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Outside The Frame: Towards A Phenomenology Of Texts And Technology

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OUTSIDE THE FRAME: TOWARDS A PHENOMENOLOGY OF TEXTS AND

TECHNOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

The subject of my dissertation is how phenomenology can be used as a tool for understanding the intersection between texts and technology. What I am suggesting here is that, specifically in connection with the focus of our program in Texts and Technology, there are very significant questions concerning how digital communications technology extends our humanity, and more importantly what kind of epistemological and ontological questions are raised because of this. There needs to be a coherent theory for Texts and Technology that will help us to understand this shift, and I feel that this should be the main focus for the program itself. In this dissertation I present an analysis of the different phenomenological aspects of the study of Texts and Technology. For phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, technology, in all of its forms, is the way in which human consciousness is embodied. Through the creation and manipulation of technology, humanity extends itself into the physical world. Therefore, I feel we must try to understand this extension as more than merely a reflection of materialist practices, because first and foremost we are discussing how the human mind uses technology to further its advancement. I will detail some of the theoretical arguments both for and against the study of technology as a function of human consciousness. I will focus on certain issues, such as problems of archiving and copyright, as central to the field. I will further argue how from a phenomenological standpoint we are in the presence of a phenomenological shift from the primacy of print towards a more hybrid system of representing human communications.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Denise Nicole Crisafi, and to my sons Dominic Jerichau Crisafi and Michael Anthony Crisafi, without whom I could never have succeeded. I love all of you very much.

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CHAPTER ONE: TOWARDS A PHENOMENOLOGY OF TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGY

It would be an unsound fancy and self-contradictory to expect that things which

have never yet been done can be done except by means which have never been

tried.

--Francis Bacon

Edmund Husserl wrote that "Natural objects . . . must be experienced before any

theorizing about them can occur." It is this sentiment I have decided to begin my

dissertation with so that I may defend phenomenology as a method for Texts and

Technology. I feel it is important to outline what I mean by phenomenology here and to

define how I see phenomenology contributing to the larger discourse, because I am aware

that the particular tradition at work within English Studies has typically been antagonistic

towards phenomenology. As I will point out in my dissertation, the Poststructuralist and

the Postmodernist modes of theory and critique generally reject phenomenology. This is

mostly based on Michel Foucault's critique of phenomenology as being a static and

privileged discipline, one which has used philosophy as a means of legitimizing itself as a

science. Phenomenology, according to Foucault, fails to posit anything outside of

consciousness, thereby reducing thought to a specialized category. Because of the

emphasis phenomenology places on the concepts of the subject and the self, Foucault

views phenomenology as a form of "false consciousness" that ultimately becomes

"transcendental narcissism." Foucault's main critique here is that phenomenologists fool

themselves into believing that the subject and the self are inherent, innate, and essential

parts of the human, and as such phenomenology then privileges the subject as the starting

point of all knowledge. For Foucault, however, the subject and the self are constructions

of larger social apparatuses which cannot be reduced to mere "consciousness," but rather

must be understood in connection with larger rules guiding human science. Foucault

makes four major assumptions about the nature of thought and knowledge that seem to

subvert the phenomenological tradition:

1. Historical: knowledge obeys different rules in different historical periods.

2. Archaeological: different sciences obey the same fundamental rules, the
   "episteme."

3. Epistemological: knowledge is grounded in the "experience of order" of an
   age.

4. Semiological: understanding the experience of signs and language in an
   age is vital to reconstructing the episteme.

Foucault wants to "uncover" the rules that guide all sciences, specifically the human

sciences. Phenomenology, according to Foucault, purports to offer a universal scientific

truth about human nature by positing the subject and the self as the starting points for all

knowledge. Foucault's critique undermines such claims by exhibiting how the subject

and the self are just the outcome of contingent historical forces and is not scientifically

grounded truths. However, I do not believe that Foucault ever fully realized these

assumptions, nor did he ever really discover the rules that underline human sciences. He

discovered the rules that underline institutional and cultural practices, but not necessarily

the episteme for the human sciences. Also, what Foucault did not realize or did not care

to acknowledge is that the heart of the phenomenological inquiry is not necessarily an attempt to arrange thought into a quantified system, but is an inquiry into the very nature of subject and selfhood through conscious experience. Whether Realistic, Constitutive, Existential, or Hermeneutic, the true focus of phenomenology is not the primacy of the essential subject and self but rather the means in which consciousness shapes the concepts of subject and selfhood through experience.

According to Lester Embree, phenomenologists conduct research in ways that share most of the following features:

1. Phenomenologists tend to oppose the acceptance of unobservable matters and grand systems erected in speculative thinking;

2. Phenomenologists tend to oppose naturalism (also called objectivism and positivism);

3. Phenomenologists tend to justify cognition with reference to what Edmund Husserl called *Evidenz*, which is awareness of a matter itself as disclosed in the most clear, distinct, and adequate way for something of its kind;

4. Phenomenologists tend to believe that not only objects in the natural and cultural worlds, but also ideal objects, such as numbers, and even conscious life itself can be made evident and thus known;

5. Phenomenologists tend to hold that inquiry ought to focus upon what might be called "encountering" as it is directed at objects and, correlatively, upon "objects as they are encountered." ("Seven")

Phenomenology may be defined as the study of structures of experience or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": appearances of

things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity. The structure of these forms of experience typically involves what Husserl called "intentionality", that is, the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that it is a consciousness of or about something. According to classical Husserlian phenomenology, our experience is directed toward — represents or "intends" — things only *through* particular concepts, thoughts, ideas, images, etc. These make up the meaning or content of a given experience, and are distinct from the things they present or mean. Maybe it is because of the kind of phenomenology practiced in Foucault's time that he rejects; certainly, Merleau-Ponty, whose lectures he attended, and Heidegger were particularly important. Indeed, Foucault's earlier work in the academy was grounded in Heideggerian phenomenology, but Foucault soon diverted away from these initial influences and towards the work of Georges Canguilhem, whose work in the history and philosophy of biology provided a model for much of what Foucault was later to do in the history of the human sciences. Canguilhem, incidentally, sponsored Foucault's doctoral thesis on the history of madness and was a staunch supporter of Foucault throughout the years.

What I am suggesting here is that the reason for dismissing phenomenology on the basis of the Foucauldian critique is false and misleading. The experiences we have with our surroundings help to shape our understanding of both our worlds and ourselves. The opposite is true here as well; we shape the world and ourselves through our

embodied experiences. Specifically, and more importantly for Texts and Technology, our experiences with digital technology constitutes a form of phenomenological inquiry that may help us understand how texts and technology is influenced by and influences human subject experience and consciousness. The problem with the early Foucauldian Poststructuralist/Postmodernist position is that it does not recognize how human consciousness influences culture and society; it only recognizes that human conscious is influenced by institutions. The creation and the engagement with a text, whether digital or otherwise, is an intentional act of meaning, one in which we construct ourselves both psychologically and culturally. Why then should we limit our examinations of the new emerging field of Texts and Technology to mere critique instead of serious inquiry? How we encounter digital texts is of prime importance to our discipline, and many theorists in the field, such as Ulmer, Landow, Bolter, and Joyce, already present work that is more phenomenological in nature than it is Poststructural or Postmodern, even if these authors have not realized it yet. We must be open to the possibility that digital texts act upon human consciousness in far different ways than what we are used to, since the nature of the digital environment shifts the power of the text from the control of the institution into the hands of the human. All of the underlying theories in Texts and Technology point towards a phenomenology of human activity grounded in the primacy of the creator or the actor in constructing meaning. There is already an unspoken acknowledgement of the position the subject and the self play here, one that recognizes there is a subject and a self that are essential for this kind of cognitive engagement.

For example, my research represented in Chapter Four of this dissertation into the ways in which hate groups utilize the digital environment to exploit young people and to

destroy the fabric of society presents a good example of the phenomenological power of this new medium. That white supremacists can extend their ideology through the digital medium and substantively connect and entice young people into their cause and movement represents more than a critique of social apparatuses: it demonstrates the very way in which engagement with digital technology seeps down into human consciousness on both individual and cultural levels. There is no neutrality in the digital environment; there is the powerful presence of the constructed subject and self that has the potential to become overwhelming by being grounded in the representation of desires through the digital medium. Foucault only discusses the institutional nature of power, not the phenomenological essence of it, and as such, Foucault becomes problematic for inquiring into how the digital medium possesses the essence necessary both to inform and control its audience. If we limit ourselves merely to critiquing this phenomenon via Poststructural or Postmodern concerns, we cannot effectively evaluate the kind of power the digital environment has to both inform and influence conscious action and experience.

What phenomenology can provide us with in Texts and Technology is a method for understanding the complexity of human experience as it relates to the creation and the interpretation of digital texts. This method is grounded on first identifying cognition as an integral part of any creative or interpretive act, and as such places the focus of research onto the human rather than on the machine or the institution. Daniel Schmicking, a phenomenologist who teaches at the University of Mainz, Germany, suggests that the phenomenological method is really a toolbox of methods, one in which

the researcher can pick and choose to perform the specific kind of study under

consideration. Schmicking describes some of these methods as:

1. Phenomenological reductions: suspending scientific explanations and beliefs.

2. Investigating particular phenomenon: description through detecting, grasping, and analyzing phenomenon.

3. Investigating invariant structures and relationships.

4. Analyzing the static and genetic constitution of objects/experience.

5. Hermeneutic interpretation of the meaning of phenomenon. ("Remarks")

What Schmicking recognizes concerning the phenomenological method is that

phenomenology is both wide enough a field of study to encompass the

Poststructural/Postmodern concerns, while at the same time providing the researcher with

specific means for which to understand and investigate phenomenon from variant

positions beyond just institutional concerns. While I am perfectly aware of institutional

concerns, I do believe however that in connection with my research agenda, the

institutional concerns must be re-ordered around the identification of the nature of the

power of the digital environment. The institutional concerns that we are preoccupied

with are only part of the dialogue here; the other part being the ways in which we as

human agents use this new and emerging communications medium to construct meaning.

To deny the self is to be naïve about the power of human consciousness to influence and

effect the physical world. Indeed, the whole idea of a virtual world that exists nowhere

but in the circuits of a machine, a world that can exert such power over both human

consciousness and cultural practices, is absurd on its surface, but poses significant

problems that must be dealt with through a more inclusive theory of Texts and

Technology. Phenomenology is a tool to be used to develop this inclusive theory, and therefore we should make some space, even if it is a little space, in this program for such inquiry.

I believe the most important thing we can do both for the Texts and Technology program itself and its students is to consider this larger, phenomenological field for which I have attempted to lay out here. Clearly, Texts and Technology discourse is something that can handle such a rigorous inter-disciplinary approach, and especially since Philosophy and Cognitive Science appear to be working in this area already, we should take a more broad perspective to the study here. What I am suggesting is a more fruitful bond between Texts and Technology and Philosophy, one that would help open our program up to greater research possibilities. A text is more than just a set of materialist, pedagogical practices; it is a technology itself, one that extends and embodies the mind in a physical space long enough for others to access and learn from. If we shut down the more creative elements of Texts and Technology research, then we may never discover just how powerful this new communication medium is. The subject of my dissertation is how phenomenology can be used as a tool for understanding the intersection between texts and technology. By phenomenology, I mean the process by which we can understand how the conscious mind constructs models in order to exact from them abstract, universal, and even generic categories of thought. These categories are then further used to construct more models, for which the mind uses to continue the thought process. These models could be understood as being inner representations, such as in analogy, where we use a figure of some sort to compare unknown ideas with, or such as in digital, where we can use multiple figures at once, in the same space, and create a

visio-linguistic system, specifically, digital communications technology, that can stand for thought itself long enough for us to examine the implications of it and learn how to recognize it as a kind of example of consciousness at work for later reflection, learn how to integrate it into our society and culture.

For phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, technology, in all of its forms, is the way in which human consciousness is embodied. Through the creation and manipulation of technology, humanity extends itself into the physical world. Therefore, I feel we must try to understand this extension as more than merely a reflection of materialist practices, because first and foremost we are discussing how the human mind uses technology to further its advancement. Technology is created and produced both out of need, as in the creation of simple and complex machines to accomplish engineering projects, and out of want, as in the evolution of communications technology for broadening our understanding of ourselves and our world. What I am suggesting here is that, specifically in connection with the focus of our program in Texts and Technology, there are very significant questions concerning how digital communications technology extends our humanity, and more importantly what kind of epistemological and ontological questions are raised because of this. There needs to be a coherent theory for Texts and Technology that will help us to understand this shift, and I feel that developing this theory should be the main focus for the program itself.

For instance, consider the following examination of Foucault's Poststructuralist critique. The impact Foucault has made on English and Texts and Technology is one of the most important theories to date. Foucaldian terminology is found disseminated throughout English and Texts and Technology discourse, and as such it represents the

position of authority Foucault is currently placed within. Terms such as Power/Knowledge, The Body, Discourse, while not in and of themselves created by Foucault, nevertheless take on the meanings for which Foucault has used them. This has created a necessary need to rely on Foucault in order to establish a contemporary typology concerning literature, rhetoric, and technology. Foucault's inquiry into the ideology of academic departments is used to question English as an academic discipline, which in turn also establishes a critique of current issues relating to the integration of technology into our scholarly practices; critics and theorists such as Stuart Hall, Diana Fuss, and David Bartholomae are working to develop discourses that question the stringent politics of canonicity and textual analysis, and they have found in Foucault a firm foundation to rest their critiques upon. In his essay "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms" Stuart Hall uses Foucault as the spine of his argument that culture is interwoven into the fabric of literary narrative. Hall deconstructs elements of structuralism and Marxist ideology using power/knowledge as the normative basis for his inquiry while legitimating Foucault as an established authority concerning how knowledge is produced through the organization of cultural institutions. Feminist thinkers such as Diana Fuss and Judith Butler both invoke Foucault: Fuss to discuss Foucault's notion of the "subject-position" in order to, "help us to read texts and to textualize readers" (586); while Butler uses Foucault to open a discussion concerning the oppression of gender and sexuality in terms of the body. Similarly, specifically in the field of rhetoric and composition, James A. Berlin in his book *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985* uses Foucault to discuss the development of rhetoric and composition programs in American universities. Berlin pays

specific attention to the power that ideology plays in determining the way composition and rhetoric are taught in the university system. David Batholomae, on the other hand, relies on Foucault to advance the notion that teaching composition should be a means of initiating students into the discourse of the university, thereby placing importance upon discourse communities as a standard for rhetorical argument. These cursory examples point to the proliferation of Foucault within English and Texts and Technology; Foucault's influence is part and parcel of a beginning discourse which challenges previously existing structural emphasis upon literature and rhetoric. In no way can we be exhaustive in defining the influence of Foucault in terms of Texts and Technology, especially since the field is now so wide and variegated, and for which Foucault is disseminated throughout the field accordingly.

From these examples it is clear that Foucault has become an authority concerning the ideology of power structures; his analyses into the organization of academic disciplines has moved critics and theorists of English and Texts and Technology literature and rhetoric to become more forceful in advocating strong changes in the field. However, while Foucault's strength rests in the dismantling of ideological apparatuses, there is an absence of inquiry in Foucault concerning the relationship between consciousness and knowledge in terms of textual creation. By insisting on discourse as genealogy, meaning that knowledge is not determined, or posited as a fixed object for consciousness, Foucault breaks apart the traditional organization of human sciences; Foucault replaces the hierarchical teleology of traditional academic structures, evidenced by the Hegelian dialectic, with a more fluid movement between discourses themselves. What is lost in this analysis, however, is the locus for consciousness and knowledge; instead of knowledge as

a progression towards an objectified meaning it is developed through a continuum of interrelated discourses with no fixed antecedents. Knowledge is no longer created but produced, and the dialectic, which posited interaction between subjective and objective as the impetus for progression in human thought, is replaced with discourse, a mode of discussion that can be divorced from the active intention of the dialectic participants. The problem with this genealogical chain, however, is a problem of phenomenological metaphysics, specifically the relationship between the mode of creation and the object created. For example, in his essay "What is an Author?" Foucault discusses the author as being an initiator of discourse and not a creator of meaning, a differentiation which divests the author of what Foucault feels is the mythological importance that is often associated with such a person. The author, "is functional in that it serves as a means of classification" (123), one who sets apart certain texts in order to satisfy a cultural need for authentication. Authentication is a problem for Foucault here because it is not a necessary function of the discourse that a text may either produce or enter into; authentication is merely a means of signifying a set of discourses within the parameters laid down by the classification of the category of "author." Removing the author from the intention of the text allows Foucault to call into question the objectives of phenomenology as a field of inquiry, thereby divesting phenomenology of its power to posit consciousness as a ruling force of nature. Nonetheless, because Foucault cannot assert that texts are not the product of the mind, and because he cannot assert a metaphysical existence for knowledge outside of human engagement with subjective and objective forces, Foucault's own analyses into the relationship between the author and the text pose strong phenomenological problems

that are left isolated and cut off from discussion by Foucault's own non-phenomenological terminology.

The argument that Foucault creates here is very careful and extremely delicate; Foucault is trying to assert a line of demarcation between the discourse the text engages in and the discourse an author may want to produce. It is the idea of intention that Foucault is attempting to remove, thereby setting aside the ego, or the persona, that is created by the narrative structure of a given text. A key to understanding Foucault at this point rests within the notion of narration. Foucault states that:

> . . . it would be false to consider the function of the author as a pure and simple reconstruction after the fact of a given text as passive material, since the text always bears a number of signs that refer to the author. Well known to grammarians, these textual signs are personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and the conjugation of verbs. But it is important to note that these elements have a different bearing on texts with an author and on those without one. In the later, these "shifters" refer to a real speaker and to an actual deictic situation, with certain exceptions such as the case of indirect speech in the first person. When discourse is linked to an author, however, the role of "shifters" is more complex and variable. (129)

Foucault differentiates between the author and the narrative structure of the text, underlying the separation of the author from the text through the persona the author creates in order to write. In this way, Foucault can distance the text from phenomenological inquiry by removing any question concerning the conscious creation of thought. However, the inquiry into this phenomenological relationship has not ended

merely because Foucault chooses to focus his attentions elsewhere. Indeed, by his own methodology, it becomes important to question Foucault's authority by examining that which he ignores in the same way he inquires into the penal system by discovering the "common matrix" (*Discipline 23*) where law and history overlap. This absence of inquiry may ultimately reduce Foucault's insistence on discourse over dialectic to an ideological position just as tenuous as the fields for which he himself attacks so rapaciously. This absence may also prove to become problematic within the burgeoning field of Texts and Technology, as the ideological foundation of contemporary theory and criticism becomes mired within Foucault's own solipsism.

The phenomenologists of the 20th Century, specifically Heidegger, Husserl, and Merleau- Ponty, identified the text as a place where knowledge is arranged in such a way as to point to a condition of being inherent within human consciousness itself. Maurice Natanson, a theorist in the field of literature and phenomenology, states that:

> Phenomenology, then, is a discipline of correlates. The noetic intends the noematic. In the life-world, the correlates are taken for granted; they form a movement of pre-reflective awareness in which the "intentiveness" of consciousness is hidden from the ordinary activity of perception. Such hiddenness is not an ontological state of affairs. There is nothing to "look inside," as it were. Or "looking inside," there is nothing to find. Correlations of meaning do not occupy space; if anything, such correlations as we are speaking of are temporal in character. It is temporality, however, which is at issue here, not time in the sense of chronology. (26)

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Natanson's remarks demonstrate a methodology that phenomenologists have applied

towards the study of literary texts. "The 'object' of concern," according to Natanson, "is

the irreal, not the 'thing' that parlormaids polish or the reeds that basket weavers bend"

(26) meaning that the physical text itself is not in question, but that the essence

consciously created within the text is the focus of inquiry. This methodology is grounded

in identifying the process of creation and not by imposing or extracting meaning on or

from the text. Phenomenologists regard literature as a relationship between the essence

within the text and the essence of the texts origin, specifically the knowledge that an

author organizes in order to create the text. Again, Natanson writes that, "Not fact but

essence is the gateway to phenomenology. To understand intentionality as the axis of

phenomenology is to recognize that it is essential and not factic aspects of reality which

are at issue" (26). Natanson is clearly aligning himself with Heidegger, who writes that,

"The origin of something is the source of its essence. The question concerning the origin

of the work of art asks about its essential source" (149). Heidegger's criticism here is an

application of the hermeneutics into the essence within a work of art; his assertion is

meant as a method of interpreting the relationship between the creator and the created,

which in this case is between the author and the text.

This phenomenological study between the author and the text is in stark contrast

to Foucault, who asserts that:

> . . . the "author-function" is tied to the legal and institutional systems that
>
> circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses; it does not
>
> operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any
>
> given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to

its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does

not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it

simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective

positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (*Author* 130-

131)

Foucault is concerned here with identifying the ideological apparatuses that would insist

the author is the locus where knowledge is produced. It is this point between the author

and the text that Foucault creates serious phenomenological problems in his analyses.

The use of Foucault as an authority is problematic because of his deliberate attempt to

keep phenomenological metaphysics from his discourse. In one instance, keeping

discourse at such a level of inquiry into power/knowledge structures focuses attention on

the causal nature of thought, and the direct consequences of overbearing systems such as

Structuralism. However, in another instance, the need to posit consciousness within

textual discourse is also important because there is still no formal construction of a

phenomenological inquiry into texts. In fact, if we trace the line of inquiry from New

Criticism to Reader-Response Criticism we can see that the issue of the relationship

between the author and the text is fraught with basic problems of phenomenological

metaphysics. From the New Critics to Northrop Frye there has been an insistence on a

scientific based approach to the study of literature that starts with the removal of the

author from the intention of the text and culminates in the categorizing of literature as a

study of genre and terminology. The ancillary line of inquiry in Reader-Response

Criticism poses even more specious questions concerning the relationship between the

author and the text by positing meaning and interpretation within communities, an

interpretation that also removes the author from the locus of meaning. These theories are constructed upon an ideology of exclusion; they are theories whose own propositions cannot be argued from outside the interpretive communities themselves, leaving a gap between themselves and other forms of theoretical inquiry.

