INTERNET ADDICTION AND NETWORK PRODUCTION:

SUBJECTIVITY IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL CAPITALISM

by

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ABSTRACT

EMALINE FRIEDMAN: Internet Addiction and Network Production: Subjectivity in the Age of
Digital Capitalism
(Under the direction of Dr. John Roberts)

Internet Addiction (IA) is a curiosity. While it is not yet a pathological formation according to the

DSM, it is entirely comprehensible as such, even to non-psychologists. The Internet is

increasingly a dominant modality of society and its institutions, the individual subject of

symptoms being only one such institution. In this piece, I deploy a theoretical toolkit comprised

of psychoanalytic, Marxist, and post-psychoanalytic thought to unpack the intricacies of

expanding, excessive use of the Internet, focusing on social media. I first present Internet

Addiction in its development as a possible diagnostic formation by retracing its speculative

genealogy as a behavioral addiction tethered to a subject of motivational dis-regulation. I then

pursue a remediation of Internet Addiction using Lacan's theory of the discourses. Such an

intervention transforms IA into the "discourse of network production"—a modulation of the

discourse of the capitalist. Using the example of Facebook, I theorize the infrastructure and

business of social media, describing the relations of which it is comprised and their organization

as social power. Therein, an algorithmic formalization of "the social" (S2) emits positivized

lacks, objects-to-know (a). This constructs the platform as a decontextualized, yet highly

personalized environment whose pursuit of subjects ($) induces them to emit identifying

significations (S1). Re-invested in S2, the machinic production of "the social" is an important facet of the real subsumption of life by capital. As such, it both captures, recapitulates, and rearranges society's attendant discontents, before and beyond the speaking subject.

DEDICATION

This piece is dedicated to my mother and father. She first instilled in me the pity of wasted

thoughts, and he the hypothesis that nothing one does online is private.

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Jarod, Ray, Matthew, Nico, Greg, Will, and others opened me to the depths of net culture and the heights of cryptocurrency paradise. With these brave souls and others, I received the first real taste of what is technologically, socially, and economically possible today; they gave me a sense of something larger than myself, and a globally connected and supported live-and-work community to match. Giancarlo Sandoval in particular helped me see that critique in fact goes hand in hand with a positive program, and that love and hate for the world are two sides of the same emotionally charged coin.

PREFACE

The first academic paper I ever published was entitled "Arrested by the Preface." It described the act of prefacing as a (snowballing) performative disclosure of the superegoic constraints on one's right to speak. Whether in the realm of micro-interaction, or in dealing with global cybernetic infrastructure, I have never left the question of the social (power) mechanisms that hold back expression. If Psychology pathologizes new regimes of communication, and these regimes of communication are themselves manifestations of capitalist enclosure and expropriation of culture, what is a user to do? Between the grips of Deleuzo-Guattarian and Lacanian legacies, I struggled to find ways out from the blessing and curse that is my own online life, and what I later learned to understand as the various modes of *commodification of self-actualization*. Perhaps the most resolute message I could convey in a preface, that might ward off an even greater need to preface again, is for the reader to hold steady. This work is unfinished. There are volumes to come. The fight is far from over, and it will take the entire 99% of us in arms together in order for us to finally fulfill on the injunction to "be ourselves."

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

What does it mean for "addiction" to float about as an optional subjective status on the tails of revelatory research that exposes the drug-like potency of the technological architecture that structures the way we work, live, communicate, and collaborate? Words like "addiction," "repetition," and the phrase "loss of control" may drum up a whole range of behaviors of digital-age subjects. But what are the palpable, subjective mutations captured by these terms? The naïve assumption here is that something of greater significance than psychopathological theory is at stake when addiction and non-addiction to the Internet are not so easily distinguishable.

While "Gambling Disorder" is the only "behavioral" addiction to make it into the reference guide for psychological and psychiatric diagnoses (DSM-V,), both shopping and Internet gaming addiction were present in work group discussions in light of hundreds of publications on both prospective disorder (Hasin et al., 2013). Such an inclusion heralds a metaphysical or alchemical shift in the conceptual framework of "addiction" long in the works. Where the position of drug in the user-drug pairing has traditionally been filled with intoxicating, often illicit substances, it is now open to a seemingly endless trove of human activity. In the guest editorial of a special issue of *Subjectivity* entitled "Consuming Habits: Today's Subject of Addiction," one finds related concern with addiction's popularity both in and out of the academy. This concern is based in the fact that this bloated scope of the category "threatens to touch

almost all aspects of everyday life in today's consumer culture" (Wright, 2015, p. 93). Rapping (1996) describes a shift from the 1950s, when addictions were treated like pathogenic instances that affected criminal bodies, to the 1970s when "addictive personalities" and "behavioral addictions" became intelligible frameworks for understanding the temptation of excess that affects nearly everyone—thought by some as an annoyance and by others perhaps as a true crisis of life.

As a wide body of literary and cultural references affirms, this broadened scope parallels the shift in a subjective nominalization of expanding domains of experiences as "addictions." Take, for example, a passage from David Foster Wallace's novel, *Infinite Jest*:

> That sleeping can be a form of emotional escape and can with sustained effort be abused. . . . That purposeful sleep-deprivation can also be an abusable escape. That gambling can be an abusable escape, too, and work, shopping, and shoplifting, and sex, and abstention, and masturbation, and food, and exercise, and meditation/prayer, and sitting so close to Ennet House's old D.E.C. TP cartridge-viewer that the screen fills your whole vision and the screen's static charge tickles your nose like a linty mitten. (p. 183)

That anything might be construed as addictive is an oft-cited piece of the Alcoholics Anonymous *Big Book* (Wilson, 2015). One could understand this insight as an effort to inform us of an addictive character machine capable of spitting out permutations of its theme. Unsurprisingly, then, 12-step fellowships themselves began to include other addictions, beginning with Narcotics Anonymous (Peyrot, 1985). There are currently 36 different such fellowships listed by Wikipedia, all of which have live links and active meetings, on and offline.[1] As early as the

1970s, members of such meetings began publishing guides that promised to adapt the principles and traditions of the fellowship to any and all emotional problems. And, in a recent study of the promiscuous use of the signifiers "addiction," "addict," and "addicted" across Twitter hashtags, researchers found that one day's keyword search (on which no particular public events of significance to the notion of addiction occurred) returned 580, 106, and 324 tweets, respectively (Dwyer & Fraser, 2016, p. 91). Coming from a school of researchers aligned through hard-hitting critical work on the discursive construction of addiction (e.g., Acker, 2002; Campbell, 2010, 2011, 2013; Courtwright, 2005, 2010; Lende, 2005), these results are meant to illustrate the simple fact of the "worn out metaphor" that is "addiction" (Dwyer & Fraser, 2016).

For their part, numerous theorists and practitioners have demonstrated the resemblance between drug addictions and destructive involvements and activities. Describing "love addiction," Peele (1985) urges us to recall passionate crimes when wondering whether or not love addiction is or can be equally or more severe than the illicit drug addictions and trafficking that are depicted with such moral vehemence in popular mass media. In the United States, these portrayals have unfolded from the propaganda of the temperance and anti-opium movements for 80 years and running (Crano & Burgoon, 2002). By and large, however, the lawfulness of the activity toward which the addict is compelled seems not to matter much. Again, one need only consider the laundry list of possible behaviors that have flown under the banner of "addiction" since the 1970s (Sedgwick, 1993).

According to Kemp's (2009) qualitative interviews, addicts often report being unable to escape, being caught and yet very much needing their drugs. He considers that the needing described in the interviews does not pertain to dependency in the usual sense, but as prior to the fulfillment of other facets of life. It entails a need to cope with emotions, relieve pain, relax into

sleep, and overcome interpersonal difficulties. Indeed, when addiction serves the aim of coping as opposed to either indulging in substances and behaviors socially recognized for their compelling qualities, or dependency "in the usual sense," it seems likely that anything can be an addiction.

Addiction is a popular enough topic, but all too often taken for granted as a problem of individual sufferers whose aid hinges upon the manner and the degree to which the addict poses problems to, or could even be said to inflect, seemingly irrelevant aspects of their surrounding milieu. A slow-rolling universalization of suffering, victimhood, and vacuous relationships ensues as the generalizable notions of "use" and "abuse" stick to and perturb purveyors of the diagnostic landscape, be they pro-sumers of psychology, court-mandated Alcoholics Anonymous attendees, or self-proclaimed addicts in the realm of pop-culture, like Chance the Rapper, whose 2013 *Acid Rap* professes his addiction to "cocoa butter kisses," or when the TV show *My Strange Addiction* runs for five years, boasting such episodes as "addicted to eating drywall" (Bolicki, 2011), "addicted to beestings" (Bolicki, 2013) "addicted to men in doll suits" (Bolicki, 2015a), and "addicted to being Pamela Anderson" (Bolicki, 2015b).

Given this, I will think through Internet Addiction (IA) as the creation of habit through a claimed or attributed dependence, elaborating both the infrastructural components and social context of addiction and the Internet to suggest an alternative way of thinking about our dependence on and enjoyment of its consumption, use, and highly productive underbelly. These pieces, the infrastructure and context of the Internet's development and global dissemination, are much less commonly discussed in connection with addiction as a pathology of individual subjects. It is as if a formulation in which the individual addict bears the full weight of this networked fact *necessarily* leaves out the "how" and the "why" of technological innovation's

massive force upon society at large. Is it possible to soberly assess the global social, economic, and political shifts by going through, rather than circumventing, the mystifying allure of the Internet (our drug of choice)?

Of drug-taking, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan once aptly remarked that to live the experience of the real of drugs, we must leave the symbolic of culture, which excludes the real. This is doomed to fail because it is impossible to "just leave" the symbolic order of culture. As a universe unto itself, there is nothing outside it. And yet, within the institutionally imposed bifurcation of "normal" and "pathological" drug use, the "real" of drugs is pitted against the "symbolic" of culture, as it is the latter that attempts to exclude the former as it drives toward unmitigated bodily excesses that elude the mediating mechanisms of civil society. On the backdrop of this dichotomous formation, it would seem that the addict reaches toward an impossible outside, making compulsive use of the drug a failed subjective strategy or solution. Drug-taking misses the utopic alternative to sober life that it at least manages to index—perhaps in this way it nevertheless enacts, in the form of a true experiment, a wager on the boundaries of the symbolic universe of culture. When the shadow of a contentious, threatening, or ostentatious object of fascination conditions *all* of the user's relations, what comes of these relations? They become sites of struggle proper to the modes of existence they engender *within* the cultural universe they unsuccessfully escape. In the defining characteristic of addiction, the excesses of the drug attempts to flee something staked out as "the world." Foiled by a stroke of necessity, the addict finds that attempts to leave this realm of culture, history, and power inevitably result in only deeper cuts into its same severe matrix.

Put simply, there is no escaping the system from which drugs ostensibly remove us. The position of the addict is one of a purveyor of interiority and exteriority, or the included-excluded,

as its strategy is, in its most reduced form, a failed attempt to operate "outside" of culture. In fact, it is the social imagination of addiction which variably poses the prohibition of excess to this subject position. Such a position is, today, easily occupied by the casual Internet "user." Of paramount importance of our account is setting up a position from which is given the repetitive gestures of supposing the expendability of culture itself. If we follow Lacan in acknowledging that there is in fact no outside of the symbolic order, one might even concede that this is a privileged position—it affords a unique view from a place of inhabiting the indeterminate but yet distinctive organizing and fracturing lines of this order. This is the precise sense in which it is imperative that Internet Addiction be understood, against the grain of psychological pathologization, as a profoundly social (as opposed to anti-social) symptom. As an expression of discontent, it reflects a desire to go beyond perceived limitations, setting up an apprehension of the ground that gives rise to it as fact, and with it the possibility for grasping the dimensions of such discontents. The addict sits on the fringe of culture as a figure necessary for envisioning the breakdowns and ruptures that may indicate discontent but yet may support the (re)production of culture as well.

The forthcoming is an elaboration of the discourse of network production. The discourse of network production is the (contentious) positing of the social link that serves as the productive matrix of round-the-clock users of the platforms of the Internet. In this way, it presents the mode of inclusive exclusion generated by this fact of social organization. It therefore by no means corresponds to a psychological account of the medical brain-disease entity, "addiction"—the subject of two centuries of moral invective. Delving deep into the logic of this particular supplement affords, instead, insight into the complex coordination of humans, machines, and automaticity. Internet Addiction, on this account, denotes an especially gripping devotion to the

production process itself. This form of devotion is characterized by the lived repetition of habitual use, as well as what can be considered the defining affect of addiction: a felt sense of compulsion or loss of control.

In fact, the notion of control and its loss remains a core criterion for addictive disorders of all stripes (see Weinberg, 2013), despite the fact that *the science of addiction lacks any successful distinction between instances of controlled drug use from the loss of self-control vis-a-vis drugs so pivotal to its diagnosis* (cf. Levine, 1978; Reinarman, 2005; Valverde, 1998; Volkow & O'Brien, 2007). Freud makes the useful point, in *Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses,* that "habit" is a "mere form of words, without any explanatory value" (1898/2010c, p. 467). Moreover, he was quite explicit about the fact that not everyone who takes any of the popular objects of addiction of his time (morphine, cocaine, chloral hydrate) develops an addiction to them. More research than the brief tour taken in the first quarter of this piece is required to show that addiction lacks any monothetic principle relating the user to the drug. However, we do well to keep this point in mind in consideration of the actual and possible mobilizations of the addiction label, and real and virtual instances of Internet connectivity.

Equivocation notwithstanding, control, and its loss, resonate far beyond the confines of psychological theory. It is precisely greater degrees of control over our lives via knowledge that are on offer via the networked connectivity of ourselves and our devices. Today one sees an impressive outpouring, in seemingly equal measure, of critical and congratulatory responses to the rise of "smart" Internet-connected devices, from phones to refrigerators to sensor-attached coastlines, aquifers, and soil-beds. This range of sentiment speaking to automation, financialization, "smart" everything, and endless boilerplate contracts provide the grounds for

using this framing in both directions; What can "addiction" tell us about the Internet, and what can the social relations of the Internet tell us about addiction?

Is it possible to channel the political, economic, and psychic potency of a subject group that is at least superficially complicit with its own reduction of "life" to "need" without, for all that, dragging in the moral superiority and insufficient assumptions about the nature of human freedom on which such a group was initially carved out as a population of concern? Our hypothesis is that the pathological formation, "Internet Addiction" and its variants need be neither personological preoccupations, a wholesale evaluation of the society within which it is intelligible, nor an agenda item for the charitably inclined. We seek neither pride in a pathological formation, nor the hidden universality of its bases—only to unpack some of the paradoxes that develop through an exploration of the overarching oddity—the application of the Internet, what has become synonymous with "culture" in the widest sense, to qualify the antisocial, devastating, and isolating features normally connoted by "addiction."

This addiction, then, and the addicts to which it corresponds, is a subject that can be read neither through its specific case, nor through generic notions of the individual. In this way, this subject urges us to question the status of the social link in the face of a product that aims to realize ubiquitous, personalized access to a total "world out there," or to *the social* itself. The Internet Addict as a generic figure is not meant as a totalizing account of subjectivity, but, in the vein of the xenofeminist[2] articulation, an artificial "glue" or hosting ground for thinking through the exceedingly intimate recursive effects of prosthetics to memory, inscription, vocalization, and other functions of the living body (Cuboniks, 2018).

The placeless Internet Addict is an indispensable position in relation to the production of the "world out there," and we will experiment with the capacity of such a position to grasp its

own constitutive dimensions. Offered here is a sort of theoretical-political-incidentally clinical portrait of a modern problematic guided by a signifier, "addiction" in one of its particularly sticky, paradoxical iterations. The link typically drawn between addictive disorders and consumer capitalism is simple enough; when our market society offers commodities to consume as *the* fix for any and all discontents of its subjects, we should expect to see a massive increase in disorders of excessive consumption, whose status as a disorder would, on this account, be questionable in itself as a deviation from some other norm. The notion of Internet Addiction, which we do not mean to generalize, but instead to normalize in the manner of the former argument, expands the somewhat obvious correlational link between excessive production and excessive consumption (and subjects who can both produce and hold their own in the face of the expanded construction of capitalist demand).

Critical psychology, as Ian Parker (1999) has defined it, has four components, three of which are relevant here. The first is to address the privileging of some types of psychological action and experience over others, thus ensuring the psychological notions operate in service of dominant power structures. The second focuses on the cultural and historical construction of psychology, provisioning a politicization of alternative considerations. Third, a critical psychology should attend to forms of surveillance and self-regulation that compose everyday life, and the ways in which psychological culture operates far beyond the bounded world of academic and professional practice. We will move quickly through the role of psychological research and practice in forming the "Internet Addiction" entity, instead focusing more intently on its discursive uptake in other realms of life and its ability, as a colloquial notion, to express a subjective pathos that far outruns the mission and resources of its institution(s) of origin.

The gamble of this piece, then, is to see if we can politicize the Internet Addict, expanding the concept out of the domain of psychological study where it has been only thinly theorized through preexisting models meant to police the use of illicit drugs and contrast it to normal functioning. This is to say, also, that the consumption-oriented homology mentioned above, where the Internet is a new commodity and the addict a beleaguered subject of capitalism, does not go far enough. As Internet users are simultaneously producers and consumers of value on-line, such a homology does justice neither to, on the one hand, the production of subversion arguably always present historically in accounts of drug use and abuse (if one cares to look), nor, on the other hand, to the productive labor of life on-line of which many are only vaguely conscious. In short, we, as compulsive or out-of-control users of the net, are also digital laborers in the playground/factory[3] of network production known today as the Internet. The role of drugs, especially alcohol, and the question and meaning of sobriety has historically factored into workers' struggles, revealing the inextricable intimacy between the ostensible binary of labor and leisure. Generally speaking, this binary falls apart relative to the degree that one focuses on the role of habitual practices of the body.[4]

However, where it was formerly the case that, for example, alcoholism was simply a roadblock to struggle with and against work, and sobriety was the first weapon taken up against exploitative conditions, it is today the case that the drug is the *means of work* itself. We must eschew off the bat, then, the facile solution of "just quitting." As dominant modes of psychology tend to introject social struggles into the heads of "sick" individuals, we seek a fix that overcomes the temptation to attribute these problems to individuals in favor of change in the social organizations that form them.

We have theoretical resources from so many efforts to conceptualize our present historical moment: "immaterial labor" (derived by many from Marx, 1939-41/1993), "affective labor" (Hardt, 1999), "network society" (Castells, 2000), "postmodern capitalism" (Jameson, 1991), "ludic capitalism" (Galloway, 2012), "cognitive capitalism" (Moulier-Boutang, 2011), and others still. Whatever nomination one chooses, it bears pointing out that the surplus of capitalism is directly correlative to its proliferation of code. Accordingly, two facets of digital life gain special relevance in relation to the question of addiction. The first is the style of connectedness prompted by network organizations, their informational character, and global reach. The network structure of organization that pervades finance, business, markets, entertainment, and social life rely on digitally mediated communication across long distances, and the use of complex computational instruments for processing massive quantities of data. This organizational structure eschews dominant frameworks of time or space in favor of a 24/7 connective tissue of messages, alerts, and updates that spreads across all other areas of life like a layer of foam (Stalder, 2006).

These infrastructures underlie all still-existing industrial and agricultural production, driving all production processes toward what Hardt and Negri (2004) call abstract labor. The computer, in all its manifestations, becomes a universal tool. The second, related facet is the restless, disjointed precariousness that stems broadly from the dislocation and dispersion of populations, families, and cultures inimical to the deterritorializing movement of global capital. For labor, this manifests in micro-careers—the brief, contracted, and migrant labor that is often overlain with an ideological promise of freedom through ceaseless expressions of flexibility (Papadopoulos, Tsianos, & Stephenson, 2008). For independent contractors and micro-careerists, then, as much as subjects engaged in more traditional forms of labor, the population dispersion

that intensifies alongside capitalism's development is mitigated by long-distance communication. I will show that anyone who uses a net-enabled device, even and especially for *resisting* the dislocating and other ravages of global capitalism, is in fact a digital laborer.

Internet Addiction is not only, as per its psychopathological form, a repetitive, compulsory use of an addictive drug. It is also the repetitive and compulsory work of the average user. Internet Addiction flows seamlessly into "users" (a term misleading in its connotation of agency, but delightful in its parallel to the use of addictive drugs), or digital subjects who are caught up in an overwhelming form of enjoyment most intimately tied to the bleeding edge of this moment of capitalist production. We therefore read compulsive net use and the self-same formation of subjectivity, "user" both in its implications for the productive (and consumptive) processes of capitalism *and* from the charge of pathological enjoyment, the remediation of which already necessitates a contextual and historical reading of the user. The writings and seminars of Lacan, Marx, Deleuze, and Guattari will unfold a means by which we are able to set aside psychologization and pathologization of individual "users" to delineate a discourse that charts compulsive net use as a collective phenomenon. Such a phenomenon centers on the materiality of the digital signifier, the status of on-line signification, its enjoyment, and its connection to the Real of the body.

This reconstruction of the terms of addiction and the addict also necessarily reckons with the pathic components that correspond to the position of the user—an everywhere de-humanized, and yet all-too-human subject. Within a matrix of social relations, the appearance and disappearance of the subject of the signifier marks the movements of in-situ factors of de- and re-subjectivization. Addiction will therefore be posed as a modality of the machine that logically precedes questions of habit, perceived loss of control, withdrawal, compulsion, etc., as subjective

pathos of the networked age. The real effects of the networked drug appear equal to its creation of a socio-symbolic fabric that weaves together all subjects of digital, data-fied capitalism. But, do networked computational platforms, and social media in particular, constitute social links that bind their subjects in meaningful ways? This question burns within and beyond psychological and psychoanalytic thought, for subjects of excessive internet use conceived clinically as much as for thinkers concerned with the digital glut of the present and the contours of the social re-organization to which it gestures.

The lens of Internet Addiction is especially useful in demonstrating how the "strategic contradictions"[5] of capitalism are palpable on both individual and collective registers. For the addict, not only is the poison the same as the cure—the injunction to be on-line *and* to get off-line are both posited "in the name of social life." Because addiction to the Internet stands out from most other addictions as having an intrinsically social character, its lens also affords a nuanced understanding of how such contradictions tie into the systemic and infrastructural organization of social relations. That this is so allows us to follow thinkers like Brian Holmes (2003) toward a style of cultural critique that links the major articulations to the habits and aesthetics of everyday life. In forging these linkages, one reveals "the systematicity of social relations and their compelling character for everyone involved, even while it points to specific discourses, images and emotional attitudes that hide inequality and raw violence" (p. 27).

Modulating the Brainy Addict. There is, first, some ground to clear. The following section therefore reviews the social context of Internet Addiction as a budding pathological formation developing from addiction in Psychology. What is called "addiction" has always intersected with subjective constitution so as to demonstrate it as a malady of the individual. Looking at this intersection gives us a privileged view into the ideological semblance of enjoyment—how it is thought to work. We first examine the presumption and paradox of self-regulation, starting with neuroscientific and brain-based theories of addiction. The focus on the endogenous dopaminergic system as a motivational system locates something like an addictive capacity in human subjects, expanding the range of possible addictive "drugs," and extending the threat and verbiage of addiction to more and more people. These theories further suggest that brains, and by extension, human behavior, must constantly be monitored and regulated so that what is at root flexible and plastic can be kept stable. The call for the addict's stabilization through monitoring and reflexive regulation is particularly ironic in the case of Internet Addiction, where the solution is logically indistinct from the workings of the drug; The solution and the fix both operate through the logic of reflexive networks.

The dominant framework for the brain disease model of addiction is typified in the conception of addictive disorders given by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (see Courtwright, 2010), the institution that heavily informs the addiction science used to develop diagnostic criteria. On this model, also widely referred to as the "disease model of addiction," it is argued that drugs cause biological euphoria by promoting the release of neurotransmitters, preventing their re-uptake, or mimicking their effects. Accordingly, extended use induces neurological adaptations that reduce users' sensitivity to alternative sources of reward and increase sensitivity to anticipated rewards of their drug of choice. The disease model, critics have

pointed out, has congealed out of a long history of accounts into the current "official view" of addiction. This view is promulgated by state, corporate, and institutional interests that amassed in the evolution of addiction pathologies since its conceptual entanglement with illicit substances in the 19th century that created the need for a psycho-pharmaceutical industry for the treatment and governing of addicted subjects (Alexander, 2008; Hari, 2014; Maté, 2008).

Foucault (1965) among many others (see Levine, 1978) links the late-19th century medico-juridical discourse of "toxicomania," an early iteration that would later become "addiction" and "addictive disorders," to the mania operating in the hierarchizing "science of types" that attempted to order the elements of the world in accordance with their supposed functions. The taxonomic impulse that characterized and formed these knowledge discourses placed addiction into the imagination of the late-19th-century welfare blend of medical, judicial, and social institutions. Many critically minded characterizations of the present explosion of addiction pathologies highlight such top-down restraints on life, calling them "civilizing technolog[ies]" (Vrecko, 2010), and "medicalization[s] of deviance" (Schneider, 1978). Inspired primarily by Foucault's late work, Rose and other "governmentality theorists" (Rose, 2003, 2013; Valverde, 1998) draw attention to the productive normativity and governing rationalities issued through the science of addiction as it increasingly centers on the brain.

The question of whether or not addiction is a disease is now overshadowed by the consensus that it is a cerebral phenomenon. The hegemonic narrative of addictions in the field more broadly is that addiction is a pathology of the dopaminergic system, and drugs are said to metaphorically "hijack" this system. Levy's (2013) "Addiction is not a brain disease" attests to this eclipse, even while being ostensibly interested in the disease question. One finds in this paper that one should err on the side of compassion (read: not a disease) because the neural

dysfunction to which addiction points is not sufficient for impairment (where impairment is a necessary condition for the disease label). Instead, it is a pathology of the midbrain dopamine system. The midbrain dopamine system is a valuation system, or a reward prediction system (see also Montague, Dayan, & Sejnowski, 1996; Schultz, 1997). Accordingly, its role is to signal the value of a resource to the organism and motivate it toward a level of consumption that will aid its survival and reproduction.

According to Catharine Malabou (2012), neuroscience has successfully replaced "sexuality" with "cerebrality," a concept which denotes the specific causality of the brain, hormones, and neurons for all affects. The dominance of neuroscientific cerebrality and its dazzling images of the human brain nevertheless effect a trajectory through which the endogenous opioid system—auto-erotic capacity is discovered (Trigo, Martin-García, Berrendero, Robledo, & Maldonado, 2010). The Freudian notion of libido, for example, is replaced by the notion of "appetites," as in the Excessive Appetites Theory (Orford, 2001). The Excessive Appetites Theory of Addiction (Orford, 2001) gives an explanatory model of how nearly any object or activity can put humans at risk of developing a strong attachment. It touts improvement upon other models of addiction—those whose accounts are unable to situate the becoming-addicting of any and all things over and above substances manufactured to chemically dominate the human body. The theory is accommodating in its move toward unification of disparate and seemingly contradictory effects of dependence under a radically "ecological" model—personality, biochemistry, the surrounding environment, and the drug itself are equally at play in the development of an addiction. These elements are knotted together through a disorder of the *motivational system* at large. This system is a chaotic one, undergirded by the

fashionable notion of the brain's flexible, radically adaptable character. Through it, one learns

that the motivational system has in fact evolved to be inherently unstable:

> The motivational system is built like a "fly-by-wire" aircraft with built in instability that
> requires constant balancing input to keep it "on the straight and narrow". This has the
> advantage of making us highly adaptive and creative but the disadvantage that, without
> balancing inputs, including devices and techniques to stabilise our mental processes, we
> readily develop maladaptive thought processes and behaviour patterns. (West & Brown,
> 2013, p. 5)

In these theories, the whole of the human motivational system is understood to be so fragile and

susceptible to unwanted intrusion that it requires constant balancing. The need for perpetual

balancing delineates a form of the subject, including and beyond addicts, for whom the question

of self-control is perpetually looming and whose creativity and adaptability are strangely liable

to morph into their opposite—that is, in the absence of stabilizing devices and techniques. Note

the knitting of body and environment happens in the brain, whose capacity to adapt is equally

blessing and curse—its very nature requires that humans supplement their motivational systems

with devices and techniques that keep what Freud first called *der Trieb* (the drive) "on the

straight and narrow." Perhaps the increasing scope of addiction may be viewed either as the

becoming-addictive or the addictive capacities behind or beneath objects and behaviors that were

never thought to be so, and as the increasing capacity of subjects to become addicted to anything,

or to enact infinite "misrepresentations of value."

Conceiving addiction as a problem of an individual brain's ability to represent value in the environment to itself is an exceedingly clever rhetorical tactic. When Eve Sedgwick (1993), charted the logic underpinning the boom of addictions in psychology, she found that its conceptual and practical slippage suggest different loci of addictiveness—neither the substance nor the body. She concluded that this must entail some type of abstraction that would settle the narration of relations between the two. The abstraction that settles Eve Sedgwick's subject-object question that underpins the notion of addiction is revealed to be the brain as a faulty mediator. Where addiction science used to expend efforts adjudicating between the user and the drug, it now suggests that what connects them is problematic. In this way, there is nothing wrong with a drug object "in itself," nor is a person to blame for their shortcomings, their circumstances, their biology, etc. The body of the user, with its neurotransmitters, adrenaline, and cortisol, take on an increased role in controlling consumption *qua* uptake of the consumed, but the mediating, representing brain requires techniques and devices for its stabilization. Sedgwick's piece also links the anti-sodomitic discourse that bore early witness to the binary opposition of that which is natural and that which is unnatural, with the perhaps lineal 21st-century discourses on substances and behaviors on the basis of a distinction between natural desires called "needs" and artificial desires called "addictions." Where squeamishness with respect to broaching the enjoying body once made the distinction between "natural" and "artificial" rewards clear, endogenous opioids emitted from the brain place the pleasures (and also the horrors) associated with addiction within the brain as an inadequate perceiver and deliberator of its own capacity.

Locating addiction in a faulty system of cerebral representation justifies treatments that plunge all the more deeply into the body (the brain), obfuscating the collective nature of enjoyment, representation, and the relationship between these two. This largely precludes the

possibility that the fact of an addiction may be used to question the presence of the drug in the environment of the user, naturalizing the social systems of a drug's production, distribution, and exchange. For these theories, it is instead the relationship between internality and externality that should be balanced and stabilized by techniques and devices, subjecting this relation to the foregone conclusion that already-existing misrepresentation be met with psy-industrial management. On this account, the pathology of addiction is a problem of the in-between—a problem of information. The hubris of a science that claims to be able to register a mismatch between the value that a subject assigns to an object and the actual value of the object for the subject is breathtaking in its paternalism.

The correspondence of this laudable rhetoric and related developments in addiction science to market ideology extends even beyond the normal sense in which theorists of addiction sound like amateur economists (choices, rewards, and incentives, oh my!). This turn to managing the brain reflects the struggle embodied in the neoliberal[6] subject of the market, in that the optimal functioning of this subject presupposes adequate information about choices (which are not always available). As Foucault (2007) says, the market becomes the "grid of intelligibility" and the self-as-human-capital integrates the body securely into this grid. This is because neoliberalism enforces a regime of voluntary choices and actions among actors who do not merely consent in the form of a choice, but whose choices presuppose adequate information. The claim to knowledge of a mismatch between value assigned to an object by a subject and its actual value *for the subject* is provocative, not least because value is among the most elusive of concepts in capitalism. More importantly, it is because value determinations rely on an assumption of sufficient (market) information that (neoliberal) subjects need in order to make value decisions in the first place. The addict's brain unreliably represents, or gives false

information that psychological aid comes to fill in, even as it also contains the key to the hidden calculus of the endogenous opioid system. It is as if it is the job of neuroscience's techniques and devices to reveal the brain's auto-erotic knowledge to itself. It would seem that these expert tools possess this key that would unlock, at long last, a truly harmonious relationship between subject and object based in transparent communication of what is "really" on offer. The conclusion here, in properly academic parlance, is that, in its role as economic advisor to the body, addiction neuroscience gives its subjects masturbation tips.

Internet Addiction. The preceding sections aimed to show that Malabou's (2012) proclaimed substitution of sexuality for cerebrality has created conditions within which the anti-social dangers of enjoyment subject so-called addicts to a regime of normality achieved by intensive forms of monitoring and modulating. Does the same hold outside of the clinic? Let's zoom out to reconsider addiction's pathos, more readily apparent in its symptoms, while turning to Internet Addiction specifically.

Its varying and tenuous status in the psy-industries notwithstanding, the fact of the matter is that Internet Addiction (IA) is culturally intelligible. Exploratory studies and surveys that preempt the formalization of IA assessments have found that the trope of Internet Addiction is so intelligible that participants self-reporting on the phenomenon needed practically no guidance in forming a sense of what constitutes excessive or problematic Internet use. Indeed, there are many sources of information about the addicting quality of the computer, as much within the psychological industries as outside of them. Journalists and tech writers simply go nuts about the concept of Internet Addiction, seemingly quite eager to expose the suffering imposed by the use of technology that has become ever-present in daily life. They write about how users are no match for the power of pleasure fabricated for us in the experience of recent technological

advances, supporting their outcry with analogical reasoning that points to the similarity between the brains of World of Warcraft addicts, slot machine players, and heroin addicts at the moments of preparing to play or take a hit and morph together along the active trajectory of administration.[7] [8] Though they seem to see themselves as hard realists bringing forth the truth about the manufacturing of maximal enjoyment, they are indeed new moderators weighing in on its moral and amoral use, in a way that is, in typical addiction fashion, entirely unconcerned with the social and economic realities that bring to bear the necessity of Internet use that is compulsive.

As Reed (2000, 2002) has claimed, the historical management of the interlaced computer fear and computer addiction are products of specific milieus. In America, she says, the convergence of drug counterculture, cyberpunk techno-culture, and the "culture of addiction" condition the possibility of the cultural intelligibility of "computer addiction." As with discourses on addiction from time immemorial, these knowledges regulate, manage, and define definitions related to proper use or consumption. The discourse on computer use, the formation of computer, Internet, and social media addictions, the role of selfhood and subjection that belie them have undertaken the managerial and governing functions of users, deploying notions of "healthy" and "unhealthy" use, "natural" and "unnatural" obsessions, and "proper" and "improper" uses of computing.

Even maverick programmer and artificial intelligence engineer Joseph Weizenbaum (1976) notes that the experience of programming on the computer is largely "dopaminergic." Recall that in discourses of addiction, the dopaminergic system dysfunctions as a representational system. At the level of the midbrain dopamine system, a loss of control is homologized to a "systematic misrepresentation of value." These two examples certainly attest to

the degree to which the trope of addiction receives popular attention. Following suit with dominant discourses on addiction, Weizenbaum even draws a parallel between "the magical world of the gambler" and the "magical world of the hacker"—both entailing the megalomania of clear choices and their impact and the "pleasureless drive for reassurance" (p. 142) that follows from this immediacy and visibility of cause and effect that he relates to software creation and use alike.

Like gambling, Weizenbaum (1976) tells us, programming can become compulsive because it both rewards and challenges the programmer. It is driven by

> two apparently opposing facts: first, he knows that he can make the computer do anything he wants it to do; and second, the computer constantly displays undeniable evidence of his failures to him. It reproaches him. There is no escaping this bind. The engineer can resign himself to the truth that there are some things he doesn't know. But the programmer moves in a world entirely of his own making. The computer challenges his power, not his knowledge. (p. 143)

According to Weizenbaum, because programming engages power rather than truth, it can induce a paranoid megalomania in the programmer. Because this knowledge is never enough, because a new bug always emerges, because an unforeseen wrinkle causes divergent unexpected behavior, the hacker can never stop.

