

CRITICAL UPGRADE

New-Media Culture Week ZAGREB, CROATIA, MAY 1-7

labinary newsletter 00000100



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reality check for cyber utopias

The title we have taken as a problem source for our symposium outlines at least two directions that seem important to us. The term “reality check”, appropriated out of a clinical discourse, would like to show that it is not just about a “census” or a question of comparison between somewhat already thought out ideals or fantasies and unsavoury taste of the so-called reality. Even more so, the title “reality check” points out to a certain critical attitude regarding certain pathological deformations of the phenomena we are trying to describe. The dot.com mania crash on the stock exchange, that was allegedly limited strictly to the “emerging markets” has left a shadow of a doubt covering all the other aspects of use of the Net, disregarding if they are used in corporate, state-owned, activist or individual/personal purposes. This doubt, presenting Internet as a perfect mean of social control in the era of decentralisation is one of the topics in question, regarding the pathological character of the global conditions.

On the other hand, “cyber utopias” are a paradigmatic location of construction for emancipatory hopes of our contemporaneity. It seems that this exact location of cyber utopias and the reflection on them answers radically to the challenges of the information societies of the immaterial labour. When contemporary theory describes a dominant hegemonic space of the social production, we consider new forms of sovereign power that are no longer guided by the clasical relations of the industrial production but a distributed (rhizomatic) networks of the post-fordian setup. Legal system of this sovereign power, that has become a dominant form of the social domination we call Empire, thus marking efficiency of this new form of capitalism as well as heterogenous (combined, simultaneous forms of constitution of the political field, as well as heterogeny inherent to the intelectual labour as the dominant form of production). Postfordian capitalism (or the “communism of the capital” as Paolo Virno calls it) ows it's actual success and continuity to it's own ideology where reproduction of capitalism is not actually possible.

Each utopian aim has thus encountered a hopeless task to seek for forms of socialization that shall be able to induce transformation and avoid a snare of fantasy where something radical “outside” heterogenous, efficient production of the capital exists. In that sense “cyber utopias” do not represent a colonisation of the until now unconquered and free territories, bared of the capitalistic means of production, but not accepting the modalities of subjection of the modern societies – here and now. The fight against the empire is, before all a fight against the legal system of the sovereign power, by the one and only normative element or intuition left, one that transcends imperial forms of rule, being non pathological, free reproduction of life and an important possibility for a collective social action. “Cyber utopias” may become shibboleth of the life of the free immanence.

for editorial team: PETAR MILAT

Presence in the mediated environment of digital networks is probably one of the most complex phenomena of the new types of social interaction that have emerged in these environments. In the current phase of radical deployment (or penetration) of the internet, various attempts are made to come to terms with the social dynamics of networked communication spaces. It seems that traditional media theory is not able to contextualize these social dynamics, as it remains stuck on a meta-level discourse of media and power structures (Virilio), hyperreality (Baudrillard), or on a retrograde analysis of media structures deeply rooted in the functionality and structural characteristics of broadcast media (McLuhan).

Attempts to come to terms with networked communication environments from the field of social theory, are generally shallow, ill informed about actual practices, and sometimes to straightforwardly biased. Psychology does not contribute in any significant way to an understanding of these social dynamics either. The rather popular idea, for instance, that the screen is a projection screen for personal pre-occupations, and that social relations that emerge through the interactions via networked media are mostly imaginary for lack of negative feedback or corrections, is deeply contentious. The idea that absence of corrective feedback stimulates the creation of fictitious relationships is an interesting one, but one that can apply equally well off-line as it can on-line. It illuminates certain patterns of human behavior, but it does not tell us much of what makes presence in the networks specific.

One of the greatest fallacies of current attempts to understand the social dynamics of networked media is the tendency to see these media as an extension of the broadcast media system. This idea has become more popular as the internet is extended with audio-visual elements. Interactive audio-visual structures, streaming media, downloadable sound and video, all contribute to the notion that the internet is the next evolution of broadcast media. But this vision applies only partially, and is driven primarily by vested interests of the media industry. It is often not reflected in how people actually use the net.

The predication of the conception of media on the broadcast model based on a division of roles of the active sender <> passive receiver / audience relationship, is the greatest barrier to understanding what goes down in a networked media environment. The networked environment should primarily be seen as a social space, in which active relationships are pursued and deployed. Activities that often seem completely useless, irrational, erratic, or even autistic. The active sender and the passive audience/ receiver, seem to have been replaced by a multitude of unguided transmission that seem to lack a designated receiver. Thus the net is seen as an irrelevant, chaotic, and useless infosphere, a waste of resources, a transitory phase of development that will soon be replaced by professional standards of quality, entertainment, information, media-professionalism, and above all respect for the audience.

Let me be clear, I do not believe in this vision, and I am convinced that the net will not evolve into the ultimate entertainment and information medium. Instead it seems more likely that the seemingly unstructured mess of random transmissions will prevail.
< sovereign media or 'the joy of emptiness' >

Sovereign media are first of all media that simply exist for the sake of nothing else. Sovereign media produce signals with an origin/sender/author, but without a designated receiver. The term 'Sovereign Media' alludes to the notion of the sovereign as developed by Georges Bataille in The Accursed Share. As a media phenomenology it has first been identified by BILWET (a.k.a. ADILKNO - Foundation for the Advancement of Illegal Knowledge). For Bilwet the sovereign media are a bewildering new UTO - Unidentified Theoretical Object, which they study with great curiosity and leisurely pleasure.

Bilwet/Adilkno's early observations of this UTO indicate that, "the sovereign media (...) have cut all surviving imaginary ties with truth, reality and representation. They no longer concentrate on the wishes of a specific target group, as the 'inside' media still do. They have emancipated themselves from any potential audience, and thus they do not approach their audience as a mouldable market segment, but offer it the 'sovereign space' it deserves."

Riding on the waves of pure data-ecstasy, the sovereign mediators invite us 'to hop right onto the media bus' - the signal is there, you only have to pick it up! No more technical mystification, just pure enjoyment of the endless and multidimensional connections that are created between the liberated fragments of the universal media archive. Disconnected from the gravity of the professional, the

alternative, the artistic and the political media, the sovereign mediators and their accidental audience float through the boundless media space beyond meaning and intention.

Freed from the demands of usefulness, quality becomes an irrelevant criterion for these media signals. The signals exist, how they are interpreted, what the framework and the demands are that are projected upon them, is not a consideration in the process of their production. The signals can be beautiful and brilliantly clear, or amateurish and oblique. The traditional criteria of media professionalism have long been left behind in the universe of the sovereign media.

One of the most beautiful examples of a supremely sovereign media practice is the net.radio.night, a global micro jam in net.audio, regularly hosted by the xchange network. Typically for a net.radio.night a call is put out on the mailing list, inviting net.casters to join on irc and listen to a live stream originating from location one. Other locations listen and pick up the stream till someone announces on the irc channel that the live stream will move from its original location to theirs. The next stream is a remix of the original, some things added, others taken away. The process starts anew and the stream moves to the next location and the next re-mix. This process can go on for hours, and very soon the origin of any specific sound is lost. What the net.radio.night imprints on the participants is a strong feeling of being in the network, where the relationship between origin and destination has been dissolved. Also the traditional audience can tune in and listen, but is no consideration in the structure of the event.

A distinctive characteristic of sovereign media is their hybridity. Any medium can be combined with any medium. Sovereign media have a cross-media-platform-strategy, but this time not to reach a new audience, but simply to extend the media space. Examples are the Virtual Media Lab (media.live.nu), an intersection of all available media in Amsterdam, combining cable television with web casting, with radio, and even at times with satellite transmissions. Another interesting cross breed are automated media such as the Frequency Clock of r a d i o q u a l i a, or Remote TV of TwenFM, allowing automatic scheduling of live streams from the internet on local radio and cable TV infrastructures. Or the project Agent Radio of the Institute of Artificial Art in Amsterdam that automatically and randomly selects sounds sources from the Internet and schedules them in the ether.

