NEW MODES OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN THE NETWORK SOCIETY

by

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Dedication

My dissertation is dedicated to the icons I have lost, in the order in which I lost them:
To my Nanna, who read to me every day, and my Pappy, who let me read to him.
To my Grandpa, who loved me like no one ever will and who gave me faith in humanity.
And to Dylan, who fed my heart in ways that kept my soul from starving.
I miss you every single day.

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Abstract

NEW MODES OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN NETWORK SOCIETY

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This dissertation examines the Anonymous network, as well as the 4chan imageboard from which Anonymous emerged, to explore the status of intellectual life today and the ways in which networks are using technology and leveraging changes in media structures to create alternative discourses and recast the terms of public debate. Aiming to identify new modes of intellectual engagement in America today, the first half of this dissertation reviews prominent definitions of the intellectual, sets forth a clear denotation, and reviews the role of the intellectual as an historical actor in American since the 20th century. The case studies that follow focus on the activities of the Anonymous network since 2008, when Anonymous announced a staunch commitment to social justice, as well as 4chan, an imageboard known for its vile depravity. The aim of this research is not to determine whether these networks are liberatory or oppressive, but to delineate what can be learned from their activities and operations, and the ways in which network society can be used in the service of intellectual aims.

Chapter 1- Introduction

You can never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change
        something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.
                                                                —Buckminster Fuller

1.1 The So-Called Erosion of Intellectual Life and the Need for this Study
        Since the publication of Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals* nearly twenty-five

years ago, there has been much discussion about the erosion of intellectual life that, many

theorists argue, is occurring in America. Asserting that modern society has no equivalent

to intellectuals such as Lewis Mumford, Irving Howe, Dwight MacDonald, and Edmund

Wilson, Jacoby's text spurred a strong declinist narrative throughout the 80s and 90s as

writers lamented a bygone era of great public intellectualism. This romanticized

nostalgia persists today as writers continue to ask, "Where are the Daniel Bells and Susan

Sontags of the 21st Century?"[1]

        This dissertation responds to this question by exploring the idea that American

intellectual life is not in decline, but is occurring in new public spaces of critical

intervention and taking on new forms. More specifically, I explore the idea that, (at least

partly) in response to the contemporary neoliberal order— characterized by corporate

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[1] Such sentiments can be found in texts like Thomas Bender's *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States*; Morris Dickstein's *Double Agent: The Critic and Society*, and Alan M. Wald's *The New York intellectuals: the rise and decline of the anti-Stalinist left from the 1930s to the 1980s*.

domination, mass surveillance, the commodification of public spaces, the privatization of social problems, and the undermining of social solidarity and notions of the common good— new types of intellectual activities are emerging in and across digital networks that offer individuals and collectives new ways of communicating, collaborating, and organizing. Examining case studies that focus on the activities of the Anonymous network since 2008, as well as the 4chan network from which Anonymous emerged, this dissertation will investigate the ways in which widely organized collectives are utilizing technology and changes in media structures to create alternative discourses and the degree to which these collective networks are recasting the terms of public debate.

What makes this exploration particularly important is that very few theorists have considered alternative approaches to studying public intellectual life, and instead adopt (or respond to) the declinist stance, which recirculates the "narrative of the once-great era of public intellectuals now effectively ruined" (Park 115). When considering American society today— a "media and consumer society, organized around the consumption of images, commodities, and spectacles," characterized by an information economy, wider access to higher education, and the emergence of digital networks that offer new means by which individuals can traverse the communication boundaries of corporate media, and occupy formerly unattainable spaces of autonomy and anonymity— it is possible that intellectual inquiry is evidencing itself in new ways— taking on new appearances, and making possible new modes of intellectual intervention (Best and Kellner 1).

I propose maintaining the term "public intellectualism" in my discussion of this new media environment as a corrective to the narrow approaches that have been applied

to the term and to argue for its continued relevance. Although its definition is highly contested, at its core it refers to a project to claim space, legitimacy, and power for particular groups in public life and, therefore, can serve as a way to frame meaning and practice within specific publics. Perhaps more importantly, my use of the term serves to 1) acknowledge that many individuals (such as Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Stanley Aronowitz, Naomi Klein, Cornel West, Lewis Gordon, Nathan Glazer, Lewis Cosner, Garry Wills, Michael Walzer, Susan Sontag, Alan Brinkley, Sidney Hook, Stephen Carter, Hannah Arendt, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., to name just a few) remain widely regarded as intellectuals, and 2) to legitimize new forms of intellectual life and to demonstrate that there is no shortage of people working to provide original content, innovative ideas, and critical discourses that attack oppression and perceived injustices.

I do not intend to propose a narrative of unproblematized technological emancipation made possible by digitized interaction; rather, I will investigate the need for an expanded understanding of intellectual life— one which is grounded in the critical theories of cultural studies and which considers the notion that intellectual inquiry is no longer solely the task of erudite individuals working in isolation, but is occurring in the form of decentralized collaboration, appearing in online spaces, and forming rapidly expanding yet fragmented communication networks that present both risks and opportunities. I do not intend to fall into the trap of digital romanticization, but rather to further investigate the ways in which "the battle lines are already being drawn between the cultural optimists and pessimists"— between those who believe that technological developments will only accelerate already existing trends and those who endorse

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technology's potential to shift the organization of society and yield a more rational and information-rich public (Eliot 243).

1.2 Research Questions

While the declinists' work is useful in providing historical context for the former roles of public intellectuals, it fails to consider the newly emerging media processes that are currently shaping intellectual production. As a corrective to this, this dissertation examines the impact of new media[2] on intellectual life and investigates emerging modes of public organizing, and the degree to which they are changing how people challenge ideas and manage information. This exploration will consider the following:

- How are digital networks affecting intellectual life? That is, has the new digital media landscape made possible new forms and modes of intellectual life?

- To what extent are digital networks and new technologies fostering new forms of collaboration, organization, and democratic participation? Do networks like Anonymous demonstrate a shift from a society that looked to public intellectuals for guidance to a society of intellectual publics (made possible by their pooling of resources and collaborative sharing of skills and expertise)?

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[2] The term "new media" is typically used to describe emerging digital technologies. Lev Manovich, for example, in *The Language of New Media*, defines new media as "graphics, moving images, sounds, shapes, spaces, and texts that have become computable" (20); Douglas Kellner and Rhonda Hammer, in *Media/cultural studies: critical approaches*, employ Leah Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone's definition, which describes new media as "information and communication technologies and their associated social contexts" (119).

- What digital tools and methods (such as electronic mailing lists, collaborative software, blogs, vlogs, memes, internet relay chats, etc.) are networks utilizing as a means of social organization?

- What political and economic conditions are promoting, sustaining, and/or inhibiting networked forms of intellectual practice?

1.3 Methodology

Building on the work of cultural studies scholars, I explore the idea that the state of intellectualism in America today warrants a far more complex assessment than most theorists grant it, and requires a distinct departure from the declinist narrative. Not only does the declinist narrative refuse to acknowledge and legitimize new forms of intellectualism and new epistemes, but it is built upon a suspect and problematic foundation. To begin, many declinists blame professionalism for the decline in intellectual life, thereby examining public intellectualism along a singular dimension and failing to consider the crucial media processes that affect public intellectuals.[3] Perhaps more problematically, when discussions of the role of the media do occur, declinists often demonstrate a preoccupation with print media, such as academic journals, books, and magazine articles, and thus overlook the potential ways in which new media may be influencing and transforming intellectual life.

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[3] This, in turn, has prompted many academics to defend their professions, resulting in a dialog that places far too much emphasis on institutional factors and far too little on the media-related issues central to public intellectualism.

As a potential remedy to these problems, I will explore the idea that "we are awash in a far greater amount of public thought than ever before," (Freese 46) and will investigate the impact of networks on intellectual life by examining 1) Anonymous, a decentralized online network that, since 2008, has claimed a staunch commitment to protecting civil liberties and human rights, and 2) 4chan, the digital imageboard from which Anonymous emerged. Treating each as a case study, I will utilize discourse analysis to examine:

- the origins of the networks (that is, the actions and methods that enabled each network to come into being)

- the networks' stated goals and the degree to which their agendas resemble or parallel classic intellectual initiatives

- the physical and digital artifacts the networks have produced and the ways in which they have collaborated to share resources and expertise

- the relationships between and among networks and network members, and the affordances made possible by horizontal organization

After collecting this data, I will be able to produce systematic and formal analyses that highlight the ways in which networks are affecting, challenging and/or redefining what it means to engage in intellectual life in the digital age today. Although this research brings together examinations of communication technology and intellectual production, technology will not be assumed to be a positive force (as it can also serve private interests and facilitate increased surveillance and control), nor will it be assumed to be a negative force (that necessarily aids private interests). Instead, it will be regarded

as something that has fundamentally changed (among other things) information management and intellectual production.

I have chosen these case studies, in part, because each creates complex and critical spaces in which divergent views can be expressed. Each promotes participation, disseminates critical and oppositional ideas, organizes across digital networks, and uses technical skills to engage in discussions and debates that are free from censorship. Furthermore, although since 2008 Anonymous has claimed a commitment to social justice, it evolved from 4chan, an imageboard known for its vile depravity and, as such, each case study will lend insight into the wide variety of ways in which digital networks (and the alternative discourses and epistemes constructed therein) can be used to oppose— or to sustain— discrimination, oppression, dominant discourses, and dominant power. What is of greatest interest to this study is not whether these networks are liberatory or oppressive, or whether they are serving as agents of social change, but determining what can be learned from their activities and operations, and the ways in which network society— its horizontal structure and the digital modes of organizing, communicating, and collaborating that it makes possible— can be used in the service of intellectual aims.

1.4 Outlooks on the Status of Intellectual Life & Traditions of Pessimism
Indeed, for more than half a century, there has been a great deal of discussion on the supposed erosion of intellectual life occurring in society. Largely spurred by the publication of Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* in 1963, many have sought to trace the social movements in history during which intellect (supposedly)

fell into decline. According to Hofstadter, religion, commerce, and democracy were to blame, for each played a distinct role in the deterioration of public intellectual life. American Protestantism, he argues, had subordinated "men of ideas to men of emotional power or manipulative skill" (55); American commerce and business culture had criticized abstract analysis in favor of practical knowledge (233); and American democracy had produced an under-funded and sexist public education system that nurtured mediocrity, rather than cultivating and challenging brilliant minds (299-322). As a result, the options for intellectuals were bleak: they could exist as mere experts, embedded within and compromised by the institutions they served, or stand apart as critics, alienated from and misunderstood by society.

While Hofstadter's predictions in the 1960s were deeply pessimistic, more than 25 years later, other theorists took his apocalyptic forecast further, declaring the extinction of intellectuals an imminent reality. Published in 1987, Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals*, in fact, describes Hofstadter as one of the last remaining intellectual minds of our time. Instead of focusing on the nation's cultural life, Jacoby looks at issues of institutional change to argue that intellectuals have all but disappeared due to the restructuring of cities, the decline of intellectual bastions, and the expansion of universities. He argues that together, gentrification, suburbanization, and academic careerism have encouraged a sterile professionalism among young intellectuals who have "retreated into specialized and cloistered environments" and "have lost contact with a public world" ("Last Thoughts on The Last Intellectuals" 39).

For Jacoby, today's would-be intellectuals have themselves to blame, for they have failed to develop a straightforward prose and have neither sought nor gained a nonprofessional audience and a public profile. He writes,

> The previous generation of intellectuals could be read, and were read, by educated readers; the most recent intellectuals cannot be- nor do they direct themselves to a public audience. They have settled into specialties and sub-specialties. Even as critics have become more sophisticated and daring, they have also become more private and complacent, which belies a critical discourse. (Intellectuals and Their Discontents 44)

Assessing the situation as dismal, he argues that "An older generation of intellectuals is passing on, and a new one is not showing up" (44). Among the most notable aspects of Jacoby's argument is his failure to elucidate a strong rationale for the role intellectuals *should* play in a democratic society. He argues for comprehensive prose, but does not qualify the type of intellectual engagement one should have with the public, or describe the role such a person should fulfill. He chastises young academics for not participating in public life, yet fails to consider the ways in which participation is changing. In short, Jacoby's perspective is informed by antiquated understandings of intellectual life, which render him susceptible to misunderstanding or overlooking the intellectual capacity of and affordances made possible by the digital networks explored in my case studies.

Writings several years after Jacoby, cultural critic Andrew Ross also explored the decline of intellectual life in his text, *No Respect: Intellectuals & Popular Culture*.

Citing intellectuals' rejection of the popular (and their failure to study pop culture) as one of their primary downfalls, Ross asserts:

> It is increasingly important (especially today, when the once politicized divisions between high and low culture make less and less sense in a culture that ignores these divisions with official impunity) to consider what is dialectical about the historically fractious relationship between intellectuals and popular culture. Only then can we expect to make proper sense of the linked material power, in our culture, of elitism and anti-intellectualism, vanguardism and populism, paternalism and delinquency. Only then can we see how categories of taste, which police the differentiated middle ground are also categories of cultural power. (5)

That is, because intellectuals have cultural authority and are central to the legitimating processes that inform, impose, and maintain established canons and notions of taste, they play an integral part in the struggle over meaning-making. As such, Ross asserts, it is crucial that intellectuals examine the realm of popular culture, where the "struggle to win popular respect and consent for authority is endlessly being waged," as their valuations of pop culture topics can serve to legitimate new identities, meanings, and modes of cultural production (3). According to Ross, however, many intellectuals have instead become the gatekeepers of high culture, oftentimes serving as corporate and government functionaries who maintain structures of authority and uphold dominant interests.

Like Jacoby, Ross calls for a closer relationship between intellectuals and the public; however, neither writer elucidates who intellectuals are and what they are

supposed to do. Jacoby dismisses the issue by claiming that "Too many definitions, too much caution, kill thought" (xii), while Ross concedes that his "own history of intellectuals is methodologically governed by no strict or absolute definitions of the role or functions of intellectuals" (10).[4] By sidestepping this important discussion and avoiding the task of defining intellectuals, these texts offer little insight into intellectuals' contemporary situation.

Such oversights persist across declinist accounts. For example, Ralf Dahrendorf argues that intellectuals stand completely outside of the societies they seek to influence and are consequently defined in negative terms. Their role is one of resistance and dissent, as their job is "to doubt everything that is obvious, to make relative all authority, to ask all those questions that no one else dares to ask" (The Intellectual and Society 51). However, by describing intellectuals in negative terms and reducing them to mere dissenters, Dahrendorf offers little room for intellectuals to transform and serve a different role in their contemporary situation, (nor does he comment on what their ideal role should be). Others, like Zygmunt Bauman, Talcott Parsons, and Alan Trachtenberg focus on the structural changes in Western society to argue that consumer culture has weakened intellectuals' claims to authority and has dismantled their ability to persuade. In these accounts, intellectuals' efforts to intervene in and respond to structural changes

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[4] Despite that he does not define what constitutes an intellectual, Ross offers a partial list of those he deems intellectuals. He writes, "It includes Lenny Bruce, Ethel Rosenberg, Andy Warhol, Jonh Waters, and Grace Jones, just as it includes Dwight MacDonald, Susan Sontag, Marshall McLuhan, Amiri Baraka, and Andrea Dworkin" (10).

in society are never examined; in each account intellectuals are simply (that is, too simply) emptied of their agency and deemed unable to compete with the commodities of entertainment and distraction.

Among the things most interesting about this perception of the decline of public intellectual life is that it traverses the left/right, liberal/conservative divide.[5] As Bruce Robbins puts it, there is an "unsettling consensus" among critics from both sides that public intellectuals no longer exist in 21st Century American society (xi). Indeed, many diverse and more concrete diagnoses on the perceived disappearance of intellectuals and the dissolution of public life persist among writers of all political affiliations. Throughout the 1980s, for example, American neoconservatives like William Bennett and Allan Bloom cited the decline of culturally shared civic values as the cause of the decline of the public. According to their assessment, it was the left-wing 1960s academics that catalyzed this collapse because they, and universities at large, abandoned their role of preparing students for civic life and participation in the public sphere.[6] They argue that, instead of inculcating shared cultural values and encouraging a consensual public sphere, universities instill in students a relativistic value structure that encourages

[5] Liberal, conservative, and Marxist critics have expressed similar sentiments regarding the state of modern public culture and the democratic public sphere. See, for example, Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992. Print.; see also Keane, John. *Public Life and Late Capitalism: Toward a Socialist Theory of Democracy*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984. Print.; see also Eagleton, Terry. *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism*. London: Verso, 1984. Print.

[6] For an overview of the neo-conservative stance on left academe intellectuals, see Bruce Robbins' "Introduction" in *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics*.

multicultural difference and public contentiousness. According to neo-conservatives, left academics both initiated and perpetuated a multicultural splintering of the vital center of American life and, in doing so, effectively destroyed the country's shared public culture.

In addition to those on the right, many prominent Marxist and post-structuralist critics affiliated with the left (such as Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, and Terry Eagleton) have written at length about the demise of the intellectual and the collapse of the public sphere; however, rather than deeming this transformation a negative one, they instead declare that, in the heterogeneous culture of postmodernity, the nostalgic notion of universal truth is quite simply dead. For example, Baudrillard's In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities argues that, in the postmodern world, the production of meaning has been overtaken by the production of the demand for meanings. The media, the simulations, and what he calls the "cyberblitz" have yielded a new realm of experience, a new era, and a new kind of society in which the masses passively consume media spectacles. He writes:

> Today, everything has changed: no longer is meaning in short supply, it is
> produced everywhere, in ever increasing quantities -- it is demand which
> is weakening. And it is the production of this demand for meaning which
> has become crucial for the system. Without this ... power is nothing but an
> empty simulacrum and an isolated effect of perspective. The mass
> "absorbs all the social energy, but no longer refracts it. It absorbs every
> sign and every meaning, but no longer reflects them. It absorbs all
> messages and digests them. For every question put to it, it sends back a

tautological and circular response... The mass is dumb like beasts, and its

silence is equal to the silence of beasts. Despite having been surveyed to

death ... it says neither whether the truth is to the left or to the right, nor

whether it prefers revolution or repression. It is without truth and without

reason. It has been attributed with every arbitrary remark. It is without

conscience and without unconscious. (27-9)

For Baudrillard, the outlook is grim, for, in his estimation, the media have rendered the

public passive and have all but secured the demise of the democratic public sphere.

In contrast to Baudrillard's pessimistic, if not nihilistic, diagnosis, others like

Lyotard maintain that progressive change is possible if one concentrates on the local

level. As Lyotard explains in Tombeau de l'intellectuel, the death of the intellectual in a

postmodern world was spurred by a skeptical public that had grown too untrusting of

intellectuals' metanarratives. In fact, he argued, it was this "incredulity to

metanarratives" that defined postmodern society (La Condition postmoderne 7).[7] As

such, changes in intellectual life were not brought on by intellectuals' failings, but by the

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[7] For Lyotard, postmodernity was tied to the emergence of a postindustrial society in which knowledge had
become the main economic force of production but which had, at the same time, lost its traditional
legitimations. According to this perspective, society is not an organic whole or a dualistic field of conflict,
but should been conceived of as a web of linguistic communications in which language and "the whole
social bond" is composed of different games. As such, science has become one language game among
others and can no longer claim privilege over other forms of knowledge as it had done in modern times. As
Perry Anderson, in The Origins of Post Modernity puts it, "In fact, its [science's] title to superiority as
denotative truth over narrative styles of customary knowledge concealed the basis of its own legitimation,
which classically rested on two forms of grand narrative itself. The first of these, derived from the French
Revolution, told a tale of humanity as the heroic agent of its own liberation through the advance of
knowledge; the second, descending from German Idealism, a tale of spirit as the progressive unfolding of
truth. Such were the great justifying myths of modernity" (19).

collapse of grand narratives— large-scale philosophies of the world that lost credibility as

people became more alert to their diverse and incompatible beliefs, values, and

aspirations. The solution,[8] he argued, was to replace grand narratives with a multiplicity

of micro-narratives, and to supplant the notion of a single public sphere with the idea of a

multiplicity of public spheres[9] that can reflect the concerns of changing individual and

group identities. Building on Wittgenstein's theory of "models of discourse," Lyotard

proposes a mode of progressive politics that is grounded in the cohabitation of a wide

range of diverse and locally legitimated language games.

1.5 Possibilities for Intellectual Life in Network Society

Though taking shape in ways postmodernists perhaps never envisioned,

intellectual life today relies on the language games and multiple public spheres that

Lyotard values and promotes. They are characterized by their focus on specific, local

contexts, their investment in and awareness of the diversity of human experience, and

their use of digital media, which makes information accessible to audiences far larger and

more diverse than was ever possible with print. Indeed, intellectual endeavors today may

be taking on new forms and may look remarkably different from those we've come to

know. With the emergence of digital networks— horizontally-organized spaces in which

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[8] Unlike neo-conservatives, who vilified universities for failing to instill in students a set of consensual
shared civic values, Lyotard insisted that universities could serve as sites for analyzing and contesting
oppressive metanarratives (of the predominantly white, male, European tradition) and for formulating new
micro-narratives. For a more detailed description of this vision of the university curriculum, see Gless and
Hernstein-Smith (eds.) The Politics of Liberal Education. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992. Print.

[9] For a more thorough discussion of the notion of multiple publics and resistance to totalizing narratives,
see Jean François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

individuals can anonymously collaborate, pool resources, and share expertise— new forms of collective intellectual production have become possible, as the audience for (and the realizable value of) advanced thought and scholarship has vastly increased.

In the former system of intellectual life that relied on print culture, publications could not reach beyond several hundred or, at best, several thousand research libraries. Perhaps more problematically, intellectual endeavors were embedded within a system of professionalized incentives in academia that encouraged professors to write, not to discover, but to secure tenure, facilitate promotions, and bring esteem and funding to the universities for which they work. Today, however, with radically new technologies and social practices emerging every day, intellectual production can occur within digital networks, utilizing sophisticated services to analyze and combine information in ways that generate new knowledge. Intellectuals today can maintain blogs, work for the Open Content Alliance (OCA), write for Wikipedia, organize Internet Relay Chats, produce content under Creative Commons open licenses, and propel the explosive growth of other, novel forms of intellectual production. The material and digital systems on which these networks are based simply did not exist fifty years ago and therefore pose possibilities for intellectual life that traditional intellectuals could have never imagined.

In order for these new social functions to become intelligible, a new framework "that does not limit the discussion from the outset to modern patterns of interpretation" must be adopted (Poster 202). That is, we must challenge our current theoretical approaches and the questions we ask, for existing examinations of intellectual life offer an overly limited role for digital networks in cyberspace and do not adequately represent

the range of communicative possibilities available online. As Blackwell puts it, "The center of gravity for intellectual life has […] shifted, decisively and forever, to a digital medium" and intellectual production must now be recognized as occurring in a multitude of digital public spheres (Conclusion: Cyberinfrastructure, the Scaife Digital Library and Classics in a Digital age 27). In short, these networks indicate that a new apparatus has emerged— one that is affecting the world in material ways, demonstrating a long-term commitment to continued change, and raising important questions about the potential and limitations of democratized media and the state of intellectual life in America today.

Chapter 2- Defining Intellectuals: A Theoretical Overview

2.1 The Origin of the Term

Although more than one concept of intellectual identity has persisted throughout history, the term was first used to describe the group of writers, professors, and students who came to the defense of an obscure Jewish officer in the French Army who had been accused of treason, and who "lent their prestige to the call for" his release (Drake 1). Denoting a position of defiance against the ruling order, the controversial term (and the acts to which it referred) caused a hostile division in France between the anti-Dreyfusard majority (citizens of a hierarchical, Roman Catholic, imperial state, steeped in military traditions, who respected authority and valued French patriotism) and the Dreyfusard intellectuals (who valued abstract, Enlightenment ideals and the rights of individuals).

While the Dreyfusards deemed themselves agents of justice, anti-Dreyfusards dubbed them traitors and wielded the term 'intellectual' as an insult. In fact, "when [famous writer, Emile] Zola and [owner and editor of the Paris daily newspaper, Georges] Clemenceau first outlined the fundamental program of the intellectual, the academics and men of letters of the Right intentionally excluded themselves from its company" (Shurts 15), declaring they preferred to "be intelligent, rather than intellectuels" (Shurts 41). Despite all attempts to vilify the term 'intellectual,' the

Dreyfusards embraced the title and, as the first group to call themselves by it, went on to mold the concept in their image and according to their values.[10]

In accordance with this heritage, this study examines new modes of intellectual life in America today by way of the intellectual parameters set forth by the Dreyfusards who embraced the term and the Marxists who expounded upon it, for although Karl Marx never produced a systematic theory of intellectuals, his theory of class struggle serves as the theoretical foundation of hundreds of accounts of intellectual life. That is, most theorists understand social life as being produced through economic, political, and ideological struggles, and recognize citizens as being situated within a network of social and class relations that affect and constrain their (individual and collective) actions. Furthermore, in accordance with the way Dreyfusards wielded the term, the majority of accounts examine intellectuals' potential to use "intellectual work as revolutionary practice" and to function as a disruptive force in defense of the oppressed (Franz 99).

This particular focus is not intended to deny the Right wing's intellectual identity or to imply that thinkers on the Right did not (or do not) possess authority, and influence public opinion and national debates; rather, this work acknowledges that there has always been an underlying struggle to control what it means to be an intellectual and to define the relationship intellectuals should have with the government, institutions, and society as a whole— but takes, as its focus, a particular intellectual identity— that constructed by the Left, and examines the ways in which digital media and networked forms of

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[10] The Dreyfus Affair will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

organization are impacting intellectual life in America today. To prepare for careful

analysis and thoughtful case studies, I will first provide a theoretical overview of the

ways intellectuals have been conceptualized, followed by an historical overview of the

intellectual as an historical actor in 20th century America.

2.2 The Public Deployment of Expertise

To begin, this work understands the word 'intellectual' to refer to 'public

intellectuals,'[11] as engagement in the public sphere[12] is inherent to the term. As Edward

Said and others have pointed out, intellectuals are and have always been public, for their

commitment to an Enlightenment way of thinking demands engagement with the

community. As such, the term "public intellectual" is redundant and was only

popularized in the late 1980s, when Russell Jacoby used it ad nauseam in his text, "The

Last Intellectuals." That said, in its most basic sense, the term 'intellectual' refers to

someone who possess a mental pedigree, a privileged insight and deeper understanding,

and who deploys his or her expertise in (and to the) public. Equipped with particular

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[11] Although Russell Jacoby claimed, in the introduction to a reprint of his text *The Last Intellectuals* in 2000, "As far as I know, I was the first to use this term [public intellectual]," he failed to recall his own citation (in *The Last Intellectuals*) of C. Wright Mills, who used the term in 1958 in *The Causes of World War Three*.

[12] Traditionally understood as a network for influencing political action through the exchange of informed and logical discussions, the concept of the public sphere has its basis in the work of Jürgen Habermas and his seminal text "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere." According to Habermas, the liberal public sphere is a domain of social life to which all citizens are granted access and where unrestricted public opinion can be formed. Based on the exchange of independent perspectives, a public sphere can only exist in the absence of state control and comes into being when citizens have a "guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely," "without being subject to coercion" (103). As such, the public sphere is a crucial component of sociopolitical organization, for it serves as a site of intellectual life— a space designated for the free exchange of ideas where citizens can (re)vitalize democracy, animate rational discussions, and impact public will.

cognitive faculties and a "reflexiveness about […] the rules that govern their society" (Shils 1972; 5) intellectuals "consciously and methodically employ the mind" (Barzun 5) and "bring into being new modes of thought" (Gramsci 9). Reinhold Niebuhr describes intellectuals as "the more articulate members of the community […] who are professionally or vocationally articulate, in church and school, in journalism and the arts" (302), while Joseph Schumpeter defines them as "people who wield the power of the spoken and written word" (147).

In contrast to experts who specialize in narrow fields, intellectuals "transcend their professional specializations" and, possessing a broader outlook, address a wide variety of important issues (Misztal 36). As Sartre once explained it, an atomic scientist is not an intellectual while constructing an atomic bomb, but becomes an intellectual when he or she signs a letter of protest against nuclear arms (Goldfarb 30). That is, to be an intellectual is not to be a technician, or expert, or engineer, or even simply a protestor— but to be someone who protests "in the name of highly controversial systems of values that see human life as the supreme standard" (230-1). Using complex expertise to address wide-ranging social challenges in ways that contribute to society's well-being, intellectuals are, as Mannheim described them, the "bearers of syntheses" and of the "total perspective" (143-4).