While not yet fully theorized or accepted into the DSM, Internet Addiction, like other behavioral addictions, inherits the general etiology of addiction described above. As we can see in Weizenbaum's (1976) account, it also inherits its pathos. Block's (2008) model of Internet

Addiction transposes onto the Internet the four components that consistently emerge in reference to addictions: excessive use, withdrawal, tolerance, and negative repercussions. The notion of excessive use refers to the amount of time spent engaged in the using behavior and, in this case, is associated with loss of sense of time owing to the Internet's totally immersive qualities. It corresponds to high tolerance for its effects, implying the possibility that its grip can ramp up indefinitely for the involved user. Withdrawal symptoms like feelings of anger, tension, and/or depression arise when the user is unable to engage in the activity. Use itself then brings about negative repercussions like lying, underachievement, social isolation, fatigue, and decreased quality of the user's relationships.

Other models, like the three-factor framework put forth by Demetrovics, Szeredi, and Rozsa (2008) explicitly confront obsession, neglect, and control. Obsession refers to continuous thoughts of engagement in the behavior, continuous seeking of novelties within the behavior, and the familiar withdrawal symptoms when unable to engage in the behavior. Neglect refers to the disregard of life areas previously deemed important to the individual before becoming involved in the problematic behavior. Lastly, "control" refers to the user's inability to control their use. Within Internet Addictions specifically, the loss of control comes, again, from an altered temporality, and the networked computer is construed as a technology of immersion whose special effect *as* a drug is the intoxication proper to the style of engagement it fosters. The high levels of cognitive absorption experienced by those in the virtual world creates states of "deep attention" and "hyper-focus" (Barnes & Pressey, 2014; Snodgrass, Lacy, Dengah, Fagan, & Most, 2011). In this sense, it is easy to see how the inability to control one's use leads to neglect of other facets of life. This is painstakingly clear in extreme cases of Internet Addiction, for

instance in China, where young gamers are so transfixed by their on-line activity that they suffer

seizures and even death from lack of food and water.[9]

These are exceptional cases, though, that have the potential to add colorful shock value

to, say, the eight or so hours a day the average college student spends on-line (Roberts, Yaya, &

Manolis, 2014.). In the effort to take a moral position for or against, techie or Luddite, discourses

of Internet Addiction tend to minimize the social, political, and economic stakes of the Internet

as a shared protocol for collecting, distributing, and storing information. The nomination of

networked devices (i.e., smartphone addiction), the network (i.e., Internet Addiction), and a short

list of popular uses of these (i.e., Internet Gaming Addiction, Internet Pornography Addiction,

Social Media Addiction) as drugs or supplements obscures the sense in which these are

incontrovertible and inescapable parts of everyday life, particularly for economic activity.[10] The

global fact of the rise of digital production, inextricable from the use of connected devices and

the Internet, vanishes when the latter is situated alongside assessments like those above that aim

to fix Internet Addiction as a distraction from other parts of life with negative consequences. One

could easily arrive at a similar conclusion logically since it is an extension of a generic discourse

of addiction.

The ambivalent formation of these pathologies might be chalked up to the fact that, in an

ambiance of the increasing importance of intellectual property and commercial and work-related

computing, not to mention an always-important and vulnerable locus of geopolitics, the tension

between the usefulness and threat of computer addicts is very far from settled. In terms of

regulation and management, the question is clearly not one of "use" or "no-use," as per the cold-

turkey style of ending an addiction much easier to pursue in the realm of illicit drugs, but of the

cultivation and direction toward particular uses. For subjects of informatic- and data-driven

capitalism in which data is "the new oil," the Internet is also, then, the site of competition for new markets, for capitalists as much as governments, digital laborers, users, and the locus of possible innovation or "disruption" of nearly any commercial industry.

These pieces are more apparent in the deployment of Internet Addiction as expert knowledge outside of the clinic. It appears that IA is and will be mobilized in relation to a number of different social and cultural milieus for about as many purposes as there are uses for the Internet itself. For example, the very similar "Computer Addiction" functioned as a mechanism of regulation during crackdowns on "addicted" hackers during the 80s and 90s when the Internet rose to become a prominent social force. The legal designation of "Computer Addiction" has generally resulted in the implementation of rehabilitative therapy, where the hacker is reformed through supervised computer use and increased jail time. One's politics related to the shifting and porous legalities of intellectual property and the regulation of information channels, as much as one's understanding of addictions in their complex and porous relation to freewill and responsibility, are determinate. Such deployment has not gone unnoticed by the Electronic Frontiers Foundation (1991), who put forward the argument that "computer addiction" is used to deny hackers their basic rights of free association and right to employment, and, moreover, that when seen as addicts, hackers are disposed in favor of state and corporate desires to regulate computer networks on their terms in defiance or neglect of the terms of other networks users.

To generalize about a somewhat heterogeneous global group, hackers live by the ethic that "information wants to be free" on the basis of the fact that one can replicate digital code *ad infinitum* with almost no marginal cost or loss to the original. At its root, then, hacking as a practice mobilizes against the centralization of power over information that seeks to privatize it.

Taking circulation of information to the hilt, hackers, pirates, and techno-shamans all undermine the implicit economy of scarcity of channel space, making their actions criminal to institutions and experts who guard, deploy, or profit from its exclusivity. Acts like uploading and downloading, providing controlled media files or software infrastructure for the removal of these controls, are framed as criminal (Kennedy, 2013).

In this case, enjoyment of the computer (and Internet) is directly threatening on the grounds of its capacity to shake the new bedrock of the global economy—*this* drug happens to live in the system for its purposes rather than lie outside of it (as do illegal drugs). Hackers, as addicts, constantly push the boundaries of the prevailing economic system. They seem to live in accordance with its values in an exaggerated, even mocking way (see Coleman, 2009). Riding the boundary line of the maximization of the individual, self-possessed subject to its logical conclusion, the addict, faithfully devoted to the social compact, obsessively so, prompts its redrawing. It is as if the addict, in this case, is a too-good producer/consumer of the immaterial goods of the digital, immaterial world. They are perceived as risky folks who are real threats to the infrastructure through which both states and market forces operate. As Naparstek (2002) aptly points out, the position and function of drug-objects marks variations related to the binding of members of a society through laws conceived judicially or ritualistically. The scope of criminalization and medicalization in the Western world, then, speaks to an overarching careful but nevertheless contradictory attitude toward the distribution and use of enjoyment even beyond specific drug-objects. Through the addict and addiction, "drug-taking" and "excess" offer ways of speculating upon the potential dangers of enjoyment, all the way up to threatening the whole of the social order. In this way, the addict bypasses sanctioned satisfactions for upstanding

citizens, implicitly also circumventing participation in its normal mode of governance and distribution.

This is the story of the addict, who, one might say, places their own enjoyment over that form of enjoyment that comes from performing one's civil duties and comporting oneself in accordance with the dictates of good citizenship and adherence to the symbolic. This circumvention of social norms is exactly the false flight that we began with; the addict, taken to be too busy with their own, private enjoyment through the route of the drug, only postpones the question of its formation in the field *of* the other. Such a distraction, however, clearly does not amount to an escape or a flight from the society which structures both this enjoyment and its semblances, attached to private individuals and specifically their brains.

Freudian Social Organization. One could conclude that, where addiction is concerned, psychology's shift from sexuality to cerebrality is one that moves a potential interest in the social and economic configuration of objects of enjoyment and subjects who enjoy toward the calculation of value in the environment by the brain. Yet, it is clear that the monitoring and modulating of brains with faulty value-representational ability, on the one hand, and the political-legal struggles around the computer as an object of addiction, on the other, speaks to a particular type of individual constituted in relation to and as related to a particular vision of society. Where the cerebrality dominating the psychological science of addiction inherently precludes this social relation, the preceding psychoanalytic interpretation of addiction is not so shy about elucidating the individual and/of/versus society that operates like a spectral mythos at the root of addiction(s) and their broadening application.

Returning to this mythos is crucial not because we are proposing a return to sexuality from cerebrality, but because it enables us to suss out the coordinates of the relationship between

the individual and society that informs both sexual *and* cerebral accounts of addiction. In returning to and thus grounding in the Freudian story, we have a better opportunity to think through and within the struggle for social power we have already revealed addiction to be. Only then can we broach the deep implications of the expanse of addiction-objects in society, and consider whether or how the Internet, as a crucial piece of social-linguistic infrastructure, may even be a special case. The reader should bear in mind that histories and theories of the Internet are in fact highly contested topics that make way for and dismiss possible futures of the Internet in its capacity as a social organizing force.

In a sense, Freud construed the whole of society as having been founded upon the necessity to manage enjoyment. In his (1912-13/2010d) *Totem and Taboo,* we see a mythology that recounts the founding moment of a social pact that forms conventions on the basis of a collective renunciation of enjoyment. Such a renunciation instantiates a sacrifice "in the name of" society itself. This bedrock of culture comes into being, for Freud, when the children of the primitive horde kill off its strongest member who had, until then, enjoyed all its women for himself. Upon this act of patricide, the horde must come to some kind of agreement to secure a social order not based in strength and mutiny—so begins the operation of distributional law, as a virtualization (or deferral) of active aggression. Already, the distribution of enjoyment is at stake, albeit in the subterfuge of protection against the mightiest. This law concerns itself with anything that could be considered enjoyment: its allotment, symbolization, and use in ceremony, commemoration, and ritualization.

The murderous act, then, gives rise to the installation of its memory alongside an imagination that ponders the all-encompassing satisfaction possessed by the mightiest horde member. The total remainder left from the act, then, is the positive formulation of Law as a

contractual renunciation, and the fantasy of coming to take the place of the original locus of total enjoyment. As a superego injunction for the individual subject as much as at the level of society writ large, the memory of this father, for whom a totem is erected, regulates the functions of the law. According to Freud's earlier formulations of the roots of society, then, it is paternal identification that regulates enjoyment at the level of the subject understood to be struggling in and against the same facets of the social order that create them *as* individual subjects. Furthermore, the myth makes of the father merely a memory symbolized by an inanimate rendering.

For our purposes, this founding myth also functions as a cut that instantiates a basis of cooperation, mutuality, and responsivity to a larger whole. Which is to say, the mythical function of renunciation is to create an alertness, to direct us outward, or to instantiate a manifestly operable fantasy of a collective. And the notion recurs all the more fiercely in Freud's (1930/2010a) paradox of the conscience in *Civilization and its Discontents*. Freud finds that it is, by no stretch of the imagination, the case that obedience to law secures a feeling of righteousness. Quite the contrary, in fact, such seeking barrels on infinitely. Following up, too, on the clinical evidence of his writings on such characters as those moved to crime through an unflinching sense of guilt, and a visually-obsessed man of "developed intellect" and "high moral values," he notices that the most law-abiding people often experience the most guilt.[11] Freud reconciles this paradox by showing that the renunciation of instinctual gratification does not follow some enigmatic entity, conscience, but inversely that conscience springs from that very renunciation. Conscience comes from renunciation, and with this conclusion, Freud foregrounds the dialectical co-construction of desire and prohibition.

Leaving aside its figurative nature, the main idea to focus on now is that it is the very renunciation of the totality of enjoyment that gives rise to society, the roots of which grow the seemingly requisite discomforts and annoyances that we might indulge in attributing to the fact of social reality in which one lives among others. Attempts to claim the whole of the enjoyment of the proto-father must be renounced to ensure that there is something left to be desired for the rest—an act of generosity acting first on an abstract entity which is presumed to need the charitable renunciation of the individual who, one never knows, could be *the* one to overtake the whole of the social with the grandiosity of their appetite. So goes the Oedipal story and the rudiments of the social pact as law, imagined by Freud. The castration that results from buying into the agreement, as it involves an equally mythic individual will to power, allows one the possibility of obtaining enjoyment on the basis of the experience that the others share in this same lack, as Freud (1921/2010b) details in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Other members of the nascent society are, in light of its origin, imbued with a fantastical imaginary idea of the total enjoyment—that which was stripped from the proto-father.

Where, then, can we locate the addict in all of this? Freud's (1985) letter to Fliess suggests an aligned mythology proper to addiction: the first addiction, he writes, for which all other addictions are merely substitutes, is masturbation. Reading Dostoevsky, he points out that the addict fears the father, and for this reason is compelled to suppress the "auto-erotic satisfaction of early childhood and puberty" (p. 4589), which he ties to the repetition of the compulsion to masturbate that he notices is replaced, in Dostoevsky's writings, by addiction to gambling and the opportunities for self-punishment that it affords. The vast substitutions possible in regards to objects of addiction undoubtedly holds today, in reference to the enlarging scope of addiction objects that substitute for "real" life, work, and relationships.

However, through Freud we find that lawfulness and its opposite speak less to the sheer fact of the illegal status of intoxicants that sometimes lends formal justification to the moralizing responses leveled at their use, and more to the implication of a social compact within which is taken for granted, to use Freud's words, "normal sexual intercourse" of which auto-erotic satisfaction is opposed. Later in the life of the addict, he states, "whenever normal sexual life can no longer be re-established, we can count with certainty on the patient's relapse" (1985, p. 467), bemoaning the fact that treating addiction follows the same course as sexual need itself in that its success involves displacement along another path. This path only appears stable so long as the physician does not trouble himself about the source from which such need springs. What is the implication here about auto-erotic satisfaction? Is it simply that it is and has been prohibited as a sort of initial hazing into social management that aims to turn it outward?

In the Lacanian clinic as well, the drug-taking at the face of addiction presents a mode of enjoying that is different from the phallic enjoyment made possible by the subject's relation to the Other through castration in the symbolic realm of language. In Lacan as in Freud, there is an evasion (if not a fear) of the Father *qua* symbolic. When Lacan defined castration in terms of the impossibility of the sexual link, he meant to bring out that there is no holy grail or hidden formula that can assure the successful union of the erotic couple. Because there is no transcendent assurance of any kind, life is unknown, but for all that it is abundant, full, and in that sense "impossible" (Malone, Bell, & Roberts, 2015). It is the lack of sexual relation that gives rise to speech as its proof, that there is a lack to be covered over. This lack gives rise to the social link, as speech forges a social bond which has no place in the absolutism of enjoyment, or the antithesis of speech that is personified in the addict (Ragland, 2000).

To break the marriage with the phallus is to disrupt the ways in which the social link and the properties of language gets one out of the conundrum with being the object of the Other's desire. Being castrated by speech does not only mean assuming a loss, but it also means gaining a distance from the other, whose speech need not be taken as a demand or command that threatens to efface the subject. With castration we avoid the proximity that welcomes the endless repetition of "them-or-me", of enjoying and being enjoyed. On its face, addiction heralds dependence on a prosthetic supplement that intervenes at the level of the real of the body, adding to or replacing signification as the distinctive human way of dealing with enjoyment and the body.

In this sense, the addictive drive constitutes a pathological limit to socialization. As Luca Bosetti (2010) claims, the addictive drive constitutes a pathological limit to socialization that amounts to an ethics of enjoyment in explicit defiance of the Other. The addict avoids confronting the desire of the Other, and so we are still left with a somewhat Freudian notion of enjoyment administered "independent" of the Other. So, the account of the addict in psychoanalytic thought posits the addict as a figure of regress in relation to the Symbolic. That the addict is pre-Oedipal or pre-Symbolic is a well-known tenet of psychoanalytic thought on addiction that, like phobias, are less well constructed or nascent neuroses or containment strategies of psychoses that are not structures of desire in and of themselves.[12]

Loose (2002) notes that, as an attempt to forge a path of independence from the Other, addiction tends to ward off or smother the formations and symptoms of the unconscious. Addiction is a type of symptom that does not represent the subject for another signifier, but eclipses the signifier that does. The subject of the unconscious, he writes, can solve the conflict of its own lack and the overwhelming desire of the Other either through the Symbolic, with

words, through the use of the imaginary realm of fantasy, and, as in addiction, confronting the

immediacy of the real with another real that might overwhelm *it*. Loose's formulation is not a far

cry from the typical reading of addiction as a profoundly anti-social phenomenon—the Other, or

for Meyer (2011) the inscrutable timing of the Other, is substituted for the more certain,

scheduled, and predictable enjoyment afforded by the drug.

It seems that whichever way it's sliced, one cannot underestimate the degree to which

enjoyment has always been related to the formation of a coercive, imagined normative structure

designated as "the social." If we are concerned with Internet Addiction as a social fact, and its

calling into question of supplementation, consumption, and subjective economy, we must remain

open to what enjoyment brings with it—the overtly social, economic, and political stakes

involved. Moreover, it seems that society always had to be manufactured through the installation

of an imaginal notion of belonging, togetherness, and a *dispositif* of enjoyment itself.

Enjoyment relates to the energetic aspect of Freud's drive theory, and it is the body that

experiences it, as it is variously connected to tension (Lacan, 1966/2006). Enjoyment

(*jouissance*[13]*)* in Lacan's work gives name to the ineffable energetics, the often destructive,

unexpected, jarring *beyond* of the pleasure principle that regulates it. The latter might be said

only to indicate the necessity of detours from the path by which the subject is sustained along the

search for enjoyment. The drive-ridden body, as the body that enjoys, has a contentious role in

psychoanalysis more broadly. Lacan may be more popularly read as having issued the reality of

the body as imaginary, particularly in light of his popular formulation of the "mirror stage" when

the nascent subject is able to identify with his whole image in the mirror. While it is undoubtedly

the case that one's reflection is saturated by the significations and norms of the culture it exists

in, the body is not *only* the image constructed by the symbolic. The drive-ridden body is subject

to symptoms, and far from being imaginary, it hosts libido and enjoyment. The real body of

psychoanalysis is that which enjoys itself, and, as Lacan says, we don't know what it means to be

alive except that a body is something that enjoys itself (as cited in Soler, 2016).

However, Soler (2016, p. 52) notes that there are three "bodies" between which

psychoanalytic theory must rigorously distinguish. There is, first, the (Real) living organism

studied by biology, which she says psychoanalysts need not know much about. Then, the more

familiar (Symbolic) subject defined by its speech, and finally, the (Imaginary) body the subject

"has" in that it is subject to symptoms. This final body can be thought about as a special locus of

inscription, or a hystericized body that registers the effects of signifiers. This body is further

formed and reformed through the rhythms of its changing dispositions, in light of enjoyment as a

real force and the semblances of its distribution, management, and image. As Lacan (2002a) says

in seminar XIV, "the locus of the Other...designated the locus of the Other in the body" (p. 141).

His point is that it would be impossible for the body *not* to be the locus of the Other—this body

is, in effect, the writing pad of the Other. Late in his teaching, Lacan situates enjoyment in his

theory of the discourses, giving it a somewhat different flavor. In this context, enjoyment is

defined as the disturbing dimension in the experience of being a body. Being a body is revealed

to be disturbing precisely insofar as one's experience with enjoyment conveys the truth of non-

self-sufficiency to the subject. This is because, as Alenka Zupančič (2017) succinctly puts it:

> enjoyment and the Other are structured like a matryoshka: enjoyment is "in" the Other,
>
> but when we look "in" the enjoyment, there is also the Other "in" it, and so on. …
>
> Enjoyment is in the Other, and the Other is in enjoyment—This is perhaps the most
>
> concise formulation of the structure of the non-relation, the non-relation between the

subject and the Other. If enjoyment is what disturbs this relation, it does so not simply by

coming between them (and hence holding them apart), but rather by implicating, placing

them one in the other. (p. 29)

In a move that locates enjoyment as a radical otherness, we see that enjoyment does not come

between subjects but already implicates them with each other. The sense in which enjoyment

mediates subjects is, then, no longer a sacrifice or a deferral, but a deep, mutual implication. As

demonstrated by the Internet-addicted hackers above, it is plainly the case that the Other is in

enjoyment in the sense that hacking emerges in simultaneous conjunction with a semblance of

the Other—FCC regulations, intellectual property laws, and geopolitical info-wars. Enjoyment is

always "in" the Other in the sense that none of the activity is possible without a public/private

infrastructure, a fact of which hackers are more than well aware. This disturbs the neatly carved

boundaries of the Other and enjoyment, and encumbers more generally the compulsory quality of

enjoyment typically reserved for the affects of addiction (e.g., lost control, hijacking of the

conscious subject, radical dependence).

The crux of the paradox of addiction that we have attempted to suss out by looking at

neuroscience and psychoanalysis alike is that they both suggest that *society is becoming less*

social. What could this possibly mean? Or, more specifically, how can we understand the

substituting/displacing motion of addiction once it finally slides to signification itself? If we take

at face value the notion that addiction is a symptom that eclipses the signifiers of the unconscious

through confronting the immediacy of the real with the real, the Internet of Internet Addiction

would have to be a sort of Symbolic-Real object that is perhaps more Real than Symbolic or an

Imaginary-Real object that is, again, more Real than Imaginary.

But is the Internet not composed of connections between speaking beings, all subjects of the unconscious and of the signifier? If this were the case, it would significantly trouble the clinical formation in which addiction is an individual enjoyment apart from or against the social. The fear of the father and the concomitant sacrifice that compels deviant (addicted) subjects to steal a little extra bit of enjoyment for themselves (masturbation) does not seem to account for excessive Internet use if the latter is a piece of this sacrifice. It is not unthinkable that such use could figure into a sort of neurotic addiction also elucidated by Loose (2002) in which consumption is itself an offering to an other, as when a party-goer drinks or consumes drugs as if to fashion themself as such (someone who is flexible or willing, one might imagine). This would leave us to question after the attachment to sociality minus digital interfaces. Perhaps this attachment applies equally to psychologists, who wield this pathological formation as a label, as to commentators in various ranks of society and in a host of different humanities and social science departments who bemoan the screen-mediated present. On the Lacanian clinical account, one might create a generic theory in which Internet Addiction substitutes an Other that operates primarily in the symbolic order of law and prohibition for an Other that is, by and large, imaginary and superegoic, as in the hyper-modern injunction to enjoy (a point to which we will turn to examine in great detail below).

Indeed, other drug objects are fetish objects in the double sense that they embody human labor and relations—the Other is in there somewhere, along with the other of experience—and in that they are required for enjoyment by the user. However, the Internet is an artifice that is at least meant to facilitate an address constitutive of all social links. Such addresses operate in the time of 24/7 or real-time with its unpredictability and inscrutable timing as substantial inputs and outputs (data). Are we not, then, dealing with a shift whereby the serried ranks of excessive

Internet users relate primarily to a reading and writing over a speaking? Contrary to the

formulation inherent in a pathological form of Internet Addiction where the relationships are

mediated by the screen, for better or for worse, relationships are made visible and invisible by

the screen in the form of letter-images. The imagined whole of the Internet is (in a generic and

yet-unqualified sense) the unconscious as a public utility through which the timing of the Other

is constantly undecidable and utterly unpredictable.

Without getting ahead of the argument, the real question is whether or not, or even more

precisely, *how* the Internet is qualified as a social artifice. Only time will tell if psychologists or

anyone else with authority to weigh in on the effects of the Internet recognize the sociality of the

Internet as such, naturalizing it and putting effort into understanding it as an infrastructural piece

of the habitus, rituals, and inter-subjectivity of the 21st century. To put it very simply, is the

Internet part of a normal sociality, inclusive of work, family, and romance, or is it something

else? If the addict is a figure who does not accede to the symbolic Name of the Father, what is

she doing online? Addiction to the Internet concerns us all, not least because of its expansion as a

psychopathology, but because anyone reading this dissertation is, in point of face, implicated in

the (social and socializing) body of enjoyment that is the Internet. In this sense, it is perhaps a

misstep to place Internet Addiction into addiction's canonical anti-sociality. Is it not instead a

hyper-social symptom in that it attests to society's development through, and in fact, *as* a

productive economy of enjoyment?

Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1986), for their part, write of desire (enjoyment) that "the

objective being of [enjoyment] is the Real in and of itself" (p. 27).[14] Enjoyment is the production

of the Real, as a process rather than an unreachable limit, not so much impossible to represent,

but non-representational in itself. For all its nebulous, elusive, and almost mystical veneer, it is,

for all that, never natural or spontaneous, but always the result of a highly engineered montage, rich in interactions, that cannot be understood outside of a determined social apparatus. It is the result of passive syntheses, perceptual and visceral contractions that preserve and remember, that constitute the auto-production of the living force of social production that they call the unconscious (Buchanan, 2008). Interested in the "immanent pragmatics" of the unconscious, in its machinic character, enjoyment as a real force of production engenders the various machines and functions that manufacture and express various material and immaterial flows.

This means, further, that the unconscious, for them, is real in the same sense that enjoyment is real in Lacan. The provocative move that Deleuze and Guattari make in *Anti-Oedipus* is to testify to the perspective of their present moment by lumping together the Lacanian unconscious and the drive, or the subject of enjoyment and the subject of the signifier. Guattari (2011) describes their version of the (machinic) unconscious as moving away from "affair[s] of psychological instances" to the production of enjoyment which operates "'before' objects and subjects have been specified" (p. 167). Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1986) understand enjoyment as a force of absolute production that opens the social field to what they suggest is the infinite capacity of living force. The language of liberation circulates as freely and whimsically as its power of description and unflinching optimism. The writers' schizoanalytic methodology is, therefore, a means to describe capitalist deterritorialization as a means of expressing an invigorated redefinition of the ground of deterritorialized subjectivation.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1986), there is a wholly different sense in which the enjoying unconscious *qua* living force of production is structured like a language—only insofar as it is the collusion between enjoyment and the historical process of the sign's use, the sign as ever-evolving and only understandable in its situated, productive dimensions, co-emergent with

the systems which it ultimately serves to model. Where Lacan hints that enjoyment of the body and materialism's matter have equal ethical bearing, we see the inter-relatedness of two knowledges that may not be all that distinct. Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the schizoanalytic unconscious is additive (rather than polemical) of the productive dimensions of subjectivity and sociality, and thus counterbalances the sense in which the subject of the unconscious is an absolute negativity, or a gaping hole. Deleuze casts off any doubt that these both equally require a bearing witness to what is constituted; a field of immanence or plane of consistency, in Guattari's (2013) later terminology. This field of immanence of substance opposes all strata of organization, *the organism's organization as well as power organization*. The enjoyment attributed to the body in the formation of the symptom, then, is real, unbridled social production, that creates and recreates time and the praxis of everyday life.

Likewise, Deleuze's final formulation of the body without organs, the X, spells out the painful consequences of general substitutability. In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981/2003) he writes that it is not defined by the absence of organs, nor by the existence of an indeterminate organ. In the last instance, he says, the body without organs is defined by the "temporary and provisional presence of determinate organs" (p. 48). Following Deleuze's final formulation, it might be prudent to re-write the body without organs as the "body of re-organization." To put it as straightforwardly as possible, addiction is not a question of sociality or anti-sociality, but a question of what kinds of rituals, habits, and arrangement of bodies is designated as "the social," for whom and by whom. One can imagine that this is an especially pressing question in light of widely acknowledged, global social shifts. The imaginary body is, for us, preserved when we begin with the notion of addiction, in that the subject-object connection is the interface of subject and culture. Embodied practice, or habitus in Bourdieu's (1977) sense, is this

very link through which "subjectivity emerges in part through mastering the cultural norms of withholding, delay, surprise, pause, and knowing when to stop—through mastery over certain forms of time" (Freeman, 2010, p. 4). This notion of habitus highlights the fact that "institutional and cultural rhythms" shape flesh, through arcs of time and affect, into "legible, acceptable embodiment" (p. 4).

CHAPTER II

A LACANIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERVENTION ON INTERNET ADDICTION

Collectivizing the Symptom (or *Sinthome*?)

Let's pause here to speak about the elephant in the room. Readers of critical theory may be surprised to see the inmixing throughout the piece of Lacan and Deleuze's thought without due explanation owing to the oft-cited Lacanian critique of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and his work alongside Guattari by the likes of Badiou (1997/2000a, 1998/2000b, 2005), Žižek (2012), and Hallward (2006, 2010), all of whom suggest deep lines of mutual exclusivity between the thinkers. However, one need not look too far to find books and articles dismissing the disputes between the two as superficial, even deceptive with respect to the definitive points of alliance within their systems[15] (Schuster, 2016). To get at this latter reading, we would need only to echo theorists who have given more nuanced accounts of the work of each, periodizing and codifying them as to point to more specific points of intersection.[16]

We have neither time nor ability to examine the relationship between these two overlapping schools of thought, a book-length topic in itself. As stated, however, the hypothesis here is that Deleuze and Guattari understand the Lacanian subject of the signifier and the subject of the drive, or of enjoyment, together. The simplest justification for what runs the risk of appearing like a methodological free-for-all is the value of the timing of their respective theoretical developments in broaching the question of the symptom. Indeed, the symptom of Internet Addiction is at stake. Internet Addiction undeniably falls under this category of "new symptoms" in the Lacanian clinic, not least because it could not have existed in a recognizable

way before the 90s. More importantly, it is because it figures into the relationship between the body of enjoyment and an ongoing practice of writing that deploys advances in semiotic forms practically inconceivable to any of these theorists.

Deleuze never underestimated the importance of descriptive symptomatology, and looked to the great authors like Lewis Carroll, Tournier, Artaud, Fitzgerald, Beckett, and others, as co-conspirators in the indelible link he establishes between the "critical" and the "clinical." And before Deleuze was playfully critiquing psychoanalytic tenets alongside Felix Guattari,[17] he was taking on psychoanalytic issues and deeply engaged with Freud and Melanie Klein in his mightiest contributions to Western philosophy, *Difference and Repetition* (1968/1994) and later *The Logic of Sense* (1969/1990).

Much like the body that is subject to symptoms in Lacan, the socius in Deleuze and Guattari is a full body that creates a surface of the recording of production, and, as second nature, the process seems to emanate from this recording surface as its divine presupposition. The socius is a recording surface which naturalizes production on the basis of its recording capacity. Therefore, the user-oriented technology of inscription is the precise nexus between subjectivity and productive sociality. One can look at the consequent technical and social machines as historically recognized displacements (or de-territorializations) of enjoyment at scale. Where addictions are concerned, we have, on the one hand, the designation of drugs, or objects of problematic enjoyment, but on the other, we observe the connection they forge between the subject of the signifier and a defined regime of habit that links it to *this* substance or *this* behavior which are intelligible as suitable candidates for regulation or as signifiers for enjoyment. This puts a slightly different spin on the place of addiction within the set of "new symptoms"[18] that appear in the Millerian/Lacanian clinic (Svolos, 2011). These new symptoms

are characterized by the way they directly inscribe and write the body, which works just like

Deleuze and Guattari's recording surface: these symptoms naturalize the production of the body.

They reproduce a body that is already partially socialized.

Where we can say very generally that Lacanian psychoanalytic thought tends to begin

with the symbolic order and proceed to seek out the "gaps" that mark the irruption of an

impossible Real, Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis[19] starts with the Real, as the immanent,

living force that enjoys, and seeks to mark both the interruptions of this process and its

continuations and transformations (Smith, 2004). For them, the Real cannot only be theorized

negatively as impossible, but must be construed as a positive principle of non-consistency

marked by enjoyment. This positive principle of non-consistency was redundant for Lacan,

whose primary efforts were to formulate a theory of the subject who would embody it as a

product of the signifier, from which excessive total enjoyment functions to sustain the subject

through a particular form of satisfaction.

Unless, that is, one considers the difference between the clinic of neurosis and the clinic

of psychosis in Lacan. In the former, symptoms are deciphered as to move the subject from the

tightness of the symbolic to the, well, *real* of the Real. To this aptly named analysis, one can

juxtapose psychosis which involves a *treatment* that moves from the Real to the Symbolic to

construct a symptom as a subjective solution. Interestingly, in Gault's (2007) comments on

Lacan's pedagogical use of James Joyce, he understands treatment as the treatment of

information. Such treatment involves the application of a logical or mathematical operator to raw

data in order to exploit them following a program. On these terms, the symptom can be

conceived as a mode of treatment of the enjoying substance by means of the symbol, in order to

modify it, deactivate it, and render its usage possible for the subject" (p. 75).

The clinic of psychosis aligns more closely with Lacan's notion of the *sinthome*. Though, Miller takes pains to explain the *sinthome* retroactively, through the barred subject. He reads the subject of Lacan as both the subject of enjoyment (foregrounded by separation) and as the subject of the signifier (foregrounded by alienation; 2007, pp. 60-61). For this subject, he designates voids in being and in enjoyment, where the signifier and something which is not necessarily fantasy, or is not reducible to fantasy, fill in these respective voids.

> in the same way that we can say that the bar on the subject, the bar that indicates that something is missing, is an effect of the signifier, it also conforms to what Lacan articulates: namely, that the voiding of enjoyment is an effect of the signifier. (pp. 60-61)

According to Miller (2007), the symptom in Lacan's graph of desire is made of two elements. The first is a signification that is an effect of the signifier, and the second an element called fantasy *but which can be clarified as being the subject's relation to enjoyment.* The symptom also resists knowledge, or deciphering, because of enjoyment. A symptom is not simply a signification, though, but also the relation of a signification to a signifying structure. It is, then, a truth that plays on the side of enjoyment. The enjoyment in and of the symptom resists interpretation, resulting in what Freud called the negative therapeutic reaction—the fact that something persists despite interpretation. Lacan uses the notion of the *sinthome* to encompass the symptom and the fantasy. Re-centering on enjoyment bridges the Real and the Imaginary in much the same way as Deleuze and Guattari do. The mixture is of the symptom as an effect of truth and of the relation to enjoyment (Miller, 2007).

While the essence of the symptom is the inexistence of the truth supposed by it, repetition-compulsion insistently demonstrates the inexistence of enjoyment. In the period of the Real-Symbolic-Imaginary (RSI) seminar, Lacan tries to write the symptom and repetition-compulsion in a single trait—the knot. This knot is both signifying function and enjoyment. He therefore says of the symptom that it is what does not stop writing itself. It is defined, too, as the enjoyment of the unconscious insofar as the unconscious determines this enjoyment. It is the *sinthome* which Lacan, on Miller's account (2007), introduces as a single way of writing S1 + 'a', signifier and enjoyment, for this complement of the subject in this dual sense. This is important for us given the dual strategy, we will soon see, in the machination of the Internet, of the perpetual re-inscription of proper names combined with a collective habitus of hypnotic timing and recursive suggestion. For now, we can say that the extent to which the proper name of the subject and the void in enjoyment are immanent to each other on the Internet determines the degree to which it makes sense to think about Internet Addiction clinically in terms of the *sinthome*.

And yet, outside of the clinic and its emphasis on speaking, the stakes are different. Is the symptom as a mode of enjoyment of [S1] and [a] not, then, society's enjoyment of itself through the institution of the writing of the individual (in Lacan) or the collective (in Deleuze and Guattari)? The ease with which we deploy these thinkers together is not by dint of philosophical exercise; rather, it arises more as an inheritance of the historical moment in which we are writing; that an addictive, compulsive, or "other" flavor to life today, ascribed to a new and predominant form of social life through technical networks as it has been to drugs and alcohol. It is a question of insertion of the subject into a uniquely public, reflexive language, stylized as an object of consumer enjoyment—enjoyment in and through the digital signifier. Because, in the

case of either body of theory, enjoyment in Lacan, and desire/desiring-production in Deleuze and Guattari locate the complex matrix of the (re-)production of living force and thus of sociality (Buchanan, 2008). For the latter, as for us, nothing is more harmful to a critical project than the artificial boundary separating the machinations of enjoyment from the realities of history. Put most simply, what these theoretical-analytic systems share is the fact that enjoyment is *real* and it is *otherness*—the fact of sociality.