Indeed, it would seem that using Foucault's discourse is apropos when faced with such stringent lines of theory. However, by ignoring phenomenology Foucault creates a methodology that is just as hemmed in by ideology as any of the other theories. While ideology is a factor in human development, it is so by imbrication and exists with other arenas of knowledge such as epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, etc. By limiting his vocabulary to ideological definitions, Foucault fails to explain or to discuss the metaphysics of phenomenology. Foucault may be refusing to discuss phenomenology for fear of reanimating the ideological prejudices associated with the field; however, because of the indefinite nature of the relationship between the author and the text, any attempt to step around this relationship necessarily loses its footing and creates a mode of inquiry that has no metaphysical outlet, thereby reducing the ontology of consciousness to a set of cultural reactions. However, the real problem with Foucault's anti-phenomenological view is not the failure of phenomenology itself; it is a problem he has with the Hegelian dialectic, which Foucault attempts to break away from. The movement from Hegelian dialectics to Foucauldian discourse represents a significant break with philosophical tradition, a tradition which has held the idea that the individual is the source of reason and of philosophic inquiry. The grand narrative of philosophy that started with Plato's assertion to question the world ends with the systematic hierarchy of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* where the whole of philosophic history is categorized by Hegel

according to specific periods of intellectual development and is meant to represent a teleology towards absolute knowledge. Foucault trades in the grand narrative of Hegelian phenomenology for small units of discourse; instead of an all-encompassing representation of reality, Foucault settles for a series of discussions concerning what constitutes inquiry itself. There is no systematic, developed epistemology in Foucault, but rather an advanced form of scepticism that refuses any classification. In Foucauldian analysis, genealogy is preferable to dialectic hierarchy because knowledge can be examined more closely as a product of structured phenomenon, instead of being a part of an all-encompassing puzzle. Foucault takes great pains to avoid any formal approach towards his genealogical inquiry; instead, he poses questions into the makeup of philosophical, political, and social structures. Foucault asserts that, "it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle" (*Power/Knowledge* 84), directly pointing to Hegel's attempt to scientifically categorize knowledge. Foucault here breaks up Hegel's systematic dialectic into a discourse more identifiable in form, reducing the dialectic to an evaluation of power struggles that produce knowledge rather than actualize the goal of Spirit.

Because of Foucault's assertions into the nature of power that academic disciplines hold, it is easy to see just why Foucault has become such an important figure for the study of English and Texts and Technology. Theory in our field is undergoing a fierce revolution concerning the methodology used to approach textual analysis. Indeed, the field at present is large and variegated, resulting in a plethora of theories and critiques that often fight one another for supremacy. Varying ideologies have emerged that have created certain problems in the philosophy concerning textual analysis; evaluating

consciousness and knowledge in relation to the text has become swept aside in order to

argue the merits of certain subject positions within literature, such as Postcolonial

theories or Gender Studies. Indeed, it seems, coincidentally, that where Foucault's lacks

influence is in the identification of the relationship between consciousness and

knowledge as these concepts relate to the text. Texts, for Foucault, do not have an

intrinsic meaning outside of their relation to other texts. In turn, authors do not create

texts but, "produce not only their own work, but the possibilities and the rules of

formation of other texts" (*What is an Author* 131). An author is not a creator but an

initiator of discourse, one who may spur on future discussion concerning a line of inquiry

but is never the absolute locus of knowledge concerning any field. Texts become

mediums for which discourse flows through, rather than where meaning is imbedded or

discovered. The author is a function of discourse, one point in a genealogy of thought

traced through many different lines of thinking. If an author is referred to it is because

that author has initiated a discourse, not created a school of thought. In this way Foucault

is deftly able to side-step discussion concerning the location or placement of

consciousness and knowledge. Pertaining specifically to academic disciplines, Foucault

writes that, "[disciplines] constitute a system of control in the production of discourse,

fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking form of a permanent reactivation

of the rules" (*Archaeology* 224). The very act of aligning knowledge into a field of study

necessarily constitutes a form of power over not only what is taught, but what is thought

and discussed, a proposition which may seem an elemental necessity for the purpose of

organizing a body of education, but is nonetheless fraught with political and ideological

implications. Such organization can never be an objective science of knowledge, since

the decisions concerning such organization are grounded within temporal politics. Furthermore, as Foucault goes on to state, "Every education system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses with the knowledge and power they bring with them" (227), meaning that once organized, an academic discipline must necessarily control the means of the production of knowledge in order to ensure the future of that discipline. But if it is true that the aligning of knowledge constitutes power, then it is also true that Foucault's own alignment of discourses also signifies a form of ideology, which is just as subject to inquiry and criticism as the fields Foucault chooses to focus his attentions upon. Therefore, we must allow for a more rigorous inquiry into Foucault, examining what is at stake when investing so strongly in the thinking of a person whose own analyses are fraught with questions concerning phenomenology.

While I do not want to dismiss the importance of Foucault here, I do want to reiterate that Foucault poses problems for us who work in Texts and Technology that cannot be resolved through a materialist critique. As a method, phenomenology can help us synthesize various different phenomenon concerning Texts and Technology into a more coherent theory. An example of this kind of synthesis is represented in the work of Daniel Schmicking, a phenomenologist who writes about auditory phenomenon. In his essay "Is there imaginary loudness? Reconsidering phenomenological method," Schmicking applies Husserlian phenomenology to suggest that imagination is an indispensable tool of phenomenology, and that "the practicability of phenomenological method and its claim to objectivity ought to be reconsidered with regard to its dependence on imagination" (169). Schmicking specifically analyzes the problem of auditory imagery, and he illustrates problems involved in grasping and analyzing

imaginative contents, particularly loudness. What is most important about Schmicking's

work here for me and also for Texts and Technology is that he proposes what I feel is one

of the best articulations of the phenomenological method and how it can be applied to our

understanding of complex phenomenon. Schmicking writes that:

> Similar to phonetic segmentation and classification, phenomenologists
>
> segment and classify mental acts and contents. Just as phoneticians rely on
>
> experts' evaluations of notations to reach valid results, phenomenologists
>
> may try to develop similar agreement procedures to escape the
>
> 'subjectivism' of their solitary first-person approach. (169)

What Schmicking does here is to formulate a means for which we can understand how

we can use phenomenology to segment and classify different elements of a phenomenon

based on Husserl's phenomenology. Schmicking further lays out this phenomenological

method as such:

> Imagination is not only involved as "imaginative free variation" in eidetic
>
> intuition (where it plays an essential role of course). It is already present in
>
> trying to understand a phenomenological description given by someone
>
> else. For example, when Husserl describes an episode of perceptual
>
> experience the reader is expected to follow every single step or aspect in
>
> his own imagination. For instance, in his lectures of 1907, *Thing and*
>
> *Space*, Husserl speaks of merely imagined perceptions and fantasy-
>
> representations (*Phantasievergegenwartigungen*) which serve as points of
>
> departure for the analysis of the essential rules of perception (see Husserl
>
> 1997, § 3). Moreover fantasy variation is at least presupposed by (1)

abstraction of parts from wholes (or from each other), (2) generalizing

abstraction, and (3) eidetic intuition. (175)

Schmicking identifies here that the way in which we perceive a phenomenon can be

detailed by moving through these various stages and various systems. This can be

helpful for us in Texts and Technology because we can begin to breakdown the

perception of digital communications technology as a function of knowledge systems.

We should invest more heavily in phenomenology as a research method because it has

the potential to broaden our understanding of how texts are being transformed by

technology and also how this transformation relates to human consciousness.

This dissertation, then, is a proposal at best to move towards an integrative theory

of Texts and Technology that may be able to bring together the disparate methods and

theories currently at use in this emerging field.   In Chapter Two: The Politics of Digital

Research, I will detail some of the theoretical arguments both for and against the study of

technology as a function of human consciousness. The first problem to address here is

the institutional attitude towards integrating digital technology into humanities

scholarship. This attitude can be understood as reluctance to recognize that digital

technology can contribute to the very form of scholarship rather than merely being used

as a quick and easy archival system. This problem can be seen in how institutions are

trying to control the creation and production of scholarship, specifically how the academy

uses institutional controls to limit the kinds of work that get recognized as scholarship.

This does not mean that these kinds of digital texts have no place in the academy; in fact,

I will argue, they are the eventuality of scholarship in the humanities, and as such we

should pay more time and attention to better understanding how this medium can change

scholarship and how we can use it to represent our disciplinary goals. I will focus on

certain issues, such as problems of archiving and copyright, as central to the field. I will

further argue in this chapter how from a phenomenological standpoint we are in the

presence of a phenomenological shift from the primacy of print towards a more hybrid

system of representing human communications.

In Chapter Three: Hybridity: The Hermeneutic Logic of the Digital Text, I will

first define hybridity as the means for which a digital text brings together seemingly

disparate medium to create an interactive experience. Drawing from the work of Mikhail

Bakhtin, I will define hybridity as a dialogic process. His analysis of how the text brings

together two seemingly disparate modes of discourse is suitable to our understanding of

the new media age we live in, particularly how digital media can be used to create new

kinds of textual experiences. Theorists such as Bolter, Landow, and Lanham have helped

to establish a new mode of discourse that uncovers the rhetoric of digital media, a

rhetoric grounded in practices of hypertext, of interactivity, and of the convergence of

visual and written linguistic systems. In other words, a digital text remediates older

textual practices into an interactive experience, bringing together written language and

visual language to create an aesthetic experience more akin to community dreaming than

to reading. Examples of such texts include Michael Joyce's digital novel experiments or

George Landow's digital Victorian project. Other theorists such as Ulmer, Ray, and

O'Gorman have posited that the very logic of the digital text is grounded in the

hermeneutic practices of poetics that help create and produce them, making the digital

text a medium for both artistic expression and scholarly interpretation and fulfilling the

requirements for Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." I will then conclude this chapter by

demonstrating different approaches to digital scholarship by highlighting the Michael

Joyce, specifically focusing attention on his students' digital projects.

In Chapter Four: The Phenomenology of Evil, I present an example of what a

phenomenological method for Texts and Technology may look like. In presenting an

egregious example of the phenomenological power of digital communications

technology, that of how hate groups use the technology to recruit and program young

children into their movement, I will demonstrate how the phenomenological method can

apply to our understanding of digital communications technology. By using Paul

Ricoeur"s *The Symbolism of Evil* as an armature for my analysis here, I will bring

together several critical approaches to understand how hate groups use digital technology

to empower themselves. I will focus on how from digital cameras to the internet, the

advancements in media technology have democratized the access to public information in

a way that has produced potentially dangerous results. Hate groups, who before the mid

Nineties were relegated to the farthest margins of our society, have found a home in the

virtual space of the internet. In many ways this increase of activity is related to the ability

of these groups to disseminate their messages directly to the public via the internet. For

instance, www.stormfront.org first went online in March of 1995, and at that time was the

first and only pro-nazi website; currently there are more than 4000 of these websites with

the number steadily increasing every year. There is a clear indication that hate groups are

becoming much stronger because of the ease that internet access provides them, however,

what is not understood is how exactly the internet allows them to become so. One way to

assess this phenomenon is by studying the media culture of the current white supremacist

movement. These groups are not merely writing pamphlets or creating websites; they are

also engaged in using current media technology to create culture through books, magazines, video games, and music. This suggests that hate groups are increasingly more interested in creating cultural narratives in order to attract new converts and adherents.

In Chapter Five: The Fusion of Horizons and the Future of Digital Scholarship, I will end the dissertation by looking ahead at how current trends in phenomenology are shaping our understanding of Texts and Technology. In order to understand and to create a digital text, we must be able to concisely define and discuss what a digital text is. To do this, we must take the theories and methods already in use and bring them together. We must clearly define what Texts and Technology is as a discipline and what kind of a theoretical practice it may provide. Therefore, by studying the phenomenology of Texts and Technology, and by extension bringing phenomenology into the discipline, we may be in a better position to state our research goals more clearly. Further, we must integrate into this discussion three particular approaches to textual analysis that will help us situate digital texts in the context. For this, I will rely on the works of the following authors and their respective theories:

- Barthes: The written text is composed of non-linear units known as *lexia*.

- Lacan: Language is a non-linear structure that is a manifestation of psychic structures.

- Foucault: Texts are representative of certain disciplinary practices, which in turn are indicative of certain social ideologies.

- Deleuze and Guattari: The Rhizome is a model for discourse because it represents an organic approach to structuring communities. Rhizomes communicate with one another in order to work together. This is a central theory concerning the digital environment.

- Lyotard: The communication of knowledge is conditional upon translating knowledge into a technical language.

- Baudrillard: We live in hyper-reality, where the sign is an autonomous image.

- DeSaussure: Language is a system of differences and how they relate to all symbolic interaction.

Along with these theories, I will apply *Media Theory* in order to evaluate how media work and how the digital text as a medium does and will function. For this, we will rely on the works of:

- Ong: The shift from oral to printed texts represents a fundamental change in human civilization, specifically in the differences in the way knowledge is now constructed.

- Havelock: The shift from oral to print culture is a shift in approaches to media.

- McLuhan: The medium for which messages appear is the ultimate measure for truth and validity. McLuhan also discusses the movement from oral to print to electronic media.

- Lanham: The spirit of the electronic text is rhetorically centered, non-linear, dynamic paradigm.

- Landow: Hypertext radically transforms the experience of reading and writing.

- Bolter: hypertext represents writing of a second order, in which writing structures are remediated to represent the electronic format.

- Hayles: The digital text is a hybrid space that reaches beyond electronic medium. The aesthetics of digital writing can be remediated into other mediums.

- Johnson: The computer interface mediates semantic relationships between the writer/reader.

- Poster: Digital rhetoric represents a shift in discipline centered practices to user centered rhetoric. As such, the electronic text is unstable compared to earlier forms of texts.

- Marvin: Current discussions concerning the shift from print to electronic technology are not current at all, and are a part of a larger cultural fascination with technology.

- Winston: The history of electronic technology is the history of institutional practices.

- Kittler: Discourse networks.

I will also apply hermeneutics to this task in order to help lay the framework for the definition of digital texts. I will use the works of:

- Schleimacher: All knowledge takes the form of the concept or the judgment, the former as conceiving the nature of thought as plural and the latter connecting to individual objects (texts).

- Dilthey: Texts can be scientifically and systematically interpreted by situating them within the contexts of their production.

- Husserl: A text is a way of bracketing knowledge so that one can observe and understand it.

- Heidegger: The meaning of our lives is co-developed through our experiences and our background. Hermeneutics then is a way to interpret shared meanings and practices; it is also a way to situate our experiences with a context. Language enables us to identify this phenomenon.

- Gadamer: Language is embedded in our understanding of the world. Therefore, understanding will always be a historical, dialectical, and linguistic event. Texts are the artifacts of that event.

- Merleau-Ponty: Hermeneutics is a perceptive process, in which we directly engage with signs in order to construct meaning.

- Ricoeur: Discourse is an event that occurs in a particular place and time, making discourse an action concerning validity. Texts act as actors within a discourse, making them markers for discourse.

- Derrida: The text is decentered and more suited to the complexities of discourse. Deconstruction is a way of dealing with "difference."

In this chapter, I will further focus on what I believe is the future theory of Texts and Technology. This theory I will call for the moment *Noesis*, in which the digital text is more akin to actual thought than just merely a representation of materialist and ideological practices. Because of the immense power of the digital text to both inform and influence on multiple levels, we must consider that the true phenomenology here is the text as thought embodied. Because of this form of embodiment, I feel that research because of its emphasis on embodied and extended mind, Cognitive Science research provides us with a good model for understanding the phenomenology of Texts and Technology. I will end this chapter with a brief look at the work of Andy Clark, whose research in embodied and extended mind encapsulates what I feel to be an appropriate starting point for a true theory of Texts and Technology.

CHAPTER TWO: THE POLITICS OF DIGITAL RESEARCH

He who stands aloof runs the risk of believing himself better than others and

misusing his critique of society as an ideology for his private interest.

--Theodor Adorno

In this chapter, I will detail some of the theoretical arguments both for and against the study of technology as a function of human consciousness. The first problem to address here is the institutional attitude towards integrating digital technology into humanities scholarship. This attitude can be understood as reluctance to recognize that digital technology can contribute to the very form of scholarship rather than merely being used as a quick and easy archival system. This problem can be seen in how institutions are trying to control the creation and production of scholarship, specifically how the academy uses institutional controls to limit the kinds of work that get recognized as scholarship. This does not mean that these kinds of digital texts have no place in the academy; in fact, I will argue, they are the eventuality of scholarship in the humanities, and as such we should pay more time and attention to better understanding how this medium can change scholarship and how we can use it to represent our disciplinary goals. I will focus on certain issues, such as problems of archiving and copyright, as central to the field. I will further argue in this chapter how from a phenomenological standpoint we are in the presence of a phenomenological shift from the primacy of print towards a more hybrid system of representing human communications.

One point I would like to make here is that historically pedagogy and scholarship have always been influenced by technological shifts. For instance, after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Greek manuscripts and Byzantine scholars poured into Italy, contributing to the development of what the humanist philosopher Marsilio Ficino called "a golden age." Encouraged by the availability of Greek resources, and supported by his patron Cosimo de' Medici, Ficino translated the entire corpus of Plato's writings from Greek into Latin, making them available to Western scholars for the first time since antiquity. Ficino's translations and the founding of the Platonic Academy in Florence (financed by Cosimo de' Medici) launched a reappraisal of Plato and the Neo-Platonist that had a major consequences in the domains of art and literature. Plato's writings - especially the Symposium, in which love is exalted as a divine force - advanced the idea, popularized by Ficino, that "platonic" (or spiritual) love attracted the soul to God. Platonic love became a major theme among Renaissance poets and painters, who held that spiritual love was inspired by physical beauty.

Humanism emphasized the dignity and worth of the individual, an emphasis that was central to Renaissance developments in many areas. Humanism originated in the study of classical culture, and it took its name from one of the era's earliest and most crucial concerns: the promotion of a new educational curriculum that emphasized a group of subjects known collectively as the *studia humanitatis,* or the humanities. Humanities disciplines included grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and ethics. These subjects were all studied, whenever possible, in the original classical texts. The humanities curriculum conflicted directly with more traditional education that was based on scholasticism. Scholasticism was a philosophical and theological movement that attempted to use the

philosophy and science of Aristotle to understand the supernatural content of Christian revelation. The term Scholasticism is also used in a wider sense to signify the spirit and methods characteristic of this period of thought or any similar spirit and attitude toward learning found in other periods of history. A scholastic education concentrated on the study of logic, natural philosophy (science), and metaphysics, or the nature of reality.

Scholars at the time often clashed sharply over these two systems of education. Far more was at stake in these academic controversies than the content of education. Scholastic training prepared students for careers in fields such as medicine, law, and, above all, theology. The humanists believed that this scholastic course of study was focused too narrowly on only a few professions. They claimed that it was not based sufficiently on practical experience or the needs of society, but relied too heavily on abstract thought. The humanists proposed to educate the whole person and placed emphasis not only on intellectual achievement, but also on physical and moral development. The humanists also stressed the general responsibilities of citizenship and social leadership. Humanists felt that they had an obligation to participate in the political life of the community. From their perspective, the specialized disciplines taught by the scholastics had failed to instill a respect for public duty.

One of these Renaissance Humanists, Petrus Ramus, re-aligned the Scholastic rhetoric and created the standard for what we would now consider the first modern text book. This is the first real technological shift that changes the means in which academic knowledge is produced and displayed, and so it is worth spending some time discussing the influence Ramus has on the current discussion. Ramus' contribution to academia as a whole was to move away from the medieval *disputatum* as the method of displaying

knowledge towards dialectic as the demonstration of knowledge. According to Triche

and McKnight in their article "The quest for method: the legacy of Peter Ramus:"

> Ramus's primary intellectual accomplishment was the refinement of the
>
> art of dialectic by transforming dialectical reasoning into a single method
>
> of pedagogical logic for organizing and demonstrating all knowledge. In
>
> addition, his invention of method completes humanism's transformation of
>
> medieval scholasticism's courses of study in the liberal arts into a
>
> recursive singular course of studies called curriculum. Ramus
>
> accomplished this by 'inventing' what can be best described as a dialectic
>
> of the arts, a system for dividing and arranging knowledge into discreet
>
> categories, thereby making it easier to teach (*doctrina*).   (40)

What Ramus did was to shift the focus of the Scholastic teachings away from dialogue

towards the newly discovered logic of print. Ramus was a savage critic of Aristotle, and

proposed to replace the subtleties and complexities of Aristotelian logic with the single

method of humanist dialectic, conceived as the means of systematizing knowledge to

facilitate learning and its practical use. Ramus saw Aristotle's *Organon* (or logical

works) as a confused body of doctrine, which it was his task to reorganize for

pedagogical purposes, based on the simple principle that the general comes before the

specific, the whole before the part. Utilizing Plato's method of dichotomous division,

Ramus became famous for his elaborate tables and tree diagrams. Although Ramus drew

the familiar distinction between discovery and demonstration, or as he called it, invention

and disposition, the latter was clearly of greater importance to him than the former.

According to Ramus, the discoveries had already been made by the ancients; the task was only to present them properly.

Walter Ong writes in an essay titled "Ramus; Rhetoric and the Pre-Newtonian Mind" that:

> Within these two traditions, logical and rhetorical theory could retain or regain the suppleness that the mechano-scientistic bent of arts-course scholasticism was constantly tending to deny it. Here we find persistent, if not ubiquitous, exploitations of Aristotle's notion of the various kinds of logic – scientific, rhetorical, dialectical, sophistic, that . . . the arts course tended to nullify and that Ramus makes the central objective to be destroyed by his curricular reform. (225)

It was this emphasis on presentation that led Ramus to create logical diagrams that would ultimately lead to the ordering of information in later. According to Ramus, there are always three essential aspects of every art which need to be considered: nature, principles, and practice. It was the third element, practice, which was essential, for it was through practice that one demonstrated that the art and its principles were correct. If they were correct, the art was useful and constructed according to nature. All three elements were closely connected, and Ramus often presented the various arts by setting out their three main parts. Ramus considered it extremely important to follow the natural method. When, however, it came to practice, this was not always possible. Sometimes it was necessary to start with the most particular, at other times the most general. Practice, moreover, required analysis as well as synthesis. Ramus wanted students to learn logic by reading and practicing the way we naturally think and argue. An oration or even a

poem could reveal how the principles of logic work in practice. We should start by analyzing the text in order to see how it is constructed according to logical principles: what problem is being considered, what arguments are chosen and so on. After this has been done, the text is further analyzed with help of the main parts of logic, *invention* and *iudicium*, and afterwards by the minor parts: the propositions, syllogisms and such. David Hamilton writes, "Ramus' reaction (or contribution) was to replace this aural analogy with a visual metaphor. Does the argument *look* right – in terms of its layout or 'disposition'" (11). When the analysis is completed, it is time for students to move on to synthesis, the part of practice that Ramus usually referred to as *genesis*. At this stage students were expected to imitate, more or less, the procedure which they had previously studied by means of analysis. This was a crucial moment because they could now show how useful their studies had been by demonstrating the ways in which they had benefited from their theoretical knowledge.

Ramism affected virtually all knowledge with the possible exception of medicine, which vigorously resisted Ramus' anti-Aristotelianism. Making a great deal of clarity and distinctness and of analysis of all sorts—the term "logical analysis" was recognized in the sixteenth century as a characteristically Ramist term—Ramism considered branches of knowledge to be totally separated from one another in themselves, however united in use. In the lower curriculum ranges it encouraged schematization of Latin and Greek grammar—and often of vernacular grammar, even though this was not taught in school. Because it placed a high premium on logic, regardless of what kind of expression was involved, Ramism discouraged ornate expression and encouraged a "plain style." This was not the "low style" of classical and medieval rhetoric but rather an expository

mode of expression, highly cerebral and analytic, developed out of habits of composing

in or while writing (instead of using writing to "put down" what was orally composed),

quite impossible in an oral culture. Joseph S. Freedman suggests that "individual

academic works used and interpreted Ramus differently and in combination with various

other authors" (121), which led to Ramus's textbooks and diagrams becoming somewhat

of a standard for academic institutions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries.