All these media operate beyond the body count of viewer statistics.

< phatic media >

In their final phase of evolution media become phatic. The term derives from linguistics. In linguistics phatic language relates to "speech used for social or emotive purposes rather than for communicating information". The typical, though admittedly somewhat stereotypical example, is the daily speech of house wives meeting every single day in the garden while hanging wash or taking care of domestic tasks. The exchanges of apparently meaningless phrases such as "how are you?", "How are your children doing in school?", etc.. communicate something beyond the semantics of the individual words.

An amazing image: A test channel of a satellite tv transmitter, operated by satellite tv amateurs - an international network. One central image surrounded by smaller screens. They show what looks to most of us "nothing". A small room, an attic, a technical workshop, equipment, somebody sitting around, no apparent communication. The image is, it does not speak. One of our civilization's most highly developed high-tech infrastructures, utilized to celebrate the joy of emptiness ...

This type of media appears to be completely useless within the traditional (broadcast) media scheme. It is a mistake to take this view for granted, however. There is indeed nothing banal about this media behavior. The media sphere is treated here as a new type of environment, 'in' which people create presences, but without a desire or aim to communicate a specific message.

In fact I understand this as a fundamental anthropological principle - a way of inhabiting a new environment, and one that is, after all, primarily a hostile environment for most of us.
(This is an excerpt of a longer text that is online at <http://subsol.c3.hu>. Text is based on talks given at Bannf Interactive Screen 0.0 and at net.congestion - int. festival of streaming media, Amsterdam.)

Eric Kluitenberg

MEDIA WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE



The life of the avant-gardes has become a virtual geography. Manifestoes invoking the arrival of new forms of immaterial, liquescent subversion assume that after the stagnation of the conservative eighties, the previous movements of the left, including the radical avant-gardes, have dematerialized from the streets to the ‘rhizomatic’ universe of the net. Critical Art Ensemble have announced the disappearance of the visible power which was once incarnated in the body of the king or in the architecture of castles and parliament houses. Becoming liquid, power seeps through cyberspace, an elusive entity that nomadically wanders the globe. Vacated of the symbols and materiality of power, the streets are dead and not worth fighting for and defending – it is the control of information that has become the terrain of battle, and the name of resistance whispered in every enthusiastic ear is infowar, the appropriation of “*data and/or means of communication.*” The net, in all its beauty and terror fulfills the promise of the radical impulses of earlier generations. The revolutionary vision lives, transfigured. As Eric Kluitenberg has said, “*The strategies, the conceptual tools, the tactics of intervention in the new digital hypersphere are highly familiar. They draw on the legacy and experience of the avant-garde movements.*” The arsenal of the future is constructed out of the ruins of the past: Duchamp, Berlin Dada, Breton, the irreproachable Situationists. According to the new mythology, is not the form or the content or the ideology behind these gestures that has become obsolete, but only their geography – their location in physical space. But which gestures, which avant-garde?zt

The legal battle at the end of 1999 between the billion dollar toy dot.com eToys and the European art group etoy was one of the important events in the history of the Internet, since it was precisely the possible use, legality, and future direction of the net that were at stake. The facts of the case were that etoy had existed and had its domain name first; the demand by eToys that etoy change its domain on the grounds that the similarity of the names was confusing eToys’ customers and hurting its business was ridiculous and the legal injunction it obtained against etoy was bordering on illegality. But the myth of this epic battle suffered from its own exaggerations. RTMark credited the virtual sit-ins against the eToys site and forms of counter-propaganda against eToys in the press with the eventual ‘70% decline in the value of eToys stock (this 70% decline happened at a time when many dot.coms were already experiencing a slump; the massive dot.com crash was looming only a few months away on the horizon). The Toywar site took all the credit and announced that “*TOYWAR was the most expensive performance in art history: \$4.5 billion dollars.*” Reinhold Grether portrayed the war as “a conflict between two lifestyles, one consumerist, giving absolute priority to acquisition, in this case, a domain, and the other artistic, declaring the exhibition of complex social practices, rather than art objects, as the object of art.” But was this a war between consumerism and the purity of anti-corporate art or a conflict between different types of consumerism? After all, as etoy has insisted over and again, “*We are not anti-corporate. That's something people don't understand. We are an overdrive corporation with surreal goals. We sell nothing except ourselves. We don't promise any revenue, except excitement and maybe a little bit of confusion.*”

Etoy sells itself, it barter its image. As Geri Wittig remarked to etoy in an interview, the image is stylishly militaristic, it is dependent on wearing the same uniform, and looking like identical toy soldiers (or members of a gang) – this is why, as etoy confesses, there can be no women or blacks in the group: “*it would destroy the concept.*” The many support sites that sprang up during Toywar capitalized on this incredibly puerile image of warfare, an image capable of seducing only adolescent boys, even if its target audience

proved to be older. The Toywar UK site under the direction of ‘Captain Smithers’ launched its own internet offensive against eToys as a sign of support. The site featured e*bombs in the forms of alternative news service and mailing lists. “*The e*bomb blast radius was global and it rendered eToys.com powerless. VIVA la e*bomb! Thousands of friendly fire e*bombs detonated, and no one hurt! Pure 21st century FIRE POWER!*” zThe image of war is sexy not just in the popular imaginary of television, but among the more refined tastes of the militant left and the radical art crowd. The indiscriminate forms of its rhetoric and gestures are legion, though the mask as a symbol of the terrorist or the guerilla stands out as one of the new trends of identification, from the multitude who gather in the street borrowing the checkered mask of a Palestinian holy war, to RTMark, who don the pantyhose of the bank robber in their videos, and Ricardo Dominguez who performs the story of electronic civil disobedience in an EZLN mask, as a gesture of identification with the cause of the Zapatistas. The Zapatistas say they use masks so that people won’t be beguiled by their beauty but pay attention to the power of their words. But in this EDT performance, it is the power of the words that speak of the different form of struggle of the Zapatistas that is obscured as the audience identifies with the image of the mask. The identity of the mask is prefigured in advance by the associations it has in the contemporary stage of the media.

The media spectacle needs a boogey of opposition to the universal values of democracy and the right to consume without restraint, and after the collapse of the big other of ‘Eastern Europe,’ the image of a man dressed in black wearing a mask has now become the mass media’s perfect fantasy, the face against which it can define its own values. Making a fetish of the image of the terrorist or guerilla has become both pious and stupid, even in the aestheticized form of the avant-gardes, as the theatricalization of a nameless revolution. The identification with the image of warfare was always the worst militant aspect of the avant-gardes. If the avant-gardes were a momentary instantiation of a great promise, speaking in a different language outside the banality of organized politics, they were simultaneously the ridiculous quarrels over names and concepts, vicious arguments about ideological correctness, exclusions of deviations, puerile antics, and the inflated machismo of warfare. The desire to proclaim the avant-garde an unfinished project that inevitably returns to fulfill a secret history preserves all these characteristics. It preserves the militarism inherent in the metaphor of the ‘avant-garde’ – the avant-garde as an elite group, organized by strict military discipline, going out first and paving the way for the attack. If this metaphor started out as a blank parody, it became real with the march of history. The avant-gardes became in their relations to each other and to the opponent they claimed to despise nothing more than the magical face of the double, the inverted mirror of totalitarianism. Drawing upon their strategies, conceptual tools, and tactics of intervention summons not the specter haunting a new epoch, but a corpse in absolute decomposition.

When the ‘multitude’ come together in a virtual-sit-in in opposition to eToys or any other website as a show of force against capitalism, they don’t escape its dialectic. The form assumed by the association of individuals is based and mediated by the cause it is opposing, rather than on the desires of the participants and on their interest in each other. To subordinate the process of fusion to a negative cause does not construct a new form of collaboration, as much as it is a formal repetition of a cycle of enslavement and revenge. Opposition misses the mark, though it is very successful in the media. When tactical media seek to smash the code, to disrupt the seamless surface of digital mediation, of corporate power, of whatever abstract form their idea of opposition takes, they are determined by their enemy. The energy and source of their self-valuation derives from their act of negation.