This shared space to which Lacanians give the name *sinthome* also reinvigorates the alliance between psychoanalysis and the Marxism, in which Deleuze and Guattari are more than complicit. Where Lacan suggested that Marx's logic fails to overturn the discourse of the master to produce something like a revolution (1991/2007, p. 24)—a failure owing to the triumph of enjoyment over truth—we concur with Pierre Bruno (2010) that the real connection between Marx's and Lacan's thought is emphasis on the logic of the symptom. Marx never explicitly formulated a logic of the symptom, but nonetheless enacted a symptomatic logic in his analyses of capital and labor. Throughout Marx's writings, and especially in *The German Ideology* (1932/1978), symptoms are expressions of relations. For example, ideology is a symptom of social relations rather than their aim, just as rights and laws are expressions of *other* relations on which state power rests. Accordingly, to Marx, the symptom is both a mode of connection to the Real, in addition to, as Lacan would have it, its effects. It is this notion that is shared by Lacan and Marx, albeit in what might be called their different expressions of this logic.

Lacan even notes that Marx may well have discovered the symptom before Freud, in the sense that it is a sign of something which is what is not working out in the Real—as the Symbolic's effect in the Real. What is at stake here, then, is the point of linkage between the Symbolic and the Real through its effects. Again, the conjecture is that Internet Addiction

suggests this link, in that the Internet itself is an operator of this linkage—technologies of writing and communication produce solutions *en masse*. Internet Addiction is then *both* a symptom in the sense of a subjective solution to what is not working in the Real and *also* the production of this Real insofar as human labor (whether paid or unpaid) is involved in it.

Capitalism begins with primitive accumulation for Marx, where dispossession does not only suggest that land is stolen from its inhabitants who are then expelled from it (though of course it also implies this). What's more, its rise is concomitant with the dispossession of nature from itself, its objectification in modern science which serves as the operator and justification for the expulsion of its inhabitants. The beginning of the wage relation is the way that this applies to its subjects. The barred subject in Lacan, the subject of the signifier is a positivized loss, or indeed a disavowed and exploited negativity. Symptoms point to or posit a founding contradiction upon which a primitive accumulation or a numeric accounting of human capacity is possible—the founding of the world as a set of quanta. The symptom is related to the singular contradiction of which it is a solution. Indeed, where a symptom, like one brings to analysis, is a subjective solution to an impasse or contradiction, a social solution is a collective investment in one, too. If the clinic of neurosis forces out the contradiction "solved" by the symptom, then the clinic of psychosis treats this symptom by way of making of it a livable story.

Comparing the tasks of the Marxist schizoanalyst and the psychoanalyst, we can say that both figures are explicitly against adaptation or charity, forms of love that take for granted the conditions in which they were created as possibilities (Tomšič, 2015). The subversive tendencies of psychoanalysis consist primarily in repeating the contradictions of the regime of domination it operates in within the space of the clinic. Avoiding a relationship of charitable love, it aims at a re-orientation of the established mode of enjoyment. It would be difficult to imagine this work

without a threat of resistance against capitalist production as the dominant symbolic order, as that which enjoys itself. The guiding light of the schizoanalytic project was to breathe life into the psychoanalytic institution and to hold it to its subversive tendencies, non-adaptive capacities. In the second part of the piece, these perspectives will complement each other. Further reflections in this key will serve, also, to justify a use of Lacan's theory of the discourses as a sort of social mapping tool that maps beyond the context of its creator. Or, at the very least the edge of his context—the capitalist discourse. Luckily, there is no irony lost when one considers the Internet as the "everywhere" context of social relations.

Lacan's Theory of Discourses

Given the depth and breadth of the permeation of network-connected computing, a re-tooling of Internet Addiction understands a ubiquitous symptom as a discourse—a type of social link whose dynamics need to be picked apart delicately. As a remediation, we seek an understanding of the social relations that create Internet Addiction as a widespread phenomenon that designates a group of subjects, or in fact an entire era of digital capitalism. So far, we have established the centrality and relevance of the enjoyment/signifier link, and also the management of enjoyment to the construction of subjectivity at the collective level. Internet Addiction must therefore be couched, no longer in relation to its guise as a pathological type inside of the psy-industries, but within a history of the development of the broader context of political and social economy of the sign and its enjoyment. For this task, we introduce Lacan's theory of discourses in its capacity to speak more readily to this broader context. The sheer fact that enjoyment is something which must be dealt with at all gives rise to the discourses, which aim at containing, staving off, or managing the overwhelming, disturbing dimension of enjoyment.

Indeed, when Lacan's thought turned to the intricacies of discursive production, of subjectivity *and* enjoyment, the political implications of the theory of the signifier became significantly more pronounced in his work than when it had been somewhat subordinate to a structural-linguistic semiotics. The schemata of the four discourses were formulated by Lacan off the heels of the student revolutions in France in May '68 to analyze the factors through which language constitutes a formative power for human beings, as well as a transformative one (Bracher, 1994). Such discourses were first presented in Lacan's 17th seminar (1991/2007), when he elaborated the discourses of the master, whose rotating elements wrought three more discourses. The subsequent discourses, those of the university, the hysteric, and the analyst, share in its fixed structure of the four positions of the master discourse; semblance (agent), enjoyment (other), truth (of the subject's division in language), and surplus enjoyment (product), as pictured below. Through the theory of the four discourses, Lacan begins to consider the effects of language and its effects on and of enjoyment—all the while without exposing the social link as somehow independent of utterances.

Discourses are logical expressions of social bonds (Gendrault, 2013). The creation of subjectivity, therefore, takes shape within discourse, as do modes of dealing with enjoyment. As Vanheule (2016, p. 2) points out, discourses come to deal with the sexual non-rapport. The sexual non-rapport that discourses manage (or control, force, obscure, avoid, etc.) corresponds to social antagonism, discord, and asymmetry. This is an irreducible dimension, just as enjoyment perturbs us *in that the body has a structurally dysfunctional status for the human being* (Lacan, 1971-1972, p. 217, Vanheule, 2016)*.* The fact of enjoyment is the disturbing fact of being a body, and the existence of discourse addresses the non-rapport between bodies rooted in the indeterminate changeability of individual bodies. Alongside Tomšič (2015), we contend that the

theory of discourses comprises the full force of Lacan's structuralism,[20] yet eventually slid into a science of the real.

The theory of discourses does not reference the way we communicate to each other through speech, but instead the structural configuration that *gives rise to* social bonds. Discourse makes a social link insofar as the "agent" of speech addresses the other from a place of lack, or need—an act that creates a social bond (Vanheule, 2016). The one-way arrow running from agent to other (see Figure 1) denotes that the efforts of communicational exchange are not reciprocal, and thus a message sent is never received as intended. Why? While the top left position can be thought of as a conventional starting point, hence "agent," this notion of agency can be deceptive. The later elaborated "semblance" indicates more clearly that this position of speech's origin is a simulated seat of power. As we learn in Lacan's 19th seminar, discourse is always discourse of semblance. The notion of the semblance troubles his earlier methodological division of the Symbolic and Imaginary, or at least makes it clinically relevant, but for our purposes reproduces an untenable separation between appearance and essence (Smith, 2004).

Where Lacan's first use of this term was to characterize feminine sexuality, he later uses it to develop the relation between the Symbolic order, on the one hand, and the Real and Imaginary orders on the other. He eventually argues that truth and appearances are continuous with one another, like two sides of a moebius strip (Evans, 1996, p. 178). If the real driving force of discourse is truth, mediated by the necessity of passing through the other and forging a social link, we might construe this semblance as the organic vessel of language. This cause of communicative desire is itself an effect of the signifier. The semblance's equivocal relation to truth is transformed in the necessity of using exchangeable signifiers to beckon toward the

other—the necessity of speaking the language of the other which is incapable of transmitting the truth that fuels it (Verhaeghe, 1995).

Impossibility

$$\text{Agent} \nearrow \nwarrow \text{Other}$$

Agent | Other
Truth | Product

Impotence
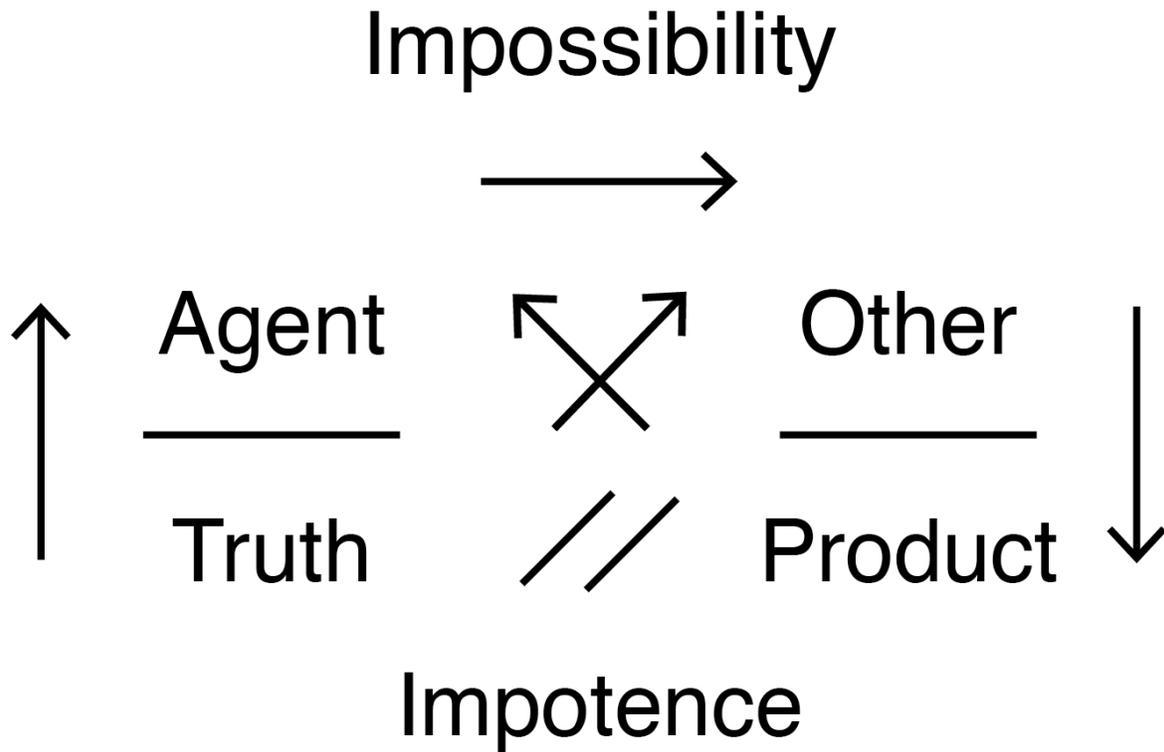
Figure 1: Structure of the Discourses

Language precedes discourse which precedes possible forms of communication (Loose, 2002). In fact, the endurance of social bonds is the success of discourse insofar as discourses produce a surplus, or remainder. This remainder has a fixed relation of impotence with the true force of its propulsion. The necessary failure of communication between agent and other, called the "disjunction of impossibility" turns out to support the social link; we continue to talk to each other because, as Freud saw in transferential repetition, the one to whom the subject speaks is a

logical other, a big "O" other, not the little "o" other of reality (Gendrault, 2013; Lacan, 1988).

Transference repetition is the subjective manifestation of the truth of social antagonism and the

way in which the subject cannot leave behind its history (e.g., psychic conflict). Likewise, for

any semblance, the effect intended on enjoyment cannot be established because the truth that

fuels its attempted harnessing and managing is largely unknown (unconscious) to the semblance.

It cannot know what it is staving off or what it is that would happen if it did not make appeals to

this "other." The very efforts of management inadvertently deploys an impossible logic of

equivalence in the face of the inherently unknowable, incommensurable, and singular.

The train tracks on the bottom half of the discourse (see Figure 1) mark the *disjunction of

impotence*, situated between product and truth at the bottom level of the discourse. The product,

[a], is the remainder produced through discourse. Its manifestations may be sublime, abject, or

philosophical. The wonder that it inspires hearkens to an ineffable beyond which is never

captured in discourse at all. The disjunction of impotence between [a] and [$] in the discourse of

the master means that the subject's division is masked, and never touched by [a], making

totalization impossible.

What is produced in the other, as a result of the top-level disjunction, is therefore

structurally unable to compensate for the enjoyment lost through the necessity of signifying

intelligibly from within the social bond. Looking at this impossibility from another angle, Lacan

(2006d) touches upon the important fact that for speaking subjects, demand and need always

emerge together. Their inextricability turns need into the drive to speak because the twinning of

demand and need delivers the latter to the infinite need for symbolic affirmation of love. The

move from need to drive, then, the theoretically limited and quantifiable status of need to the

infinite, insatiable drive is the deterritorializing force of symbolization itself, in its primordial

relation to acts of love (love being the axis of demand).
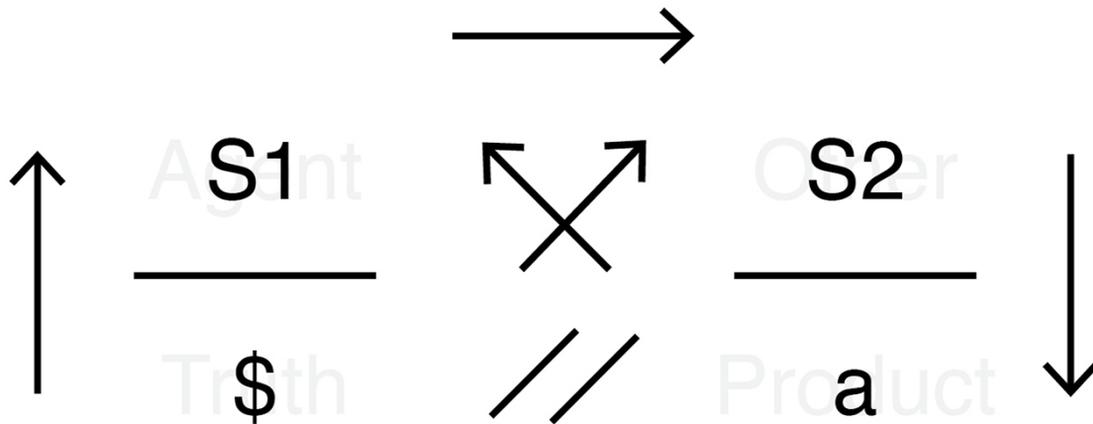
Figure 2: Discourse of the Master

The above represents what Lacan called the "discourse of the master," which he took as a

base statement of how discourses work. This is because the master's discourse contains in it the

dimensions of speaking itself, in which a repressed truth, the truth of the subject's division ($)

motors the production of a signifier in the position of agent (S1) that is to represent a subject for

the other, (S2), on whom it is imposed and who is presumed to operate through knowledge. It is

therefore in the initial status of the master's discourse that the slave's share is knowledge. The

tyranny of knowledge explicated by Lacan in seminar XVII (1991/2007) is that the S1 of the

master is coiled up—this makes it impossible for truth to appear in the course of historical

movement. This also means that the sign of the truth is to be produced by those who are the

substitutes for the slaves of antiquity—those who are the consumable products of the consumer society.

That a disjunction of impossibility is at work, this coiling up, means that a product, something "extra" is created, [a], the remainder that re-fuels the semblance, so to speak. But, for all that, it does not hit on the truth that motivated the discourse in the first place. The formula for fantasy ($ <> a) is shaped on this basis, speaking to the notion that the subject is forever separated from the object that would ensure total enjoyment. The typical interpretation of the latter half of the discourse of the master runs, more or less, that object [a] in the position of production is produced by the servant [S2] for the master's consumption/enjoyment. As we have seen, however, the slave does not only produce objects of enjoyment for the master, but also shares in the inter-subjective determination of the dispositions of the body, making object [a] a hyper-object of shared local knowledge, enjoyment, sense, and futurity in the sense of a socio-cultural know-how, and justifies social contracts that make it legible and transferable.

Likewise for the other diagonal arrow from [$] to [S2], the repressed truth of the subject, never enunciated, nonetheless has an effect on the Other to whom signifiers are directed. It is furthermore important to point out that none of the arrows arrive at [$], meaning that the subject's division cannot be put to rest, nor is the exchange of language the resolution of discontent. Instead, it generates something else—a sensation of an irreducible beyond whose allure might be temporarily capable of holding a place at the fore of consciousness. This object [a] delivered up as the product in the discourse of the master is characteristically identified with surplus, as it not only arises in the position of "product," but is also that mysterious, ontologically thin lost object/cause of desire that refuels the engine of speech. However, following Vanheule's (2016, pp. 4-5) elucidation, surplus-enjoyment is a more fitting name for

this final position of the discourses, indicating that [a] need not be exclusively identified with product of the discourse. The position of surplus-enjoyment constitutes an impasse by embodying that which is lost in the transition from need to demand, and hinges upon possible metabolism of the discursive machinery. Surplus enjoyment is produced as the corporeal tension not inherent to language, but to fantasy or delusion (Vanheule, 2016).

The discourse of the hysteric pushes us to "define the phallus as semblant and to approach the impossible of the sexual relation" (Brousse, 2007, p. 6) in that the discourse is motivated or moved by a --> $, the latter occupying the position of agent. The movement from $ --> S1 makes the hysteric's speech akin to protest, most generally speaking, in a revolt against the law of symbolic exchange, articulated to a master signifier. All discourse that is ordered around an attempt to reduce the impossible of the sexual relation to master signifiers can give rise to the hysteric's response. This move, in its turn, generates all sorts of narratives and knowledges as the product of confronting a master with truth.

The next turn in the standard rotations of discourses beginning with the master discourse is the discourse of the analyst. This discourse situates the analyst as object [a], in the position of object, nevertheless *as* agent. Motivated by knowledge, a praxis-oriented knowledge, or an ethical-as-generic knowledge of the real of the unconscious, such knowledge moves the analyst's speech toward the barred subject. Such provocation propels the production of master signifiers, the appearance of signifiers around which the analysand's discourse is knitted. The discourse of the university, for its part, builds up the proclamation of knowledge, with [S2] in the position of agent. Underscored by dogmas and ideas taken for granted in the academy, it tries to pull more and more into its auspices, including something of the subject. This produces an alienated subject who appears in the place of surplus value.

$$\downarrow \quad \frac{\text{\$}}{\text{S1}} \quad \times \quad \frac{\text{S2}}{\text{a}} \quad \downarrow$$

(Agent / Truth on left; Other / Product on right)
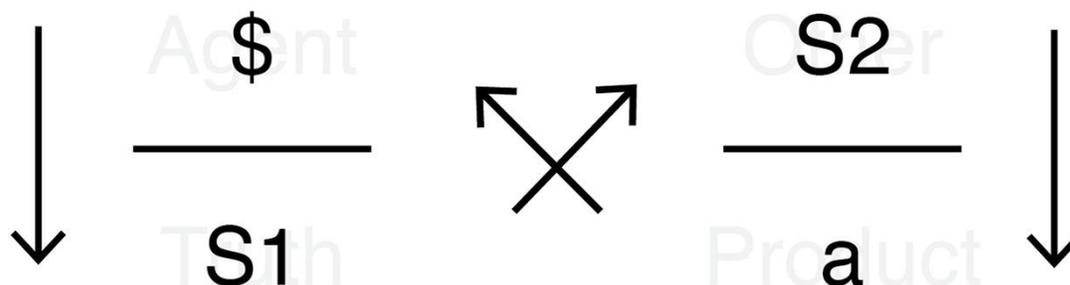
Figure 3: Discourse of the Capitalist

From the Universe of the Master to the Universe of the Capitalist

The capitalist discourse is situated as the "substitute" of the master's discourse, and as such makes overt the crisis of that discourse (Lacan, 2008). It is crucial to exercise caution in extending the theory of the discourses outside of the four elaborated in much greater detail by Lacan because he suggests that the schema of the four discourses is exhausted in his formulations, even while introducing the discourse of the capitalist. Bryant's (2006) work represents the difficulties that may have been at the root of Lacan's own trepidation. He reasons that the subtle inversion whereby [\$] moves into the position of agency and [S1] into the position of truth *inaugurates its own universe of discourse.* This bold assertion takes Lacan's discourse theory to the hilt, giving rise to a maneuver of delimiting possible worlds that is unfortunately more concerned with a mathematical logic of permutation than with either clinical or even socio-cultural observation.

One need not follow Bryant all the way down his rabbit hole to see the value in understanding the universe of the capitalist as expressing new social links in *its* permutations. We conjecture that these will be more apparent in our world today than the overly speculative (other three) universes with their respective rotations. Moreover, Bryant neglects to integrate in his account of the discourse of the capitalist the inversion of arrows and the disappearance of the disjunctions of impotence and impossibility. One cannot presume that the discourse functions in its specificity without just such a consideration—indeed, the status of castration and truth are the defining questions that arise in trying to parse the capitalist universe. We therefore continue down this path, also taking into account the dynamics of flow established by the changes in direction of the arrows and the dissolution of the disjunctions of the universe of mastery.

The cautiousness with which we venture into this new universe takes two forms. One is that analogous reasoning from the universe of the master must be rigorously qualified; if functors are arranged such that they give rise to the relational "moments" of the universe of mastery (e.g., $S1 \rightarrow S2$ or $a \rightarrow \$$) we must explain how these moments are synchronically imbricated into the logic of the capitalist universe. The other caveat, which makes this an exploratory effort indeed, is that we hold in suspension the degree to which the universe of the capitalist can be understood *as* a set of social links. This is a question very much unanswered in Lacan and often mournfully answered in the negative by contemporary Lacanian theorists. In light of this, if the capitalist discourse and the universe to which it gives rise do not constitute discourses, what are they? If not maps of social links, might they instead map a collective symptomatology?

The following therefore constitutes a speculative reading of the present and an experimental use of the functors of the barred subject ($\$$), master signifier(s) (S1), knowledge (S2), and the partial, or petit, object [a]. These functors invite us to attend deeply to questions of

distance and proximity, mediation, and the capitalist development of signs. The *order of the operators*, though having different relations of agency between each other, is maintained in the inauguration of this universe: ($ --> S1 --> S2 --> a). We take this as a sobering reminder to preserve that which *has* stayed the same—hinting at the overlapping or perhaps even superimposed nature of universes subsequent to that of mastery. When we turn to engage thinkers thoroughly caught in panic about the ruins of "real sociality" taken to inhere in such passage, overlaps in their actual manifestations (on social media) demonstrate the extent to which these relations survive as building blocks of a new (anti?)social relation. The direction of the arrows, which is to say, the flow of materials and signifiers, change in the universe of the capitalist. This implies a new imagination of causes, manifest as an altered relation between truth, subject, and other. It is the changed direction of arrows, notably absent from Bryant's (2006) reading, that has the most to say about the question of the social link in the capitalist discourse and its permutations. All changes of the capitalist universe are linked to the changing of these arrows; their dissolution of the disjunctions of impossibility and impotence (and the attendant stylized reckonings with "castration"), the invisibly complete re-investment of surplus-enjoyment, and the eerie accessibility of subjective truth that scrambles conscious and unconscious registers. While Lacan axiomatically maintained that truth rules the four discourses, we can suspend this certainty when dealing with the capitalist discourse and its permutations—allowing us to re-frame the questions above in terms of the relation between truth (of the unconscious) and social bonds.

  $ and S1 are Inverted. The implication to be drawn from this is that the directionality of $ → S1, retained from the discourse of the master has changed from (truth → subject) to (subject → truth). The subject does not address itself to the other, but to the truth in the place of which is

S1. This move is an inward plunge aimed at the most outward extension, the second motion of truth directed at the other. The distinctive quality of signifying symbolization, preserved in the move from S1 → S2 is no longer qualified by the disjunction of impossibility, but instead *first passes through truth*, making a deep (but fleeting) sense of mastery and certitude a condition that preempts the place of the other.

Lacan says of the advent of secular capitalism that "the impotence of adjoining the surplus-enjoyment to the truth of the master is suddenly voided" (1988, p. 207). For Kordela (2006) the secular sign of the capitalist economy makes economic exchange and speaking equally "within values." And although, as Marx (1867/1990) notes, in capitalism value "differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus-value" (p. 256) the latter's adjoining to capital makes the two effectively indistinguishable. Likewise for the barred subject who produces master signifiers (S1s) in the position of truth (see left side of Figure 3), the Other's enjoyment differentiates itself *as* truth in its articulation to an other.

This is to say that the Other's seeming existence is supported by the subject's illusion that it possesses the phallus and is itself bound to surplus-enjoyment. Here is where we find the subject's fantasy that it is the object of the Other's desire as a user, to which it devotes itself, thereby producing the illusion that sustains the Other. In this case, surplus-enjoyment adjoins itself to the truth of the Other, by way of the subject so that, epistemologically, they are one. This muddles the Symbolic/Imaginary distinction that separated demand from desire. All subjects of speech, irrespective of status, or position, engage capitalism on a different strata of its structure—that of the *drive/demand.* Regaling us with his interpretation of capitalist ideology, Žižek (1992) attends to the mode of interpellation of individual consumers. He notes that even when consumers are faced with ever more perverse and excessive products to desire, and their

"desire to desire" is thoroughly manipulated, we still do not yet reach the level of drive. The inherence of drive to capitalism, he writes, is more fundamental and systemic, propelling the entire machinery as the "impersonal compulsion to engage in the endless circular movement of expanded self-reproduction" (p. 13). The tight loops of the discourse of the capitalist correspond to and exemplify the moment famously described by Marx in the first volume of *Capital* (1867/1990) as the passage from M-C-M (money-capital-money) to C-M-C (capital-money-capital). The drive then figures as the human analogue of the circulation of money as capital. The expansion of value in this mode becomes *an end in itself.*

Recall that we began by defining discourse as the passage through the social bond that deals with enjoyment. Yet, when all of social life is subsumed under capital, objects of enjoyment (use-values) are subordinated to, and redefined in terms of, exchange value. The unencumbered, facelessness of abstract value via an imbrication of investments plays off the subject's division in language. This confers a perpetual sense that the impossibility that inheres in language is surmountable precisely because its certainty is always deferred. This indissolubly ties together the speaking subject and the function of value creation—the dissolution of the disjunctions conveys this. The effect on the social link is that of a replacement of the shared project of laboring to satisfy one's conscious or unconscious desires by a shared project of the wager of exchange.

The sense in which the barred subject is the agent in the discourse of the capitalist is that of false choice of alternatives from a blocked sense about what *could* be rather than what is *there in the market*. Speculation about the Other's desire comes to eclipse a sense of one's positioning within it; the question is not what does the Other want from me, but how does the Other want me to desire? Does the discourse of the capitalist spur the declination of the social link *writ large?* If

so, what are we to make of the impasse of reflexive self-seeking that precedes (the now unhinged movement between) S1 → S2? It is in this impasse that we locate the fodder for social linkage—such an impasse takes preponderance seriously, which is to say, the capture of attention in which signifiers play a, though not *the* role.

The Arrow Pointing Upward on the Left that Makes the Truth Unattainable in the Classic Discourse is now Pointing Downward. The relationship between the divided subject and the master signifier is preserved in that [$] brushes up against [S1]—even rushes toward it. However, [$] is in the position of agent rather than the position of truth. What does this entail? In the master's discourse, totalizing signifiers covered over subjective division, but now we actively "seek clothes" to cover this new vulnerability, seeking signifiers as totalizing explanations for this discontent. The sign of truth is to be produced by the subject who is now a product *sold* to the unconscious: "consumer society." This inversion entails that, in contrast to the master's discourse, where [S1] hides the truth about the self-assured master's own finitude, the new master's position is one where he is very aware of his shortcomings, and thus elicits desire subordinated to, or in the time and shape of, the drive**.** It is as if divided subjects unconsciously configure unique organizations of the Law, S1(s) on the basis of the semblants, and partial objects produced (which, should be noted already, are by no means simply "things" or "commodities"). Moreover, as Mura (2015) indicates, "the ability of the signifier to stand as a cause in the place of truth depends on the subject" (p. 162).

Additionally, where we used to have [a] informing [S1] in the position of agent, [a] now greets [$] there as anxiety or as *pure production of desire*. No signifier sheaths contact with [a] which becomes a haunting vision or a bedrock of subjectivity rather than a semblant that nudges along the production of signifiers articulated to the other. When we say that the master signifier

is determined by the subject, we must recall that, within the trajectory of the discourse, this downward flight toward S1 is preceded by a direct encounter (a → $) and followed by (S1 → S2). The antecedent suggests that this relationship is buffered first by the subject's persecution by surplus enjoyment and then placed in a signifying matrix in the locus of the other (see Figure 3). The stationing of a signifier in the place of truth, then, is independent insofar as the subject's autonomy is conditioned by the anxiety of the proximity of the indeterminate fetishized possible object(s) that becomes immediately socialized. Taking into account, too, the cycle speeds we have considered, and the "addictive" rhythm of immediacy, the subject's agency is, properly, a semblance motivated by the enjoyment we designate as superegoic.

The Upper Horizontal Arrow that Connected "Subject" and "Other" Disappears, and is Replaced by a Downward Arrow Connecting "Subject" and "Truth". The loss of this relationship could be read as indicating a loss of social ties, and many have commented on such a loss, arguing that, concomitant with the fall of symbolic, paternal authority, is the declining sense of a fixed social order that would mediate the relationship between subjects (e.g., Bryant, 2006, 2008; Dean, 2013a; McGowan, 2012; Žižek, 1999), in exchange for the downward arrow directing the barred subject to nominate a master signifier in the position of truth in which it "interfaces" with knowledge in the position of "other." As Soler (2016) notes, Lacan provided this fifth matheme to his theory of discourses *as* social links, even while indicating that it does not imply a bond between human partners. Gone, she says, are the pairs "master" and "slave," "student" and "teacher," "analyst" and "analysand," and "hysteric" and "authority." While remaining agnostic as to relay these accounts, the investigation of such a statement can perhaps only be undertaken in more concrete instances. It is curious for Lacan to undermine his own

mathemes (his designators surely undergo significant mutation), and even less characteristic to do so as an alarm bell or warning sign.[21]

Loose's (2015) description of the "addictification of society," consonant with the initial observations above, gives a similar account through the notion of the symptom. He claims that the erosion of its protective, symbolic element gives way to the increasing attractiveness of products that affect the mind and body directly. In the discourse of the capitalist and its arrangement of functors, [a], whose importance Lacan claims is elevated to the "social zenith," confronts [$] directly. In contrast to the master's discourse in which [a] is utterly unavailable, here it is painstakingly present—so much so that [$] is violently completed by [a], causing a foreclosure of castration and stunning or steamrolling the very status of the unconscious. Without solidarity and the bond of opposites, we are "face-to-face with plus-de-jouir objects" (Soler, 2016, p. 42). And yet, if the capitalist universe is its own universe devoid of the dyadic social relations of the master's universe, it is because Lacan strove to negate the idea of a simple replacement of "slave" and "master" for "capitalist" and "proletarian."[22] In the master's discourse, the subject's division is behind the speech that is believed in, i.e., the subject believes that it is telling the truth, and that any apparent impasse between agent and other is a function of communicative shortcomings.

In the capitalist discourse, the situation is otherwise. The subject's division is front and center, it knows that it is lying and must seek a truth whose pathic charge is sufficient for its admissibility before the other. It would seem as though the symbolic authority of [S1] becomes subjectivized, in that the active seeking of repressed truths becomes both individualized and absolute. Another way to put this is that conscious and unconscious registers are thoroughly mixed up. Without the neat division "capitalist" and "proletarian," what is also lost is a clean

class struggle based in shared interests and related claims to the natural world. In fact, Lacan remarks that we are all proletarians under capitalism. The assumption appears to be that social bonds come into doubt at the same time that asymmetrical power relations fade into the background. Our guiding questions in what proceeds, then, are: Is this dissimulation of hierarchies actually realized? If so, are social bonds without these asymmetrical relations possible?

Temporality and the Social Link of Capital

Lacan understood the effects of the discourse of the capitalist as issuing directly from the speeding up of capitalist production. In the Milan lecture where the discourse of the capitalist made its first appearance, he expressed concerns about it working too fast and consuming itself and the subject. Lacan is far from alone in this trepidation. In fact, scholarship spanning nearly all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences take pains to consider the spatio-temporal changes associated with our present moment. In Ben Agger's (1989, 2004) "fast capitalism," the free time of the user is colonized, robbed, and administered by on-line technologies as exemplary of the colonization of all life by perpetual production and consumption. These and other references to the digital, networked, and informational character of today's capitalism posit similarly charged accounts of how the economization of every moment of everyday life operates at the speed of flows of information. In this context, the speed of transmission of the latter bears on its capacity to produce surplus value.

David Harvey (1987) and Paul Virilio's (2006) analyses of "postmodern time-space compression" and "high speed," respectively converge upon the notion that a thickening of the present in real-time comes to overthrow or at least obscure the physical limits of space (cf. Celis, 2015). This round of time-space compression, enabled by high-speed communication

infrastructure, shrinks the temporal horizon of decision-making, and reassigns it across assemblages of humans and machines. Over-production is absorbed through accelerations in turnover time and through spatial displacement (Harvey, 1988, p. 183). As Crary (2013) notes, as the collapse of controlled and mitigated forms of capitalism washes through the United States and Europe, a time of "24/7" dislodges the supposed necessities of rest, recuperation, and preservation of organic biorhythms. Insofar as these have little to do with profitability and economic fortitude, he warns that "uninterrupted markets" are challenged by human fussiness over, for example, eight hours of sleep per night.

Simply put, there are speeds beyond which commences a destruction of social life, in that the latter is related to the rhythms of bodies that can only accelerate so far; destruction of social life is understood in these accounts to proceed through destruction of individual bodies. Such analyses indicate precisely the subjective bypass that seems also to be at stake for Lacanian theorists. These accounts capture well a critical zeitgeist that far outstretches the phenomenological accounts in psychological research, producing popular notions of emotional burnout, information overload, and our familiar Internet Addiction. Though, their assumption of a bypass of the subject opens up as many questions as it answers. How does the posited acceleration mix with subjects outside of fantasies of its total destitution? In other words, what are the actual operations of what can only be social power, supposed to dismantle social life? Does such a tiring of the subject, through rhythm and habit, constitute a poisonous social link rather than the absence of social links? By looking at concrete relations of production of the injunction to enjoy, we will see how temporal relations of this injunction emerge between subjects mediated by capital.

In an account of the present state of late capitalist society, Todd McGowan (2012) theorizes a switch from a society of prohibition to a society of enjoyment. The superego, having always been produced through the agency of the id, finds its fullest expression in a total injunction to enjoy. Accordingly, its overtly repressive features fade against a backdrop of the fantasy of compulsive indulgence. He points to Lacan's 17th seminar (1991/2007), where we are first referred to a distinctively modern discourse marked by a radical change in the symbolic mechanism of repression whose productive side (ability to produce surplus enjoyment ciphered in symptoms) graduates to a pivotal role in contemporary capitalism. As opposed to the mythologized societies founded on the threat and subsequent prohibition of enjoyment, which we elaborated through Freud above, today's world instead commands enjoyment. That we are to enjoy, rather than to renounce enjoyment, entails that the mechanism identified in Freud's paradox of conscience—that the more one accedes the more guilty one feels—is on overdrive. The more readily one greets the "right to enjoy," at the speed of immediacy, the faster the cycle of enjoyment/guilt, compared to the delayed gratification of its renunciation.