The main thrust of Ramus' reform of learning was not toward what later became

modern science. That is, it was not toward experimental observation conjoined with the

application of mathematics to physics. Ramus' reform drove toward simplified analytic

order in presentation of subject matter and toward an empirical approach in teaching

methods which skirted abstruse details. However, the practical drive which produced

Ramist simplification and empiricism did also open new intellectual horizons. It

encouraged giving studious attention to matters previously regarded as beneath formal

academic concern. Ramus himself, although he took for granted with virtually all his

contemporaries that Latin would remain the dominant language of the intellectual world,

was interested also in the vernacular and published a French grammar in reformed

spelling. Again, Triche and McKnight state:

> Ramus's pedagogical purpose was practical and expedient – transform
>
> scholasticism's rigorous and difficult, but impractical, educational
>
> practices into a simplified enterprise 'useful' to the student. He stated: 'At
>
> present my arguments bear not no order but on usefulness. Is it not far
>
> easier for a boy to learn and memorize and art from a few precepts than to

make excruciating efforts to pursue it as it lies scattered and diffused in a

great many books?' (42)

Close, if sometimes ambiguous, connections exist between Ramism and the manual arts and crafts of the world where Ramism had so much appeal. At a deeper level, the Ramist tendency to dissociate thought from the human context of discourse and make it into a kind of thing—a tendency derivative from but not entirely continuous with the quantification in medieval logic—favored the growing tendency to view the universe as basically an aggregate of neutral objects rather than as something vaguely animistic.

Ramus' work belongs in part to the enlarging world of humanism. Renaissance humanism extended academic interest to new areas and fostered a juncture of academic learning and artisan know-how, as can be seen in the development of printing. But Ramism did not share equally all humanist enthusiasms. The imaginative interest in the human which marked much in the Renaissance and which eventually helped generate the modern fields of cultural history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology, and much else, is weak in the Ramist milieu. The resonances of human life were not congenial to this anti-iconographic, diagrammatic, encyclopedic cast of mind, which produced singularly few poets. Ramus himself engaged in endless controversies, at least seven of which broke into printed exchanges, sometimes running over several years. Ramus' work also exemplifies the kind of phenomenology that such shifts in theoretical, rhetorical, and pedagogical practices ultimately institute. We should be careful here to understand that Ramus serves as an example of how politics of research are ultimately doomed in the face of such new practices. Digital research is an emergent field, and not unlike a child who learns to swim, we are beginning in the very shallow end before

finding our strength to move into the deep end. One thing is for certain, however: such

changes as we are identifying in Texts and Technology demand both a new way of

thinking about scholarship and a new way of practicing scholarship if we are fully make

sense of this new and dynamic field of study.

One purpose of this dissertation is to outline a general theory and practice of

digital scholarship in the humanities discipline. The first problem to address here is the

institutional attitude towards integrating digital technology into humanities scholarship.

This attitude can be understood as reluctance to recognize that digital technology can

contribute to the very form of scholarship rather than merely being used as a quick and

easy archival system. Work by theorists such as George Landow, Jay David Bolter,

Richard Lanham, and Michael Joyce make it very clear that digital technology can be

folded into scholarship practice to create digital-based texts that have the potential to be

more interactive than current print practices allow. However, there is an even stronger

animus against interactive scholarship, as seen in the work of Sven Birkerts, Geoffrey

Nunberg, Mark Poster, and others who argue that digital technology works against

established Humanist principles, such as the ownership the author has of her/his work,

the necessarily difficult bureaucracy that such technology entails, and the erosion of the

linear logic of print as a medium. This problem can be seen in how institutions are trying

to control the creation and production of scholarship, specifically how the academy uses

institutional controls to limit the kinds of work that get recognized as scholarship. For

instance, Ph.D. students in humanities disciplines are not typically allowed to create

digital-centered texts as dissertations. Students have tried, only to be told by their

departments and institution that their work would not be recognized as valid. These

students run the risk of not earning a degree just because they do not present their research in a traditional fashion. But this does not mean that these kinds of digital texts have no place in the academy; in fact, I will argue, they are the eventuality of scholarship in the humanities, and as such we should pay more time and attention to better understanding how this medium can change scholarship and how we can use it to represent our disciplinary goals.

The main selling point that sparked my interest in the Texts and Technology program here at UCF was that the program was initially built to be inter-disciplinary. Students from many different backgrounds were invited to be a part of the program in order to foster a more in-depth treatment of the intersection between the humanities and digital media. We were encouraged in the beginning to broaden our backgrounds by taking courses in other departments, such as Psychology, Computer Sciences, Philosophy, and other disciplines where issues of technology and culture were being discussed. We were also encouraged to bring our own specializations into the program so that we could research and present our findings concerning the intersection between the Texts and Technology program and other disciplines. Basically, we were asked to contribute to what in all honesty was a grand idea: the solidification of a new academic discipline and the formulation of a coherent theory for that discipline. We find ourselves in the Texts and Technology program – students, faculty, and administration – in an untenable position at a moment in our cultural history in which our existence is tenuous at best. Some of the overarching factors concerning this problem are out of our control, as nationwide we are experiencing a budgetary crisis that is crippling our educational institutions from top to bottom. Partly in response to this budget crisis the Texts and

Technology program has had to undergo a scaling back of the kinds of research and experiments that would have furthered the defining of the discipline. As I teach my Humanities students, there is no art without politics and money, and this is true also of other types of institutions, specifically higher education.

Some of the factors that have derailed our main objectives have been purely institutional, in that our studies have uncovered holes in the way the academy understands the use of technology as a cultural medium. One example that bears directly on this dissertation is the integration of digital media into scholarly practice. For instance, the main idea of this dissertation in the beginning was to be the creation of a digital project modeled after the work of George Landow and Michael Joyce, both of whom have done great work defining hypertext and how it can be folded into scholarship. The project would have been a hybrid dissertation that would have incorporated a hypertext essay together with the traditional format of a dissertation. In this sense, the dissertation would have been completely digital, because it would be built on a digital platform that could support the hypertext structure of the work. However, the problem I have encountered with this plan is that the university itself, and, indeed, the Texts and Technology program, have no real way to support such a dissertation. There is no proper way to archive such a dissertation, since it is only recently the University has switched to an archival format that only supports public document file (.pdf) versions of printed dissertations.

Also, even if there were such a way to archive a hypertext dissertation, there are serious questions concerning copyright and the control of the information in such a dissertation. Because a dissertation is considered a publication, you must get permission

for everything that you replicate in the dissertation. For instance, if I want to include a screenshot of a website into my dissertation as an example, I must track down the owners of the website and get their permission. This is not an unreasonable request, but because of the very anonymous nature of digital information, tracking down owners of websites is very difficult. This is exactly the problem I ran into during my research into hate groups on the internet. Most of these groups despise academics, and as such they are very tricky to talk to about permission to use their material. Here is a cryptic reply I received from David Duke's EURO organization about using material from their website:

> Why not do a study of the racist and selective use of affirmative action and hate crime laws. That would be a better use of your time.
>
> Best regards,
>
> Vincent Breeding
>
> National Director
>
> European-American Unity and Rights Organization (EURO)
>
> 985-626-7714 Office
>
> 985-624-3351 Fax
>
> sales@davidduke.net

Vincent Breeding never even answered my question; instead, he thought it best to fish for a new recruit by asking me to research his own agenda. This next email I received from the leader of the American Nazi Party is even more interesting:

> Dear Sir: Thank you for your interest in the American Nazi Party, but as a rule we do not seek or desire "publicity" as so many other "racialist organizations" do. We work with sincere dedication towards our goal of

Racial survival, and Social Justice for White Working Class people's everywhere...without the use of a "scrapbook". LOL I believe that our three websites will provide you with all the necessary information that you might desire, or need...concerning our IDEOLOGY. As per "statistics" of growth, etc.....you will find that these other orgs will tell you of such "magnificent growth and progress" that we might wonder why they aren't marching into the White House tomorrow. WE will keep our "statistics" to ourselves, as by "acts alone" shall you be known...or something like that, eh? Thanks again for your interest. for White WORKER Power! Rocky J. Suhayda, Chairman www.americannaziparty.com

Here Rocky J. Suhayda implies, in a tone that is eerily devoid of violence, that one day I will see the power of the ANP in my streets, probably as they are stomping me underneath their feet. Again, Suhayda does not explicitly give me permission to use any of the material from his group's websites. These replies demonstrate some of the pitfalls facing anyone who researches the digital environment. But if one wants to fully demonstrate something as difficult as the very power of the digital environment, then the potential for trouble becomes more magnified. I cannot publish the kind of essay about these groups that I want at the current moment because I cannot include all of the evidence that I need, much less create a hypertext dissertation that may incorporate such information.

One last institutional problem that puts pressure on our program is that of who controls such information. With print as the medium, one can control the means of production and publication easily because the very text itself can be considered

intellectual property. The idea here is that the very physicality of the work, the book or the essay, can be warehoused in some codified form that can be distributed, or not, by the controlling institution. For example, if I publish a textbook through a publishing company, that company can make decisions on who gets a copy of my book based on a whole series of market variables (since this is not a dissertation about economics, I will gloss over this here). The publisher can distribute the book how they see fit, and if there are substantive copyright issues, such as someone misappropriating my text, the publisher can legally fight for control of the text because they physically own the property. However, the digital arena offers no such boundaries for which to understand the misappropriation of information. One major problem the University library and indeed our program would have is that if I were to create a dissertation on a purely digital platform and leave it up on the web, then there would be no way to control who has access to my work and how someone accessing the work may use it. Many authors, such as Birkerts, Poster, and Nunberg have commented on this in their work, and so I do not feel it necessary to report after them at this time. I suggest that it is reasonable to discuss and debate the exact place such scholarship has in the academy at present, because such a move could put our reputation at stake. Therefore, the concern that the Texts and Technology program has shown for these specific institutional issues are clearly in line with current discussion in the field, and as such one cannot blame the program for exhibiting caution and keeping projects from progressing too fast.

But what place does digital scholarship have in the humanities? By digital scholarship, I do not merely mean printed texts that have been remediated into a digital format, but instead I am discussing the actual incorporation of digital medium into the

scholarship process. It is impossible not to look around us now and realize that the nature

of scholarship in the humanities is changing. This change is predicated on the inclusion,

for good or ill, of technology into our everyday practices. I am writing here about the

eventual shift from the logic of print discourse to the logic of digital interaction as a

means of creating and producing scholarship in the humanities. I deliberately use both

"creating" and "producing" here to establish what I believe is the most important

contribution of digital communications technology to scholarship, which is the ability to

bring together the materialist and the phenomenological dialectics in the very same space.

A digital text has the capability to transfigure our notion of what scholarship is into what

is can be, and this is apparently shocking and troubling to humanities disciplines.

For instance, the decision in recent years by the University of Central Florida to

require electronic versions of graduate dissertations and theses demonstrates how

pronounced the movement from print culture to electronic culture is beginning to take

hold in the academy. In fact, UCF has now joined a community of approximately 200

institutions that either require electronic dissertations and theses, or who help catalogue

and index electronic dissertations and theses (Fineman 220). The NDLTD (Network

Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations) was established in 1996 as a group to help

coordinate electronic dissertations and theses, and as of today they have catalogued

approximately 18,000 such dissertations. Another group, *ProQuest Digital Dissertations*,

has access to over 209,000 dissertations (Fineman 220). Universities such as Virginia

Tech are working to improve the way electronic dissertations and theses are organized

and how they are formatted (*Networked Digital Library).* Clearly universities are

acknowledging the importance of the digital text, and this movement corresponds with

the thinking in the field of Texts and Technology concerning the placement of digital texts over printed texts. In their introduction to *The Digital Word*, Paul Delaney and George P. Landow state that "Whatever the future holds, almost all the essays in this volume demonstrate that today electronic texts exist largely as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, manuscripts, typescripts, and books" (9). There is hope and optimism in Delaney and Landow's sentiments that one day electronic texts will supersede print texts, and it is this optimism that belies much of the writing concerning digital texts in the current climate. Indeed, the future of scholarship and publishing in the academy is quickly moving towards the digital dissertation as a genre of digital texts, and in order to understand this change and the implications of such a movement we should ask some serious questions concerning the nature of electronic dissertations and theses.

However, while professors and other academics are beginning to embrace the electronic dissertation as a genre, there has not been the significant embrasure of digital texts by the academy as a whole, specifically in the Humanities. There has not been the abundance of digital histories, novels, and poetry that theorists and critics such as Delaney, Landow, Bolter, and Lanham predicted there would be. Instead, the digital environment has created a plethora of odd commentaries concerning mass culture in the form of websites, instructional cd-roms, and video games that for the most part reproduce narrative standards of printed texts without advancing the use of the inherent tools of the digital medium. And even though the technology has advanced, current discussion concerning the medium of the digital text has not changed. Steven Johnson (1997) suggests this is because overall we lack a cultural understanding of the differences between the digital and the physical (print) mediums. Johnson uses the example of the

garbage can icon on Apple computers to point out that because we do not have a sufficient language to understand the digital environment, we impose onto it a physical frame of reference. For instance, when we go online we say to ourselves that we are looking at web pages, even though the electronic presentation is clearly not analogous to the leaves of paper we turn in a book or magazine. The digital text has no real language of its own, and therefore cannot become a different and more fully-realized medium until we can relate to it differently.

Subsequently, this problem has filtered down into the discussion of the digital dissertation as a genre, specifically what constitutes a digital dissertation. While there are clearly electronic versions of dissertations and theses available through *ProQuest* and the University of Virginia, however these dissertations and theses are in actuality Public Document File (PDF) versions of printed texts. Dissertations that are developed on completely digital platforms, such as HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) or SGML (Standard General Markup Language), are finding a hard time being accepted as valid dissertations.   For instance, in their article "Born Digital: Hypermedia Theses," Matthews and Wiggins relate a story of a student at Simon Fraser University who attempted to submit a master's thesis in a digital format and who was told by the university that this would not be acceptable (41). The argument for not accepting the digital version of the thesis by SFU was that they could not be sure the electronic version would be accessible years down the line. SFU had not invested in a sophisticated computer database system to catalogue such a dissertation. PDF versions of printed texts, according to the argument, are merely replications of something physical; therefore, they are easier to store and ultimately they can be replaced if they are lost because the

university will always have the printed version on a shelf somewhere. This example would merely be anecdotal if it were not for the fact that most institutions also do not allow purely digital versions of dissertation. UCF, in fact, adopted a policy ruling out the creation of such dissertations as well. We are clearly surrounded by digital technology, and we clearly believe this technology has a place in the academy, but these examples show there is an underlying fear of the technology, a fear that manifests itself in arcane guidelines and esoteric institutional practices. This is a good example of what Steven Johnson is referring to concerning the problem of defining the digital text; because we are so used to looking at texts as a product of a print culture, it is difficult to understand what a digital text is outside of this.

The fear of technology as a controlling mechanism is not a new idea of course, but in light of most of our current discourse, even suggesting that technology can be used to discover knowledge is an anathema to the stability of the academy. The use of digital texts in humanities scholarship is an important step towards creating a more dynamic type of academic experience. The digital text will innovate the ways in which we practice scholarship in the humanities by bringing together two previously separated disciplines: humanities and fine arts. However, there is currently much resistance to this hybrid approach, as the politics of humanities scholarship at present do not allow for this shift. This is because the mode of scholarship is grounded in the materialist practice of print, and the rhetorical conventions of print demand strict adherence to accepted forms. This does not mean that we should not push forward; rather, it is now up to us as scholars, both professors and students, to experiment with the accepted forms in order to properly place the digital text within the discipline. This is already causing disruption, as

programs, such as UCF's T&T program, expand and become more interdisciplinary in order to deal with this shift.

It occurs to me that one of the major problems here is this movement towards interdisciplinary research. Academic departments are also political departments, and as such they fight for stern control over their respective subjects. Departments demand that their professors act as professionals who focus their time and energy performing a function that serves a particular need for the department. For instance, if an English department hires a professor to teach Renaissance Literature, that department is invested in making sure that professor remains an expert in that field. That professor must spend a great amount of energy performing and producing research in the field of Renaissance Literature. The department uses the professional status of the professor to entice students into the program and for other types of promotion. But what happens if that professor stops this research and goes off in another direction altogether? The department cannot sell this new research, especially if that research conflict with the core values of the department itself. The professor must always understand her/his place in the political schema of academia. Interdisciplinary research is even more troubling because departments are invested in this minute level of professionalization. An English department cannot hire a professor who could also potentially teach in Philosophy because that does not do anything for the English department's profile. Because even thinking about digital technology requires academics to be interdisciplinary, it should come as no surprise that there is much resistance to changing even this much of our professional practices.

What, then, are the implications of digital scholarship on the humanities? Issues of ownership – a digital text is one that cannot be easily "created" by one person, making authorship and copyright difficult to establish. Also, the information contained within a digital text can be used and manipulated in different ways, again making copyright issues difficult. Changes the nature of scholarship – at present, humanities scholarship is predicated on the notion that the texts we study are *artifacts* preserved in time. We reflect on these texts and extract meaning out of them based on our current position. For instance, when Michelangelo created his slave sculptures, critics of his time thought he did not get a chance to finish them because the figures of the slaves were encased within the stone they were carved from. However, modern art historians have argued that Michelangelo may have actually done this deliberately; he may have anticipated the kinds of artistic experiments Modernist artists would incorporate by making a statement about the nature of the soul trapped within its own creations. The point here is that contemporary critics would not have had a language for Michelangelo's sculptures until Modernism, thereby making their own analyses and criticisms grounded in a historically determined moment. This is the very nature of scholarship: we reflect on the past and utilize the tools of our present to create meaning from texts to represent our social, political, and/or intellectual heritage of the present. Even contemporary texts are treated in this way. We insist that texts produced within our time adhere to our intellectual values; otherwise, they are not worthy of our consideration.

The digital text, on the other hand, is a text with the capability of being more than an artifact; it can potentially be a living document far into an unknown future, making current analyses difficult. Even though Poststructural and Postmodern theories hail the

instability of the text, this is only meant to apply to our understanding of the past. As praxis, postmodern analysis insists that we look at the texts of our past as things without a central meaning and without mythology. Instead, they are materialist examples of how institutions manipulate society through carefully constructed power relations through the ability to control who gets to have a public voice and who does not. The only way for the disenfranchised to have power is by destroying, or deconstructing, the system that has excluded them. The digital text and the digital environment, on the other hand, have the potential to create whole new communities that can constitute a form of power all on their own. These communities, or networks, do not necessarily need to deconstruct the past in order to create meaning, but rather may create meaning through other means. This would mean that humanities scholarship as we know it may begin to break down in the face of this powerful emerging medium. Scholars would have to consider the ramifications of a text that they create which potentially can be changed or augmented at some time in the future. Scholarship becomes open ended and experimental, rather than closed and finalized. Also, one other point about humanities scholarship that is important to point out is that it is based on the ability of the scholar to create a *narrative* about the subject she/he is writing about, thereby creating a whole new context for the subject. Because the conventions of narrative insist on a beginning, middle, and an end, the digital text and the digital environment subvert this by creating a text that may not have an ending. The scholar of the digital text is then put in a position of being more than merely a producer of a type of scholarship; the scholar must now become a creator and an experimenter, an artist, so to speak. Scholarship may be about art, but the current ethos makes it clear that scholarship is not art itself, and the scholar is not to be an artist at the

same time. Francis Bacon wrote "It would be an unsound fancy and self-contradictory to expect that things which have never yet been done can be done except by means which have never been tried," and indeed this maxim could be applied to the problems we face because of the modern academy's resistance to digital scholarship.

In his seminal work *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and* Technology, George P. Landow writes:

> Hypermedia linking, which integrates scholarship and teaching and one discipline with others, also permits the faculty member to introduce beginners to the way advanced students in a field think and work while it gives beginners access to materials at a variety of levels of difficulty. Such materials, which the instructor can easily make available to all or only to advanced students, again permit a more efficient means than do textbooks of introducing students to the actual work of a discipline, which is often characterized by competing schools of thought. Because hypertext interlinks and interweaves a variety of materials at differing levels of difficulty and expertise, it encourages both exploration and self-paced instruction. The presence of such materials permits faculty members to accommodate the slower as well as the faster, or more committed, learners in the same class. (126)

First published in 1992, Landow's proclamation of a world in which digital communications technology will create an integrative academic experience was revolutionary. The ideal that classroom instruction could become more holistic and integrative, a place where active learning could take place, is, of course, the dream of

every professors in the academy. We desire droves of students who will dazzle us on every level with their dedication and their acumen; we want to see students rising above their own limitations towards the heights of intellectual successes. However, the promise of Landow's desires has not yet been fulfilled sixteen years later. In fact, what is happening in connection with digital mediated education is almost the opposite, in that digital communications technology is not necessarily promoting the kinds of active learning environment Landow had hoped. For instance, take the recent federal study conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics in which the results have shown that only 31% of college graduates can perform reading tasks at the advanced level (Romano A12). "While more Americans are graduating from college, and more than ever are applying for admission, far fewer are leaving higher education with the skills needed to comprehend routine data" (Romano A12). The statistics further show that these rates are in decline compared with 40% in 1992. Naomi S. Baron, a professor in Linguistics at American University in Washington, subscribes part of the problem to the rise of digital communications technology. She writes, "Many of this generation are aliterate - they know how to read but don't choose to. And abridgement of texts is now taken to extremes, with episodes from micro novels being sent as text messages on cell phones" (B11). In her article, Baron discusses her students' attitudes towards reading as a general reflection of the way in which digital communications technology teaches people how to think. The very thing for which Landow and others, such as Richard Lanham ad J. David Bolter, believe is the strength of digital communications technology, Baron critiques in an almost Adorno-like manner by pointing out that the ability to easily search through hypertext actually keeps students, and others by extension, from having to

apply the critical thinking skills that printed literacy promotes. Baron goes on to write that

>Much as automobiles discouraged walking, with undeniable consequences for our health and girth, textual snippets-on-demand threaten our need for the larger works from which they are extracted. Why read "Bowling Alone" – or even the shorter article upon which it builds – when you can lift a page that contains some key words? In an attempt to coax students to search inside real books rather than relying exclusively on the web for sources, many professors require references to printed works alongside URL's. Now that those "real" full-length publications are increasingly available and searchable online, the distinction between tangible and virtual is evaporating. (B11)

Baron's critique here is that digital communications technology is blurring the line between what is actual knowledge and what is supposed knowledge, and even more important to Baron is the fact that students would rather remain at the level of the supposed than rise to the actual.