Negation can be a source of exhilaration and an experience of increased power, as the limits imposed artificially on the self by the many forms of micro-oppressions are temporarily transcended, transgressed. But this is a potentially endless cycle of negation ad infinitum, unto death; the satisfaction of negation is only temporary, its hunger renewed again.

In a correspondence that was neither private nor public, Sebastian Luetgert wrote “it is the network - not empire - that is materializing before our very own eyes, and the multitudes are part of it. their only threat to the regimes of control is that they will be their mirror . . . the enemy of the network is not the activist, but the passivist. passivists don't surf: they have learned to wait, and they know that when crossing a desert there is no need for a powerbook, a gps phone or a press tent.” But maybe this is a false dilemma, the swing of a pendulum across the clockface of dead time. The activist in its familiar militant pose is a creature that should be abandoned to a museum of relics – the activist determined by a war against an oppressive power, engaged in a fight which consumes all his energy in reverse, convinced of the absolute virtue of his cause and of the correctness of his theory. But invoking the passivist risks being construed for a celebration of the silent majority of consumers, secretly active in their absolute stasis.

There are forms of action that are neither activist nor passivist. Somewhere, where the location is unimportant, there's a group of people who started a club <social center is not the right word, but sometimes the search for names is also unimportant> not out of a desire to be in opposition to any of the dominant art or cultural institutions, but because they wanted to create a scene that did not yet exist. While inside, everyone uses a form invented currency. Some members of the group who are graphic designers make posters for restaurants and bars in town in exchange for free vouchers so they have places to take their friends. They don’t occupy but evacuate the space of their club, inviting others to take temporary possession of it: artists, musicians, some local people from a half-way house for those considered mentally ill, even some political theorists and sociologists. They make a lot of actions, but when added together their sum is not activism. No theory is constructed, no manifesto written that proclaims this form of life as the model of the coming revolution. There is no gospel and no disciples. The institutionalized left might perhaps snicker at this flimsy example, concluding that it changes absolutely nothing, that it will not ‘overthrow’ capitalism (overthrow = desire to rule, to become master), that it doesn’t conform to their vision of utopia (utopia = waiting until the conditions are ripe, negating the present in anticipation of a future whose past has already been glimpsed).

Zhivago once fled with his lover to the interminable snow plains across the barren landscape of revolutionary Russia. Reaching a place that most resembled the center of nowhere, they stopped. The Bolshevik police followed on their heels, moving at a different speed, chasing a desire that escaped their comprehension. They knocked at the door, asking, what is your agenda, what are you plotting against us, what do you plan to do here? Live, he answered, just live. If understood slowly, this is not the fatality of hopelessness or a sign of passive acquiescence in the face of an obscene demand. And if it is an insurrection, it is not the insurrection proclaimed loudly on the center stage of capital cities whose success is measured by how many times the police beats it to the ground. Knowing when to disappear, it does not ask to be represented. Although there are many who live it today, outside the speed of the media spectacle, their names would only be invoked in vain, as the idols of yet another manifesto thrown on the rubble-heap of history.

Duna Mayer



"Twilight of the Idols"

(excerpt - longer version of this essay is online at <http://www.dplanet.org/>)

Saskia Sassen

The Topoi of E-Space

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC CYBERSPACE



We need to retheorize electronic space and uncouple it analytically from the properties of the internet which have shaped our thinking about electronic space. We tend to think of this space as one that is characterized by distributed power, by the absence of hierarchy. The internet is probably the best known and most noted. Its particular attributes have engendered the notion of distributed power: decentralization, openness, possibility of expansion, no hierarchy, no center, no conditions for authoritarian or monopoly control.

Yet the networks are also making possible other forms of power. The financial markets, operating largely through private electronic networks, are a good instance of an alternative form of power. The three properties of electronic networks: speed, simultaneity, and interconnectivity have produced strikingly different outcomes in this case from those of the internet. These properties have made possible orders of magnitude and concentration far surpassing anything we had ever seen in financial markets. The consequence has been that the global capital market now has the power to discipline national governments, as became evident with the Mexico “crisis” of December 1994. We are seeing the formation of new power structures in electronic space, perhaps most clearly in the private networks of finance but also in other cases.

1. THE TOPOI OF E-SPACE: GLOBAL CITIES AND GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS

The vast new economic topography that is being implemented through electronic space is but one moment, one fragment, of an even vaster economic chain that is largely embedded in nonelectronic spaces. There is no fully virtualized firm and no fully digitalized industry. Even the most advanced information industries, such as finance, are installed only partly in electronic space. So are industries that produce digital products such as software. The growing digitalization of economic activities has not eliminated the need for major international business and financial centers and all the material resources they concentrate, from state-of-the-art telematic infrastructure to brain talent.

Nonetheless, telematics and globalization have emerged as fundamental forces reshaping the organization of economic space. This reshaping ranges from the spatial virtualization of a growing number of economic activities to the reconfiguration of the geography of the built environment for economic activity. Whether in electronic space or in the geography of the built environment, this reshaping involves organizational and structural changes. Telematics maximizes the potential for geographic dispersal and globalization entails an economic logic that maximizes the attraction and profitability of such dispersal.

Centrality remains a key property of the economic system but the spatial correlates of centrality are profoundly altered by the new technologies and by globalization. This engenders a whole new problematic around the definition of what constitutes centrality today in an economic system where (1) a share of transactions occur through technologies that neutralize distance and place, and do so on a global scale; (2) centrality has historically been embodied in certain types of built environments and urban forms. Economic globalization and the new information technologies have not only reconfigured centrality and its spatial correlates, they have also created new spaces for centrality.

To some extent when I look at the global economy I see a network of about thirty or forty strategic places—it is a changing animal that depends on all kinds of things—where there is an enormous concentration of all those resources. They are largely cities but not exclusively, Silicon Valley would be one, as well as other industrial areas with telecommunications industries like Lille, for instance. The point is: yes, globalization, yes, digitalization, yes, dematerialization, yes, instantaneous communication, but because it is a system characterized not by distributed power, distributed ownership, distributed application of profits, but by the opposite, concentration of profits, concentration in ownership, concentration of control, you also have a material correlate to this, which is this enormous concentration of strategic resources in major cities.

2. A NEW GEOGRAPHY OF CENTRALITY

We are seeing a spatialization of inequality that is evident both in the geography of the communications infrastructure and in the emergent geographies in electronic space itself. Global cities are hyperconcentrations of infrastructure and the attendant resources while vast areas in less developed regions are poorly served. Even within global cities we see a geography of centrality and one of marginality. For instance, New York City has the largest concentration of fiber-optic cable-served buildings in the world; but they are mostly in the center of the city, while Harlem, the black ghetto, has only one such building. South Central Los Angeles, the site of the 1993 uprisings, has none.

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Once in Cyberspace, users will also encounter an unequal geography of access. Those who can pay for it will have high-speed service, while those who cannot pay will increasingly find themselves with very slow service. For instance, Time Warner ran a pilot project in a medium-sized community in the U.S. to find out whether customers would be willing to pay rather high fees for fast services; they found that customers would—that is, those who could pay.

3. EMERGENT CYBERSEGMENTATIONS

One way of beginning to conceptualize possible structural forms in electronic space is to specify emerging forms of segmentation. There are at least three distinct forms of cybersegmentation we can see today. One of these is the commercialization of access—a familiar enough subject. The second is the emergence of intermediary filters to evaluate sort, and chose information for paying customers. The third, and the one I want to focus on in some detail, is the formation of private firewalled corporate networks on the web. We cannot underestimate how pervasive is the search for ways to control, privatize and commercialize. Three major global alliances have been formed that aim at delivering a whole range of services to clients. While the mechanisms for commercialization may not be available now, there is an enormous effort to invent the appropriate billing systems.