For McGowan (2012), capitalist markets produce subjects as consumers, inundating them with hyper-stimulation in the form of food, drugs, entertainment, and lifestyle "updates." All the while these consumer subjects become accustomed to the rapid obsolescence of these sources of stimulation. Today's consumer subject is best qualified as ultra-adaptable, fashioning and re-fashioning itself with elements of reckoning for its superegoic pilotage. Counter-intuitively, the less prohibitory law there is, the more we are constrained by heeding the open-ended agreement to enjoy. Such an injunction now binds everyone, flatly and equally, under capital as the obscene contradictory node that subtends that "no-saying" of the traditional (read: mythic) prohibitory structure of the Law (McGowan, 2012). This line of thought suggests that passive subjects

submit to the control of the superego that emerges through the injunction to enjoy, contented with the products it so adamantly pushes.

The preeminence of the subject's exposure to a host of material and immaterial objects to which excessive enjoyment is attributed means that the superegoic law manages and controls in the register of enjoyment, which is to say, who and how to be. As Vanheule (2016, p. 8) says, the question for capitalist subjects is not "what do I desire?" but "what *should* I desire?" which Bryant (2008, p. 13) considers not a question about objects, but a question of the conditions under which the other might desire one or other ego. This means that there is an auto-production of subject *qua* consumer that is mediated through the desire of the Other, which is to say, imagined to be evaluated by others. The question of the desire of the Other, then, drives itself through its own opacity, and surplus value is extracted in the form of consumables that inundate the subject with options of being.

What I would like to draw special attention to is that the production of consumers does not have at stake the enjoyment of the body, but the enjoyment of being a sign for the Other—in other words, *being* enjoyed. Capitalist discourse fashions subjects who can enjoy *without contradiction with their ideals.* This means that "objects" of behavioral, lifestyle type addictions must hold together the paradox of demonstrating (and thus enacting) one's ideals through their incorporation and simultaneously disavowing the specific effects of incorporation. This is because the object is a semblant, as when "exercise," for example, is saddled with the work of securing a symbolic matrix of a good-enough subject. It is not the enjoyment of the body at stake here, then, but the temporality of enjoyment as a sign to the Other. Moving at the speed of information, the performance of enjoyment obscures the difference between use-value and exchange-value, making value and surplus value appear immanent to each other.

And yet, consumerism in capitalism is figured as passive in the wrong sense—we are subjects of *what gets produced*, and are not made passive because of products that are the new opiates of the masses. As we will go on to argue at great length in the context of the production of value on-line, we are more engaged than ever as prosumers (producer-consumers). The problem is not so much that we are passive at all. It is that we are powerless—powerless in the sense that something described as consumerism, especially with its superegoic features, is but an inadequate moniker for those who are voiceless in determining the direction of society through what does and does not get produced. With the flotation of the value of money right around the time of Lacan's announcement of the discourse of the capitalist, control appeared to be at the whim of the standing elite for whom its massive expansion is of crucial importance. The timing of markets and capital flows modulate everyone's lives, and yet the social link that gives rise to widely shared modulations are not created through discourse. They are created instead through relations of ownership of shares of society's productive power. Put simply, money is the loudspeaker that roars over subjects, determining the distribution of enjoyment constitutive of the social link.

One should not be fooled by the barred subject's location in the place of agency in the discourse of the capitalist, and not least because the bar that separates it from [S1] in the position of truth leaves its alienation from the signifier unchanged. The [S1 → S2] of the capitalist discourse, from truth to the Other, effects a bypass of the subject via the over-determination of truth in the capitalist system. This [S2] in the place of the Other is not the position of the slave as per the master/slave dialectic present in the [S1 → S2] of the master's discourse. The authoritative, superegoic injunctions in the place of truth in the discourse of the capitalist facilitate an address from [S1 (truth) → S2 (other)] as a demand that springs forth from a

narcissistic identification. Such a demand is addressed to the those who have decision-making power within markets. The social link we perceive here is that of purchasing power.

In what follows, the discourse of the capitalist is explored through money itself. This accomplishes a few things. The first is that it adds to the consumerist account of the society of enjoyment exemplified by McGowan (2012) by spotlighting the commodity that does not already assume a subject who can afford to follow the superego's injunctions in the first place. In addressing head-on the media common to capitalist subjects, it takes the social link as a distributor of enjoyment literally. Not only is it common to all capitalist subjects, but it is what links speaking subjects to the system. It does so by constituting their voice, or nomination as part of the productive machinery.

If the question is in fact not "what do I desire," but "what should I desire," money would then figure in at this ground-zero of desire for the subject as well as in the broader determination that directs production. Moreover, looking at money as a social link can chip away at the more popular vision of consumerism in which objects of consumption are *successfully* de-linked from anyone but a shopkeeper (or a computer interface). This is to say that readings of the injunction to enjoy tend to focus on ends rather than means, objects of enjoyment rather than media. This is strange considering the latter is a more obvious locus of social linkage, though the former certainly brings a brand of lonely, anti-social consumerism closer to hand. The next section takes this opportunity to elaborate what comprises the distanced informational process by which subjects' nominations do or do not factor into what gets produced. Though it is not in fact an address, this subject is a subject of money, demonstrating the latter's effects on subjective temporality. To put it boldly, this is the psychic habitus of capital. Such a temporality is institutionalized in capitalism in infinite ways (hence the wide range of interpretations of the

discourse of the capitalist). We therefore look at the injunction to enjoy directly, through the procurement of money-as-money and its linking of debtors and lenders.

Debt Relations

The presumption of a market that has everything does not account for the social relations that direct what is produced, and it is these things to which we are subject. Adding to McGowan's (2012) consumer-focused account, we are also involved in social relations that are not simply relations with objects—relations of power obviously constitute one's ability to access and procure these objects (wealth disparities and inequities), and these are sets of strategies in which objects of consumption play numerous roles (e.g., they are instruments, weapons, incentives, etc.). Not only entranced by images or sedated by a wide range of satisfying goods, we are linked, by various degrees of transparency and opacity, to those who determine what gets produced, and thus to what we are subject. Historically speaking, the injunction for growth that expands consumerism despite stagnating wages produces social relations of extreme and normalized debt. The new superegoic injunction to enjoy either presumes a wealthy subject, or else implies a preliminary injunction to earn (and, likely, to "love one's work"). If the superegoic injunction in the capitalist discourse sends a subject out on a search for things to enjoy, its ground-zero makes it first a subject of money *qua* abstract or non-incarnated enjoyment. If capitalism is speeding up, devouring itself and its subjects, we are increasingly all proletariatized by relating, first and foremost, to money itself.

Going into debt presupposes objects which possess all pleasure in potentiality, and therefore realize the function of money as a *material representative of wealth.* This opens up the possibility of self-fashioning for the other, taking phallic enjoyment to the next level—we return to the possibility and function of wealth shortly. The debtor is thus caught in circulation and is

forever leaping from commodity to commodity in search of that final commodity that will surely

grant true enjoyment. Each pleasure, however, can only be realized in the next, each present

pleasure is always already waiting for the coming pleasure and pleasure is achieved only by not

having it at all. The debtor is tethered, hysterically, to an always already deferred future; "I will

have had." For the flexible, "debtor" subject of consumer capitalism, the world provides a supple

framework in which one effortlessly bounces between intoxicating commodities and the fact of

their novelty. The agency of the superego proceeds from a stream of "inadequate despairs" that

are just satisfying enough that the debting subject is never quite despairing enough to reach the

truth of this framework, and ultimately create an unnerving sense of anxiety and emptiness. The

command to enjoy follows the same logic of *symbolic substitution,* at the barreling speed of

obsolescence of consumer commodities.

The inadequate despairs of debting do not derive solely from the existential emptiness

described in both production-focused (Marxist) analyses, or the highly similar one found in

McGowan's (2012) consumption-focused account of societies of enjoyment. They are generated

too by the abstraction of enjoyment from the particular ways in which it is incarnated, including

not only its fethishization in specific commodity forms, but also from the temporality of desire.

A Marxist reading informed by Casarino (2003) and Negri (1996, 2003a, 2003b) also suggests

that the time of circulation/consumption dictates such enjoyment. It is a sort of addictive

enjoyment *that abides by the speed of production cycles in neglect of the time of enjoyment*. This

type of enjoyment, call it, for now, imaginary enjoyment, that characterizes capitalist societies

today can only proliferate on the condition of a regime of temporality indifferent to the time of

the enjoyment of the body. Thus, radically unique, "quirky," to put it mildly, forms of imaginary

enjoyments are opened up over and over again owing to the dumb repetition of surplus value,

which continually stimulates reinvestment into the system of abstract value, capital itself. What repeats is what is profitable, capital's for-itself drive, rather than what is desired.

This production for profit itself operates inversely. Lending, therefore, as opposed to debting is the act that realizes the function of money in which it is the *general form of wealth* as against its particular commodities. For the lender, it would seem that enjoyment is not bought with money, it is accessible as a function of the body, but for all that *is* ruled on the time of money. In Marx's *Grundrisse* (1939-41/1993) notebooks as in introductory economics textbooks, money works as (a) a measure of value, (b) a medium of exchange, and (c) the general form of wealth, or money *as* money. Money as the general form of wealth is what transcends pre-capitalist circulation and creates a universalized form of wealth. Money represents the "divine existence" of commodities, and also acts as the terrestrial symbol that reminds us that anything and everything we want may just be out there waiting to be grabbed up in an exchange. Money is *the* object of greed, as greed itself is a form of the drive distinct from the craving for a particular kind of wealth, like jewelry, silk, wine, spices, etc. that only becomes possible when money is posited in its third, fully abstract, modern form.

Money is a contradiction that dissolves itself, drives towards its own dissolution because, as the abstraction of riches, it exists as pure fantasy. When money became the general form of wealth, it also became the first hyper-deterritorialized signifier, losing the denotative function of accounting and turning instead into an icon. As the material representative of general wealth, it is realized by being thrown back into circulation or into the realm of the subjective singular/particular. It remains in circulation as medium *of* circulation but is lost for the accumulating body. Because its disappearance secures it as wealth, with money one can only be sure that it exists for what it is supposed to be by giving it up.

Money's independence is a semblance; its independence of circulation exists only in view of circulation, as dependence on it. As realized exchange value, it must be simultaneously posited as the process in which exchange value is realized when it is negated as purely objective form. Money must circulate to realize its full potential for abstraction—it only even becomes independent of commodities to the extent that it becomes fully dependent on the circulation of those commodities, like the figure of an anthropocentric, transcendent god who achieves its transcendence by repeatedly being brought back to earth and reincarnated in each and every successive instant of an immanent process of circulation. The temporality of money-in-itself is that of circulation, implying varying modes of divergence from the temporality of enjoyment.

Capitalism's enjoyment of its death drive can be translated into its use of humans who desire money *as* money. For the debtor, such a procurement of money is drug-like in its bundling of losses that have never occurred. On the other hand, lending achieves pleasure through the stretching of time, dealing with money in itself. The lender plays with time, renouncing the past and the present by stepping outside of time altogether in favor of the control over production processes afforded by money in its transcendent, a-temporal form. This occupation of eternity, not unlike the looping infinity shape of the discourse of the capitalist, presents a desire to plunge the body into an uncertain future. Such enjoyment precisely occupies the linkage between the Symbolic and the Real, thereby shifting attitudes relating to symbolic castration and authority. With respect to the question of the social link in the context of the universe of the capitalist, the temporality induced by the quest for money-in-itself prolongs the individual subject as an abstract personality in relation to any possible having—any property relation whatsoever. It therefore identifies the subject's self-relation in the universe of the capitalist. The subject's self-relation within the universe of the capitalist is carried over into the forthcoming discourse. In the

discourse of network production, the subject is provoked to signification by these imaginary

losses that act as inputs into the discourse, thus prolonging them and the system itself together.

CHAPTER III

A LACANIAN DISCOURSE FOR ANALYZING SOCIAL MEDIA

Introducing the Discourse of Network Production

In the last section, I gave a (truncated) look at the general relation between temporality

and the social link that inheres in the discourse of the capitalist. The capitalist discourse takes the

notion of language without communication to the hilt, blurring the lines between conscious and

unconscious registers. With this cursory understanding in place, we turn our attention to the

major development of this dissertation—the discourse of network production. The discourse of

network production is a name for one positioning of the functors of discourse in the capitalist

universe where:

$$\downarrow \quad \frac{S2}{a} \quad \times \quad \frac{\$}{S1} \quad \downarrow$$
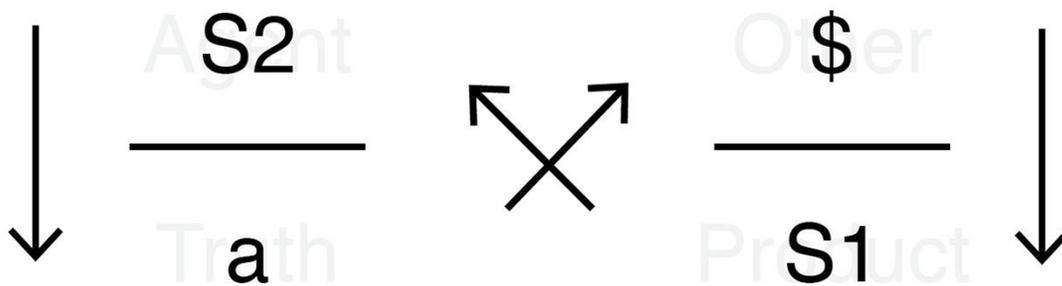
Figure 4: Discourse of Network Production

Gendrault (2013) draws attention to Lesourd's (2006) rotations of the capitalist discourse, noting that he considers them "chatters" rather than discourses. He reasons that these mathemes have speakers and interlocutors that nevertheless do not represent the one enunciating, but instead represent utterances directly. This is a situation in which, it is supposed, subjectivity does not come into play. For him, the following discourse constitutes the "chatter of technology." Such a name does not permit much investigation into the question of a constituted social link. If there is constituted a social link, a discourse in which subjectivity seems to be elided, cast out, or simply unrecognizable, this is symptomatic of the form of the social link and the way it constitutes subjects—not an indication that subjectivity is no longer what is at stake.

Such a dismissal is, unfortunately, familiar. As a pathological form, the construction of Internet (and other) addictions brushes aside too quickly the question of habit and habitus. Fear of a nonhuman, "mechanistic" creep within the human short circuits the changing nature of enjoyment and the social link. Portrayals of this scenario in movies like *Terminator* (Daly, Gibson, Hurd, & Cameron, 1984) and *I, Robot* (Baron et al., 2004) end with robots and intelligent machines forming a new sort of violent or hyper-conscious revolution capable of taking over or overthrowing human domination over the natural world. We see this same fear deeply rooted in the progression of labor and technology under capitalism, where the managerial fantasy of humans' replacement by fully obedient, laboring machines is repeatedly presented as an actual possibility. Rather than affirm human obsolescence outright, or replay horrific images of bombastic takeovers, it is time to tackle head-on this "impoverished" view of subjectivity made visible from the modifications to the social link referenced by the discourse of network production.

In fact, the Internet implies an ethic because it can only model worlds based on human action, or input. This means it does the work of mediation by guiding actors through a set of possible, predetermined inputs (Galloway, 2012). As an ethic, the computer takes our action as the condition of the environment's expression. The computer is not an object, or a creator of objects, it is a process or active threshold mediating between states. Computing, like language itself, is premised on the notion that objects are subject to definition and manipulation according to a set of principles for action. The matter at hand is not that of coming to know a world, but rather that of how specific, abstract definitions are executed to form a world. In other words, it is not quite right to say that the computer is a formal medium, and thus declare that formalism is the appropriate way to approach it. Rather, the computer is a *formalizing* medium—like other media, it cannot address a world that is anything but entirely formalized—and because of this it must be approached through the meeting point between world and formal model. So, in dealing with the capture and production of social information, we deal fundamentally with action and with power.

From the groundwork of the subject of superegoic injunction of the discourse of the capitalist—the subject tasked with the self-management of enjoyment for the Other—we turn to a discourse in which such a subject occupies, not the position of "agent," but the position of "other." The forthcoming account of the discourse of network production looks at on-line platforms—the digital factory, as it were—to understand how the otherness of the subject is provoked and capitalized, *as* sociality. As we will see, there is good reason to be concerned about the loss of the theme of production in the narrative of passive user-ism espoused as much by web companies and critics as by the commonplace understanding of Internet Addiction. As not to add to the conditions through which the procedural logic of private and individualized

consumption is sustained, we look at the recursive interactions and meticulous planning that give rise to the appearance of a spontaneous participant of social media. Indeed, a lot must be done in order to capture and profit off of what might even be called social or affective labor executed on-line.

The uniquely capitalist temporality of money-as-money that we looked at in the context of the discourse of the capitalist tends to jumble the neat division of producers and consumers in a sort of undifferentiated fog of advertising, self-marketing, and its recursion. The folding of the logic of production and consumption will be demonstrated concretely as we glimpse in greater detail the process of social media participation and its capitalization. At root, recording rights, property relations, and identity-tied accounts shape digital worlds. These delimit the seen and the unseen of platforms, where billions of people worldwide communicate, plan events and meet-ups, render payments, make recommendations, read each other's posts as sources of news, etc. As such, they mold the productive use of capitalist subjects in their value *as* capitalist subjects (hence the barred subject in the position of "other" in this discourse).

The discourse of network production is demonstrative of the way in which the imbricated, collective work of recording human activity and gathering knowledge suggests and assumes an abstract beyond—"the social," from which no subject escapes. This is especially strange on the backdrop of a global neoliberal regime for which Margaret Thatcher's statement from the late-1980s, "society doesn't exist" (only individuals and families do), is emblematic. Who would have thought that an idea like this would emerge alongside a massive engine of social record-keeping, organized by networks? Such record-keeping produces truly gluttonous amounts of self-representative data on subjects who have no claim to it. The Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology of connective desiring machines, mechanisms of control centered on politically liberal

models of human beings (subjection), and mechanisms that are indifferent to this model (enslavement), is helpful in this key.

Because the discourse of network production is a discourse that relies on the interplay between human and machine-readable code, one may rightly wonder whether or not it is a discourse at all (or, equally, whether or not Lacan's barred subject is the correct functor to place in the position of "other"). Nevertheless, failing to understand what happens on-line in relation to the subject of consumption of the discourse of the capitalist would be an oversight. The subject-as-other in this discourse is a formative of something like global culture based in rituals of knowledge-seeking, spreading, and sense-making—and subjection to recording and highly opaque governance of networked spaces. What is tempting to call the horizontal, libidinal economy of networks nevertheless does not change the status of self-representation. While control over its timing and context by self-represent(ing/ed) subjects steadily diminishes (as this economy is capitalized), we must be careful not to glorify or over-estimate self-representational speech. Such speech is just as empty as it has ever been.[23]

The wager of the following analysis is that delineating the speaking/spoken subject's place in the creation of surplus value can provide the fundamental premises for a program of solidarity among digital subjects—such a program is conceptually challenged by the temporal non-differentiation of production and consumption as well as by on-line conditions that vary, sometimes greatly, by national jurisdiction. Popular commentary of dominant social media sites abounds. Think manipulated Facebook feeds, echo chambers of political opinion, fake news, bad news, threats from cyberbullies, alt-right fascism, everyone's birthdays, and Trump's tweets. However, a much less topical and more structural analysis is required to move these complaints from shared annoyances to alliances that recognize the depth of the social, economic, and

political engineering of which these annoyances (in addition to our addicted use) is symptomatic

(read: *sinthome*-atic).

Let's give a brief, narrative overview of this discourse, as the rest of the piece will offer a

more granular explanation of the mechanisms and implementations of the abstractions described

in Figure 4 (above). The loop of the discourse of network production begins and ends with [S2]

which translates, without being reducible to, the platform's network and its knowledge

processes. This is not specific to the case of Facebook, though it is through Facebook that we see

this logic in action. As a major "hub" on the Internet, its logic extends to the social "Web 2.0" as

a whole. This means that the quick recursion through which it conditions and organizes social

knowledge makes this discourse highly action-oriented compared to staler notions of ideology-

as-propaganda.[24] [S2] in the position of agency invites reflection on how this compares and

diverges from how knowledge is wielded in the discourse of the university. We know the

university discourse is always in service of some master's discourse, even if it operates at a

degree of removal from it (or even derives its power from this distance). If this is so for the

discourse of network production, it can be figured as a privileged site of social and political

engagement, specifying processes that produce and reproduce social relations. It therefore also

indicates the spread of market logic through domains that political thinkers, such as feminists,

have historically sought to keep outside of the scope of such logic (see Hansen & Philipson,

1990; Shaw, 2014). The discourse of network production captures subjects in continuous

modulation, adapting us idiosyncratically to code bases that serve as inputs and outputs of the

network as a whole. With respect to [S1] in the position of product, or surplus value, we see how

unique signifiers attached to subjects [$ → S1] issue back into [S2] without the fetter of the

disjunction of impossibility. While this disjunction evaporates in the capitalist universe, this

discourse enables an assessment of a—perhaps novel—type of exclusion from [S2] that presents itself nevertheless.

The agency of collective knowledge and its generation of a beyond, a social substance flush with enjoyment [S2 → a] pursues individual subjects as outsiders *within* the system [a → $]. This motion constitutes the stupefying overwhelm often conceived as the way the "attention economy" pushes right up against human cognitive limits (e.g., Berardi, 2005; Terranova, 2012). Interpreting the discourse of the capitalist, Vanheule (2016, p.9) takes the arrow [a → $] to mean that "object a plagues the subject, which again creates the move from $ to S1". He calls [a] the "only element affecting the subject" (p. 9), opposing the notion that the marketplace of services and solutions impacts the subject in a meaningful way. In the discourse of network production, these marketplace S1's are not services and solutions, but the subject's (conscious and unconscious) self-representation *as* commodities (or a bundled commodity). These commodified representations act an unprecedented degree of removal from the subjective and inter-subjective contexts of communication [$ → S1]. These proceed automatically as inputs into and out of the agency of knowledge with which we began [S1 → S2]. In this way, the signifiers from the traumatic pursuit of the subject by [a] return as a haunting, alienating, and individuating body of knowledge, constructed from above and without.

When subjects are caught up in the looping structure that characterizes all of the rotations of the universe of the capitalist (the other two are not discussed here), it appears as if there is a constant demand for more enjoyment on behalf of the system as a whole. This means more psychic labor for the subject in the expansion of network production, as it concentrates and broadens bodies of data. The dizzying flight of digital flows and currents, along with the subject's participatory self-management, become fused to industrial and manufacturing

processes. Such processes become increasingly driven by the speculative vehicles of predictive data analytics and (similarly concocted) financial derivatives. While we focus on an explicit, self-proclaimed social network, it is now the case that administrative, coordinating, intellectual, manual, industrial, agricultural, and service labors share a commonality. They are all overseen and strategically coordinated (or sometimes "disrupted" in proudly rebellious tech-world parlance) by continuous electronic surveillance and ongoing analyses of the performance of subjects (Holmes, 2003). In network production, surplus value (S1's) is honed and interpreted— it is all capital in potential until it is used at the will of the purchaser or owner, be they companies, governments, transnational agencies, extremist groups, or any other interested third party.

While network production informs the (still operative) discourses of the original four rotations, it doesn't work, as they do, to ward off the death drive. As one of the rotations of the universe of the capitalist, it *self-propels.* Such propulsion instigates an ongoing reorientation of the traditional role of desire toward an always pre- and post-desiring subject. Deleuze (1992) describes this constant reorientation as a regime of control via modulation. The subject fractures along its original fault lines *as* a split subject, depending, of course, on its historical embedding in and on the Internet. The Internet often does, but does not *need* to presume a speaking subject. Social media platforms make it apparent that the whole of the social web is like a big come-as-you-are party. However, when the circulation of code becomes an end-in-itself, multiple identifications and fantasies are called upon as inputs. The "as-you-are" is scrambled, expropriated, and even exploited in this process. The mother lode of the participatory web is identifying habits, relations, and networks of relationships from which can be discerned subjective states of user-groups, like fear or belonging. These account for attentive behaviors,

and create feedback loops through which users and algorithms turn data into higher-order reflections, rationalizations, and data-driven deployments. In other words, network production is not only a joyous connecting of all-to-all, but a system of strong profiling given over to indeterminate operations of those in positions of power and ownership.

The rise of the networked platform, Facebook, has had profound influences (both in its concept and style as well as its international lobbying efforts) on other sites of production of language, affects, and codes. As such, it draws together many different forms of networked production in terms of the social constraints and affordances it generates. Looking at the dynamics of Facebook will thus give us the opportunity to outline more clearly interventions that do not pit the subject against the agency of the network, but enable a livable relationship to it, within it. This symptomatic politics of the discourse of network production resonates doubly; with the workerist bent of analyses of digital labor that emphasizes its anti-social, asymmetrical distribution of wealth, and with widespread sentiment of love/hate, addiction-style devotion to the Internet and social media. Both of these angles speak to the discontents of civilization, surfacing the pain of insider exclusion and the struggle for control. The encounter with [a] that produces ever more fractures of the subject [$] is a remainder, or excess, of the system of networked production that incites the production of [S1].

When signification is the enjoyment on offer "in both directions," we do not only incur the primordial loss that accompanies, in Lacanian parlance, puncturing the Real with signifiers (Ragland, 1997). Beyond subjective frustration of signifying impotence is the fact that this process creates titles, rights, and possessions at an unprecedented rate. This formal enclosure of an increasingly relevant realm of signification, through the property relations of data, creates a scenario in which we struggle for control over what Bernard Stiegler (1998, 2005) might call the

means of collective individuation; for the social know-how that we produce willingly and in abundance. Reading the terms of conditions for Facebook, where college students spend up to eight hours a day producing and consuming signification, one finds that these datum are held on private servers in perpetuity.

Network Analysis: Facebook as Prototypical Social Media Architecture

Facebook is one major player in what Benjamin Bratton (2015) calls the "Cloud polis". by this he means:

> The model provided and enacted by global cloud platforms to cohere Users into proto-state entities. These entities may operate at the scale of a true state and may come into political geographic conflict with states accordingly. *Cloud polis* is characterized by hybrid geographies, incomplete governmental apparatuses, awkward jurisdictions, new regimes of interfaciality, archaic imagined communities, group allegiances, ad hoc patriotisms, and inviolable brand loyalties . . . We can observe different formal models of *Cloud polis* in the service architectures of contemporary *Cloud* platforms, such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple, and can deduce possible *Cloud polis* by the recombination of these architectures. (pp. 369–370)

Facebook is one of the current cloud platform empires, though the way it exists today is by no means determinative of future arrangements of stakeholders. As one of a few major ventures, it can be viewed as a prototype for geopolitical cloud futures. What sets Facebook apart and makes it especially interesting for our purposes is that, in addition to being an oft-named subset of Internet Addiction (social media addiction, Facebook addiction), it is also a cloud polis

built from the lives of its users. This moves to the fore questions of human interest related to ubiquitous network technology at layers beyond those visible to users (e.g., energy expenditure of data centers or technical re-orientation of supply chains).

As a limited simulation of human culture that becomes a new habitus into which we enter willingly, it is a ripe area for the pursuit of an analysis of the specific forms of enjoyment of the Internet. The simultaneity of the avoidance of the body and the question of sexual difference denoted by addiction more generally, amplified by its particular affinity between the geographically distanced, digitally mediated communications, and the techno-fetishistic ideal of leaving the body behind in favor of its subordination by machine intelligence, are indeed the modalities of enjoyment on-line. This account will move back and forth between the real economic, political ramifications of this enjoyment and the subjective effects of life on-line—a user perspective. In other words, we will directly broach the asymmetrical relations of social power; the class division between the owner-capitalists of the platform and the dispossessed user; and the horizontal relations of social capital, mediated by selection algorithms whose operations are opaque to users. While a multi-stakeholder analysis, inclusive of the public-private partnerships that define the networked technologies, and disproportionate effects of data-driven technological control on marginalized groups, would be a more accurate and nuanced way of discussing the reality of social power in digitally dependent societies, I opt instead to stress the poles presented by these forms of enjoyment *as* social power: A Lacanian-Marxism through a handful of Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts.

Facebook is not only a player of the cloud polis. It is also a platform. Platforms are not merely technical models, but institutional forms on par with states and markets. They are generative of interaction in that they set terms of participation according to fixed protocols,

whose value paradoxically lies in their ability to mediate interactions that may not be conceivable from the outset of their design. Bratton (2015) defines platforms as systems that "simultaneously distribute interfaces into that system through their remote coordination and centralizes their integrated control through that same coordination" (p. 374). Platforms have the capacity, therefore, to transform social processes according to their own logic in advance of and as a result of their use—provided that such social processes are dependent upon them in the first place. This dependence and shaping makes exit and entrance dynamics key sites of struggle for users and groups (Bratton, 2015).

The private companies that operate social media, like most other forms of media, comprise the primary network participation for most users today. Facebook is a blockbuster, or "oligopolistic" software. As such, it is a cultural text that frames forms of user interaction, determining the terms of our social relations with a billion other users, all the way down to how electrical signals are routed to our devices. To broach subjectivity in the digital age more broadly, a critical understanding of Facebook cannot operate only at the layer of content we see on the website. The high degree of personalization of newsfeeds and pages could only render the most diverse of accounts that reflect the specific social milieu of the researcher. The level of discourse takes into account the position of the subject in its relations to actors involved in the address, beyond the inter-subjective instances of communication that occur on the visible interface. The semiotics of information and data production, the place of the subject, and the surplus value such discourse generates are, therefore, composed together in the group ensemble that is the network. Treating the subject as simply a consumer, the perspective that we saw in the discourse of the capitalist, is insufficient for determining how two modes of enjoyment, or the

producer/consumer, "pro-sumer" status of users, makes Facebook an exemplar of how network production functions more generally.

The fact that networks are, literally, nothing without their pro-sumers has no bearing on how the network comes to function for these same prosumers. Those whose lives are increasingly mired in "liking," "sharing," button pushing and other bureaucratic acts of self- and peer-monitoring have no share in the massive wealth of data, the collective memory to which they contribute. Why, then, are commercial social networks as they currently exist thought of as a commons that embodies global public opinion?

Tim Berners-Lee, credited with the invention of the World Wide Web, lucidly articulated that the dream behind the early Internet was to communicate, through sharing information, in a common space (Kennedy, 2013). Facebook wants us to be able to share information more efficiently. It is this rhetoric that establishes social media giants' function as hosts of the party, so to speak, facilitators of the social world. By emphasizing their role as social facilitators, the politics of data labor, management, ownership, and monetization are conveniently stored away, and political-economic issues are overwritten as largely technocratic ones (Gillespie, 2010). The company line, abetted by a twisted version of the 90s net-cultural ethos of sharing, serves first to obscure proprietary control, and then to neutralize and smooth out the relations between the content-generating users, the platform vectoralists, and the advertisers and data handlers who put it to intermediary uses (Kennedy, 2013).

It is not as if popular media outlets do not expose the exploitative or predatory nature of social media, in its links with advertising agencies, data brokers, and analysts. Recall the Cambridge Analytica voter manipulation scandal of 2014-2018, and the leaked emails evincing surveillance efforts of U.S. police departments and the National Security Agency. However,

these phenomena tend to be presented as if they are hiccups in an otherwise egalitarian trade-off between user and web company. The overarching story of the participatory web, Web 2.0, is that it costs a little privacy to have the convenience of an instant communication and social discovery service. This story centers the conversation on whether or not Facebook is a good consumer choice, suggesting that a cost-benefit analysis of the platform is tipped in the direction of benefits. To take a specific example, one may compare the free political Facebook news content with traditional news outlets. Facebook news is superior in terms of entertainment and killing time, but for news media parameters like "balanced information" and "social utility," Facebook pales in comparison (Schäfer, Sülflow, & Müller, 2017). Facebook has a relatively narrower niche and a low overlap with print and television media, especially because news feeds conform to the past activity of the account from which it is accessed.

This has to do with the fact that, unlike more traditional media sources, Facebook does not produce content itself, but harvests, curates, and extracts it from pro-sumers, who are tasked with producing selves, giving updates on their lives, displaying feelings, choosing from the 56 available gender identifications offered by the interface's drop-down menu, and the like. Rhetoric that conceptualizes social media platforms as consumer products mislead, leaving out the productive dimension and the reliance of the platform's functioning on its base of users. Providing us with free or cheap tools for expanding the scope of remote communication, informational "enhancement" of life, and other digital art supplies make it all the easier for us to be productive, but non-remunerated workers for such platforms.

As of November 2016, Facebook is far and away the largest social networking site, with 1.79 billion active profiles (Terranova, 2004). It continues to grow exponentially, at the rate of about 16% per month. How did such a behemoth originate? Greg Elmer (2017) suggests a

critical approach to Internet history in which one looks at the process of web companies'

financialization. In times leading up to major rounds of funding that Elmer calls "pre-

corporation," architects designing for the pursuit of future interests come out with new directions

and features of the platform. As we have said, Facebook is such a major force on-line that this

view allows one to extrapolate about the direction of network production writ large, shaped as it

is by the projections, features, and profit-creation of its leading companies. In the case of

Facebook, such value is, of course, sought in social networking.

Pre-corporation is the moment when investors must be convinced to part with their

money. This is the development of the specifics of network production, because its inventors

must be able to discern a processual way of selling and profiting from the coordination of social

relations as commodities. When the question of value is "immaterial," as opposed to a more

tangible, landed asset, it can be an especially obscure matter that eludes critics and market-

watchers alike. Taking advantage of the ethereal, non-visible facet of production abstracted from

concrete goods, and the vaporous, highly mobile quality of data, it is difficult to grasp its course

even for those with vested monetary interests.

As the dotcom gold rush cascaded forwarded, leading to the dot-bomb market crash of

1999 and 2000, pre-corporate histories of the Internet also become governmental stories,

highlighting the rules that dictate the conditions of pre-corporate promotions, offers, "pitches,"

and trades. Brian Murphy (2002) reminds us that since the late 1990s, the Internet has been

governed as a for-profit commercial sphere. While earlier forms of what is now the Internet

(Arpanet) were developed for academic and military use by the Defense Advanced Research

Projects Agency (DARPA) of the U.S. Department of Defense decades earlier, Vice President Al

Gore shepherded a series of government bills that would place control of the Internet in the

hands of the private sector. The primary enabling legislation, the Communications Act of 1996, governed the operations of all media in the United States, affirming that "the Market will drive both the internet and information highway" (Murphy, 2002, p. 31).

Facebook's prospectus, the key document used to sell the company's future financial viability and worth to investors and the market, was revised six times to arrive at a basic model of market viability (Blodget, 2012). In each instance, revisions were sought by market regulators and financial underwriters like Morgan Stanley, J. P. Morgan, and Goldman Sachs, so as to sharpen the case for how the company would go about making money. While most recognized that ad sales would lead the way for Facebook, revisions to the prospectus also noted the role of the company's recently developed "social graph" algorithm—in conjunction with the roll-out of a mobile platform—would enhance the company's future prospects. And, as to prevent aggravation from future social networks, its makers created a developer platform, allowing programmers to build apps capable of running on top of, rather than in competition with, Facebook. The combination of the network's mobility (people can use it all the time, everywhere), its warding off of competition by making it easier for aspiring network capitalists to establish their footing as sub-networks of Facebook, and the patenting of the means to allow the network to self-capitalize (the social graph that refines data as to make it valuable) was the perfect recipe.