2.3 Thinking Anew: Inventive Effort and Creative Activity[13]

In addition to sharing knowledge and insight with the public, intellectuals must produce new ideas and strategies to subvert existing systems and address existing problems. As Florian Znaniecki describes them, intellectuals are "explorers" who seek "in the domain of knowledge new ways into the unknown" and who "specialize, so to speak, in doing the unexpected" (165). Occupying a space in the domain of knowledge production, intellectuals contribute original ideas, identify unsolved problems, challenge the legitimacy of norms, and aim to liberate the human imagination by thinking anew.[14] It is about making important discoveries and also overturning them, about voicing a view "which in some ways goes beyond that available to those with a merely instrumental or expert relation to the matter in question" (Collini 2006: 56). Furthermore, because creativity indicates "a special type of cultural competence," it is an empowering resource

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[13] The phrases "inventive effort" and "creative activity" are taken from John Dewey's discussion of creative democracy (emphasis added in bold below). Dewey writes, "At all events this is what I mean when I say that we now have to re-create by deliberate and determined endeavor the kind of democracy which in its origin one hundred and fifty years ago was largely the product of a fortunate combination of men and circumstances. We have lived for a long time upon the heritage that came to us from the happy conjunction of men and events in an earlier day. The present state of the world is more than a reminder that we have now to put forth every energy of our own to prove worthy of our heritage. It is a challenge to do for the critical and complex conditions of today what the men of an earlier day did for simpler conditions. If I emphasize that the task can be accomplished only by **inventive effort and creative activity**, it is in part because the depth of the present crisis is due in considerable part to the fact that for a long period we acted as if our democracy were something that perpetuated itself automatically; as if our ancestors had succeeded in setting up a machine that solved the problem of perpetual motion in politics. We acted as if democracy were something that took place mainly at Washington and Albany--or some other state capital--under the impetus of what happened when men and women went to the polls once a year or so-- which is a somewhat extreme way of saying that we have had the habit of thinking of democracy as a kind of political mechanism that will work as long as citizens were reasonably faithful in performing political duties." For more information, See Dewey's *Creative democracy: The Task Before Us*.

[14] According to Harry M. Collins, while creativity involves the production of new ideas, the "ideas cannot be too new," for in order to be successful, ideas must be recognizable and must stand "in relation to the ongoing conversation of the intellectual community" (31).

and, according to many accounts, serves as a primary source of public intellectual

authority (Said 1994; Szacki 1990; Beyme 1994; Shils 1972; Bauman 1995; Bourdieu

1989, 1992, 2004;[15] Polanyi 1951; Collini 2006). Lastly, creativity performs the vital

function of securing the attention of (and potentially inspiring) the audience. As Roger

Berkowitz writes, "The free act surprises; it is noticed."[16]

2.4 The Pursuit of Justice on the Side of the Oppressed

Persistent across a wide array of accounts is the belief that intellectuals play an

emancipatory role in society. In accordance with the part they played in the historic

Dreyfus Affair, intellectuals are largely deemed devotees to justice and truth who act in

defense of universal ideas and on the side of the oppressed. Edward Said, for example,

asserts, intellectuals have "a special duty to address the constituted and authorized

powers of one's own society, […] particularly when those powers are exercised in a

manifestly disproportionate and immoral war, or in deliberate programmes of

discrimination, repression and collective cruelty" (97-8). Their job, he explains, is to

"speak the truth to power" (97)[17] and to act in accordance with an "unbudgeable

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[15] For example, according to Edward Shils, creativity is what differentiates intellectuals from "the ordinary run" of professors and academics (6), while Pierre Bourdieu argues that "creative imagination" constitutes the intellectual's competence (2004; 113).

[16] As Berkowitz, in "The Courage to Lead," explains, "What elevates such a free act to political relevance is that it not only surprises, but it also inspires. The free act (freedom and acting are synonyms for Arendt) leads others to act as well. By way of responses, the free act is talked about and turned into stories. In this way the free act re-narrates and thus re-makes our common world. That is why the free act is political and how it can change the world."

[17] Said clarifies, "By that, I do not mean here some Old Testament like thunderings, proclaiming everyone to be sinful and basically evil. I do mean something much more modest and a great deal more effective.

conviction in a concept of justice and fairness"[18] (94). Similarly, Julien Benda[19] declares "their duty […] is that of justice and of truth" (57). Motivated not by material gain or personal advantage, but by a staunch belief in justice and a sense of responsibility to "denounce injustice wherever it occurs" (*The Writings of Jean Paul Sartre* 285), intellectuals (in the eloquent words of Karl Mannheim) serve as "watchmen in what otherwise would be a pitch-black night" (*Ideology and Utopia*, 160).

Michel Foucault also championed the idea that intellectuals must work on the side of the oppressed, but advocated a new mode of engagement. Rather than conceptualizing intellectuals as people who "play the role of advisor to the masses and critique

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To speak of consistency and upholding standards of international behaviour and the support of human rights is not to look inwards for a guiding light supplied to one by inspiration or prophetic intuition. Most, if not all, countries in the world are signatories to a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed in 1948, reaffirmed by every new member state of the UN. There are equally solemn conventions on the rules of war, on treatment of prisoners, on the rights of workers, women, children, immigrants and refugees. None of these documents says anything about disqualified or less equal races or peoples. All are entitled to the same freedoms. Of course, these rights are violated on a daily basis, as witness the genocide in Bosnia today. For an American or Egyptian or Chinese government official, these rights are at best looked at politically, not from a consistently moral standpoint. But those are the norms of power, which are precisely not those of the intellectual whose role is at very least to apply the same standards and norms of behaviour now already collectively accepted on paper by the entire international community" (*Representations of the Intellectual* 97-98).

[18] Said's full quote is as follows: "But the meaning of an effective intervention there has to rest on the intellectual's unbudgeable conviction in a concept of justice and fairness that allows for differences between nations and individuals, without at the same time assigning them to hidden hierarchies, preferences, evaluations. Everyone today professes a liberal language of equality and harmony for all. The problem for the intellectual is to bring these notions to bear on actual situations where the gap between the profession of equality and justice, on the one hand, and, on the other, the rather less edifying reality, is very great" (*Representations of the Intellectual* 94).

[19] Julien Benda, in his best-known work, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, harshly criticizes public intellectuals for betraying their original vocation and purpose. For Benda, intellectuals include "all those whose activity essentially is not the pursuit of practical aims, all those who seek their joy in the practice of an art or a science or a metaphysical speculation, in short in the possession of non-material advantages." However, he argues, in the early decades of the 20th Century, public intellectuals began subordinating their disinterested concern for truth, reason, and justice to the pursuit of their own selfish passions and aims (43).

ideological content," he proposed the concept of the "specific intellectual," whose intellectual work is "conducted alongside those who struggle for power, rather than consisting simply of their illumination from a safe distance" (*Intellectuals and Power* 133). Furthermore, he argued, rather than serving as the defenders of truth, intellectuals operating at the local level should "provide instruments of analysis" that help people understand how representations and ideas have gained the status of truthfulness" (*Power/Knowledge* 12). "In this sense," he explains, "theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice"[20] (208).

Like Foucault, Antonio Gramsci stressed the role intellectuals play in the dissemination of so-called truths, and the ways in which intellection can be used to serve class interests. However, Gramsci recognized two types of intellectuals: those who support bourgeois hegemony[21] (traditional intellectuals) and those who subvert it (organic intellectuals). As such, he stresses, what differentiates these groups is not their intellectual work, but "the system of relations in which [intellectual] activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general

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[20] In "Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," Foucault clarifies: "But it [this practice] is local and regional, as you said, and not totalising. This is a struggle against power, a struggle aimed at revealing and undermining power where it is most invisible and insidious. It is not to 'awaken consciousness' that we struggle (the masses have been aware for some time that consciousness is a form of knowledge; and consciousness as the basis of subjectivity is a prerogative of the bourgeoisie), but to sap power, to take power; it is an activity conducted alongside those who struggle for power, and not their illumination from a safe distance. A 'theory' is the regional system of this struggle."

[21] As Gramsci used it, the term "bourgeois hegemony" refers to bourgeois dominance in the struggle over worldviews.

complex of social relations" (139). That is, intellectuals should be understood, not in terms of "the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities," but in terms of the space they occupy within a system of dependencies and the role they play in reproducing or subverting that system (139).

Working on behalf of the ruling class, traditional intellectuals emerge from the bourgeoisie, and function as the "dominant group's 'deputies'" (145). Although they "put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group," they in fact serve the "subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government," sustaining the "spontaneous consent" of the masses on "the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group" and "'legally' enforc[ing] discipline on those groups who do not 'consent'" [22] (145). To sustain this "consent," traditional intellectuals rationalize existing modes of social reproduction, pass off myths as commonsense truths, and use the "prestige" granted by their privileged "position and function in the world of production" to justify and maintain (the reproduction of) inequitable systems of social power (113).

Their hegemonic authority, however, is not absolute, for as Gramsci argues, hegemony "is not universal and 'given' to the continuing rule of a particular class," but is a "moving equilibrium," in which ideas and positions are continuously contested and revised. As a dynamic force, it as an active site of negotiation and one that presents

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[22] Describing this mode of direct domination, Gramsci writes, "The apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed" (Prison Notebooks 118).

opportunities for other social groups to create counter-hegemonic projects. More specifically, Gramsci believed that the working class could develop its own "organic intellectuals" who share the class experience of those they represent, and who could articulate that experience in political terms in a counter-hegemonic project.

The emergence of such individuals was possible, Gramsci argued, partly because "all men [sic] are intellectuals"[23] (140). That is, people are not merely reactive animals of instinct, but are thinking beings, capable of rational analysis. Furthermore, he believed that although "not all men have in society the function of intellectuals," "every social group coming into existence […] in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals" (134). Arising from within and working on behalf of their own class interests, these individuals, he argued, could reeducate their class, free it from the ideas that bind it to the existing exploitative order, and by working "incessantly to raise the intellectual level of ever-growing strata of the populace," could "produce elites of intellectuals of a new type which arise directly out of the masses, but remain in contact with them to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset" (652).

Emphasizing the importance of linking theory with practice, Gramsci maintained that organic intellectuals need to be more than "simple orator[s]" and must actively

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[23] Gramsci explains, "There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: homo faber cannot be separated from homo sapiens. Each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought" (140-141).

participate "in practical life, as constructor, organiser, [and] 'permanent persuader'" (141). By doing so and establishing an alternative form of political and moral leadership, organic intellectuals could shift the grounds of intellectual activity, and establish a revolutionary cultural and historical block (comprised of members of subordinated groups) that challenges and undermines the existing social order. Famously dubbing this block the "modern Prince" (after the prince who Niccolò Machiavelli hoped would bring about a revolutionary unification of renaissance Italy), Gramsci stressed both the need and the potential for oppressed groups to produce organic intellectuals, and to form a revolutionary party that could mount an insurrection. Advocating a form of pedagogy-as-democratic-practice and expanding the (conception of the) social functions of intellectuals in the modern world, he promoted not only a working-class movement, but the organization of a new intellectual order and the formation of a proletariat hegemony that would serve the interests of the oppressed.

2.5 The Active Avoidance of Cooptation
    Because intellection can be used to serve dominant interests, intellectuals, by most accounts, must also demonstrate an active and continued commitment to avoiding various forms of (government, military, and corporate) cooptation. Sartre, for one, believed all intellectuals were born out of the bourgeoisie and therefore could only function as "true intellectuals" by distancing themselves from the dominant ideology and "adopting the point of view of its most underprivileged members" (*A Plea for intellectuals* 255). Said and Foucault, among others, issue similar warnings, insisting that intellectuals must "struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object

and instrument" (Foucault, Intellectuals and Power 207-208) and remain stolidly devoted

to "confront[ing] orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produc[ing] them)" (Said 11).

2.6 Courageous Risk-Taking

As active defenders of the oppressed who question so-called truths and oppose the

ruling order, intellectuals must possess a willingness to engage in risk—

a willingness to risk social and professional unpopularity, ridicule, discreditation, and

personal attacks, alienation, financial loss, and even harm to one's well-being. As Said

explains, "this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being

someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions" (11). This requires

not only the courage of conviction to speak about matters of human significance, but also

the civil courage to unapologetically challenge prevailing opinions, assumptions, and

attitudes, to speak out against the powerful, and to do so publicly. As Sartre writes, "if

the technician of practical knowledge […] refuses to be a subaltern agent of bourgeois

hegemony […] then the agent of practical knowledge becomes a monster, that is to say an

intellectual; *someone who attends to what concerns him* […] and whom others refer to as

a man [sic][24] *who interferes in what does not concern him*" (qtd. in Marxism, History,

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[24] Sadly, the male bias dominates conversations both old and new, despite the volumes of work women and men have produced that critique and problematize male/female binaries, the notion of male-authority, and public-male-space associations.

and intellectuals 150).[25] To be an intellectual, one must be willing to be both adored and fiercely disliked.

2.7 Distinctions between Intellectuals and Activists, Experts, and Protestors

The Dreyfus Affair not only gave rise to the first group to be recognized as intellectuals, but also yielded the act of intellectual protest. Using petitions and popular media (specifically, the newspaper), Dreyfus's supporters not only formed a united front, but brought attention to a variety of social, political, and moral issues (that would starkly divide the country) and demonstrated the efficacy of a new form of civic and political expression. Using a succinct written statement, they illuminated a host of human rights issues (such as anti-semitism, and the rights of the individual against the State) and, laying claim to a disinterested position of reason and rational thought, used their credentials to imply that their argument was sound and deserving of the public's attention. As such, they demonstrated new ways of acquiring power and challenging authority, and highlighted the capacity for protest to interrupt and disrupt "business as usual." Furthermore, their collective action showed that there was power in numbers— and in ideas.

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[25] Sartre's full quote reads: "If the technician of practical knowledge becomes aware of the particularism of his ideology and cannot reconcile himself to it; if he sees that he has interiorized authoritarian principles in the form of self-censorship; if he has to call in question the ideology that formed him to escape malaise and mutilation; if he refuses to be a subaltern agent of bourgeois hegemony and act as the means towards ends which he is forbidden to know or to dispute— then the agent of practical knowledge becomes a monster, that is to say an intellectual; *someone who attends to what concerns him* (in exteriority— the principles which guide the conduct of his life: and in interiority— his lived experience in society) and whom others refer to as a man *who interferes in what does not concern him*" (*Marxism, History, and Intellectuals: Towards a Reconceptualized Transformative Socialism* 150).

Although intellectuals utilize expertise, political activism, and protest in pursuit of their objectives, they are more than experts, activists, or protestors. While activists and protestors are devoted to a particular cause (or causes), intellectuals question and address issues across a broader spectrum; furthermore, unlike activists and protestors, they have a different positioning in society. While activists, experts, and protestors may be motivated by a variety of things (i.e.an activist organizes a public demonstration to protest student loan rates because she is concerned about her own student loan debt; an expert designs nuclear weapons because the salary is exorbitant; a person protests an abortion clinic because his or her religion deems abortion murder) intellectuals are devoted to advancing the causes of freedom, justice, and societal betterment. Furthermore, as Michael Warner has pointed out, "expert knowledge is in an important way nonpublic: its authority is external to the discussion. It can be challenged only by other experts, not within the discourse of the public itself" (145). While intellectual knowledge also bears a sense of authority, intellectuals champion each person's right "to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, [and] to point out faulty reasoning" (Foucault qtd in Warner 152). "Tempered with an ability to listen to others," they not only accept critiques, but "engage in modes of self-critique" (Giroux "Intellectuals as Subjects" 8). As such, it is the scope of their concerns, the breadth of their understanding, the source of their motivation, their allegiance to oppressed groups and individuals, their task to create new possibilities and to subvert existing systems, and their relationship to the practice of critique that differentiate intellectuals from others.

2.8 Intellectuals and Class Positioning

Because intellectuals engage in the class struggle, it is useful to consider their own class positioning, the implications of that positioning, and the degree to which it is determined by material conditions and/or mutual interests. Since the 1920s, three distinct approaches have emerged, which theorists conceptualizing intellectuals as a distinct class, as class-bound, or as altogether class-less.

Gramsci's aforementioned theory of the organic and traditional intellectuals is the most prominent class-bound approach. Engaged in a broader cultural project of analyzing how ideas and ideologies gain supremacy (i.e. hegemony) in society, Gramsci maintained that it was not only economic domination (the "base") that secured bourgeois dominance, but also the cultural "superstructure," including (among other things) its public intellectuals and the role they play in supporting or subverting bourgeois hegemony (i.e. its dominance in the struggle over worldviews). From his perspective, intellectuals are the products of the class into which they are born (with "traditional intellectuals" emerging from the bourgeoisie and "organic intellectuals" emerging from the proletariat) and what differentiates them is not their intellectual work, but "the system of relations in which [intellectual] activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations[26]

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[26] Gramsci writes, "What are the "maximum" limits of acceptance of the term "intellectual"? Can one find a unitary criterion to characterize equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the

(Gramsci 8). In other words, the category of the intellectual is "defined not by its intrinsic qualities, but by the place it occupies within the system of dependencies which such a figuration represents and by the role it performs in the reproduction and development of the figuration" (Bauman *Legislators and Interpreters* 19).

Recognizing intellectuals' positionality within a system of relations is necessary, he contends, in order "to reach a concrete approximation to reality" and account for the changes occurring in capitalist society and the opportunities such changes yield (124). That is, as the old caste of elite intellectuals began losing its monopoly on communication channels and the formation of social consciousness, new knowledge workers were gaining opportunities to become socially recognized authorities. With this shift, Gramsci asserts, the formerly elite-based intellectual realm was becoming grounded in everyday life and required a new mode of praxis. That is, "the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence […] but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator…" (1971, 10). More specifically, he argues, if organic intellectuals actively develop a counter hegemony to undermine existing social relations, they can help others

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general complex of social relations. Indeed the worker or proletarian, for example, is not specifically characterized by his manual or instrumental work, but by performing this work in specific conditions and in specific social relations (apart from the consideration that purely physical labour does not exist and that even Taylor's phrase of "trained gorilla" is a metaphor to indicate a limit in a certain direction: in any physical work, even the most degraded and mechanical, there exists a minimum of technical qualification, that is, a minimum of creative intellectual activity.) And we have already observed that the entrepreneur, by virtue of his very function, must have to some degree a certain number of qualifications of an intellectual nature although his part in society is determined not by these, but by the general social relations which specifically characterize the position of the entrepreneur within industry (8-9).

understand their exploitative class positioning and empower them to contest ideological mechanisms of cultural hegemony.

Writing around the same time as Gramsci, Karl Mannheim championed the intellectuals-class-less approach and his text, *Ideology and Utopia*, has become an iconic example of this tradition. Describing intellectuals as an "unanchored, relatively class-less stratum," Mannheim believed that intellectuals, due to their education, have (to some degree) the potential to transcend class (Ideology and Utopia155). While the everyday "person who is not oriented toward the whole through his education […] merely tends to absorb the Weltanschauung [worldview] of that particular group," (156) educated intellectuals understand "opposing tendencies in social reality" and have the ability to "attach themselves to classes to which they originally did not belong." Empowered with a "broader point of view," "they and they alone were in a position to choose their affiliation" (158). As a result, he explains, "free-floating intellectuals" (159) have "furnished the theorists for the conservatives" as well as "the proletariat," though Mannheim advocates intellectuals' commitment to the latter (158). He believed it was their "mission" to encourage mutual understanding among various social classes and to "create a form outside of the party schools in which the perspective of and the interest in the whole is safeguarded" (161-62).

Many others have carried forth Mannheim's conception of intellectuals as class-less and potentially transcendent. David Caute (1966), for example, argues that intellectuals are able to transcend class because their "political affiliation remains one of personal conviction, personal psychology, personal choice" (19); Talcott Parsons (1969)

makes similar assertions, while Everett Ladd Jr. and Seymour Lipset agree that "there are factors in the social role of intellectuals which result in their persistent position as social critics" and their ability to transcend their class origins (132-33).

The third approach, which conceptualizes intellectuals as a class-in-themselves emerged in the 1960s and 1970s among New Class theorists. Both Daniel Bell and David Bazelon, for example, argue that throughout the last century, the expansion of higher education and the increasing importance of the role of information shifted the determinants of power and class position, allowing new possibilities for social groups to form a coherent class. In *The End of Ideology*, Bell writes,

> Two "silent" revolutions in the relations between power and class
> position in modern society seem to be in process. One is a change in
> the *mode of access* to power insofar as inheritance alone in no longer
> all-determining; the other is   a change in the *nature of power-holding*
> *itself* insofar as technical skill rather than poverty, and political
> position, rather than wealth, have become the basis on which power is
> wielded. The two "revolutions" proceed simultaneously. The chief
> consequence, politically, is the breakup of the "ruling class."[27] (45)

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[27] Bell defines the "ruling class" as "a power-holding group which has both an established *community* of interest and a *continuity* of interest" (45).

According to Bell, with changes in the techno-economic order came changes in the legitimation of power, allowing new groups like intellectuals to obtain (new routes to) power.

Similarly, Marxist Sociologist Alvin Gouldner cites the ways in which changes in the twentieth-century socio-economic order allowed for the rise of a new social stratum. There emerged, he explains, a "New Class composed of intellectuals and technical intelligentsia," who by "enter[ing] into contention with the groups already in control of the society's economy" brought about "a new contest of classes" ("The New Class Project, I" 153). At their best, he believed, intellectuals "embod[y] any future hope of working class self-management and […] the release from alienated labor" (170). Yet at their worst, he deemed them an "elitist" and "flawed universal class," that could become "a new bourgeoisie whose capital is not its money but its control over valuable cultures" (1971: 21).[28] George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi make similar assertions and provisions, citing the capacity for intellectuals, as a class, to use their "teleological knowledge" for societal progress, as well as their potential to selfishly exploit their relative monopoly on complex knowledge ("The Three Waves of New Class Theories" 306).

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[28] To quote Gouldner in full, he writes: "5. New Class as Flawed Universal Class (my own view): The New Class is elitist and self-seeking and uses its special knowledge to advance its own interests and power, and control its own work situation. Yet the New Class may also be the best card that history has presently given us to play. The power of the New Class is growing. It is substantially more powerful and independent than Chomsky suggests, while still much less powerful than is suggested by Galbraith who seems to conflate present reality with future possibility. The power of this morally ambiguous New Class is on the ascendant and it holds a mortgage on at least one historical future" (159).

Many other accounts of intellectuals-as-a-class abound, with each most noticeably distinguished by its theoretical conception of the way in which the New Class will obtain its power. While some believe power can be obtained through changes in the technocratic order (Bell, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1991; Bazelon, 1967), others see control over the media and the educational system as key (Kirstol, 1979); some point to the potential of the information age (Brooks, 2000), while others deem critical discourse (Gouldner 1978) "teleological knowledge" (Konrad and Szelenyi, 1979; Szelenyi, 1982), and the ability to disseminate ideas (Wright, 1979) most vital. Interestingly, however, though each articulates intellectuals' position as a class, very few discuss the mobilization of this class, the collective dimension it implies, and the modes of (collective and individual) practice it may preclude or make possible— an oversight this dissertation sets out to rectify.

2.9 The Collective Dimension of Intellectual Life

Pierre Bourdieu, on the other hand, distanced himself from the class-based approaches to studies of intellectual life, arguing that each perspective "fails to include the point of view from which it speaks and so fails to construct the game as a whole" ([1979] 1984:12). Deeming notions of classlessness self-deluding, he contends that "The ideology of the utopian thinker, rootless and unattached, 'free-floating', without interests or profits, […] scarcely inclines intellectuals to conceptualize the sense of social position, still less their own position and the perverse relation to the social world it forces on them" (472). Equally intolerant of Gramsci's class-bound approach (and for similar reasons), he claims that "by reducing intellectuals to the role of the proletariat's 'fellow travelers,' this

myth prevents them from taking up the defense of their own interests and from exploiting their most effective means of struggle on behalf of universal causes" ("The Corporatism of the Universal" 1989: 109-110). That is, Bourdieu believed that the pursuit of personal interests was inevitable and argued that, because intellectuals' self-interests coincide (at least in large part) with universal interests, intellectuals' self-interests could actually further egalitarian goals.

Defining intellectuals as politically active "cultural producers" who "belong to an autonomous intellectual world (a field)" that is "independent from religious, political, and economic powers," Bourdieu focused on the intellectual properties of the field as a whole and stressed the importance of the collective dimension of public intellectual work ("The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World" 656). Asserting that "the first objective of intellectuals should be to work collectively in defense of their specific interests and of the means necessary for protecting their own autonomy" (660), he argued that the most effective way to defend the universal "is by defending the defenders of the universal" (661). Developing this solidarity is crucial, he explains, for the struggle for autonomy is "a struggle against all institutions and agents which […] introduce dependence upon external economic, political, or religious powers […] in order to impose their domination inside the field" (663). That is, the autonomy of intellectuals is threatened not only by the State, but also by the "increasing interpenetration of the world of art or science" and "the world of money" (663). He writes:

> I am thinking of all the new forms of patronage and of the new alliances
>
> being forged between certain economic enterprises, often the most

modern, and cultural producers; I am thinking also of the increasingly

frequent recourse to sponsors on the part of academic research and of the

creation of educational programs directly subordinated to business. (664)

Because these alliances control the means of dissemination and dictate a great deal of the

country's cultural production, the intellectual field has increasingly become the scene of

"media events" designed to produce manipulated data and classifications. Writers,

artists, and scientists who should be involved in public debate have been replaced by

spokespersons whose ability to "come across well on TV" has become a criterion of their

supposed intellectual competence and has elevated their status as authorities (665).

These technocrats "and all those political staffers, whether on the right or the left, who

aspire to reduce politics to *management* problems to be solved by competence and

expertise, immediately find new accomplices in the new technocracy of communication"

that strengthen their control over cultural production and demonstrate "the capacity of an

expert discourse to disarm criticism," for oftentimes not even the accomplices are aware

of the ends they're serving (666). That is,

    The professionals of the communication arts, who monopolize access

    to the means of communication, contribute, without wanting to do so

    or even knowing that they are doing so, to the enterprise of the

    intellectual and, therefore, political demobilization: having very little

    to communicate, they open a void at the very heart of the omnipresent

    communication apparatus; more than the effects of propaganda or

    clandestine persuasion, it is the false problems and the everyday chitchat,

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not so much false as vacuous, of the daily newspapers that occupy the

whole symbolic space, paradoxically evacuating it by filling it with

padding. (666-67)

This complicit participation in the dominant order has become widespread for, as

Bourdieu points out, even self-proclaimed staunchly progressive professors perpetuate

the social order by using pedagogical strategies that unconsciously endorse the dominant

values of ranking and discipline, among others.

To defend against and compete with these technocratic tendencies, he argues,

intellectuals must "invent forms of organization which would give voice to a *great*

collective intellectual, combining the qualifications and talents of all specific

intellectuals." It is imperative that this effort be collective "because so many of the

powers to which they are subject (such as that of journalism) succeed as well as they do

only because the opposition to them is scattered and divided against itself." However, he

argues, by "constructing a true international network whose circumference would be

everywhere and whose center would be nowhere," intellectuals can mobilize resistance to

all forms of cultural imperialism and threats to their autonomy (667). The case studies

that will be discussed in this dissertation may be attempting to create the "true

international network" Bourdieu promotes and therefore his work will be instrumental in

my examination of their efforts and my analysis of their efficacy.

Chapter 3- The Intellectual as Historical Actor

Although the concept of the intellectual has many historical roots (on which I

could write volumes), for the purpose of this dissertation I am focusing on a particular

history of intellectuals. Beginning with the Dreyfus Affair, when the word "intellectual"

emerged as a noun, I chart the term's origin, the context in which it emerged, and the

ways it was contested and perceived. I then trace the term's popularization in America,

with a focus on New York, as it served as a locus for many of the 20th century

communities that shaped the country's intellectual life and production. This particular

history is relevant to my study of intellectual life in contemporary network society, for

the divisions and antagonisms that emerged in the 1898 Dreyfus Affair not directly

impacted intellectual life in America, but still persist today. Furthermore, "the issues that

were of primary concern to the New York intellectuals from the Thirties onward—

namely, Marxism in politics and modernism in culture—are still, in one form or another,

the central political and cultural issues of the present day, and they affect a larger part of

our society than ever before" (Kramer 1). As Hilton Kramer explains,

> The way these issues were argued thirty or forty or fifty years ago; the
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> divisions they caused, the loyalties they engendered, and the positions that
>
> resulted from them; above all, the fate that this movement met with in the
>
> upheavals of the Sixties, and the changes which followed from that— the

whole intellectual dynamic of this complicated history has turned out, for

better or for worse, to have played a considerable role in shaping our

institutions and setting the agenda for a great deal that remains under

 intense debate today. On many matters that are now of urgent concern

[…] there is simply no way of grasping their rudiments without some

knowledge of this antecedent history. (1-2)

In accordance with this understanding, this overview will explore the groups and

individuals who played a prominent role in the debates of the time, the values that united

intellectuals, and the prominent intellectual organizations, communities, networks, and

relationships that shaped their experiences.

3.1 The Dreyfusards: The First Intellectuals

Although the term "intellectual" has long existed as an adjective in the English

language, it was not until 1898 that its usage as a noun became the subject of debate,

when the question of *who* would be considered an intellectual divided the French

educated elite. First used to describe the group of writers, students, and professors who

came to Captain Dreyfus's defense, the notion of the intellectual, from its start, denoted a

position of defiance against the ruling order and as such, was a controversial term— so

controversial, in fact, that it would begin a centuries-long division in France (and then the

wider world) between those considered "of the Left" and those "of the Right."