The promise of digital communications technology is that communication will become more dynamic and more immediate than previously understood. For instance, the internet began as an electronic means for academics and scientists of all sorts to communicate with one another about their research. Tim Berners-Lee developed the software for the World Wide Web (www) as an open-source product so that the internet could be available to as many people as possible. Berners-Lee writes that:

The dream behind the Web is of a common information space in which we communicate by sharing information. Its universality is essential: the fact that a hypertext link can point to anything, be it personal, local or global, be it draft or highly polished. There was a second part of the dream, too, dependent on the Web being so generally used that it became a realistic mirror (or in fact the primary embodiment) of the ways in which we work and play and socialize. That was that once the state of our interactions was on line, we could then use computers to help us analyse it, make sense of what we are doing, where we individually fit in, and how we can better work together. ("Short")

Berners-Lee imagined the virtual space of the World Wide Web as a place where communication can happen both synchronously and asynchronously. The possibilities for changing the dynamics of human communication are indeed profound. In fact, digital communications technology has become probably the most popular form of communication, with millions of people logging on and surfing the net daily. But why, then, has this open form of communication not been embraced as openly in the academy? Why do we insist on replicating non-digital types of research? One way to answer this is to survey the general attitudes in Humanities scholarship to see how theorists and scholars imagine the use of digital communications technology in the academy.

What theorists such as Bolter, Lanham, and Landow desire is to create a space where academics can freely and openly exchange and collaborate on ideas. The virtual space of the internet is supposed to create an open forum where communication will become more democratic. Specifically, people will find themselves freely conversing

about a plethora of subjects and will ultimately become more intelligent. While the

internet has certainly opened up the dialogue concerning the multitude of subjects, it has

not happened the way these theorists imagined it would. There is a real disconnect

between the utopian fantasies of these thinkers and the dystopian reality. The fact is the

academy has not embraced digital communications technology because the technology

has not shown it can be used to produce the kinds of scholarship we are used to seeing.

There are no digital essays, dissertations, or research projects to speak of, or if there are

they are not recognized as legitimate practices. This is a long-running feud that the

academy has had with digital communications technology, ever since Sven Birkerts

published his book *The Gutenberg Elegies*. Birkerts writes that

> My core fear is that we, as a culture, as a species, are becoming shallower;
>
> that we have turned from depth--from the Judeo-Christian premise of
>
> unfathomable mystery--and are adapting ourselves to the ersatz security of
>
> a vast lateral connectedness. That we are giving up on wisdom, the
>
> struggle for which has for millennia been central to the very idea of
>
> culture, and that we are pledging instead to a faith in the web. What *is* our
>
> idea, our ideal, of wisdom these days? Who represents it? Who even
>
> invokes it? Our postmodern culture is a vast fabric of competing *isms*; we
>
> are leaderless and subject to the terrors, masked as freedoms, of an
>
> absolute relativism. It would be wrong to lay all the blame at the feet of
>
> technology, but more wrong to ignore the great transformative impact of
>
> new technological systems--to act as if it's all just business as usual. (111-
>
> 112)

There is a real paranoia here on the part of Birkerts that is shared by most of the academy, particularly in the Humanities. The idea that technology will somehow de-emphasize or in some way de-value the research we produce is at the heart of this problem. In responding to Birkerts, John Unsworth writes

> In fact, the most revolutionary aspect of networked communication is not that they deprive us of presence--a presence which we lost long ago, if indeed we ever enjoyed it at all--but rather that it makes it possible for us to present ourselves to one another in much more immediate, more elective, and more productive ways. If we were to evaluate the various "sense-extending technologies" according to their economies of communication, we would find that, up until the advent of computer networks, these technologies fell into one of two categories: one-to-one and one-to-many communication. Manuscript writing, speech, the telegraph, and the telephone are all examples of one-to-one communications--granted that in some cases, they might be more accurately called one-to-a-few, still their essential character is person-to-person. Print, television, movies, and radio--the technologies of broadcasting--are one-to-many technologies: notwithstanding the fact that the content communicated may have been produced by many hands, it emanates from one point and is inherently designed to be received, in a one-way transaction, at many different sites. In contrast to all of these, computer networks offer many-to-many communication, multicasting instead of broadcasting. (par.11)

The dialogue here between Unsworth and Birkerts demonstrates just how polarized the academy is when it comes to understanding and accepting digital communications

technology as a means of praxis. On the one hand, there is an aversion to anything that does not at least look or feel like accepted discourse, and on the other hand there is a radical desire to discard tradition for the new media. And while both sides are fighting with each other, creative thinking and invention in this field is stifled under the weight of these ideological conflicts.

One reason for this is that the language of the academy, particularly in the Humanities, is still rooted in print culture. Susan Hockey, in her book *Electronic Texts in the Humanities*, writes:

> The term 'electronic text in the humanities' is used to mean an electronic representation of any textual material which is an object of study for literary, linguistic, historical, or related purposes. Most often these texts are typical primary sources such as poetry, novels, plays, and historical documents, rather than electronic journals, monographs, reference works, and other secondary sources, although these text types can also sometimes be objects of study. I will not attempt to define the term 'text', but will use it to mean any written or spoken material, whether it is a complete work or manifestation of that work, or a sample or other subdivision of that work. (1-2)

Hockey here replicates the central problem in understanding the digital text in the Humanities by demonstrating that the definitions of texts exist outside of digital communications technology. This reminds us of Steven Johnson's discussion concerning the confusion the icons on the Apple computer cause. Indeed, Hockey's own definition of text as "any written or spoken material" clearly leaves out the types of texts being

created on digital platforms.   It is fundamental to our discussion that we situate this

problem as a problem of language; we must understand how the way define our

disciplinary practices influences the types of practices be engage in. Hockey actually

tries to argue for the acceptance of digital communications technology in Humanities

scholarship, but in doing so her research uncovers many of the problems inherent in using

digital communications technology as scholarship. She writes further that:

> The picture at the beginning of the new millennium is thus scattered.
> There are individual projects doing useful and frequently complex work
> but often in their own idiosyncratic way. There are also some large
> collections of texts available for searching in simple ways over the World
> Wide Web. The Internet and the World Wide Web are now at the centre
> of most computing, but this technology is now seen by many people more
> as a means of distribution or publication of information rather than as a
> means of manipulation and analysis. (9)

 She is right, of course: there are too many differing example of digital texts to make any

realistic evaluation as to how they should be used as material for scholarship. And, what

is worse, in terms of publication, the Internet is viewed more as a large bulletin board

system where anyone can post their thoughts without regard to standards as opposed to a

legitimate forum for publishing serious work.

In 2002, MLA released its proclamation "The Future of Scholarly Publishing" in

which it made the following recommendation:

> Departments, in formulating their guidelines for tenure and promotion,
> should bear in mind the dramatic changes that have occurred in scholarly

publishing practices and alter their expectations with regard to all levels of

scholarly publishing. Departments should engage in dialogue about these

standards with other humanities departments at the same institution and

other institutions and work energetically to inform their administrators

about changes in publication conditions specific to their disciplines. (183)

The MLA report also suggests:

Administrations should be aware of the radical changes in scholarly

publishing that are taking place and the particular pressures that obtain in

the languages and literatures. We urge them to meet with departments to

review existing criteria for scholarly publishing and decide if they are

appropriate to the institution. In particular, the kinds of publications

deemed appropriate for tenure should not be restricted to traditional

monographic studies. (184)

While the language adopted here by MLA is clearly progressive and embracing of DCT

in the Humanities, the reception of this has not been as stellar and universal within the

disciplines as expected. Writing about these issues in his article "A Note on the Current

State of Humanities Scholarship," Jerome McGann equates this disconnect to a system of

apartheid, in which one form of disciplinary practice (print) is privileged over another

(digital). McGann writes, "Editorial and interpretational projects in digital forms are now

being designed and executed and will proliferate. Departments of literary study have

perhaps the greatest stake in these momentous events, yet they are – in this country –

probably the least involved" (410). We continue to acknowledge that these practices are

happening and are going to change our scholarship, but we also continue to create

restrictions that make it difficult for those of us working in this new medium to be accepted as "real" scholars.

However, this is not a new problem, and at its roots is the discussion concerning the differences between the different mediums of communication. The works of Walter J. Ong and Marshall McLuhan provide us with a clear picture of the complex processes involved when modes of communication shift from one medium to the next. Relying on Eric Havelock's notion that writing disrupted the culture of ancient civilizations, Ong posits that the movement from oral traditions to written texts is less about technological advances than it is about cultural change. Ong analyzes that cultures that relied upon oral means of communication developed mnemonic systems of thought that allowed members of that culture to effectively communicate with each other. The only way to preserve these systems was to keep speaking to one another in rhythmically established patterns, ensuring that the narratives would be preserved. But these narrative structures are not universal and, according to Ong, cannot be translated easily from primary orality into written texts. Ong writes that

> Fixed, often rhythmically balanced, expressions of this sort and of other sorts can be found occasionally in print, indeed can be 'looked up' in books of sayings, but in oral cultures they are not occasional. They are incessant. They form the substance of thought itself. Thought is any extended form is impossible without them, for it consists in them. (*Orality* 35)

Ong goes on to write that "the law itself in oral cultures is enshrined in formulaic sayings, proverbs, which are not mere jurisprudential decorations, but themselves constitute the

law. A judge in an oral culture is often called on to articulate sets of relevant proverbs out of which he can produce equitable decisions in the cases under formal litigation before him" (35). Writing transformed primary oral cultures not merely by providing the benefit of codifying language for all to understand, but also by removing the mnemonic patterns of thought that they once held. There are three main points Ong makes here that are important for our discussion concerning digital texts: 1. the structure of the communicative act is dependent upon the medium (oral or written); 2. These mediums of communication are not universal, but rather specific, and as such they contain certain conventions that ultimately replace older ones; 3. The conventions of the medium of writing are such that thought is recorded and reflected upon without having to be integrated into the whole of the person as in a primarily oral culture. Because of this, Ong posits that communication both loses and gains something when it is transformed from an oral to a written medium. What is lost, according to Ong, is the sense of community that existed before the shift from the oral word to the written text.

Marshall McLuhan makes a similar argument concerning the relationship between the printed text and the advent of electronic media, and like Ong who sees the loss of oral traditions, McLuhan suggests that electronic media can record both written and oral traditions and create a hybrid means of communicating. McLuhan believes that media (mediums) are an extension of human communication, and as such they are phenomenal experiences that engage the whole psyche rather than fragmenting the thinking process. McLuhan writes that:

> Western man acquired from the technology of literacy the power to act
> without reacting. The advantages of fragmenting himself in this way are

seen in the case of the surgeon who would be quite helpless if he were to

become humanly involved in his operation. We acquired the art of

carrying out the most dangerous social operations with complete

detachment. But our detachment was a posture of noninvolvement. In the

electric age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended

to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of

mankind within us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the

consequences of our every action. It is no longer possible to adopt the

aloof and dissociated role of the literate Westerner. (*Essential* 150)

If we set aside the clearly romantic nature of McLuhan's rhetoric for a moment, we can

see that McLuhan here is making a similar argument to that of Ong's in that McLuhan

also sees written literacy as a disinterested approach to intellectual engagement. The

difference here is that McLuhan views electronic media as an interactive experience, one

that reawakens a similar type of communicative engagement oral traditions once did. It

is not enough for McLuhan that electronic media merely reprint written texts; indeed, if

that were the case, then there would be no significant difference between writing and

electronic media. If the shift from oral to written changed the way we consciously

thought about information, and the advent of print ordered the way we arranged and

published information, then electronic media will ultimately change the very order of

information itself. McLuhan writes further that:

In the electronic age which succeeds the typographic and mechanical era

of the past five hundred years, we encounter new shapes and structures of

human interdependence and of expression which are "oral" in form even

when the components of the situation may be non-verbal . . . It is not a

difficult matter in itself, but it does call for some reorganization of

imaginative life. Such a change of modes of awareness if always delayed

by the persistence of older patterns of perception. The Elizabethans

appear to our gaze as very medieval. Medieval man thought of himself as

classical, just as we consider ourselves to be modern men. To our

successors, however, we shall appear as utterly Renaissance in character,

and quite unconscious of the major new factors which we have set in

motion during the past one hundred and fifty years. (99)

For McLuhan, there will no longer be a differentiation between, say, science and poetry,

as both of these will fold into one another as they once did under ancient civilizations.

Only now we will have direct access to both of these disciplines and we will be able to

see how both contribute to the discussion. What Ong and McLuhan understand about the

shift from orality to literacy is that literacy re-arranged information according to ordered

forms. McLuhan's comments about our relationship to the Elizabethans and the

Medieval ages are predicated upon the way these epochs in Western history constructed

their information differently from our ways. Both Ong and McLuhan make it very clear

that shifts in media are complex processes that somehow influence the very culture we

are a part of.

        It is clear from the examples of the different kinds of digital texts that a similar

shift in media is occurring. What we need to understand at this point is that what is

problematic about Landow's definition of a digital text as a printed text in electronic form

is that it does not account for the discrete processes that Ong and McLuhan identify. We

are still in the early stages of discovering just what this new technology is and how it influences our notions of the aesthetics and the rhetoric of communication. The way we conceive of the digital text may limit our approach to how we define and understand what it is. A digital text cannot merely be a print text in electronic form because the very nature of the medium itself transforms the semiotics of the text. It is a different type of text because it has a different phenomenal relationship between the reader and the message. In his book *Electric Language: A Philosophical Study of Word Processing*, Michael Heim examines the digital text from a different point of view than Landow does. Heim does not directly define a digital text, but rather discusses the phenomenon of digital writing:

> Digital reproduction of writing is as different a phenomenon in form from typewritten, printed language as digital audio reproduction differs from phonograph recordings and oxidized tape recordings. When a phenomenon has been digitized, it has been interpreted and processed. It has been transmongrified into a new form, a form that can be controlled by human beings with a precision far beyond that of other forms of reproduction. *Digital* [sic] is derived from the Latin *digitus*, or "finger." The fingers are the primordial counters, the first servants of human calculation. When something is digitized, it is interpreted as a sequence of numbers, numbers that have a precision that cannot be experienced directly in the original phenomenon, though the original phenomenon may have in itself a certain kind of precision that cannot be reduced to

quantities or numerical relationships. . . . Phenomena that have been

digitized are new creations at the fingertips of human beings. (84-85)

Here we have an evaluation of the electronic medium as a place where dialectic and

dialogic processes take place. Heim suggests that there is a necessary interpretive

process that happens when we transform information into the digital environment. This

process is necessary because the means for which information is stored digitally is quite

different from the way it is typeset onto a page and published or recorded onto a tape for

broadcast. The computer first must understand the information according to its own

language, a language that represents the manipulation of binary codes. Because the

computer is essentially a calculating machine, it does not think in terms of semantic or

linguistic structures as we understand them; it orders information according to exact

relationships based on encoding systems. Once the information is encoded it can be

stored in the memory for retrieval at a later time. However, in order to retrieve the

information, the computer must then perform a new series of processes to interpret the

information to be viewed on the screen. What Heim identifies here is that the shift from

printed and electronic media into digital media composes a different set of codes like the

ones that Ong and McLuhan identify.

But as to how this new disruption will affect the nature of scholarship and the

ordering, creation, and production of knowledge, Poster and others cannot say with any

definite exactitude. There is mostly amongst the discourse at this moment either a

reckless embracing of the technology or a general fear of it, neither of which are pushing

the discourse towards any substantive answers. Disruptions in disciplinary systems are

nothing new, however. Probably the best analysis of such disruptions comes from

Foucault's *The Order of Things*. It is worth noting that Foucault recognizes how

knowledge systems changed dramatically from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth

century, from the complex systems of signs and symbols rooted in Catholic dogma to the

taxonomic ordering of knowledge during the age of science. Foucault's analysis reminds

us that the human sciences such as psychology, sociology, and cultural history all had to

fight for legitimacy at one time or another by positing themselves against the accepted

order of their age. Writing about the limited nature of Renaissance knowledge, Foucault

states that the sixteenth century "condemned itself to never knowing anything but the

same thing, and to knowing that thing only at the unattainable end of an endless journey."

At this point, I would like to suggest ways in which we could counter this animus by

focusing in on a few examples of how others have addressed this type of issue in the past.

For instance, writing about the dawn of the technological age, Carolyn Marvin states that

"Media are not fixed natural objects; they have no natural edges. They are constructed

complexes of habits, beliefs, and procedures embedded in elaborate cultural codes of

communication. The history of media is never more or less than the history of their uses,

which always lead us away from them to the social practices and conflicts they

illuminate" (8). Here Marvin identifies the way in which any shift in technology is

equated to the means in which knowledge changes, just as Foucault does in *The Order of

Things*. The main methodology here then is to perform a kind of archaeology concerning

the way in which the academy and other types of academic/archiving institutions have

addressed or are addressing this shift.

What we are faced with in the academy at the moment is a crisis concerning how

we both understand the digital text and incorporate the digital text into our own scholarly

practices. While the politics of digital as I have outlined them here make it difficult

move fully towards digital scholarship at the moment, however, there is an intermediary

way of contextualizing this problem. If we were to consider the phenomenology of the

digital text as a place where convergent mediums, such as print and visual systems meet,

then we may be able to address the hybrid nature of the digital text as a focus for research

and investigation. It is this concept of hybridity that I will focus on in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: HYBRIDITY: THE HERMENEUTIC LOGIC OF THE DIGITAL TEXT

> The artistic image of a language must by its very nature be a linguistic hybrid (an
>
> intentional hybrid): it is obligatory for two linguistic consciousnesses to be
>
> present, the one being represented and the other doing the representing, with each
>
> belonging to a different system of language.
>
> <div align="right">--M. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel"</div>

In this chapter, I will first define hybridity as the means for which a digital text brings together seemingly disparate medium to create an interactive experience. Drawing from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, I will define hybridity as a dialogic process. His analysis of how the text brings together two seemingly disparate modes of discourse is suitable to our understanding of the new media age we live in, particularly how digital media can be used to create new kinds of textual experiences. Theorists such as Bolter, Landow, and Lanham have helped to establish a new mode of discourse that uncovers the rhetoric of digital media, a rhetoric grounded in practices of hypertext, of interactivity, and of the convergence of visual and written linguistic systems. In other words, a digital text remediates older textual practices into an interactive experience, bringing together written language and visual language to create an aesthetic experience more akin to community dreaming than to reading. Examples of such texts include Michael Joyce's digital novel experiments or George Landow's digital Victorian project. Other theorists such as Ulmer, Ray, and O'Gorman have posited that the very logic of the digital text is

grounded in the hermeneutic practices of poetics that help create and produce them, making the digital text a medium for both artistic expression and scholarly interpretation and fulfilling the requirements for Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." I will then conclude this chapter by demonstrating different approaches to digital scholarship by highlighting the work of Michael Joyce..

In his essay "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin writes "What is hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, and encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (358). While Bakhtin is discussing the novel specifically as a mode of print, his analysis of how the text brings together two seemingly disparate modes of discourse is suitable to our understanding of the new media age we live in, particularly how digital media can be used to create new kinds of textual experiences. Theorists such as Bolter, Landow, and Lanham have helped to establish a new mode of discourse that uncovers the rhetoric of digital media, a rhetoric grounded in practices of hypertext, of interactivity, and of the convergence of visual and written linguistic systems. In other words, a digital text remediates older textual practices into an interactive experience, bringing together written language and visual language to create an aesthetic experience more akin to community dreaming than to reading. Examples of such texts include Michael Joyce's digital novel experiments or George Landow's digital Victorian project. Other theorists such as Ulmer, Ray, and O'Gorman have posited that the very logic of the digital text is grounded in the hermeneutic practices of poetics that help create and produce them,

making the digital text a medium for both artistic expression and scholarly interpretation and fulfilling the requirements for Gadamer's "fusion of horizons."

Hybridity should be understood as the rhetorical structure of the digital text, a structure that allows for the bringing together of disparate writing and linguistic systems in order to create a dynamic and interactive experience. Hypertext, for instance, with its emphasis on wandering through the virtual space of the digital as opposed to fixing the text in a linear fashion, creates an experience in which the reader is empowered to discover the narrative on her own terms. According to Michael Joyce

> . . . hypertext is reading and writing electronically in an order you choose;
> whether among choices represented for you by the writer, or by your
> discovery of the topographic (sensual) organization of the text. Your
> choices, not the author's representations or the initial topography,
> constitute the current state of the text. You become reader-as-writer. (3-
> 4)

What Joyce advocates here is the text as a form of discovery for the reader through direct engagement with the structure of the writing itself. But while Joyce envisions the reader-as-writer, notice he does not destroy the text altogether. The idea here is not to advocate a rhetorical practice in which chaos rules the text; rather, by defining a digital text as a hybrid means that we are bringing together already understood modes of writing with what is unique and unknown in such a way as to foster dynamism rather than anarchy. In his article "Dialogism, Intermediality and Digital Textuality," Federico Pellizzi suggests:

> I do believe, however, that rather than abandoning the concept of text, it is
> far more useful to overhaul its very founding rules. In fact I think that in

the age of digital and multimodal communication the concept of text is

still necessary, and that the minimum conditions of *uniqueness, autonomy,*

delimitation, permanence, intentionality, coherence and *cohesion* which

define a text remain valid even in the digital world. . . . The text is a

communicative convention, both practical and theoretical, which fixes the

rules for the establishment, preservation and transmission of units of

meaning. It is also an experimental space, a cultural and pragmatic space

where forms of speech and models for organizing reality are put to the

text. (2)

One concept which is key for Pellizzi here is to understand that any text, whether print or

digital, is an *experimental* space. The discursive nature of writing suggests that any mode

we choose to write within allows for some measure of play; we are encouraged to

discover through writing what meaning is, and as such we are encouraged to create a text

that brings together different and disparate kinds of linguistic experiences. The digital

text does not change this underlying principle; the digital text merely enhances and

magnifies it through the incorporation of hypertext and multimedia capabilities. The

essence of the hybrid text, then, is the potential of the text to be a creative and an

expository act.

The concept of hybridity here, then, is drawn from Bakhtin's study "Discourse in

the Novel," where he conceptualizes hybridity as the mixing within a single space two or

more linguistic consciousnesses. For Bakhtin, hybridity is a form of dialogism, where

everything uttered is understood as being a part of a larger whole. Holqluist writes in the

glossary for Bakhtin that dialogism is something "Which will affect the other, how it will

do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue" (426).

Probably the best analogy to make concerning hybridity can be found in Nam Jun Paik's multi-media art display *Electronic Superhighway: Continental US (1995)*. With this display, Paik has created an allegory commenting on the nature of media and American culture. The states of the Continental US are linked together by series of technological structures that support the notion that media has become ever pervasive in our contemporary world. The television sets seem haphazardly arranged but are carefully staged to reflect the outline of the country itself. Each set is framed with multi-colored neon lights that represent the borders of the states. The television sets themselves broadcast a plethora of American pop culture that relate to each state. For instance, for North Carolina, the sets show images of burning cigarette cartons (Marlboro); for Tennessee, the face of Elvis. For Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is broadcast during one of his speeches. Clips from films such as *Showboat*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Oklahoma* all play in their respective states as well. Notice in the picture how Alaska is set apart from the rest, designating both its geographical distance and its cultural proximity to the rest of the country. What is important to point out here is that Paik uses the physicality of information arts to create a digital essay, so to speak, about culture and media. Paik weaves together aspects of critical theory and hermeneutic poetics to create a new means of commentary and analysis. In his book *Networked Art*, Craig Saper writes:

In the work of Nam Jun Paik, the Fluxus artist and founder of video art, the direct link between mail art and electronic art represent a widely known example of the importance of networks and networking in contemporary art beyond any particular medium. And the preoccupations and peculiar aesthetic codes of these underground art networks, with their emphasis on an explosion of information, appear as key components in the definition of an electronic cultural milieu of World Wide Web and Internet mail systems. (43)

Saper's analysis of Paik's work includes how the founding principles of digital networking are based on this aesthetic. Paik's work fuses together two seemingly disparate modes of discourse – digital technology and cultural theory – to create a hybrid text. This is the essence of Bakhtin's quotation from above concerning the "artistic image of language," and as such it also constitutes a good example of the nature of hybridity.