While the process of seeking investment is most clearly associated with the process of financialization (seeking investment through the stock market), almost all Internet companies share a pre-corporate period of external capitalization and investment, often by these so-called "angel investors," or by other larger digital media and software companies like Google and Microsoft, who take a small stake or ownership in the emerging firm. The years of pre-

corporation are closely attuned to market regulations of the day, the rules that define the responsibilities and processes that incorporated and so-called "public" companies must follow. The writing and rewriting of the company's prospectus was chiefly governed by the U.S. Securities Act, and overseen by the Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition to questions of immaterial value, IPO sales, and market regulation, Facebook also used its pre-corporate years, specifically 2008-2012, leading up to the NASDAQ IPO, to reconfigure its relationship with its technicians and programmers. Compared to other on-line moguls, Facebook always had a startlingly low number of employees, and during their pre-corporate phase, the company only formally employed about 3,000 people. However, this figure is misleading when one considers the 835 million users on whom it depends for ad revenue and the production of social data, as we will see (Thompson, 2012).

Facebook changed its attitude toward its content-providing user base to intensify its efforts to collect the data needed to make the social graph valuable—the more data, the more powerful the social graph algorithm, and the more valuable Facebook becomes. The pre-corporate era, then, became synonymous with rapid changes in the interface's aesthetics for addressing users, its functions, and its features. In the case of Facebook, all of these changes amount to ways of intensifying user surveillance and data mining, particularly immediately preceding their stock flotation. Right around the time of pre-corporation, in 2011, it was even revealed that Facebook makes "ghost" or "shadow" profiles for people they hope will eventually become users, and linking these profiles with identifying information gathered from other parts of the Internet.

By 2010, twelve months prior to the company IPO, the platform witnessed 48 changes, many focused on promoting more networking with other users, tagging friends in updates,

uploading photos, alerting users to "friend anniversaries," and so forth. Most importantly for the future prospectus of Facebook was the introduction of the open graph protocol in April of 2010, where all objects, users, non-users, media, and text were integrated into Facebook's back-end algorithms and data mining technologies. In many cases the changes were experienced by users as prompts that encouraged them to post more, upload more, and engage with their friend networks through ever more granular means. That's a lot of social labor!

These changes often occur without protest, as an overwhelming majority of users accept default settings of social network platforms, and almost all users adopt new settings without complaint (Shepherd & Landry, 2013). In fact, critics like Frischmann and Selinger (2018) have suggested that the most defining change wrought by ubiquitous network platforms is the multiplication of contractual agreements in the form of boilerplate contracts. These boilerplate contracts are designed to be sped through, such that reading the text in them is difficult, inconvenient, and can be easily avoided by clicking "I agree" and moving on to the "real" user experience offered by the platform or service.

When Facebook's privacy policy proudly proclaims that it has never and will never sell our information, it is because it would be fiscally nonsensical to dispossess themselves of the market-guiding and predictive power associated with granting or withholding access to that data (Kennedy, 2013). The business of gathering data centers on a sound plan to own it rather than to sell it, meaning that we should expect, just as we have seen in the pre-corporate era, concerted efforts to cultivate such data in both breadth and scale. This process is also structurally transformative of commercial media because, instead of being funded by advertising, it will be funded through commercialized, private data (Patelis, 2013). Rather than just being paid by advertisers in exchange for viewers' attention, social media can sell data directly to interested

companies for more clandestine social purposes and more serious ones, like establishing credit ratings and insurance premiums.

Unlike traditional media companies that create and distribute information in the form of paid content, Facebook organizes, filters, and distributes unpaid content that they solicit by spurring our virtual, imaginative capacities for envisioning society at large. The network company refused to revise their sorely inadequate form of data encryption upon a case filed against it by the Belgian data protection commission in the wake of the Court of Justice of the European Union's 2014 ruling on the misleadingly titled "Right to Be Forgotten" case. This speaks to Facebook's implicit necessity to deny or deflect concerns about surveillance and tracking, among other nefarious uses of the data it harvests. It is clear that companies like Facebook that control on-line information that flows on such a grand scale are new kinds of business entities, and need to be treated as such by the public and its institutions. The opacity of its data-processing protocols that the proposed deletion of data by users outed is a strong testament to the stark power asymmetry between the company and the pro-sumers whose work of connection it carefully crafts.

CHAPTER IV

FACEBOOK AND THE DISCOURSE OF NETWORK PRODUCTION

S2 → a

$$\frac{S2}{a} \qquad \frac{\$}{S1}$$
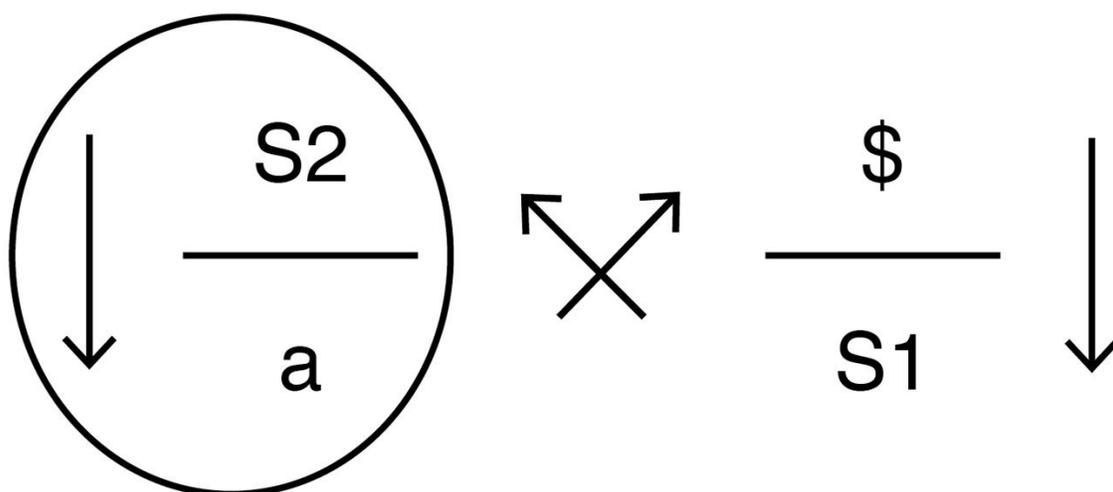
Figure 5: First Motion of the Discourse of Network Production

In Lacanian discourse theory, the functor [S2] is "knowledge," or the treasury of signifiers of the Other. In the discourse of the capitalist, [S2] is in the position of "other," whereas here in the discourse of network production it occupies the place of "agent." In the discourse of the university, [S2] is likewise in the position of agency, where it refers to the specific enjoyment of knowledge taken to be objective. Despite its formulaic difference from the discourse of the master, university discourse has an effect that nevertheless exposes it as an attempt at domination or mastery over those to whom knowledge is transmitted. The capitalist universe and the discourse of network production both feature a downward arrow from the position of agency flowing toward the position of truth. There is, therefore, the *pursuit* of truth by an agent.

This section relays the overarching techno-ideology by which [S2] moves toward and captures [a]. The explanation here attests to this movement by sketching the way that these functors move forward and are reflected in pervasive narratives that implicitly prescribe a mode of knitting the body, society, and technology. It then analyzes this logic against the peculiar form of knowledge-agency that operates Facebook. Within the authoritative ethos of technology's role in society *writ large,* knowledge is a retroactive process of capture, disguised as a guarded object. With the Internet in general, but with social media in particular, one can confidently say that there is an attempt to capture that which is unknown of the Other's desire, [a], or more simply put "Other enjoyment." [S2] seeks that which is in excess of it. From the discourse of the university we learn that knowledge requires unknown and unknowable, enigmatic, or speculative objects for preliminary fodder for the type of social link to which it amounts.

What Knowledge?

In seminar XVII, Lacan (1991/2007) follows up on a statement he made the previous year, which he himself considered quite unique. It was a logical formulation, "knowledge is the enjoyment of the Other" (p. 7). Despite [S2's] position of agency in this discourse, we must also understand [S2] as the locus of reinvestment of the surplus value or product of the network. In this sense, we "begin" at the end, with what endures in the network through being recaptured by it. In order to expand upon the reinvested output of the discourse of network production [S1], we must attend to its time- and effort-dependent gradations: *data, information, and knowledge.* Data includes the machine-readable melange of code, language, and behaviors like selecting, responding, various connections between users and machines, mouse hoverings, clicks, scrolls, timers, and even the time differentials between behaviors. Information is the result of the selective processing of this data into coherent, human-readable language. Knowledge, however, is the enjoyment of the Other in two senses. The first is the enjoyment of deducing, through mapping, an imaginary social totality from the perpetual movement of this process of social media. Such mapping is the machinic process of capturing data in real-time, whereas deducing this social totality occurs in relation to investors (lenders). The more complete the map is understood to be, the more valuable it is considered to be. Its robustness correlates to the market of all users, marking out, for powerful stakeholders, a social world *as* that which can be engineered—provided there is sufficient information. The second way in which knowledge is the enjoyment of the Other is that this map is supposed to answer the question "what does the Other want from me?"

Facebook is among the winners of "Web 2.0" businesses. Web 2.0 is distinguished from the earlier Internet atmosphere by its ease of use, direct facilitation of sociality, and free

publishing and production platforms that allow users to upload content in any form of their choosing (Lovink, 2011). Web 2.0 and its features follow from the dot.com crash, at which time Google made waves by developing a means to profit solely on the basis of free, user-generated content; or as they say, by attempting to "organize the world's information." Web 2.0, in its rhetoric as much as its technical infrastructure, embeds principles of participation and interactivity assured by inter-operability between different platforms—another feature that heightens users' capacity to distribute information (Kennedy, 2013). Web 2.0 is less a set of new technologies than it is a new mode of behavior. Its features created a cut in the elite information sharing of universities and government intelligence agencies to facilitate behaviors often associated with a more mundane sociality; attracting the attention of others in one's milieu, recounting and circulating signs of eating, sleeping, exercising, purchasing, etc. Chatting, posting, texting, sharing pictures, videos, and whatever else with our network contacts (and beyond) was all part of the zeitgeist of a new and exciting on-line world in the early to mid-2000s (Ippolita Collective, Lovink, & Rossiter, 2009). In its guise as a participatory world, its more recent progression mostly fails to distinguish the participatory contributions of people and devices. The so-called "Internet of Things" relies increasingly on data collection from "agents" for services provided off-line (Weber & Wong, 2017). We could imagine, for example, a chair that can sense how much you like sitting on it, your seated heart rate, galvanic skin response, and the amount of time you've spent sitting filtering into Facebook ads for the fitness franchise nearest to your home.

Overcoming the Body with Computational Certainty

The belief in the supremacy of digital networks is not only exemplary in their ubiquity and our behavior within them, but is part of the support of the discourse of network production.

It is not only tech entrepreneurs and Silicon Valley companies that sing the praises of the Internet, wonder what we ever did without it, and point to a future in which we are inevitably increasingly more connected and more deeply integrated with our digital devices. It is this inevitability, and this promise of tech without an object proper to it, like a solution looking for a problem, that foregrounds an answer to the question: how, beyond the evangelizing of stakeholders, technologists, philosophers, and pundits, does the Internet operate as the locus of knowledge, or a something-we're-supposed-to-know?

N. Katharine Hayles (2005) recounts pioneering computer scientist Stephen Wolfram's formulation of the dream of the Computational Universe. This view rests on the notion that from the simplest processes (like a single word), the wildest things can be built. The Computational Universe claims that the whole universe is generated "through processes of computation running on a vast computational mechanism underlying all of physical reality" (Hayles, 2005, p. 3). A computational ontology points to computation as the sole means of the production and reproduction of reality. On this view, nothing is outside the grasp of computation, making biological, social, and cultural systems equally comprehensible through the work of computation. It also lays the groundwork for the nearly universal acceptance of the positive value of applying machine computation to these diverse domains of reality.

The computational universe is yet another "mother nature" metaphor in the Western modern sciences. As such, it has strong resonance, first with the scientific ideology popularized by Francis Bacon. The "mother nature" metaphor posited the universe as a mysterious and horrifying force, both ineffable bastion of the secrets of the universe and its reality, whose unraveling and taming was the proper task of modern science. This metaphor gradually wove into "new frontier" narratives that have historically invigorated the know-to-plunder excursions

of colonists, gold-rushers, and creators of (other) markets.[25] Unsurprisingly, the frontier of

infinite possibilities, not to mention the useful understanding of the Internet as a new *space*, has

figured prominently in media and scholarly work about the Internet as well as Facebook's

understanding of itself, through branding, initially as a "place for friends" and later more directly

in its virtual reality feature, "Facebook Spaces." Distinct from the tools and machines of the

industrial era, the sledgehammer or the plow, which narrowly defined an environment and a

group of subjects, networked platforms are what Michel Serres (1990/1995) calls "world-

objects." World-objects are the culmination of objects' increasing range of actions and,

recursively, the number of humans producing, using, and maintaining them. They are tools with

dimensions commensurable to one of the dimensions of the world. In the case of the Internet, this

dimension is space (Serres, 1990/1995).

The rhetorical justification for the fact of our migration on-line consists in dreams of

liberation corresponding to the Computational Universe. This mathematically certain and legible

universe is one where the messiness of human bodies and the relations between them need not be

dealt with directly. That remote communication creates a practice of such a fact, as when bodies

are separated by distance and mediated by screens, amplifies the pious fervor with which the

belief in the mightiness of algorithms is expressed. Furthermore, the consequences of the

popularity of this notion, a lived and implemented duplication of the scientific ideology, affects

the imaginary of the body and likewise the way it is inhabited. Guattari's notion of

"retransduction"[26] signals the fantasy of everything being written, in a perfected symbolical

redoubling of reality that has the capacity to intervene on the real (Genosko, 2002; Guattari,

2006). The corresponding notion of "accomplished digitalization" is the perfect materialization

of an omnipotent overseer who has complete access to information, making the status of

Facebook's news and story feeds, its "discover people" function, its "people you may know"

recommendations, and its search function of individuals' pages an ever-changing, open-ended

guarantor of a God's-eye-view style of social intelligence for which the inquisitive deliberation

of human beings is optional.

If the mechanism of capitalist extraction and exploitation *par excellence* is that of

abstraction, the experience of an on-line space like Facebook provides an escape from the "meat-

space" of the human body, whose terrifying slowness, unpredictable timing, pesky needs, and

lag-time in living the information it seeks on-line are construed as fetters from which the churn

of advancing network technologies offer freedom. Immortality in the form of disembodied

consciousness, just as much as freedom from the constraints of distance and equality born from

the on-line affordance of untying modes of creative self-presentation to one's physical body,

reign supreme. The constraints of ordinary life seem to drop away in the face of the hypnotic

quality of (nearly) freely circulating information, the obfuscation of material concerns that user

experience makes possible, and the immediate action loops of issuing commands that

instantaneously effect perceptible changes on-screen (more on this below).

That S2 occupies the place of agency, as in the discourse of the university, is suggestive

of the popular modernity correlative to the dawn of the Internet. In a combination between the

correspondence view of reality via representation, the far-reaching global dominance of

Facebook (which boasts its billion users in many places), and the mystification of its private,

copyrighted software that collects and distributes content, Facebook comes to be seen as society

itself. The vast and unseemly abundance of social intelligence and information it amasses is

hardly questioned but often remarked upon. Where the Internet as a whole is concerned,

catastrophes like the recent Equifax or Yahoo hacks, and the solemnity with which threats of info

wars, fake, or even "deep fake" news in the political sphere depict the waves of panic that spread through society when its reliability is threatened. For Facebook as exemplary of social media that happens to also own other major platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram, Occulus, Bloomsbury AI, etc.), one need only experiment with leaving it (for which there are numerous coping guides).

Were we simply trying to poke holes in the dominant ideology of technological progress and its aspiration to symbolic redoubling of reality, "complete knowledge" of the world, it would be easy to point out a few seemingly forgotten facts; the the Internet is but a protocol invented by university elites in the 1950s, our ability to connect is only a corporate-owned electrical circuit made of fiber optic cables that are themselves threatened by changing sea-levels, and the extent to which any of this is used in the non-affluent, non-Western world is severely limited. Instead, this generalized, symptomatic belief in the link between perfected knowledge and the migration of public life and social institutions on-line only lends credence to the viability of the discourse of network production. One may, however, note the irony of an appeal based in an abandonment of the body as an anchor of possibility. Social networks like Facebook overtly claim the purpose of connecting people, when in fact they connect machines—whose connection, which creates the Internet, consumed 8% of global electricity production seven years ago, from the time of this writing.

But anyway, we buy this need to connect across time and space, with Facebook positioned as a sort of central planning agency. But who is it exactly that needs to be connected? The company, driven by profit motive and the social logic of the derivative (see Arvidsson, 2016), has never expressed any interest in understanding the social link for which it offers a substitute. The movie *The Social Network* (Brunetti et al., 2010) offers us a superficial glimpse into its founding. The first scene of the film portrays a male student, who we quickly learn

attends Harvard, asking his love interest how it is one is supposed to distinguish oneself from a population of people who all got 1600s (the then-highest score) on their SATs. She is then portrayed breaking up with him moments after, "not because [he's] a nerd, but because [he's] an asshole." Facebook is born of a blend of tools for keeping tabs on his now-ex-girlfriend while also being able to rate and rank the hotness of other college girls.[27] Stalking and lurking, both descriptors for common usage of Facebook at which no one even bats an eye, are the foundational rather than deviant or trangressive uses of the platform, and the term "surveillance" denotes the same type of use at even greater degrees of organization. Horror and outrage about being stalked and surveilled, which one can read almost daily in major news outlets, symptomatically bespeak an outrageous lack of its social context from which it has deviated primarily in scope rather than style. The Other's enjoyment, the substance of S2 in the context of Facebook, is not only creepy. It is necessarily an individualizing and empirical, demographic science of people based on their habits of consumption—of commodities as much as of others' images and digital texts. It is also all-encompassing in its measurements of on-line behavior, creating a particular form of platform dependence (lock-in) that one might easily confuse with addiction.[28]

In Facebook's pre-corporation story, the need to attract more users to the platform, as to build it up with user data, drove its major design features. Most of these took the form of programmed pleas that users represent themselves with ever more detail, as when one can choose from hundreds of different moods to select and display, and by making suggestions for action, as when the platform suggests that you tag your friends' faces in newly uploaded photos. All that mattered for Facebook at the time of pre-corporation was increasing the number of connections between people as data objects. The connections users make between one another is over-

determined by Facebook's inter-mediation. Its algorithms decide who sees what, and when. Facebook creates a social computing environment from users' raw material. By keeping this foothold of user investment, as if distracting users with commodified versions of each other, they are then subordinated to the motivations and whims of the platform's self-subsistence. In some circumstances, this amassing of connected users under its dominion is more obvious than others. In its (failed) "Free Basics" program, Facebook aimed to become a one-stop Internet shop—the exclusive portal to the whole of the web[29]—in rural India and some countries in the Global South.

Some say that these pretensions to a global social structure has less to do with the ambition of the corporate Facebook and more with the tendency toward structural inequality on the web. This tendency toward activity concentrated in major hubs is called the "predicable imbalance" of the Pareto Principle (see Sanders, 1987). For a more thorough understanding we must also look at what are called "network effects," described by libertarian tech mogul and Facebook board member Peter Thiel, in presentations to Stanford University undergraduates that offers steps to creating platform (or network) monopolies. Large, scalable networks create network topologies with asymmetric, highly unequal distribution that, at the level of IP (the router network), follows a power law quite closely (Barabási & Bonabeau, 2003). Such a network structure consists of a collection of non-uniformly connected nodes. The connectors of these islands of nodes are called hubs, and the role of the hub goes to enormous databases and our top social media sites. A small number of strongly connected and a large number of weakly connected objects, enables a very small network diameter with very many nodes without an overall extremely high degree of connectivity. Massively connected nodes enable great leaps and

provide for the overall cohesion of the network. As a major node, Facebook reaches about 73%
of all Internet users, trumped only by Google.

Unevenness is the most important ingredient of ultra-scalable networks—they are driven
with the help of databases. When nodes are added to scale-free networks, they preferentially
attach themselves to highly connected nodes, prompting the celebrity culture of Facebook and
other social media. This descriptive law of networks gives rise to the phenomenon of platform
monopolies at the corporate level as it does to influencers (persona nodes so highly connected
that they are paid by companies to promote them) on the individual level. Facebook's proprietary
"social graph" ensures that all data produced through Facebook's incursion into the Internet at
large stays in its clutches, produced as a sign of its future value to shareholders.

Facebook, like Google, Amazon, Alibaba, Twitter, and Instagram, are not simply ideas
that can be aped, as per traditional forms of market competition that aim to better serve users.
Rather, we must keep in mind that these monopolies are entrenched global infrastructures that
draw together financial actors, private investors, and state governing bodies, in addition to the
role of User. As Morozov (2015) says, we cannot leave Facebook for an improved but roughly
commensurate social media site because of this (politically neutral) network dominance and the
corporate-monopolistic stronghold over the index it has created. The difficulties of the little
known, peer-produced social media alternatives, like Mastadon or Diaspora, in garnering support
for its non-monetized and open source project is telling of just how harrowing it is to compete
for users against a company that is and has been reaping the benefits of network effects of
primacy (Sevignani, 2013).

The Social Graph

We have an empirical, statistical formalism that is separated by a bar from this truth, that operates via the power law of networks, on the abstract totality, *society at large,* which it partially creates—one billion users and who knows how many to come? This is a unique development from the perspective of the form of social linkage. Rather than the discourse of science pouring into ever more domains of society, like business, medicine, and law, with especially devastating effects on the humanities, Facebook and other social media work upon the abstract totality of the social world itself, becoming a science of *it*, that massively outshines the social scientific disciplines—at least on the measure of quantity and scope (i.e., according to the yardstick and methodological impulses that the social sciences inherit from the "hard" sciences).

One must keep in mind that the university discourse, to which this first movement of network production is similar, is not bound to the university as a social institution (Žižek, 2006). Rather, there is a style of university discourse—a pretension to centrality and certainty which, for Lacan, was always quite near to the master's discourse. For this reason, like university discourse, network production discourse also endeavors to appropriate that which is in excess of it. As a portal to its formalized world, it offers this social totality as a glimmering lure, which lacks only *you* and *your* unique way of entering into society. It is against this backdrop that the triteness of discourse around cultural appropriation is stark. Where it is all too often applied to Americans doing yoga or eating burritos we fail to notice the ease with which an American company imposes its social logic across the globe to slowly possess a full map of those objects, places, events, people, plans, and affects it reorganizes and curates—just so—to all one billion of its users (and those who encounter its social buttons and plug-ins elsewhere on the web).

By looking more deeply at Facebook's Social Graph, we begin to see more precisely the workings of the appropriations of the outside as an excess or remainder that falls from it. Such appropriation carries with it the imaginary registers already implicit in objects, places, and people—their identifications, ideals, and aspirations, and adds to this mix the logic of social-empirical formalism. The protocol underlying the Social Graph allows the platform to replicate within its database a kind of semantic map of the web based on the activity of users which first adds their friends, then starts adding "things" they like, or share. Who's connected to whom, is included, but what the protocol did to the graph was to add buttons all across the Internet. Hence the general equivocation (and purposeful demonstration) in this piece; as it stands every Internet Addiction is also a Social Media Addiction, and more specifically a Facebook addiction, in that its expressly designed logic of sharing infiltrates most other popular sites and applications. Every time a page has a "like" button it becomes captured as a Facebook object, replicated for their back end algorithms. The Social Graph is Facebook's source of value, and serves as a sign to their shareholders of this robust social empirical knowledge—this is the literal sense in which, as per Lacan, knowledge is the Other's enjoyment, by way of the other's enjoyment. In fact, it blurs the difference between the two, realizing the neoliberal ideology within which society is a collection of individuals or families (if society exists at all!). The knowledge of the Social Graph is precisely the ongoing mapping of more and more of a social totality *as* a *c*ollection of individuals, to sell ads and as a vehicle of speculation about the value of making this map operable for other forms of social engineering.

Real and possible objects alike are modeled inside the graph. Users are encouraged to build maps of their social relations. We are made to wrest things from their social, historical, and political contexts, enunciated subjectively, and map them according to the platform's logic in a

language its algorithms can learn from—we teach the platform, providing the substance of its programmatic reproduction. With the introductions of social plug-ins and buttons a larger data structure is modeled, in which other objects (shops, cities, bands, celebrities) can become part of the graph and subject to its data processing. Zwick and Dholakia's (2006) notion of epistemic consumption objects characterize these objects well. Epistemic consumption objects reveal themselves progressively through interaction, observation, use, examination, and evaluation. Such layered revelation is accompanied by an extension rather than a diminution of the object's complexity. In this way, its lack of ontological stability turns the object into a continuous knowledge project for its users. It is the ongoing cycle of revelation and discovery that creates strong, complex attachments to such objects; a relationship that Zwick and Dholakia (2006) call "quasi-social."

Marx (1939-41/1993), understood commodities as objects that mystify in that they are themselves *more than themselves.* This is in large part because they incarnate the labor that went into their production. Value is not hidden in commodities, but exists in the relationship between them as a function of the social relationships of production. Epistemic consumption objects, one must note, are equally epistemic production objects that trouble Marx's categories at the same time as they expose the veracity of his theory of value. They do not only incarnate, but are actively "recharged" with social reproductive labor as a living, even mundane practice of the user. These "consumer" objects contain the means of harnessing labor power, or conscripting labor power, by means of such connectivity. An epistemic consumption object helps us consider the apex of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, which for Kordela (2018) undermines the Kantian paradigm of the duality of things and their representations. Digital *prosumption* objects cast light on this binary-breaking reading of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism in that the

simultaneous and reciprocal mutual constitution of subject and object is melded with striking conspicuousness.

The rule of the platform reigns in the sense that major changes to its features are always exclusively company-steered, but it nevertheless changes in ways that reflect both the different driving forces that issue into [S2] and the ongoing amassing of data that it *is*. Neither the large team of engineers responsible for maintaining the platform and adding features to it, nor the board members of Facebook who technically own the company can be said to possess knowledge of the mass amounts of social information aggregated and processed through the writing or ownership of the algorithms that comprise Facebook. These parties do not *have* this knowledge, though they may design its functions or use it to produce speculative value. Again, the platform is an impersonal process rather than an accomplished thing; it can be speculatively owned, but ontologically speaking, it can never be had. This is true across all of the different rungs of Facebook's labor—from programmers, to CEO's, to users. The network itself recedes as a reality that could be exhaustively accounted for.

One could even say that this is the case necessarily or ontologically, by virtue of their processual nature, on the one hand, and their machinic evolution, on the other. Digital archives, in the case of Facebook, its patented social graph, are integrated, through machine learning, back into these algorithms so that they improve themselves (i.e., increase their ability to provide what we want to see). Put simply, this knowledge is a barreling, ongoing process rather than a static set of facts. Like all other computer-based "calculational" media, archives are falsely characterized as "things" because, in contrast with traditional archives that couple with cultural memory, digital archives have no intrinsic macro-temporal index (as the Y2K bug scare demonstrated; Ernst, 2013). They operate at a micro-temporal level. In fact, Facebook's graph

changes so quickly that any moment of retrieval is but a snapshot of the dynamics of the ongoing process of data collection and aggregation. The archive gives way to archival dynamics and its control structures rather than the specifics of its contents. Its primary operations, then, are not sorting the content of files, but their linkages, just as the Web is defined by its protocols (HTTP, TCP/IP) rather than what one may or may not find there.

The massive stores of information collected represent the completeness of a knowledge that is decidedly out of the grasp of human beings; it is the social body in its infinite unfolding, recursively in response to itself. Its possession is formally impossible, though control over its flows is the proper locus of struggle in the discourse of network production. That social networks come to represent this all-absorbing, non-human (or trans-human) wealth of knowledge, a sort of empirical science of social relations that nobody can have is an idea borne of the gaps between data, information, and knowledge. The algorithms that process raw data into its other forms are in fact so opaque that they are spoken of as gods, or divine forces of nature acting upon the users of the platform. Intervention seems essential, not only owing to these pervasive characterizations of an unwieldy and enigmatic machine intelligence, but because this glorified linear algebra and the data that enables it to learn from its own processes are Facebook's intellectual property to do with as it pleases.

Selling exposure, boosting posts, and other advertising mechanisms create invisible hierarchies of visibility. However, it is difficult to put a price tag on getting a complete grasp on the data traces associated with one's name or accounts. Many have pointed out that even attempting to represent the entities and the procedures that tracking daily activities, locations, and browsing information is a waste of time; too difficult in the state of multilateral, just-in-time surveillance that exists today (see Lovink, 2011; Vaidhyanathan, 2012). There is no neatly

collected list of possibilities for modes of capture, simply because there is no oversight that requires it (Pasquale, 2015).

The build-out of Facebook's features make it a sort of one-stop Internet shop—what net critic Geert Lovink calls the Walmart of the Internet. Therefore, when the latter also evokes imagined connections common to *all* networks, subjects are massively encouraged to incorporate, or code, that which is not already a part of [S2]. The pull of this abstract sociality tends toward the encapsulation of more and more captures of everyday life on these major hubs. The subject rushes to incorporate more and more (people, places, and things, indiscriminately, waste, remainder, resistance, what have you) into this social body, the substance of which is Facebook's code, which recursively writes itself through our input, and its effects. What is possible to digitize, the ever more minute details of life, becomes a category of what is possible for and from others.

Code objects, such as the indiscriminate codification, following social graph protocol, of all objects, users, non-users, media, and text that become part of Facebook's back-end algorithms for data mining can be thought of in three ways (a) as the objects of the process of the deterritorialization of social relations, (b) as the fodder of a new, shared transcendental-structural theory whereby the operations of the algorithm *qua* God elide other explorations of the unconscious, and (c) as a material-epistemological signal (object [a]) that confers upon the subject of the digital signifier an experience of speed, no-time, or timelessness.[30] From this processual adding of real objects through our desire to know them, or in the basic way in which we are made to code or digitize the real, how can we understand the human-machinic generation of [a]? This is an important point to deliberate upon, as [a], despite its being highly individualized, operates commonly as a signal to the subject.

A → $

S2 $

↖ ↗

a   S1
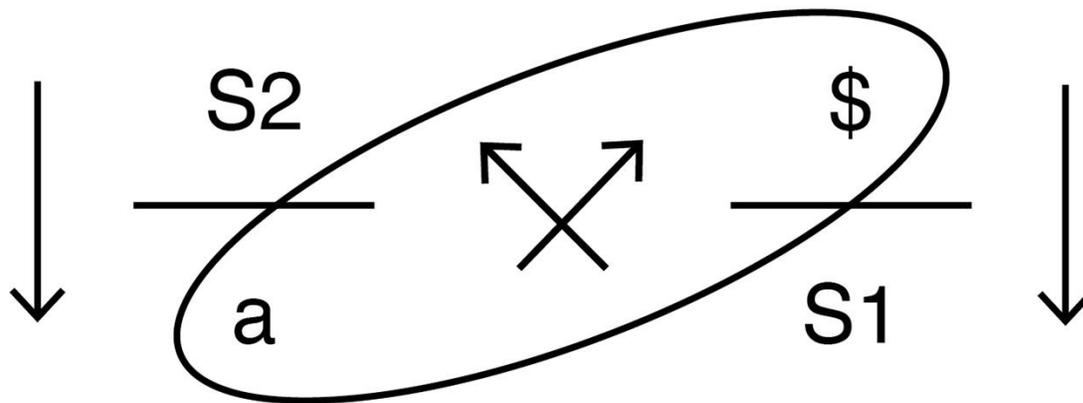
Figure 6: Second Motion of the Discourse of Network Production

The Graphical User Interface (GUI) delivers this social empirical formalism to the user, in presenting a clean, satisfyingly organized environment. The harsh dogmatism of the platform's encoded laws and procedures for the collection of data are securely shielded by smooth and convenient dashboards and graphics. In a certain sense, interfaces appear to be analogous to both the traditional "veil" of ideology, obscuring the algebraic social of the machine, and acting as an opiate of the masses, providing a palliative measure to the anxiety baked into digital temporality. From Douglas Engelbart's (1962) vision of a system to "augment human intellect" to Ben Shneiderman's (1993) endorsement of "direct manipulation" as a way to produce truly pleased users, GUIs have been celebrated as enabling user freedom through visible and personal control of the screen. Everything is created as a digital object that we can control on the graphical user interface. Personalization and control are meant to be amplified by ongoing improvements to interfaces, while at the same time ease of access and contribution simplify one's participation in the networked world (Lovink & Rasch, 2013).

According to Wendy Chun's (2011) study of real-time computer interfaces, when we compute we are offered, both conceptually and thematically, a way to map and engage an increasingly complex world driven by the high speed, ever-changing rule of the informatic capitalist market. She argues that interfaces induce the user to map constantly so that the user in turn can be mapped. The construction of the interface relies heavily on the infrastructure progressively produced by [S2]. This world is a mathematical formalization of what Facebook believes you will enjoy on the basis of your past on-line behaviors and its generic architecture for user enjoyment (e.g., the features that drive more and more use, like frequent alerts and a never-ending feed of curated posts).

The series of acts by which this mapping and being mapped occurs secures the user distinctively as the object of a science. In Facebook's exemplary biopolitical program, users are raw heaps of malleable *potentiality.* Labor-power, defined by Marx, is the "use-value which the worker has to offer to the capitalist [which] is not materialized in a product, does not exist apart from him at all, thus exists not really, but only in potentiality" (1939-41/1993, p. 204). The interface does not at all admit the appearance of a digital factory, seeming instead to be more of a personal play-place—one's own corner of the digital world. Nevertheless, the user is labor-power for Facebook in two senses. First, the mere existence of users on the platform, in number, signals the speculative value of the social networking site itself. Users are potentialities to Facebook's shareholders such that they may be seen, secondly, as yet more potentialities to advertising firms and entrepreneurial individuals who pay for privileged access to them. This sense of potentiality comes first from a deadening of the living user; users are advertising targets once a critical mass of lateral activity (e.g., interaction with other users and digital objects) provides fodder for the supposed truth of their enjoyment, or in Facebook's language, their

"liking." This potentiality is provoked over and over again by the presence of [a], which sends users into the mode of the drive.

Our drive-ridden participation makes social media what it is. There are both vertical and horizontal social relations that condition our dependence on the value produced by the Internet. On the one hand, vertical relations of ownership carry forward massive power asymmetries typically of contemporary capitalism that profit from the continuing destabilization and global scramble of bodies that creates both the very cheap workforce of data-producing consumers, and on the other hand the horizontal relations of identification we have with each other and to our survival that creates a profound willingness to participate in these technological networks. This dual relation is clear in posting a status update or story to Facebook. There are no guarantees about the recipients of our signifiers. We presuppose the frame of automatic archiving, and inform and demand of no one in particular—the abstract "All" of our lives, but also, in default settings mode, to the entirety of the Internet (insofar as we, in turn, are in turn searchable by our names). The labor proper to Facebook, then, is the labor of producing hysterical selves, founded upon a seeking oriented around [a] that posits a social link only in order to dissimulate it again. This is what consists in the circuit forged between the personalized instantiations of the (imaginary) computational universe [a] and subjects of the digital signifier [$]. This circuit, despite being hyper-reflexive is fundamentally incomplete. Such incompleteness generates anxiety as an implicit imperative (demand) to signify, as a means of making it repeat over and over again.

The seeking that takes place on Facebook, and its algorithmic over-determination, is best exemplified in its search function. This seeking is, however, the epistemology of solutions on which the platform is founded. The place of the subject supposed to know, the place of

authoritative consistency, is occupied by the platform's algorithmic knowledge which, crucially,

acts as a placeholder for the next substitution and for the "new thing" on which it depends as a

placeholder. The maintenance of this position, in the analyst's discourse, structures the

transference between analyst and analysand. In like fashion, the fetishism of the platform's

algorithmic knowledge and its linkage with a sweeping body of folk knowledge that is always

being written supports an ominous sense of asymmetrical knowledge/power whereby the user is

given over to the truth of the incompleteness or unsatisfactory nature of knowledge—even if

being on the platform tests this over and over and over again. Perhaps one of the more frustrating

aspects of public discourse about the overwhelming qualities of the Internet is that critics are still

apt to point out that the problem with spending increasingly more time on-line is problematic in

that it constitutes a limitation of the senses. The reduction to the audio-visual, as it were, bars us

from the fullness of human experience, which must then include our ability to taste, smell, and

touch the other.