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Today most big infrastructure projects—laying fiber-optic cable across the bottom of the oceans—are carried out by three major engineering companies who do it on “spec”—that is not because they were contracted to do so by a government or a company, but on their own because they

know that there is a market of actors with very deep pockets, such as the multinationals and the financial services firms and the financial markets, which will buy the bandwidth. We fight for the right of access to using bandwidth because we are fighting around issues concerning the internet—public space, a public good. It is like poor workers demanding public transportation to get them to their jobs.

Internet activists and experts don't usually recognize or often have not thought about the world of private digital space because they really are two separate worlds. To me, someone who focuses also on finance, it is always astounding to hear generalizations made about the features of digital networks in general, when what they are talking about is the features of the net. I think this shows us once again that technology is, ultimately, embedded. There is no neutral technology. The structures of power also shape some of the decisive features of the digital networks as I compared earlier for the internet and the private networks of finance.

CONCLUSION: SPACE AND POWER

Electronic space has emerged not simply as a means for transmitting information, but as a major new theater for the accumulation and the operation of global capital. This is one way of saying that electronic space is embedded within the larger dynamic of organized society, particularly economic areas.

There is no doubt that the internet is a space of distributed power that limits the possibilities of authoritarian and monopoly control. But it is becoming evident over the last two years that it is also a space for contestation and segmentation. Further, when it comes to the broader subject of the power of the networks, most computer networks are private. That leaves a lot of network power that may not necessarily have the properties/attributes of the internet. Indeed, much of this is concentrated power and reproduces hierarchy rather than distributed power systems.

The internet and private computer networks have coexisted for many years. This situation is changing, however, and that drives my concern for the need to retheorize the internet and the need to address the larger issue of electronic space rather than just the part of the internet that is a public electronic space. The three subjects discussed above may be read as an empirical specification of two major new conditions: (1) the growing digitalization and globalization of leading economic sectors has further contributed to the hyperconcentration of resources, infrastructure and central functions, with global cities as one strategic site in the new global economic order; (2) the growing economic importance of electronic space which has furthered global alliances and massive concentrations of capital and corporate power, and has contributed to new forms of segmentation in electronic space. These have made electronic space one of the sites for the operations of global capital and the formation of new power structures.

What these developments have meant is that suddenly the two major actors in electronic space—the corporate sector and civil society—which until recently had little to do with one another in electronic space, are running into each other.

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One of the concerns for me has been to understand the differences between private and public digital space. A lot of theoretical work has been done on public digital space, for example about the Digital City in Amsterdam. I have been more concerned with private digital space and with what I see as a colonizing of public digital space by private (that is, corporate) players. We have three historical eras of the internet. The first phase is that of the hackers, where access was the issue as well as making the software available.

The second phase is when you begin to have the interest by private players that did not quite know how to use it. At that point it was still primarily a public space, though in some ways protected. And presently the third stage which is the invasion of cyberspace by corporate players—it is really combat out there. So, for me, the internet becomes a space for contestation. I am here not only thinking about multinational corporations. I am thinking of all kind of players, including those that misuse the internet, something which is serious also.

This is also the context within which we need to examine the present trends towards deregulation and privatization that have allowed the telecommunications industry to operate globally in an increasing number of economic sectors. These changes have profoundly altered the role of government in the industry, and, as a consequence, have further raised the importance of civil society as a site where

a multiplicity of public interests can resist the overwhelming influence of the new corporate global players. Civil society, from individuals to NGOs, has engaged in a very energetic use of cyberspace from the bottom up.

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The overwhelming influence that global firms and markets have gained in the last two years in the production, shaping, and use of electronic space, parallel with the shrinking role of governments, has created a political vacuum. However, it does not have to be a political vacuum.

Because the ascendance of digitalization is a new source of major transformations in society, we need to develop it as one of the driving forces of sustainable and equitable world development. This should be a key issue in political debates about society, particularly about equity and development. We should not let business and the market shape “development” and dominate the policy debate. The positive side of the new technology, from democratic participation to telemedicine, is not necessarily going to come as a result of market dynamics.

Further, even in the sites of concentrated power, these technologies can be destabilizing. The properties of electronic networks have created elements of a crisis of control within the institutions of the financial industry itself. ...

I am convinced that we need to fight for free and public content. But bandwidth is the infrastructure that is intimately linked to the formation and multiplication of public activity on the internet. Public space and free content have always required access to specific conditions, even if elementary. What looms ahead is a sharpening division between a slow moving space for those who lack the resources and a fast moving space (quick connections, enormous bandwidth) for those who can pay for it. Although it is really very different, for illustration we could say that this is a new version of an old syndrome: the public busses in poor neighborhoods are often of poorer quality than those for rich neighborhoods. It seemed, once, like these forms of inequality could not be enacted in the internet. Today it would seem that they are.

This is a particular moment in the history of electronic space, a moment when powerful corporate players and high-performance networks are strengthening the role of private electronic space and altering the structure of public electronic space. However, it is also a moment when we are seeing the emergence of a fairly broad-based—though as yet demographically isolated —civil society in electronic space. This sets the stage for contestation.

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An Alpha Revisionist Manifesto

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In the technological sector, having a product ‘in Alpha’ refers to a product that is in development, frequently little more than a fully developed idea in the process of implementation. The ‘Beta’ stage follows, which is the final consumer testing that precedes release of a product (software, hardware, etc.) to the public. This follows an industrial tradition that includes such New World cultural icons as Detroit’s concept cars, but a promise of progress is no longer enough for technological society. We are now in a period of the Alpha Revision. In previous times such as the 1950’s, development was closely guarded, with peeks of, or brief glimpses at objects-in-progress, only to climax in the glorious debut of the newest Philco television, Chevrolet automobile, or latest motion picture. In the past, the industrial production culture guarded its developing projects closely. The need for primacy in the promotion of ideas and products in the increasingly accelerated culture of the 80’s and 90’s technological markets became ever more pronounced, and required announcements to be made while concepts were in the ‘Beta’ stage. The marketing of a product or concept increasingly moved back in the development arc, and in that period the prevalent timeframe was that of the final testing phases. In contrast to this, the current technological culture is one that feeds on hype and diminished expectations of the real.

History was once a prime driver of society. Philosophical and artistic movements have often looked to the past to revitalize the present and strategize the future. McLuhan mused that artists lived in the present, making them seem visionary while others looked to that very same past. In the McLuhanist shift, the present became the focus. However at the turn of the second millennium the shift increasingly turns to the future. History is hopelessly ephemeral in the digital culture, the present is a bore, and it takes far too long for projects to get out of beta. The acceleration of culture demands the consumption of ideas at their peak of freshness, instead of waiting two years from Microsoft’s announcement of the X-Box for delivery of the physical object. So, to insure primacy of the idea in the larger community, and to maximize mindshare for that idea, the concept must be released as soon as possible. This is reinforced by the inability of actual objects and events to satisfy our expectations. The release of the Playstation II in the USA met with 50% shortages of delivered systems from projected numbers and even with the latest technology the machine has a scant twenty-five games at time of release. When the most current computer system is brought to market, the chip manufacturers frequently have a version a little faster that is not quite ready for release. But in the case of the Pentium III and Windows 98, the new chip or operating system only reinforced the discontinuity between the hype and any hope of its consummation. Even being an artistic visionary is not enough. McLuhan’s present fails our expectations of the future. At the prestigious 2000 Ars Electronica technological arts festival, the top prize did not go to any Internet art practitioner per se, to science fiction writer Neal Stephenson. Fin de millennium culture is not even satisfied with the next big thing; its interest is the next blip on the radar two to ten years out. The new object of desire becomes the next upgrade for failed technological expectations; the most up-to-date applied fictive piece that may or may not come to fruition; the next cultural vaporware. In Lunenfeld’s essay, “Demo or Die”, he describes a culture at MIT of researchers

