, sometimes a con-
ccerning amount, to persuade Google to censor or release particular information. Halavais raises difficult questions in relation to this: is censorship a necessary form of regulation, or does it delegitimize the entire premise of search? Further, even though searchers may be aware of the accessibility of their personal information, is their privacy jeopardized regardless?

The notion of search engine 'sociability' is made concrete in the final chapters, where the author discusses the origins of searching as a human-determined technology. Halavais suggests that search is an inherently social activity, as demonstrated by the 'search party' for instance, 'sociable search' is a way of collectively determining information, by ranking, or using social media such as blogs. This offers an alternative to algorithm-based search engines such as Google or Yahoo, as it relies on social interaction. A 'marketplace' for answers and knowledge is created, which relies on trust in peers, and consequently provides the means for collective networking and knowledge-making.

Given the pervasiveness of search engines, and the assumption that they neutrally permeate all aspects of society, this book offers a particularly fresh perspective. Halavais' consideration of some of the social aspects of search engines, as opposed focusing solely on technology, is particularly insightful. While information technology is often construed as a harmless convenience, Search Engine Society urges searchers to reconsider such a conception, and be wary of the very accessibility and pervasiveness that makes search engines convenient. Stimulating questions of power and politics are also raised, perspectives not often associated with the topic. It is Halavais' final question, however, that really invites further analysis of the operation and transparency of search engines in society: who will overtake Google?
BOOK REVIEW: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE (NANCY K. BAYM)

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Part of the Digital Media and Society Series, 'Personal Connections in a Digital Age' by Nancy K. Baym is a timely, insightful book, designed to provide the reader with an understanding of the implications of new technologies on human interaction.

While acknowledging that the digital age impacts practically all areas of life, ranging from politics to economics to health, Baym's focus, rather is on interpersonal relationships. Whilst technology has tremendous, mostly beneficial effects, Baym argues that it also deepens the rift between those socially, geographically and economically positioned to use it, and those who are not.

Setting out the goals of her manuscript decisively in the first chapter, Baym identifies the seven key concepts to bear in mind when analysing the effects of technological advances in communication: interactivity; reach; an inexhaustible ability for Storage and its associated dangers of replicability; temporal barriers arising from synchronous media; mobility, and the loss of social cues arising from the lack of different forms of visual, auditory and contextual stimuli. Exploring this at length, Baym systematically addresses the issues thrown up by constructions and representations of identity as articulated through these concepts.

The book begins with an expansive discussion social psychologists who have worked on understanding to what extent the presence of online forums have impacted the development of interpersonal human relationships. Baym posits that online spaces allow for more cross-gender and trans-socioeconomic boundary interaction - without destabilizing the offline social order. The allowance of anonymity and the careful construction of virtual 'identity' make for what she refers to as 'pure' interaction that is not deterred by socio-cultural barriers. This is indeed, a fascinating idea, however, whilst Baym aggregates studies in the field, for most part, she addresses them broadly, leaving the conclusions open to interpretation by the reader highlighting the immense space for further research.

Baym then turns to the innate human tendencies of insecurity and narcissism in the digital era, presenting data from blogs and interviews she points out how people feel the need to look "FaceBook-worthy" on any given occasion, or the tendency to attend events where one could potentially get nice profile photographs. The author looks at such beha-
viour types as reactionary, stemming from the usage, and pressure to post unrealistically attractive images on social networking sites to generate maximum 'likes' and comments. These experiences and studies Baym suggests, lead the reader to analyse, at depth, the relationship between heavy make-up and body contouring attire in real-life to Photoshop and Instagram-like effects on profile pictures. On several levels, it is easier to manipulate and construct virtual identities - possibly allowing for individuals to be more satisfied with their creations of ideal selves. Could this be seen as one of the reasons for the exponential growth of social networking? Baym contends that it could, by manner of 'early idealization' - by the selective revelation of character traits. Addressing issues in asynchronous text-based media that allow space for interpretation, Baym provides an account a personal experience in the development of a meaningful friendship with a man named 'Markus' - that originated online. She argues, contentiously, that relationships initiated through online interaction can be as meaningful as those struck up offline. While this appears to almost contradict her earlier assertion of identity construction, it presents an interesting conundrum. Since 2008, Social Networking Sties (SNS) have largely been to maintain social relationships, juxtaposed with freedom of anonymity and the representation of an idealized version of oneself. Baym highlights the key problems here are in the appropriateness of selecting the medium for interaction, the idea of 'friendship', as well as the amount of information it is acceptable to disclose on a public forum.

This, of course, leads to the much-discussed idea of deception online. However, whilst citing horror stories of large scale misrepresentation - she argues that offline identity representation in relationships were as much projections that altered over time as individuals learnt to trust one another. She makes a compelling case, contesting that representations and interactions offline could be every bit as deceptive as those occurring online.