The historic case that prompted the country's staunch political divide began in

1894, when Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus was arrested and charged with treason for

allegedly delivering classified French military information to the German embassy in

Paris. Found guilty on December 22, 1894, Dreyfus was stripped of his rank and

deported to Devil's Island to live in solitary confinement for the rest of his life. Two

years later, however, when Lieutenant Colonel Georges Picquart (then Head of Military

Intelligence) came forward with evidence showing that Dreyfus had been unjustly

accused in the place of the real traitor,[29] infantry officer Major Marie-Charles Walsin-

Esterhazy, Picquart's superiors tried to silence him by dismissing him from his position,

and added forged and incriminating documents to his file. When Esterhazy was quickly

acquitted and Picquart arrested (based on what would later prove to be falsified

evidence), journalists and scholars took new interest in the case and grew suspicious that

the military was attempting to conceal an injustice in order to preserve its public image.

Among those with strong misgivings was famous writer, Emile Zola, whose

suspicions had grown so deep that, on January 13, 1898, he took a critical position

against dominant power and did so in public. In an open letter comprised of no less than

4,000 words, Zola accused in explicit detail President Félix Faure and the senior officers

of the French army of framing Captain Dreyfus for treason and of conspiring to protect

the true traitor, Charles Walsin-Esterhazy. Owner and editor of the Paris daily newspaper

L'Aurore,[30] Georges Clemenceau decided not only to run the controversial article,[31] but to

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[29] Around the same time, Captain Dreyfus's brother, Matthieu Dreyfus (1857-1930), had also uncovered evidence implicating Esterhazy and had begun a suit against him. The War Office, in an effort to save its reputation, staged a court-martial for Esterzhazy, but then acquitted him of all charges on January 11, 1898.

[30] L'Aurore translates to "The Dawn."

[31] Zola's letter was entitled, "Lettre a M. Felix Faure."

publish it on the front page under the attention-grabbing headline, "J'Accuse!" (I

Accuse!).[32]

Very few articles have provoked such impassioned public debate, for by the end

of the morning, 300,000 copies had been sold— ten times the typical amount— and, by

the following day, more than 1,200 people had come forward with a petition demanding a

new trial for Dreyfus (Kleeblatt 268). Zola had drawn up the petition himself, and with

the help of Emile Duclaux, head of the Institut Pasteur, and Lucien Herr, the librarian at

the Ecole normale supérieure, had circulated it among the scholars at their institutions.

As a result, most signatories were professors, writers, and students, and included such

now-well-known figures as Marcel Proust, Anatole France, Daniel Halévy, Felix Fénéon,

Charles Andler, and Gabriel Monod. Insinuating that their educational backgrounds

granted them a particular type of status and privileged depth of understanding, the

signatories listed beside their names their academic and professional titles. The

following day, Clemenceau published their petition, and grouped their names according

to their academic or professional qualifications under the headline "Manifesto of the

Intellectuals."[33] Insinuating approval of their collective effort to impact public opinion,

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[32] According to the most comprehensive accounts, it was Clémenceau (who later became Prime Minister from 1906-1909 and again from 1917-1920) who gave Zola's letter its now well-known title, "J'Accuse"(Kleeblatt 268).

[33] The petition read, "The undersigned, protesting against the violation of the judicial forms in the trial of 1894 and against the mysteries which have surrounded the Esterhazy affair, persist in demanding revision." The group would later issue a second petition, which read "The undersigned, struck by the irregularities committed in the Dreyfus trial of 1894 and by the mystery which surrounds the trial of commandant Esterhazy, persuaded in addition that the entire nation is interested in the maintaining of legal guarantees, the protection of citizens in a free nation, astonished by the findings of lieutenant-colonel Picquart and the

Clemenceau remarked in an editorial published several days later, "Is this not a sign, all of these intellectuals from all corners of the horizon, united around an idea?" (Datta and Silverman 2).

Clemenceau's stance, however, was not common among members of the press, who were largely Anti-Dreyfusard, [34] and following Clemenceau's decision to assign the word "intellectuals" to Dreyfusards, writer Maurice Barrès set out to vilify the term. Using his more widely circulated *Le Journal*, Barrès published "La protestation des intellectuels," a scathing condemnation of the "intellectuels" who, he argued, had abused their talents and had recklessly sought to apply their general intelligence to the complex problems surrounding the Dreyfus Affair without enough information to make an informed opinion. To Anti-Dreyfusards, the "intellectuals' impugning of the integrity of the French High Command[35] was symptomatic of the wider takeover of France by arrivistes— 'Freemasons, Protestants and Jews,'" who as immigrants were not true "Frenchmen from France" and who therefore could not be trusted (Read 233). As such,

findings no less illegal attributed to the latter, moved by the procedures of judicial information employed by the military authority, demand the Chamber maintain the legal guarantees of citizens against all things arbitrary" (*L'Aurore*, January 23, 1898).

[34] Anti-Dreyfusards were largely comprised of military men, Catholics, anti-Semites, members of the state, and members of the press.

[35] Expressing opposition to the French Army was largely seen as a bold act of national defiance for, as Shurts explains, "The army, despite its defeat in 1870, had become for many on the Right, the great heroic force which would exact its revenge on Germany and return Alsace-Lorraine to the nation. Widespread insecurity about the military preparedness of France until this revenge led not only to glorification of military figures but to immediate opposition to anything that might damage its stability and stature. Nationalism, which had long been associated with Jacobin patriotism, had been redefined and popularized by Barrès in 1892 with a new anti-Republican tone and became synonymous with the defense of traditional values and institutions against internal and external enemies" (40-41).

they perceived the campaign to free Dreyfus as both "an attempt by the Jewish 'syndicate' to save one of their own, and as a conspiracy to discredit the 'holy of holies' of the true France, the Army High Command." Dubbing Dreyfusards traitors and accusing them of disloyalty, Barrès claimed he and his fellow Anti-Dreyfusards preferred to "be intelligent, rather than intellectuels," which meant leaving Dreyfus's fate to the military courts to preserve the stability of the military, accepting realistic limitations on the human capacity to grasp universal truths, and protecting the interests of the nation by avoiding the irresponsible behavior of speaking in abstractions without considering the dangers that could pose for society (Read 2).

Yet, despite the scathing connotations the Anti-Dreyfusards ascribed, Dreyfusards embraced and appropriated the term, using it "to name themselves and to claim by it a new sort of oppositional moral authority" (Bender 228). Like their detractors, they saw dissent as crucial to the role of the intellectual, but instead deemed it both courageous and necessary. To Dreyfusards, dissenters were not traitors but agents of justice— educated, rational, "moral watchmen" of the modern state, whose willingness to raise objections was done on behalf of the common good (Lilla 203).[36] They had intervened in the Dreyfus case, not to defame and destabilize the French army, but to defend the rights of the innocent, and they did not deem themselves traitors. From their perspective, they had

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[36] For comprehensive accounts of the Dreyfus Affair detailing the progression of events, the major figures involved, and the socio-political aspects of the case, see Louis Begley's *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*; Michael Burns' *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A Documentary History*; Christopher Forth's *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*; Andre Simone's *J'Accuse - The Men Who Betrayed France'* and Émile Zola's *The Dreyfus Affair: "J"Accuse' and Other Writings*.

acted according to reason, had based their judgments on the merit of arguments, and had come to the defense of an otherwise unknown army officer, not out of disloyalty to their country and its military, but in defense of the common good. Marking a stark departure from the Anti-Dreyfusards' use of the term,[37] intellectuals reframed the definition while wholeheartedly embracing the title and, as the first group to call themselves by it, went on to mold the concept according to their values.

While the Anti-Dreyfusards' use of the word 'intellectual' was intended to imply a lack of patriotic nationalism, a willingness to jeopardize the military in a time of European instability, and a cosmopolitanism that threatened to weaken the French national identity, Dreyfusards rejected every charge, defining intellectuals according to the values that the Affair had come to represent: the pursuit of truth and justice, the defense of the disenfranchised, the protection of individual rights, and the advancement of social betterment. More specifically, they deemed themselves educated individuals whose specialized knowledge had granted them privileged status, and who felt a moral responsibility to use that status in the public pursuit of truth and in defense of the causes of freedom and justice. Occupying a monopoly on the term that would last an entire year, Dreyfusards took ownership of the concept and, forging an intellectual identity as rational, moral authorities, legitimized themselves as the nation's intellectual guides (Shurts 49).

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[37] For a thorough discussion of the contested image of the intellectual, see Shlomo Sand's "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who is the True Intellectual of them All? Self-Images of the Intellectual in France," in *Intellectuals in Twentieth Century France: Mandarins and Samurais*.

As the Dreyfusard intellectuals' influence in society grew, however, "Right wing scorn for the Dreyfusard concept of an engaged intellectual turned to envy of their authority and resentment of their unrivaled dominance over the role of the social and moral guide." Realizing that, "To gain equal influence over public affairs, […] they would need not only to engage their work in the delegitimization of the intellectual of the Left, they would need to claim for themselves both the title and role of the intellectual and the responsibility to engage," anti-Dreyfusard thinkers of the Right— just one year after launching a smear campaign on the term— attempted to call themselves by it (Shurts 41).[38] By this time, however, the Dreyfusards had not only molded the concept in their (Leftist) image, but by using words and protest in defense of individuals' rights and Enlightenment ideals, had provided a blueprint for a new way to realize power in the modern world— a blueprint that would have a profound impact on intellectual life in America.

3.2 The New York Intellectuals of the Early 20th Century
    Within just three months of the Dreyfus Affair, "the word [intellectual] appeared in America in an editorial in *The Nation;*" however, it is William James, who "privately identified with the defenders of Dreyfus and embraced the designation in 1898," who is credited with popularizing the term. An educated professor himself, James was inspired

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[38] This crusade on the Right would begin with the creation of the Ligue de la Patrie françiase on January 1, 1899. Barrès expressed the members' new claim to the title 'intellectuel' saying, 'The important thing is that no one is able to say any longer that intelligence and the intellectuals- to use that questionable French word- are only on one side' (Shurts 41).

by the French academics, and in a series of letters written in 1898 and 1899, expressed his sympathy for and support of their efforts. Outraged that "Dreyfus, without one may say a single particle of *positive* evidence that he was guilty, ha[d] been condemned," he championed the French Intellectuals' "aggressively militant role"[39] and castigated the "big institutions" responsible for Dreyfus's plight. Though he recognized corruption existed in America, he described it as a "mere fly-speck of superficiality compared with the rooted and permanent forces of corruption that exist in the European states" and thusly declared that "we 'intellectuals' in America must all work to keep our precious birthright of individualism, and freedom from these institutions."[40]

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[39] James writes, "Dear Mackintire,—The incredible has happened, and Dreyfus, without one may say a single particle of *positive* evidence that he was guilty, has been condemned again. The French Republic, which seemed about to turn the most dangerous corner in her career and enter on the line of political health, laying down the finest set of political precedents in her history to serve as standards for future imitation and habit, has slipped Hell-ward and all the forces of Hell in the country will proceed to fresh excesses of insolence. But I don't believe the game is lost. 'Les intellectuels,' thanks to the Republic, are now aggressively militant as they never were before, and will grow stronger and stronger; so we may hope. I have sent you the "Figaro" daily; but of course the reports are too long for you to have read through. The most grotesque thing about the whole trial is the pretension of awful holiness, of semi-divinity in the diplomatic documents and waste-paper-basket scraps from the embassies—a farce kept up to the very end—these same documents being, so far as they were anything (and most of them were nothing), mere records of treason, lying, theft, bribery, corruption, and every crime on the part of the diplomatic agents. Either the German and Italian governments will now publish or not publish all the details of their transactions—give the exact documents meant by the *bordereaux* and the exact names of the French traitors. If they do not, there will be only two possible explanations: either Dreyfus's guilt, or the pride of their own sacrosanct etiquette. As it is scarcely conceivable that Dreyfus can have been guilty, their silences will be due to the latter cause." For more information, see *The Letters of William James*, *Volume II*, by William James.

[40] James writes, "The breath of the nostrils of all these big institutions is crime—that is the long and short of it. We must thank God for America; and hold fast to every advantage of our position. Talk about our corruption! It is a mere fly-speck of superficiality compared with the rooted and permanent forces of corruption that exist in the European states. The only serious permanent force of corruption in America is party spirit. All the other forces are shifting like the clouds, and have no partnerships with any permanently organized ideal. Millionaires and syndicates have their immediate cash to pay, but they have no intrenched [sic] prestige to work with, like the church sentiment, the army sentiment, the aristocracy and royalty

Following James' use of the term, it became part of the American vernacular and, by 1900, was being used to refer to immigrants living in New York's Lower East Side, "who, under settlement-house auspices or in cafe society, had formed study groups to incorporate into their lives American literature and culture" (Bender 228). Like the Dreyfusards, they were largely comprised of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe who, when they arrived at Ellis Island in the 1890s, had "carted with them their socialism, trade unionism, respect for literary culture, and familiarity with ideological battles" (Jumonville 2). More secular than religious, more social than academic, they valued and drew upon sources of literature and culture both within and outside of academia and, by the mid-1920s, "had children of college age who, though schooled in America, had been raised at home in a European cultural tradition that proved vital to the development of a critical project" (2).

Because they had been born into "families [that] had little money and as Jews they were not welcome at more prestigious universities,"[41] their children, after graduating from high school, typically attended City College in New York, where they met in classes and in political clubs and soon began to regularly congregate (Jumonville 2). Comprised

sentiment, which here can be brought to bear in favor of every kind of individual and collective crime— appealing not only to the immediate pocket of the persons to be corrupted, but to the ideals of their imagination as well… My dear Mack, we 'intellectuals' in America must all work to keep our precious birthright of individualism, and freedom from these institutions. Every great institution is perforce a means of corruption—whatever good it may also do. Only in the free personal relation is full ideality to be found.—I have vomited all this out upon you in the hope that it may wake a responsive echo. One must do something to work off the effect of the Dreyfus sentence."

[41] As Jumonville notes, "There were a few exceptions: Lionel Trilling attended Columbia, Dwight Macdonald went to Yale, and Mary McCarthy to Vassar" (The New York Intellectuals Reader 2).

of writers, thinkers, and activists like Lionel Trilling, Dwight Macdonald, Sidney Hook,

Meyer Schapiro, Clement Greenberg, and Philip Rahv, the New York Intellectuals, as

they became known, were a group of "outsiders to American culture,"[42] who— united in

their break with Stalinism, and drawn to (some form of) Marxism or radical socialism—

shared a commitment "to left-wing politics founded on optimism of the will." Like the

Dreyfusards, their "political aim was a more just society" and like Dreyfus, they were

Jewish immigrants who had experienced injustice and anti-Semitic discrimination[43]

(Krupnick 188). After graduating from college, "many of these aspiring intellectuals

found that the American university system, still highly elitist and not yet pried opened by

the GI Bill of Rights of 1944, had little desire to hire Jews" (Jumonville 2) and, in the

words of Irving Howe, did what they could "when intellectuals can do nothing else":

"they start[ed] a magazine" (Howe xv).[44]

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[42] As Daniel Silliman explains, "To be a New York Intellectual is to be of a certain time, age, generation, and place. […] It [being Jewish] was their identity and not in some tangential 'oh yeah, and we're Jewish' way but as the core of what made them the New York Intellectuals" (Silliman).

[43] Describing the ways in which their lives were punctuated (on social, economic, and political levels) by tensions with the dominant culture, Cooney writes, "Jewish religion and Jewish customs were more at variance with those of Protestant America than the practices of most groups; and sources of friction, both formal and random, were plentiful. With the resentment of aliens and the fear of radicals (with whom Jews were often associated) rising to a crest in the immigration restriction and the assorted nativistic vulgarities of the 1920s, few bright young Jews could ignore the hostility of the larger society" (14).

[44] There are significant disagreements about the membership of the New York Intellectuals, with some writers even claiming that no such group existed; however, the names I have provided and will provide on the following pages are found in the majority of popular accounts (and are based on individuals' publications in the group's key periodicals) and, as such, should be understood as a suggestive list, not an exhaustive or complete log.

3.3 "Knockout Synthesis:" A New Tradition of Cultural Critique

Although, prior to the 1930s, the tradition of cultural criticism in America had largely been supplied by graduates of Ivy League universities (like Walter Lippmann, Lewis Mumford, Harold Stearns, Max Eastman, Edmund Wilson, Van Wyck Brooks, and Malcolm Cowley), this trend began to shift in the late 1920s, when New York Intellectuals began founding what some now describe as "the most important periodicals of the twentieth century" (Jumonville 2). While their founding of magazines was "unremarkable in that everyone was starting a magazine, fighting to define the revolution and working to aid it to port," what made the New York Intellectuals' publications significant "was their effort to introduce literary theory and cultural studies to Marxism" (Silliman 6). Most of the radical magazines being published at the time were narrowly political, and understood Marxism and socialism as primarily economic and political movements that were going to transform society. The New York Intellectuals, on the other hand, demanded "a world that was deeper than the political," and argued that "Marxism, to be of any value, had to speak to art and culture, to be of such a breadth that encompassed the world" (Silliman 7). Using magazines like *The Menorah Journal*,[45] *The New Masses*,[46] and *Partisan Review*[47] "as the ushers of Marxist revolution," (much like

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[45] *Menorah Journal* was founded in 1915 and published essays, poetry, fiction, and political commentary. In addition to articles, it published a great deal of Jewish visual culture, featuring works of art as well, as articles by artists and cultural critics. Among its notable members were Elliot Cohen and Henry Hurwitz, who both served as editors (Pappas 206).

[46] Widely regarded as a highly influential American Marxist publication, *The New Masses* was published from 1926 to 1948 and featured the works of a diverse array of (many now-famous) figures; contributors included Walt Carmon, Whittaker Chambers, Hugo Gellert, John F. Sloan, Max Eastman, Michael Gold,

Dreyfusards used the modern press and popular publications) they employed the "methodology of the universities in a less polished, less strictured, and more public way than the universities ever could" and began a new tradition of literary, social, and political critique (5-6).

With no singular figurehead or dominant personality at the forefront, the New York Intellectuals[48] were a prolific and diverse collective whose members included literary critics Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv, and Diana Trilling; art historian Meyer Schapiro; philosophers Sidney Hook and Dwight Macdonald; journalists Elliot Cohen and William Phillips; literary critics Max Eastman and Edmund Wilson; theologian and ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr; and political novelist James Farrell. Acting "as intelligent commentators, authoring books and articles, moving in and out of the political, the social, and the cultural with a role outside of the universities but an education lifting them above the pundit," they developed a significant presence by persistently publicly addressing

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Joseph Freeman, Granville Hicks, James Rorty, William Carlos Williams, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Dorothy Parker, Langston Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, and Ernest Hemingway.

[47] With the support of the New York John Reed Club, a Communist organization of proletarian writers, Philip Rahv and William Phillips launched the first *Partisan Review* in1934. Featuring proletarian literature and revolutionary Marxist politics, its writers included Dwight Macdonald, Sidney Hook, Harold Rosenberg, Fred Dupee, George Morris, Mary McCarthy, and Paul Goodman (Jumonville 50).

[48] While the scope of this chapter allows for only a succinct overview of the New York Intellectuals, a great deal has been written on the collective and its origins, its membership, the changes it underwent, and its eventual decline. For more information, see Terry Cooney's *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: Partisan Review And Its Circle;* Joseph Dorman's *Arguing the World: The New York Intellectuals in Their Own Words;* Neil Jumonville's *Critical Crossings: The New York Intellectuals in Postwar America;* and Alan Wald's *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s.*

some of the most complex and controversial issues of the day (Silliman "The Failure of the New York Intellectuals"). They waged debates on communism and the viability of an anti-Stalinist left, opposed American entry into the war, fought for a democratic socialism, and spoke out against fascism, totalitarian forces, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Writing on contemporary issues of cultural importance, they took all of culture and society as their subject and engaged topics ranging from modernist literature and painting to issues of intellectual freedom and the dangers of absolutism. "As reviewers and critics, they were constantly evaluating and adjudicating ongoing cultural and political production; as intellectuals, they were involved in current issues and struggles, rather than detached and neutral scholarship" (Jumonville, Critical Crossings, 3).[49]

Though many academics considered their writings to be "unsound," the group developed (what many critics now endorse as) its own "style of brilliance," celebrating "the idea of the intellectual as the anti-specialist" and "the writer as roamer among theories" (Howe in Lopate 113) and became famous for what Howe describes as their "free-lance dash, peacock strut knockout synthesis" (The Ordering Mirror 113). Their essays, not bogged down by obfuscation or technical jargon, yet "composed with the care of the expert and the passion of the anti-specialist, […] moved easily between literary and political judgments before bringing them together in a larger moral conclusion," and

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[49] For comprehensive histories of the New York Intellectuals in the pre-World War II period, see: Alexander Bloom's *Prodigal Sons*; Terry Cooney's *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals*; Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left*; and John Patrick Diggins's *Up From Communism.*

"synthesized socialist politics and literary modernism" (Boynton 54). Demonstrating a

strong moral impulse, they "chose sides, sniffed out enemies, suggested future strategies,

and buried outdated beliefs and commitments; they quibbled over scriptures, whether

religious, political, or literary; broke from their intellectual parents and chastised their

cultural children; and fought and refought the last war" (Jumonville 4). In addition to

essay-writing, verbal discourse was a "staple of their intellectualism" and, like their

publications, was largely distinguished by its breadth and its attention to culture.

Promoting "an intellectual generalism that discouraged distinctions between literature

and politics, or art and social policy," they encouraged discussions that encompassed the

wider world and which aimed to balance social, political, cultural, literary, moral, and

economic considerations (Jumonville 9).

By the late 1930s and early 1940s, the New York Intellectuals' tradition of

cultural critique had widened in breadth, with writers contributing to publications like

Commentary,[50] *The Nation*, and *The New Republic*,[51] and its membership grew to include

such now-famous figures as Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, Clement Greenberg, Richard

Hofstadter, Paul Goodman, Harold Rosenberg, Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol, Nathan

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[50] *Commentary's* editorial staff included Elliot Cohen (the magazine's first editor), Clement Greenberg, Nathan Glazer, Robert Warshow, and Irving Kristol. Other contributors included Sidney Hook, Harold Rosenberg, Mary McCarthy, Paul Goodman, Alfred Kazin, Hannah Arendt, Sidney Hook, Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, Philip Rahv, Diana Trilling, and William Barrett. For more information, see Chapter 9 in Alexander Bloom's *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World.*

[51] From the mid-1930s to the 1980s, various members of the New York Intellectuals also wrote for, edited, and founded such journals as *Encounter, The New Leader, The Contemporary Jewish Record, The New Criterion, Politics, National Interest,* and *The Public Interest* (Jumonville 8).

Glazer, David Bazelon, Isaac Rosenfeld, Melvin Lasky, Lionel Abel, Delmore Schwartz, and Bernard Malamud. Carrying forth a tradition that resisted the narrowing specialization of disciplines, "they were reviewers, debaters, critics, interpreters, intellectual surgeons, [and] polemicists" who "increasingly set the agenda for contemporary intellectual discourse" (Jumonville 9). Like the Dreyfusard intellectuals, their aim was to serve the common good, and their actions designed to defend and advance the causes of freedom and justice. Like their French predecessors, they rejected anti-Semitism, advocated the use of logic and reason, sought the universal ideals of truth and justice, and felt a responsibility to defend and uphold free, unorthodox thought.

3.4 Post WWII Conservatism: Changing Valuations of Dissent & Institutions
        Despite the group's growing influence, however, the years following World War II became a turning point in its identity, as the polemic style for which it had become known began to greatly shift/took a decided shift. In contrast to the depravity-laden climate of the Depression Era, it was a time of upswings and growing optimism; the war had been won, the economy was on the rise, and by the late 1940s, many of the New York Intellectuals' "sharp criticism of American culture had given way to a mixture of optimism and pessimism" (Jumonville 10). While some were still concerned about the threat of totalitarianism, others began embracing America as the only defense against totalitarianism, and sharp conflicts "between their political hope for a socialist society and their commitment to the American ethos of acculturation and success" arose among members (Krupnick 188-89). Though the country was still plagued by a variety of social ills, such as rampant and overt racism and sexism, and widespread poverty, the group had

emerged from the position of outsiders to American culture, and in the postwar years some members experienced a "new identification with and support for America" (Jumonville 10) that forever changed (and, according to many accounts, ultimately ended) the tradition of the New York Intellectuals.

As distinct political and cultural disagreements emerged, individuals began moving in vastly different political directions in ways that unsettled and called into question the definition of an intellectual. Though some (like Lewis Coser, Irving Howe, Dwight Macdonald, and Harold Rosenberg) maintained the belief that intellectuals were, by definition, dissenters who need to be free from institutional attachments in order to confront dangerous political ideologies, more centrist members (like Seymour Martin Lipset and Sidney Hook) saw no advantage to occupying a space of perpetual opposition and began endorsing an occupational definition that stressed the intellectual's relationship to ideas. Though they still acknowledged the importance of questioning the status quo, they began to see "the intellectual's role as one of affirmation rather than dissent," describing intellectuals as "liberal cultural critics" (Jumonville 12) who "reshape the world through a skeptically minded affirmation of culture" (Jumonville 49).

Many found well-paying outlets in academia (Daniel Bell became a professor of social science at Harvard and a professor of sociology at Columbia; Irving Howe became a professor of literature at City University and at Stanford; Kazin taught at City College, Nathan Glazer taught at Harvard's Graduate School of Education; Harold Rosenberg and Saul Bellow joined the faculty at the University of Chicago; Lionel Trilling taught English at Columbia and Poetry at Harvard; C. Wright Mills taught sociology at

Columbia; and Irving Kristol became a professor at New York University), while others took government posts. Some began writing for the mass media (like Edmund Wilson, who became a writer for *The New Yorker* and Dwight Macdonald who took a position at *Time Magazine*), while others, like Irving Kristol, "progress[ed] all the way to the right, reconciling with capitalism and becoming neoconservatives" (Silliman "The Failure…").

Though, by the mid-1950s, most were employed at the institutions that William James and the Dreyfusards (and, indeed, they themselves) had so adamantly warned against, the once-marginal New York Intellectuals "had found a place at the very heart of the culture from which they had formerly felt so estranged" and they were enjoying the rewards of their newfound positions (Boynton 62). Boynton explains,

> After all, for all intents and purposes, they had won: their preferred
> modernist authors were fixtures in the canon, Stalinism was discredited,
> America was more internationalist, anti-Semitism had abated, and
> intellectuals were considered an important and distinct class. On a more
> personal level, they had successfully asserted their place as Americans; by
> mastering the American WASP literary and cultural canon, they had
> transformed it. […] In order to come to terms with their Jewishness, they
> had conquered the culture of gentile America; in order to reconcile
> themselves with their Americanness, they had rediscovered their Jewish
> origins. What emerged was a distinctive hybrid: an intellectual with a
> strong attachment to both his ethnic and his national roots. (Boynton 62)

Although they recognized the dangers of institutionalization (namely the threat it potentially posed to their intellectual freedom and the direction of their research), many found that they could maintain productive, intellectual lives within their places of employment and carry on their fight against society's corrupting influences. Irving Howe, for example, continued to rail against the stifling aspects of academia, even while teaching at City College and Stanford University, while others published their most important and influential works during their tenure (such as Trilling's *Liberal Imagination*, and Bell's *End of Ideology*). Maintaining varying degrees of the oppositional flare that formerly characterized their movement (with several still proudly wearing the radical badge, and others increasingly distancing themselves from all such monikers), the New York intellectuals were, by the 1960s, largely employed by universities— and entering into a period of civil unrest that would mark the end of their movement (Boynton 64).

3.5 1960s Student Protests: The New Left versus the Old Left
While the New York Intellectuals had suffered the economic depravity of the Depression Era and had fought against a multitude of threats and injustices, the 1960s marked a period of political, social, and cultural upheaval never before seen in the country, for although the postwar years marked an unprecedented period of American prosperity (that began in 1946 and would last until 1973), painful disparities and contradictions abound. Between 1950 and 1965, the average weekly income for workers in the manufacturing industry grew by 84%; yet, alongside rising affluence there existed crippling poverty, as members of Black communities were wholly disadvantaged—

economically, socially, and educationally— by the Jim Crow laws, and subject to

rampant racism and discrimination. Furthermore, despite the country's professed support

for democracy, its newfound economic status relied on its position as a global

superpower and its ability to overtake any threat to its position and, as a result, "the U.S.

ruthlessly attacked any challenge to the postwar political order— overthrowing

nationalist regimes in Guatemala and the Congo, waging a low-intensity against the

Cuban Revolution and spending great and great sums of money supporting its puppet

dictatorship in South Vietnam" (Bailey 1). Such attacks were launched against critics

both abroad and at home, for even the slightest criticism of or challenge to the existing

system was swiftly labeled Communist (Bailey 1).