Fluxus represents a fluid example of how hybridity works in terms of intermedia. Intermedia is a term coined by the artist Dick Higgins. Higgins introduced Intermedia in 1966 during his "Statement on Intermedia" speech. Intermedia is an activity between different medias, such as found items and painting (Fluxus History and Trans-History: Competing Strategies for Empowerment). Within the intermedia idea lies the art form of Fluxus. Fluxus was seen as something new and different to most. Up to this point, most art came from one source, such as a painting or music. Fluxus artists followed their own thoughts and ideas, forgetting everything that was evident in the past eras. Fluxus artists came up with new ways of doing things, and new beliefs as to what they felt was art and

what should be considered art. Despite the loosely grouped nature of Fluxus, there are

twelve qualities typically consistent with Fluxus pieces (Friedman 244). Fluxus is a free

flowing, non-conforming approach which allows ultimate freedom to the artist. Fluxus is

a fairly abstract term, which applies to a wide array of art and media. A key term in

analyzing Fluxus is the term abstract. There are very few characteristics that truly

personify Fluxus as a whole, as the field that it encompasses includes a broad range of

different types of works. A characteristic that actually may loosely describe the

movement may be that they do not conform to any one feature or trait. For example,

when contrasting *I Love the Old Goat* by Ken Friedman and Alison Knowles and *Untitled*

by Wolf Vostell, one can find very few similarities between the two works. *I Love the*

Old Goat is a picture of a common goat, which has been seemingly vandalized with the

addition of a painted on mustache and goatee with the words "I love the old Goat" in the

lower corner. *Untitled* is neither similar nor different. It depicts, from two views, a bread

vendor of some sort. These works are neither alike nor different, which represents the

paradoxical nature of Fluxus. Despite the fact that these works share some distinct

qualities, they are both very different works. Fluxus artists were constantly looking for

new ways to look at things, which may have not been traditional and may end up being

controversial. This is key to the essence of Fluxus, as it strives to keep moving and

changing. Examples as such also lend their worth to the feature that Fluxus is difficult to

pin down with one singular term or idea. As works are constantly changing the term

Fluxus changes as well. It may have begun as a freedom movement, but perhaps in the

future Fluxus will be a practice in conformity due to its ever-changing nature.

Ken Friedman observes the twelve main Fluxus ideas as being Globalism, Unity of

art and life, Intermedia, Experimentalism, Chance, Playfulness, Simplicity, Implicativeness, Exemplativism, Specificity, Presence in time, and Musicality. Globalism, though not a typical word, expresses the human nature behind art. Despite different countries and states, people are typically similar to some level. Intermedia and Experimentalism both fall together as first trying new things, such as Intermedia, then assessing the results of the experiment. In society, chance sparks events that move the world. To Fluxus, Chance represents the spark that keeps the art form moving. Fluxus pieces must be playful yet simple, hearkening back to the audience and artist's younger days. Fluxus pieces implicate a higher meaning than ascertained at first glance. As also noted by Dick Higgins, Fluxus pieces show exemplativism, which means that they have been produced with the qualities consistent to the Fluxus movement. Pieces are consistently specific and show where they belong in time. The final element of a Fluxus work is Musicality. This does not only imply the inclusion of music in the piece, but also that the work does not just look pretty and is soon forgotten. Musicality means that the work paints a full picture, and gets a point across to the audience. For example, *I Love the Old Goat* could display facets of ironic disrespect toward an elder generation. It seems that the younger graffiti artist has vandalized the picture of the goat, but still says that he or she "loves the Old Goat." The graffiti in this case seems to be a prank, or in jest, as the intentions in the end seem pure. Perhaps the artist and whoever the goat symbolizes have a very humorous relationship (Friedman 244-51).

The twelve main ideas of Fluxus lead to an image of Fluxus works being spontaneous, simple, meaningful, and witty. These are all admiral traits for a work of art to possess, and certainly high expectations for Fluxus pieces. For example, *I Love the*

Old Goat, at the very least, possesses six of these qualities. Evident are its characteristics of Experimentalism, Playfulness, Simplicity, Implicativeness, and Specifity. It is very experimental in its use of applying graffiti like writing over a picture of a goat. Its components are playful and simple in nature, and likely came together as a result of an artistic epiphany of chance. The title and written graffiti actually tell a different story than just a goat. It seems that some imaginary character is proclaiming that despite all of their partner's shortcomings, they still love that person. The interesting thing about Fluxus works is that different people can take out different meanings. Though different interpretations can be drawn, the artist is sure of what they want to convey and it is apparent to the audience.

Untitled seems to also inherently possess six qualities: Globalism, Unity of art and life, Playfulness, Simplicity, Implicativeness, and Presence in time. The image of baguettes of bread is, in privileged countries, globally known. This is a compilation of two pictures of a real-life scene that was not set up. It is in sync with real life, seeing as how these real scenes are now depicted in the piece. This work is playful in the fact that it is displaying a mundane, simple scene yet the way it is displayed with real bread, the subject matter tends to seem more interesting. The work also seems to implicate, wittily, the underlying poverty in the world. This individual makes a living selling bread, yet it seems to be from the side of an automobile. *Untitled*'s presence in time is not immediately evident, yet the audience can gather that it is likely within the last 50 years at the most. The main point to drive home here is that Fluxus represents an attempt to create hybrid texts, ones that integrate, synthesize, and amalgamate different kinds of artistic and rhetorical positions. Fluxus provides theorists such as Craig Saper and

Marcel O'Gorman with a fitting analogy for the kinds of experimentations in digital art and digital theory.

In their book *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Bolter and Grusin define hybridity as "Media produced by heterogenous networks, such as computer graphics, digital photography, or the World Wide Web" (272). While this serves as a functional definition, we should point out that hybridity is the convergence of two different mediums within the same space, a convergence that both preserves the language of each medium while at the same time creating a new means of representation. The hybrid text is one in which multiple ideas, sometimes even opposite ideas, exist on the same virtual space. Specifically, there are three questions concerning the text:

1. What is a text? – A text is traditionally defined as a medium that transmits written language to an audience in order to communicate cultural values. However, this definition was challenged in the Twentieth Century by Poststructuralist theorists such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault to include sign systems that also communicate cultural values. For instance, a painting can also be considered a text because it not only visually represents a thing ("woman", "famous battle", "historical figure", etc.), but because those representations have semiotic components to them. Therefore, a text as we understand it today is a cultural artifact that reveals a particular set of values to an audience at a particular moment in history. A text does this by bringing together both the signifier and the signified in the semiotic process. Digital texts, therefore, must be understood as artifacts produced through the electronic medium. These artifacts semiotically communicate to our particular culture. There is already an acknowledged difference between print texts and other

types of text; however, digital texts represent another form of communication altogether because they have the power and the ability to synthesize both printed, visual, and other non-verbal mediums together in the same space. Digital texts, therefore, are integrative; they represent a hybrid form of thinking and of semiotics than print texts do.

2. Who reads it and how do they understand it? -- Generally, print texts are available to all members of a given culture. This is the *ethos* behind writing – such as when Hammurabi wrote the laws down for all Babylonians to read. However, there are clearly different levels of access to specific types of information and of texts based on certain class distinctions. For instance, you really need to be initiated into the class of "Physicists" in order to understand texts written about Quantum Mechanics. You must also be initiated into the class of "Lawyers" to have access to and to understand legal documents. These are *disciplines* as Foucault understood and defined them, and as such disciplines control the means of and the access to the information within their own practices. The implication here is that not all texts are accessible to everybody, no matter what the prevailing cultural myth may dictate. Concerning digital texts: on the surface digital texts appear to be a general form of communication, such as Hammurabi's laws. Because of the access to and the dissemination of relatively cheap technology, nearly everyone in the contemporary period can read digital texts. However, it must be noted that there are those who do not have access to technology, making digital texts just as elusive and as a part of a discipline as printed texts.

3. How do we develop new textual practices? (Using critical theory as poetics.) -- Understanding that texts are as much a product of cultural ideology as they are the

creation of a singular mind, we must look at texts as mediums that communicate information rather than as absolute loci for knowledge. Texts themselves only tell us what is happening at a moment in time; if there is universal or archetypal information in a text, it is there only to serve as a point of reference rather than an absolute form. Therefore, we can understand both the production and creation of texts through the presentation and the arrangement of information as they relate to cultural standards and practices. For example, we can observe how the conventions of print made it necessary to codify the content and the form of printed material. A good example of this is Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, where the spelling in the text would be considered atrocious to our current standards but reflects a lack of such standardization. The form of the medium arranges the content, and as such the form also dictates other types of conventions. These forms can be subverted and thereby contribute to our understanding of textual practices by demonstrating how the conventions actually work. For instance, McLuhan's *the Medium is the Massage*, Mark Taylor's *Imageologies*, and N. Katherine Hayles' *Writing Machines* are examples of printed texts that remediate other types of mediums.

 This is a very different concept of text than what we have currently, one that opens up a whole world of possibilities. Our current notion of the text is one in which only one rhetorical mode is present at any given moment, but the logic of the digital environment moves beyond the linearity of print towards a future that is still evolving and still uncertain. The incorporation of printed words, visual representations, cinematic elements, sounds, hyperlinking, networking, and a whole host of other techniques gives

the digital text the power to transform our intellectual experiences into interactive wonders.

This is problematic because we may have to admit that there is a range of the types of digital texts that we encounter. The plethora of discourse alone that the internet supports suggests that there are different levels to digital information. If we analyze the texts we find on the internet, we find that there are at least three different levels of hybrid digital texts, all of which employ different heuristics in their construction. At the first and lowest level is what I will call **Print-Online Texts**. These are texts that are clearly grounded in print medium; they may be everything from actual print documents turned into public document files (PDF) that are online or they may be web sites for print-based publications. These are the texts that Landow refers to in his definition, and because of their relationship to printed texts they represent the lowest level of digital text. The homepage for the Orlando Sentinel, and it is an example of a **Print Online** text. For the most part, the Orlando Sentinel online does not act much different from the print version. All of the major sections of the newspaper are represented here, and a reader can access daily news, sports, and even classified advertisements online as in print. The most distinguishing features of the Orlando Sentinel online are that the search engine allows readers to find specific articles or issues and that the archive gives readers access to past editions or stories. The layout of Orlando Sentinel online is rhetorically analogous to the printed newspaper, making the web site an augmentation of the printed medium. Therefore, **Print-Online Texts** are digital texts that deliver print in another form without deviating much from the print medium.

The second type of digital text is what I will call the **Multimedia-Text**. In this type of text, information is constructed utilizing the different multimedia aspects of the digital environment (such as streaming video, flash, php, etc.) in order to rhetorically impact the reader/audience. The **Multimedia-Text** employs digital media in order to create and shape the meaning of the text. A good example of a **Multimedia-Text** is Guillermo Gomez-Pena's website for Cyber-Vato. Pena is a performance artist that uses media as a means of drawing attention to multicultural issues. This web site utilizes the multimedia power of digital communication to draw attention to socio-political causes, specifically the use of streaming video and real-time chat rooms to create performance art. The **Multimedia-Text** is a text that is consciously aware of the electronic apparatus that is necessary to support the digital environment. Other types of **Multimedia-Text** projects include academic journals such as *Rhizomes, Kairos,* and *Culture Machines*. These online journals utilize many of the heuristics of print-based texts but allow their authors to create texts using various multimedia formats. These journals then become a mixed-method approach to digital communication, which also underscores the nature of the digital environment.

The third type of digital text is the **Exists-Only-As-Digital** text. These types of texts rely solely on the digital environment to produce desired effects. These texts are oftentimes database driven, and rely on server-side language (such as ASP, JSP, PHP, etc.) to create and arrange information. While these texts certainly utilize the multimedia capabilities of the digital environment, they are tests that for the most part do not have much of a frame of reference to the standard definition of text, if any at all. For example, a text that fits into this category is the web site *From Lexia to Perplexia* that N. Katherine

Hayles (2002) writes about in *Writing Machines*. *From Lexia to Perplexia* is an experiment in digital narrative, one in which the user wanders around through a symbolic representation of conscious ideas. The site is interactive in that the choices the reader/audience makes in terms of linking produces very different effects. *From Lexia to Perplexia* utilizes both Landow's theory of hypertext and Bolter's theory of remediation to create a narrative experience. The text is dense and seemingly without form.

Another example of this kind of text is the *Infinite Grid* experiment. According to Stephen Wilson *Infinite Grid* ". . . at its most basic interpretation and intention, is a place for image-makers and image-lovers to exchange ideas, collaborate, and, in a loose sense of the word, meet" (580). Users participate in a digital art project whereby they upload images into the database that become a part of a mosaic of converging ideas. The mosaic itself is then transposed into a shockwave format that animates the images. Here we see another aspect of the digital environment, that of the emphasis on collaboration and community. While this is not indicative of **Exist-Only-As-Digital** texts, it is however one thing that makes these texts distinguishable from **Print-Online** or **Multimedia**. Another good example of this is the *Habbo Hotel* website, where kids from all over the world create a user account and an avatar that lives in cyberspace. *Habbo Hotel* is a meeting place; it is a virtual chatroom replete with rooms to inhabit and online avatars to speak to. These types of texts derive their power from being able to construct worlds whose experiences are often outside the realm of our own, and it is this power here that makes the digital text in general so important to define and interpret. We have not really gotten past the tip of the iceberg here and already we are faced with the fact that digital

texts are highly complex, and that their complexity is directly related to the dialectic between media and rhetoric.

The main point here is to ask if such a theory based clearly on critiquing material production can be applied to such an immaterial medium as the digital environment, and it is here that current scholarship concerning digital texts has not made the case very effectively. While theorists and critics working within new media studies and English literary theory are quick to point out the differences between the material and the immaterial, however none so far has gone farther into actualizing a theory of how we can access and understand the immaterial nature of digital texts. Theorists such as Lanham (1994), Landow (1997; 1994), Landow and Delany (1993), Botler (1991), Bolter and Grusin (1999), and Hayles (2002; 1999) all discuss digital technology as being a medium without bounds that can create and sustain viable communities in ways that print culture no longer can. Many of these theorists have also established the heuristics of what digital theory is today. Lanham (1994), for instance, outlines his desire for digital media to enhance the way we think writing in communities. Lanham writes that "Digitized communication is forcing a radical realignment of the alphabetic and graphic components of ordinary textual communication" (3-4), citing that computers will ultimately change the way we publish, produce, and even think about writing. George Landow (1997; 1994) in his work on hypertext theory discusses the way in which the ability to create hyperlinks in web pages allows digital writers to create non-linear narratives, thereby freeing the digital text from the rigidity and structure of the printed text. So to do Bolter (1991) Bolter and Grusin (1999) in their theory of remediation, in which they argue, based on McLuhan's notion that the medium is the message, that digitizing information is

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more than merely transferring print to digital; rather, the printed text must be re-imagined and re-mediated to fit the logic of the digital environment. Marie-Laure Ryan (1999), another theorist in the field of new media, writes that

> The act of writing taps into (and enriches in return) a reservoir of ideas, memories, metaphors, and linguistic material which contain potentially an infinite number of texts. These resources are textualized through selection, association, and linearization. But if the text is the product of an actualization, it reverts to a virtual mode of existence as soon as the writing is over. . . . This potentiality is not just a matter of being open to various interpretations, nor of forming the object of infinitely many acts of perception; otherwise texts would be no more or less virtual than works of art or things in the world such as rocks and tables. The virtuality of texts . . . stems from the complexity of the mediation between what is there, physically, and what is made out of it. (96)

Here Ryan acknowledges that there is a difference between materiality and immateriality, but she is not able to describe "what is made out of it." Lanham, Landow, and Bolter and Grusin also discuss the immaterial nature of digital texts by pointing out how different they are from print, but here again there is no substantive inquiry into whether there is a conscious essence of digital texts that allows them to be so powerful. Other critics and theorists, such as Poster (2001; 1999) and Porter (1998) discuss the problems that the immateriality of digital texts pose on scholarship and on ethics. While both of these theorists embrace digital technology, nonetheless they do so with caution, demonstrating the lack of unity between theorists currently working in the field of new media theory.

This also underscores the fact that there is skepticism concerning whether or not there is such a thing as a digital text in and of itself. At first, this question may seem redundant and ridiculous; one can reply that you need only to log on to the internet to see examples of digital texts. But as obvious as this may seem, the observable qualities of online texts do not necessarily constitute a definition of a digital text. For example, what is the significant difference between reading Time Magazine in print form or online? Setting aside the tactile experience of holding the magazine, the aesthetic and rhetorical experiences are quite the same in many ways. You can read the same words in print as you do online, you can see the same photographs in print as you do online, and because of this there is probably no significant difference in the way the audience experiences the meaning of the text in print or online. The difference may be easy access; reading Time Magazine online may allow for a larger audience of people who may not subscribe to the magazine or who cannot afford to. But easy access is in itself not a strong qualifier for the argument that digital texts exist because easy access does not have to do with the text itself. Easy access rests with the technological apparatus that provides the text to the audience; it is the conduit for which the audience experiences the medium, not necessarily the medium itself. Again we are back to a critique of materialism rather than the examination of the essence of the digital text. If a digital text is nothing more than the replication of print onto the computer, then where does its power reside? How does it educate? How does it arrange and alter social constructs? Does it do any of these things at all? It is important to ask these questions and make these distinctions because if there is such a thing as a digital text, then there must be an approach to understanding it. This is important because if we are to utilize the burgeoning technology for educational or

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social means, then we must have a concrete theory concerning the nature of the digital text.

In order to define the digital text then we investigate at least three general areas concerning digital texts. These three areas can be articulated as:

1. What are the heuristics that constitute a digital text?

2. How does a digital text substantively connect to an audience/community?

3. What purpose are digital texts created for?

These questions represent different aspects of three areas of inquiry: hermeneutics, semiotics, and rhetoric. In answering what the heuristics for digital texts are we are engaging in a form of hermeneutics because hermeneutics is the formal science of interpreting texts. Theorists such as Merleau-Ponty (1968; 1964), Ricouer (1991; 1974), Gadamer (1992; 1976; 1975), and Vattimo (1997) all have established hermeneutics as an approach to understanding the nature of texts. Working with concepts from traditional phenomenology, such as Husserl's notion of the relation between noetic and noematic processes (1969), these hermeneuticists have established recognizable criteria for texts that can be applied to various medium without necessarily being rooted in the materiality of print culture. Ricouer (1991) suggests that while the print aspect of texts makes it more concrete and therefore more observable, nonetheless print is an amalgamation of both verbal and nonverbal constructions. This means that the key to understanding texts rests within understanding codified language. In the case of the digital environment, just because the text may not appear in print does not mean that it is not observably constructed. Therefore, Ricouerian hermeneutics can still apply to the digital text outside

of materiality. Gadamer (1976), in his discussion of semantics and hermeneutics, states
that

> Semantics is a doctrine of signs, in particular, of linguistic signs. Signs, however,
> are a means to an end. They are put to use as one desires and then laid aside just
> as are all other means to the ends of human activity. "One masters one's tools," it
> is sad, that is, one applies them purposively. And certainly we would say in a
> similar fashion that one must master a language, if one is to express oneself to
> another in that language. (87)

While Gadamer is specifically discussing semantics as an approach, however there are
two things clear here that apply to textual understanding in general: 1. texts are a part of a
communicative process; 2. texts are a means of communication which must be
understood by involved parties. Language, whether oral, print, or visual, must be rooted
in understandable concepts in order to be effective. Both Gadamer and Ricoeur focus on
this aspect of language and texts, and this will allow us here to inquire into the nature of
digital texts by focusing on how such texts utilize verifiable communication systems.

One way to understand the hermeneutics of hybridity is to examine the work of
Michael Joyce, who has extensive experience combining technology and the written
word. His hypertext fiction, *Afternoon, a Story*, is considered to be the founding text in
hypertext fiction, and Joyce's own work has been a crusade to transform academic
writing through hypertext experiments. Hypertext fiction is a genre of electronic
literature, characterized by the use of hypertext links which provides a new context for
non-linearity in "literature" and reader interaction. The reader typically chooses links to

move from one node of text to the next, and in this fashion arranges a story from a deeper pool of potential stories. According to Joyce:

> Hypertext is the confirmation of the visual kinetic of rereading. This is not a good first definition of the form or art, but rather one made possible by a kind of prospective rereading that, given a world in which ketchup bottles have websites listed with their ingredients, assumes the reader has at least a muddled sense of hypertext from the World Wide Web. Hypertext is a representation of the text that escapes and surprises by turns. ("Nonce" 580)

The main strength of hypertext is that the reader is no longer a passive receiver of an author's words, but rather the reader is now in a position to choose how she wants to understand a text by choosing when and where to begin reading the text. Joyce writes further that:

> The traditional definitions of hypertext," "begin with nonlinearity, which, however, is not a good place to start, given the overwhelming force of our mortality in the face of our metaphors. Either our lives seem a line in which our reading has ever circled, or our lives seem to circle on themselves and our reading sustains us in its directness and comforts us in its linearity. (580)

Joyce here identifies hypertext as a place in which the reader engages more than the senses in order to read: the reader is also engaged with the phenomenology of the act of reading itself, breaking down the narrative into its pure forma and extracting from it a

form of meaning more akin to existential identity. In his response to Joyce's hypertext novel *Twelve Blue*, Greg Ulmer comments that:

> *Twelve Blue* is a brilliant probe of the direction in which on-line writing must inevitably evolve. . . . In the era of print, as Scholes and Kellog long ago argued, prose writing was divided into two functions associated with two styles: the plain style of the essay was assigned the representation of fact, and the narrative story was assigned the expression of fiction. The making of patterns by means of association fell to lyric poetry, and was subordinated culturally to the report and the novel. . . . These conventions have been dissolving throughout the new age of media. Long anticipated in the experimental arts, the technology to support a new arrangement among functions and styles is finally reaching the general public in the form of desktop interactive authoring. ("Response" Par. 6)

Both Joyce and Ulmer here articulate a theory of hypertext as a hybrid space in which the old order of writing and thinking break down and synthesize into a new form of thought.