demonstrating their ideas so that they can continue in their acceptance, funding, etc. through a ritualistic series of PowerPoint lectures and prototype displays. This culture has bled into the art world, as artists ‘demo’ their works with the same tools that corporate executives employ to generate excitement about their “Next Big Idea”. In this way, the capitalistic production culture of symbols in the dotcom world has inscribed itself on the artist, this time the technological artist, and the Internet artist in particular. The artist has returned to the creation of objects, although contemporary projects may be largely symbolic in nature. With the lack of physicality inherent in digital art, and net.art in particular, the art symbol is objectified in the form of the installation. However, as with the execution of the physical object, the execution of the online installation falls short of expectations, as is evident in the Ars exhibition’s refusal to give the top award to any artist who actually created an installation. Due to numerous factors such as systemic incompatibilities, quality of the machine used to see the work and so on, the qualitative experience of the installation is almost always a disappointment compared to the spark of imagination that an alpha revision announcement conjures. It might be said that this manifesto is merely another extension to the Conceptualist legacy, and this is not an incorrect assumption. However, the cultural shift represented by digital art is that the obliterated physical referent is reborn in the symbolic, that the embodiment of the subject has moved from the cyborg to a corpus of information. In so doing, net.art pieces, even in the form of Brechtian descriptions of happenings, are reiterated as symbolic objects through these shifts in discourse and representation. What are left as satisfying experiences in the digital are merely allegories to, and functional prototypes of, works-in-progress that may or may not ever be created, depending on interest and funding.

The Alpha Revision art project signifies that which is not fully conceptualized or executed, even symbolically, except for the germ of an idea. If there are the 50 or so recorded concepts for such symbolic works (this treatise refers to digital art), these are in fact works in themselves, and the art which could come from these concepts is distinctly different and potentially less satisfying than the images convoked by the concepts. As with the alpha revision announcement, the desire invoked by an upcoming product is far more powerful than what the release of the work/product itself will engender. In fact, the conceptual aesthetic of the information world is linked to the creative potential imbued within the description of an intervention or work, and not necessarily the work itself. Therefore, the option now exists to have the work one imagines creating spread through the rhizomatic web of the electronic noosphere, for description is enough on its own. Perhaps, due to a sort of refusal to let go of past forms of expression, the artist will likely continue to create occasional works, but far more will still be in ‘alpha’ because the likelihood of having the power, time, or money to execute them all is very, very slim.

*The past is no longer good enough,
The present is a disappointment,
The future takes too long to arrive,
Culture is now in alpha revision.*

"New Media Culture Week" is project initiated by Multimedia Institute in autmn 2001. after initial conversations about cooperation with Goethe Institut in Zagreb. Formulated as one week of events which by its topics and forms, promote but also question "new media culture". This term seemingly abstract and out of reach of everyday's vocabulary includes several interpretations. "Culture" is in this ucase nderstood as social framework (weither then working with art production and presentation and historic treasures). By the notion of "New Media" one associates all digital environments in our communication space (rangig from WWW to SMS or video phone services). New media culture is not primarily form of video art, but a system or or product which imbodies new concepts trough digital technologies, using new "dictionary" of structural elements. In broadest sence participation of IT industy and cultural industries is also included, while in most pure sence of the word it covers the area of creative interdisciplinary (scientific, artistic and technological) and intersectoral overlapping.

As heterogenous is production cycle of new media, from designers and multimedia artists, programmers (and their cyberpunk beliefs), all the way to theoreticians and scientists, so is the public who can be grouped only with one single joint denominator "users". The challange we would like to force is re-evaluating of needs and articulation of standpoints towards everyday media-tehnological surrounding. To break out of web browsing experaince towards conceptual understanding of networks and/or or gameing thrills towards thinking about interfaces, as this move is essential for every individuall to comprehend what is specific in contemporary culture and to participate in its construction.

The slogan of the week is "CRITICAL UPGRADE" and with 4 segments will try to approach Croatias general public and experts, by showing what is "new" and "essential".

--- Annual exhibition of computer art organised for the third time (2000. "I'm still alive" i 2001 "Re:Con") organised by Multimedia Institut & Croatian Visual Artists Association, which is focused this year on the topic of generative art exhibition "GenArt" in Gallery PM and Gallery Karas (1.-7.5.2002.)

--- Two day conference in Goethe Institut "Reality Check For Cyber Utopias" will in 4 sessions (4. & 5.5.2002.) present twenty international teoretitians, artists and programers, which should help start up discussions on art, new economy, software and media

--- "TESTTONE" (1.-6.5.2002.), festival of new electronic music which will through a series of concerts in KSET present most recent musical trends micromusic & netcasting scenes, and with presentation & discusssion introduce the topics od digital production, distribution and reproduction in digital media

--- With series of workshops, presentations and forum of regional and translokal initiatives in the field of new media, "Quorum" (1.-5.5.2002.) in net.culture center "mama", will provide opportunity for institution of regional projects and initiatives. This program is intended for producers, curators and managers, who work with new media culture.

For more information on program and guests
[HTTP://www.newmediaculture.net/](http://www.newmediaculture.net/)

For organisational team
Željko Blaće

Exhibition GenArt will be take place in Gallery PM & Gallery Karas during the whole NewMediaCultureWeek.

Izložba GenArt će biti postavljena u Galeriji PM i Galeriji Karas tijekom cijelog tjedna.

PROGRAM - New Media Culture W

01.05.2002.

00:00

12:00

19:00

22:00

opening event - GenArt exhibition +
PRESS
TESTTONE, presentations and round
TESTTONE, performances by Jan Je

02.05.2002.

09:30

20:00

22:00

Quorum/presentations/
TESTTONE, open-air performance b
GenArt, performing unit Generative

03.05.2002.

09:30

12:00

19:00

22:00

Quorum /workshops/
PRESS
GenArt, presentations + lecture
TESTTONE, netcast CLUBRADIO, live

04.05.2002.

09:30

12:00 - 15:00

17:00 - 20:00

22:00

Quorum /presentations/
conf. “Reality Check for Cyber Uto
conf. “Reality Check for Cyber Uto
TESTTONE - netcast Re-Lab, live EG

05.05.2002.

11:00

12:00 - 15:00

17:00 - 20:00

22:00

PRESS
conf. “Reality Check for Cyber Utop
conf. “Reality Check for Cyber Utop
TESTTONE - live Akira (JP) & Farme

06.05.2002.

09:00

20:00

22:00

Quorum / final meeting /
GenArt, presentations
TESTTONE, netcast PingFM, live EG

07.05.2002.

10:00

20:00

21:00

PRESS
GenArt, guided tour
ClosingParty

“CRITICAL UPGRADE”



bits Live ! [DomHDLU]

[mama]
[mama]
[KSET]

& Kim Cascone (US)

eljhan “SignalServer”
(INT)

[mama]
(SLO)[URK]
[URK]

mmerer (AT) + EGOBOO.Bits

[mama], Mi2LAB
[Goethe Institut]
[DomHDLU]
[KSET]

s

[mama], Mi2LAB
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(AT/DE)

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s (HR)

[mama]
[DomHDLU]
[KSET]

[mama]
[DomHDLU]

Projekt «Tjedan kulture novih medija» inicirao je Multimedijalni institut u jesen 2001. nakon inicijalnih razgovora o suradnji sa Goethe Institutom u Zagrebu. Projekt je zamišljen kao jednodnevni skup događanja koji svojom problematikom i formom, promiču ali i propituju novomedijsku kulturu. Pojam koji se čini apstraktan i van domašaja svakodnevnog riječnika u sebi sadrži više značenja. Kultura je u ovom slučaju svačena kao društveni sistem, a pod pojmom novih medija se podrazumijeva sav digitalni okoliš koji čini naš komunikacijski prostor (od WWW do SMS ili netom najavljenih video telefonskih usluga). Kultura novih medija ne čini prvenstveno video umjetnost, nego sustav ili proizvod koji u svojoj strukturi sadrži bitno nove koncepte ugrađene digitalnom tehnologijom, koristeći novi «pojmovnik» strukturnih elemenata. U najširem značenju te riječi podrazumijevamo i učešće informatičke industrije i tzv. kulturnih industrija, a najužem ono specifično kreativno područje interdisciplinarnog (znanstvenog, umjetničkog i tehnološkog) i intersektorskog preklapanja.