In response to these contradictions and the country's growing climate of

conservatism and conformity, student activists across the country began waging a series

of confrontations that challenged and would ultimately forever change mainstream

culture in America. Rejecting the cultural standards of their parents, they began speaking

out against the arms race and America's involvement in warfare; questioning gender

roles, sexuality, and conventional ideas about the family; challenging institutions and

traditional modes of authority; and demonstrating that they would no longer tolerate

segregation in America. Building on the civil rights protests of the 1950s,[52] students—

Black and White, and from the North and South—waged an organized campaign against

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[52] Although Martin Luther King Jr. was writing letters to newspapers and other organizations in support of
civil rights in 1946, the first major protest for which he's credited with organizing took place in 1955.

Jim Crow segregation, launching boycotts, marches, sit-ins, and voter-registration drives, and forming groups (like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) to coordinate their activities.

Drawing inspiration from black radicals, the student protestors believed "that the evils to be corrected were deeply embedded in social institutions and that only direct confrontation could persuade Americans of the urgency of far-reaching change," and, in addition to fighting racism, organized mass demonstrations to confront a variety of institutions (Foner 1104). They trusted neither the government (home to dishonest politicians and corporate-serving lobbyists), nor the churches (which encouraged complacency, puritanical sexual mores, and repressive gender roles), nor the institution of marriage (which is incompatible with more expansive notions of the human potential to love and the purposes of sex), nor the schools (which had abandoned the noble mission of education to produce docile technicians and middle managers needed by the corporate order), nor the New York Intellectuals who now served as their professors and with whom they found themselves "engaged in face-to-face confrontations." As Jumonville explains,

> New York Intellectuals were not hidden in libraries nursing ideas; they
> were leading and visible members of faculty councils that legislated the
> outcome of the student rebellion. Often it was they who determined
> whether police force would be used, whether university policies would be
> altered, and what sort of radicalism would be tolerated in the centers of
> American cultural and professional training. (233)

Slated in that role, professors became opponents, for although the New York Intellectuals had emerged as an oppositional group (and indeed had fought for some of the very same causes), students largely saw them as part of the bourgeois establishment, members of what they called the "Old Left," who now belonged to a compromised and corporate academia.[53] The university, students argued, had abandoned its mission to "serve as a significant source of social criticism and an initiator of new modes and molders of attitudes," and instead had become a place in which "the student learns by his isolation to accept elite rule […] which prepares him to accept later forms of minority control."[54]

Rejecting this trend, as well as the intellectual and political categories that had shaped radicalism and liberalism throughout the twentieth century, the student protestors

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[53] According to some authors, occupying this position brought great internal strife for the more radical members of the New York Intellectuals. As Hilton Kramer describes, "Least of all, then, in the case of those writers for whom radical sentiment remained a badge of virtue even when they had abandoned radical politics, was it easy for the New York intellectuals themselves to accept this situation. While enthusiastically embracing the rewards which their new status brought them—professorships in the universities, staff jobs on *The New Yorker*, and the loving attention of the media—they were nonetheless haunted by the specter of the radical vocation and possessed by the rhetoric it had bequeathed to them. Which is why the political and cultural upheavals of the Sixties represented such a crisis for the New York intellectuals, and in fact marked the termination of their movement. Whether or not they still professed to be radicals or were openly opposed to the Left or were becalmed somewhere in between, the New York intellectuals belonged unmistakably to the bourgeois establishment as far as the new radicals of the Sixties were concerned." For more information, see "Writing the History of the New York intellectuals" in *The New Criterion.*

[54] This quote is taken from "The Port Huron Statement," a document written by the Students for a Democratic Society" (SDS). Although I will be discussing the SDS in further detail on the following pages, it's worth noting that this quote represents the group's more mild criticism of academia. Other charges they issue include, "But the actual intellectual effect of the college experience is hardly distinguishable from that of any other communications channel -- say, a television set -- passing on the stock truths of the day"; and: "The real campus, the familiar campus, is a place of private people, engaged in their notorious 'inner emigration.' It is a place of commitment to business-as-usual, getting ahead, playing it cool. It is a place of mass affirmation of the Twist, but mass reluctance toward the controversial public stance. Rules are accepted as 'inevitable', bureaucracy as 'just circumstances', irrelevance as 'scholarship', selflessness as 'martyrdom', politics as 'just another way to make people, and an unprofitable one, too.'"

challenged the very basis of/drew attention to the oversights of/deemed their intellectual tradition ill-equipped to deal with the problems of the day/ the Old Left's intellectual tradition. While the New York Intellectuals had railed against class-based oppression, the student protesters believed discussions of oppression had to include issues of gender, race, and sexual orientation; while the New York Intellectuals had envisioned the working class as the primary agent of social change, youth protestors promoted their own ability to impact society; instead of focusing on social citizenship, they spoke of the isolation, alienation, and powerlessness they felt in the face of bureaucratic institutions; instead of discussing the importance of economic equality, they expressed a "hunger for authenticity that affluence could not provide" (Foner 1054). Students were demanding a new intellectual tradition and seeking out texts that challenged the "climate of consensus of the 1950s" (Foner 1056). As Hayden describes it,

> The experience of middle-class alienation drew us to Mills' "White Collar," Albert Camus' "The Stranger," or Paul Goodman's "Growing Up Absurd." Our heady sense of the student movement was validated in Mills' "Letter to the New Left" or "Listen, Yankee!" The experience of confronting structural unemployment in the "other America" was illuminated by Michael Harrington and the tradition of Marxism. Liberation theology reinforced the concept of living among the poor. The reawakening of women's consciousness was hinted at in Doris Lessing's "The Golden Notebook" (which some of us read back to back with Clancy Sigal's "Going Away"), or Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex." (3)

Also influential was James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, which gave voice to the black

revolution, and Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which

criticized urban renewal and the removal of poor populations from city centers, and

instead promoted the importance of density, diversity, and multiculturality. However,

one the most influential critiques[55] was one the students wrote themselves, entitled, "The

Port Huron Statement."

3.6 The Students for a Democratic Society and "The Port Huron Statement"

Written by the members[56] of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)[57] (who

were based in Port Huron, Michigan,) The Port Huron Statement offered a vision for

social change that set the terms for the student rebellion (and became the manifesto for

the group that would become known as the New Left). While a considerable portion of

the text is devoted to criticizing institutions (including unions, political parties,

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[55] Tom Hayden writes, "According to Kirkpatrick Sale's [text] *SDS*, published in 1970 and still the most comprehensive history of the organization, the PHS 'may have been the most widely distributed document of the American left in the sixties,' with 60,000 copies printed and sold for 25 cents each between 1962 and 1966" ("Participatory Democracy: From Port Huron to Occupy Wall Street" 11).

[56] Although Tom Hayden is commonly credited with writing The Port Huron Statement, the statement's introductory note reads, "This document represents the results of several months of writing and discussion among the membership, a draft paper, and revision by the Students for a Democratic Society national convention meeting in Port Huron, Michigan, June 11-15, 1962. It is represented as a document with which SDS officially identifies, but also as a living document open to change with our times and experiences. It is a beginning: in our own debate and education, in our dialogue with society."

[57] According to Thomas Hayden, "SDS was the fragile brainchild of Alan Haber, an Ann Arbor graduate student whose father was a labor official during the last progressive American administration, that of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Al was a living link with the fading legacy of the radical left movements that had built the labor movement and the New Deal. Al sensed a new spirit among students in 1960, and recruited me to become a 'field secretary,' which meant moving to Atlanta with my wife, Casey, who had been a leader of the campus sit-ins in Austin, Texas" ("Tom Hayden's New Port Huron Statement" 2).

corporations, and the military-industrial complex) the document proposed an entire

"agenda for a generation" and "managed to fuse two types of ideological advocacy that

are often viewed as antagonists: first, the romantic desire for achieving an authentic self

through crusading for individual rights and, second, the yearning for a democratic

socialist order that would favor the collective good over freedom of the self" (Kazin "The

Port Huron Statement at 50" 83-84). Written "in varieties of prose not commonly

featured in one document,"[58] the Statement offers a pointed overview of the grim realities

of the nuclear age and the problems the SDS saw as both punctuating and destroying

people's lives:

> With nuclear energy whole cities can easily be powered, yet the dominant
>
> nationstates [sic] seem more likely to unleash destruction greater than that
>
> incurred in all wars of human history. Although our own technology is
>
> destroying old and creating new forms of social organization, men [sic]
>
> still tolerate meaningless work and idleness. While two-thirds of mankind
>
> [sic]suffers undernourishment, our own upper classes revel amidst
>
> superfluous abundance. Although world population is expected to double
>
> in forty years, the nations still tolerate anarchy as a major principle of
>
> international conduct and uncontrolled exploitation governs the sapping

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[58] Michael Kazin writes, "In addition, the statement combined varieties of prose not commonly featured in one document: existential longings inspired by Albert Camus, a quote from an encyclical by Pope John XXIII, urgent descriptions of the most serious issues facing humankind (then known as 'mankind'), and far-reaching proposals for how to go about the prodigious task of democratizing the nation and the world" (83). See Kazin's "The Port Huron Statement at Fifty" in the Spring 2012 issue of *Dissent*.

of the earth's physical resources. Although mankind [sic] desperately

needs revolutionary leadership, America rests in national stalemate, its

goals ambiguous and tradition-bound instead of informed and clear, its

democratic system apathetic   and manipulated rather than "of, by, and for

the people." (1)

Yet despite its sobering start,[59] the document moves quickly from a tone of dismal

realism to one of proactive hopefulness and (directly inspired by the black freedom

movement) [60] proposes "participatory democracy"[61] serve as the basis for solution-

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[59] The cited paragraph is the fifth paragraph of the Statement and appears on page 1. The preceding paragraphs similarly describe the ways in which they "began to see complicated and disturbing paradoxes in our surrounding America" (1).

[60] As Thomas Hayden, a leading member of the SDS explains, "We were all influenced by Ella Baker, an elder advisor to SNCC with a long experience of NAACP organizing in the South. Ms. Baker, as everyone referred to her, was critical of the top-down methods of black preachers and organizations, including her friend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She argued that SNCC should remain autonomous and not become a youth branch of the older organizations. She spoke of and personified participatory democracy. SNCC played a direct role in shaping my values, as it did with many SDS founders. SNCC's early organizing method was based on listening to people and taking action on behalf of their demands. Listening and speaking in clear vernacular English was crucial. Books were treasured, but where you stood, with whom and against what risks was even more important, because if the people you were organizing couldn't understand your theories, you had to adjust. This led to a language and a form of thinking cleansed of ideological infection, with an emphasis what people were trying to say what people were already thinking but hadn't put into words" ("Participatory Democracy: From Port Huron to Occupy Wall Street" 12).

[61] The notion of participatory democracy has a rich heritage; as Hayden explains, the concept "arose among the tumultuous rebels of western Massachusetts who drove out the British and established self-governing committees in the prelude to the American Revolution. It was common practice among the Society of Friends and in New England's town meetings. It appeared in Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man" in passages exalting 'the mass of sense lying in a dormant state' in oppressed humanity, which could be awakened and 'excited to action' through revolution. It was extolled (if not always implemented) by Jefferson, who wrote that every person should feel himself or herself to be a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day.' Perhaps the most compelling advocate of participatory democracy, however, was Henry David Thoreau, the 19th-century author of "Civil Disobedience," who opposed taxation for either slavery or war, and who called on Americans to vote 'not with a mere strip of paper but with your whole life.' Thoreau's words were often repeated in the early days of the '60s civil rights and antiwar movements. This heritage of participatory democracy also was transmitted to SDS

building. Arguing that "politics has the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community, thus being a necessary, though not sufficient, means of finding meaning in personal life," (4) the SDS deemed it crucial that each individual "share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his [sic] life" and "that society be organized to encourage independence in men [sic] and provide the media for their common participation" (3). Opposing bureaucratic, formally representative, and suppressive institutions, as well as the elitist mindset that government experts should establish national priorities on behalf of the people, the Statement not only advocated participatory democracy,[62] but suggested it be the standard by which existing social

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through the works of the revered philosopher John Dewey, who was a leader of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), the parent organization of SDS, from 1939 to the early '50s. Dewey believed that 'democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint community experience.' It meant participation in all social institutions, not simply going through the motions of elections, and, notably, 'the participation of every mature human being in the formation of the values that regulate the living of men [sic] together.'" (Thomas Hayden's New Port Huron Statement 3).

[62] Several authors have argued that the SDS failed to fully define the term "participatory democracy." As Michael Kazin, citing Jim Miller, writes, "'p.d.' was, at its creation, a profoundly ambiguous idea that did not become any more coherent over time. 'It pointed toward daring personal experiments and modest social reforms. It implied a political revolution' but with a patriotic ring, evoking New England town meetings where neighbors debated and made the key decisions that affected their communities" ("The Port Huron Statement at Fifty" 86). In 2012, Thomas Hayden addressed the charge of ambiguity, explaining, "Obviously the concept [of participatory democracy] arose from our common desire to participate in making our own destiny, and in response to the severe limitations of an undemocratic system that we saw as representing an oligarchy. At its most basic, it meant the right to vote, as Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "not with a mere strip of paper but with one's whole life." It meant simplicity in registration and voting, unfettered from the dominance of wealth, property requirements, literacy tests and poll taxes. It meant exercising the right to popular initiatives, referendums and recalls, as achieved by Progressives in the early twentieth century. And it meant widening participation to include the economic sphere (workplace democracy and consumer watchdogs), neighborhood assemblies and family life itself, where women and children were subordinates. It meant a greater role for citizens in the ultimate questions of war and peace, then considered the secret realm of experts. Participatory democracy was a psychologically liberating antidote to the paralysis of the apathetic "lonely crowd" depicted by David Riesman et al. in the 1950 sociological study by that title. The kind of democracy we were proposing was more than a blueprint for structural rearrangements. It was a way of empowering the individual as autonomous but interdependent

arrangements (such as workplaces, schools, and governments) be judged. Inspiring many

social movements of the decade, it offered both a critique of institutions that failed to live

up to these standards, as well as concrete approaches and alternatives for tackling many

of society's ills, and issued a formal call for the formation of "a new left."

Arguing that "Any new left in America must be, in large measure, a left with real

intellectual skills, committed to deliberativeness, honesty, reflection as working tools," it

cites knowledge and critical thinking as the crucial basis of the movement and thusly

declares the university the movement's logical locus. Academia, it explains, makes great

sense for several reasons, for it is an "overlooked seat of influence" that bears enormous

potential:

> First, the university is located in a permanent position of social influence.
>
> Its educational function makes it indispensable and automatically makes it
>
> a crucial institution in the formation of social attitudes. Second, in an
>
> unbelievably complicated world, it is the central institution for organizing,
>
> evaluating and transmitting knowledge. Third, the extent to which
>
> academic resources presently are used to buttress immoral social practice
>
> is revealed, first, by the extent to which defense contracts make the
>
> universities engineers of the arms race. Too, the use of modern social
>
> science as a manipulative tool reveals itself in the "human relations"

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with other individuals, and the community as a civic society. Without this empowerment on both levels,
the PHS warned, we were living in "a democracy without publics," in the phrase of C. Wright Mills, the
rebel sociologist who was one of our intellectual heroes" (14).

consultants to the modern corporations, who introduce trivial sops to give

laborers feelings of "participation" or "belonging," while actually

deluding them in order to further exploit their labor. And, of course, the

use of motivational research is already infamous as a manipulative aspect

of American politics. But these social uses of the universities' resources

also demonstrate the unchangeable reliance by men of power on the men

and storehouses of knowledge: this makes the university functionally tied

to society in new ways, revealing new potentialities, new levers for

change. Fourth, the university is the only mainstream institution that is

open to participation by individuals of nearly any viewpoint. (7)

In addition to their social relevance and the knowledge they made accessible, universities

also offered the geographic dispersion crucial to the formation of a new movement, and a

large student body of potential participants. The SDS believed passionately in the radical

potential of young citizens, and asserted, "A new left must consist of younger people who

matured in the postwar world, and partially be directed to the recruitment of younger

people" (7). It also stressed the importance of dissent, arguing "a new left must start

controversy across the land," and "the ideal university is a community of controversy,

within itself and in its effects on communities beyond" (7). Tackling diverse issues like

economic planning, party realignment, the mobilization of disenfranchised voters, and the

need for a revitalized labor movement, the Statement— and the New Left that embraced

it— embodied a persistent challenge to top-down institutions and promoted a vision that

was "far more populist, more middle class, more quality-of-life in orientation than the customary platforms of the left" ("Tom Hayden's New Port Huron Statement 5).

Unlike the Old Left, the New Left suggested their "own government was partly to blame for the cold war, and by denying that the Soviet Union sought to take over the world by force" waged a campaign for phased nuclear disarmament whose demands were seemingly heard when, in October of 1963, President Kennedy initiated and signed a partial nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union. ("Participatory Democracy: From PH to OWS" 18). Yet despite the increasing success of their efforts and that "The Port Huron vision of winning seemed entirely possible to those who debated the strategy and set forth earnestly to carry it out," three obstacles would prevent the New Left from "bringing a new governing majority to power" ("Tom Hayden's New Port Huron Statement " 17).

3.7 The Rise of the Power Elite and the Demise of the SDS
However, just as "an idealistic social movement was exploding, winning attention from a new administration, […] murder derailed the new national direction" when on November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Describing it as "the first of several catastrophic murders that changed all of our lives, and the trajectory of events imagined at Port Huron," Hayden writes:

> Just as we hoped, the March on Washington made race and poverty the
> central moral issues facing the country and the peace movement would
> hear a president pledging to end the Cold War—and then a murder
> derailed the new national direction. I was about to turn 24 when Kennedy

70

was killed. The experience will forever shadow the meaning of the '60s. The very concept of a presidential assassination was completely outside my youthful expectations for the future. No matter what history may reveal about the murder, the feeling was chillingly inescapable that the sequence of the president's actions on the Cold War and racism led shortly to his death. The subsequent assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert Kennedy in 1968 permanently derailed what remained of the hopes that were born at Port Huron. Whether one thinks the murders were conspiracies or isolated accidents, the effect was to destroy the progressive political potential of the '60s and leave us all as "might-have-beens," in the phrase of the late Jack Newfield. (Tom Hayden's New Port Huron Statement 5)

Following the loss of several "central figures in the transformation we hoped to see," the SDS and the New Left faced its second major obstacle in 1965, when the US initiated aerial bombings in Vietnam and began a war that would put 500,000 American troops in combat (Hayden "Participatory Democracy: From Port Huron to OWS" 17). Diverting public attention from the "budding War on Poverty," the Vietnam War deflected America's priorities away from class and racial tensions, "plunging our young movement into five years of draft and war resistance, and provoking an escalated militancy against the warmakers [sic]" (Hayden "PD: From PH to OWS" 17). "Opposing the war in Vietnam consumed most SDS activists" and, building on ideas from their experiences in the civil rights movement, they organized some of the largest anti-war demonstrations of

the decade (Tom Hayden's NPHS 6).[63] Between 1964 and 1966, the SDS's membership grew from 2,500 members to 25,000, with new chapters emerging on campuses across the country. Yet despite their growing numbers and the increasing organization of their anti-Vietnam efforts, "it was too late to stop the machine" (Tom Hayden's NPHS 6), for the "third obstacle to the PHS dream […] was the system itself,"— the intersecting hierarchies of political, economic, and military organizations that control the country's principal institutions and fashion the nation's agenda (Participatory Democracy: From PH to OWS 17).

Occupying an "unprecedentedly powerful" position, "the power elite," as C. Wright Mills referred to them, held a position of supremacy that made deep paranoia among citizens seem far less irrational, for in response to the mass uprisings, key members of "the system" waged a disruptive, invasive, and violent backlash (Mills 297). Between 1965 and 1975, under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI "mounted the largest known program yet in domestic surveillance" and opened more than 500,000 intelligence files on more than one million Americans; throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the Pentagon "ran a far-reaching domestic spying program that, at its height, fielded over 1500 plainclothes agents from 350 offices to spy on anti-war and civil rights groups"; the CIA, until 1974, conducted "a widespread, illegal spying operation," cross-

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[63] In April 1965, the SDS organized the first national demonstration against the war in Vietnam. Although they expected a few thousand people to attend, an estimated 20,000 people, the majority of whom were college students, participated in the protest (Bailey "The rise and fall of SDS" 3).

indexing within agency files the names of 300,000 U.S. citizens, and placing "thousands

of Americans "on 'watch lists' to have their mail opened and telegrams read" (Kaplan).

Perhaps more alarming, however, were the activities of COINTELPRO (the

acronym for a series of covert and oftentimes illegal FBI action programs aimed at

surveying, discrediting, and infiltrating domestic political groups) and its growing list of

targets. Although the program had been launched in 1956 to disrupt Communist Party

U.S.A., and had used tactics like IRS audits and anonymous phone calls aimed at winning

defections, the program's scope by the 1960s had widened and its tactics had intensified.

Targeting domestic groups like the Socialist Workers Party,[64] the PTA, the New Left, the

SDS,[65] and the Black Panther Party,[66] agents of COINTELPRO began harassing groups,

organizing smear campaigns, issuing illegal wiretaps, burglarizing office files, stealing

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[64] According to Richard Criley of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, who was also a victim of government surveillance abuse, "In the City of Chicago alone, from 1966 to 1976, the FBI employed (at a cost of $2.5 million) over 5,000 secret undercover informers to operate within civic and political organizations which were violating no laws. For 16 years (1960 to 1977), the FBI employed 1,600 informers to infiltrate one small political group, the Socialist Workers Party (at an estimated cost of $26 million). Such was the national pattern." See Criley's "The Bill of Rights: Can We Take Freedom for Granted?"

[65] As Goldstein describes it, "Chicago police and firemen appeared at the [SDS national headquarters, 1608 W. Madison], in response, they declared, to reports of a shooting and a fire in the office. When SDS [National Secretary Mike Klonsky] told them there was no shooting or fire, an agreement was reached to the effect that the fire chief alone could inspect the premises. However, a group of firemen attempted to enter the office, and when SDS staff members resisted, police joined the fray. Five SDS staffers were arrested and held on $1,000 bail on charges of 'battery on an officer,' 'interfering with a fireman,' and 'inciting mob action'" (Goldstein "Political Repression in Modern America" 517).

[66] According to "The COINTELPRO Papers," "On December 4th, 1969, the Chicago Police Department and FBI raided an apartment unit in which Black Panther Party members were living. At 4:45 am, a heavily armed police forcibly entered the apartment, killing Panther member Mark Clark immediately. Clark fired his shotgun once, making it the only shot fired by the Panthers that day, while the police and FBI fired more than 98 rounds. All Black Panther Party survivors were reportedly beaten while handcuffed, charged with "aggressive assault" and "attempted murder," and held on $100,000 bond each (The COINTELPRO Papers 140).

bank records, opening mail, wrongfully imprisoning law-abiding citizens, and using

violence against them. As Hayden describes it,

> Scores of young people were killed or wounded, well beyond the widely
>
> remembered shootings at Kent State and Black Panther offices. One
>
> victim of an assassination attempt in 1969 was Richard Flacks, a key
>
> participant at Port Huron. He was targeted politically by Hoover and the
>
> Chicago police "red squad" before being attacked in his office with a claw
>
> hammer by someone who was never apprehended. SDS was banned on
>
> many campuses. Police or troops occupied at least 127 campuses, and
>
> 1,000 students were expelled in the spring of 1968[67] (which, as
>
> Kirkpatrick Sale notes, made them instantly draftable). ("Participatory
>
> Democracy: From PH to OWS" 20)

The program's militancy further intensified in 1968, when Hoover issued new directives

for COINTELPRO, instructing FBI agents to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or

otherwise neutralize" protest leaders, with an emphasis on "black nationalist" leaders.

Just one month later, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.[68]

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[67] According to the ACLU, in May of 1970, an FBI agent "committed arson and other violence that police used as a reason for declaring the University students were unlawfully assembled" and for arresting 150 students (Chomsky "Domestic Terrorism: Notes on the State System of Oppression").

[68] In its second stated goal, the COINTELPRO document explicitly names Martin Luther King and cites the need to prevent his rise to the status of a messiah. It reads: "2. Prevent the RISE OF A 'MESSIAH' who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement. Malcolm X might have been such a 'messiah;' he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael and Elijah Muhammed all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammed is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed 'obedience' to 'white, liberal

In the days that followed, riots broke out in 100 cities across the country. In April

and early May (of 1968), students and faculty at Columbia University went on strike for

six weeks. As the war in Vietnam escalated and it became clear to even the most

adamant war supporters that the U.S. could not win, Johnson's approval rating plummeted

to less than 35 percent, prompting a loose coalition of activists, including members of

SDS, to call for a national protest at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Although organizers predicted 100,000 people would attend, fewer than 10,000

participated, marking a definitive lull in what had formerly been an impassioned anti-war

movement. Lacking strength in numbers and facing aggressive police forces, the

protestors faced "three nights of police violence, in which demonstrators, reporters, and

bystanders were beaten indiscriminately" (Bailey).

In response to the violent repercussions they faced, the SDS began to break into

revolutionary factions, with members rejecting the PHS as "too reformist" and "in search

of an ideology that only Marxism seemed to offer" ("Participatory Democracy: From PH

to OWS" 20). Some joined the Progressive Labor Party, "a tightly disciplined, highly

secretive organization dedicated to recruiting SDS members in support of a communist

revolution" while others joined the Weathermen (later known as the Weather

Underground), a group of communist revolutionaries whose goal was to create a

clandestine revolutionary party for the overthrow of the US government ("Participatory

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doctrines' (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. Carmichael has the necessary charisma to be a
real threat in this way."

Democracy: From PH to OWS" 20). Having abandoned the Port Huron vision and

strategy, the group became more radical and less intelligible, demonstrating a

"heightened militancy [that] became disconnected from a comprehensible narrative that

the wider public might have understood" ("Participatory Democracy: From PH to OWS"

20). With its resources divided, "factional wrangling killed SDS" at its national

convention in 1969.

Despite its demise, however, it's important to note that the SDS and the New Left

won many of the major reforms they demanded, including the aforementioned 1963

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the passage of the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Water Quality Act of 1965, and

the Freedom of Information Act in 1966. In 1967, an Environmental Defense Fund was

established to preserve natural systems, and in 1968, Nixon promised to end the draft

(although it would continue until 1973). As Hayden writes, "never in US history had so

many changes occurred in so short a time, all driven by the vibrancy of participatory

democracy." Furthermore, although the SDS dissolved, the vibrancy of citizens' political

engagement did not, as "the greatest outpouring of youth, student, GI, liberal, feminist

and environmentalist sentiment—of perhaps any previous era in American history—

occurred after SDS had closed its doors" (Participatory Democracy: From PH to OWS"

20). Such efforts included the 1969 Moratorium against the war and the organization of

(what was at that time) the largest peace march in American history; the May, 1970,

student demonstrations against the invasion of Cambodia, in which 4.3 million took part;

and Earth Day in 1970, which drew the support of 20 million people (CITATION).

Despite the death of the New Left movement, however, many remained committed to its causes, and began working within the system in pursuit of its objectives. Attempting to change society by infiltrating its major institutions, members took positions in schools, the media, the entertainment industry, labor unions, and the government, and sought to implement policies from institutionalized positions of power. Most notably, a number of New Leftists turned their energy and attention to electoral politics, and not only joined the Democratic Party, but secured powerful positions within it. Hayden, for one, went on to serve "18 years in California Legislature, chairing policy committees on labor, higher education, and the environment." As he explains it,

> This was not so much a 'zigzag' as an effort to act as an outsider on the
> inside. It was consistent with the original vision of Port Huron, but played
> itself out during a time of movement, decline, or exhaustion. The lessons
> for me were contradictory. On the one hand, there was much greater
> space to serve movement goals on the inside than I had imagined in 1962;
> one could hold press conferences, hire activist staff, call watchdog
> hearings with subpoena power, and occasionally pass far-reaching
> legislation (divestment from South Africa, anti-sweatshop guidelines,
> endangered-species laws, billions for conservation, etc.). Perhaps the
> most potent opportunities were insurgent political campaigns themselves,
> raising new issues in the public arena and politicizing thousands of new
> activists in each cycle. ("Tom Hayden's New Port Huron Statement" 7)

While many other former New Leftists followed in Hayden's Democratic Party footsteps, throughout the 1970s some began identifying as Republicans, and adopted neoconservative views on foreign and domestic policy (Jumonville 233). Thus, just as the New York intellectuals in the post-war era became institutionalized, pledged new allegiances, and lost a coherent identify, so too did the New Leftists. Passionately devoted to a wide range of causes, each served as the opinion-shapers of a growing educated class and fought for change— first as outsiders, and later as insiders— with some remaining loyal to advancing their causes (and attempting to use their institutional posts to those ends), and others joining the opposition.