Overall, Baym's view appears to be one of acceptance. She states, resignedly, in the epilogue, "[d]igital media aren't saving us or ruining us. Digital media aren't reinventing us. But they are changing the ways in which we relate to others and ourselves in countless, pervasive ways." (p. 152)

This book is timely and thought provoking - one that informs the reader on the changing mediascape, and opens new avenues for thought, encouraging readers to consider ideas that may not have been entertained before. Examining the various ways in which human communication is impacted by online interaction, Baym builds an argument contesting that in spite of all its delimiting factors, digital media both eases and enhances communication. The author's ideas are fresh, and in my view truly confrontational, as we are shown how the inevitability of technology's influence on day-to-day communication imposes itself on our everyday lives. Whilst we grapple with the barrage of technological influence over technological mediated communication, Baym's book provides necessary insights into its human dimension. -a necessity for scholar working in the area.
BOOK REVIEW: A PRIVATE SPHERE: DEMOCRACY IN A DIGITAL AGE (ZIZI A. PAPACHARISSI)

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Far from following the popular narrative of bemoaning low levels of civic engagement, Papacharissi presents an accessible and persuasive case for the establishment of a new civic vernacular through new technologies. The author contends that online communication has allowed contemporary society to significantly alter civic habits, though not necessarily to its detriment. She evaluates these through the dichotomy of public and private spheres of activity. According to the author, this framing makes it abundantly clear that citizens are engaging in the political in an manner unfathomable prior the introduction of the internet and social media.

Drawing heavily on Jurgen Habermas' theory of the public sphere - widely believed to be a central tenet in determining public opinion - the author contends that for any 'public' debate, there exists a dichotomous partner working in the 'private' sphere. Traditionally, the two have been mutually exclusive, the 'public' serving the public good and operating in the realm of the state, and the 'private' remaining under private ownership, relating directly to the self and often under unofficial pretense. Traditionally, issues that emerged in political debate were those of 'public' concerns, whereas the 'private' remained separate from mainstream discussion.

The author reflects that under these conditions it appears that civic engagement is at an all-time low. There is palpable nostalgia for past forms of political engagement and growing cynicism in regards to public debate. Judging by the old public framework, contemporary democracies look anemic at best. Papacharissi suggests that this perceived political malaise is due to the commodification of public spaces, but also due to the recent trend to treat domestic or private spaces as political subjects (à la feminist Carol Hanisch (1969), the personal is political) and for citizens to discuss these issues in a social environment.

According to Papacharissi, these trends have collapsed the divide between public and private spheres. The line is now blurred on what is to be discussed politically, where it will be discussed, and in what capacity. This coincides with technologies converging, which further adds to the communication overlap. A contemporary example may be found in recent speculation over how online chatter may influence court proceedings regarding the murder of ABC journalist Jill Meagher in September 2012 (ABC, 2012). Premier Ted Baillieu

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reflected "It (online discussions) has moved from indefensible gossip into almost resourced gossip, and it does have an impact." There is now total confusion surrounding what constitutes public and private debate as these spheres, as well as the mediums that facilitate them, now overlap and are projected through new technologies.

It is here that Papacharissi's book takes an interesting turn. Instead of resigning democracy to the fate of non-commercialised public spaces, she contends that, aided by convergent technologies and spaces, citizens are beginning to reinterpret their roles and adjust their civic habits accordingly. Citizens are now able to actively monitor and comment on international events, aggregate and filter news, and add their viewpoints in the form of blogging and uploading Youtube videos. Papacharissi believes this withdrawal from public debate to private reflection is a form of political protest from citizens who feel alienated from mainstream discussions. She borrows Roger Silverstone's term of the 'mediapolis' to convey that citizens now execute civic habits, not in a physical environment as in the past, but in a virtual environment that mediates the world.

While acknowledging that new technologies are presenting unprecedented opportunities and spaces for democratic activity, the author also reminds us that current engagement does not necessarily facilitate pluralistic discussions. She cautions the reader that online spaces are also susceptible to commercialism, inequitable access to information, and lack of communicative reciprocity, and therefore falls short of replacing the public sphere. Indeed, one can feel politically empowered when blogging or tweeting, and this mode of communication does have the capacity to reach a broader audience than ever conceptualised in human history. However, that is not to say that the blogger's arguments will be subject to the rigorous scrutiny once afforded by public spaces. It is here that Papacharissi warns us that it is possible for technology to be democratic without being democratising.

Despite outlining obvious strengths and weaknesses of new civic habits, Papacharissi eschews valuing the influence of new technologies on democracy in facilitating these new habits. Like with television and the print media, she believes the new civic habits afforded to the citizen by new technologies often encourage commentators to haphazardly label new technologies as inherently 'good' or 'bad' for society, evoking visions of utopian or dystopian futures. Papacharissi courageously sticks to her thesis that the current nature of civic behaviour is a result of social developments, such as our willingness to treat the private sphere as a political landscape, rather than being solely due to developments in technology. In this sense A Private Sphere is thought provoking in the true sense of the word. The reader is encouraged to reflect on contemporary (online) civic habits, not in a technologically deterministic mindset, but as a response to broader social trends which encourage citizens to use the internet in a particularly narcissistic manner.

One criticism of the text may be that Papacharissi uses real-life examples to support her claims sparingly, and relies more heavily on generalities surrounding Youtube and the blogosphere. This not to deny that, Papacharissi makes rigorous use of numerous communication theorists to mount her argument, making The Private Sphere an excellent text for scholars eager to deepen their knowledge of citizenship or broader communication theories.

REFERENCES


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