Kao što je heterogen produkcijski krug 'novomedijalaca' od dizajnera i multimedijalnih umjetnika, pa preko programera (cyberpunkerskih uvjerenja), do teoretičara i znanstvenika, tako se i publika može naći samo pod jednim najopćijim zajedničkim nazivnikom 'korisnici'. Izazov koji želimo staviti pred njih je preispitivanje potreba i artikuliranje stavova prema svakodnevnom medijsko-tehnološkom okružju. Napraviti pomak od browsanja weba prema konceptualnom shvaćanju mreža i/ili od igranja računalnih igara do razmišljanja o grafičkim sučeljima je pomak koji je nužan za svakog pojedinca za shvaćanje specifičnosti suvremene kulture i sudjelovanju u njenoj konstrukciji.

Programski slogan tjedna je «CRITICAL UPGRADE» a kroz 4 segmenta će široj hrvatskoj javnosti ali i stručnjacima, (u/po) kazati na to što je «novo» i «nužno».

- Godišnja izložba računalne umjetnosti koju po treći puta (2000. «I'm still alive» i 2001 «Re:Con») organiziraju Multimedijalni institut i Hrvatsko društvo likovnih umjetnika je ove godine usmjerena na temu generativne umjetnosti izložbom «GenArt», u prostorima Galerije PM i Galerije Karas (1.- 7.5.2002.)
- Dvodnevna konferencija u Goethe institutu «Reality Check For Cyber Utopias» će u četiri sesije (4. i 5.5.2002.) predstaviti dvadesetak internacionalnih teoretičara, umjetnika i programera, te njihovim izlaganjima potaknuti rasprave o temama umjetnosti, nove ekonomije, softwarea i medija.
- «TESTTONE» (1-6.5.2002.), festival nove elektronske glazbe koji će kroz seriju koncerata u KSETu predstaviti najrecentnije predstavnike micromusic i netcasting scene, te sa prezentacijom i diskusijama približiti modele produkcije, distribucije i reprodukcije u digitalnim medijima.
- Serijom workshopa, predavanja i forumom regionalnih i translokalnih inicijativa na području novih medija, «Quorum» (1.-5.5.2002.) u net.kulturnom centru «mama», pružit će se prostor za formiranje regionalnih inicijativa i projekata. Ovaj dio programa namjenjen je producentima, kustosima i managerima, koji rade u području novih medija.

Za više informacija o programu i gostima
[HTTP://www.newmediaculture.net/](http://www.newmediaculture.net/)

Ispred organizacijskog tima
Željko Blaće



Život avantgarde postao je virtualni zemljopis. Manifesti koji prizivaju dolazak novih oblika nematerijalnih, likovificirajućih subverzija pretpostavljaju da su nakon stagnacije konzervativnih 80-tih prijašnji pokreti ljevice, uključujući i radikalnu avantgardu, dematerializirali od ulice prema «rizomatičnom» univerzumu mreže. Critical Art Ensemble najavili su nestanak vidljive moći koja je nekod bila utjelovljena u kraju, arhitekturni dvoraca ili zgrada parlamenta. Postajući tekuća, moć natapa cyberspace, neuhvatljivo biće koje nomadski luta našom planenom. Ispraznjene, bez simbola i materijalnosti moći, mrtve ulice nisu vrjednne borbe – kontrola informacija postala je ratištem, ime otpora pripadnuto u svako entuzijastično uho jest info-rat, prisvajanje «podataka (data) i/ili sredstava avangardnih pokretač (Eric Kluitenberg). Arsenal budućnosti sastoji se od ruševina iz prošlosti: Duchamp, Berlin Dada, Breton, bezgrešni Situationisti. Prema novoj mitologiji ni forma, ni sadržaj niti ideologija ovih gesta nisu zasrtajele, samo njihova geografija – njihov položaj u fizickom, realnom svijetu.

Ali koje geste, koja avangarda?

Jedan od najznačajnijih događaja u povijesti interneta, pravna bitka s kraja 1999., između multimedijunskog dot.com-a eToys i evropske art grupe etoy doveła je u pitanje upravo mogućnost upotrebe, legalnost i buduće smjernice (domain name) prije nastanka eToysa. Zanhjev eToysa da etoy promijeni svoju domenu, zbog sličnosti imena domene koja zbuňuje kilijente eToysa i štetí njihovom poslovanju je smiješan, a sudska odredba protiv etoya grančila je sa ilegalnošću. No, nit o ovoj epskoj bitci trpi od vlastitih pretprijevaja. RTMark pripisuje konačni pad vrjednosti eToys dionica za 70% virtualnim sit-in protestima i etoy's doprinosu u medijima (ovaj 70%-tni pad događa se kontrapropagandi u medijima (ovaj 70%-tni pad događa se stečajem, a dot.com krah uslijedio je svega nekoliko mjeseci nakon). Toywar site pobrao je lovorike i objavio da je "TOYWAR najskuplji performance u povijesti umjetnosti: 4.5 milijardi dolara." Reinhold Grether oslikao je rat kao "sukob između dva lifestylea, potrošačkog, koji daje apsolutni prioritet posjedovanju, u ovom slučaju domene, i drugog, umjetničkog, koji proglašava izlaganje kompleksnih društvenih rituala, prije nego umjetničkih predmeta, predmetom umjetnosti." No, da li je ovo rat između konzumerizma i čistoe antikorporativne umjetnosti ili sukob između različitih oblika konzumerizma? Na kraju krajeva, etoy su uvijek insistirali: "Mi nismo antikorporativni. To je nešto što ljudi ne shvaćaju. Mi smo nabrijana korporacija sa srealnim ciljevima. Ne prodajemo ništa osim nas samih. Ne obećavamo zaradu osim uzbuđenja i možda malo zbrke."

Etoy prodaje sebe, trgujući svojim imageom, koji je – kako Geri Wittig primjećuje u jednom intervieuu – pomodno militantan, ovisan o nošenju iste uniforme, identičnom izgledu vojnika-igracačke (ili članova bande) – što je ujedno razlog koji etoy navode kao razlog zasto u grupi ne smije biti crnaca niti žena: "To bi uništilo koncept". Mnoštvo je stoeova podrške kapitaliziralo na ovom djetinjastom imageu ratovanja, image privlačan adolescentima, čak i ako se ciljna publika pokazala starijom. Site Toywar UK, pod ravnanjem "captain Smithersa" lansirao je vlastitu internet ofenzivu protiv eToysa u znak podrške. Site je nudio e*bombe u obliku alternativnih news servisa i mailing lista.

"Radjus djelovanja e*bombe je globalan i ona onemogućuje djelovanje eToys.com. VIVA la e*bombi Vatra tisuća detoniranih prijateljskih e*bombi nije povrijedila nikoga! ČISTA VATRENA SILA 21. stoljeća!"