3.8 1980s Memoirs, Declinist Accounts, & Anti-Intellectualism

The 1970s was also the decade during which several members of the first generation of New York Intellectuals died, prompting a number of New York Intellectuals to pen their own memoirs, [69] and sparking discussions among critics about the supposed end of America's greatest intellectual era. Following Philip Rahv's death in 1973 and Lionel Trilling's in 1975, several members published memorial essays expressing nostalgia for the early days of *Partisan Review*, when the country's problems were clear and young intellectuals were passionately poised to fight them. Following Harold Rosenberg's death in 1978 and Dwight MacDonald's in 1982, scores of such essays appeared, with the majority recounting the New York Intellectuals' early years

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[69] Those who wrote memories include Alfred Kazin, Norman Podhoretz, Irving Howe, William Barrett, William Philips, Lionel Abel, Sidney Hook, and Mary McCarthy.

and the vital issues they valiantly confronted. By 1985, a number of prominent members

had published memoirs (such as Lionel Abel's "The Intellectual Follies," William

Phillips's "A Partisan View," Irving Howe's "A Margin of Hope," William Barrett's

"The Truants," and Sidney Hook's "Out of Step: A Life in the Twentieth Century"), with

each contributing to the conception that America had lost its critical edge and its once-

vibrant public sphere. Although some critics deemed the New Left (and

neoconservatives) the political heirs of the New York Intellectuals, others argued that the

great Greenwich Village thinkers had no true line of successors.

Throughout the 1980s, this sentiment grew[70] and was perhaps most notably

cemented in 1989, when Russell Jacoby solemnly pronounced the end of the country's

great intellectual tradition in "The Last Intellectuals."   Arguing that gentrification,

suburbanization, and academic careerism had encouraged young intellectuals to retreat

into specialized environments[71] and to lose contact with the public realm,[72] Jacoby

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[70] Some argue that declinist accounts were largely inspired by the publication of Richard Hofstadter's Anti-Intellectualism in American Life in 1963, in which he argues that religion, commerce, and democracy each played a distinct role in the deterioration of public intellectual life. According to Hofstadter, American Protestantism had subordinated "men of ideas to men of emotional power or manipulative skill" (55); American commerce and business culture had criticized abstract analysis in favor of practical knowledge (233); and American democracy had produced an under-funded and sexist public education system that nurtured mediocrity, rather than cultivating and challenging brilliant minds (299-322). As a result, the options for intellectuals were bleak: they could exist as mere experts, embedded within and compromised by the institutions they served, or stand apart as critics, alienated from and misunderstood by society.

[71] While Jacoby argues that today's institutions are largely incapable of producing or sustaining public intellectuals, individuals like Noam Chomsky, Nathan Glazer, bell hooks, Lewis Cosner, Garry Wills, Michael Walzer, Susan Sontag, Alan Brinkley, Sidney Hook, Cornel West, Stephen Carter, Hannah Arendt, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.— that is, individuals who are institutionalized and largely recognized as public intellectuals— may disagree.

ominously declared, "An older generation of intellectuals is passing on, and a new one is not showing up" (Intellectuals and their Discontents 44).

However, as Bruce Robbins has pointed out, this "myth of general decline […] is really a defense of a very particular group— in this case, white, male, native-born intellectuals who once had something of a monopoly of American 'public' discourse," but who lost this monopoly in "the 60s, when the universities in fact became more 'public' by letting some new people in" ("Intellectuals in Decline?" 258). That is, while the New York Intellectuals are recognized for having cultivated and sustained a rich critical tradition, they were not the country's only (or necessarily its greatest) [leftist] cultural critics. For example, during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, critics like Sterling Brown, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Jean Toomer, and W. E. B. Du Bois were challenging orthodoxies, speaking out against inequality, writing Marxist critiques, and promoting a radical restructuring of American society; not to mention the many women who have impacted intellectual life, but who've been largely omitted from textual accounts— women like Alice Walker, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Germaine Greer, Ruth Benedict, Carolyn

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[72] In his 2000 article, "Intellectuals and Their Discontents," Jacoby declares, "An older generation of intellectuals is passing on, and a new one is not showing up." More specifically, he claims that, unlike the previous generation of intellectuals who "could be read, and were read, by educated readers, the most recent intellectuals cannot be- nor do they direct themselves to a public audience," for by succumbing to specialization and professionalization, they have lost the independence and public role that defined them (44). It is worth noting, however, that while Jacoby argues for comprehensive prose, he does not describe or discuss the type of intellectual engagement one should have with the public, or the role such a person should fulfill. While he chastises young intellectuals for not participating in public life, he fails to consider the ways in which participation is changing. In short, Jacoby's perspective is informed by antiquated understandings of intellectual life that cause him to overlook new and/or different modes of intellectual engagement.

Heilbrun, Linda Greenhouse, Mary Lefkowitz, Gloria Steinem, bell hooks, Kate Millett, Lillian Hellman, Jessica Mitford, Betty Friedan, Naomi Wolf, Susan Faludi, Deborah Tannen, and Natalie Angier (among others). The point here is not to belabor the elision of minorities from intellectual histories, but to understand that, in the last quarter of the 20th Century, particular conceptions of America's intellectual lineage were contested, debated, and popularized.

The 1980s was also the decade in which Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency, yielding "a resurgence of anti-intellectualism" that "inundated the country." As Henry Giroux describes it,

> Anxiously insistent triumphalism was in – coupled with a growing mood of conformity. The new orthodoxy wrapped itself in the cult of individualism and personal responsibility – freeing its advocates from any sense of social obligation and engagement with larger social forces that animated the political movements of the 1960s. As Noam Chomsky pointed out, at the heart of Reagan's uplifting call to remake America was a market-driven ideology designed "to ensure that isolated individuals face concentrated state and private power alone, without the support of an organizational structure that can assist them in thinking for themselves or entering into meaningful political action and with few avenues for public expression of fact or analysis that might challenge approved doctrine."
> […] Against Reagan's carefully crafted persona of strong masculinity, decisiveness and middle brow wit culled from his early Hollywood days,

intellectuals were cast in the role of radical, if not communist, subversives,

or dithering eggheads incapable of effective action. The notion that

important social problems required a more complex language or careful

analytic accounting in order to render them with precision and

accessibility was dismissed as a plunge into unintelligibility. Questioning

authority was now a symptom, a bad hangover from the alleged anti-

Americanism of the 1960s, and the long period of dissent and opposition

that had marked the period was viewed by many politicians and

conservatives as a disease eating away at the body politic. ("On Pop

Clarity: Public Intellectuals and the Crisis of Language" 2)

As a result, public spheres were increasingly commercialized, commodified, and erased,

and critical civil discourse was replaced with attacks on critical thought. Equally

problematic, the mainstream media, engaged in what Chomsky describes as

"manufacturing consent," became "an echo chamber for corporate values," dominated by

conservative talking heads intent on "denigrating all things public" (Giroux "On Pop

Clarify" 3). Devoted to "producing spectacles of violence, and pushing a celebrity

culture" the media became hostile to engaged criticism (Giroux 8), instead serving as

sites for what Bourdieu described as "fast thinkers" who offer "cultural fast food"—

empty, sanitized sound bites— instead of posing meaningful arguments and thoughtful

inquiries (Bourdieu "On Television" 11).

This retreat from democratic values, evidenced in the mainstream media, also

infiltrated college campuses, as academic institutions became research-driven

powerhouses funded by non-academic sources. This outside-funding created competition between disciplines and formed new disciplinary hierarchies, as faculty members engaged in research were granted new respect inside and outside of the academy. By the end of the 20th century, research-oriented professors were paid more than those who only taught in the classroom (Nikias and Tierney 1), yielding not only a different kind of research, but also "a different kind of engagement" (Fleck et. al 6). With the private appropriation of knowledge— wherein private interests increasingly set the agendas, controlled the research process, and decided what to do with the intellectual products— intellectual endeavors became embedded within a system of professionalized incentives, by which professors were "either marginalized or functionally incorporated into the management culture of expertise" (Warner 147).

Chapter 4- The Rise of the Internet and New Possibilities

4.1 The Mass Digitization of the 1990s & Internet Debates

The 1980s and 1990s were also the first decades of mass digitization, when computing and communications took on new functions, roles, and value. As an increasing number of products and services became encoded in cyberspace, various forms of popular analogue media, such as audio and video cassette tapes, were increasingly being replaced by superior digital substitutes, like compact disks and DVDS. Personal computers were mainstream home and office appliances, and by the mid-90s, millions of individuals and organizations had become everyday Internet users.

Though many critics analyzed this digital revolution, the hopes and fears it inspired are well-summarized (respectively) in Nicholas Negroponte's 1995 book, "Being Digital," and Neil Postman's 1992 polemic, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Describing information as "a form of garbage" that Americans endlessly consume,[73] Postman argued information was "not only incapable of answering the most

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[73] Describing the information overload that, Postman argues, characterizes American culture, he writes, "In the United States, we have 260,000 billboards; 11,250 newspapers; 11,556 periodicals; 27,000 video outlets for renting video tapes; more than 500 million radios; and more than 100 million computers. Ninety-eight percent of American homes have a television set; more than half our homes have more than one. There are 40,000 new book titles published every year (300,000 worldwide), and every day in America 41 million photographs are taken. And if this is not enough, more than 60 billion pieces of junk mail (thanks to computer technology) find their way into our mail-boxes every year. From millions of sources all over the globe, through every possible channel and medium — light waves, airwaves, ticker tapes, computer banks, telephone wires, television cables, satellites, printing presses — information pours in. Behind it, in every

fundamental human questions but barely useful in providing coherent direction to the solution of even mundane problems" (69-70). If left unchecked, he warned, America's new technopoly would ruin "the vital sources of our humanity" and produce a "culture without a moral foundation" (52). Negroponte, on the other hand, was aware that digital technology posed potential dangers,[74] but also believed it could free society from many of its traditional ills. Describing this transformation, he writes, "While the politicians struggle with the baggage of history, a new generation is emerging from the digital landscape free of many of the old prejudices. These kids are released from the limitation of geographic proximity as the sole basis of friendship, collaboration, play, and neighborhood." In this regard, digital technology can function as "a natural force drawing people into greater world harmony" (229-230). For Negroponte, it is the Internet's "decentralizing, globalizing, harmonizing, and empowering" qualities that warrant optimism.[75] He explains,

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imaginable form of storage — on paper, on video and audio tape, on discs, film, and silicon chips — is an ever greater volume of information waiting to be retrieved. Like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, we are awash in information. And all the sorcerer has left us is a broom" (70).

[74] Acknowledging the possible drawback and negative societal transformations that cyberspace could prompt, Negroponte concedes, "The next decade will see cases of intellectual-property abuse and invasion of our privacy. We will experience digital vandalism, software piracy, and data thievery. Worst of all, we will witness the loss of many jobs to wholly automated systems, which will soon change the white-collar workplace to the same degree that it has already transformed the factory floor. The notion of lifetime employment at one job has already started to disappear."

[75] Describing the basis for his optimism, Negroponte writes, "My optimism is not fueled by an anticipated invention or discovery. Finding a cure for cancer and AIDS, finding an acceptable way to control population, or inventing a machine that can breathe our air and drink our oceans and excrete unpolluted forms of each are dreams that may or may not come about. Being digital is different. We are not waiting on any invention. It is here. It is now. It is almost genetic in its nature, in that each generation will become

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The access, the mobility, and the ability to effect change are what will

make the future so different from the present. The information

superhighway may be mostly hype today, but it is an understatement about

tomorrow. It will exist beyond people's wildest predictions. As children

appropriate a global information resource, and as they discover that only

adults need learner's permits, we are bound to find new hope and dignity

in places where very little existed before. (231)

Focused on "the empowering nature of being digital," Negroponte celebrated the ways in

which the Internet has produced "a previously missing common language," and its ability

to facilitate the expression of diverse views necessary to democratic deliberation.

4.2 The 21st Century Emergence of New Media and Digital Public Spheres
      In the decade that followed, debates about the risks and opportunities of the

digital revolution intensified for, while the 80s and 90s had brought mass digitization, by

which countless media, products, and services were transferred into an electronic, binary

format, the 2000s brought what some refer to as "atomization," wherein computing on a

variety of devices became ubiquitous. Although in the 80s and 90s, it was possible to

access and digitize text, music, and video, it required the use of a desktop or laptop

computer; by the 21st Century, this was no longer the case. While personal computers

remain in mass use, equally prevalent are portable audio and video media players, mobile

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more digital than the preceding one. The control bits of that digital future are more than ever before in the
hands of the young. Nothing could make me happier" (230).

PCs, media tablets, smart phones with Internet access, and personal digital assistants.

With the proliferation of portable digital interfaces, digital access has become constantly

and immediately available, yielding major changes in the key relationships that impact

individuals' lives— relationships between users and technology, between customers and

corporations, between citizens and the state, between employers and employees and

human relationships of all kinds.

Despite such changes, however, in the contemporary neoliberal order—

characterized by corporate domination, the concentration of media ownership, the

privatization of social problems, and the undermining of social solidarity— many critics

have remained skeptical of the impact of new media on intellectual life in America.

Indeed, discussions of a bygone era of great intellectualism continued on into the first

decade of the 21st Century, in texts like Richard Posner's *Public Intellectuals: A Study of

Decline* published in 2002; Frank Furedi's *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?* in

2004; Eric Lott's *The Disappearing Intellectual*; and Amitai Etzioni and Alyssa

Bowditch's *Public Intellectuals: An Endangered Species?* in 2006. Revisiting the topic

in 2008, Jacoby remained dubious that digital access offers new possibilities for

participatory democracy. Asserting that digital access has not necessarily changed the

quality or content of discussions, he contends that new modes of publishing such as

"blogs are not so much about challenging an authoritarian state as about adding to the

cacophony" ("Big Brains, Small Impact" B5). Countless others echo this, lamenting a

new era of distraction, characterized by "endless soundbites, celebrity babbling, hate talk,

consumer mania and endless pornographic representations of violence" (Giroux "Crisis of Language" 5).

While narratives of decline acknowledge that American society still has individuals who are widely regarded as intellectuals— oftentimes citing academics like Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Stanley Aronowitz, Naomi Klein, Cornel West, and Lewis Gordon— they are largely considered an endangered species, and most institutions are still deemed hostile to intellectual endeavors. The mass media, for one, often shut out intellectuals or characterize them as subversive, un-American, or dangerous; meanwhile, "college campuses, once a hotbed of dissent," have adopted a corporate model and are accused of abandoning their intellectual mission. As Giroux, writing in 2013, points out,

> Faculty has largely been reduced to adjuncts - out of 1.5 million faculty, more than 1 million hold temporary jobs. Learning is being turned into a form of commerce or training. Critical thought is now viewed as an excess in a culture in which a college education is simply a credential for getting a well- paid job. At best, students are now trained or groomed to be ardent, unquestioning consumers - the children of Aldous Huxley's nightmares - who eventually define their intense investment in pleasure through forms of violence that provide increasingly the only thrill left in a society dominated by surveillance cameras, Reality TV, the culture of cruelty, and the mind-numbing experience of the ever-present shopping malls. ("Intellectuals as Subjects and Objects of Violence" 3)

While "the very notion of being an engaged public intellectual is neither foreign to nor a violation of what it means to be an academic scholar, but central to its very definition," some argue academic institutions have been "transformed into an adjunct of corporate and military power," and are no longer vital public spheres but "spheres of induced mass cultural illiteracy that doom critically engaged thought, complex ideas and serious writing" (Giroux "Crisis of Language" 6).

Despite arguments that "discourse has taken a bad hit with the rise of the new media," and has bred "a new kind of thoughtlessness," (Giroux "Crisis of Language" 5) it is important to recognize that "we are awash in a far greater amount of public thought than ever before" and it is not only possible but likely that intellectual life is evidencing itself in new ways (Freese 46). Today's environment "multiplies not simply the actors laying claim to the mantle of the intellectual, but the formats and modes of intervention itself, i.e. the different ways in which knowledge and expertise can be inserted into the public sphere," and long gone are the days of a quaint and singular Habermasian public sphere (Eyal 117). As Blackwell puts it, "The center of gravity for intellectual life has […] shifted, decisively and forever, to a digital medium" and intellectual production must now be recognized as occurring in a multitude of digital public spheres (Conclusion: Cyberinfrastructure 27). Serving as the "modern critical intellectual's field of action," online spaces offer users unprecedented access to information and collaboration; new modes of production, distribution, and consumption; new forms of publicness, and new methods of intellectual engagement (Kellner, "Intellectuals, the New Public Spheres and Techno-Politics" 1). Before investigating the ways in which online spaces are

functioning as new public spheres, it is useful to first establish an understanding of the notion of the public sphere itself and the ideological discourse that informs it.

4.3 The Continued Relevance of Habermas & the Concept of the Public Sphere

Traditionally understood as a network for influencing political action through the exchange of informed and logical discussions, the concept of the public sphere has its basis in the work of Jürgen Habermas. In his seminal text "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere," Habermas charts the rise and fall of the bourgeois public sphere, describing the ways in which commercialization, capitalism, and the rise of mass media have negatively impacted rational-critical debate. Though his text has been problematized and critiqued at length, scholars like Nancy Fraser continue to assert that "Habermas' idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory and democratic political practice" and insist that "no attempt to understand the limits of actually existing late-capitalist democracy can succeed without in some way or another making use of it" (Fraser 1992, 111).[76]

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[76] To quote Fraser in full: "The idea of 'the public sphere' in Habermas's sense is a conceptual resource that can help overcome such problems. It designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official-economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. Thus, this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions between state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory. For these reasons, I am going to take as a basic premise for this essay that something like Habermas's idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory and to democratic political practice. I assume that no attempt to understand the limits of actually existing late capitalist democracy can succeed without in some way or another making use of it. I assume that the same goes for urgently needed constructive efforts to project alternative models of democracy. If you will grant me that the general idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical theory, then I shall

According to Habermas, the liberal public sphere is a domain of social life to which all citizens are granted access and where unrestricted public opinion can be formed. Based on the exchange of unfettered, autonomous perspectives, a public sphere can only exist in the absence of state control and comes into being when citizens have a "guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely," "without being subject to coercion" (103).[77] As such, the public sphere is a crucial component of sociopolitical organization, for it serves as a site of intellectual life— a space designated for the free exchange of ideas[78] where citizens can (re)vitalize democracy, animate rational discussions, and impact public will. In this politically potent space, a democratic citizenry can demonstrate its capacity to exercise reason, a sensibility that Habermas describes as "a threat to any and all relations of domination" (35). In his

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go on to argue that the specific form in which Habermas has elaborated this idea is not wholly satisfactory. On the contrary, I contend that his analysis of the public sphere needs to undergo some critical interrogation and reconstruction if it is to yield a category capable of theorizing the limits of actually existing democracy" (Rethinking the Public Sphere 57).

[77] The free exchange of ideas has been a considered a crucial element in theories of democracy, as many deem public participation in discursive deliberation imperative to a democratic society. John Dewey, for one, writing in 1927, describes public inquiry and communication as the basis of democracy and, arguing against a singular state authority, promotes the merits of group deliberation and the public's participatory potential. Similarly, Tocqueville (1990) deems civic participation in public affairs mandatory to a healthy democracy and an act that enhances individuals' self-respect.

[78] Habermas's notion of the public sphere has been problematized and critiqued by many theorists who have charged him with idealism and significant oversights. Nancy Fraser, for example, notes that the public sphere that Habermas describes as the pinnacle of democracy was ironically undemocratic in its structure, as it excluded women, as well as members of lower social classes. Others, like Lyotard, challenge his idealist notion of consensus, arguing that it is not agreement but anarchy, individuality, and discord that yield democratic participation.

original application of the term, Habermas argued that the bourgeois public sphere[79] was

exemplified by the European coffeehouses[80] and salons of the late 17th and early18th

century where people gathered together, away from the influence of the state,[81] to discuss

public issues. However, as Habermas himself concedes,[82] these gatherings did not

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[79] "The bourgeois public sphere," Habermas explains, "may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people com[ing] together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations In the basically privatized but publicly relevant spheres of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason" (27).

[80] Habermas writes, "The coffee house not merely made access to the relevant circles less formal and easier; it embraced the wider strata of the middle class, including craftsmen and shopkeepers. New Ward reports that the 'wealthy shopkeeper' visited the coffee house several times a day, this held true for the poor one as well" ("The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" 33).

[81] Describing the ways in which salons in France functioned as "peculiar enclave[s]", Habermas writes, "In the *salon* the mind was no longer in the service of a patron; 'opinion' became emancipated from the bonds of economic dependence. Even if under Philip the *salons* were at first places more for gallant pleasures than for smart discourse, such discussion indeed soon took equal place with the *diner*. Diderot's distinction between written and oral discourse sheds light on the functions of the new gatherings. There was scarcely a great writer in the eighteenth century who would not have first submitted his essential ideas for discussion in such discourse, in lectures before the *academies* and especially in the *salons*. The salon held the monopoly of first publication: a new work, even a musical one, had to legitimate itself first in this forum" (34).

[82] Describing the prevalence and impact of illiteracy throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Habermas writes, "In relation to the mass of the rural population and the common 'people' in the towns, of course, the public 'at large' that was being formed diffusely outside the early institutions of the public was still extremely small. Elementary education, where it existed, was inferior. The proportion of illiterates, at least in Great Britain, even exceeded that of the preceding Elizabethan epoch. Here, at the start of the eighteenth century, more than half of the population lived on the margins of subsistence. The masses were not only largely illiterate but also so pauperized that they could not even pay for literature. They did not have at their disposal the buying power needed for even the most modest participation in the market of cultural gods. Nevertheless, with the emergence of the diffuse public formed in the course of the commercialization of cultural production, a new social category arose. The court aristocracy of the seventeenth century was not really a reading public. To be sure, it kept men of letters as it kept servants, but literary production based on patronage was more a matter of a kind of conspicuous consumption than of serious reading by an interested public. The latter arose only in the first decades of the eighteenth century, after the publisher replaced the patron as the author's commissioner and organized the commercial distribution of literary works" (37-8).

represent true liberal public spheres, as they did not grant access to everyone;

participation required an education, as well as property ownership and thereby precluded

women, as well as members of lower social classes. As a result, women and lower-class

members could inhabit public spaces, but not public spheres, for while public spaces

promote discussion, public spheres promote democracy and require both literacy[83] and

access to media for the democratic exchange of ideas.

According to Habermas, at this particular time in the development of the

bourgeois public sphere,[84] the press took on a unique and public-intellectual-like role.

"No longer a mere organ for the conveyance of information," the press became "an

institution of the public itself" that served to "provide and intensify public discussion"

(Jürgen Habermas On Society and Politics 234). Newspapers informed public opinion,

directed public thought, and (because they were "not yet a medium of consumer culture")

shared controversial perspectives that prompted democratic debate. Yet, as Habermas

describes it, this era of literary journalism was relatively short-lived, for by the 1830s, the

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[83] For a discussion of the growth and impact of the reading public, see R. D. Altick's *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public.*

[84] Describing the historical specificity of the bourgeois public sphere, Habermas writes, "It is no accident that these concepts of the public sphere and public opinion were not formed until the eighteenth century," for "they derive their specific meaning from a concrete historical situation. It was then that one learned to distinguish between opinion and public opinion, or *opinion publique*. Whereas mere opinions (things taken for granted as part of a culture, normative convictions, collective prejudices and judgments) seem to persist unchanged in their quasi-natural structure as a kind of sediment of history, public opinion, in terms of its very idea, can be formed only if a public that engages in rational discussion exists. Public discussions that are institutionally protected and that take, with critical intent, the exercise of political authority as their theme have not existed since time immemorial— they developed only in a specific phase of bourgeois society, and only by virtue of a specific constellation of interests could they be incorporated into the order of the bourgeois constitutional state" (On Society and Politics 232).

press had "abandon[ed] its polemical stance [to] take advantage of the earning potential of commercial activity," thereby granting private interests privileged status within "the sphere of publicness" (Jürgen Habermas On Society and Politics 235).

4.4 Online Public Spheres in the Digital Age
    While the commercial imperatives Habermas describes (and credits with eroding the public sphere) continue to thrive in contemporary society, today's digital media landscape is far different from that which he analyzed and has prompted many reconceptualizations of sphere theory. This is, while his insights into the structural transformation of the public sphere in the 18th and 19th centuries are of value, his approach does not offer an adequate framework for comprehending the structural transformation of the public sphere in the 21st century and the multiplicity and density of realms that comprise the current media domain. As Nathaniel Poor points out, "It is doubtful that a single public sphere could consist of millions of people and still function, since deliberation would be difficult. Allowing for multiple publics, with different interests," on the other hand, "allows for smaller and thus workable, yet still global public spheres through the Internet" (2).

    In accordance with this understanding, writers such as Fraser, Palczewski, Anderson,[85] McKee, Breese, and Squires[86] argue for the need to speak of publics and

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[85] Anderson has produced research on the Islamic public sphere and the ways in which identity is based on and impacted by religion.

[86] Squires's work, for example, focuses on African-American populations and details the ways in which particular publics are organized around issues of identity, race, and/or ethnicity.

public spheres rather than *the* public and *the* public sphere, insisting that "multiple but unequal publics participate in public life" (Fraser 128). Others, like Warner, are charting the development of counter-publics to describe the way those in subordinate positions collectively organize to contest dominant positions in society, such as those surrounding race, gender and sexuality. Still others are exploring "issue publics," "each organized around its own political structure, media systems, and sets of norms and interests" (Garnham 371). While most agree that public spheres have moved into cyberspace, a multitude of debates surrounding the pros and cons of online public spheres persist.

4.5 Narratives of Progress and Ruin: Cyber-Optimists and Cyber-Pessimists
    Starkly divided between utopian and dystopian visions, the debate on the pros and cons of online public spheres is largely informed by and follows the tradition of the communications research that began in the United States in the 1880s. Largely produced by Dewey, Park, Cooley, Mean, and Ford, the early research of the Chicago School deemed communications a new frontier and heralded technology as a way to improve politics, culture, and democracy. Communications technology was part of a narrative of progress and one which has been used to frame many other emerging media.[87] As Mark Surman explains, "With every swell of the techno-revolutionary wave, there are at least three ideas that pop up:"

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[87] Describing the way in which this narrative of progress was applied to the emergence of television, Surman writes, "Cable became the magic wand of technological revolution and the utopian predictions started to flow. Cable would improve education, prevent crime and urban decay, break down social isolation, help people to communicate, and enhance democracy. The wire of the wired world quickly became a social elixir." See "Wired Words: Utopia, Revolution, and the History of Electronic Highways."

1. That massive and positive social change will emerge from the introduction of a new communications technology;

2. that these changes will be caused by the inherent technical properties of the hardware; and

3. That the social revolution occurring as a result of the new technology is of a scale not seen for hundreds, or even thousands, of years. (Wired Words: Utopia, Revolution, and the History of Electronic Highways 1)

Yet alongside such optimistic declarations that technology can elevate the human condition and construct a more enlightened civic realm are dystopian fears that technology has the potential to destroy the planet. This debate, though rooted in the dawn of the Enlightenment, has characterized the majority of discussions focused on emerging technologies and is now being played out once again in debates on the civic potential of online culture. Indeed, for each assertion hailing the emancipatory potential of online forums are dystopian warnings that emphasize the severity and grimness of the problems they identify.

The major points of contention between theorists focus on discussions of access, content quality, commercialization, and privacy. In the discussion that follows, I will briefly outline the primary arguments of each camp to show not only how pessimistic predictions have become largely exaggerated, but also to demonstrate that in an age of newly emerging online public spheres, unapologetic optimism is, in fact, warranted.

4.6 Points of Contention: Issues of Access, Content Quality, Commodification, and Privacy

In analyses of the public sphere potential of the internet, issues of access are hotly contested. According to cyber-pessimists, the Internet's first-world bias renders it fundamentally problematic and ultimately inhibits its potential to enhance democracy. (Williams and Pavlik 1994; Sassi, 2005; Lockhard, 1998). More specifically, they argue that the internet is dominated by white, wealthy, educated, English-speaking males, most of whom are American citizens and whose agendas reflect American concerns. As a result, "cyber-english," has become "the language of the nets," and "demands a common comprehension where no similar communicative need existed before." Lockhard writes,

> Born in the primitive command-and-control Arpanet and its Pentagonese argot, cyber-english emerged from the nuke-hardened military cellars and now projects American world power overtly. Other world englishes, the more modest englishes of orality and textuality, function as subsumed and minor epistemologies, as necessary preparations for cyber-english. English is local; cyber-english is global. (161)

Thus, for the millions of would-be cyber-citizens who are not yet fluent in the net's primary operating language, the Internet is simply inaccessible.

Further contributing to disparities produced by the cyber-english monopoly are the uneven literacy and education rates among citizens of different countries, for even if Internet users speak "cyber-english," their meaningful participation in online forums depends on their having an understanding of the wider world and a level of media literacy that enables them to contribute to democratic discussions. As Carey puts it, "Literacy

produces instability and inconsistency because the written tradition is participated in so unevenly," (Communication as Culture 164) yielding a world in which "Improvements in communication…make for increased difficulties in understanding" (Innis 25).