The digital text is a synthesis of disciplinary ideologies, particularly derived from Computer Science and Engineering, English and New Media Studies, and Philosophy and Cognitive Science. As such, the digital text is comprised of interpretive language structures. Understanding the digital text is a hermeneutic process, because hermeneutics unlike Critical Theory, which is interested in analyzing the mimesis of a text, is interested in the noesis or understanding the epistemology of a text through interpretation. What both Joyce and Ulmer understand is that hermeneutics applies abductive reasoning to the interpretation of texts, and is therefore more suited for research in this field. Indeed,

Ulmer's own methodology for creating digital scholarship is heuretics, which he terms "the logic of invention." According to Ulmer, any theory must be demonstrable and applicable, and heuretics is a research process whereby artistic creativity is applied to a problem in order to uncover the interpretive processes. Heuretics is another form of abductive reasoning, and as such it is a hermeneutic process as well. Just as in hypertext narrative the reader discovers the meaning of reading through the active engagement with the text, here research is conducted through self-discovery, where the researcher is asked to also be creator of praxis as well as disinterested observer. Combining hermeneutics and heuretics together, we should discover the nature of a digital text by designing one, both Joyce and Ulmer suggest. By imposing an interpretive strategy onto the digital text, we may uncover the poetic practices that make up the interpretive process. Already in place in this discourse, then, in the process of designing digital scholarship is the phenomenological process which may lead us to discover what digital scholarship really is and how we can understand in connection with the academy. The hermeneutics of hybridity then is a starting point for this phenomenology.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF EVIL: AN EXAMPLE OF DIGITAL RESEARCH

How shall we make the transition from the possibility of evil in man to its reality,

from fallibility to fault?

--Paul Ricoeur

In this chapter, I will present an example of what a phenomenological method for Texts and Technology may look like. In presenting an egregious example of the phenomenological power of digital communications technology, that of how hate groups use the technology to recruit and program young children into their movement, I will demonstrate how the phenomenological method can apply to our understanding of digital communications technology. By using Paul Ricoeur"s *The Symbolism of Evil* as an armature for my analysis here, I will bring together several critical approaches to understand how hate groups use digital technology to empower themselves.

On the morning of Monday, March 21, 2005, Jeff Weise walked into his high school in Red Lake, Minnesota and fired at people with weapons he had taken from his grandfather, a local policeman named Daryl Lussier. Weise had murdered Lussier and Lussier's girlfriend Michelle Sigana before committing the rampage at the high school, and when it was all said and done, he had killed a total of nine people and wounded fourteen more before finally committing suicide. Newspapers would ultimately detail the portrait of Weise as an emotionally disturbed child who had undergone a host of tragedies in his young life, including the suicide of his father and the complete hospitalization his

mother due to a debilitating car accident. Weise himself at the time of the shooting had

been suspended from Red Lake High School for undisclosed infractions and was enrolled

in a program where tutors would visit him at his home where he lived with his

grandfather. He was described by peers as being a Goth kid who would walk around in a

black trench coat and talk about murder and suicide to his friends. Weise was often

picked on and bullied by others at his school, and he once commented that he thought it

would be cool to shoot up the school after watching the movie *Elephant*, which is about a

school shooting. It would also surface later that Weise was a supporter of racial

separatism; Weise apparently was fond of visiting the website for the neo-Nazi group the

Libertarian National Socialist Green Party (LNSG) and posting comments about racial

purity under the pseudonym *Todensengle* (Angel of Death). Weise was a member of the

Chippewa tribe in Red Lake, and he advocated racial purity for his people. Weise was a

lonely kid whose own pent up anger and hostilities drove him to find comfort in the

hateful rhetoric of the neo-Nazis, and he learned to hate so well he eventually carried out

his own version of an ethnic cleansing. Weise would post his angry ramblings about his

tribe and his situation in the forums. In one posting on the website, Weise apparently

commented "I guess I've always carried a natural admiration for Hitler and his ideals, and

his courage to take on larger nations" ("Teen"), and in another he stated:

> I get the same old argument which seems to be so common around here. 'We need
>
> to mix all the races, to combine all the strengths.' . . . They (teachers) don't openly
>
> say that racial purity is wrong, yet when you speak your mind on the subject you
>
> get 'silenced' real quick by the teachers and likeminded school officials. ("Teen")

One could almost imagine him: a lonely and angry child who hated being shuffled from one relative to another and being picked on at school because he was an outsider, and who finally asserted himself in a violent and destructive manner. He had become so poisoned by his own self-loathing that his addiction to the neo-Nazi website spilled over into the real world.

The day after the shootings, the LNSG posted this reply:

> "We knew [Weise] briefly through 34 posts he made on the forum," said LNSGP forum administrator Atem. "He expressed himself well and was clearly highly intelligent and contemplative, especially for one so young." Weise participated in the forum in part because, unlike "white nationalist" or "white power" movements, the LNSG embraces all races as part of its vision of world nationalism. His statements on the site reflected a frustration with the populist politics and materialistic arrogance of modern society.

> Weise most clearly expressed his philosophy in the following statement of frustration with the raceless, cultureless void of liberal industrial society: "The Natives you've known to be sympathetic to the cause are probably ones who've experienced firsthand what kind of problems cultural and race mixing can cause. As a result of cultural dominance and interracial mixing there are barely any full blooded Natives left. Where I live less than 1% of all the people on the Reservation can speak their own language, and among the youth wanting to be black has run rampant.

Under a National Socialist government, things for us would improve

vastly... That is, if we haven't already become too soft from the way this

materialistic life-style has made us, and that is why I am pro-Nazi. It's

hard though, being a Native American National Socialist; people are so

misinformed, ignorant, and closed-minded it makes your life a living hell."

(http://www.nazi.org/nazi/policy/weise/)

It is sad in retrospect to read Weise's own words that "It's hard though, being a Native

American National Socialist; people are so misinformed, ignorant, and closed-minded it

makes your life a living hell," and to realize that he was closing himself off to the rest of

the world in such a destructive manner. But what is worse here is the fact that the LNSG

actually exploited the tragedy at Red Lake for its own ends. In that same response, the

LNSG wrote this:

National Socialism is a philosophy that, unlike the beliefs of modern

society which are founded in material technology and abstract moral ideas

about what should be, is based in the realism of nature. Each tribe must

separate itself genetically from all others in order to survive, as otherwise

it is assimilated; further, National Socialism recognizes that the individual

comes second to the collective, comprising both human society and the

natural environment that supports it. As a result, National Socialists are

willing to engage in eugenics, racial separation and removal of elements

hostile to a healthy society.

Modern society, in contrast, is based around the belief that the individual alone is supreme - a belief system that finds no opposition among the masses, who often fear their own inadequacies. Such societies turn toward liberal democracy, and thus permit public image manipulation to determine their course, while behind the scenes an oligarchy of the international wealthy manipulate politics and social trends for their own profit. The result is widespread environmental destruction, loss of ethnic-cultural heritage, a dysgenic program of rewarding the most subservient, and dominion by mass tastes that contradicts any thought of doing what is right for the whole.

Modernity is insane. The constraints of modern societies like the United States prevent the individual from publically [sic] acclaiming National Socialism or any other non-modernist solution without fear of losing jobs, friends and potential mates through social alienation. For this reason, the thinking individual is forced into a desperate position of seeing the downfall of our civilization at hand, but is prevented from speaking up unless that individual is willing to sacrifice his or her life for an impoverished, isolated existence, jail time, or suicide.

The school shooting in Red Lake, Minnesota will surprise no one who is familiar with this condition. Modernity is the root cause, and there are many symptoms of its effects, including school and workplace shootings, racial conflict, and ecoterrorism. The LNSG encourages all who are

emotionally affected by today's events to embark on a course of changing

modern society instead of blaming Jeff Weise or others who have brought

this problem to your attention. (http://www.nazi.org/nazi/policy/weise/)

Notice how there is no real concern for the victims of Weise's rampage or even any real care for Weise himself. This reply, so to speak, is actually a self-serving promotional gimmick. The LNSG actually views the shooting as an opportunity to soak in the spotlight. This group and its members supported and incubated Weise's delusions concerning racial purity and separatism, and here they want to distance themselves from any further responsibility by blaming the victims of the shooting. The LNSG and Jeffrey Weise were not to blame, but 14 year old Alice White, who was the oldest of six children living with her grandmother, was to blame. The LNSG and Jeffrey Weise were not to blame, but 15 year old Chanelle Rosebear, a basketball player and a cheerleader, was to blame. The LNSG and Jeffrey Weise were not to blame, but 62 year old Neva Wynkoop-Rogers, a retired teacher who returned to service because she wanted to keep being a positive influence for the children at Red Lake, was to blame. These are the members of the "oligarchy of the international wealthy" who are destroying our society, according to the LNSG. I believe there can be no better example of evil in the contemporary world than this.

The above quote by Paul Ricoeur reminds us that the phenomenology of evil rests in the means for which evil is actualized in the individual. In his book *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur analyzes evil as an act of defilement, an action which becomes a physical manifestation of inner turmoil. Ricoeur writes:

This bond between defilement and suffering, experienced in fear and

trembling, has been all the more tenacious because for a long time it

furnished a scheme of rationalization, a first sketch of causality. If you

suffer, if you are ill, if you fail, if you die, it is because you have sinned.

The symptomatic and detective value of suffering with regard to

defilement is reflected in this explanatory, etiological value of moral evil.

Moreover, piety, and not only reason, will cling desperately to his

explanation of suffering. If it is true that man suffers because he is

impure, then God is innocent. Thus the world of ethical terror holds in

reserve one of the most tenacious "rationalizations" of the evil of

suffering. (32)

What is important to note here about Ricoeur's analysis is that defilement should be

understood as the debasing of oneself by engaging in abusive behaviors. The subjective

state of one who suffers from feelings of guilt, inadequacy, or persecution is turned

outward as an extreme act. This extreme act becomes the means for which the one who

suffers both attempts to purge these feelings of inadequacy through an impure act and at

the same time debases him/herself even further because the act itself is inappropriate in

the first place. Ricoeur recognizes that the dialectic between the subjective suffering and

objective evil consists in one choosing debasement over redemption. This fits directly in

with the discussion here because the atmosphere that hate groups such as the LNSG

foster is a means for which one can readily and easily debase oneself, just as Ricoeur

discusses.

For instance, Jeffrey Weise felt persecuted by the world because of the terrible circumstances he lived through. He then began to abuse himself by engaging in fantasies of committing murder and suicide. An example of this is that Weise posted his feelings about racial purity on the LNSG website as early as March of 2004. For a while the LNSG kept Weise's forum postings on its website until very recently when they deleted them. However, the postings have been cached and maintained at <http://cryptome.quintessenz.org/mirror/jeff-weise.htm>. Take a look at Weise's initial posting on the LNSG forum:

Nationalist Forums (http://www.nazi.org/current/forum/YaBB.cgi)

Nationalism >> Native American Nationalists >> Native American Nationalists?

(Message started by: Todesengel on Mar 19th, 2004, 12:09am)

Title: **Native American Nationalists?**

Post by **Todesengel** on **Mar 19th, 2004, 12:09am**

Hello all.

My name is Jeff Weise, a Native American from the Red Lake "Indian" reservation in Minnesota. I'm interested in joining the group, as I support your ideals and even though I am young, I still want to join. What is the age requirement (if any)?

Title: **Re: Native American Nationalists?**

Post by **BlueEyedDevil** on **Mar 19th, 2004, 12:29am**

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on 03/19/04 at 00:09:08, Todesengel wrote:

> Hello all.
>
> My name is **Jeff Weise**, a Native American from the Red Lake "Indian"
>
> reservation in Minnesota. I'm interested in joining the group, as I support your
>
> ideals and even though I am young, I still want to join. What is the age
>
> requirement (if any)?

There is none that I am aware of; we welcome all ages and all nationalities, regardless of your back-ground. Our main goal here is to educate and inform--in hopes of creating a better world for all of us. I welcome you, Jeff! What brings you to the forum?

Title: **Re: Native American Nationalists?**

Post by **Todesengel** on **Mar 19th, 2004, 1:15am**

> Thank you.
> What brings me to the forum? Well, I stumbled across the site in my study of the Third Reich as well as Nazism, amongst other things. I guess I've always carried a natural admiration for Hitler and his ideals, and his courage to take on larger nations. I also have a natural dis-like for communism.
>
> When I was growing up, I was taught (like others) that Nazi's were (are) evil and that Hitler was a very evil man ect [sic]... Of course, not for a second did I believe this.

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Upon reading up on his actions, the ideals and issues the German Third Reich addressed [sic], I began to see how much of a lie had been painted about them. They truly were doing it for the better.

It kind of angers me how people pass pre-judgement [sic] on someone if they even so much as say something like "I support what Hitler did," without even hearing what you have to say. This goes double if you're ethnic. I also hear things like, "oh he had syphilis, he was crazy and that's [sic] why he did what he did." Or, "he molested his neice [sic]," it's easy to see that even today people are trying to destroy the image of a man who deserves great respect... (http://cryptome.quintessenz.org/mirror/jeff-weise.htm)

There are two important things to point out about Weise's initial postings here: 1. Weise is clearly seeking some kind of outward sign of approval and recognition; 2. There are others who are willing to approve, recognize, and indulge Weise's suffering. As to the first point, Weise engages the hero worship of Hitler in order to impress BlueEyedDevil, who has responded favorably to Weise's inquiry as to becoming a member of the LNSG. Weise wants to become an active member of this organization, and in later posts he will openly discuss his thoughts about violence and racial separatism. Each time Weise makes his sentiments clear, another member of the forum or the organization approves and recognizes Weise's desires. For instance, take a look at this posting from April 19, 2004:

Title: **Re: Native American Nationalists?**

Post by **Todesengel** on **Apr 19th, 2004, 11:41pm**

Hmn, after a recent discussion with some misinformed people I had to ask you guys, why are people so close minded?

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By the way, I'm being blamed for a threat on the school I attend because someone said they were going to shoot up the school on 4/20, Hitlers [sic] birthday, and just because I claim being a National Socialist, guess whom they've pinned?

Title: **Re: Native American Nationalists?**

Post by **atem** on **May 2nd, 2004, 11:12am**

This is a time in which nationalists are demonized. Much as "terrorist" indicates "someone who disagrees with our global empire," so does "nationalist," but the complexity of separating that term from "patriot" will confuse the general population, so they use simple words like hate, Hitler, bigot, ant-semite [sic], etc.

(http://cryptome.quintessenz.org/mirror/jeff-weise.htm)

In an article published in the *Missoulian* in July of 2005, Rita Weise, Jeffrey's grandmother, gave an interesting description of her grandson as a kind and gentle child who was bullied a lot. The authors of this article relate this story as well:

Mary Sumner of Red Lake recalled the half-dozen times she saw kids hitting Weise outside of the middle school when she picked up a grandchild.

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"I thought it was sad he would stand there and take it."

He took it out on himself. (Rave)

In his posting above, Weise relates a story about someone threatening to blow up his school, but so far no accounts of this story have been found to be true. Weise apparently made this up in order to make himself sound like a victim in order to gain sympathy from the other members of LNSG. The accounts his grandmother and Mary Sumner give are of a scared and timid boy who allowed himself to be beaten by others. But in this posting, Weise is bragging somewhat about a fictitious threat, and he finds validation in the post by Atem, who tells him that nationalists are picked on just like Weise is. Atem, by the way, is the handle for the organizer of the LNSG website, so his presence here is not merely as a fellow wanderer looking for validation; he is the head of this organization, and as such becomes a mentor and father-figure to the young and impressionable Weise. Weise made no attempt to hide his violent desires in his postings, and at no time did anyone of the members of LNSG ever discourage him.

Weise was crying out for attention in the virtual space of the internet, and the only ones who really heard him were the most evil of monsters. Just like the pedophile who grooms his victims by gaining their trust and then having his way with them, so to do white supremacists use the internet as a means of finding and attracting young people into their midst. Anyone who was paying attention to Jeffrey Weise online would have been able to put together how troubled he was. For instance, he posted an animated film he made on the website Newgrounds.com on October 20, 2004, almost five months before the school shooting. The film is titled *Target Practice* and is a crudely drawn series of

scenes in which a masked figure shoots various people, blows up a police car, and then shoots and kills himself. Weise posted a short story in the "Writers Coven" forum about a school shooting titled "Surviving the Dead," in which the victims of the shooting come back to life as gruesome flesh-eating zombies (http://p081.ezboard.com/fwriterscovenfrm8.showMessage?topicID=49.topic), and he posted numerous veiled suicidal rants in his forum at livejournal.com (http://weise.livejournal.com/). Jeffrey Weise was a bomb waiting to go off, and as far as I am concerned the LNSG cultivated his explosive personality and let him loose to cause as much harm as possible. It does not matter that the members of the LNSG never told Weise directly to kill anybody, because when they allowed Jeffrey Weise to indulge his homicidal fantasies, they became the masters of his desires and they became the driving force behind his homicidal rampage.

The story of Jeffrey Weise is an illustration of how white supremacists use the phenomenological power of the internet to spread their toxic culture. We should understand that the internet is a mode of communication whose power rests in the synthesis of multimedia, and that this synthesis represents a complex integration of different kinds of knowledge systems that stimulate users in ways we cannot currently determine. In his book *On the Internet*, Hubert L. Dreyfus discusses the inherent dangers of the internet through an interesting analysis of Kierkegaard's essay "The Present Age," in which Kierkegaard criticizes the rise of the public press in his day. Dreyfus writes that:

. . . Kierkegaard sees the public sphere as a new and dangerous cultural phenomenon in which the nihilism produced by the press brings out something that was deeply wrong with the Enlightenment idea of detached reflection from the start. Thus, while Habermas is concerned to recapture the moral and political virtues of the public sphere, Kierkegaard warns that there is no way to salvage he public sphere since, unlike concrete and committed groups, it was from the start the source of leveling. (75-76)

The central concern Kierkegaard has here is that the public media as such creates a situation in which moral consciousness becomes difficult because all information is reduced to the same status through disinterested reflection. Nihilism becomes the ruling pathos in this kind of a social sphere because there is nothing left to jar the public sentiment towards any critical thinking of issues. To illustrate this point further, Dreyfus compares the differences between Kierkegaard and Habermas by stating:

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* Jürgen Habermas locates the beginning of what he calls the *public sphere* in the middle of the eighteenth century. He explains that at that time the press and coffee houses became the locus of a new form of political discussion. This new sphere of discourse was radically different from the ancient polis or republic; the modern public sphere understood itself as being outside political power. (74)

The root then of Kierkegaard's criticism of the public press is based on this depoliticizing discourse in which one is vested with the power of speech without having to worry about

political repercussions. At first, Kierkegaard's criticism appears to be elitist and possibly

anti-democratic. It is true that freedom of speech is a powerful social institution, one that

produces much more good than bad. The ability of marginalized groups to speak and be

heard without persecution allows for the progression of social and political causes.

However, the problem Kierkegaard saw with this new medium and the discourse it was

producing was not in the freedom of speech, but rather in the detached way in which

people freely spoke about issues. Dreyfus sums up Kierkegaard's concerns in this way:

> This leveling was produced in several ways. First, the new massive
>
> distribution of desituated information was making every sort of
>
> information immediately available to anyone, thereby producing a
>
> desituated, detached spectator. Thus, the new power of the pres to
>
> disseminate information to everyone in a nation led its readers to
>
> transcend their local, personal involvement and overcome their reticence
>
> about what didn't concern them. As Burke had noted with joy, the press
>
> encouraged everyone to develop an opinion about everything. This is seen
>
> by Habermas as a triumph of democratization, but Kierkegaard saw that
>
> the public sphere was destined to become a detached world in which
>
> everyone had an opinion about and commented on all public matters
>
> without needing any first-hand experience and without having or wanting
>
> any responsibility. (76)

Here we get to the core problem that Kierkegaard raises about the public press in his day

an which Dreyfus raises about the internet in our time. The medium promotes a form of

disembodiment in which the individual need not be physically engaged in any discourse. As Dreyfus further writes, "What Kierkegaard envisaged as a consequence of the press's indiscriminate and uncommitted coverage is now fully realized on the World Wide Web. Thanks to hyperlinks, meaningful differences have, indeed, been leveled. Relevance and significance have disappeared. And this is an important part of the attraction of the Web" (79). The internet, then, is a place where we can play at discourse without necessarily taking responsibility for our words. This is different than the physicality of the public sphere, where if someone openly professes hatred towards others they immediately can be confronted. The internet levels all information to state of relativity, where groups as divergent as civil rights activists and hate groups can exist side by side on someone's computer screen. The worth of all information, then, becomes equal in that no ideas appear to be more important, more just, and more valid than any other ideas.

It should not be inferred that this discussion here is based on any technophobia; I am not advocating a reversion to a pre-internet time. The net provides many goods, and believe it or not, I actually side more with Habermas here than Dreyfus. Habermas writes:

> In his capacity as a participant in argumentation, everyone is on his own and yet embedded in a communication context. . . . In discourse the social bond of belonging is left intact despite the fact that the consensus required of all concerned transcends the limits of any actual community. The agreement made possible by discourse depends on two things: the

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individual's inalienable right to say yes or no and his overcoming of his

egocentric viewpoint. (202)

Habermas envisions a communications medium in which public discourse actually moves

one towards higher thinking. Unlike Dreyfus here who sides with Kierkegaard, who saw

in the early public press a mass media that the humanity from the individual, Habermas

sees public discourse as investing the individual with a purpose beyond his or her own

limited knowledge. The more we openly and actively participate in the kind of public

discourse the internet offers us, the more we are exposed to different cultural issues and

the more we become a part of a larger social community. However, there is something to

Dreyfus' criticisms, especially if we look at how certain spaces on the net can cause

tremendous social trauma. White supremacists represent the very danger that Dreyfus

hints at in his discussion because they deliberately use the enticing power of the internet

to promote their violent causes. While Habermas may say that the public nature of these

groups in cyberspace represents a good because we can observe them and either dismiss

them or combat them, Dreyfus might respond that these groups manipulate this sense of

relativism and moral apathy in order to entice and attract adherents into their ranks.

Studies done by Beckles (2001), Brown (2002), and Firstman (2004) have all

examined how white supremacist speech in cyberspace poses a certain kind of threat.

Colin Beckles comments that

> . . . the information highway is being readily utilized by historically
>
> violent white individuals and organizations for the preservation of white
>
> power. These groups are archiving and disseminating violent, racist

information on the Internet, surfing cyberspace for new recruits, and

verbally attacking and threatening African American and other minorities

in cyberspace. Moreover, many are using the information superhighway

as an organizing device: they are connecting and consolidating with other

white supremacist organizations locally, nationally, and internationally.

Indeed, some are preparing for a race war both in cyberspace and in "the

real-world." (389)

At the heart of Beckles' analysis here is a recognition that these groups hide behind the

anonymity of the net in order to both recruit and attack others. The open threats against

minority communities is seen as just an expression of free speech instead of the real and

desired violence of these groups. In her article "The Internet Fosters Hate Speech,"

Stacia Brown identifies five strategies that white supremacists employ for recruitment

and organization (49): 1. Make hate noble; 2. Make hate anonymous; 3. Make hate

technological; 4. Make hate Christian; and 5. Make hate marketable. Brown's taxonomy

here provides insight into just how organized and concerted these groups have become.

Brown writes,

The Internet has given hate groups ample reason to feel young again. In

the United States, online bigots enjoy full protection under the First

Amendment and have access to a potentially limitless audience.