Image rata je sexy. Ne samo u popularnoj TV ikonografiji, već i među preflinjenijim pripadnicima militantne ljevice ili radikalnih umjetničkih grupa. Postoje čitave builimente raznovrsnih oblika njene retorike i njenih gesta, iako se maska kao simbol terorista ili gerile ističe kao jedan od novh trendova identifikacije. od mnoštva koje se okuplja na ulici posudjujući kariranu masku Palestinskog svetog rata, do RTMark-a koji u svojim video radovima nose čarapu preko lica kao pljačkaši banaka, te Ricarda Domingueza koji izvodí priču o elektronskom građanskom neposluhu noseći masku EZLN-a (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional), kao gestu identifikacije sa zapatističkim ciljevima. Zapatisti kažu da nose maske kako bi ljudi čuli njihove riječi, a ne bili obmanuti njihovom fizickom ljepotom. No, u ovom performansu Electronic Disturbance Theatrea snagu riječi, koje progovaraju o drugačijem obliku zapatističke borbe, guši identifikacija publike sa imageom maske. Identitet maske je unaprijed oblikovan asociacijama koje ima u suvremenom stanju medija.

Medijski spektakl treba baba rogu opozicije nasuprot univerzalnih vrjednosti demokracije i pravo da konzumira bez zadškje, a nakon kolapsa velikog drugog «istočne Evrope», image čovjeka odjevenog u crno s maskom preko lica savršen je za fantazije masovnih medija, on je lice nasuprot kojeg oni definiiraju vlastite vrjednosti. Fetiziziranje imagea terorista ili gerile dužnost je koliko i glupost, čak i u estetiziranom obliku avangarde, kao teatralizacija bezimene revolucije. Identifikacija s imageom ratovanja uvijek jest bio najgori militantni aspekt avangardi. Ako su avangarde bile trenutno instancijacije velikog obećanja, govoreći različitim jezicima van banalnosti organizirane politike, one su istovremeno bile i smiješna prepirka oko imena i ideja, zlobne svade o ideološkoj korektnosti, isključivanje devijacija, djetinjasti nesašuka i napuhanog machizma ratovanja. Želja da se proglasi avangardu nedovršenim projektom koji se neizbježno vraća da ispuni tajnu povijest zadržava sva ove obilježja. Zadržava militizam kao sastavni dio metatore avangardnog – avangarda kao elitna skupina, vojnički disciplinirana, prva juriša i otvara put za napad. Ako je ova metatora započeta kao prazna parodija, postala je stvarna tijekom povijesti. Avangardne grupe postaju inverzno ogledalo totalitizma, magično lice dvojnika, kako u međusobnim odnosima tako i svojim protivnicima koje su deklarirano prezirali. Korštenje njihovih strategija, konceptijskih oruđa i taktika intervencije ne priziva utvaru koja proganja novu epohu, već lešinu u visokom stupnju raspadanja.

Postoje oblici djelovanja koji nisu ni aktivni ni pasivni. Negdje, gdje lokacija nije bitna, postoji grupa ljudi koja je osnovala klub > društveni centar nije prava riječ, ponekad je i potraga za riječima nebitna > ne iz želje da budu opozicija nekoj dominantnoj umjetničkoj ili kulturnoj instituciji, već zato jer su htjeli stvoriti scenu koja još ne postoji. Dok su «unutra» svi koriste izmisljenu valutu. Neki članovi grupe, koji su grafički dizajneri prave plakate za restorane i barove u gradu, u zamjenu za bonove, kako bi imali kuda voditi svoje prijatelje, oni ne okupiraju već evakuiraju prostor svojeg kluba , pozivajući druge da ga privremeno zaposjednu: umjetnike, muzičare, lokalno stanovništvo iz ustanove za one koji se smatraju mentalno bolesnima, čak i političke teoretičare i sociologe. Oni su vrlo aktivni, ali njihova sumna nije aktivizam. Nema konstruirane teorije, nema napisanog manifesta koji objavljuje ovaj način života kao model nadolazeće revolucije. Nema evandelja niti učenika. Institucionalizirana ljevica može se podsmejhivati ovom klimavom primjeru, sa zaključkom da se ništa nije promijenilo, da neće zbaciti kapitalizam (zbaciti = želja za vladanjem, postati gospodar), da se ne slaže s njihovom vizijom utopije (utopija = čekanje dok prilika ne dozrije, negirajući sadašnjost u očekivanju budućnosti čija je prošlost već videna)

Dr. Žvago je podjegao sa svojom ljubavnicom u neodređenu snježnu ravnicu preko golog krajolika revolucionarne Rusije. Stigaoši na mjesto koje je najviše nalikovalo središtu ničega, zaustavili su se. Boljševička policija im je bila za petama, krećući se, progoneći želju koja je izmiče njihovom poimanju. Kucali su na vrata, pitajući: kakav je tvoj plan, kuješ li zavjeru protiv nas, što namjeravaš raditi ovdje? Živjeti, odgovorio je, samo živjeti. Ako ga polako razumijemo, ovo nije fatalnost beznada ili znak pasivne suglasnosti unatoč opscenosti zahtjeva. Čak i ako je pobuna, to nije pobuna objavljena glasno na centralnoj pozornici prijestolnica čiji je uspjeh broj an količinom udaraca kojim je policija obara na tio. Znajući kada treba nestati, ona ne traži predstavljanje. Iako postoje njihova čje imena samo biti uzaludno spomenuta, kao idoli još jednog manifesta bačenog u roptarnicu povijesti.

"!info-rat i net. avangarda"



već joj nudi »suvereni prostor« koji zaslužuje.»

Blivet /Adilino-va rana zapazanja na ovom NTO-u pokazuju da "suvereni mediji...presjekli sve preživjele imaginare veze sa istinom, realnošću i predočavanjem. Oni se više nusradotocu na želje specifične ciljne skupine, kao što to još uvijek čine "unutrašnji" mediji". Oni su se emancipirali od bilo koje potencijalne publike, i zato se ne priklaze publici kao segmenti tržišta koji je moguće modelirati po potrebi.

> suvereni mediji ili »veselje praznine«
> suvereni mediji su prvenstveno mediji koji jednostavno postoje bez nekog drugog razloga. Suvereni mediji proizvode signal sa izvornom /posilateljem /autorom, ali bez određenog primatelja. Termin »suvereni mediji« aludira na ideju suvereniteta Georgesa Bataillea u Prokletom udjelu. Kao medijsku fenomenologiju prvi ga je identficirao BILWET (odnosno, ADILKNO – Foundation for Advancement of Illegal Knowledge). Za Bilwet, suvereni su mediji zbunjajući novi i neidentificirani teorijski objekti, koji pručavaju s

medijskog profesionalizma i prije svega stovanjem za publiku.

Budimo jasni, ja ne vjerujem u ovu viziju i uvjeren sam da net neće evoluirati u ultimativni zabavni i informativni medij. Čini se da je vjerojatnije da će naizgled nestrukturirani nered nasumičnih transmisija prevladati gore spomenuto mišljenje.

Uspostava koncepta medija na difuzijskom modelu bazirana je na podjeli uloga aktivni posiljatelji < > pasivni primatelji / publika, najveća je prepreka razumijevanu onoga što se događa u umreženom medijском sustavu. Mrežni sustav treba prvenstveno posmatrati kao društveni prostor u kojem se nastoje uspostaviti i razvijati aktivni odnosi. Aktivnosti koje se često čine apsolutno bespotrebne, iracionalne, neuradnjaivima čak i autističnima. Aktivni odašiljatelji i pasivna publika / primatelji, naizgled su zamijenjeni monštvom nekontroliranih transakcija kojima nedostaje pripadajući primatelji. Tako je net viđen kao irelevantna, kaotična i neupotrebljiva infosfera, zaludno trošenje resursa, kratkotrajna faza razvoja koja će uskoro biti zamijenjena profesionalnim standardima kvalitete, zabave, informiranja

Najveća pogreška trenutnih pokušaja da se razumije socijalna dinamika umreženih medija je nastojanje da se sustava, ideja je postajala sve popularnija kako se internet proširivao audio-vizualnim elementima, interaktivne audio-vizualne strukture, streaming mediji (emitirani putem interneta), slika i ton koje možete downloadati s interneta, sve to doprinosi tvrdnji da je internet silijedeći stupanj evolucije broadcast medija. No, ova se vizija može primjeniti samo djelomično, i pogonjena je prvenstveno uložnim interesom medijiskih industrije. Često se ne reflektira u načinu na koji ljudi zaista koriste Internet.