Despite these concerns, however, those who share my belief in the public sphere potential of the internet[88] point to the medium's unprecedented growth in users to argue that, while issues of access surely exist, they are diminishing each day. Although in 1995, only 0.4% of the world's population was online, today more than 34.3% of people worldwide use the Internet daily. To put it another way, in fewer than twenty years, the number of global participants has grown from 16 million to nearly 2.5 billion (or 2,405, 518, 376, to be exact) and that number is constantly climbing. Furthermore, as many remind, it is a fallacy to assume that "the United States is the heart of the net." Jeff Jarvis explains,

> Brazil has long been an unsung hotbed of interactivity, early to adopt
>
> blogging, photo sharing, and friend services. China Mobile has 600
>
> million customers (which happens to be almost as many as Facebook
>
> has— and they're not the same people). Poor farmers, fishermen, and
>
> merchants in Africa and India are using connected technology to

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[88] John Carey refers to this optimism as "the rhetoric of the technological sublime" (144). Describing this mindset he writes, "it is the story of the progressive liberation of the human spirit. More information is available and is made to move faster: ignorance is ended; civil strife is brought under control; and a beneficent future, moral and political as well as economic, is opened by the irresistible tendencies of technology" (148).

improve their markets. About 70% of Facebook users come from

outside the U.S. (8)

In addition to gaining access to information in cyberspace, people around the world are

gaining access to one another. With the internet's absence of geographical and time-

based barriers, people separated by distance and time can now unite in novel ways.[89]

Global users can interact, share ideas, develop groups, and establish solidarity. They can

access and share countless types of information they would not otherwise be granted and

help each other learn and understand political, economic, and social issues. Internet

users, for example, can now easily retrieve and distribute the voting records of their

representatives, track congressional rulings, form or join interest groups, fight for their

(and their fellow citizens') rights, and protest unfair government and corporate action.

Users can join established groups devoted to political issues and political causes, such as

the Center for a New Democracy, the Voter's Telecommunication Watch, the Electronic

Frontier Foundation, The Democracy Resource Center, and Democracy Now, among

others. Through online forums and cyberspaces such as these, unknown individuals and

unknown groups can reach one another, engage in intellectual debates, effectively

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[89]Al Gore in 1994 was among those advocating the Internet's potential to strengthen democracy, asserting, "The Global Information Infrastructure ...will circle the globe with information superhighways on which all people can travel. These highways ...will allow us to share information, to connect, and to communicate as a global community. From these connections we will derive robust and sustainable economic progress, strong democracies, better solutions to global and local environmental challenges, improved health care, and - ultimately - a greater sense of shared stewardship of our small planet. The GII [Global Information Infrastructure] will spread participatory democracy. In a sense, the GII will be a metaphor for democracy itself" (qtd. in Alinta Thornton's "Will Internet Revitalize Democracy in the Public Sphere?").

organize, and gain visibility in ways that allow them to "restructure public affairs" (Papacharissi 13). Increasingly, societies can "form and act apart from government, crossing borders— as the Middle East's freedom fighters have, inspiring and teaching one another while the whole world watches in the open" (Jarvis 6).

Despite the liberatory aspects of increased access to information, however, cyber-pessimists warn that, in cyberspace, both groups and information are susceptible to fragmentation and watered-down content. With the former comes the loss of group cohesion and group influence, for when a large group divides into smaller discussion groups, it forsakes its civic solidarity and a broader span of public involvement. Equally if not more problematic, some contend, are the dangers brought on by the fragmentation of information, which can yield misinformation, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding and, as Graham Murdock argues, can empty potentially vibrant political spaces of their potency. Murdock writes,

> The Internet's progressive slicing of interests into ever thinner, more
> specialised, segments, mirrors the increasing individualisation of
> television viewing produced by the explosion of niche cable and
> satellite channels and the arrival of personal video recorders. Taken
> together these technologies make it entirely possible to only watch
> what one already enjoys and to only encounter opinions one already
> agrees with. In a situation where world views are increasingly polarised
> and talking across differences on a basis of knowledge and respect is
> more vital than ever to a working deliberative system , this hollowing out

of collective space present a major challenge to democratic culture.

("Building the Digital Commons" 14)[90]

Similarly, Kevin Hill and John Hughes (1998) argue that increased online political participation ultimately produces watered-down content that lacks innovation and creativity, while Roderick Hart contends that the media "supersaturate viewers with political information" and "create in viewers a sense of activity rather than genuine civic involvement" (109).

Despite these online tendencies, however, I reside in the camp of theorists who contend that alongside countless vapid and hollowed-out forums are many that are politically charged and intellectually engaged. Lincoln Dahlberg, for one, remarks that "a cursory examination of the thousands of diverse conversations taking place everyday online and open to anyone with Internet access seems to indicate the expansion on a global scale of the loose webs of rational-critical discourse that constitute what is known as the public sphere" ("Extending the Public Sphere through Cyberspace" 1).

Not only are people sharing ideas, but they're also adopting, modifying, appropriating, and inventing different and original ways to participate in cultural production. They're publishing on the Web, producing and distributing digital videos, blogging, instant messaging, emailing, and social networking; they're creating virtual worlds, building websites, wikis, and web pages, picture-sharing, wall-posting, video-

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[90] Richard Davis and Andrew Shapiro make similar arguments. For more information, see Shapiro's *The Control Revolution: How the Internet Is Putting Individuals in Charge and Changing the World We Know*, and Davis's *The Web of Politics: The Internet's Impact on the American Political System.*

chatting and data-sharing. As the infograph below depicts, a staggering amount of

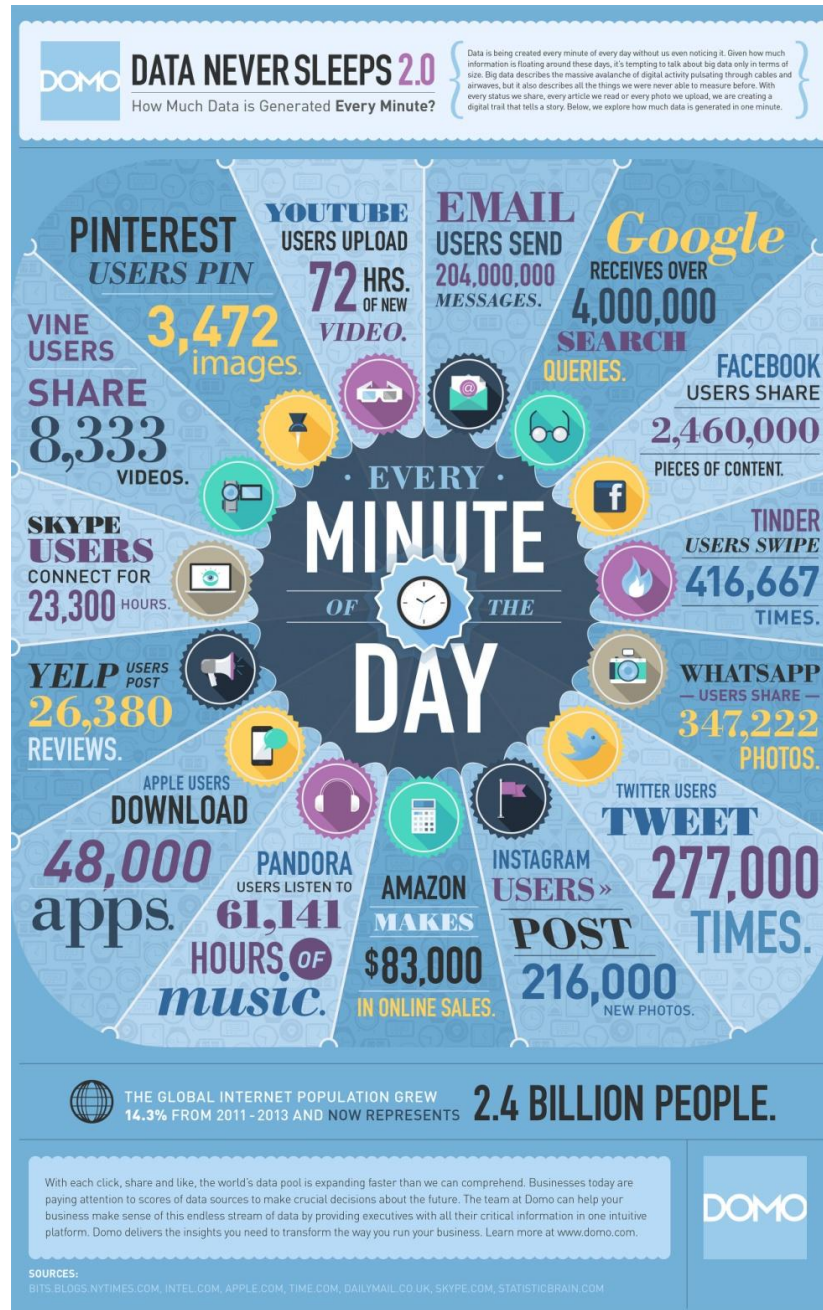content is created and distributed every minute of the day (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Data Never Sleeps

In fact, in response to the rise of this phenomenon, Time Magazine in 2006 declared "you" the Person of the Year to acknowledge the millions of people responsible for the production of user-generated content. While a great deal of online content producers have no relation to (or intentions to spur or participate in) civic engagement and intellectual life, some undeniably do and each day are confronting some of the most contentious and pressing political issues facing the world today. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the new modes of production that the Internet enables are suitable and, in some cases, superior alternatives to traditional methods of cultural production.

Also commonly debated is the degree to which commercialization and commodification threaten the Internet's public sphere potential. As with nearly every (if not every) other aspect of the culture industry, the Internet has become a major site of corporate activity, filled with "global multi-media corporations intent on redeveloping cyberspace as retail real estate" (Murdock 14). As online spaces are reduced to virtual theme parks or electronic retail stores, they are emptied of their democratic potential, as discourse is replaced by publicity and citizens are reframed as consumers (O'Loughlin 2001; Schiller 2000; Pasquale 2010; Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1995).[91]

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[91] Warning of the dangers of sophisticated online marketing methods, Frank Pasquale writes, "Distortions of the public sphere are also likely. While a commercially-influenced "fast-tracking" or "up-ranking" of some content past others might raise suspicions among its direct (but dispersed) victims, the real issues it raises are far broader. If an online ecology of information that purports to be based on one mode of ordering is actually based on another, it sets an unfair playing field whose biases are largely undetectable by lay observers. Stealth marketing generates serious negative externalities that menace personal autonomy and cultural authenticity. Moreover, the degree of expertise necessary to recognize these externalities in the

Yet with the Internet's unprecedented, immaterial, and decentralized structure, the degree to which corporations will be able to harness control over cyberspace remains unclear. Many like John Newhagen believe that the "very architecture of the internet will work against the type of content control these folks [the heads of corporations] have over mass media" (Newhagen qtd. in McChesney, 1995). Indeed, some argue, it already is. Tapscott and Williams, for example, point to the trend of peer-production to argue that user-generated content has altered the economics of production so significantly that we are witnessing the emergence of "new economic democracy" "in which we all have a lead role" (Tapscott and Williams 15). As numerous texts, such as *An Army of Davids*, *We the Media*, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*, and *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* detail, new methods and business models are evolving to support what had previously only been offered by professional content creators or established news providers, thus marking a fundamental shift in the balance of power between consumers and salespeople. Notions of authority and credibility are now in flux, and new types of intelligence are taking on new value. Divisions are being eclipsed and states of dependency are being replaced with modes of collaboration. As Dan Gillmor writes, "technology has given us a communications toolkit that allows anyone to become a journalist at little cost and, in theory, with global reach. Nothing like this has ever been remotely possible before" (xii).

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new online environment is likely to be possessed by only the most committed observers" (Pasquale "Trusting (and Verifying) Online Intermediaries' Policing" 359).

Indeed, the potential for the emergence of new modes of intellectual life today are truly inestimable.

Closely related to discussions of commodification are debates over the ways in which corporate and government surveillance inhibit the internet's public sphere potential, as the methods involved in commodification involve a great deal of data mining. As Rheingold describes it, "The capabilities of information-gathering and sorting technologies that can harvest and sift mind-numbing quantities of individual trivial but collectively revealing pieces of information are formidable today" (Chapter 10). Similarly, Foucault long ago warned of the potential for the constant electronic surveillance of the citizenry, writing:

> Just as the ability to read and write and freely communicate gives power to citizens that protects them from the powers of the state, the ability to surveil, to invade the citizens' privacy, gives the state the power to confuse, coerce and control citizens. Uneducated populations cannot rule themselves, but tyrannies can control even educated populations, given sophisticated means of surveillance.[92] (290)

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[92] The notion that government control can jeopardize the Internet's potential to support democracy is exemplified by Barack Obama's 2009 cyber-security proposals before Congress. In two different Bills, President Obama suggested that, in situations of "national emergency," the U.S. Government should have the power to "switch off the internet." Clearly violating the rights of the individual, the recommendations greatly increase the size of government and offer government and private interests increased power to monitor data on the Internet. See "Bill Lets Obama Turn off the Internet."

The internet provides such sophisticated means, as the same channels of communication that allow citizens around the world to interact also allow the government and private interests to gather information about online users.[93] This "direct assault on personal liberty," some argue, "is compounded by a more diffuse erosion of old social values due to the capabilities of new technologies." Rheingold explains,

> Traditional notions of privacy are challenged on several fronts by the ease of collecting and disseminating detailed information about individuals via cyberspace technologies. When people use the convenience of electronic communication or transaction, we leave invisible digital trails; now that technologies for tracking those trails are maturing, there is cause to worry. The spreading use of computer matching to piece together the digital trail we all leave in cyberspace is one indication of privacy problems to come. (The Virtual Community 299)[94]

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[93] Issuing similar admonishments, Joanne Jacobs writes, "Information collection via internet is a growth area for businesses and governments alike, and few users understand how much information about them is stored, the purpose for which that information is kept, and who has access to that information." See "Democracy and the Internet."

[94] Rheingold refers to this type of surveillance system as "Panoptic in reference to the perfect prison proposed in the eighteenth century by Jeremy Bentham— a theoretical model that happens to fit the real capabilities of today's technologies" (300). Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, in "Cybernetic capitalism: Information, Technology, Everyday Life" echo this, stating, "We believe that Foucault is right in seeing Bentham's Panopticon as a significant event in the history of the human mind. We want to suggest that the new communication and information technologies — particularly in the form of an integrated electronic grid — permit a massive extension and transformation of that same (relative, technological) mobilization to which Bentham's panoptic principle aspired. What these technologies support, in fact, is the same dissemination of power and control, but freed from the architectural constraints of Bentham's stone and brick prototype. On the basis of the 'information revolution', not just the prison or factory, but the social totality, comes to function as the hierarchical and disciplinary Panoptic machine" (74–75).

With the transparency of digital information, citizens' privacy can be easily violated, thereby granting elites new means by which to exercise power and control over citizens. Yet cyber-surveillance is not unidirectional and, as writers like Larry Downes argue, "the same technologies that create the privacy problem are also proving to be the source of its solution." Though government and corporate eyes may be watching and recording users' behaviors in cyberspace, "consumers increasingly have the ability to organize, identify their common demands, and enforce their will on enterprise" (Szoka "The Next Digital Decade" 25). Citizens can also utilize sites such as WikiLeaks (a site that will be explored throughout this dissertation) to keep government power in check. As a website that publishes classified media from anonymous sources, WikiLeaks "forces secrets into the open, robbing government of unnecessary confidentiality and officials of their assumed authority to hide their information and actions" (Jarvis 6).

Furthermore, in a debate that is characterized by the paranoia of privacy advocates, it is worth questioning the value of privacy itself. Some argue that "if we become too obsessed with privacy, we could lose opportunities to make connections." As Jarvis explains,

> When, out of fear of the unknown, we shut ourselves off from links to
> one another, we lose as individuals, as companies, and as institutions.
> When we open up, we gain new chances to learn, connect and collaborate.
> Through tools ranging from TripAdvisor to Wikipedia, from Google's
> search to Facebook, we gain access to the wisdom of the crowd— that is,

our wisdom. When we gather together, we can create new public

entities— our public spheres. (5)

Indeed, there are numerous rewards that come with openness and the ability to form new

connections, not the least of which being the ways in which publicness can function as a

"profoundly disruptive" political weapon. As Jarvis explains, "Publicness threatens

institutions whose power is invested in the control of information and audiences. That is

why we hear incumbents protest this change and warn of its dangers. Publicness is a sign

of our empowerment at their expense" (11). As a tool of disruption, publicness allows

people to break old bonds and forge new futures. Among the many recent and notable

examples of this dynamic is the revolution that occurred in Egypt in June, 2010, when

people utilized publicness (via Twitter and Facebook) to rise from obscurity, invisibility,

and silence, and make their voices heard. Millions of Egyptians used these social forums

to share information, support, and strategies, and in just eighteen days, the country's

dictator of 29 years, Hosni Mubarak, resigned from his post as president.

4.7 Possibilities for New Modes of Intellection in Network Society
     With a thorough understanding of these debates, I carry forth Kellner's assertion

that, in the contemporary digital age, characterized by the growth and importance of

media and computer technologies, online spaces should be understood as the "modern

critical intellectual's field of action" (Kellner, "Intellectuals, the New Public Spheres and

Techno-Politics" 1). Moreover, within this field of action—a network society in which

users are offered unprecedented access to information and collaboration; new modes of

production, distribution, and consumption; and new forms of publicness and new public

formations— it is likely that new modes and ways of wielding of intellection are emerging. To be clear, "the critical capacities and vision of the classical critical intellectual are still relevant" (Kellner, "Intellectuals, New Public Spheres, and Techno-Politics" 4) and traditional markers of intellect, such as the earning of advanced degrees in higher education and publication in an academic journals and books will always represent a standard of intellectual accomplishment. However, "the center of gravity for intellectual life has […] shifted, decisively and forever, to a digital medium," (Blackwell 27).) and the new modes of intellection and possibilities for intellectual life occurring therein "can only become intelligible if a framework is adopted that does not limit the discussion from the outset to modern patterns of interpretation" (Poster 202). As Mark Poster explains,

> For example, if one understands politics as the restriction or expansion of the existing executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, one will not be able even to broach the question of new types of participation in government. To ask then about the relation of the Internet to democracy is to challenge or to risk challenging our existing theoretical approaches and concepts as they concern these question. (202)

Thus, to understand the range of communicative possibilities and opportunities for intellectual intervention available today, we must be willing to see things in new ways. Our is a network society — and, based on a much different set of organizing principles, structures, and codes than those that dominated the Western world of industrial capitalism— in some ways, the game has definitively been changed.

4.8 The New Economy of Network Society

Coined by Stein Braten and largely developed by Manual Castells, the term "network society" refers to "a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks" (The Network Society 7). [95] It is important to note, he clarifies, that "it's not just about networks or social networks, because social networks have been very old forms of social organization. It's about social networks which process and manage information and are using micro-electronic based technologies." Fluid in design, participation, and function, networks consist of an unspecified set of "nodes" or connected points, whose connections can be rigid, flexible, strong, weak, close, distant, singular, multiple, material and immaterial, and what constitutes a node "depends on the concrete networks of which we speak." [96] Castells explains,

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[95] More specifically, Castells describes the network society as "a social structure based on networks operated by information and communication technologies based in microelectronics and digital computer networks that generate, process, and distribute information on the basis of the knowledge accumulated in the nodes of the networks. A network is a formal structure (see Monge and Contractor, 2004). It is a system of interconnected nodes. Nodes are, formally speaking, the points where the curve intersects itself. Networks are open structures that evolve by adding or removing nodes according to the changing requirements of the programs that assign performance goals to the networks. Naturally, these programs are decided socially from outside the network. But once they are inscripted in the logic of the network, the network will follow efficiently these instructions, adding, deleting, and reconfigurating, until a new program replaces or modifies the codes that command its operational system" (The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy 7).

[96] Various authors (such as Bloomfield & Vurdubakis, and Lee & Brown) have critiqued the network metaphor, taking issue with the way in which it can imply a totalizing view of reality that insinuates all possible elements and entities are accounted for and securely positioned within a network or networks. As a result, some, such as Annemarie Mol and John Law, have conceptualized other ontologies that supplant networks with the notion of fluid regions or ambiguous spaces.

They are stock exchange markets, and their ancillary advanced services

centers, in the network of global financial flows. They are national

councils of ministers and European Commissioners in the political

network that governs the European Union. They are coca fields and poppy

fields, clandestine laboratories, secret landing strips, street gangs, and

money laundering financial institutions in the network of drug traffic that

penetrates economies, societies, and states throughout the world. They are

television systems, entertainment studios, computer graphics milieux,

news teams, and mobile devices generating, transmitting, and receiving

signals in the global network of the new media at the roots of cultural

expression and public opinion in the Information Age" (501).

Precarious and unpredictable in both formation and continuity, networks (and nodes) can

assume a multitude of shapes, and operate according to a highly dynamic and open

system that is "susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance" (Castells 501).

As such, Castells explains, "Networks are appropriate instruments for a capitalist

economy based on innovation, globalization and centralized concentration; (and) for

work, workers and firms based on flexibility and adaptability." They are also powerful

instruments "for a polity geared to the instant processing of new values and public

moods; and for social organization aiming at the supersession of space and the

annihilation of time"— that is, they are well-suited for intellectual aims (501-502).

Yielding a new economy that is "organized around global networks of capital,

management and information, whose access to technological know-how is at the roots of

productivity and competitiveness," (502) networks are serving as "a source of [the] dramatic reorganization of power relationships," for power, wealth, and the production of knowledge now greatly depend "on the ability to organize society to reap the benefits of the new technological system" and revolve around capital accumulation in the 'sphere of circulation,' rather than in the sphere of production, as they did in industrial capitalism (503). As a result, corporations in both the private and public sectors, limited by their vertical and bureaucratic organizational systems, are being forced to transform themselves from operations that rely on decision-making centers into decentralized and flexible structures. To use Castells terminology, the "fixed geometry" of the traditional corporation is being supplanted by the dynamic "variable geometry" of network organization— for in the new network culture "of creative destruction" and constant reinvention, the codes on which bureaucratic control has traditionally relied simply cannot survive (Castells 215). To be clear, Castells is not at all insinuating the demise of capitalism, but asserting that "Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture" (500).

While traditional forms of expertise functioned and were mediated through isolated disciplines and channels, in today's network society, the "collective exchange of knowledge cannot be fully contained by previous sources of power" (such as bureaucratic hierarchies, media monarchies and international economic networks that "depended on maintaining tight control over the flow of information") (Jenkins 140). As a result, individuals have an immense and unprecedented opportunity to use networks to construct

"intelligent communities in which our social and cognitive potential can be mutually developed and enhanced" (Levy 17). Rapidly evolving technologies, and digital and material networks are transforming the type of positioning and practice available to individuals and collectives, and intellectual limits— more than ever before— can be broken, altered, and transformed, renewed, rewritten, and redesigned. *But are they?* The remainder of this dissertation aims to find out. Focusing on the activities that have been taking place since 2008 under the name "Anonymous"— a nebulous network of networks, comprised of diverse individuals who interact through stratified digital and physical realms in pursuit of social justice—[97] , as well as the 4chan network from which Anonymous emerged, this work explores how and in what ways digital networks are affecting and changing intellectual inquiry, and the degree to which they are being used (or can be used) to recast the terms of public debate.

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[97] Throughout this dissertation, I refer to this network as "the Anonymous network," "Anonymous," and "Anonymous network of networks." Each usage should be understood as referencing a network of networks- not a singular network or a singular group.

Chapter 5 – The Anonymous Network of Networks

5.1 From Lulz to Civic Action in Defense of the Oppressed

Although it was not rare to see handfuls of protestors outside the Church of

Scientology, the gathering that formed on February 10, 2008, was unlike anything the

members of the Church had seen before. More than 500 people, engaged in loud and

animated protest, filled the sidewalks, where they danced, sung, passed out fliers,

Figure 2: Project Chanology Protests

shouted on megaphones, and led chants accusing the Church of a range of human rights

abuses and unethical acts (Figure 2). These were not the same people from the several

small groups that had been picketing the church for years; they were young people, many of them high school and college students, who had recently learned about the Church's corruption and who had used digital networks to rapidly organize a spectacle of carnivalesque proportions. They were boisterous, unabashed, and, with many wearing Guy Fawkes masks, they were largely unidentifiable. Throughout the day, this scene was repeated in cities around the world, as global demonstrations orchestrated by an enigmatic "group" known as Anonymous, emerged and gained international attention (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Global Protests at the Church of Scientology

Prior to the public protests, dubbed "Project Chanology," most of the general public had never heard of Anonymous, for although it began in 2003, it emerged on 4chan.org, a bulletin board where "nerdy techies, confrontational smartasses and weirdo

nonconformists" went trolling in shameless pursuit of the "lulz" (Parker 2). In 2008, however, with the launching of "Project Chanology," the collective took a decidedly ideological turn, began functioning in politically distinct and discernible ways, and became something else.

5.2 Project Chanology and the Advent of a New Anonymous

Anonymous began Project Chanology in January, 2008, after the Church of Scientology attempted to prevent the publication of a biography on Tom Cruise that depicted the Church in a negative light. Asserting that the claims in the book were defamatory and libelous, the Church threatened publishers with legal action and successfully prompted several publishers in the United Kingdom to halt the book's production. The Church, however, was clearly unaware of "The Streisand Effect" (and the ways in which attempts to censor information often have an inverse effect), for its efforts to conceal the book only brought the book greater attention.

As discussion of the controversy grew online, on January 14th, a video featuring Tom Cruise praising the virtues of Scientology was leaked and posted on several extremely popular, high-traffic websites, including YouTube.com and Gawker.com. Nearly ten minutes long, the video casts a deeply fanatical and neurotic depiction of both the celebrity and the Church, as Cruise not only makes unfounded claims (asserting, for example, that Scientologists have extraordinary powers and should be seen as "the authorities on the mind") but exudes a manic energy, oscillating between hysterical

laughter and intense seriousness, as he extols the power and superiority of the Church of Scientology.[98]

As the video spread to various websites and rapidly gained a mass audience, the Church took immediate action, accusing YouTube and Gawker of violating the Digital Millennium Copyright Act 17 U.S. Code § 512[99] and demanding that they remove the video from their websites. While YouTube quickly and quietly complied, Gawker did not and, arguing that its use of the video was protected by the fair use clause (detailed in Title 17 U.S. Code § 107 - Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use[100]), Gawker kept the video on its website. Yet, even if Gawker had promptly complied with the Church's demand, it would have already been "too late," for in the digital network society— wherein individuals and communities can organize, collaborate, and communicate across time, space, and geography, and outside of the dominant channels of mainstream media, and within mere seconds can view, embed, download, save, share, co-opt, and reappropriate content— circulation simply cannot be controlled.

Perhaps as important as the number of people who had seen the video, however, was *who* had seen it, for although various groups had long been protesting the Church of

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[98] This video can be found on numerous websites and, as of September, 2015, was available on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFBZ_uAbxS0.

[99] The full text of this law ("17 U.S. Code § 512 - Limitations on liability relating to material online") can be found at: http://copyright.gov/title17/92chap5.html#512.

[100] The full text of this law ("17 U.S. Code § 107 - Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use") can be found at: http://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html#107.

Scientology's alleged abuses, they had been unable to accomplish in decades what

Anonymous achieved in one month. Utilizing and leveraging an array of new media and

numerous digital platforms, Anonymous announced Project Chanology with a video it

posted on YouTube, entitled "Message to Scientology." Hosted by a figure wearing a

Guy Fawkes mask who speaks in a computer-generated the voice, the video lambasts the

Church's "campaigns of misinformation," and its "suppression of dissent,"[101] and

declares Anonymous's intention to destroy the organization.[102] Following the release of

the video, members of Anonymous executed a barrage of multimedia tactics, both in

digital and physical realms, that not only created public awareness but garnered public

support; they wrote and distributed press releases on the Church's abuses and outlined a

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[101] The Church of Scientology has been accused of financially exploiting its members, and blackmailing members who attempt to leave the church, among other abuses.