Webmasters are anonymous and difficult to silence; leaders suffer few

consequences for their followers' actions. And their strategies for

organizational growth are beginning to look more corporate than cross-lit. (46)

Richard Firstman in his article makes a correlation between the rise of hate groups in cyberspace and to the rise in specific types of hate crimes. He writes that,

> While federal statistics on reported hate crimes nationwide over the last decade have remained steady at about 8,000 a year, there has been a rise in the number of crimes committed by people whose views were either shaped or reinforced by what they found on the Internet. This comes at a time when the number of hate sites has gone from one, Stormfront.org, in 1995 to some 2,800 today. (77-78)

These particular studies outline a specific kind of threat white supremacist groups pose in cyberspace. Each of these authors understand that there is a correlation between what these hate groups present on the Internet and the violent actions of young people who adhere to these groups.

This quote from Goethe's *Faust* sums up the nature of the phenomenology at work here:

> Should one his trust surrender
>
> Where Majesty holds undisputed sway
>
> And ready might sweeps hostile force away?
>
> Where honest purpose holds command
>
> And wisdom guides the active hand?

What can the powers of evil do, combining

To make a darkness where such stars are shining?

--Mephistopheles speaking to Faust, from Goethe's *Faust*, Part II

The quote above, from Goethe's Faust, Part II, is Mephistopheles attempt to seduce the

Emperor into allowing Mephistopheles to become a member of the Emperor's council.

Goethe consciously constructs Mephistopheles' language to reflect the evil nature of the

devil by masking the truth of the Emperor's potential damnation. Mephistopheles tempts

the Emperor by saying he has nothing to fear if he stays honest and wise. "What can the

powers of evil do," Mephistopheles says, knowing all along that once the Emperor agrees

he will have sold his soul. This is an apropos analogy for the discussion in this

presentation concerning the media culture of the current white supremacist movement in

America today. Just like Mephistopheles, white supremacists hide their evil intentions

behind rhetoric meant to seduce a growing population of young Internet users. While the

advancements in media technology have democratized the access to public information

and helped to create new avenues for wider communication between divergent

communities, the Internet has developed in such a way as to produce potentially

dangerous results. Hate groups in America, who before the mid-1990 were virtually

relegated to the farthest margins of our society, have found themselves a home in the

virtual space of the Internet. According to the Southern poverty Law Center's 2002 issue

of Intelligence Report the number of hate groups has been steadily on the rise for the last

several years. Indeed, the map provided by the southern Poverty Law Center lists 762

hate groups active in the United States in 2004 alone.

In many ways, this increase of activity is related to the ability of these groups to disseminate their messages directly to the public via the Internet. For instance, www.stormfront.org first went online in March of 1995, and at that time was the first and only pro-nazi website; currently, there are more than 4000 of these websites with the number steadily increasing every year (Levin 2002; Ivey 2000). This rise in hate sites is a clear indication that groups such as the KKK, American Nazi Party, and the National Alliance are becoming much stronger because of the ease that Internet access provides. These groups are able to reach large audiences because of the amount of traffic on the Internet, and these groups are actively working to exploit this audience in order to attract adherents and create converts by employing a rhetorical strategy that masks their racist and violent desires.

The real question, however, is how are these groups becoming stronger? In order to understand this phenomenon, we must acknowledge two main ideas: 1. That cyberspace has become the new open and free market in the modern era; 2. These groups consciously exploit cyberspace and cyber culture by carefully constructing their rhetoric as to make it difficult for audiences to discern the true desires of the groups. As to the first main idea, with its relative ease in use and in cost, the Internet has become almost indispensable as it creates easier avenues of communication and self-expression. Nearly everything and everyone is online; anything you may want to do can be done from your home. Need to write a letter? Forget the stamps, as you can send email with electronic address. Have bills to pay? Why wait in annoying lines talking to disinterested clerks when you can do so from home? You can watch movies, listen to the radio, or even read an electronic version of your local newspaper over the Internet (there are even electronic

libraries, which carry digital copies of books that you can actually check out). The

Internet provides the user with virtual communities that can be accessed anywhere at

anytime. According to Hilliard and Keith in their book *Waves of Rancor: Tuning in to*

the Radical Right:

> As cyber culture use expands, the Internet is quickly joining the older
>
> media as a controller of people's hearts and minds. In one sense, the
>
> Internet is even more powerful than radio and television insofar as it
>
> permits any one individual to reach out to literally millions of other
>
> individuals. Even though there may be millions who log on to any single
>
> Web site, the process affects participants as if it were one-to-one
>
> communication. As this is written, at the end of the second millennium, it
>
> is expected that not far into the new millennium the economic and
>
> technological availability of computers will spread rapidly to all parts of
>
> the world, expanding and strengthening cyberspace's role as a
>
> communicator and persuader. (4)

Published in 1999, Hiliard and Keith's treatment already sounds dated; indeed, one needs

only to look around the home and the office to realize how much their statements have

already come true.

What is fascinating, however, about Hilliard and Keith's discussion is their

emphasis on cyberculture. Cyber culture can be understood as the gathering together or

creation of communities through the mediation of digital media. Work by Turkle (1995;

1996), Lanham (1993), Penny (1994), Heland (1995), and Chapman (1995), just to name a few, has attempted to address questions concerning everything from gender issues to the arrangement of knowledge on the Internet. Others, including O'Connor and Downing (1995), Meyrowitz (1995), Winston (1995; 1998), Jones (1997), and Fernback (1997) have attempted to contextualize the Internet in connection to its historical and social place. Therefore, if we understand culture as the shared beliefs and politics of a given society at a particular moment, then cyber culture can be understood as an extension of our social desires into the virtual world. But what about the idea of cyberspace as creating social communities equal to real communities? Identity on the net is a malleable thing; because the computer acts as a filter between the user and the net, being able to ascertain identity is difficult at best. But for white supremacists, which are already used to hiding behind the façade, the internet has provided them with a tool of unlimited power.

Therefore, in order for culture to exist, there must be an established community. Opponents of the notion of a white supremacist movement, such as Ezekiel (1995) claim that there is no unified or even well defined community; rather, white supremacists are a loosely-related group of gangs whose only connection to one another is their shared hatred and prejudices. These assertions are true to an extent; the groups that make up the current community of white supremacists are as divergent and diverse as a bag of M & M's. There are many different flavors in the current movement, and they range from the American Nazi Party and the Hammerskin Nation who represent the more militant and violent end of the spectrum, to the KKK and the Aryan Nation who stress separatist policies, and to the 11th Remnant Hour Church and David Duke who make up the

religious and the political ideology of the community respectively. However, even though these groups are different and separated, nonetheless, thanks to the Internet they have been able to reach out and come together in cyberspace much stronger than they were able to before the proliferation of computers.

This brings us to our second main point concerning these groups conscious construction of rhetoric in cyberspace. For instance, this is an advertisement for a white supremacist rock concert that was held in California on November 16, 2002:

White Rider Records presents: Hallow-Caust 2002

Great News! White Rider Records, is hosting a show in Southern California! The directions to the show will be provided upon ticket purchase. Tickets are on sale for $25.00 in Advance. In order to receive further information on the event, or to order tickets please contact the Imperial Klans of America's State office at (714) 214-0577. (www.stormfront.org)

Here is a prime example of how white supremacists construct their rhetoric in cyberspace. This type of promotion for a community activity is something we would likely see on a website for our favorite music group, or even for our local block association or city parks and recreation department. It is important to point out that the rhetorical structure of the message is deliberately constructed to sound as if the group is a part of mainstream culture and not a representative of a violent gang on the margins of society.

Indeed, very early on the leaders of this movement made a conscious decision to harness the power of the emergent digital medium by setting down clear rules for how information in cyberspace should be arranged and presented. In an interview with Russ Nieli in 2000, Don Black, who is the head of www.stormfront.org, stated

> The Net itself is, as I have mentioned, an alternative news media. My work now is centered around that, of bringing our point of view to as many people as we can who otherwise would never have come to a Klan rally, or never have subscribed to one of our publications, but who will be very important to us in the future. We are particularly interested in those people who feel that because of their jobs, or their plans for the future, they can't be in any way associated with us, can't be publicly associated that is, cannot let their true feelings be known. But they do feel comfortable visiting a website and sometimes even participating in our discussion forums with a pseudonym. But most of them don't go that far. They just visit and the information is there, and we feel we are planting the seeds with these people which will later grow and later may be the basis for a more viable political movement. (161)

Don Black is the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan who in 1981 was arrested and jailed for three years for attempting to assassinate the leader of the Caribbean nation of Dominica. While he was in prison, Don Black learned computer programming, and since 1995 has run the website www.stormfront.org. As Black states, "*Stormfront* is a resource for a movement which we call white nationalism. Our purpose is to provide an alternative news media with news and information and online forums for those who are

part of our nationalism" (154). But while the tone of his argument may make him and his organization seem like a legitimate political group, this quote from the website itself uncovers the real agenda:

> Stormfront is a resource for those courageous men and women fighting to preserve their White Western culture, ideals and freedom of speech and association – a forum for planning strategies and forming political and social groups to ensure victory. (www.stormfront.org)

The very language of this proclamation is infused with violent connotations, and in itself it reveals that no matter what Don Black may say, he clearly has not abdicated his commitment to the use of violence as a means of solidifying political power. Don Black uses stormfront.org as a hub to organize other white supremacist groups and to provide visitors with information pertaining to white supremacy and links to hundreds of other white supremacist websites. The website is anything but neutral, and Black's attempts to legitimize his organization are tantamount to a horrible lie.

What makes stormfront.org even more perfidious, however, is that its target audience is actually children and young adults. In fact, nearly the whole of the current white supremacist movement is geared towards recruiting the young into the organization. For instance, there is a page on stormfront.org that advertises a scholarship competition for young members interested in going to college. The competition is based on who writes the most effective essay on a subject dealing with white nationalism. "Education is a powerful weapon in this struggle," Black writes on this page, and this is another example of how this movement envisions the power of the Internet. By enticing

disenfranchised youth with the promise of money for college, Black hopes to persuade young people that the movement is looking out for the interest of the youth. Of course, in order to get the money the winner must be dedicated to all the ideas that the movement stands for, including the use of violence against other races and genders.

There is one more example of how corrupting Black and his stormfront.org website are, and that is the section of the website dedicated specifically to children. *Stormfront.org for Kids* is supposedly organized by his 15 year old son Derek. In the opening introduction to the section, Derek states that

> Hello, welcome to my site. I can see by the fact that you have visited my page that you are interested in the subject of race. I will start by introducing myself, my name is Derek. I am fifteen years old. I used to be in public school, it is a shame how many White minds are wasted in that system. I am now in home school, and I am no longer attacked by gangs of non-whites and I spend most of my day learning, instead of tutoring the slowest kids in my class. In addition to my schoolwork, I am also learning pride in myself, my family, and my people. (www.stormfront.org/kids)

The rhetoric here has two functions: 1. To make kids who view this material feel at ease, and 2. To indoctrinate kids into the movement through carefully constructed propaganda. It is important to note here that this page has been a part of the website since its beginning in 1995. The message here has also been the same, with only Derek's age being updated from time to time to reflect his growth. It is quite impossible for Derek to have the presence of mind at 5 years old or younger, which he would have been in 1995,

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to construct such a complicated message, thereby casting aspersions as to who really wrote this in the first place. Even the poor grammar appears to be deliberately constructed to represent a young, immature mind. Notice how the introduction goes from the soft and personal tone of the narrator immediately into the politics of the organization. This part of the site also contains simple video games that young children would be interested in, thereby creating an appeal to the youth. But once a child is here, they are also surrounded by images of Nazi and other white supremacist insignia (such as the Iron Cross and the website Logo) and by links that invite the child to explore writing on the subject of white nationalism. One of the sections is labeled "The Truth about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," and it is a vitriolic attack against the slain civil rights leader that attempts to inflame the reader against integration and civil rights. This demonstrates that the white supremacist movement is engaged in a propaganda campaign whose main weapon is the creation of cultural narratives in order to attract converts. As empty and as idiotic this website may seem to the enlightened, we must not forget that it is still a carefully constructed rhetorical appeal. Even the idea of using children in such a way makes it clear that there can be no better proof of the existence of Mephistopheles than Don Black and his organization.

But Don Black's stormfront.org is but one of the many organizations in this movement. Resistance Records, an affiliate of William Pierce's National Alliance, demonstrates just how rooted in popular culture this movement is. Resistance Records advertises everything from jewelry to t-shirts, from music and video games, and from books to political pamphlets concerning white supremacy culture.

One area that Resistance Records is currently investing heavily in is the production of video games. In *Ethnic Cleansing: The Game*, the caption states that

> The Race War has begun. Your skin is your uniform in this battle for the survival of your kind. The White Race depends on you to secure its existence. Your peoples [sic] enemies surround you in a sea of decay and filth that they have brought to your once clean and White nation. . . . None of their numbers shall be spared. (www.resistance.org)

In another video game titled *White Law*, one of the scenarios has the player running through the streets of a fictional city not just killing those of other races, but homosexuals as well, who are portrayed here as pedophiles. Babies are placed throughout the city, and the main character must find them and protect them, so to speak, from the homosexuals. In these two examples we can see the propaganda for the movement being folded into a pop-culture narrative. The idea behind creating a video game based on this ideology demonstrates that the intended audience is young video game players. Even more disturbing is the fact that the makers of these games are trying to manipulate their audience into legitimating the murder of those designated as the "other." What this suggests is that hate groups are increasingly more interested in creating cultural narratives in order to attract new converts and adherents. Elissa Lee and Laura Leets conducted a study in which they observed and recorded the reaction of adolescents to hate website material (Lee & Leets 2002). Their study concluded that hate material on websites were more persuasive and enticing to adolescents if the messages were more implicit and artistically presented than explicitly demonstrated. Their study helps to define the

relationship between how material is rhetorically constructed on the Internet and how a general audience reads cultural narratives. The Internet is quickly supplanting television and radio as the prime means of transmitting cultural narratives; and because the internet is not regulated the same as television or radio, it provides anybody with a computer the means of expressing their ideas.

The internet is appealing because it disseminates the images of our popular culture easier than any other medium, and for some reason white supremacists understand this better than nearly anyone else. For instance, the website for the *IHR: Institute for Historical Review* is a prime example how white supremacists use the façade of the website to create an air of legitimacy:

> This site offers scholarly information and thoughtful commentary, from a revisionist perspective, on a wide range of historical issues, including the "Holocaust," Auschwitz, World War II, Stalin, Hitler, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Hiroshima, Pearl Harbor, the Palestine/Israel conflict, Zionism, the "Jewish question," the Bolshevik revolution, and much more.
>
> This material is provided by the IHR free of charge, as a public service. It may be copied and printed, but please observe the copyright notice.
>
> The Institute for Historical Review is non-ideological, non-political, and non-sectarian. It is recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational and publishing enterprise. Donations to the IHR are completely tax-deductible. (www.ihr.org)

On the surface, *IHR* appears to be a scholarly journal that purports to "comment" on historical issues. Its board of editors is supposedly made up of scholars from all over the world, and its list of conference participants even includes John Toland and former California Representative Paul McCloskey. However, beneath the claim of being "non-ideological and non-sectarian," the *IHR* is far from a legitimate scholarly board of historians. Articles published by the journal include "A Look and the 'Powerful Jewish Lobby,'" "Simon Weisenthal: Bogus Nazi Hunter," and "The 'Jewish Soap' Myth" (www.ihr.org). The *IHR* claims to be disinterested in its approach to historical scholarship, but in actuality it is a propagandistic tool for the white supremacist movement. But how does such a society even begin to appeal to a top-notch and well-respected historian as John Toland? One answer to this question is that it has created an air of legitimacy by keeping explicit propaganda from its pages and replacing the white supremacist signs and symbols with clean and accessible text. The *IHR* is a prime example of a white supremacist group benefiting from the Internet by exploiting the current technology employed in order to hide its agenda. In many ways the website for the *IHR* demonstrates Lee and Leets notion that imbedded narratives are more powerful and enticing than straight propaganda; by masking its message under an air of authority, the *IHR* can hide themselves away from the center of attention.

If it is true that computer technology and the internet is a powerful tool for persuading the public, as Hilliard and Keith (1999), Bolter (1984), and Bolter and Grusin (1999) suggest, then we must examine how white supremacists are able to tap down into that power. One way to understand this power is by understanding the nature of cyber culture communities. According to work done by Kolko (1998), Taylor (1998), Ronald

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Lee (2000), Goldzwig and Sullivan (2000), and Whillock (2000), cyber media allows for a much more direct interaction with the creation and flow of information than television, radio, or print media. What cyber media does differently than other media is to allow the user to actively engage the content of a website. Television, radio, and print media work by situating the reader/viewer in a passive position in which the viewer/reader has no control over the information presented. Cyber media, however, puts the user in a more powerful position; the user must actively read the narrative of a website and decide for her/him what and when to view next. What white supremacists are tapping into is the user's desire to be empowered; the messages on white supremacist websites are rhetorically arranged to draw a particular audience into reading and engaging with the propaganda of the group. Again, an example from the American Nazi Party's website illustrates this principle. As with the *IHR* website, the American Nazi Party is attempting to lay claim to legitimacy by claiming its legal right as a political party. This website is overtly propagandistic and represents the extreme of these types of websites. However, as with Resistance Records and *IHR*, the American Nazi Party website is using cultural narrative to entice adherents and converts. One of the links on the site is the "Stormtroopers Page," in which a person can join the ranks of the nazi party via the Internet. Here is an example of a white supremacist website appealing to the sense of power an internet user either wants or dreams of having. In all, the level of agency between the user and the material on the Internet is much more of an aggressive appeal, and as such actually defines how cyber media creates cyber culture. Cyber media puts into the hands, or the keyboard, of the Internet user the power to transform her/his own

destiny – or at least that is the selling point of the technology. And white supremacists are using this appeal more powerfully than any other political group.

This has been at best a cursory examination into only the very surface of the issues concerning the rise in white supremacist activity over the internet. There must be a more comprehensive study done in order to fully understand just how cyber media works to promote the spread of such potentially dangerous ideas. One way to understand this phenomenon is to historicize the current use of the internet by white supremacist groups in connection with the use of media technology by the Nazis during the early half of the Twentieth Century. In his notes taken during secret conferences between himself and his ministry of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels wrote in 1942:

> The Minister takes the opportunity to make a few fundamental observations on our propaganda: from the very start, National-Socialist propaganda has always addressed itself to the common people and has never attempted to convert the intellectual. The popular language of National-Socialist propaganda appealed to the man in the street and brought him closer to the National-Socialist ideas. It is thus a mistake to conduct propaganda in such a way that it will stand up to the critical examination of the intellectual. The intellectual will never have the strength to make the man in the street conversant with his ideas; on the contrary, it is the intellectual who will take his cue from what the ordinary person thinks and wants. (Boelcke 293)

How Goebbels went about appealing to the "man in the street," so to speak, was to manipulate radio and film. Goebbels created a network of studios that could churn out

images and text that was appeasing to the general populace. In light of the current use of cyber media by white supremacists, Goebbels' statements above are eerily prophetic. Goebbels understood that you must use people's fears against them if you are to enslave them. Many authors, including Baird (1974), Herzstein (1978), Bergmeier and Lotz (1997), and Wyden (2001) have chronicled and examined the Nazi's use of media to disseminate political propaganda; their work may serve as a starting point for examining the connection between the current white supremacist movement and their use of cyber media. And before we dismiss these apparently disorganized groups of hate mongers on the Internet, we must never forget that even a small group of like-minded individuals can certainly cause great suffering if they put their minds to doing so.

We must not give in to paranoia, but we must examine this phenomenon if we are to make realistic evaluations concerning the use of digital media by these white supremacists groups. It is clear by the examples above that the current white supremacist movement in America today is more than just a rag-tag group of disorganized cretins. This is underscored by the fact that these groups use the Internet to inform each other of what is currently happening in white supremacist culture and to reach out to an audience of inexperienced and immature young people in order to fill their ranks. From the selling of goods by Resistance Records, to the appearance of intellectual legitimacy of the *IHR*, to the overt recruitment by the American Nazi Party, one can clearly see the stirrings of a social and cultural movement underneath the margins of our society. More important, we must see that this current movement itself acts as an organization of violent pedophiles whose ultimate goal is to destroy the souls of our own children for their own ends. My

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hope is that by uncovering the true nature of Mephistopheles' rhetoric, we can protect our

children from this seduction of evil.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: THE FUSION OF HORIZONS AND THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

For both art and the historical sciences are modes of experiencing in which our own

understanding of existence comes directly into play.

--Hans-Georg Gadamer

A partial impetus for this dissertation is a reply to Mark Poster's assertion in *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* that "By contrast my study of the mode of information is more concerned with the manner and forms in which cultural experience constitutes subjects rather than with how groups of already constituted subjects resists or conform to the "external" demands of mass culture" (16). I am not raising any objection to the rhetorical passage which starts the sentence but to the underlying assertion in the later part of the sentence that Poster makes concerning cultural experience. His claim here is that these experiences are the actuality of our existence, that they make up the totality of our sensations and our rationale, and that they are fundamentally connected to communications technology. Earlier on before this claim he evokes two schools of thought that he posits his study against: the Frankfurt School, in which he states "In the 1980s the study of mass culture moved beyond the Frankfurt School's preoccupation with the manipulation of the masses by the culture industry" (16); and Stuart Hall's cultural studies approach, which, according to Poster, ". . . locate within popular groups points of resistance to dominant forms" (16). The Frankfurt School, Poster feels, is outdated, and he inherently believes that Stuart Hall's more Aristotelian

approach to uncovering categories does not address how popular groups arrange and control their subjects. For Poster, of course, communications technology, in all of its media forms, constitutes a material example of how ruling class ideology is programmed into the very foundation of the messages we receive. Poster's term "popular groups" is really a substitution for ruling class ideology; he feels that the group is the true measure of our existence because without it we would not exist. In this book, Poster applies Postructural criticism to understanding that communications technology is the apparatus that extends this ideology into the material world, particularly into the social body. He rests his theories on Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard, all of which he relies on to support his material dialectic approach to understanding communications technology. The political interaction between groups can be understood as an exchange of information as an economy, something of value to be traded in order to secure a homeostasis in the body politic. This exchange is in the form of publicly sanctioned modes of information exchanges at specific points within the body politic. Without the exchange, we would be at constant war because our ideas would differ so greatly. Therefore, we are a part of a complex machine grounded in a series of negotiations between politics and economy rather than rational beings using these forces for our own purposes. Our own purposes, Poster makes clear in the underlying assumption of his proposition, is always subsumed under the need for the machine, because, as he points out, he believes us to be subjects to the machine by the very fact of our communications technology. Indeed, by our own assertions, the complexity of communications technology itself is enough to prove that we are not capable of sustaining such an apparatus without full cooperation between all of the mechanical parts.