Surely, the on-line experience has a profound capacity to overtake the body. But how

does this happen if the problem is that it cuts off access to enjoyment which overwhelms the

body *qua* death drive? In its profound capacity both to facilitate encounters with image-based,

textual, and auditory alterity, and to fortify narcissistic semblances that cover over it, the on-line

experience is overtaking or overwhelming precisely insofar as [a] in the position of truth appears

consciously as a continual disruption. This disruption lends credence to the metaphoric drift of

knowledge as the Other's enjoyment, and with it the interchangeability of the phallic signifier.

The participatory nature of Facebook and social media goes beyond one-way media

where operates the notion of inter-passivity. Rather than being relieved of our duty to enjoy as

some other does so in our stead, we come into being as a question of emptiness needing to do the

work of being. We are indemnified as global persons, hailed by the imperative to migrate on-line in a psycho-dramatic attempt not to be left out, which is to say *to be.* This takes on the form of preservation when one wants to use Facebook to keep in touch with people who have already migrated there. This is also to say that the commodification of social relations puts on display the reliance on the Other for a self, through the subject's broaching of an absence of self and other activated in searching, posting, and responding.

One can only send signs, intended for someone, somewhere out there. Who, or what, answers, and from where do the responses of our appeals come? The recipient of our signs is a matter of algorithmic fate and chance, and the sheer volume of Facebook use attests to an enacted belief that our social relations are interchangeable, subject to metaphoric substitution. How else could the All be an actionable addressee of language? Really the whole environment of Web 2.0, of which Facebook is exemplary and permeating, creates a fate-and-chance ethos through the thickness of the All and the unknowable content selection of its algorithms. We lose concern for our addressee, whose place is taken by this general social body that comprises one's life. Instead of identifying with a group, country, a locale, a religion, or a race, the "out-there" is constructed on the basis of *my network.* Identifications become more specific when one uses Facebook's group pages, where users communicate under the banner of special interests or preexisting affiliations. Such groups are nevertheless anchoring domains or landing pads for subjects located in the interchangeability of the All of their personalized social totality.

The existence of Facebook as a social hypertext that functions as described above makes its progressive changes and ongoing updates an "epistemic consumption object" that pursues the subject, signaling a form of loss that can hardly recognize itself as such. Why? Because the loss it points to is itself an abstract one, the idea of a social link considered for-itself. Since the early

2000s, Lacanians have been quick to point out that cyberspace, as it was called then, radicalizes the gap constitutive of the symbolic order (which was always already virtual)—every access to social reality must be supported by an implicit phantasmic hypertext (Parker, 2007; Žižek 1999). This hypertext, in the case of networked interfaces, is the fictitious and fantastical "All" or the "whole world of knowledge, people, experiences, and life." The overarching content of such 24/7 connection ideology, then, is the "out there," the sociality of which it is comprised. The absorption of new things into the binary language of code through Facebook's various input mechanisms may very well be one of the most *literally* accurate ways of talking about the elusive object of psychoanalysis! Just as Facebook automatically creates ghost profiles in anticipation of yet-to-be users, anyone can simply start a club, an event, a place, a business page, irrespective of whether or not it corresponds meaningfully to human activity off of the platform. The coming on-line of new fantasy entities that can be placed in connection to other things on Facebook's social graph show that byproducts of speech open onto the realm of the combinatory and symbolically determined possible without, for all that, being actual.

Žižek's spin on this overwhelm is his early account of the subject of cyberspace where he warns of "phantasy closure" (1999, pp. 90f). The argument makes another point about the "decline of symbolic efficiency." His claim counter-poses the techno-fetishistic ideology of endless possibilities, articulating instead the imposition of a radical closure. The excessively abundant supply of ready-made "foreign" fantasies closes gaps which should remain open for the user's own fantasies. He argues that the space of fiction is saturated in cyberspace, and that these gaps where speech enables access to the Real that cannot be broached directly are filled in. Accordingly, the gap of signification, the minimal difference that makes some item or answer significant, that makes it "feel right" or "the one" dissipates. But instead of eliminating the space

of doubt, the filling-in occasions the loss of the possibility of feeling convinced, of the sense that an answer can be or is "right" rather than just another opinion. Our argument is similar, but stronger in that the space of fiction is crucially and recognizably the fiction of selfhood and the dependence of being on loss as its real referent—these are the stakes of the proximity of [a] and [$] in this discourse. The anxiety produced in its encounters—the "lack of lack" common to the whole of the capitalist universe—is all the more potent in that the metonymy of narcissistic identifications becomes the target of [a].

Lacan gives us the means to portray the pursuit of users and the generation of what we could call the *abstract affect* called anxiety. In fact, it is owing to this radical particularity that it is impossible to do more than give brush-stroke generalizations to the imaginary constant that is the computing experience. How, then, does the social substance that is [a] converge as a *signal* of surplus enjoyment, an abstract binding of the drives? It is through the affect, anguish, translated into English as "anxiety"; that affect to which Lacan devoted the entirety of his tenth seminar. Soler (2016) explains that Lacan's focus on anguish aims to develop Freud's concerns about the end of analysis, or the "brick wall" that anguish (henceforth, anxiety) supposedly constitutes at its end, as the determining effect of trauma (p. 16). Anxiety stands alone as the affect that does not lie or deceive, an exceptional affect in light of Freud's assertion that affect deceives regarding its cause through displacement (Freud, 1927/2001). Characteristic of anxiety is the visceral experience of an obscure threat whose nature the subject cannot describe, save for staunch assuredness of being targeted by it. In Freud's terminology, anxiety is this signal of imminent danger in a highly subjective, rather than natural or inherent sense—thus signaling object [a].

When Lacan posited object petit [a], it constituted an extension of his thinking on the highly mobile, labile "drive" (Gherovici, 2017). This special psychical object that commemorates loss is not the end point of desire but its primal mover. Lacan considers the object petit a, an object-cause of desire, a trigger for desire. Objects, on the other hand, represent this original object, and because they hold a representative function, they enter into a relationship of equivalence or interchangeability that promotes a movement from object to object. When Lacan coins the concept of [a] as an objectal remainder, he presents it as founded on four objects defining the partial drive: the breast as the lost object of suction (the oral drive—demand *to* the other); feces as the object of excretion (the anal drive—demand *of* the other); and objects causing desire, like the voice (the invoking drive) and the gaze (the scopic drive). For Lacan, when there is an object [a], there is castration, because the object, as such, is always a lost object. These four objects that define the partial drive, then, quite obviously have their particular arrangement on Facebook—consumption, production, and the audio-visual are in fact its defining qualities.

However, this is the logic of Facebook, a series of individualized, partial objects attempts to describe particulars, which Lacan (2007) assures us can only be justified through a psychoanalysis of each little [a]. Instead,

> The rise to the social zenith of the object described by me as [a] will be enough, through the anxiety effect that is obviously provoked, which the product of our discourse [a slip] … which our discourse provides by failing to produce it. That it should be by such a fall that the signifier drops to the sign, is proved among us by of the fact that when people no longer know which way to turn (à quel saint se vouer), in other words when there are no more signifiers to cook—that is what the saint provides, as you know—you buy anything

whatsoever, specifically an automobile, which is enough to give a sign of understanding, as one might say, one's boredom, or in other words the affect of the desire for something Other – with a capital O. (Lacan, 2007, p. 179).

While [a] takes its root in partial objects of the drive, there emerges a temporal logic of infinitization that condenses these partial drives in such a way that it is not so much that they are bundled—rather, their condensation gives rise to an emergent production. This is rooted in the subsumption of the partial drives through the logic of money-as-money, "the affect of the desire for something Other," the nexus at which [a] is capitalized. As we saw, [a] always implies that there has been castration, which is to say, loss. But [a] is not loss itself, it is the object that mediates between the loss and the substitution, or as Ragland (2010) writes, it acts as a separator between active and passive drives in the dialectic between desire and enjoyment—our system of libidinal knowledge. It is perhaps most accurately described as a *condensed enjoyment that Lacan located at the intersection between knowledge and desire*. It is an excess of libido joined to quantitative representations, or the non-dialectical cause of itself which one seeks in fantasy.

We might think of anxiety as the condition of subjection to a regime of speculative value, of the monetization of everything that makes it impossible to know to which of one's efforts are being used. Anxiety is the only affect that psychoanalysts call the ally of interpretation—the same reason why we are able to point to it as an affective but nonetheless intelligible signal that confirms the potency of the lures, features, and functions that ensure our "user enjoyment" on the temporality dictated by the machine. Neither is anxiety only the variously mystifying and terrifying enigma of the place of the other, in its a-signifying (beeps, dings, transient alerts) and hyper-signifying guises (involving multiple framings, as when a user sends a sarcastic message,

underneath a picture of a cat wearing glasses, in a liberal social justice forum, under the username "ChrisBrown" on the "glitch in the Matrix" sub-Reddit), but that the subject is its target.

The affect, therefore, by which [a → $] is sensible is anxiety. The on-line All, the generic "out there" of searching, browsing, and connecting on-line create a hyper-speedy, context-free void, redoubling the sense in which we cannot know who or what we are, both for, but also *as* other. Following Lacan's 17th seminar (1991/2007), we find a means to directly posit the relationship between anxiety and enjoyment. We are told that the analyst's discourse is conditioned by the discourse of science. The latter leaves no place for anxiety (as in the complete knowledge to which the social graph aspires, but whose failure is evinced in its need to perpetually reassert itself). A student in the seminar then asks about the relationship between anxiety and enjoyment, assuming that anxiety is its opposite. To this, he notes that anxiety's object is surplus enjoying, though struggles to express the sense in which this is an unnameable approximation, and precisely *not* a name; "This object without which there is no anxiety, perhaps cannot be tackled in any other way" except in "terms of surplus value" (1991/2007, p. 217).

In the position of truth in this discourse, [a] is like the unsung structure of network production, in that it is this substrate that mediates knowledge in the position of agent and the subject ($) in the position of other. This connector is immanent to itself, its own cause, and knowable only through its effect of subjective production. This is a strange process by which we shape the environment of our seeking both through, but also as knowledge. The user becomes a biopolitical potentiality—not as an effect of intellectual labor as opposed to manual labor, but as themselves the knowledge for processing. The mundane processes of mapping and being mapped that build online contexts fulfill what Lacan called the historical function of philosophy, where

the slave's knowledge is pressured so that it can be transmuted into the Master's knowledge (1991/2007, p. 219). It is quite telling that he follows this by explaining that "the science that dominates us is the fruit of this operation" (p. 219).

$

$$\downarrow \quad \frac{S2}{a} \qquad \times \qquad \left(\frac{\$}{S1} \downarrow \right)$$
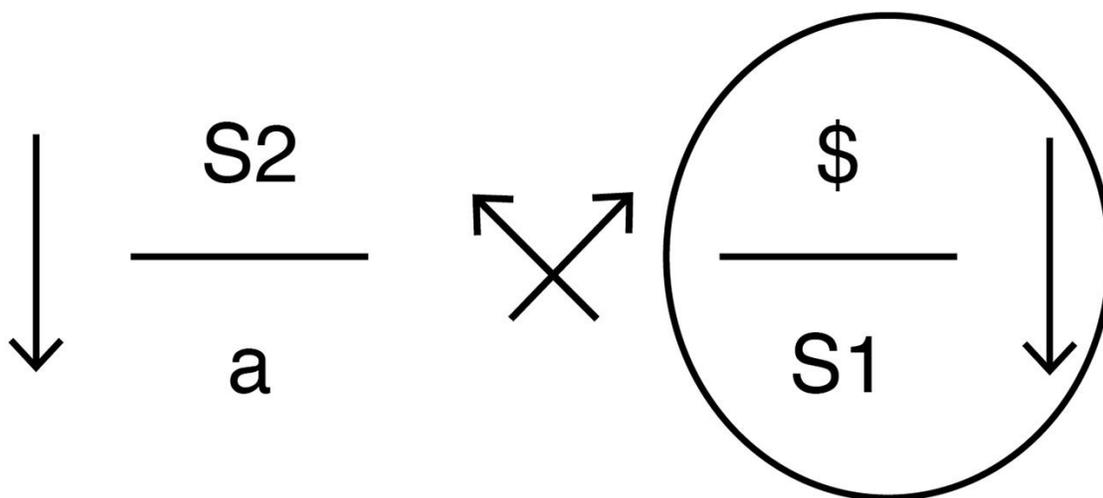
Figure 7: Third Motion of the Discourse of Network Production

In the discourse of the capitalist, the subject, in the position of agency, rushes toward [S1]. As we have described, the capitalist discourse directly aims at the root of the problem, indicated by the downward arrow on the left (see Figure 3, above). The subject conceived there as a consumer of various [S1] fixes "does not encapsulate the discomfort of subjective division as structural, but aims to recuperate discontent in its very system" (Vanheule, 2016, p.7). It is largely a solutionist discourse in which discomfort is only lacking proper information for the fix; there is always an answer, and it is only a matter of finding it. Some [S1] corresponds to, and functions as a truth for, the divided subject. The agency of the subject consuming fixes and the [S1] as the truth at which it aims dissolves in the discourse of network production where [$] is in the place of other, and [S1] in the place of surplus value.

In the discourse of network production, the subject is not only a consumer of fixes, but also a producer of selves *as* products, incarnated digitally in bodies of data. This is not only the reproduction of a consumer, but a production of selves-as-selves, in a generalized regime of selves-management that navigates a field of overlapping, non-coincident identifications. Because Facebook operates before the level of production of physical goods and services, it creates identifications that aspire to new lifestyles and expressions. Its competitive attentional landscape is an advertising ontology. Yet, thinking of this solely as the site of the creation of new consumers inhibits future thought of what is possible for these subjects (this will be covered in detail in closing).

Nevertheless, as it stands, the barred subject of social media, asks "what does the other want from me," which creates selves in reaction to the materials fabricated through the abstract, social-cooperative curiosity [a] that constitutes network production's truth. These signs are inflected by the anxiety induced by the abstract, social totality it creates. While the production of data bodies [S1] *literally* represent subjects for other signifiers in the associative chains of users accumulated in [S2], this production is designed by invisible protocols that favor the interests of capital with little or no regard for users as private persons or as those who generate the value of the platform.

Social Subjection

In the discourse of the capitalist, the barred subject of speech is in the position of agency. This positioning has afforded a thorough understanding of how capitalist subjects are hyper-individualized through the agency of choice with respect to the market of fixes. The discourse of network production is quite different because [$] is in the position of "other." This section seeks to understand this subject-as-other, and testifies to a hystericization of the barred subject of

language on the platform. User-oriented systems, as we've described, can be looked at through the dichotomy of the interface where users interact with each other and the system, and an obscure back-end of data which is invisible to users as it underpins, enables, provokes, and nudges users, and capitalizes the whole process. The subject is other on the platform first insofar as engaging with it consists entirely in relationships between users at various degrees of physical distance from each other. Even while this activity is controlled, monitored, and optimized for value production by the platform's owners, many-to-many communication using all previous forms of media, and the mostly permissionless nature of this communication, open up possibilities for a host of remote social relations. Rather than the individualized subject from the capitalist discourse who returns its enjoyment to its own narcissism, the subject here is radically closer (perhaps terrifyingly so) to the images and signs of others. The subject of Lacan is always other in the sense that it is always already part of a network, and thus only exists in relation. The subject in the place of other in this discourse, however, illuminates this. From the side of the graphical user interface, it is the target of infinite images with which to engage and identify.

From the back end of algorithms and server infrastructure, it is a subject of the symbolic and thus an unending well of data to be mined and turned into an image—a lure to *other* others—on the platform. One way to envisage the barred subject of network production and its value production is *informed* through two interacting forms of power: social subjection (individuality) and machinic enslavement (dividuality). Deleuze and Guattari's, along with the Italian autonomous Marxists' (e.g., Lazarrato, Virno, and Negri) notions of "subjection" and "enslavement" bring out the way that temporal and informational power asymmetries work through the strategic interplay of the rational, economic, and individual subject with its

intentional acts of communication, the inputs of the user above and below these, and its personified data mass in perpetual interaction with other personified data masses.

To give something of a diachronic account to a circular, simultaneous process, we can envision two moments in the history of social power. There is the outright enslavement of over-coded empires and also the modern condition of social subjection. Social subjection is the production of individuals who believe both in their own control over their lives and also in the value of their assigned place in society. In the moment of subjection, this higher unity constitutes the human being as subject, linked to an exteriorized object. Subjection entails a decoding of hierarchies and assumes the tenets of legal personhood associated with Western, liberal political subjects. The ethos of sharing, participating, and "community" ensure that we construct "real" selves to use as avatars of exchange, where such an imperative operates as a sort of civic responsibility. On Facebook, everything begins with (and, crucially, remains tethered to) one's identity. On the private enclosure of the social that is Facebook, real identity is a requirement for entrance. Mark Zuckerberg asks that we have one true identity that must be used for our Facebook profiles.[31] It is only by arriving as one's legally defined, unified self that the platform can be kept safe and operate as a "true community." In Kirkpatrick's (2011) book on the company's origins, Zuckerberg is quoted at a 2009 conference as saying:

> You have one identity… The days of you having a different image for your work friends or co-workers and for the other people you know are probably coming to an end pretty quickly… Having two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity. (p. 89)

This runs up against the psychic benefits of virtual reality and digital life pointed out by earlier psychoanalytic theorists interested avatars and identity play. For example, Turkle (2005) aptly notices the parallel between on-line personas and the selves that emerge in the space of the clinical encounter of analysis. It is for precisely this reason that some place Facebook and the creation of a social media profile within the lineage of Foucaultian "technologies of self" (see Illouz, 2008). But how is it possible to sustain the ideal of identity play and the rich discoveries it might afford in the context of the very real social and political ramifications that arise from their ties to legal selfhood?

The construction of this "real" self through both signifying and a-signifying behavior is recorded, and issues back into the coded and coding socio-empirical data mass, [S2]. Zooming out from the subject's production of the real, identifying account, one sees that we are data-objects just like any other on Facebook's social graph, for which purpose we are requisitely constructed *as* such unified, context-undifferentiated individuals. This is to say that we construct and are constructed as images for others, on-line. The linkage of these images and the bodies of data tethered to them with physical IP addresses complete the tethering of the online self to the real body of the user. This is the sort of generic configuration—with respect to the Lacanian categories of Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary—of the digital subject and thus comprises the stakes of digital signification.

We can only signify by *first* representing ourselves according to the traditional dictates of location, name, age, and sex. Neither does it matter very much if we are given more options to express our unique racial, sexual, or spiritual identities—to the extent that these categories have sufficient numbers, they are only used to make and amplify correlations between these and other categorical markers upstream (age, location) and downstream (searching and browsing habits)

from them. Facebook and social media reproduce credible identities that, intentionally or not, recapitulate and make legible the "performative iteration of [unmistakable] origins" (Mitropoulos, 2012, p. 65). This is to say that genealogical lines that foment systematic power asymmetries are captured and solidified on Facebook, too. Such categorization is divisive; strict silos create classes of users that correspond to categories used off-line to discriminate between people (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual preference, political opinions, etc.). Unfortunately, self-exploration through inconsequential avatars is now a piece of Internet history.

The mandate of one real identity tied to the contextual histories and irreversible records that come with names makes an uncountable or anonymous virtual identity implausible. With this imperative in place, and Zuckerberg's conviction that the profitability of the company depends on users bringing their real identities, there is also a very real extension of social life in the process of its commodification. This real identity is, in essence, hystericized as the subject needs to know more and more to be able to act as multiple coexisting social identities in the context-meld of the platform. Recall that this is the subject prodded into existence by the anxiety producing [a] that falls out unexpectedly of [S2] as truth. On-line more generally, but specifically in the catch-all social factory that is Facebook, the same spatial representation is the site of one's scholarship, one's family relationships, one's professional life, and other roles that, accordingly, combine and separate in various ways. One might therefore consider different social roles; for political thinkers, Facebook is a possible state dossier, for precarious writers and media professionals it is a resume for the future of real employment, for business owners it is the locus of attraction and visibility, for public relations and communications workers it is where emotional investments are shaped and maintained, and on and on. As if to prove the imaginary nature of these identifications, one has the opportunity to see them subordinated to the mandated

"real" identity of one's account. If one is conscious of its linking to one's other on-line accounts (e.g., when an ad pops up on Facebook from something we searched on Google) it quickly becomes apparent that something like a true online identity is opaque to the user by design.

$ → S1

The set-up of this scenario is the recursive loop of the platform's prediction and ever more personal provocations. The "we" that interacts with the environment of the platform is created by statistical and "spoken" conceptions of us, blended with enunciated ones. What many commentators suppose to be the heightened ability to express oneself, the oft-claimed benefit of social media, is also the creation of our data doubles. These masses of data are our on-line signification, whether intentionally through interaction with other peers in the network or unintentionally, as in the data collected on our non-linguistic movements and navigation through the platform. It is these masses that interact symbolically on Facebook's back end, with other like masses, to produce the flow of content—signs of self and other.

The facet of the discourse of network productions in which subjects are made to signify intentionally expresses a manifestation of the link between hysteric and analytic discourse (albeit in a different institutional context from the clinic). Just as the university discourse survives outside of the walls of the ivory tower, an encounter between a hystericized subject and the analyst in the latter's discourse exists "in any case whether psychoanalysis was there or not" (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 67). It is a question of different institutions that hold different "moments" of these original four discourses. That these moments still exist in the universe of the capitalist indicates their existence in different institutions; ones that, like Facebook, exist to perpetuate themselves through the provision of an ambient social/advertising environment.

In the same vein in which the method of "free-association" is bound to the context of the consulting room and linked to its function defined by the analyst's discourse, the supposed freedom of signification on Facebook's platform is related to the provocation of algorithmic desire posed to the divided subject. Such a provocation creates and captures culture in the same motion of recursive looping. Lacan has noted that the analyst's setup of the clinical encounter hystericizes discourse, and indeed that analytic discourse is established when the hysteric's truth is returned to her. The hysteric is identified with the desire of the Other, and it is this structure that opened up, for Freud, a means to the discovery of the unconscious. Because hysterics desire the Other's desire, their desire is to show the Other. Just a quarter turn from the hysteric's structure, Lacan writes the analyst's desire as impossible, the desire to represent the cause of the subject's desire of which the subject is unaware [a → $].

The cybernetic nature of the platform emulates the analyst/hysteric game of cat and mouse; the analyst's desire to represent the unknown cause of the subject's desire structurally identifies the subject with the desire of the Other (recommendations and suggestions built of past activity and friends' past activity). The hystericizing of discourse on Facebook consists in this provocation by which signifiers are returned, albeit with the identifying image(s) still intact and in play. The profusion of digital signifiers on social media, the passage of memes, the sharing of life events and links, etc., are provoked by the discourse-driving movement [a → $]. In confrontation with machine-predicted desires whose placement and emergence elide the timing of the subject, the subject speaks and is taken to speak through its actions of seeking and engaging.

They are animated by the desire to know, as Lacan says of the hysteric as much as of the analysand. But to know what? Of the hysteric, he answers that this knowledge aims at "what she

herself is worth, this person who is speaking". With the knowledge of enjoyment that comes out in these conditions, "what is important for her, is that the other, the other called man, should know what a precious object she becomes in this context of discourse" (1991/2007, p. 10). Following his thread on the discourse of the hysteric, Lacan gives a moment's reflection too on Freud's discovery of the unconscious, framing it there as "the remark that there is a perfectly articulated knowledge for which, properly speaking, no subject is responsible" (p. 10). But just as the hysteric ethos of speaking at all made Freud forewarn of the knowledge that is encountered, its all-consuming quality, and especially its rejection, here we must consider how the position of the subject of network production entails alienation from the whole range of linguistic and non-linguistic digital signs it emits.

Where [a] is in the position of truth in the hysteric's discourse, it moves to the position of agency in the discourse of the analyst. Here, the analyst addresses the analysand [$] in the position of Other. The discourse of network production combines elements of these, as [a] is located in the position of truth where it provokes, rather than addresses, the subject in the position of Other. Object causes of desire bombard or overwhelm the subject such that it produces reactive signifiers that comprise the subject's account. Contrary to the ethic of the Lacanian clinic, however, there is no distinction between what we might consider the subject's speech and its signifying and a-signifying actions. The entire bulk of data tied to the subject of social media includes, undifferentiated, the subject's intentional logs, posts, and comments (on-line speech) and acts of clicking, hovering, sorting, and browsing. The potential teachings of the movement [a → $] in the analyst's discourse, for example, that subjects are less-than-consistent functions of desire and enjoyment, or that there is no meta-language, may or may not occur.

In the discourse of network production, the production of [S1] diverges entirely from a clinical epistemology of master signifiers. When an [S1] surfaces in the discourse of the analyst, it is the result of the analyst addressing the subject from the position of desire. This in turn affords an encounter with the paternal metaphor, some degree of certainty, that knots the analysand's symptom and says something about its subjective constitution. In the discourse of network production, no care is taken to parse out the master signifier from the metonymy of imaginary identifications. Certainty is on the side of the algorithmic social graph rather than held between a speaker and a listener. [S1] is the surplus value, or the product, of this fantasy of certainty. The fact of what one does or which signifiers reappear in the fact of what one sees— the subject, as "other" to the "completed" agency of the platform, is alienated from participation in the process by which the data masses it produces [S1] are linked with other signifiers in the web of culture, [S2].

The master signifier [S1] is an auto-referential moment that is performative and eccentric in relation to [S2], giving a point of fixity to desire as it hooks into chains of signifiers. On social media, S1's refer to the total mass of personified data; users who are always provoked to by and to other signifiers to continue the capitalized work of self-production. The hysteric's discourse embodied this protean doing and undoing of selves in service of a quest for the next. [S1], as the account(s) to which all individual user-activity is tethered also displays the self as a container, socially plugged-in to the new, to difference, and thus to substitutions at lightning speed. [S1] products are ultimately these accounts; the user as a body of data traces, which conflates identifications and identities, relating them in entirely unpredictable ways for the sake of empirical, predictable, social knowledge. The subject's master signifier, their "data body" or "data double" is, in essence, a static representation of frenetic actions that the platform affords to

compensate for an abstract, distanced, and dislocated social form. It is this S1 that is privatized as data, making it possible to say that we do not have anything like rights, and certainly not exclusive rights, to ourselves on-line.

Machinic Enslavement

What about the signifiers collected and processed across the platform to be used on the back-end data infrastructure *as* signifiers? Machinic enslavement points towards an aspect of contemporary political functioning that is more difficult to assimilate into the way language is normally thought to create subjects, through different types of interpellation (Goffey, 2015). The forms of diagrammatic (non-representational) activity specific to machinic enslavement are heterogeneous to the representational functions of language as they operate in peer-to-peer social life. As a concept explicitly taken from cybernetics and automation technologies, it refers to managing or governing the components of a system; in a technological system, certain variables, like pressure, speed, force, and output are enslaved to the machine's overall functioning by having to "do their part" to ensure balance and cohesion. In this way, subjects of Facebook are inputs and outputs, or points of conjunction or disjunction in the web of economic, social, and communicational processes of network production. These are pre- and supra-personal operations that operate as a gaseous form of control that becomes recognizable retroactively and at its points of departure from mechanisms of subjection. Enslavement involves neither subjects nor objects as such, but "ontologically ambiguous" entities, hybrids, "objectivities/subjectivities" in other words, "subject-object bi-face" entities. Machinic enslavement therefore refers to the social determinations by cybernetic processes which treat human beings not as sovereign individuals but as dividuals—a collection of functions which contribute to larger machinic assemblages (e.g., the social graph).

The increasing reliance of society on digital recording and automated decision-making processes means that, despite our socially constructed sense of ourselves as individuals, we are also "dividuals" (Deleuze, 1969/1990). Dividuality is made by similarity, and corresponds to enslavement in that it is not a universal, nor the opposite of "individuality," but is composed of more than one component, constituting it as something divisible, but that also links it with other dividuals, similar in their components (Rauning, 2016). The notion of the dividual is not meant to mark a new metaphysics of the subject, but the optimization of the social utility of the unconscious. These two forms, subjection and enslavement, exhibit two cynicisms of capitalism: the "humanist" cynicism of assigning us individuality in fixed categories (even when these are multiple or inter-sectional) and the "dehumanizing" cynicism of inclusion as a sort of raw material in an assemblage whose production hardly distinguishes between human and non-human signals. Neither is it sufficient to think about the dividual only as a mortified or reduced individual, dismantled or naked through the operations of surveillance.[32] Here, dividuals are data points that attach to and detach from the image of the human user, agnostic to its concerns, rights, freedoms, etc. Not the opposite of subjection, but the overshadowing of all other modes of value by quantitative measurement and modeling of human practices forged in large part through a competitive attention economy (Terranova, 2012). The global extension of market valuation to social activity through Facebook plunges the inward depths of individual subjects to the point of their depersonalized subordination to the shifting demands and strategies of capital growth.

One consequence of the making of dividuals concomitant with the business of capitalizing signifiers tied to subjects is that there is no rational/economic reason to distinguish the human from the non-human. What algorithms (and other trackers) cannot interpret is whether the user passes the Turing Test. In a recent report in the *New York Times*, confirmed by venture

capitalists and marketing directors at other major news outlets, most metrics of advertisement reach and user engagement are false, owing to the technical inability to distinguish, in many instances, users from their devices. Should a person switch cell towers while using Facebook's mobile app, for example, Facebook marks them as another user. The same goes for using the same account on different hardware devices. In fact, it is patently within Facebook's financial interest to fail to catch fake accounts. This way they remain permissible as real representations of potential consumers. This falsification of society is troubling to advertisers and advocates of democracy alike, who are slowly waking up to the fact that Facebook is simultaneously not as worthwhile an avenue for attention grabbing than was once believed, and at the same time a much more powerful one (Greenspan, 2019).

According to Facebook's own disclosures to investors and on its transparency portal, it believes that somewhere between 13 and 36% of its monthly active users are fake accounts (i.e., accounts that do not each correspond to a unique, individual user). Greenspan's (2019) detailed study estimates that 50% or more are fake. Having changed their method of uncovering fake accounts 10 times in the past year, it is safe to say that Facebook does not and will never have a fool-proof way of measuring or addressing fake accounts (Greenspan, 2019). Facebook has already disclosed that since Q4 2017, as a conservative estimate, it has deleted 2.841 billion fake accounts on a network purporting to have 2.271 billion current monthly active users, amounting to 55% of all accounts ever created. Click farms all over the world employ people to register and sell hundreds of fake accounts per day, tied to different SIM cards. *The New Republic*'s (2015) reports showed that there could be as many as 10,000 accounts corresponding to a single person. Bot agencies show quick tips for getting around Facebook's security verification (e.g., download someone's Twitter photo and upload it as verification), and claims that Facebook does not catch

99% of fake accounts. And yet, for users that actually correspond to human beings, the stakes of these different forms of social power are high and yet indeterminate.

Visible and Invisible Signification

The ways that individuality and dividuality are played off of each other are technically complex and unfold continuously in the platform's drive to profit through reciprocity agreements and partnerships in which user data are shared. They are messy processes whose description can highlight the exploitation and control of individuals through integration with dividuality; the social capacity and technological advances unleashed by the rise of dividual data bodies; and how such in-mixing is what makes Internet technology not a neutral tool, but a highly potent one for those who can leverage such in-mixing to their advantage. I emphasize the latter, while making the previous two apparent as valuable perspectives in their own right.

The coding capacity of the computational machines that facilitate the movement of capital, language, and flows of material and immaterial resources transforms exchange, making it possible to trade digital assets more and more quickly with less and less a relationship to material, industrial, and energy production. In the progression of communication infrastructures, digital signs are registered almost simultaneously to their production. As a capacity of the infrastructure of the Internet, this unleashed flow of data affects processes of production as well as the part human effort takes in relation to it. Here we have the opportunity to describe the changing nature of value production, and thus of subjective temporality, linked to the affordances of online social life. Where capitalism has always sought to extract surplus value from labor in the form of time spent "on the clock," it now seeks to appropriate and extract value from subjective states, experiences, feelings, and social exchange. As this form of social labor spreads across the day, existing as "flow and circulation within time" and comprising "the

relation between production time and reproduction time, as a single whole"—capital aims to impose time-as-measure against "the conception of working-class freedom over the temporal span of life" (Negri, 2003a, pp. 89-91).

This happens through an opaque system of measurement, facilitated by the use of digital information technologies, that extracts surplus value on a machinic temporality that is not confined to a time or space that would otherwise designate "labor" or "leisure" for a new generalized proletariat.[33] The premium put on collection and extraction of data, then, coincides with the fall of clock time and the binary configurations that it upheld. Surplus value is not only produced by our forms of employment, sectioned as they are by roles with fixed spatial and temporal coordinates, but by integrating networked computing machines into social life such that value is created from chatting, planning, exchanging, convening, advice-giving, etc.—activities that are not apparently exploitative (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

This new regime of digital signification entails front and back ends that demarcate the visible and the invisible of the platform's operations for users. The process of producing self-representing statements that communicate something of the user comprises the user's conscious activity on the platform, which obfuscates the modulation and control processes that operate on and link dividuals, as data, behind the scenes. It is along these lines that social subjection and machinic enslavement play off each other to produce the alienating effects of a knowledge that is making important decisions about the user which are not known to it as such. In important ways, the subject cannot *not* represent itself, but it also does not speak; it is not the locus of symbolic efficiency, which is displaced to the empirical network overview contained in the proprietary social graph and the flight of its data across multiple agents. Above and below the level of the input of content, of meta-data and deep data, respectively, the subject becomes dividual. It is

spoken rather than speaking. Facebook registers what is unsaid—clicks, page navigation, hovering used to measure length of attention, likes, and who we friend are just a few examples. When pictures are uploaded to the site, they are tagged with linguistic descriptors, the speaking on behalf of the subject, by Facebook's algorithms.

While the environment of the platform is standardized to a degree, what appears in, say, our news feeds and story suggestions are produced through feedback loops that integrate signifiers produced intentionally and collected through the mute motions, engagements, and behaviors of users. The flow of content that creates the set and setting of the social space of Facebook comes from our previous acts of clicking, hovering, "checking in" to physical locations, "liking," etc. It is as if the linear past dissolves in the intensification of the present to create an ordered, coherent, and personal informational world. Because these signifiers are articulated by the machinations of the social graph, they are in some sense deployed by humans and administered through the mediation of artificial intelligence. These signifiers come to construct the world available to the subject, informing its possible on-line social encounters and conditioning real ones. All the while, undifferentiated digital signifiers become the source of meta-information that is processed and delivered into the productive sphere. Metadata generated by our engagement with objects and prospects on the screen contribute to an improved understanding of demographic-based desire for a range of social purposes, like access to health care, employment, financial services, and allocation of public resources.

The mapping processes of filling the social graph described above, and the many ways in which [a] functions as a suture comprises our dividuality—algorithmically informed approximations of us in the form of packets of information from our browsing, clicking, and managing of on-line features—all activities that are interpreted to represent the attention and

engagement of the subject. This information is read through predictive analytics that use

elements of actual on-line activity as well as demographic norms from statistical aggregates to

presume and predict this subject's or subject group's enjoyment. This progressively creates a

social network of ambient and perpetual suggestion. Data doubles are "us" as "epistemic objects"

(or to put it less academically, stereotypes) mediated by categorical sorting and analysis, through

a variety of probabilistic calculations, that recursively affect our actual social opportunities. Our

data create shadow profiles of us that generate individualized on-line affordances through a

credit-score like system of offerings that arise on the basis of our likelihood of, not even

purchasing, but engaging with this or that idea.