[102] The video states: "Hello, Scientology. We are Anonymous. Over the years, we have been watching you. Your campaigns of misinformation; suppression of dissent; your litigious nature, all of these things have caught our eye. With the leakage of your latest propaganda video into mainstream circulation, the extent of your malign influence over those who trust you, who call you leader, has been made clear to us. Anonymous has therefore decided that your organization should be destroyed. For the good of your followers, for the good of mankind--for the laughs--we shall expel you from the Internet and systematically dismantle the Church of Scientology in its present form. We acknowledge you as a serious opponent, and we are prepared for a long, long campaign. You will not prevail forever against the angry masses of the body politic. Your methods, hypocrisy, and the artlessness of your organization have sounded its death knell. You cannot hide; we are everywhere. We cannot die; we are forever. We're getting bigger every day--and solely by the force of our ideas, malicious and hostile as they often are. If you want another name for your opponent, then call us Legion, for we are many. Yet for all that we are not as monstrous as you are; still our methods are a parallel to your own. Doubtless you will use the Anon's actions as an example of the persecution you have so long warned your followers would come; this is acceptable. In fact, it is encouraged. We are your SPs. Gradually as we merge our pulse with that of your "Church", the suppression of your followers will become increasingly difficult to maintain. Believers will wake, and see that salvation has no price. They will know that the stress, the frustration that they feel is not something that may be blamed upon Anonymous. No--they will see that it stems from a source far closer to each. Yes, we are SPs. But the sum of suppression we could ever muster is eclipsed by that of the RTC. Knowledge is free. We are Anonymous. We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us." See "Message to Scientology": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCbKv9yiLiQ.

plan to end its corruption; they made prank calls, sent black faxes,[103] and used distributed

denial-of-service attacks (DDoS)[104] to take down the Church's websites and disrupt its

operations, and using social media to coordinate mass efforts, effectively organized

protests that reached around the world. In a matter of days, a nebulous, decentralized and

leaderless group had mobilized thousands of individuals in 50 countries, bound by

newfound knowledge and united in a common cause, and had captured the attention of

mainstream media and the general public.

5.3 Misnomers, Labels, and Depictions of Dissenters
    While a great deal of excitement surrounded the public emergence of

Anonymous, its members' use of illegal tactics made them susceptible to defamation, and

a multitude of mainstream media outlets quickly vilified them. The Los Angeles Fox

affiliate KTTV, for one, dubbed them "cyber bullies" and "hackers on steroids." The Fox

affiliate even went so far as to call the group "domestic terrorists" while playing an

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[103] A black fax is a method of disrupting a fax machine by disabling it or causing it to run out of toner. A
black fax is sent by repeatedly sending a completely black page through a fax transmission to another fax
machine. In addition to causing the excessive use of ink and toner, this transmission can cause the machine
to become mechanically or electronically overwhelmed and to shut down.

[104] A distributed denial of service attack (commonly abbreviated as DoS or DDoS) is a means of taking
down a website or other online content by rendering the server on which the content is hosted unreachable
by other computers. Although there are multiple ways to accomplish this, it often involves the attacker's
computer bombarding the target server with fraudulent requests for information, or by exploiting network
protocol in a way that causes the targeted server to utilize all of its available resources in attempts to
connect with another machine (Molsa, 2005).

unrelated video clip of an exploding van, [105] to serve as a depiction of the terrorist threat

that Anonymous supposedly poses (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Fox Depiction of Anonymous

The media's coverage of Anonymous is not surprising, however, for it is deeply

reminiscent of how media outlets have traditionally treated subcultures. As Dick

Hebdige explains,

> The emergence of a spectacular subculture is invariably accompanied by a
>
> wave of hysteria in the press. This hysteria is typically ambivalent: it
>
> fluctuates between dread and fascination, outrage and amusement. Shock
>
> and horror headlines dominate the front page while, inside, the editorials

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[105] The Fox broadcast can be viewed at http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/internet-hate-machine. The described scene occurs 52 seconds into the video.

positively bristle with 'serious commentary' and the centre spreads or

supplements contain delirious accounts of the latest fads and rituals.

(Subculture, the Meaning of Style 92-93)

According to Hebdige, it is typically a "subculture's stylistic innovations which first

attract the media's attention." The media then deems and labels the innovations as

"deviant," frames them as a "transgression of sartorial codes," and uses them to prompt

or encourage "moral panic" (93). It is a simple and predictable recipe, and one that has

proven to be frighteningly effective.

Remarkably, however, despite Fox's (and other news outlets') best efforts to

provoke public fear of the group, the work that Anonymous has done since Project

Chanology has drawn the celebration and support of millions of people. As Fruzsina

Eordogh, a writer for *The Guardian* described it in 2013, "The spooky criminal portrayal

of Anonymous has melted from the public consciousness, to be replaced with an image of

strangers in pale masks passionate about improving society, one cause at a time."[106]

More specifically, in the years since it launched Project Chanology, Anonymous

has increasingly shown itself to be not a group of dangerous delinquents, but a network

that claims a deep commitment to justice in theory and in practice; its members, no

longer reducible to pranksters or trolls, have become staunch defenders of free speech,

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[106] This article, entitled "How Anonymous have become digital culture's protest heroes" appeared in The Guardian on April 15, 2013.

actively fighting censorship and combating surveillance "in an era when the surveillance state has never been more powerful" (Leonard 2). Constantly shifting its tactics and utilizing new digital spaces, Anonymous has mobilized a growing number of individuals who, acting in defense of human rights, have waged impactful campaigns against PayPal, Fox News, Citigroup, Amazon, the FBI, the CIA, Scotland Yard, and the Vatican, among many others. As a collective, Anonymous has educated the public, exposed corruption, and sought justice on a variety of fronts, from protecting free speech, to freeing hostages,[107] to defending rape victims.[108] Its activities have been making headlines around the world every week for several years, and it has become the subject of serious and sustained analyses, with some authors sympathetic to its goals and others concerned about its practices and the potential for negative outcomes.

5.4 Defining Anonymous

Nearly (if not) all accounts of Anonymous confer that it emerged in 2003, on the /b/ message board on 4chan.org, an uncensored forum on which anonymous users (also known as Anons) post and discuss a wide range of content. Described by Christian Fuchs as a site that is "at the same time anarchistic, mean, rude, absurd, pornographic, political,

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[107] The group effectively facilitated the release of an Anonymous member who had been kidnapped by Los Zetas. See NBC News, "Anonymous wins victory in drug cartel fight": http://www.nbcnews.com/id/45169382/ns/technology_and_science-security/t/anonymous-wins-victory-drug-cartel-fight/#.UW8mqsrQhBo.

[108] Anonymous sought justice for the now deceased 17-year-old Rehtaeh Parsons, an alleged gang rape victim who killed herself after being bullied by her Nova Scotian classmates. See http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/canada/9991536/Rehtaeh-Parsons-Canadian-police-re-open-case-into-rape-of-suicide-teen.html

creative, playful, [and] sarcastic" (89), 4chan has become notorious for its "depraved

images and nasty jokes," and its users best known for their trolling and shameless pursuit

of the lulz— that is, acts to incite laughter at someone else's expense (Olson 32). Anons

created the now-famous LOLcats memes, began "rickrolling" (a bait and switch tactic in

which hyperlinks that appear to be relevant instead lead to a video of the 1987 Rick

Astley song, "Never Gonna Give You Up") and have developed their own jargon and

etiquette.

As users of a censorship-free site, Anons reappropriate discourse and regularly

wield a variety of words that society deems off-limits. As Parmy Olson, the author of We

Are Anonymous: Inside the Hacker World of LulzSec, Anonymous, and the Global

Cyber Insurgency, explains:

> Racist comments, homophobia, and jokes about disabled people were the
> norm. It was customary for users to call one another "nigger," "faggot,"
> or just "fag." New 4chan users were newfags, old ones oldfags, and Brits
> were britfags, homosexuals were fagfags or gayfags. It was a gritty world
> yet strangely accepting. It became taboo to identify one's sex, race, or age.
> Stripping 4chan users of their identifying features made everyone feel
> more like part of a collective, and this is what kept many coming back.
> (34)

Despite the use of labels to categorize and differentiate members, Anons developed a

sense of solidarity and unity through the culture of 4chan— a space that emphasizes the

importance of the freedom of information and which objects to only two things: child

pornography, and "moralfags"— that is, users who oppose 4chan's vile content and attempt to intervene, or "worse," as Olson puts it, try "to get /b/ to act on some other kind of wrongdoing" (Olson 35). Anonymous members of /b/ were in it for the lulz and held no commitment of any kind to anyone or anything. As such, in 2008, when discussions of the Church of Scientology and its abuses began to inundate the /b/ board, with users coordinating efforts to intervene and dismantle the Church, 4chan's Anons broke into two distinct factions: those it in for the lulz and those in it for social justice (aka moralfags). As discussions about the CoS began to monopolize the /b/ board, (and stifle other discussion topics) site moderators created "711chan" and "xenu," new boards dedicated solely to discussions of Chanology (Olson 89).

While nearly all sustained accounts of Anonymous deem Project Chanology a definitive turning point in the collective when a "radical new generation of members that eschewed pure lulz in favor of focused, disruptive action" emerged, defining the new Anonymous has proven difficult. Comprised of unknown number of unidentifiable individuals who utilize a wide range of tactics, Anonymous troubles many conceptual categories, and has left "the media at a loss for even how to describe them." As Quinn Norton, a journalist for Wired, explains,

> We've tried hacker group, notorious hacker group, hacktivists, the Internet Hate Machine, pimply-faced, basement-dwelling teenagers, an activist organization, a movement, a collective, a vigilante group, online terrorists, and any number of other fantastical and colorful terms. None of them have ever really fit. Anonymous has constantly forced us to reach for the

thesaurus — revealing that as a whole, we in the media have no idea what

Anonymous really is or what it means.[109]

While some, like Norton propose that Anonymous be understood as a culture that has "its

own aesthetics and values, art and literature, social norms and ways of production, and

even its own dialectic language" others define it as a hacker movement; still others, like

Gabriella Coleman, say it's both. Describing Anonymous as "one of the most extensive

movements to have arisen almost directly from certain quarters of the Internet," Coleman

defines Anonymous as a hacktivist culture whose strategies include "part digital direct

action, part human rights technology activism, and part performance spectacle" (Coding

Freedom 210). Anonymous members are "hackers, technologists, activists, human rights

advocates and geeks" who organize collective actions online and offline both to "advance

political causes" but also simply "for sheer amusement" ("Our Weirdness is Free" 83).

More specifically, she contends that although "Anonymous has increasingly devoted its

energies to (and become known for) digital dissent and direction action around various

'ops,' it has no definitive trajectory," and "no consistent philosophy or political program"

(84). Its operations, she asserts, "often come together haphazardly," and "lack an

overarching strategy," making "Anonymous's overall direction […] somewhat opaque

even to those on the inside" (85).

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[109] This article entitled, "Anonymous 101:Introduction to the Lulz," appeared in Wired on November 8, 2011.

While some think Anonymous has the potential to be an agent of social change, others deem it a sincere threat to Cybersecurity. There is no census on who or what Anonymous *is*; however, persistent across a variety of accounts is the tendency to describe Anons as hackers (i.e. people who utilize technology in ways deemed disruptive) or hactivists (i.e. people who hack for a political cause). More problematic than the way these designations reduce members of Anonymous to mere manipulators of computer systems and denote criminal activity, is that the Anonymous network itself has repeatedly addressed and rejected these labels. In a press release issued in 2010, for example, the network stated, "Anonymous is not a group of hackers. We are average Internet Citizens ourselves and our motivation is a collective sense of being fed up with all the minor and major injustices we witness every day."[110]

While members of the Anonymous networks utilize technological skills, illegally taking down websites is just one of the many strategies that (some and certainly not all) members of Anonymous employ and most members, in fact, utilize only legal tactics. While some of Anonymous's rhetoric echoes and is reminiscent of the hacker ethos that values free information and access to that information, since 2008, Anonymous has become a highly organized and unique network of networks that takes action against a wide array of human rights abuses and effectively organizes international campaigns to oppose such abuses. Hackers don't write press releases detailing injustices and create videos claiming responsibility for their hacks; they don't organize international

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[110] See: http://news.cnet.com/8301-13506_3-20025288-17.html.

campaigns to educate and mobilize the public in defense of civil liberties, and leverage their collective skills in political ways to get their particular demands met. Anonymous does.

The Anonymous networks' identity is based on its members' political motivations, not on their proficiency with technology. Its members' objectives are decidedly ideological, not technological. And, collectively, its members have become an influential force around the world, not due to their technical skills (as many web-users have those— so many, in fact, that Anonymous operations have been able to occur) but due to their passionate insistence on social justice and commitment to their causes; their ability to quickly organize at local, national and international levels; their creative and innovative strategies; and their incredibly effective branding. To be clear, they are much more than hackers or hactivists, and, and given the major gains they have made, it is likely that a great deal can be learned from the methods and practices they have utilized and developed since 2008, when members stopped "doing it (solely) for the lulz" and became devoted agents of social justice.

5.5 Anonymous Tactics
As a leaderless and faceless collective of individuals whose identities are concealed, Anonymous is, in many ways, a nebulous, amorphous, and mysterious network of networks. However, since 2008—when, as the New Yorker put it, the

network outgrew 4chan,—[111] Anonymous has established a distinct (albeit dynamic)

identity based on particular motives and organized around particular actions. In a video

posted to YouTube in January, 2008, the network states, "We are a collection of

individuals united by ideas. You likely know Anonymous, although you don't know

exactly who we are. We are your brothers and sisters, your parents and children, your

superiors and your underlings. We are the concerned citizens standing next to you.

Anonymous is everywhere, yet nowhere."[112] In another video, it describes itself as "a

collective of individuals united by an awareness that someone must do the right thing,

that someone must bring light to the darkness, that someone must open the eyes of a

public that has slumbered for far too long."[113]

In the years since Project Chanology, the network has pursued its stated

commitment to "do the right thing" and, through organized Operations (also known as

AnonOps), has confronted a wide array of human rights injustices and taken action

against numerous governmental, corporate, and political targets. Consider for example,

Operation Iran. In June, 2009, after the Iranian presidential election (in which Iran's

incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared the winner), thousands of

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[111] Kushner, David. "The Masked Avengers." *The New Yorker* 8 Sept. 2014. *The New Yorker*. Web. 29 Nov. 2015. See: http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/08/masked-avengers

[112] This definition is stated in a YouTube video, entitled, "An Anonymous Warning Against Scientology." See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HViNfYHw228

[113] This definition is stated in a YouTube video, released on January 28th, 2008. Entitled "Call to Action," it cited abuses by the Church of Scientology and called for organized protests to take place at Church centers around the world on February 10, 2008. The video can be accessed at the following url: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrkchXCzY70

Iranians accused the government of vote-rigging and protested in public demonstrations. When Iranian authorities attempted to stifle the opposition by disrupting mobile-phone connections and blocking oppositional websites and other media, Anonymous launched Operation Iran and, in collaboration with The Pirate Bay and an unknown number of Iranian hackers, created websites and materials to support the protestors. Providing users with tools to fight the Iranian government's censorship, they distributed information explaining how to launch DDoS attacks against government websites, how to protect against surveillance, and how to safely organize impactful and nonviolent modes of resistance. Then, showing how it's done, Anonymous dismantled numerous Iranian government websites and leaked more than 10,000 government emails, bringing worldwide attention to not only a serious crisis, but to a variety of ways others could aide in and join the resistance.

Anonymous intervened and lent support in a similar manner in January, 2011, when in Egypt more than two million people took to the streets to peacefully protest the continuing reign of corrupt and abusive dictator, Hosni Mubarak. When Egyptian security forces retaliated with a wide range of violent acts, with officials shooting, stabbing, beating, tear-gassing, sexually assaulting, and killing unarmed citizens, Anonymous launched Operation Egypt and immediately dismantled the Egyptian government & Muslim Brotherhood websites with DDoS attacks. It then created Twitter and Facebook accounts for #OpEgypt and released (what it describes as, and what most members of the civilized world would consider) "shocking video footage" of the "barbaric crackdown," which spread to countless sites. On February 11, 2011— just

eighteen days after the protests began— Hosni Mubarak, the country's dictator for 29 years, resigned from his post as president.

These examples are not intended to imply that Anonymous was the sole or most important factor in these uprisings and social movements (nor am I implying that Anonymous was responsible for overthrowing a dictator); furthermore, given the daunting challenges that remain in Iran and Egypt, it is difficult (and, in many ways, not yet possible) to assess the impact or success of these interventions. However, among the things these examples *do* reflect is that Anonymous is devoted to protecting far more than just the freedom of information and, indeed, has developed a distinct and discernible identity based on a staunch commitment to social justice. As an Anon, speaking with a reporter for the Guardian in 2010 put it, the group is a "loose band of people who share the same kind of ideals" and who are working to be a force for "chaotic good" (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Chaotic Good

Indeed, "loose" is the operative word, as there is no formal way of joining

Anonymous; it has no membership requirements or registration, no command structure or

organized leadership, no log that tracks participants' involvement or details of their

demographic data. The group is constantly changing and adapting, losing followers and

gaining them, yielding a highly dynamic and unfixed collective that is remarkably fluid

and adaptable. Members exhibit distinct differences and behave in vastly different ways

(in their technological prowess, the methods they use, the legal or illegal tactics they

endorse or oppose, and the ethical frameworks to which they subscribe, to name just a

few), with some only prompted to action to support specific causes, and others committed

to leading the charge against any identified human rights abuse. They come from

different backgrounds, have different motivations, skills, allegiances, ethical standards,

and levels of involvement, and together reflect a plurality of interests and concerns— yet,

they have nonetheless formed a united-front and have executed Operations using a

variety of tactics that reflect a diverse range of collective skills (Figure 6).

Figure 6: We Are Among You

5.6 Members of the Chaotic Good

Crucial to Anonymous Operations are Internet Relay Chat networks (IRCs),

digital communication platforms that, as AnnonNet.org describes it, "enable the free flow

of ideas and communication without fear of third party interception, monitoring,

intimidation or coercion." Designed to "Provide reliable communications facilities to

projects and/or groups with a humanitarian objective," and "unmoderated, unmonitored

lines of communication between users," IRCs "store only information required for operation of the network"[114] and serve as the site of discussion for Anonymous members. It is on IRCs that Operations are born, as it serves as the channel by which members share information, discuss human rights abuses, and propose, debate, and initiate each Anonymous Operation.

When a target has been identified, Anons create a video, which they publish on YouTube, and write a press release, which they distribute across a variety of digital platforms, detailing the new Operation and its objectives. Each video, hosted by a figure wearing a Guy Fawkes mask who speaks in a computer-generated voice, clearly cites a specific abuse and identifies the definitive target responsible for the abuse. With the identity of the video's host and creators concealed, the network encourages people to act— not based on the influence of a popular figurehead, celebrity, or established authority (indeed, perhaps in spite of the sight of a masked figure whom some viewers may be quick to dismiss or ridicule) — but based on the merit of the information and evidence it presents (Figure 7). Each video also leverages social media by announcing the Operations assigned name and hashtag— establishing the shorthand by which members and new supporters can immediately organize, collaborate, and share information on high traffic sites like, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and across a variety of digital platforms.

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[114] See: http://site.anonnet.org/

Figure 7: Anonymous Video

While spreading the word of a cited injustice is central to the network's efforts, equally crucial are its efforts and its ability to substantiate its claims. By coordinating fact-finding missions on each cited injustice, and compiling and organizing relevant information into collections referred to as "dox," (also written "d0x"), members aim not only to support their allegations with concrete evidence, but to educate the public by posting dox on various websites and by distributing them via email, blogs, and social networking services. Though some (if not all, or perhaps the majority) of the information compiled in a dox is already public, these collections sometimes reveal private and sensitive information, such as someone's name, known aliases, home address, phone number, social security number, and credit card data. For example, in March, 2013,

Anonymous released to the public an enormous pedophile d0x (which has been translated into French, German, Greek, and Gaelic, with more translations expected) in an attempt to raise public awareness about pedophilia and child sex rings. Dubbed Operation PedoChat, the dox included not only users' personal data, but also messages between users of the sites, including one from Belgian political figure, Hans-Peter Luyckx, who allegedly wrote, "I love 9, 10 and 11 year old girls. Can someone help me to find them?"[115] Although Mr. Luyckx denied the claims, he promptly quit his job after Anonymous published his name in its list of alleged pedophiles.

Despite that all of the aforementioned tactics, as well as many d0x, break no laws whatsoever, the tactic for which Anonymous has best become known (and the tactic most often highlighted by mainstream media outlets) is the only illegal tactic it employs: distributed denial of service attacks (commonly abbreviated as DoS or DDoS). A DDoS is a means of taking down a website or other online content by rendering the server on which the content is hosted unreachable by other computers. Although there are multiple ways to accomplish this, it often involves the "attacker's" computer bombarding the target server with fraudulent requests for information, or by exploiting network protocol in a way that causes the targeted server to utilize all of its available resources in attempts to connect with another machine (Molsa, 2005). For example, following the aforementioned d0x released in #OpPedoChat, Anonymous organized attacks against

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[115] See http://www.networkworld.com/community/blog/dox-predator-anonymous-leaks-pii-alleged-pedophiles-child-pornographers

more than 100 child pornography websites, effectively hijacking domains and rendering numerous sites inoperable or completely inaccessible.[116]

With each hack (and unlike hackers), Anonymous claims responsibility for each attack and, on each website it defaces, features its logo and its slogan (Figure 8):

We are Anonymous.
We are Legion.
We do not forgive.
We do not forget.
Expect us.

Figure 8: Anonymous Logo and Slogan

Marking each website-takeover and takedown with its insignia— a person in a suit with a question mark in the place of the head— and its five-sentence mantra, Anonymous not only claims accountability for its transgressions, but brands its operations in a way that is enigmatic, attention-getting, memorable, and easily replicated.

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[116] It is worth noting that is not the first time Anonymous has targeted sex offenders; in October, 2011, the group launched Operation Darknet (#OpDarknet), attacked over 40 pedophilia-sharing websites, and exposed more than 1,500 alleged pedophiles.

Also crucial to the Anonymous network's branding process are the memes that members create for each Operation. Serving as visual signifiers that represent complex issues, memes are ideas (represented in images, videos, and/or with text) that get copied and recreated with variations, and which spread rapidly online (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Scientology Tom Cruise Memes

Memes can center on any subject matter and can be used in the service or support of any aim or idea. Although they can be used to reinforce oppression and existing hierarchies, Anonymous has shown that memes can also be used as a tool to issue potent critiques, promote social justice, and disrupt dominant discourses. More than simplistic imagery, memes are widely accessible "units of culture" that (like the members of Anonymous) emerged on 4chan. As such, to understand memes and the Anonymous network itself, it is crucial to understand the culture of their 4chan origin, and the logic, principles, and approach to ethics that inform their methods and modalities.

Chapter 6- The Logic of 4chan and Rogue Epistemes

6.1 The 4chan /b/ Board

Created in 2003 by then-fifteen year-old, Christopher Poole, 4chan is an imageboard website that was modeled after the Japanese content-sharing site 2channel.com (2chan). Although it originated as a forum where teenagers could trade and discuss Japanese anime and manga images, 4chan quickly developed a multitude of imageboards, with each dedicated to a different topic, and each attracting new audiences. Within five years, the site was garnering more than 200 million page views per month, (Schwartz) and currently boasts 680 million page views per month.[117] With roughly one million new posts per day and 22 million unique visitors per month, 4chan is estimated by some to be "the fourth largest bulletin board on the Internet" (Grossman 42).

Although 4chan currently hosts more than 55 individually-themed imageboards and offers an extraordinary breadth of content, it's most popular imageboard by far— and that from which Anonymous emerged— is the "random" board, commonly referred to as /b/. A bastion of anonymity, the /b/ board requires no user registration, lists no author names, and keeps no archives. All "threads expire and are pruned by 4chan's software at

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[117] See: http://www.4chan.org/advertise

a relatively high rate," and "content is usually available for only a few hours or days before it is removed".[118] As its name suggests, the topics discussed on the random board are wide-ranging and— perhaps, less obvious— /b/'s topics are entirely unregulated, yielding a digital free-for-all forum where posts may feature everything from pornography to cute puppies, original artwork to gory violence, from video game debates to coding tutorials and pictures of fine cuisine. Alongside discussions of comic books, world geography, home repair tips, recipes, movie-poster art, religious faiths, and the sharing of well wishes (Figure 10)[119] are posts that most members of the general

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[118] See: www.4chan.org/faq

[119] The 4chan /b/ threads featured in Figures 10 and 11 were saved (by unknown individuals) via a screen shot or image capture, and was then turned into a meme (by unknown individuals). It should be noted that 4chan explicitly discourages users from saving, via screen-shot or any other method, any threads and content posted on /b/ or other boards, as it is the site's prompt deletion of all posts and its refusal to keep an archive that protect users' anonymity and their freedom of expression. However, (as will soon be discussed in this chapter, in a detailed exploration of memes), because memes are central to /b/ and the logic that informs its subversion of dominant codes, it is likely that this meme may bother some users, but may be appreciated or excepted and proliferated by others.

Figure 10: Religion on 4chan

population would deem absolutely horrifying— posts featuring deeply disturbing imagery, vulgar threats and bullying, shockingly unsettling fantasies, and hateful, racists, sexist, misogynistic, and homophobic expressions of all kinds (Figure 11).[120]

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[120] The thread featured in the meme (which I accessed from http://fumaga.com/6060 on September 2, 2015) reads:
User 1: Serious question /b/. You are hiking through the snowy forest only to come across the scene in this picture. She turns around to face you. She is crying. She tells you that she has been raped, her clothes have been stolen, her legs have been broken and she cannot get up. What do you do?
User 2: Unzip my pants.
User 3: round 2?
User 4: I'd check my map again. Clearly, I'm walking in circles.

Figure 11: /b/ and Rape References

The /b/ board is a receptacle of and for all things— whether they be banal, intriguing, vitriolic, kindhearted, generous, vapid, curious, absurd, or incomprehensible— but perhaps not surprisingly, given the vile discussion featured in Figure 11, the board has largely become known and notorious for its extraordinary capacity to disgust, repulse, and offend.

Indeed, a great deal of (what mentally-stable, non-violent people would consider) deeply offensive (and downright frightening) content appears on /b/, and it hosts such an abundance of depraved content that it can be tempting to quickly deem it an internet-hate-machine. However, by resisting the impulse to become transfixed on the offensiveness of some posts (and by employing a willingness to see beyond them), we can learn a great

deal from the from the 4chan network. While it is anyone's guess whether the creators of

vile content truly believe the things they say or what their intentions are, the appearance

of vile content on /b/ should be understood as reflecting the site's immovable

commitment to allow absolute free speech of any kind and its promise that users are and

will remain completely free from censorship. As such, on the /b/ board, nearly anything

goes, as 4chan's only strictly held rule is: no child pornography. Users can actively reject

social, cultural, ethical and all other boundaries, speak without fear of repercussions, and

say whatever they want about whatever or whomever they'd like.

Users refer to themselves as "/b/tards," and commonly reappropriate

reprehensibly offensive terms in ways that subvert their meanings. Boldly wielding

words that society deems off-limits, such as "fag," users claim autonomy from dominant

codes and rules, and refuse to take seriously what most deem offensive. Each language

or image-based transgression serves as a symbolic "fuck you" to all who see them and

functions as a loud declaration of the board's and its users' unabashed freedom. Any post

that does not "violate local or Unites States law"[121] is considered acceptable and

everything (every person, idea, and post) is subject to discussion, ridicule, and

exploitation. While it is easy to become distracted by or transfixed on /b/'s more

depraved posts, important to my exploration is not the content of /b/ or its virtue, but an

examination of the creative logic on which it depends— for it is has yielded an

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[121] For example, child pornography is not allowed, but jokes about child pornography are.

alternative episteme that powerfully subverts dominant systems of understanding and

makes possible new ways of knowing.

6.2 The Disruptive Logic of Play: Doing it for the Lulz

Regardless of the topic, each thread on /b/ reflects an in-progress conversation

that utilizes phrases, terms, and imagery that make sense to members of the community,

but which are typically confusing, disorienting, or incomprehensible to first-time users.

Based not on the logic of consumption, but rather on the logic of play, /b/ serves as a

hybrid mediascape, designed to generate amusement through the pursuit of lulz. Lulz—

itself a bastardization and corruption of "LOL," the popularized abbreviation for

"laughing out loud,"— range from wholesome humor to belittling mockery and

unabashed schadenfreude. Described by Schwartz as the "joy of disrupting another's

emotional equilibrium," lulz can be grotesque, adorable, offensive, hilarious, inspiring, or

confusing (2). It's the laughter of pain and of indecency. It's a laughter that heightens

and underscores contradictions and inconsistencies, and often prompts people to consider

issues of injustice, cruelty, hypocrisy, and abuse, regardless of people's personal stances

on those issues.