strukturalne osobine difuzijskih medija (McLuhan),

Prisutnost u medijeranom okružju digitalnih mreža izvjerajato jedan je od najkompleksnijih fenomena novih tipova društvene interakcije nastalih u ovom okružjima. U trenutnoj fazi radikalnog širenja (ili prodora) interneta, ispravljani su različiti pokušaji da se svlada socijalna dinamika umreženih komunikacijskih prostora. Čini se da tradicionalna medijska teorija ne može smjestiti u kontekst ovu socijalnu dinamiku, jer ostaje nasukana na metadiskursu o strukturalizmu i moći (Virilio), o hiperealističnosti (Baudrillard), ili na retrogradnoj analizi strukturalne medija duboko ukorijenjenih u funkcionalnost ili

(ovo je uioimak iz duzeg teksta koji se nalazi online na .
Tekt se bazira na razgovorima sa Bannf Interactive Screen
0.0 ! na net.congestion – int. festival streaming medija,
Amsterdam)

Ovaj se tip medija pokazao kao krajnje beskoristan unutar tradicionalane (difuzijske) medijske sheme. Greška je, svedeno, uzimati ovaj pogled na stvar zdravo za gotovo. Nema zaista ništa banalno u ovakvom ponašanju medija. Medijska sfera ovdje se tretira kao novi tip sustava 'u' kojem ljudi stvaraju prisustvo, ali bez želje ili cilja da komuniciraju određen poruku. Komunikacija zbog komunikacije same. Ovo je, kako mi se čini, fundamentalni antropološki princip - način nastanjivanja novog okoliša, i to onog koji je prvenstveno neprijateljski raspoložen prema svima nama.

Neveryerjatan prizor: test kanal satelitla ili TV odašiljača, korišten od strane tv amatera – intencionalna mreža. Jedna centralna slika okružena mnoštvom manjih ekrana, koji prikazuju što većini nas izgleda kao »ništa«, mala soba, potkrovlje, tehnička radionica, oprema, netko sjedi u pozadini, bez vidljive komunikacije. Slika jest, ona ne govori. Jedna od tehnološki najrazvijenijih infrastruktura naše civilizacije koristi se da proslavi praznine.

> tatički mediji >

Strukturu događaja.

Distinktivna osobina suverenih medija jest njihova hibridnost. Svaki medij može bit kombiniran sa svakim drugim. Suvereni mediji imaju strategiju križanja medija i platformi, ali ne s razlogom dopiranja do nove publike, nego proširenja medijskog prostora. Primjeri su Virtual Media Lab (media.live.nu), sjećiste svih medija dostupnih u Amsterdamu, kombinirajući kablovsku televiziju sa webcastom, radijom, ponekad i sa satelitskim prijenosima. Još jedan zanimljiv križanac su automatizirani mediji kao što su radio i a – in Frequency clock, ili Remote TV Twen FM-a, koji dopuštaju automatsko zakazivanje live streamova sa interneta na lokalne radio ili kablovske TV infrastrukture. III projekt Agent Radio sa Institute of the Artificial Art u Amsterdamu koji automatski i nasumično odabire izvore zvuka sa interneta i pušta ih u eter.

Svi ovi mediji djeluju bez mrtvih duša statistika gledanosti.

Praksa je `net.radi.night`, globalni mikro jam session u tipičnoj `net.radi.night`, oglasila se poziv na mailing listu, pozivajući `net.castere` da se pridruže na IRC-u ili da poslušaju stream uživo sa lokacije jedan. Ostale lokacije slušaju i preuzimaju stream dok netko ne objaví putem IRC kanala da će se stream preseliti s originalne lokacije na njihovu. Sljedeći je stream remix originala, s nekim dodanim i nekim oduzetim stvarima. Proces započinje iznova i stream se seli na sljedeću lokaciju i u sljedeći remix. Ovaj proces može se nastaviti satima i urzo je porijeklo originalnog zvuka izgubljeno. Ono što `net.radi.night` utisne u svoje čitanove/sudionike jest snažan osjećaj pripadnosti mreži, gdje je veza između izvora i odredišta nestala. I tradicionalna se publika može uključiti i slušati, ali je nebitna za samu

Otvojen od gravitacije prema profesionalnom, alternativni, artistički i politički medij, suvereni medijatori i njihova slušačna publika putaju kroz beskrajni medijski prostor van svakog značenja i namjere.

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Naslov kojeg smo preuzeli kao problematsko izlazište simpozija naznačava barem dvije odrednice koje nam se čine valjnim. Aproprirajući termin "reality check" iz kliničkog diskursa stalo nam je da pokalemo kako se ovdje ne radi samo o nekoj vrsti "svodenja računa" ili o pitanju koje smjera da usporedi već nekako mišljen idealitet ili fantaziju sa oporošću takozvane stvarnosti, realnost. Više od toga naslov "reality check" ukazuje na određen kritički stav koji se zauzima s obzirom na patološke deformacije fenomena koji se nastoji opisati. Propast dot-com-manije na burzama koja je samo naizgled bila striktno ograničena na "perspektivna tržišta" (emerging markets) za sobom je ostavila sumnju koja pogada i sve ostale domene uporabe Mreže, slušile one korporativnim, državnim, aktivističkim ili tek individualnim svrham. Dvojba predstavljala li Internet savršeno sredstvo društvene kontrole u eri decentralizacije jedno je od pitanje koje se tiče patološkog karaktera globalnih zbivanja.

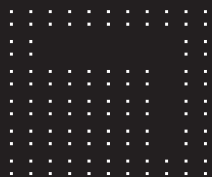
Ispred uredničkog tima Petar Milat

Svako utopijsko stremljenje tako je suočeno sa skoro beznađnom zadaćom da mora tragati za oblicima društvenosti koji će biti dovoljno transformirajući, a koji neće upasti u zamku fantazija da postoji nešto radikalno "izvan" heterogene, eficientne produkcije kapitala. "Cyber utopije" u tome smislu ne predstavljaju koloniziranje dosad neosvojenih i slobodnih teritorija, lišenih kapitaliskih načina proizvodnje, već nepristajanje na moduse subjektivacije suvremenih društava - ovdje i sada. Borba protiv imperija prije svega je elementom ili intuicijom koja transcendirala imperijalne oblike vlasti: da je ne-patološka, slobodna reprodukcija života i dalje mogućnost koja je bitna za kolektivnu društvenu akciju. "Cyber utopija" postaje šiboletom utopije života slobodne imanencije.

S druge strane "cyber-utopije" kao paradigmatško mjesto kontruiranja emancipatornih nadanja naše suvremenosti. Čini nam se da je upravo to mjesto cyber-utopija i refleksije o njima ono koje najradikalnije odgovara na izazove informatiziranih društava nematerijalnog rada. Kad teorija danas, primjerice, opisuje dominantni, hegemonijski prostor društvene produkcije, govorimo o novim oblicima suverene moći koja više nije uređena klasičnim odnosima industrijske produkcije već distribuiranim (rizomatskim) mrežama postfordističkog ustroja. Legalni sistem te suverene moći pred nama koji je postao dominantnim oblikom socijalne dominacije nazivamo imperijem, čime se markira kako eficientnost te nove forme kapitalizma, a tako i njezina heterogenost (tj. izmješani, simultani oblici konstitucije političkog poja, kao i heterogenost inheretna intelektualnom radu kao prevladavajućem obliku proizvodnje). Postfordistički kapitalizam (ili "komunizam kapitala" kako ga zove Paolo Virno) svoju faktičku uspješnost i kontinuitet duguje upravo vlastitoj ideologiji da reprodukcija kapitalizma zapravo nije moguća.

reality check for cyber utopias

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