Further, users are segmented toward the determination of their eligibility for social-

institutions-turned-services, like healthcare, education, and credit. The linking and modeling of

dividuals becomes yet another way that discrimination is systematized behind the scenes. The

automated flow of data also has unpredictable ramifications for off-line communities linked

through economic circuits informed by this data. When I buy a backpack on Amazon, for

example, I have no idea whether or not the data the purchase produced will be aggregated in a set

used to predict the likelihood of educational success in my region. If convincing to the relevant

governing and funding institutions, this data means a massive influx or outflow of capital and

other materials that could affect youth quality of life, crime rates, etc. In this case, algorithmic

patterns are referred to interpreters whose methods are opaque to the users and the groups into

which they are unknowingly and perhaps unwittingly sorted.

Data streams (dividuality/enslavement) linked with self-nominations

(individuality/subjection) come to impact life in a variety of ways. Our dividuality therefore,

becomes both our past and our future—not to mention that privately funded initiatives of all sorts

are justified on the basis of social data that is the aggregation of all of this individual user data. For the individual as much as for society, operationalized as a collection of individuals, the past that diminishes in the rapidity of the computing experience returns, filtered through predictions. It works the other way, too, from off-line to on-line. For instance, a visit to the doctor's office that results in a drug-store purchase of ibuprofen might be exchanged as data with a company whose ad appears on your Facebook feed, collated with your indicated interest in trail-running, for a "healthier alternative for pain-management." As a group of individuals and as a network collective of Facebook users, we are thoroughly and utterly predicted in advance but also interpreted with effects that sputter out into the future. Algorithmic interpretation of our online behavior sees patterns of engagement rather than meaning. For instance, if one incidentally stumbles upon child pornography, the metadata of this engagement trajectory does not register moral outrage, shame, or guilt, but it does mark this fact of the matter permanently, along with the IP address that provides the means of locating the user in physical time-space.[34]

Jarod Lanier explains in the 2012 documentary *Welcome to the Machine* (Anderson et al., 2012), that this predictive system must be just better than competitors' predictions, but not right all the time. This creates a universe of reference constructed from our aggregated past behaviors in relation to each other, instituting a deep regime of self-management that is thoroughly guided by the nudges, suggestions, and pathways provided by the encoded laws of the platform. Neither is self-management limited to, say, advertising inducing individuals to buy particular products. Self-management works on the social itself, rather than the individual user, by managing the differential conditions by which the software enables us to relate to each other. The software places some of us as objects for others by assuming we want to meet people our friends know, just as it dictates the rules of interaction—we cannot be sad, for example, we can only have

extreme emotions, like anger or laughter. The features of the social media interface and sorting work of its algorithms tacitly designate the parts of the user that will be commercialized and deemed suitable for others, and those that will not, which is to say, it determines the "inner" and the "outer" of selfhood, and adjudicates between shareable and private affects and experiences, and between the parts of social life that are represented to others and how this occurs. It determines those parts of the self that are reproducible or digestible according to the social network it enables one to cultivate.[35]

The environment of the platform relies on the social imagination of users, despite the degree of over-determination of its actions, and profits from the differently manifested but overarching sense of futurity and maintenance of social ties that [a] provokes and invokes. This is the concrete manifestation of the anxiety of the All to which I spoke in the previous section. The rise of self-marketing, branding, and the influencer economy make it easy to qualify Facebook as a type of social labor. People make complex ethical and valuating decisions nonstop on these platforms, marking out what they believe is real (the objects and utterances that they contribute), in addition to what they believe is worth their time and engagement (to the limited degree to which there is choice in the matter of attention allocation). It is in this sense disqualified from labor in the traditional sense of wage labor, reflecting again a false distinction between production and consumption along the lines of a paid/unpaid dichotomy.

Value in the digital economy emerges not only from users' time—an individualized control of labor—but from the commodification of their affective relations and affiliations—a dividualizing one. The status of knowledge embodied in the social graph is one of habitual sets of relations. Not what we like, or even what we do, but the sets of relations between entities, acts, and people. The rapidly obsolescent and ultra-transparent selves we create on-line are

subject to user-wide statistical aggregation and categorized on the basis of the data brokers or advertisers' imagined communities. Usually, these imagined communities are formed around measurements of your interests—insofar as these interests inform your brand loyalties, buying habits, creditworthiness, and even social status as measured by your friends' friends and *their* debiting habits. Facebook Beacon was an invention from 2007—the first user-tracking program that explicitly placed advertisements in users' news feeds on the basis of their friends' behavior. Though Beacon was shut down in 2009, this "friends of friends" flaw has continued up to the present. At the time of writing, Facebook is under scrutiny again when internal emails containing decisions about which other tech companies would be granted access to the "Friends API," which relays precisely these social status metrics.[36]

These are fodder for the creation of social categories that, along with other categories of predictive data, are known as "conventions of interpretation in enabling market rationality and making value decisions possible" (Arvidsson & Colleoni, 2012, p. 141). For example, in the realm of asset classes or finance, these data pieces, in addition to the use of other public data, become the key to the valuation and likelihood of success of various services, commodities, digital technologies, etc. This makes the manipulation of such technologies highly problematic, as it frames and harvests: the types of questions it asks, the forms of communication it facilitates, its design, its regulation, and its business practices all come into play.

Prediction algorithms also assemble group relations, demarcating and utilizing the social groupings of individual users it creates. These categories do not come from nowhere, but embed the values of its "sense-makers" (e.g., the designers and managers who control the software). These categories amplify divisions and distinctions *within* the imaginary social groupings of [S2]. Preferences and predilections are categorized and reinforced through the recycling of

commodified signifers. Their comings and goings are therefore also timed according to Facebook's impetuses to form strategic partners and sales and to spark more activity. It is not merely that the entire network of users who fill Facebook with interesting content do not have assurances of accessibility to what they produce, nor control of its distribution (unless they buy advertising which marginally pumps up the volume of the message they wish to spread), nor editing rights. It is that these users are re-grouped and affiliated in ways that are unknowable to them. If the interplay between individuality and dividuality creates an unfamiliar data double, this same effect occurs at the group level.

The full force of network capitalization is derived from the strength *between* relationships and groups determined through bubbles of hype around particular commodities, brands, and experiences. While this particular exploration is outside the scope of this piece, social media may in truth offer a direct demonstration of the linkage between marginalized identities and identifications, and of connection between class struggle and liberal identity political categories—a link that must always be recognized. This is because Facebook's social graph is valuable as a digital asset owing to the way it traces large movements of human sentiment through associations. Just as "a signifier represents a subject for another signifier," the associations between users as dividuals personified through accounts are taken at face(less) value. In the market analyses made possible by the social graph, frequency and proximity displace meaning. Words index communication by the fact that they appear, representing relations devoid of content.

Symbolic Efficiency Strikes Back

The notion of a decline in symbolic efficiency in recent decades of political and social history corresponds to the disappearance of the subject-supposed-to-know—that form of

authority that well and truly knows the deep secrets of our lives as political agents. This decline of symbolic efficiency also suggests a shift whereby the subject's reliance on the paternal function of prohibition is replaced by a semblance of enjoyment. When we hear of the decline of symbolic efficiency, it refers to the fact that the No-saying father has fallen. The decline of this specific paternal authority corresponds to the fall in belief and trust in the symbolic fiction of each others' words. Efficiency is about a "minimum of reification" when a measure or decree is registered by the big Other of an institution (Žižek, 1997, p. 2). It does not matter whether or not we know, but *that it is registered*. Sylvia & Andrejevic (2016) explain this shift to a drive-based political ontology through Foucault, whose power/knowledge axis it puts in question. Foucault showed that knowledge readily serves as an alibi for power, while at the same time pinpointing the locus of resistance in a kind of subordinated knowledge. Without symbolic efficiency, however, we enter into a different context in which debunking knowledge claims does not have the same sort of political purchase, and it seems as though power and its growth through capital march on with little regard for justifications and grand narrative.

What happens when we view the platform as a response to this decline of symbolic efficiency, a sort of registration machine that displaces the locus of power/authority by way of the free flow of digital signifiers? A displacement of the locus of symbolic efficiency follows more closely the logic internal to capitalism's moves of de- and re-territorialization and general substitutability in the realm of signification. Such a lens more readily attends to who, or more accurately, *what* does the work of symbolic efficiency in the stead of the subject. In view of this registration machine, it becomes possible to determine the techniques of symbolic efficiency as their locus is sought out. If, in fact, the discourse of the capitalist and its permutations *are* discourses, their relation to symbolic efficiency and its techniques cannot be underestimated. It is

possible to re-imagine the responses to this decline as collective sutures by way of the functional deployment of data. If we are willing to observe the responses to this decline, or the stepping up to the mantle of symbolic efficiency, it becomes possible to grasp the importance of its power as a locus of authority.

Disjunction and Symbolic Castration

Recall that when Lacan introduced the discourse of the capitalist (1972/2008), it was written without the disjunctions of impossibility or impotence. The four discourses of the universe of mastery presuppose symbolic castration in order to sustain the four positions (as involuted as they may become for its subjects). To refresh: the disjunction of impossibility refers to the fact that the agent cannot effectively communicate the truth of their speech/demand to the Other; something will always remain unsymbolized, such that there is no "total" or complete communication. The disjunction of impotence corresponds to this first one; since some element of truth remains unsymbolized in the Agent's speech, that which is produced by the Other in response does not correspond to the truth by which that speech was motivated.

The discourse of the capitalist and its permutations more broadly admits of a transmission with no disjunctions. As Tomšič (2015) points out, the vectors show that the capitalist discourse (and by extension, the discourse of network production) is grounded on the foreclosure of the impossibility of totalization of communication and total satisfaction in the product to which it corresponds. Capitalist discourse is therefore distinguished by a management of the non-coincident gulf between the Other and enjoyment (read: symbolic castration), which it nevertheless leaves firmly intact. It takes a firmer, altogether compensatory relation to this castration wherein various prosthetic devices speak the Real directly such that the "fetters" of speech are no longer necessary.

Nevertheless, the removal of disjunctions in the capitalist universe does not speak to the particular mechanisms of this universe, but is coincident with the entirely shifted flow of discourse. In the capitalist universe, these disjunctions disappear simply by virtue of the fact that there is no discursive link between the top two functors (in network production, [agent S2] and [other $]). This is mediated by [a] in the position of truth. That there is no disjunction of impossibility between "agent" and "other" therefore does not mean that [S2] and [$] communicate. Hence, the inaugurating move of the discourse of network production is [S2 → a] in which excess is sought for excess' sake. Whatever it may be that is *not* incorporated into the system is taken as truth in that it sustains the movement of the discourse itself—that more is out there. This object [a] plays its role as that enjoyment or surplus which is missing, unincorporated, or undiscovered. It is the sustaining nugget of truth that [S2] captures through address, described in human terms as connecting or engaging—what we do on Facebook as social media. More people not on the Internet, more information you have not provided, more ways that we can express ourselves, more physical locations that are not represented in a Facebook "places" page. If it's not on-line, it belongs there—[S2] is this sort of hunger.

That there are no disjunctions in this discourse must be read *within* the discourse. For network production, this removal generates absolutes relayed by the registration machine that comes to play in relation to symbolic efficiency (acting as an engine of symbolic fiction). For example, [S1 → S2] in this discourse can be read as "everything will be registered." The discourse of network production is premised heavily on the fantasy of university discourse and undergirded by a utopic progression toward signifying completion; total measurement, or total digitization, is thought possible to achieve. Today, when the signifying matrix of capital covers the entire globe, incessantly recording, tracking, accounting, and accumulating masses of data, it

is precisely the symbolic order that is reabsorbed into the machinery of capital and productive of surplus value. Where the money sign was the suture in the discourse of the capitalist, the data signifier is the suture in the discourse of network production. One's heartbeat, for example, number of steps walked in a day, judgment of the outdoor seating at a local business, and feelings about the traffic jam one witnesses on a drive all become commodified equivalents in the form of information or "big data." Here the link between the Real and the Symbolic is very tight. The flow of these signs structures the temporality of subjects. Its logic does the work of symbolic efficiency (i.e., the algorithm becomes the subject-supposed-to-know, and wealth is both cause and effect).

At first blush this sounds as if it has nothing to do with castration, and it is tempting to affirm the ethos of control via accomplished digitization. As we have seen, this techno-fetishistic narrative carries differing degrees of strength for different subjects, from repression to repudiation, of the lack in the Other. In the case of the social Internet, it wishes not to grapple with the impossibility of turning everything into a digital, and thus exchangeable and more easily interchangeable, object. However, this is to miss the structural role of castration which is very much intact in this discourse, just as it is a condition of all others. The following revisits the logic of castration (which is always required to produce [a]) so that we can suss out the difference between castration and the removal of the disjunctions of impossibility and impotence common to the entire capitalist universe. Doing so is important, in that it speaks to the status of sociality and symbolic efficiency as it pertains to techno-subjectivity and in its implications for a collective ethics and politics of and in social media.

Dead Father and Enjoyment

In seminar XVII, Lacan (1991/2007) goes on a goose chase into the realm of biblical interpretation to investigate the conceivable origin by which Freud based the founding of civil society, first on the murder of the father by the primal, brotherly hoard in *Totem and Taboo* and then on the death of Moses in *Moses and Monotheism.* The old Egyptian Moses, betrayed and killed by his people, was the all-inclusive One of logos, the rational substantial structure of the universe, the "writing" accessible to those who know how to read the "great book of Nature," not yet the all-exclusive One of subjectivity who imposes his unconditional Will on His creation (Žižek, 1997). When Lacan claims to analyze the Oedipus complex as being a dream of Freud's, he is essentially calling Freud out, or making him pay, for the *evasion of truth* that accompanies castration. He eventually devotes the space of a whole seminar to inviting a professor in to tell his students that there is no respectable basis in the literature to account for the theory that Moses was murdered.

There is, however, one rogue biblical interpreter who did indeed posit a theory of Moses' murder—only to recant it implicitly, by excluding it from his later writings (Lacan, 1991/2007). Outside of this anomaly, the pattern in myth that Freud sought to confirm the patricide on which his genetic theory of society lay cannot be established. But, before this professor is called in to confirm Freud's deviance from the established interpretive consensus, Lacan (1991/2007) moves to interrogate more deeply the connection between the dead father and enjoyment. He notes that such a connection is secured as essential for Freud in his writing of the *Interpretation of Dreams* where a desire for death manifests simultaneously with actually occurring death. But in fact, this death wish masks not only another wish—of immortality and omnipotence. It also masks the

uncertainty whereby the opacity of death makes it impossible to know whether or not it has already happened.

> All men born of a father, who, we are told insofar as he is dead, does not enjoy what is there to be enjoyed. The equivalence is therefore established in Freudian terms, between the dead father and enjoyment. It is he who keeps it in reserve, as I might say. (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 159).

The crux of the mythology of the death of the father is that he is one consistent figure embodying enjoyment which then becomes conferred on the basis of his positioning. How, then, does Lacan relate the crude schema, of murder and enjoyment, to the elision of the tragic dimension of Oedipus? This dimension, he says, is something similar, or related to, paying the price of castration:

> Is it not in this very object that we see Oedipus being reduced, not to undergoing castration, but, I would rather say, to being castration itself? Namely, what remains when one of the privileged supports of the [a]-object disappears from him in the form of his eyes. What does this mean, if not that the question arises whether what he has to pay for is to have mounted the throne, not by the path of succession, but by the path of this choice made of him as a master, for having effaced the question of truth. This is what he has to pay for. (1991/2007, p. 156)

There is a double sense of castration transmitted through the Father, then; neither is the truth of this bind broached directly (instead it is covered over by the wish of omnipotence, which translates, in Freud's case, to guilt over the death of the father), nor is there any other way to learn but directly, through mimicry, which creates succession. What is in this equivalence that Lacan, moments later, attributes the term "structural operator"? "There in effect, beyond the Oedipus is the Real Father, at the heart of the Freudian system, of the father of the Real, which places at the center of Freud's teaching the term impossible" (1991/2007, p. 157). This identification he further calls the "sign of the impossible itself," for which we must bear in mind that the "Real is the impossible" in the precise sense that it is *declared* impossible in the Symbolic. The Real is impossible as mathematical fall-out—a logical impossibility dictated by the fact of language. Note that this is still not a positive qualification of the Real, but its deduction by virtue of a symbolic declaration. It is this Real Father that Lacan says can only be further identified as the "agent of castration." We learn that he is an "agent" of castration, selling it, as much to himself as to anyone who pays for it.

This is different from being the person, the authority, who perpetrates the act of castration. His compensation for this sale covers over "having nothing else to do...[it] pretends to begin from the fact that he is capable of something else" (1991/2007, p. 157). The position of the Real Father cannot be qualified any further except that is not the father of signifiers, but a father because of them. As an agent of castration, then, he is compensated not for foregoing enjoyment, but for eliding the tragic dimension of truth by *not wanting to know* in the name of the Other. Enjoyment, he says, separates the master-signifier, insofar as one would like to attribute to the father knowledge which is also truth, but for the infant who knows no death or mortality, the father knows nothing about truth.

S1 → S2
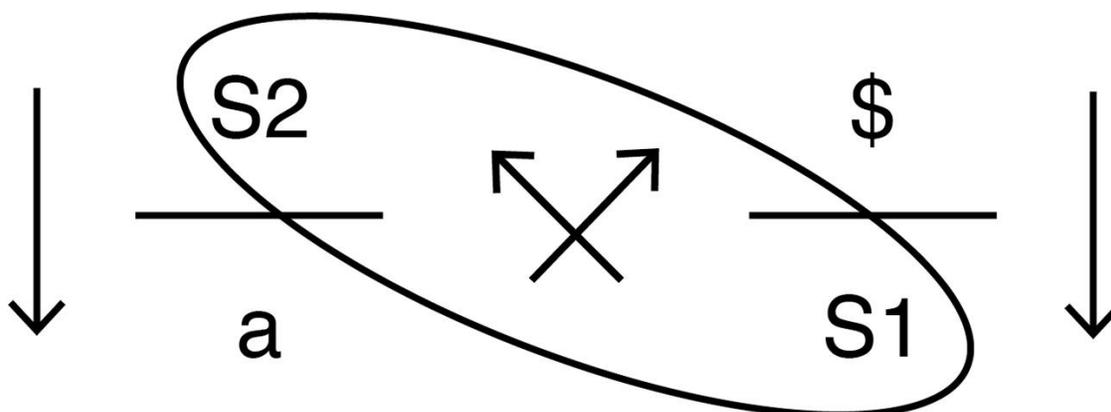
Figure 8: Fourth Motion of the Discourse of Network Production

In the position of product, or surplus value, we saw that the power of S1 does not inhere in it, but in the process by which an identifying signifier emanates from the subject of the platform as a sort of "result" of being there (and being hooked). The structural castration that separates [$] and [S1] is equal to the way in which the platform fails as a set of self-building, or self-actualization practices, exacerbating instead the distance between the divided subject and the [S1s] that come to identify the subject. Be that as it may, a foreclosure of this castration has dire consequences that are more readily apparent from the angle of the reinvestment of surplus value, that makes of [S1s] fully commodifiable dividuals. Commoditization of these signifiers is complex because it is not a question of labor in the sense of paid work, but a question of reproduction of the social world that has always been relegated to the outer, uncounted edges of production under capitalism. The search for cheap labor that has placed much industrial, commodity production outside of the U.S. and other Western nations gave rise to "immaterial" production in two principle forms: labor that is primarily intellectual or linguistic that produces

ideas, symbols, codes, texts, etc., and affective labor that express states of the body and modes of

thinking that correspond to states "such as feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement,

or passion" (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 108). It is this development that has many Marxists delving

into the realm of the digital, questioning whether or not the labor theory of value has become

obsolete. Value not only expands through the production of commodities, but by the mechanisms

through which they circulate and through the lives that foreground them. Voyeuristic and

exhibitionist styling for circulation or toward consumption creates a social link built on the

ontology of advertising; keeping up with increasing speeds creates subjects who appear to desire

"the new" per se—even as they repeat ad nauseaum their superegoic identifications. The

commoditization of identity-tied signifiers, ultimately a tie between [a] and [S1] is in service of

speculative value (e.g., advertising and *its* possible expansion).

The discourse of network production posits the direct transmissibility of these accounts

into an unprecedented capture in the data citadel of [S2]. This direct transmisibility is not only

the elision of the subject via anxiety, or the loss of the Real in its division. It is also an absolutely

transmissible version of the subject in the form of identification coincident with social subjection

(gender, sexuality, race, class, religion, etc.). Note, now, that the master signifiers supposed to

represent the subject who produce them on-line, filter into the seat of agency *occupied not by the*

subject, as in the discourse of the capitalist, but by these decontextualized fragments of

subjective truth, collected as bodies of global human social logs [S2]. These signs of

participation are captured in the language of code, inserted into databases, processed, analyzed

against each other, etc.

Yet, while the linkages between signifiers representing subjects are capitalized, the social

relations involved in production of value are obscured. While the content of our speech is an

address directed toward, and indeed often read by peers, family, colleagues, and so on, the coded

data that, below the level of the text, facilitates its meta-organization, storage, ownership, and

future uses is directed to the corporate-owned platforms themselves. Information as a control

layer, as Mckenzie Wark (2006) notes, above and below subjects, turns out not only to

circumvent the question of the subject, but intensifies the production of mutually embedded,

entropic ego-objects. It is worth repeating the way that Wark (2004) has parsed this out,

developing a notion of the rentier model of telecommunication quite fully, which culminates in

an exposition of the "vectoralist class." Similar to its usage in epidemiology, a vector is the

means by which a given pathogen travels. They therefore also denote any means by which

information moves. At the same time as telecommunications name the capacity for perception at

a distance, they also name particular vectors, like the telegraph or telephone. While any

particular media vector has fixed properties, like bandwidth, scope, and speed, its uneven

development may be viewed as a function of political economy rather than technical possibility.

Vectoralist commodification may occur at the level of information stocks, flows, or even vectors

themselves for telecommunications companies (i.e., AT&T). The commodification of

information such that surplus value may be extracted from it requires transporting information

through space and time.

Accordingly, this archival mass, big data, is a vector through time as "communication is

a vector that crosses space" (Wark, 2004, abst. 24). Such an archive has enduring value, and is

maintained through time—hence its commensurately greater effect on the lives of users. On

Facebook, a flow of information denotes the capacity to extract and distribute information of

temporary value out of action on, mediated by, or otherwise monitored through the platform.

Vectoralists own platforms in the sense that they control and govern the platform, walling off the

algorithms that make it, along with the information users provide intentionally or unintentionally through the vehicle of intellectual property. Vectoral power adds to pastoral power in its ownership, not of the information specifically, but of its value on the basis of its distribution in time. It is in this sense that class-based oppression might be understood as only one particular fetish in the larger struggle to organize the totality of human effort (Wark, 2015).

Everything we type, "like," and click is on the land, so to speak, of the vectoralists, and in the house of platform owners. The dynamics of monopolistic ownership, value extraction, labor exploitation and precariousness, power-law distribution (simply called network effects) are, for some, reminiscent of the robber baron-age monopolies of the early 1900s (e.g., Burbach, Jeffries, & Robinson, 2001; Hodges, 2000; Morozov, 2015). Similarly, if one takes the space metaphor of the Internet seriously, it is equally apparent that the capture of social substance (linguistic, affective, symbolic, and cultural commons) in platform enclosures shares qualities with the pre-capitalist feudal manors where peasants worked an enclosed space at the hands of the lords in exchange for sustenance.

Controversies surrounding Facebook's own practices of data-sharing show that the manipulation of consumer behavior is secondary to the imperatives of capitalism more broadly. The company's obligation to its shareholders to grow and profit wholly dictates with whom its data assets are shared: it strategically gives access to other tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon, Yahoo, and Apple and sells user attention to advertisers and other interests in information's select distribution. What is important in the grand scheme of things is that the creation of the silos that lock data-producing users in an anxious environment of awkward timing, faceless social interactions, and incalculable consequences is secondary to the appropriation of surplus value—a sort of insider information of everything, everywhere—on offer to states as much as to

advertisers. The question of ownership and access by necessity operates and therefore must be thought about before attempts to control what is said or who says what, on-line.

When we send information through the vectoralists' channels, we "speak their language" at *every level except that of meaning*. A user may send a message on Facebook to a friend to ask them if they can meet at such and such a time. This message may be received and responded to in the affirmative. What's the problem here? It is that that message is, in essence, duplicated: one's friend gets a copy, and Facebook keeps one, too. This means that to participate in the sort of horizontal, libidinal economy that is visible on Facebook, one must also devote this participation to the unknowable purposes for which Facebook itself maps and trust their decisions about who else will get to see this information—their data ethics. Even when we experience our recycled activity in the form of suggestion (i.e., the superego incarnate), such suggestion is over-determined by these interests. The almighty algorithm, then, poses as a pure unconscious, hiding the fact that it is mediated by those who leverage the power of the tool most successfully.

Within the capitalist universe, digitization may be thought of as an ongoing process by which signifiers become both commodities (e.g., names are digital spaces, and function to some degree as land, at the same time as software code is both an object and a service), and signs of commodities, where speculation is a key act on the sides of production and consumption alike. Such digitization is the process by which signifiers become commodities, and therefore also the process by which they are ordered, organized, and made functional for others, by and large, by artificial intelligence and in the absence of human oversight. The advances in capitalism's ability to code does not bring to light repressed or previously unknown information about the subject, it *creates* more and more recordable information through the encounter [a → $]. Symbolic fictions

are unraveled, their structures exposed by alterity on-line, and rebuilt as the invisible law of the

platform. The subject's role is to generate these signifiers, from the traumatic encounter with the

alterity of [a]. Its linking with [S2] is not one of speech between agent and other, but issues into

[S2] through the mediation of [S1]. Digitization means that the interpretive work that the other

qua [S2] had done in the discourse of the master is effectively handed over to digital machines,

whose programs are not neutral, but bear out the interests of their creators and owners.

> Here, at a particular point of the linkage, specifically the altogether initial one, between
>
> S1 to S2, it is possible that there opens up this fault which is called the subject. Here
>
> linkage-effects, in this case signifying ones, are brought into operation. Whether this
>
> lived experience that is called more or less properly thinking is or is not produced
>
> somewhere, there is here produced something that is due to a chain, exactly as if it came
>
> from thinking. Freud never said anything else when he spoke about the unconscious
>
> (Lacan, 1991/2007, p. 120).

The status of the unconscious is in question, or rather, the duplication of something that

elides the subject, and that thinks on its behalf. If the superegoic injunctions of ego metonymy

seem like a brush with pure immanence, does this not indicate a disavowal of the unconscious

and the normalization of this disavowal by displacing the question to the opacity of technological

systems? When people call the Internet the unconscious, or push Marshall McLuhan's

formulation "the medium is the message" to "the medium is the mind," they are explicitly

disinterested in the subject's coming-to-know the unconscious. There is no clinical learning that

respects the particular coordinates of one's subjectivity, but instead a mass social fact that people

are confused or chaotic; in need of a machine to organize enjoyment, make the right suggestions, display the right things, to know us better than we know ourselves. Generally speaking, no one wants to know how the machine works. That is the condition of the "user"—the subject is presumed to not want to know.

The binding power or performative efficacy of the symbolic, at a collective (rather than inter-subjective) scale, is therefore displaced to the level of code. This creates reliance on the digitized passage of [S1 → S2] for meeting a variety of needs met at this collective level. This is a very different kind of symbolic castration, indeed. Significations are no longer "subjectivized" insofar as they fail to fully form subjects through them. Nevertheless, the individual's account, or name-as-marker, makes of it a hub of corporate transactions, the logic of which subordinates anything else represented by this name (e.g., the subject in communication). We are beat to the punch, so to speak, when it comes to the purposes to which our names and words are put. While in itself this may not be considered a problem, perhaps considered a feat of social engineering, I suggest that it emulates or redoubles the alienating effects of unconscious knowledge.

The discourse of network production is one that is hardly spoken at all. If the binding power of the voice is displaced across multi-media alerts, pop-ups, and surprises, we are in the realm of the Real Father. As a registration machine, the discourse of network production creates a reliable locus of the attribution of authority; it offers a way of shirking the human relations that it mediates. Authority is hiding somewhere in the nexuses between humans and computers, and yet it is indeed there. What we have been saying all along is that this registration is on over-drive rather than not happening at all; the gaze of the Other is everywhere. The direct connection between devices and the Real body makes *it,* the Real body, speak in our stead. Trust in this writing process is the binding element of castration; where symbolic efficiency is in decline,

digitization comes along with *its* fundamental rule of Law: "that's just how it works," or "leave it to the technicians," or "I don't know why this thing keeps beeping at me, but I love the scheduler."

For all its impressive mathematical opacity, the algorithmic social empiricism of Facebook relies on categories laden with meaning, that are by no means neutral. Facebook's users are therefore subject to a regime of private meanings that are used to sort them into categories that are relevant for the vast amount of social and economic activity that exists on-line. While we retain meaning from content, the associations created through the categories, or really the encoded values of the platform are a language that comes from above. It is in this sense that users who signify are "spoken" rather than speaking nonetheless, or mute in the face of a socially powerful ledger capable of serving the aims of anyone able to access it. A more nuanced way to think about the now-popular claims that our attention is hijacked on-line, or that we are manipulated by the major web companies, is that they exchange records that approximate (but inherently cannot target) something like user intentionality and internality, to which they have exclusive rights. In these instances, subjects are markers in social models that speak for them.

The maps that users build are not accessible, editable, or contestable by those who create them. Neither do they have access to the value they create. The rights to record, to formulate categories, to deploy data sets for a range of social-engineering purposes, and to otherwise realize [S1s] as surplus value is created in the setting up of the infrastructure for the circulation of this data. It is in this sense that changes in the evolution of capital's recording process (signifying economy) designates shifts in its style and capacity to dominate subjects. Wendy Brown (2006) argues that the innovations in forms of control translate genealogical attachments and identifications into right, which couldn't be better exemplified here. Likewise, Lacan's

(2002b) etymological account of *jouissance* (enjoyment) notes that *joie* involves possession and what one can dispose of when all is said and done. The *jouissance* of a title, or some paper representing a value, functions only in the sense that one is able to give it up. The *sign* of possession is to be able to *resign* it. In 2006, Facebook's trademark was granted, and its intellectual property, the social graph, protected. In fact, Facebook holds some seven to eight thousand patents for data mining of tags, keywords, and user-attentional and behavioral patterns. Trademarks allow Facebook to protect their right to the generic name, and offer an (additional) mechanism for evading taxes through a licensing scheme called "Transfer Pricing."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

To Return to Internet Addiction

I began investigating aporias of Internet Addiction by way of its social-discursive history and current institutional context. As a pathology-on-the-rise, the notion of addiction to the Internet places an image of excessive screen time in a lineage of addiction formations. Earlier instantiations have served to discipline subject-object relations of enjoyment. "Addiction," in its diagnostic criteria *and* popular narratives, has always pointed to a form of enjoyment that elides and erodes pro-social habits and relationships. Yet, the Internet is the very technology that exploded into American households over the past decades with the promise to scale up many-to-many communication and offer unprecedented access to each other and to information. This curiosity alone may have warranted a deeper investigation into how and why the supposedly social machine *par excellence* evolves into an object of anti-social enjoyment in the field of psychology.

The argument of this dissertation unfolded slightly differently, however, opting to understand the fact of mass-migration online as an evolution of social organization and its symbolic matrix. Hours and hours of screen-time are becoming normalized as the vast majority of social institutions and jobs have shifted their locus of action and interaction to online spaces. Through the current paradigm of management, security, and integration of personal, "user" data, these institutions share a root conception of digital subjects with dominant (largely commercial) platforms across the Internet. While we obviously grant that, say, 18 hours per day of video-

gaming is quite distinct from spending the same amount of time online working for Amazon's

Mechanical Turk, or doing academic research, one could pithily argue that these would be

treated with equal valence under the most recently formulated diagnostic criteria of Internet

Addiction.

And, whether or not we are stationed squarely in front of the screen, the fact of the matter

is that we are online; the smart phone, tucked away in one's pocket, is recording and sending

geo-spatial data to Google's server farms. Our purchases at the local coffee shop, where hipsters

subversively use typewriters, are registered through our credit cards to Visa's network. The flight

of data through fiber optic cables is indifferent to whether one is ignoring the person in front of

them to message someone remotely, or watching YouTube around the fireplace with one's

family, ignoring one's hunger to keep playing virtual poker, or indulging in acts of consumption

that generate yet more data. Internet Addiction, in the sense of deep dependence and pervasive

habitus, is a fact of modern life far beyond a critique of its formulation and deployment through

the psy-industries. While it may be of clinical importance to emphasize the differences between

different forms of Internet use, the critical psychological move here consists in a more nuanced

understanding of the Internet that binds rather than individualizes; our collective infrastructure is

our collective problem, whose *ad hoc* remedy through the broken brains of individual subjects

threatens to evade framing and take up its disturbing dimensions through the lens of social

struggle and contestable narratives.

Enjoyment of the Internet, as a medium and a mechanism of collective infrastructure, is

not a simple matter. There is a dizzying plurality of theories and philosophies of technology and

its qualification as a necessary evil, an evolutionary tendency, a mode of breaking away from the

natural world as to control it, and so on. Psychoanalytic and post-psychoanalytic accounts of

enjoyment and its management *as* social organization itself complicates any neat portrayal of the Internet as deleterious or beneficial to a society that existed before it. Because it is a piece of the ongoing production of society,[37] the mass adoption of this—who knows—anti-social, social infrastructure led to an elaboration of the sort of social link which this technological pillar in the social foundation might engender. Of the many ways to frame this "psycho-social event," one which interlocked the social with the bodies that fund its operation, is designated in this work as the discourse of network production. The discourse of network production is one arrangement of the functors of Lacan's discourse theory. The latter provided an experimental analytic framework, useful in that it grants the primacy of enjoyment's management through social discourses distinctive to speaking beings that nevertheless exist in the absence of language, that logically precedes communication. Nevertheless, the use of this framework presented here deviated substantially from Lacanian orthodoxy in that, for its premier theorists and analysts, how to use Lacan's very schematic formulation of the discourse of the capitalist remains an open question.

The discourse of network production posits the question of the production of social linkage through our mutual dependence on the Internet. The production of networks on the Internet presupposes the same type of mediation endemic to any situating of functors in the new discursive universe of the capitalist. The original four discourses formulated by Lacan (1991/2007) understand and presuppose that social links find their basis in the flow of signifiers through the varied encounters of positions, however they are incarnated: knowledge [S2], remainder/excess [a], the barred subject of language [$], and master signifiers [S1]. Though these terms were substantially stretched through interventions of Marxist and Deleuzo-Guattarian theory, the relational dynamics of the functors frames a story of social linkage. This story

contextualizes the movement of speech exemplary of Lacan's original four discourses within meta-level power inequities that lock up their exercise in the capitalist leveraging of the coordination technologies through which these occur. The social link is being subject of language at the same time as it is a collective subjection to the regnant networks of which one is a part—Facebook is merely one possible example, and Internet users are subjects of many coexisting, overlapping networks.