Yet more powerful than the sentiments that lulz convey or the reactions they

provoke, is the fact that they are— above all else— entirely free in every sense. Lulz can

be had by all, cost nothing to produce or consume, have no boundaries or borders, and no

allegiance to social decorum or established conventions. They are diverse, autonomous,

ephemeral productions in a realm in which the strategies of engagement are subject to

change, yet each can be understood as a politically-charged effort to "seek a blind

response that will disrupt our projects" (Baudrillard, Selected Writings 206). That is, lulz

are powerful rejections of the seriousness of the modern world— co-optations of humor

that "play with social meanings" in ways that "disrupt our definition of reality" and

which have the potential to affect the attitudes and lived experiences of social subjects

(Paolucci and Richardson 3). As potent experiments in reinvention and inversion, lulz

can serve as powerful tools that are capable of deconstructing conventional forms of

knowledge, truth, and power (Figure 12).
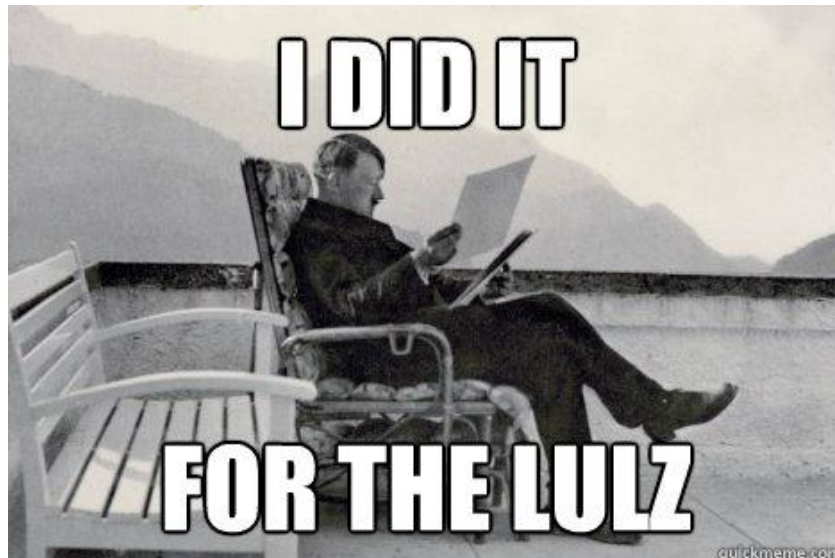

Figure 12: Hitler Lulz

6.3 The Emergence of the Memes and lolspeak
Among the most popularized and possibly the most powerful constructions to have

emerged from /b/'s lulz are memes— basic "units of cultural transmission," such as ideas,

behaviors, or styles, that spread throughout a culture. [122] Memes can feature or reference

anything— a pop culture trend, event, or instance; a movie, song, or television show; a

fictional character, animal, celebrity, political figure, or unknown person; an activity, fad,

or occurrence; a catchphrase, idiomatic expression, or joke— and reflect a "phrase or

idea that gets loose and works its way into many discourses" (Ludlow 448). The author

or creator of the meme is typically never known and is irrelevant— for what distinguishes

a meme is its rate of— and its insistence on— imitation, and its ability to prompt the

production of offshoot memes. "Propagat[ing] themselves in the meme pool by leaping

from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation,"

memes evolve rapidly, competing for relevance, attention, and the chance to become viral

(Dawkins, Selfish Gene 192). [123]

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[122] More specifically, Dawkins explains, "A meme should be regarded as a unit of information residing in the brain …just as genetic information is stored in the DNA. Its phenotypic effects, in contrast, are its consequences in the outside world. The phenotypic effects of a meme may be in the form of words, music, visual images, styles of clothing, facial or hand gestures, skills such as opening milk bottles in tits, or panning wheat in Japanese macaques. They are the outward and visible (audible, etc.) manifestations of memes within the brain. They may be perceived by the sense organs of other individuals, and they may so imprint themselves on the brains of the receiving individuals that a copy (not necessarily exact) of the original meme is graven in the receiving brain. The new copy of the meme is then in a position to broadcast its phenotypic effects, with the result that further copies of itself may be made in yet other brains" (Dawkins 109).

[123] It should be noted that British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (who is commonly credited with introducing the meme) was not the only theorist to conceptualize culture in the context of tiny units of culture that replicate and transform. Roland Barthes, for one, in 1970, explored in his text S/Z the idea of the "seme," or a single unit of semantic meaning. Other theorists who have contributed to the use of the meme term and concept include American philosopher Daniel Dennett, American biological anthropologist William Durham, Harvard University biologist Edward O. Wilson, and British psychologist Susan Blackmore.

Featuring text with intentional misspellings and intentionally awkward grammar errors known as "lolspeak,"[124] and informed by the logic of lulz and play, memes often (aim to) cause confusion— confusion about what is being said, confusion about what is and is not intended to be funny, and confusion about the point of the post and why it deserves our attention. Consider, for example, the LOLcats (Figure 13), a meme that emerged on 4chan in 2005, when a user posted a picture of a relaxed cat, waiting for "Caturday." Whether 4chan users found it funny, cute, or stupid, the post inspired a tremendous number of offshoot posts, featuring pictures of other cats expressing their love for "Caturday." Shortly thereafter, a user posted a picture of an overweight grey cat with the text, "I can has cheezburger?" and a wildly popular meme theme was born.

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[124] Regardless of whether they feature animals, most memes feature lolspeak, which according to many 4chan users and other writers, emerged to reference the ways in which animals (which of course can't speak or spell…) might wield language. Others suggest that lolspeak was influenced by some of the poorly-translated, awkward language usages that have appeared in various video games.

Figure 13: LOLcats

Two years after the emergence of lolcats memes, their popularity remained so strong (and had yielded so many offshoot memes, such as Happy Cat, Limecat, Ceiling Cat, and Basement Cat) that Time Magazine, in 2007, published an article about the phenomenon, exploring the ways in which, "Talking cats have taken over the Web," and reporting that a Google search for "lolcat" produced more than 3.3 million results (Grossman, "Creating a Cute Cat Frenzy").

What has maintained these memes' (and any meme's) popularity is its users' willingness to maintain it, for, as self-replicating ideas that require reiteration, memes only "work" and exist if they are shared, copied, altered, and transformed. They are, by

definition, constantly evolving content— moderations, spoofs, or corruptions of an initial idea— that spread through social communities and rely on those communities to for sustainment. It is, for example, via countless reiterations that memes, like the Ryan Gosling Hey Girl meme, come into being (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Ryan Gosling Memes

Spread voluntarily from peer to peer (via email, instant messaging, web forums, blogs, and social networking sites) across horizontally organized networks comprised of unidentified individuals, memes function as inside jokes whose proliferation depends on people's mutual understanding of (and interest in) the joke. Consider, for example, the

particularized audience intended for and required for the proliferation of the following

cultural studies memes (Figure 15):
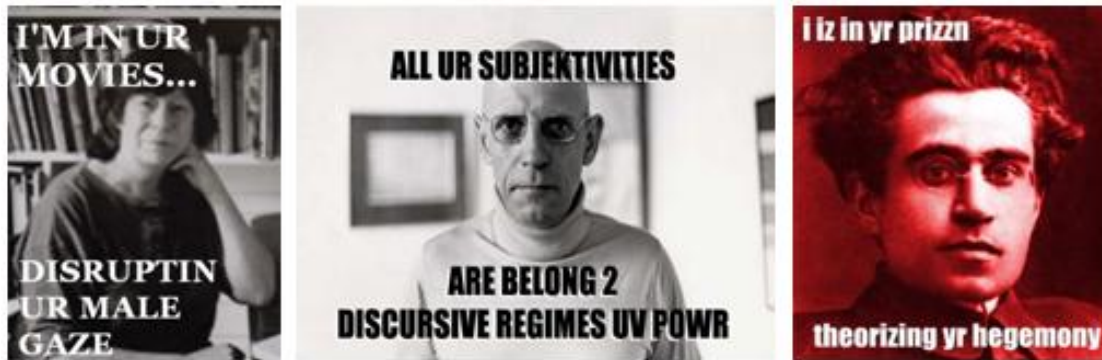
Figure 15: Cultural Studies Memes

Created and posted not for financial gain or in the name of commercial imperatives, but

by those who want to be or consider themselves to be in-on the joke (and whatever being

in-on the joke means to each individual), memes create (that is, require and yield)

communities of participants that depend on and find unity through shared and often

transgressive understandings, and defy totalization by constantly adapting.

6.4 Not (Just) for the Lulz: 4chan's Alternative Discourse and Rogue Epistemes
        While memes and lolspeak can surely be wielded in the service of dominant aims,

they can also be used to subvert a variety of dominant codes, and can enable individuals

and collectives to express dissent in creative, unique, and novel ways. Continuously

producing and evolving a language of their own, memes require a stage of disorientation

that liberates users from dominant— and as Foucault would describe them— oppressive discourses.[125]

Dominant discourses are oppressive, as Foucault explains, not only because they are used as a means of determining who should (have the right to) speak, about which topics, and for how long, but also because they serve to render false or nonsensical any tendencies that could threaten or undermine the existing distribution of power. Based on meaning systems that have gained the status of "truth," dominant discourses derive their power[126] from society's acceptance of the reality it presents to them— constructed realities that are constantly reinforcing through a variety of social institutions, such as the education system and the media. Governing how individuals define and organize their social world, dominant discourses impose discipline and order, shape human desires and subjectivities, and constrain the production of knowledge, dissent, and difference. They are based on systems of inequality and they serve to sustain widespread inequality.

As such, Foucault argues, it is the intellectual's responsibility to make visible the power relations that have been rendered invisible by dominant discourses and regimes of

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[125] Haig Bosmajian, a UW professor of speech communication, refers to this as the "language of oppression" He writes, "While names, words, and language can be, and are, used to inspire us, to motivate us to humane acts, to liberate us, they can also be used to dehumanize human beings and to 'justify' their suppression and even their extermination." That is, in order to justify and defend the inhumane treatment of human beings, dehumanizing terminology or the "language of oppression" was established and propagated by way of academic and legal opinion at the highest levels of the educational and legal communities.

[126] Following Foucauldian thought, power should be understood as a relational force that constructs social organization and hierarchy by producing discourses and truths that impose discipline and order, as well as human subjectivities.

truth,[127] and to work with the public to actively create alternative discourses that directly challenge power— not by seeking an absolute truth (which is merely a socially-produced power)— but by "detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, in Rabinow 1991: 75). That is, by creating alternative discourses that would typically be suppressed in the name of hegemony, networked individuals can disentangle notions of truth from power and hegemony, challenge existing systems of understanding, and can collectively and intelligently disrupt what is known as true. Informed by the logic of 4chan, memes (their makers and their audiences) not only accept dissent, but invite and expect it, and offer new ways for individuals to both express opposition and organize insurrections.

Resulting from new literacies and skills sets, new practices being developed in the context of new technologies, and new forms of communication and economic flows , memes can (and often do) function as confrontational and unapologetic challenges to the status quo, wielding alternative discourses that make possible alternative subjectivities, and which allow people to engage in "a struggle that concerns their own interests, whose objectives they clearly understand and whose methods only they can determine" (Foucault 81). Belonging to a different social universe based on agency, performativity,

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[127] Foucault writes, "Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (207).

and circulation, memes (can) give a voice to individuals and serve as a new form of social participation and potent civic action that can be used to impact how people act, what they pay attention to, and the assumptions they hold about the world in which they live and the people they encounter.

Featuring easily sharable content that enjoys an extended and unpredictable audience reach, memes (have the capacity and potential to) can create new talking points, offer people new perspectives, and "serve as conduit through which ordinary and not-so-ordinary citizens [can] express their views on international relations and influence a policymaker's decision making (Drezner and Farrell 34). That is, as Castells would describe it, by utilizing technology to function and leverage their positioning as nodes within networks, individuals are developing new ways and being afforded new spaces in which they can influence people's thinking and foster meaningful social change.

Furthermore, with the identity of the meme's creator(s) unknown, memes (and their messages) answer to no one and largely escape the threat of repercussions, as political, social, and media groups or individuals who disapprove of or take issue with the meme have no one to blame, retaliate against, criticize, or question. As such, they offer individuals the opportunity to express social commentary, issue sharp critiques, and hold accountable powerful political figures and corporate entities, such as those featured in Figure 16, without fear of punishment or backlash.

Figure 16: Politician Memes

Allowing people to express dissent in creative and unique ways, memes can function as an impactful form of dissent and mode of social influence— and they have played an instrumental role in the Anonymous network's operations, its branding, and its growth. A bunch of text that says something profound will soon appear in this document. A bunch of text that says something profound will soon appear in this document. A bunch

of text that says something profound will soon appear in this document. A bunch of text that says something profound will soon appear in this document. A bunch of text that says something profound will soon appear in this document.

6.5 The Role of Memes and lolspeak in Anonymous Operations

Serving to issue critiques, educate others, recruit supporters, advertise their causes, start conversations, and promote social justice, memes and lolspeak are the hallmarks of Anonymous Operations. Because they are not subjected to or hindered by the many traditional barriers that routinely control (access and entry to) the processes of production, distribution, and consumption, memes (that is, the memes themselves, meme-makers, and their audiences) are able to spread information about (and bring awareness to) issues at rates that advertisers only dream of. More specifically, the process of creating, distributing, and "reading/consuming" memes requires no financial investment, no programming experience, no expensive software, camera equipment, or understanding of coding or imaging programs, (as there are scores of free meme-generators sites), and offer individuals (and collectives) new ways to freely share data, pool knowledge, combine skills, launch inquiries, and utilize free modes of marketing, branding, advertising, and promotion.   As such, memes not only challenge the dominant order, but are based on a logic (of free propagation) that actively defies and subverts the corporate episteme. As Nicholas Mendoza explains, "Instead of commodification by the mainstream, it is 4Chan which exploits the mainstream, deconstructing its text, inverting and problematizing its original intentions in a way that exceeds fan culture" (4). Outside of the dominion of capital, memes are structured by the designer's own creative impulses,

freed from the performances required by the forces of the world of capitalist production, and able to autonomously follow their own alternative logic. Created by unknown authors and shared with and perpetuated by unknown individuals, memes require no approval (from authorities, peers, or anyone else) and, like the culture of 4chan, memes can (and are typically designed to) serve as vehicles of disruption, wherein expressions of dissent are not only accepted, but are expected.

Furthermore, because memes consist of combinations of words and images, they have an aesthetic quality and character that grants them the potential to garner (and to sustain) people's attention— and incite human emotion— in ways that plain text, alone, cannot. Memes (and those who make them) can make use of all colors, hues, designs, shapes, patterns, reference points, languages, symbols, and imagery, and can use countless aesthetic attributes to appeal not only to human rationality and mental reason, but also to a variety of physical senses and human emotions. Memes can be absurd, disturbing, intriguing, disgusting, silly, obnoxious, confusing, inspiring, and exciting, and as such, they have the incredible potential to make interesting the uninteresting— to turn dry topics into funny and engaging ideas and critiques, and to make visible a wide variety of issues that may otherwise go unnoticed (and would therefore likely never be addressed, improved, or corrected).

Conducive to short attention spans, and highly adaptable, memes have been instrumental in Anonymous Operations and its branding efforts. Operation Chanology, for example, has inspired and yielded the production of tens of thousands of memes that

have brought (and continue to bring) attention to the Church's abuses and the

Anonymous network's goals (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Project Chanology Memes

Functioning as eye-catching and memorable ideas "hijack the brain"[128] memes have been

instrumental not only to AnonOp, but to the collective's branding, bringing visibility and

memorability to new modes of resistance and collective identities (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Anonymous Network Memes

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[128] Dan Dennett's TED Talk, "Dangerous Memes"

6.6 Who Cares Who Said It?

As a collective that has created countless cultural objects and texts, and which has coordinated global campaigns without claiming or leveraging traditional markers of esteem, Anonymous calls into question the concept of authorship, notions of authority, and the value of (and need for) attribution today. As Foucault and Barthes (among others) explain, the notion of the author as a particular authority figure emerged (as a social construction) toward the end of the Middle Ages. Denoting privilege and esteem, the concept referred to a person thought to possess a unique, creative power— a "transcendent" and "genial creator of a work in which he deposits, with infinite wealth and generosity, an inexhaustible world of significations" (Foucault "What Is an Author?" 14). Valorizing the voice of a single person, deemed "so different from all other men," (Foucault 13-14) the notion of the author established "the prestige of the individual," and yielded a tradition of literary criticism "tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his history, his tastes, his passions" (Barthes "The Death of the Author" 2).

As a corrective to this tradition (and the ways in which the concept of authorship serves to limit a text),[129] writers like Foucault and Barthes have long argued for the need to "entirely reverse the traditional idea of the author" (Foucault 13), and "to restore the status of the reader" (Barthes 2). As Barthes explains, "the true locus of writing is reading" (5) for it is "language that speaks; not writing" (2). That is, "a text consists of

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[129] Barthes writes, "To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing. This conception perfectly suits criticism, which can then take as its major task the discovery of the Author (or his hypostases: society, history, the psyche, freedom) beneath the work: once the Author is discovered, the text is 'explained'" (5).

multiple writings issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation;" the "one place where this multiplicity is collected, united […] is not the author […] but the reader." While Barthes asserts that "to restore to writing its future, […] the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author" (5-6), Foucault predicts that, as society changes," "the author function will disappear"[130] (14).

More than 50 years later, the "the Author's empire is still very powerful" (Barthes 2), and traditional markers of authority and expertise (such advanced degrees and published works) remain influential; at the same time, however, the members of Anonymous have demonstrated that, in the network society, these are not only the only means by which credibility can be gained, nor are they always even necessary. Without disclosing their identities or leveraging traditional signifiers of esteem, the members of Anonymous (once-dubbed "cyber-terrorists") have garnered increasing global support and repute— not by laying claims to expertise, but through their (modes and methods of) collaborative authorship.

While (the concept and act of) collective authorship (via traditional and digital channels, in physical and virtual worlds) is not at all new, what distinguishes Anonymous's authorship is its use of direct action and its insistence on a fluid collective.

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[130] The full quote reads: "I think that, as our society changes, at the very moment when it is in the process of changing, the author function will disappear, and in such a manner that fiction and its polysemous texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of constraint – one that will no longer be the author but will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced [expérimenter]" (14).

Its members are active, tactical, and prolific, and challenge the traditional model of authorship, not only by refusing fixed meanings and appropriating discourse, but also by producing (and popularizing) units of culture, such as memes, that by definition require collaboration. As derivate mash-ups of recombined materials, memes defy totalization and serve as staunch rejections of all things monolithic.   Individual identity is irrelevant and singularity is useless, as a meme's authority is and can only be constituted through a multiplicity of voices, through reiteration and reinvention. In sharp contrast to traditional literary critics, Anons don't care who said it; they just care that it gets said.

Chapter 7- Conclusion

7.1 The Affordances of Network Society

Since 2008, when Anonymous launched Operation Chanology and declared itself a network committed to social justice, its members and contributors have launched scores of operations in defense of human rights, and have worked together in defense of the oppressed. Waging passionate and impactful campaigns to bring visibility to a wide range of human-rights abuses, to expose and hold accountable oppressive powers, members of Anonymous have sought to identify, utilize and leverage every affordance of network society and the new modes of resistance it makes possible.

In the seven years since the first Anonymous Operation began, Anonymous has launched scores of other campaigns— campaigns such as Occupy Philippines, Operation India, Operation Quebec, Operation Cyprus, Operation Japan, Operation Anaheim, Operation Singapore, Operation NSA, Operation Israel, Operation Didgeridie, Operation Titstorm, Operation Payback, Operation Avenge Assange, Operation Leakspin, Operation Sony, Operation India, Operation Malaysia, Operation Orlando, Operation Intifada, Operation Anti-Security, Operation Facebook, Operation Occupy, Operation Syria, Operation DarkNet, Operation North Korea, Operation Ferguson, Operation Hong Kong, Operation Infosurge, and Operation KKK, among others, as well as its current 2015 projects: Operation Ice ISIS, Operation Death Eaters, Operation Stop Reclamation, Operation Anon Down, and Operation StormFront, to name just a few— and has not only

spread awareness of and/or put an end to hundreds of injustices, but has made its

collective power (and its unwavering commitment to social justice and human freedom)

known. Anonymous Operations have brought about material and, in some cases,

revolutionary results that have changed and are changing the world, as members have

successfully overthrown political dictatorships, exposed rapists, pedophiles, and other

criminals, shut down child pornography sites, freed hostages, secured individuals'

freedom from censorship and their access to information, and have exposed and disrupted

corrupt governments and political practices all over the world. As such, their operations

illuminate and lend insight into the ways in which networks make possible new methods

of global organization and collaboration, and allow individuals to combine their

collective might, imaginations, intellect, expertise, and courage to creatively and non-

violently subvert dominant powers and actively participate in civic life.

7.2 Horizontal Organization and the Agency in Network Society
        As argued by Castells and demonstrated by Anonymous, the horizontal

organization of network society not only offers individuals new modes of engagement

and new ways to organize and pool resources, but also makes possible the construction of

new identities, granting individuals new modes of meaning-making and opportunities to

form new alliances. Furthermore, the successes and impact of Anonymous's

horizontally-organized Operations serve to highlight the weaknesses, inefficiencies, and

abuses of hierarchical logic—the dominant logic of capitalist societies that pervades

institutions of all kinds, from corporate to educational, governmental, religious, and

social. That is, because hierarchies rely on a rigid, top-down structure that clearly

delineates (and constantly reinforces the power differences between) the leaders and the

led, and which differentiates the speakers from the spoken-to, hierarchical organization

greatly inhibits collaboration and collective potential. Networks, on the other hand, are

fluid and unpredictable, and operating according to a highly dynamic and open system

that is "susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance," are able to quickly and

easily adapt, evolve, and innovate (Castells 501).

While vertically-organized hierarchical logic subordinates individuals,

horizontally organized network-logic empowers them, offering participants agency and a

variety of means by which they can actively counteract the "logic of domination." As

Castells explains,

> These networks do more than organizing activity and sharing information.
>
> They are the actual producers, and distributors, of cultural codes. Not only
>
> over the Net, but in their multiple forms of exchange and interaction. Their
>
> impact on society rarely stems from a concerted strategy, masterminded
>
> by a center. Their most successful campaigns, their most striking
>
> initiatives, often result from "turbulences" in the interactive network of
>
> multilayered communication. […] It is in these back alleys of society,
>
> whether in alternative electronic networks or in grassrooted networks of
>
> communal resistance, that I have sensed the embryos of a new society,
>
> labored in the fields of history by the power of identity. (Castells, Volume
>
> 2, Conclusion: Social Change in the Network Society, 7).

Consistently producing new memes and rogue epistemes, the Anonymous network and its members are, as Castells asserts, "the actual producers, and distributors, of cultural codes" and are using memes to educate others, spur interaction, incite conversation, challenge normatives, and call attention to issues that otherwise would be overlooked or altogether unheard of. Freed from the confines of censorship, memes can be used to collectively disrupt what is known as true, and serving as a new form of dissent and civic action, can prompt transformative change.

Furthermore, while traditional forms of expertise have always been mediated through isolated disciplines and channels, in network society, the "collective exchange of knowledge cannot be fully contained by previous sources of power" (such as bureaucratic hierarchies, media monarchies and international economic networks that "depended on maintaining tight control over the flow of information").[131] As a result, individuals have an immense and unprecedented opportunity to use networks to construct "intelligent communities in which our social and cognitive potential can be mutually developed and enhanced" (Levy 1997, p17).

7.3 Intellectual Publics
       The potential to construct intelligent communities is also partly made possible by (and relies on) the increasing educational attainment of the general public. Both the length of mandatory schooling and the number of people entering higher education have

[131] See Jenkins, H. (2006) 'Interactive Audiences? The Collective Intelligence of Media Fans', in Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture, New York: New York University Press, p. 140.

increased, yielding (perhaps) a broadening of the public mind and a population that may

be more inclined to demand a voice in conversations.[132] Today's public is better

equipped (than any previous public was) to assess the quality and coherence of

intellectual arguments, and its members are increasingly willing to claim a role in judging

the value of intellectual work. Internet users are fact-checking, probing, spotting errors,

posing follow-up questions, cultivating technological know-how, and offering their own

insight into issues concerning society today. In network society, a "world of diversified

messages, recombining themselves in the electronic hypertext, and processed by minds

with increasingly autonomous sources of information" (Castells 14), the intellectual

divide between intellectuals and the general public has been (in some ways and to some

degree) narrowed.

7.4 The Need for Anonymity and New Means of Evading Dominant Power
        For more than 50 years, the United States Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that

The First Amendment to the Constitution, which protects the right to free speech,

includes and protects the right to anonymous free speech. Deeming anonymity crucial to

---

[132] As Patrick Baert and Alan Shipman note, "This is not to say that expansion of general and higher education has narrowed the knowledge gap between intellectuals and the general public. On the contrary, this gap has almost certainly widened. Academic journals (for instance, the Economic Journal or the America Sociological Review) are rarely as understandable to the 'educated lay reader' today as 50 or even 20 years ago. The epistemic distance between intellectual and lay conversation has been lengthened by increasingly technical use of language (especially mathematical and statistical), and increased use of referencing to past contributions. What narrows as a result of expanding education is the evaluative distance between intellectuals and the public. 'Lay'-audience members become more competent at assessing the nature, coherence and effectiveness of intellectual arguments, and more confident in expressing skepticism or demanding clarification. This increases the public inclination to challenge, reserve judgment on or even outrightly reject intellectual arguments, without any claim to have received or fully understand the technical details of those arguments" (*Transforming the Intellectual* 197).

civic engagement, and acknowledging that exercising dissent is often yields

repercussions, the Supreme Court asserts that,

> Protections for anonymous speech are vital to democratic discourse.
> Allowing dissenters to shield their identities frees them to express critical,
> minority views. […] Anonymity is a shield from the tyranny of the
> majority […] [and] thus exemplifies the purpose behind the Bill of Rights,
> and of the First Amendment in particular: to protect unpopular individuals
> from retaliation […].[133]

While it has always been crucial that individuals be able to express opposition and

critique dominant powers without fear and with impunity, the right to express dissent

anonymously (and the protection it grants individuals and collectives) is perhaps more

important today than it has ever been— for never before have media corporations been so

narrowly consolidated, so wealthy, and in such a powerful position of control. Due in

large part to FCC deregulations and several decades of unbridled mergers and corporate

acquisitions, six formidable media giants (Figure 19) now control 90% of the content that

people watch, hear, or read— effectively controlling and determining who has the right to

speak, about what, and for how long.

---

[133] This quote is from the 1995 Supreme Court ruling in McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission

Figure 19: The Big Six

As such, there is a dire need to immediately increase the number of divergent voices and

alternative discourses made publicly available— and a need to protect the identities of

individuals who are expressing dissent and working to change the existing structure; that

is, when operating against or in defiance of such massively powerful media

conglomerates, individuals likely need and are wise to seek the protection that anonymity

yields.

Indeed, for decades, police and government agencies have been arresting and

prosecuting individuals accused of hacking or being associated with hacker or hacktivist

groups; however, all things considered (that is, the vast number of international projects

that Anonymous has launched since 2008, and the number of individuals on which those

projects relied and continue to rely), dominant powers (at least thus far) have been largely

unsuccessful in inhibiting or preventing Anonymous Operations. Despite a handful of

very notable and distinct arrests that made and continue to make headlines, the network

has very successfully deflected and defended against nearly all takedown attempts, as relatively few people associated with the Anonymous network have ever been identified, let alone located and arrested. Dominant powers and mainstream media smear-campaigns have done little, if anything, to incite public panic about Anonymous, and have been unable to curtail the Anonymous network's popularity, hinder its ability to organize, or cripple its operations.

7.5 Something Else is Possible

Situated in cyberspace, and organized unlike any other legal, economical, political, educational, or religious entities, networks (like the Anonymous network) extend beyond the market and information control of traditional institutions and are well-suited for civic projects that resist domination. Offering individuals a safe and unidentifiable space in which they can claim autonomy, pursue their own agendas, claim freedoms, and resist oppression, the Anonymous network allows people to escape the seemingly ubiquitous surveillance (methods) pervasive today and to confront the corrupt and actively intervene in public affairs without leaving footprints.

Qualitatively different from previous forms of communications media in their scope, structure, and speed, as well as in their ability to overcome temporal and spatial obstacles and enable powerful collaborations, networks are enabling new modes of resistance and public intervention; not only have they given rise to an entire meme-culture (and have shown the ways in which simple text and image combinations can be turned into memorable soundbytes that issue potent critiques), but they've also yielded (and continue to prompt) the creative production of new languages, rogue epistemes,

subversive modes of logic, and alternative discourses. Pooling individuals' resources, skills, tools, and modes of expertise in the service of collective efforts, networks and new technologies are making possible things never before imagined, enabling individuals to traverse the communication boundaries of corporate media and to occupy formerly unattainable spaces of autonomy and anonymity.

Demonstrating that American intellectual life is not in decline, but is occurring in new public spaces of critical intervention and taking on new forms, Anonymous Operations have sparked new conversations, challenged and changed established viewpoints and widely-accepted dominant truths, and have leveraged their collective power to impose material consequences on the corrupt individual, corporate, or political entities they oust and seek to disempower. As such, AnonOps have shown that horizontally-organized digital networks offer tremendous opportunities for (and can profoundly impact) civic participation, social justice projects and intellectual aims. Highly adaptable and well-suited for sustaining long-term projects committed to continued change, networks are raising (and making visible) important questions about the potential and limitations of democratized media, challenging dominant control in unprecedented ways, and recasting the terms of public debate in local, national, global, and digital ways.

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Biography

Jessica Lang graduated from Parkland High School in 1998. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English from Kutztown University in 2002. She received her Master of Arts in English from George Mason University in 2004.