The psychologized Internet Addict is construed as a subject who consumes the drug-like, ready-made content of the Internet, as if the latter were already constructed in advance of such a subject. Yet, our engagement on major web platforms is thoroughly saturated with the enjoyment of communication, connection, and a remarkable stock of texts and images with which to identify. Data-dividuals (who only exist together, in the plural, *dividuals*) take root in a baseline of anxiety *qua* indeterminacy of the Other as it manifests in encounters with alterity on-line. Anxiety is the collective response ensuing from subjection to on-line (abstract) sociality. Anxiety is thus correlative to an untenable metonymy of the imaginary, on-line. From this baseline, we may also come to recognize secondary symptoms, like a sense of lost control, love/hate struggle with devices, compulsive checking, hypnotic lapses of a subjective sense of time, euphoria, bewilderment, and so on. Even theorists of digital media and Internet cultures are driven to reflection on our body's limitations, whether discussions center around addiction to the Internet, information overload (Eppler & Mengis, 2004), desensitization to violent content (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004), eye strain, tech neck, trigger thumb, the re-wiring of the frontal lobes of the brain, or the deregulation of biorhythms (Crary, 2013). Thinking the creation of dividuals (social subjects as such) alongside the upkeep of the artifice of

individuality, these secondary symptoms take on a different valence; they are signs of net-facilitated encounters with alterity.

Perhaps, owing to the obsession with accumulating social-surveillant knowledge that originated and continues to dictate the operations of the platform, participation feels like a compulsion. Recall here descriptions of the anxiety-ridden free flow of affects, like "information overload," or Bernard Stiegler's (1998, 2005) portrayal of the stupefaction of mounting capacities of technologies and the milieus that they create and act upon. More directly related to social media is Dean's (2010) description of the (politically) fatal enjoyment of communicative capitalism, which consists less in the speed of obsolescence of identifications and more in the content produced between users (e.g., their uncivil communication: the self-righteous complaining, gossiping, and trolling one sees all over the Internet). Žižek (1997, p. 3) ties these together in his elucidation of the rise of an on-line "culture of complaint," in which demands are repeatedly posed to the open space where the now-absent authoritative stronghold of symbolic fictions formerly lay. Subjects pose demands in order to be indemnified by a missing Other for a range of social injustices. In the culture of complaint, the guarantor of the symbolic trust that underpins the symbolic order, the big Other, is upheld even as it recedes. The complaints accomplish this, at the same time as they make the Other responsible for the fact of human misery. Insofar as it sustains a (hysterical) subject and the Other that, in turn, supports this subject, complaint (i.e., on-line communication) is enjoyable in itself.

The placement of functors in the discourse of network production and its overall flow shed light on how to think the subject as both cause and effect of information-bound sociality (see Figure 4, p. 74).

In the discourse of network production, just like in the hysteric's discourse, [a] occupies the position of truth. It is underneath the bar that separates it from [S2] in the position of agency. For Zupančič (2006), [a] is only a system of nomenclature—we know nothing about this object but for the fact that it is the cause of desire, that it manifests itself as lack of being. [a] can be read as positive waste called surplus enjoyment. However, in its position of truth in the discourse of network production, if [a] is surplus enjoyment, then it can be meaningfully distinguished from surplus value, which, for network production are [S1s]. Here it need not be mistaken for surplus value, and it is in no way equal to what is reinvested in the platform. This truth of lack-of-being is what is appropriated from outside—whatever it is that creates this openness to recording and mediation.

> We have, as product of this discourse, a pure surplus work or surplus enjoyment, a positive waste, which is not exactly the unaccounted-for work, but rather the result of the knowledge-at-work being accounted for and articulated. This is the point of the coincidence of loss and surplus, a coincidence that is essential to the Lacanian notion of the objet a. (p. 163)

If social media and the Internet are addicting, it is because we long for some form of collectivity, evinced in the provocation [a] poses for the digital subject. [a] falls out of [S2] in the position of agency, meaning that the necessary incompleteness or instability of the symbolic matrix itself is the truth or life-blood of capital, and which culminates in the simultaneous attentional control of individuals *and* the creation of dividuals. Bruce Alexander's (2008) "dislocation theory of addiction" comes closest to this formulation in tying the etiology of

addiction to the struggle over landed space and territories.[38] The dislocation theory posits that addictions are born primarily of mass migrations of laborers in the wake of imperial colonization by way of global Northern hegemony.[39] The interesting part of migration into digital space, however, is that it is not so tightly coupled to histories or migrations from *here* to *there,* with their clearly delineated indigenous, national, and religious identities. There is no shared base of rituals or relations to which we may collectively hope to return—only subjection as raw material for the production of speculative value that is indifferent to the particulars of what is created (or re-created) in such digital space. In other words, we need not assimilate, but we must *be* there.

The commoditization of information involved in Facebook's creation of value ushers in an undue reliance on the time of capital, organizing rhythms of remote contact, communication, and engagement. If the platform is like a city that never sleeps, the unpredictable timing of peers is complicated and often over-determined by explicit engineering and sequencing of the visible and the sensible. The private, "closed" algorithm that shapes the Facebook user-experienced sociality is proprietary and therefore not available for public audit. For this reason, its encoded bylaws, patterns, and decisions are taken together and understood in the singular, as a Godlike "*the algorithm,*" and experienced as a true force of nature. The engineered curation of social life to drive engagement creates a treadmill of sociality where identifications intermingle with different classes of information. The subject is entranced by imaginary identifications. He or she *can* represent him or herself with this full stock of associational fodder. This dynamic is repeated on top of or in agitation of a speaking subject and its subjective structure *qua* temporality. Alterity is on offer for subjects commanded, not so much to enjoy, but to *be.* Irrespective of the particular relationship of individual subjects to the platform, Facebook's modulations relative to subjective temporality and clock time (whether one construes these in relation to work, leisure,

or something else), and engineering of social habitus are, most importantly, a corporate enclosure of culture.[40] How can one understand the pulsation of time as subject?

Remember that for Deleuze, the lost time in addiction refers not to the loss of anything particular to which the addict might return, but to time's active erasure *in the present* by the intoxicant. However, one might rightly withhold from calling those within it "Facebook addicts," when what we have is an opportunity to see more clearly the institutional rhythms of the mechanism that binds and creates subjects of social media in a regime of distinctly digital social power. A diminished horizon of flexible, binary "now/not-now" time for subjects corresponds to the infinite time of the flow of data. On the platform, cultural production suits the needs of capital in that its digital forms double as machine-readable, executable sign-points. From the perspective of the platform and its identifying mechanisms, society is a collection of repeated preferences and predilections—control operates on a collective temporal horizon, in the engineering of the visible, through information asymmetries and predictive analytics, and how or whether context is narrated.

In order to track both temporal disjunctions and conjunction in the social and subjective, we need to return to the discourses—particularly the discourse developed in the previous sections. Even as the looping tempo of the capitalist universe operates in 24/7 time, the discourse of network production does not operate without constraints. Despite the removal of the disjunctions that informed the imaginary, real, and symbolic registers of the original four Lacanian discourses, there is still a bar that separates agency and truth, on the left side, and a bar separating other from product on the right (see Figure 6). This bar always indicates the presence of the alienating effects of castration. Located under the bar in this discourse, [a], as a fallout, or surplus enjoyment in excess of [S2] remains intact as a byproduct or an unassailable inheritance

of the agency that is the unmarked enjoyment of the Other, its trove of data signifiers linked through the network; [a], then, is this uniquely social effect of loss/cause, with the enjoyment it evokes looping subjects into its circuitry. The bar between [S2] and [a] signals that there is always this fallout outside of knowledge and in its differentiation from truth.

[S2] is the immersive environment of the platform and [a] its barred counterpart that cannot be positively known, but nevertheless encounters the subject directly (as semblance, or function, anxiety). Considering the statistical-empirical formalism underpinning such an environment (i.e., a science of the social), [a] produces the anxiety that Soler (2016) attributes to the scientific era; not an anxiety about the Other, but about the absence of the symbolic Other. Here, this absence gives rise to a veritable smorgasbord of imaginary presence. The infinitizing recording process, the premise of [S2] in the position of agency, testifies to the unknowable, entirely uncertain social economy at the death-enjoyment nexus. This is the premise of the subject which collective structures typically defend, to some degree, rather than stoke for its own sake. It is this glue, the fact that we do not know where enjoyment ends and death begins, that makes it possible to think *All-people*. We are bound by the truth of not knowing how to economize our time enjoyment and death, for lack of an encounter with either term, in their mutual determination. If one is to posit an (abstract and abstracting) social link in the discourse of network production, it could only be a religiosity of science that deploys humans toward the common goal of covering over rather than holding consciously a (also collective) non-knowledge.

Regarding the topology of the discourse of the capitalist, [a] is beneath the bar of the agency of [S2], making this object elusive. The same goes for S1. The action occurs in [S2] and [$], where one is structurally unaware of the full scope of data traces of and between accounts

[S1]. The subject is not its account [S1] even as it is always writing it. Therefore, the subject does not interface with [S2] directly, but through the mediator of the account that fixes its place in it, limiting its access to the grammar of code and petrifying it in the meaning of the individual Name which acts as a marker and which causes it to repeat. The discourse operates on the subject of the signifier and exemplifies its status as such. With respect to the charge that the capitalist universe consumes itself and its subjects: the production of [S1] as a subjective nomination that says nothing about being, but nevertheless has effects on the Real, manifests this consumption in the discourse of network production. This is to say also that one does not know oneself as a dividual. Neither is there a name-of-the-Father (nom du père) to subtend [S1] outside of [S2]. In the universe of the capitalist, the fundamental value of goods is expressed through their quantitative relation with money, which ensures that such goods can be exchanged as commodities (Fuchs, 2015). On Facebook, people are expressed numerically as nodes, and their data is traded, which is to say, their digital body or dividuality is exchanged as a commodity with an imagistic byproduct. This form of ranking, which seamlessly ties data traces to representation in monetary units, determines the means and ends of the productive process.

The bar between [$] and [S1] is a cut that exemplifies the position of the subject in language, expanded to include signs and traces that are measurable and tractable in digital environments. This is to say that, even in view of the advertising ontology that brushes up against human cognitive and affective limitations, [S1] encompasses this brush, designating a whole range of signs offered to the Other. Facebook plays into a neurotic desire to imagine an undivided subject, even as the subject [$] is motivated by *its* division. That the digital subject is a barred subject [$] designates that the fantasy behind the habitus is neither known to it (in the position of other), nor incarnated in [S1] (what is absolutely transmissible to knowledge, [S2])

and yet the imperative to know and be known and to see and be seen that operates on Facebook demonstrates the way in which signifiers become linked to enjoyment. The [S1] dividuals of network production are always writing themselves into [S2], where [S2] is compiled through acts of social cooperation. Whatever one comes to think about the relations of production and exchange on Facebook, however coercive or asymmetrical they may be, the new form of value it creates is comprised of response, coordination, collaboration, and participation. Network production, in its most basic economic guise, is this fact of relational potential, forged through information sharing. Such information sharing (a redundant but popular term) comprises what Facebook calls "community."

Social Organization and Digital Networks

Owing to its positioning in network production, [a] is poised to direct us toward a politics of social media that can differentiate meaningfully between enjoyment and capital—a differentiation on which hinges our ability to parse out the interests of subjects contra the interests of capital. The context of network production discourse accentuates the sense in which [a] is the not-All of the imaginary social whole of collective memory that keeps us on the platform seeking out the old (e.g., keeping in touch) and the new (e.g., chat roulette or browsing suggested friends). If [a] is an effect by which one billion people deal with a loss that coincides with itself, it is anxiety that conditions identifications with text, images, and videos. One can see then that the stakes of our interfacing with the Internet, most particularly Facebook, entails a certain inscription that accords with the economy of the libidinal and monetary, and a particular subject circuit related to the drive and to sociality. The cure here is not worse than the disease; they are one and the same. Dean (2013b) asserts that the pleasure of connectivity of social media is a reaction to the social breakdown of neoliberal privatization and austerity policies. In this key,

the existence and success of Facebook genuinely demonstrates the desirability of a one-stop shop of social life; coyness around wanting to be "where the action is" is futile.

Recall the rudiments of the social theory of Internet Addiction developed above: The ubiquity of addiction-type enjoyment heralds a crisis of society itself. This is because society itself is a tool for the management of enjoyment. This theory hinges on the ultimately similar way in which Freud, Lacan, Deleuze, and Guattari considered the society or the socius as a means of allotting, distributing, symbolizing, and ritualizing enjoyment. There is some notion of being for each other (even in the indeterminacy of both self and other) that produces these social infrastructures and drives engagement with them. One might detect such indeterminacy subtending the vast and particular reasons why it comes to be desirable to keep remote contacts in the first place. We experiment with the scope and bounds of, for instance, the category "people," of the inexpensive delights of the homegrown audio-visual, of what sticks or does not stick from this well of indeterminacy, which testifies so deftly to our not-knowing. Taking off from this basic stock, as it were, of social linkage, one must inquire into how the artifice of social media prepares subjects pursued by this promise of the great beyond of a global networked culture.

The signs of the subject become personified chains of data [S1] that issue into [S2], knowledge or the Other's enjoyment. This move of the discourse brings out an important distinction to make with respect to the form of social organization to which the platform gives rise: groups and collectives. The two modes of control elucidated above—subjection (individual) and enslavement (dividual)—refer not only to differential exercises of power upon discrete persons, but of social organization. The same operation that plays these figures of human wholeness and reduction to a mass of data off of each other scales up. This creates groups of

individuals in conscious connection, through affiliation, whose coming together is interpersonal, and (quasi, or potential) collectives of dividuals whose symbolic linkage as nodes in the network is inter-subjective, and which creates the value of the platform as a whole.

Groups are forged through relations of "liking" informational objects of identification. On Facebook, one may accept an invitation (or seek out on their own), an invitation to become part of a group, say, "Dog Lovers." In this group, there are administrators and particular community rules (e.g., "members may post once a day to ease the quantity of posts" or "members may only post pictures of their own dogs"). The group is organized from above on the basis of its inclusion into rather than distinction from [S2]. Such groups are part of a mechanism of categorization, or a convention of interpretation (coding) that tether onto individual accounts. Sometimes hailed as governance playgrounds, groups catch users in their guise as whole persons in social microcosms or digital town squares. Groups are veritable playgrounds in that they are practice spaces for following and perhaps even making rules about the conduct of interaction, what one intentionally displays, etc.

The introduction of social buttons allows for an objectification and valorization not of the time spent by users on-line, but of their ability to create webs of affective attachments around informational objects. Such objects are valued according to their ability to move affect, sometimes called their network centrality (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2011). Repetition produces value in network production in that it creates the appearance of stability in a leaky and transient world of digital signals. Informational events must be repeated such that they can continue to exist at a micro-temporal scale. It becomes valuable upon its move from a singularly noted event to one that elicits a response en masse. It is in this sense that the generated value does not depend on the particular individual, but on the interconnections between the engagement of a collection of

individuals-dividuals. Outside of the collaborative nature of knowledge itself, which involves the collective effects of voluntary actions, "the value of information emerges through the involuntary effects of voluntary and involuntary actions, from like searches, likes, posts, and mouse clicks" (Chun, 2016, p. 119).

While they may organize themselves, groups are ontologically indistinct from users and other informational objects. According to the Social Graph, they are yet more virtual objects [S1] to be mapped in [S2] (Hui & Halpin, 2013). What groups miss, even as they become more censorious or implement high barriers of entry, is an accounting of their own structural limitations. Groups do not touch the temporal modulation owing to the structure of Facebook, its software, its governance, its profits, and the sets of material and social relations they mold and perpetuate. Collectives do not yet exist on Facebook. If a collective exists, it exists *as* the company, Facebook, in distinction from its user base. Collectives are premised upon shared value of communicative practices at the level of this or that network where *our* dividuality *qua* collective power of valuation comes together for this or that *purpose*.

Collective Self-Valuation

Rather than seeing the web as a universal space for accessing data, we must be realistic about the affordances for its coordination. Currently, it is the case that, on most of the platforms that collect the most data about us, data is not only harvested exclusively for marketing, but is also asymmetrically accessible; system administrators are able to use, sell, and circulate *collective* user data, while users are left with their personal data which only lends itself to curation and management of on-line presence—for purposes that do not facilitate cooperative engagement but the enhancement of individuals, as atoms, whose collisions are at best "interesting" and at worst foster divisive forms of competition, jealousy, and image-

management. A genuine alternative would be truly distributed, where no one has privileged access to user data. As collectives, users could class manifold, qualitatively different types of data in a creation of categories that reflect the social interests of the entire productive collectives.

The question of Internet Addiction has given us the chance to grapple with the irony that the creation of surplus value today, which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) called machinic surplus value, adapts people to social relations colonized by capital directly. Where monetary surplus is concerned, affective labor on social media produces "selves" as positive externalities. Our self-production, a cultivated (educated) self-production, no less, is commodified on commercial social network sites. If we generate value on Facebook so feverishly, to the point at which, for many, such behavior resembles an addiction, it would seem that we already have a large share in the infrastructure of the social graph. Moreover, the hedging of one's bets that partially drives the creation of flexible and remote social molecules makes the fortification of these graphs seem inevitable. The challenge for a constructive politics of the Internet, as we see it today, is not in acts of defiance or asceticism in the resistance to the Internet where users renounce on-line communication and surrender to the platform overlords. This is because, on top of the question of face-to-face or technologically mediated relations, there is the question of extractive or non-extractive mediation.

How can we avoid further social engineering and its slide toward social domination? The massive wealth/power disparities arising from the elite ownership of a whole collective body of data, a data commons as it might be called can be remedied through collective ownership and governance of the infrastructure that we co-construct. This would further entail a greater degree of mutuality in the human-software relationship and the human-human relationships they variably amplify and obscure. Is it possible to redress the commodification of relationships

without the mediation of the Facebook company's rentiership? What vectoralists do is organize users in their digital space. The subjecting, individualizing, user-facing control mechanism of the platform means that users come *as* subjects of language. The evolution of language, tech, and therefore loss, generates an extraordinary wealth of data. Currently these data act as content about individuals, as statistical aggregates by which individuals are compared, and as predictive tools that create a frenzy of financial activity serving the interests of capital. The maintenance of such data supports the symbolic fiction that *is* being on-line, but it can also be used in ways that foster engagement at the level of the collective—think user-governance and collective stewardship. Collective self-organization is, then, a necessary and missing piece of the puzzle. To this end, one could imagine something like a user-permissioned socialization of existing data, mass deliberation and negotiation of interface features, and regulatory action regarding the now-conventional use of boilerplate contracts for software and online services. In other words, if we are to be able to appreciate and share in the social value, not in the form of money, but in organization, communication, and planning on the basis of user-farmed data, we must also be able to trust that we will have a certain degree of control over when data is collected at all, or when it might be directed to a sort of digital dump, and where we consent to being monitored wholesale.

Perhaps the most damning effect of the current approaches to net politics, concerning the viability of highly individualistic claims to Internet privacy and security, is that these problems can be solved without attending to the question of surplus value. The energy-garbling storage centers from which dividuals are circulated are organizational fodder representing the heaviest-handed forces of power conceived through the modernist paradigm of knowledge (e.g., "data citadels"[41]). If governance is to proceed beyond the model of public/private, we must be able to

recognize our data bodies and big data as a whole as a sort of second-nature commons, the stuff

from which new forms of social cooperation might be modeled. One might also imagine what

would happen if Facebook opened up access to the full stock of its social laboratory and back-

end data analytic tools to more established institutions. The social sciences have garnered

centuries of related knowledge, distinctly humane and subject-centered methodologies, and

ethics learned from many difficult failures that, in hindsight, constituted a collective trauma from

which much was duly learned and remains a crucial field of study (e.g., post-colonialism, critical

race theory, gender studies). If the absolute colonization of online environments is of a piece

with our collective migration, we should protect "data" selves against speculation and in favor of

collective deliberation and prioritization that susses out interest in the common utility that is

data.

Equally important are the types of stories constructed from the data that networked

devices record—the narratives created against the backdrop of the ostensibly cold, hard facts of

behavioral, attentional, and geospatial information. Instead of falling into the trap of believing

that data is neutral in itself, we must remember that narratives *about* our data are indeed created

by humans—their interpretation is not entirely automated, but are also used to authorize and

legitimate all sorts of initiatives of tech "innovation" that sidestep common interests for those

supposed to generate interest in different styles of consumption. Another site of struggle, then, is

the creation of these data-backed narratives (Ippolita, 2015). This is because the privatization of

personal data erases the relational contexts that make them meaningful. From a feminist

economic angle,[42] the production of value on social media platforms like Facebook is an instance

in which the processes of capital accumulation runs up against and substantially devalues

processes of social reproduction. The engineered encounters with alterity facilitated by Facebook

are the backdrop for other affective flows in connection with the platform, and are the basis of

the psychical effort to which users are subject secondarily. The effects of social chilling is

typically attributed to awareness of surveillance, wherein a user may be explicitly aware of some

of the internal mechanisms of power levied by state and private partnerships.

However, one need not have this awareness in order to experience social chilling—where

one is censored out of a lack of understanding of the addressee of one's identity-tied signifiers as

in anxiety. The context mashing that Facebook achieves in its ostensive neutrality where

everyone is a friend does not only fail to distinguish between public and private, but blurs these

already blurry boundaries to the utmost. It is as if more social (implying public and private

already) interactions are situated on a platform decorated to create the feeling of a public sphere

which is actually a predominately private space that nevertheless admits state collusion when

beneficial to private aims. So much for the analytical utility of these categories. Still, we are

dealing with different hybrid forms of sociality in the locus formerly informed by these now

obsolete distinctions.

On this line of thought, one gets a glimpse at the possibilities for collective action beyond

demanding a living wage from Facebook, or its creation of a social fund.[43] Where the

modification of individual behavior could be collectivized and democratized to dismantle

systemic racism, sexism, and planet destructive growth-oriented economies, demands for

transparency of the social groupings used could also be made. Now, however, these data analytic

groupings as well as the behavioral modifications that Facebook achieves on top of sheer screen

time are used entirely to aid speculative consumption and financial speculation. Seizing the

means of production is not sufficient when it comes to production of the social *as* the social; we

must also re-imagine the relations of production through multiple, shifting collectivities that

grow together or apart on the basis of interest in using data in different ways for projects with connections to other cultural institutions that vary in breadth and reach.

Platform cooperativism presents the notion that the digital platforms should be owned by, governed by, and should enrich the participating value creators (Scholz, 2017; Scholz & Schneider, 2017). As a workerist tactic and political approach, it extends earlier forms of cooperativism into the new net-connected contexts. Owing to the semiotic-infrastructural differences of the Internet, it becomes possible to go beyond collective ownership and management of the means that connect workers to potential employers (platforms). Platforms whose fixity currently enables a premium of predatory policies to de-contextualize and re-interpret user engagement could become elective "rules of the game," enacting computational processes necessary for particular projects that can be collectively re-negotiated or exited by users for whom they do not work. Platform cooperatives could help massively scaled groups affiliate on the basis of agreements that allow consenting users to become an equally viable part of the network on the basis of their participation.

This means providing a concrete remedy to the anxiety-producing opacity of the empty, modern form of law in a realm that has profound generative capacity for meaning, habitus, and social relationships. Collectivizing on the basis of the concrete exploitation of social connection can generate a widespread awareness that, despite the limits inherent in communication, we can nevertheless hone and channel our signifying perfusion. The anarchic principle of free association emerges insofar as it is only possible to hold the conditions enabling dignity through attention and engagement in common. Such a mode of socio-economic praxis could move past the taken-for-granted model of individuals trading skills with each other to whole collectives guided by common discontents, whatever they may be.

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NOTES

[1]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_twelve-step_groups

[2]Xenofeminism is an anti-naturalist, radically material post-humanism that aims at a universal right to speak, but *as* no one in particular. This further involves abolishing abstract categorical formulations of identity (of gender, race, and class), while letting their variations flourish infinitely.

[3]See a great dual conception in Scholz (2013).

[4]Julius Deutsch's (2017) recently published writings link antifascism, sports, and sobriety in the context of the little-discussed Austro-marxism of the working class in Red Vienna immediately following the close of the First World War.

[5]For Negri (1996), the synchronic and diachronic figures of the transformation of value lead to strategic contradictions of development. In the present moment, development pertains directly to subjectivity. The synchronic figures of the form of value are those constituted around "socially necessary labor" that emerges as an integrative, ontologically consistent stock of collective individualities who have an antagonistic relationship with respect to the command capital aspires to exercise over the subjective consolidation of socially necessary labor. Factoring into the synchronic figures of the form of value is, as we have said, the instantaneous unity of production and circulation by way of integration of the movement of value. On the other hand, diachronic figures of the form of value, like the "social worker" who is suggested to have evolved from the "professional worker" and the "mass worker" of previous modes of production, are those figures

who, like fireworks, extend the horizon of increasingly complex figures. In a very simplistic

manner, we can say that the tension between homogenizing forces and singularizing, undecidable

movement of subjects constituted thereby generate a sort of requisite friction for the

development of subjectivity in the liminal space between these polar modes of recognition. A

strategic contradiction is an effect which, associating itself with the synchronic and diachronic

figures of development, are determined around the emergence of adequate subjectivity. In view

of the notion that the deconstruction of value draws the matrix of subjectivity, strategic

contradictions of development give rise to antagonistic subjectivities. As the labor of freedom's

construction, then, the critical potency of strategic contradiction lies not in replaying the search

for the lost object, but for determining the ethical meaning and value of different labor practices.

[6]David Harvey (2005) describes neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that

proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial

freedoms and skills within a political-economic framework characterized by strong private

property rights, free markets, free trade" (p. 2).

[7]http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/03/13/519977607/irresistible-by-design-its-no-accident-you-cant-stop-looking-at-the-screen

[8]All the while, debates continue in the North American psychological literature as to whether or

not such an addiction is real. While the German and Spanish governments have included Internet

and media addiction as part of its larger programs for substance-abuse prevention and treatment,

the US is reluctant to create a public health crisis from it.

[9]There, psychologists have requested that the World Health Organization officially recognize

Internet Addiction as a legitimate clinical disorder (Chuang, 2006; Young & De Abreu, 2010).

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[10]The choice of Internet Addiction as opposed to these other network-computation oriented labels for addiction is basically an arbitrary way of responding to the conceptual messiness and unfinished determination in psychology. While Computer Addiction is exemplary in this section, one could argue that the majority of the piece centers on Social Media Addiction. The "Internet" is elected as a mean between the more general and more specific nominations. It purposely highlights the connection between computers that is at stake in flows of information and bridges together sub-categories like Internet Gaming Disorder and Online Shopping Addiction.

[11]See Freud (1916/1957).

[12]This is also to say that the patterns of drug use, those leading to addiction, do not have a common etiology with respect to the subject.

[13]The choice to use "enjoyment" instead of the French "jouissance" is a stylistic one. While it may seem awkward to take a word so important to the formulation of the argument here out of its native language, the translated signifier "enjoyment" seems to carry more affective intensity in the context of the piece.

[14]While Lacan and the writing duo have entirely different conceptions of "desire," what is crucial for us is that "desiring production," or simply just "desire" in the latter can be likened to "enjoyment," as they both index overwhelming, real forces whose effects are elaborate symptomatic formations that cut across individuals, groups, humans, and non-human actors.

[15]See, for example (Kordela, 2012)

[16]One could also make this point by bringing together, as D. W. Smith (2004) does, the explicit comments and references that each has made to the other in his work, especially those comments that are demonstrative of mutual respect, if not reverence.

[17]It should be noted that the polemic dimensions of the co-authored *Capitalism and Schiziophrenia* volumes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1986, 1980/1987) are far outweighed by the credit given to Lacan and the credence, given through engagement, with other psychoanalytic thinkers. For a more detailed account of the commonalities in their thought, see (Nedoh & Zevnik, 2016; Schuster, 2016; Watson, 2009). We prefer to think of *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1986) in particular as a "true betrayal" in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari took psychoanalysis at its face, goading it on to produce a more nuanced articulation of its own ethics as they relate to subverting capitalist hegemony.

[18]Perhaps these new symptoms were anticipated in Lacan's notion of the *sinthome* which reconfigured the notion of the symptom away from its locus in the symbolic register and toward a knitting of the psyche that rests on a more active mode of self-administration à la James Joyce's writing. (See Edelman, 2004; Thurston, 2002; Verhaeghe & Declercq, 2002 for a longer discussion on the matter.)

[19]They also refer to schizoanalysis interchangeably as "materialist psychiatry" and "machinic analysis."

[20]See especially Seminar XVI: "Let us say that, in principle, it is not worth speaking of anything other than of the real, in which discourse itself has consequences. Call it structuralism, or not. Last time I called it the condition of seriousness" (Lacan, 1968-69/2002, pp. 30-31).

[21]Relative to other French post-structuralists, Lacan's tie to clinical work (and perhaps other factors on which we will not speculate here) generated, on the whole, more measured, less incandescent readings of the present than, say, Jean-François Lyotard or Jean Baudrillard.

[22]At least one notable Lacanian theorist, Holland (2015) has experimented with supposing the presence of the social link "capitalist/worker" between S1 and S2 of the capitalist discourse. He

does so by considering $ and S2 as two aspects of the proletarian. On his reading, "the $,

overwhelmed and deprived of everything—especially its status as the term that underlies a chain

of signifiers connected with the unconscious—has no recourse other than to solicit the capitalist

S1. Submitting to the latter's orders, the proletarian becomes a 'worker' in the place of

knowledge, thus producing surplus-jouissance, which will then lead to a repetition of the cycle"

(p. 112). This positioning is contingent on qualifying the knowledge of the worker as the

preferences and cost-benefit calculations of *homo economicus,* the subject who is supposed to

obtain satisfaction by acting on and in the market.

[23]For Lacan, empty speech occurs along the imaginary axis that serves egos and consolidates

images that subjects use to substantiate themselves. Full speech, on the other hand, occurs along

a symbolic axis which links the subject to a trans-subjective order of truth. Empty speech is

considered by psychoanalytic theorists like Hook (2011) as noise when compared to the

potentially transformative effects of full speech.

[24]It is not unlike Mussolini's claim that fascism is not a doctrine, but a response to the immediate

need for action.

[25]The story of design of the human-computer interface has a fascinatingly gendered history that

corresponds with the obfuscation of the surprisingly central role women have played in computer

technology, as detailed by authors like N. Katharine Hayles (2005). The feminization of the

computer, both discursively and in the actual history of female "computers," gives rise to this

naturalization, mother earth incarnate, drawing in other familiar metaphors like the rainforest,

home, etc. Consider too the role of voice-activated, virtual assistants, like Siri and Alexa. Siri's

creators sought the voice of a "millenial librarian." The voice of Siri, who was paid for a few

days of voice-over style work, has now become a universal "voice in itself," just as emoticons

are shared "universal emotions," amounting to a new voice to bring about a strong sense that our actions, not only typed commands, but spoken words too, are registered "out there," through the saccharine-professional, dream-mother voice of a caring woman always hovering nearby.

[26]In the *Anti-Oedipus Papers* (2006), Guattari gives a schematic map of universal history that would later become the material for the plateaus dedicated to regimes of signs in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). There, he attributes transduction as the semiotic modality of primitive societies, whereby signs are both representation and production. These a-signifying signs are capable of intervening in the real. Elsewhere, "transduction" is found in cybernetics and microbiology. In the former, it refers to the conversion of energy or a message into another form, and in the latter, to the transfer of genetic material. Guattari offers as examples of transduction, primitive sacrifice as giving food to ancestors, or the ceremonial breaking of a champagne bottle over a new ship in anticipation of its maiden voyage, and dreams (Watson, 2009). Transduction reemerges as "retransduction" in our present "audiovisual societies," which Guattari suggests results from the movements of deterritorialization and diagrammatic processes (Watson, 2009). Retransduction implies this writing that touches the real, and moreover attempts to hold it in the grips of the writing process continuously so that nothing escapes its touch.

[27]We are assured by a personal acquaintance of Zuckerberg's that despite factual inaccuracies in the fictional film, its depiction of Zuckerberg himself is absolutely accurate, particularly in his obsessionality (Varsavsky, 2017).

[28]This is more accurately *enslavement*. The difference between addiction and enslavement will be explicated toward the end of the piece once addiction is situated in the context of the discourse of network production.

[29]See https://info.internet.org/en/story/free-basics-from-internet-org/

[30]For Manuel Castells' (2000) "network society," the flexible, binary time of "now/not-now" replaces the linear time of industrial capitalism. This binary time of "now/not-now" indicates a digital economy in which attentiveness marks value across an array of competing informational landscapes (Terranova, 2012).

[31]If one is especially savvy, however, one can pose as an Indonesian and get by registering an account with only one name, as per the country's nominal traditions.

[32]Where Shoshana Zuboff's (2019) account of surveillance capitalism focuses entirely on a competition to modify the behavior of individuals, one might concede the importance of reparations like individual rights and protections. The problem with this is that thinking in terms of surveillance nudges the locus of inquiry from the (constitutive) social relations of production and distribution (on Facebook and other social media) to the ethics of exchange between companies and individual consumers.

[33]Though it is a mistake to say that "leisure" and "labor" time were ever truly separate, when one focuses on reproductive, traditionally female-dominated labor, in which something like going to the park with one's child could always be considered to have constituted a blend reducible to neither leisure nor labor.

[34]The process of de-anonymization is even easier with the help of LSO (Local Shared Object), a kind of flash supercookie, which cannot normally be deleted by the web browser.

[35]The notion of social networking here gains meaning when juxtaposed to the notion of the network of the discourse of network production. Hopefully it is now obvious that the latter includes the full scope of the network's production—its infrastructure, ownership, governance, and economic structure.

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[36]By and large, access was granted to companies either owned by Facebook or whose owners and upper-management sit on Facebook's board. See https://www.theregister.co.uk/2018/12/05/facebook_email_leak/ for more details.

[37]McLuhan's (1975) tetrad is another way to show how new media make pieces of society (a) enhanced, (b) obsolete, (c) returned from earlier obsolescence, and (d) reversed when taken to extremes.

[38]All the more reason that the substances and behaviors to which one is addicted tend to be of a piece with or microcosm of the local organization of structural iniquities (of race, class, gender, etc.).

[39]He notes too that other contemporary thinkers have developed similar ideas about the relationship between addiction and the structure of society, citing the work of strange bedfellows like Emile Durkheim, Karl Polanyi, Viktor Frankl, Erik Erikson, and Martín-Baro.

[40]Culture is understood here in the sense of Krtolica's (2009) paraphrasing of Gilbert Simondon: "the concrete existence of the psychological in the world" (p. 70).

[41]See Warnke (2013).

[42]As Cinzia Arruzza (2014) argues, capitalist modernity can be understood as a historical process that has resulted in the constitution of the individual as a subject of unique, irreducible, and essentially private emotions. On the one hand, as modern, capitalist subjects, we are thus coerced to recognize our "true" emotions as expressions of our inner and most authentic self. On the other hand, these same assemblages transit and are made sensible as affects. They are nevertheless rebuilt as interchangeable and measurable things, what we like and what we do, as a washed-out facet of social reproduction. Likewise, Weeks (2007) suggests that, considering that today the link between production and subjectivity has never been more apparent, there is an

impasse in presenting "a true self versus its estranged form, or a reproductive sphere of practice separate from a sphere of properly capitalist production" (p. 248).

[43]This is the usual conclusion drawn by digital Marxist thinkers like the Italian autonomous Marxists and the likes of Christian Fuchs (2015) and Ekbia and Nardi (2017). It is perhaps best embodied by the Wages for Facebook campaign, including Olivier Auber's useful software for calculating a wage based off of one's time spent on Facebook, called the Facebook Invoice Generator.