What I object to is the fact that Poster limits his discussion to the materialist dialectical approach and clearly ignores the phenomenology dialectic approach that would look at the multitude of communications technology as being the evidence of the power of the mind from a stronger position. Grounded in phenomenology, specifically in Hegel, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty, and also from hermeneutical approaches such as Gadamer and Ricoeur, the phenomenological dialectic recognizes that our experiences with the communications apparatus both represent the ideology and also uncovers how this representation is a symbol of conscious thought. Poster does not recognize the power of phenomenology because he is grounded in the material; his discourse can be traced back to the 19th century social thinkers, such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, who challenged the idealism driving the Hegelian dialectic. But phenomenology is more the study of how conscious thought is uncovered and made real, if even for a moment, in the uncovering of history. Hegel writes in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that

> What, in relation to the single *individual*, appears as his culture, is the essential moment of the *substance* itself, viz. the immediate passage of the [mere] thought-form of its universality into actuality; or, culture is the simple soul of the substance by means which, what is *implicit* in the substance, acquires an *acknowledged, real existence*. (299)

In many respects, we can see the very seed of Postructuralism right here in Hegel's phenomenology as he clearly asserts that culture does mold the individual mind. For Hegel, however, this was not done unwillingly; the individual chooses to be a part of this process on some level or another, and therefore is engaging with other concepts in order to develop rather than being merely a subject to the process. If the process ultimately

goes in directions we did not intend, that is all right with Hegel because what ultimately matters is that the process keeps going in order to fulfill the dialectic. Hegel's dialectic is, of course, deficient because it is grounded completely in the idealistic nature of history as unfolding towards the good – this is where Marx and other material dialecticians got it right – but whatever its deficiencies its strengths rest in its acknowledgement in the process as being connecting with the substance and soul of the mind.

One of the biggest problems we face in understanding how technology can facilitate and/or change disciplinary practices is in overcoming the fact that Texts and Technology is not yet recognized as a field of discourse in its own right. There is clearly a lot of research and work published that could be considered a discourse, but most of this work is actually housed within other disciplines, which makes it difficult to discuss which practices and which approaches to adopt. Therefore, we must become interdisciplinary concerning our thinking while at the same time preserving the standards of each respective discipline. It is difficult at best to understand all the inner workings of any one discipline, much less traverse across disciplines and bring together seemingly disparate discourses, and in doing so we must be careful to limit our focus to those theories that can be directly applied to technology and scholarship. Therefore, this literature review will survey the theories and the texts that pertain to Texts & Technology the most.

The first distinction we must make is between the rhetorical and the poetical practices that constitute scholarship in general. In terms of rhetoric, I.A. Richards, in his essay "The First Three Liberal Arts," provides a rather solid definition for our purposes:

Rhetoric I take to be "the art by which discourse is adapted to its end." This

makes it very inclusive. . . . The most *general task* of the Art would be to

distinguish the different sorts of ends, or aims, for which we use language, to

teach how to pursue them separately and how to reconcile their diverse claim

when, as is usual, the use of language is mixed. That our uses of language can be

divided under several different main heads, no one will doubt; though just which

divisions are the most illuminating and convenient in teaching may be a puzzling

matter. (93)

Richards' definition of rhetoric goes beyond the general definition -- that of the effective

or persuasive use of language -- and includes an analysis of rhetoric as an understanding

of how language works to create the effect or the persuasion. Richards' work here is

important because he brings an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and

literature that is grounded in uncovering the underpinnings of how thought is put

together. For example, concerning scholarly practices, Richards writes in "Towards a

Technique for Comparative Study" about how to interpret Mencius from a traditionally

Western point of view. In this essay he argues that in order to grasp the underpinnings of

Mencius' literature, we must engage in an exercise he calls "Multiple Definition" (41).

The underlying idea here for this exercise in Multiple Definition is, according to

Richards:

For we do not yet know enough about how we think (if, indeed, we know

anything about this in any strict sense of "knowing") to say: "all thinking must

use *this* or *that* kind of machinery (or have this or that kind of structure) and no

other." The danger to be guarded against is our tendency to force a structure,

which our special kind of Western training (idealist, realist, positivist, Marxist,

etc.) makes easiest for us to work with, upon modes of thinking which may very

well not have any such structure at all – and which may not be capable of being

analysed by means of this kind of logic machinery. (40-41)

The main thing to focus on here is the fact that Richards understands rhetoric to be the

very essence of scholarly practices. The very approaches we take to understanding a

problem ultimately shape how we address that problem, particularly a problem that

stands outside of our immediate frame of reference. Rhetoric, then, is a systematic

approach to structuring knowledge and understanding.

Another approach to rhetoric that is important here is Kenneth Burke's discussion

of the rhetoric of identification. Here rhetoric, according to Burke, is about identifying

the relationship a message has not only to an outside audience but also its relationship to

those specifically within the group making the address. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke

writes:

Such considerations make us alert to the ingredient of rhetoric in all *socialization*,

considered as a *moralizing* process. The individual person, striving to form

himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative

ways of his society, is by the same token concerned with the rhetoric of

identification. To act upon himself persuasively, he must variously resort to

images and ideas that are formative. Education ("indoctrination") exerts such

pressure upon him from without; he completes the process from within. If he

does not somehow act to tell himself (as his own audience) what the various

brands of rhetoricians have told him, his persuasion is not complete. Only those

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voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice

within. (39)

Here Burke posits the relationship between academic practices, including individual research, as an identification of the values of the academy. The function of rhetoric in connection with scholarship then, according to both Richards and Burke, is to both maintain and expand certain academic practices over others that do not necessarily conform to the core values. Other rhetoricians such as Bloom, Frye, and Booth all helped to establish the current approaches we take in the Humanities.

However, while rhetoric helps us to formally arrange our disciplinary practices, creating new practices falls outside the realm of rhetoric and must be addressed through another means. Scholarly rhetoric is good to use on artifacts that exist as materialist moments in history, but what if we are interested in creating new practices or reshaping established ones? The first thing we would need is the ability to experiment with the boundaries in order to find out how they can be expanded. Rhetoric does not provide for this in the sense that it supports new practices; rather, and interestingly contrary to Richards own intentions, rhetoric continues to insist on adhering to the same standards until something new is created for it to analyze and interpret. Poetics, then, is the way in which we can create new practices. In order to understand how this applies to the use of digital technology in Humanities based scholarship, we must understand first outline certain theories and approaches that broadly pertain to Texts and Technology, and then we must demonstrate specific applications to the field.

Our understanding of digital technology is first grounded in the study of semiotics, specifically the work of Pearce and Barthes. Let me illustrate this with an

example. In the Spring of 2002, I assigned for my ENC 1102 students to look up the

website for the journal *IHR: Institute for Historical Review* and to examine the

information on the website. I asked them to read several articles on the site and to

evaluate the information in those articles. I then asked them to assign a level of quality to

the website based upon certain criteria (such as author of article, sponsor of the website,

bibliography, etc). I assigned this in concordance with a section I was teaching on

reliability of information on the internet; I had given them a list of criteria concerning

how to review websites for their legitimacy concerning information. Not everything on

the net is legitimate for finding research information, and I wanted my students to find

this out for themselves. The *IHR*, for example, is a white supremacist website that deals

in revisionist history and holocaust denial; the *IHR* publishes pamphlets that deny Jews

were massacred by the Nazis in order to bolster support for other white supremacist

actions. Just like the Devil who lies by re-presenting the truth through a framework of

distortions, so to does the *IHR* create confusion by framing the events of the holocaust

through a pro-Nazi perspective. The *IHR* purports to be an unbiased journal, when it is

anything but that. I was hoping the egregious nature of this website would allow my

students to apply the standards for legitimate information I had given them, but what I

found in terms of many of their responses ended up troubling me, and I have since had to

ask myself some very serious questions concerning the nature of the relationship between

information, thought, and technology.

   While more than half of my students were able to evaluate the falsity of the *IHR*

website, there were many students who were seduced by the website's allure. One young

woman wrote that "I did not know that 6,000,000 Jews were not killed in the camps by

the Nazis," and another young man stated that "The information on this site is very well written. I would use this information in a paper." These comments were not anomalous; they were representative of many students who had failed to apply the criteria for the assignment to the website. These comments really disturbed me; I began to wonder if I had done something wrong in assigning this to my students. That my students would question the validity of the Holocaust seemed preposterous to me because I believed they could see the difference between the fact and the fiction. I took for granted that there was a general level of knowledge concerning such events, and that my students could simply rely on their own instincts to guide them through the assignment. I framed the assignment in connection with the discussion concerning the nature of information on the internet and in connection with the criteria for evaluating websites for validity. This criteria, which I gleaned from Andrea A. Lunsford's book *Everything's an Argument*, included such prescriptions as:

> -Who has posted the document or message or created the site? An individual? An interest group? A Company? A Government agency? Does the URL offer any clues? Note especially the final suffix in the domain name - .com (commercial); .org (nonprofit organization); .edu (educational institution); .gov (government agency).
>
> -What can you determine about the credibility of the author? Can the information in the document or website be verified in other sources? How accurate and complete is it?
>
> -Who can be held accountable for the information in the document or site? How well and thoroughly does it credit its sources?

I was sure that this list would be enough for all of my students to base their evaluations on. But the more I read their papers, the more I was convinced that the list itself was not enough. One student remarked when answering the question concerning "What can you determine about the credibility of the author?" stated that "The author of the article '66 lies concerning Auschwitz' was credible because he provided many citations for his information." There was no further examination into the second part of the criteria to determine if the information itself could be verified. I brought this up with a colleague of mine and she said "What do you expect? Most of the students are too young to be able to think that deeply, and the rest are lazy and unmotivated anyway. You can't expect anything less." It would be right to say that these responses could have been the product of lazy and unmotivated students if there were not so many of them: out of a total 54 students between two classes, 30 of them did the assignment correct, while 20 of them failed to apply the correct standards for evaluation. This number is too high to suggest that all 20 students were lazy and unmotivated, and the fact that 30 students could do the assignment proves that the instructions themselves may not have been the problem.

I returned to class the next day after reading these responses and decided inquire of my students what happened. I confronted the students with specific information concerning the problems with the website. Many of these students were shocked that they did not see these problems; one young man quipped that "I can't believe that the information on the net would not be regulated." In fact, many of the students expressed similar sentiments. One young lady remarked that "The website looked so professional that I didn't think to question it." Again, it might be functional to agree with my colleague that these students were lazy and unmotivated, but in actuality their responses

hint at something more underneath the surface. The very way we teach or insist to ourselves that technology serves us demonstrates a lack of conscious thought concerning how technology actually influences the way we think about the world. "The medium is the message" according to McLuhan, in that any technological media actually rearranges information in such a way as to create a rhetorical structure for it. The very nature of how say images and text are broadcast over television or the internet necessarily dictates how we read and understand that information. What my students displayed, to a certain extent, was that their reading of the information over the internet had more to do with the power of the rhetorical construction than their inability to perform as college-level students. With this in mind, I am forced to ask whether there is a way to train our conscious thought processes to be able to understand the relationship between our experiences with technology and the technology itself. In order to do this, however, we must first rethink our current theoretical discourses concerning technology as a power that rules our lives and create a new discourse concerning the nature of technology as it relates to consciousness. For, only through an acceptance and identification of the conscious relationship between human experience and technology can we understand the nature of the power of technology.

Quoting Aristotle, Marx writes in *Das Kapital* that "if every tool, when summoned, or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it, just as the creations of Daedalus moved of themselves, or the tripods of Hephaestos went of their own accord to their sacred work, if the weavers' shuttles were to weave of themselves, then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master workers, or of slaves for the lords" (Marx 294). Marx's evocation of Aristotle's sentiments here is meant as an

illustration concerning the tenuous nature of the relationship between human consciousness and technology; that no matter how much we impose upon technology the position of a subservient system to our needs and desires, we often end up becoming slaves to the technological process itself. Marx envisioned this criticism to be historically specific to the rise of capitalist factories of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to the widespread poverty these ideological apparatuses induced. However, Marx's sentiments concerning the master-slave relationship between technology and human consciousness, when looked at beyond Marx's intended scope, proves to much more ingrained into the technologized society of the modern day. Technology, in any and all of its multi-various forms, is not merely a means of production but also a way thinking; technology and the complex organizational systems needed to keep our technology up and running, according to such thinkers as Foucault, Lyotard, and Giles and Deleuze is the very essence of the modern mind, a mind that is fragmented and schizophrenic because of its inability to perceive the reality of its own slavery to the panoptic machine. Marx further writes that "Modern Industry [sic] never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative. By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually causing changes not only in the technical basis of production, but also in the functions of the laborer, and in the social combinations of the labour-process" (301). Here Marx is prognosticating into the future and providing for an examination of how the technological machine re-arranges current systems in order to keep itself, and not human consciousness, alive and well in the face of an ever-progressing and ever-changing world. Technology, then, is

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not of our making or of our choosing, but is, in its very essence, the continued product of its own technical ecstasy.

The contrast here, to be sure, is that it is an uneasy Faustian relationship we have cultivated between ourselves and our technology; we believe, as Mephistopheles states, that "Where honest purpose holds command" our technology will serve our needs and provide us with the necessary information to help us in our daily lives. Technology is the extension of our strength and of our ingenuity, so we believe, and as such it does not command us but we command it. We apply capitalist formulae to our televisions, cell phones, and computers and demand that these machines perform for us according to our will. The world no longer holds any magical sway over our imaginations because all is available to us at the touch of a few buttons; from the mysteries of the power of the sun to the very essence of genetic life, all are online and easily found. Our main premise concerning technology is that it brings to the conscious surface all that which is hidden away from our unconscious selves, that technology lays bare all there is. But just as Faust learns that the price for knowledge is eternal torment, so too must we face the reality that technology may not provide us with the answers but may provide us with more complications than we can currently imagine. Mephistopheles's remarks concerning how knowledge empowers us against falsity and evil are of course couched within the very real fact that through his association with Mephistopheles alone Faust has already conceded his soul. The devil of technology is that it appears to us as transparent because of our insistence on its status as slave to our desires, when in actuality it is us who become enslaved within its densely structured framework.

Of course, this supposed transparency is, as Foucault discretely reminds us, is nothing but a false consciousness, one that fools into believing we can have control over the apparatus. Foucault's critique concerning technology is that we impose upon our technologies an *a priori* evaluation that states that technology will reveal to us the true nature of the world. Foucault, however, understands this *a priori* reasoning not as an *a priori* of truth, but "the *a priori* of a history that is given, since it is that of things actually said" (*Archaeology* 127). Foucault avoids the more phenomenological avenue of inquiry here by insisting on the narrative over the essence; there is no essence to be discovered, according to Foucault and in opposition to earlier phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, but rather there are genealogical narratives to be written within particular historical frameworks. Here Foucault aligns himself more with Marx than with Hegel, per se, and ultimately insists that technology creates the very framework that we examine the world through; it is through our technology that we have any understanding, and not through our understanding do we have technology. In his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Lyotard writes that "Incerasingly, the central question is becoming who will have access to the information these machines must have in storage to guarantee that the right decisions are made" (14) and with this, Lyotard bolsters the identification of technology as a power that controls and limits our access to not only knowledge, but to our very phenomenological consciousness.

But if consciousness is a falsity because of the nature of technology, then where can we begin to re-examine our relationship to the very systems we have created? There is a very defeatist tone in the works of Marx, Foucault, and even Lyotard which resigns itself to the examination of the world through ideology rather than phenomenology.

Some would of course suggest that phenomenology is a form of ideology, and in part these criticisms would be correct. But they would only be correct if the evaluation of phenomenology is performed historically, as in an examination of Husserl and Heidegger. Their notions of phenomenology, which are not so incidentally the foundations for phenomenology of the twentieth century, are actually the extensions of eighteenth to nineteenth century rationalism which produced the overarching machines of today in the first place. Phenomenology, according to Husserl, is the exemplification of the natural essence of the world, a world discoverable through a rational inquiry into our experience into the natural world. Husserl writes that

> consciousness figures under different forms of apprehension and in different connexions, even within phenomenology itself: first in itself as absolute consciousness, then in its correlate as psychological consciousness, which now finds its place in the natural world, with its value altered in a certain way and yet without loss of its own content as consciousness. . . . It also depends on them that every phenomenological position concerning absolute consciousness can be reinterpreted in terms of eidetic psychology (which, strictly considered, is itself in no sense phenomenological), though the phenomenological outlook is, of the two, the more comprehensive, and as absolute more radical. (213-214)

Husserl's line of inquiry into the nature of phenomenology here takes up the Hegelian mode of thinking that states the world is observable and understandable. Husserl remarks that psychological consciousness is a lower form of understanding because it rests with the subjective essence and not among the objective essences that nature provides. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel writes:

The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is a s necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole. (2)

The crux of Hegel's analogy here is that individual essence exists before its appearance in the form of the natural and empirical world. Direct engagement with nature can produce the actuality of consciousness, according to Hegel and Husserl. Here we can see why poststructuralists and postmodernists object so strongly to this phenomenological position. According to Giles Deleuze in a note concerning Hegel in his book *A Thousand Plateaus*:

From Hegel to Max Weber there developed a whole line of reflection on the relation of the modern State to Reason, both as rational-technical and as reasonable-human. If it is objected that his rationality, already present in the archaic imperial State, is the *optimum* of the governors themselves, the Hegelians respond that the rational-reasonable cannot exist without a minimum of participation by everybody. The question, rather, is whether the very form of the rational-reasonable is not extracted from the State, in a way that necessarily makes it right. (556)

This is in some way a good summary of the recent theoretical dismissal of the phenomenological position; that the real question to poststructuralists and to postmodernists is one of legitimation over essence demonstrates the lack of faith contemporary theoretical discourse has in the very discussion of essence itself.

But if there is no essence to our individual nature, and if that nature is nothing but a construct of the technological machine, then how is it that technology continues to appeal to us? The old models of phenomenology, which attempted to examine the relationship between thought processes and experiential phenomenon, may themselves be false in the contemporary light of day, but the underlying discussion of essence in the technological age is one of supreme importance, even if we do not yet have a language to discuss it yet. The problem my students had above was not so much their inexperience or lack of ability to discern the truth behind the façade of the website, but had more to do with their simple assumption that there is nothing behind the façade in the first place. In many ways their inability to think past the appearance of propriety is indicative of the poststructuralist/postmodernist discourse over the discourse of phenomenology; by denying consciousness, and with it individual power to understand discrete functions as such, the poststructuralists/postmodernists have rejected any examination into human thought processes themselves. The genealogy of Foucault, which is the most dominant model for this discourse, attempts to relate human thought to a set of narratives disconnected from any necessary antecedents; narratives, for Foucault, are not the uncovering of the thing-in-itself but the recognizing of a narrative. Foucault writes that "discourse has not only a meaning or a truth, but a history, and a specific history that does not refer it back to the laws of an alien development" (127). These "laws of alien

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development" are the insistences of phenomenology on natural laws. Foucault further writes that:

> [Discourse] must show, for example, that the history of grammar is not the projection into the field of language and its problems of a history that is generally that of reason or of a particular mentality, a history in any case that it shares with medicine, mechanical sciences, or theology; but that it involves a type of history – a form of dispersion in time, a mode of succession, of stability, and of reactivation, a speed deployment or rotation – that belongs to it alone, even if it is not entirely unrelated to other types of history. (127)

Here is the essence of the genealogy, that narratives are in and of themselves a "type" of narrative that involves not truth-seeking or invention, but rather a reactivation of already-held principles. For Foucault, we do not necessarily discover, we re-discover what has already been established. By subverting the discovery process, Foucault and other such contemporary thinkers are able to side-step the problematic condition of phenomenology concerning essence as a necessary component of experience. But what if we can find another model for consciousness that does not necessarily include the problems of essence, but would allow us to understand the relationship between technology and consciousness even further? Maybe the way to understand this relationship is to re-invent the notions we have of phenomenology in the first place. If the Hegelian-Husserlian models are too steeped in the rationalism of their time, then maybe other models of phenomenological thinking can provide us with a better understanding of technological experience. One model may rest within Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the chiasm as a model for technological consciousness.

The technological mind does not think in the linear-rational approach that
Western thought has structured. The logical approach to invention has stalled our ability
to apply different methods of analyses to certain areas of our understanding. This is
exactly the case when it comes to understanding the nature of technical consciousness.
Barbara Maria Stafford suggests in her book *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of
Connection* that

> it seems that the crux of the problem of consciousness lies in the flagrant contrast
> or clash between organ and awareness. How does one satisfactorily reconcile the
> paradox of a disembodied brain as a scientific conglomerate of dissected
> processes with the gut feelings, flickers of emotion, moral struggles, and secret
> attractions we intuitively feel? I have been arguing that the solution to this
> dilemma requires the full participation of humanistic imaging in that supposedly
> "interdisciplinary discipline," cognitive science. (179)

What Stafford suggests is that there is a combinatory function to how the mind processes
and invents thought; instead of putting ideas and experiences together in a linear fashion,
as say historical, the mind combines thoughts and experiences together as each come into
approximation with each other. In this way, the mind thinks through permutations rather
than through Aristotelian logic; the mind takes multiple experiences and thoughts
combines them in a series of attachments until the combinations spark a creative interest.
According to Patricia Smith Churchland in her book *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified
Science of the Mind-Brain*:

> In attempts to characterize the deeper capacities underlying the observed
> performance asymmetries, it has been argued . . . that the hemispheres use distinct

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processing strategies or styles and that they use different codes and different

modes of operation. Specifically, it has been claimed that the LH [left

hemisphere] is an analytic processor, operating in a sequential manner, and

specializes in handling temporal sequencing, whereas the RH [right hemisphere]

processes in a synthetic, Gestalt, and holistic fashion, using parallel rather than

sequential processing, and specializes in spatial information. For short, the LH is

an analytic-temporal processor, and the RH a synthetic-spatial processor. (199)

While Churchland concedes these differentiations are problematic in their methodology,

however what she suggests here supports Stafford's combinatory analysis. According to

Richard M. Restak, M.D., "The brain is not a passive recipient of inputs which are then

mechanically transformed into outputs" but rather a "dynamic system which continuously

generates hypotheses about the environment which are then validated against input

information" (288-289). What these combinations of scientific and humanistic theories

suggest is that the mind itself applies a particular technology to the thought process: it

actively takes many bits of different information and places them together in multiple

permutations until one spark of an idea fits together with the permutation. In many ways

this process is analogous to the process that Merleau-Ponty describes as the chiasm. The

chiasm, according to Merleau-Ponty, is an intertwining of thought processes that lead the

mind inexorably to create conscious connections and inventions. According to Merleau-

Ponty:

Between the exploration and what it will teach me, between my movements and

what I touch, there must exist some relationship by principle, some kinship,

according to which they are not only, like the pseudopods of the amoeba, vague

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and ephemeral deformations of the corporeal space, but the initiation to and the

opening upon a tactile world. This can happen only if my hand, while it is felt

from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand, for

example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them,

opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this

crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements

incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the

same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves

of an orange. (133)

What Merleau-Ponty suggests is a phenomenological relationship between the tangible

and the thing touched; that the essence of the experience of the touching hands produces

the thought concerning the map of their relationship between each to each and each of

them to the external world.

The analogy between the two halves of the orange and the two hemispheres of the

brain here are not accidental; they are the very precepts of the combinatory mind.

Whereas poststructuralists/postmodernists would forego this relationship merely for the

narrative of the experience, this chiasmic way of thought does not need to eschew

experience for narrative because it is the melding of the two that ultimately produces the

technology of thought. The term *techne*, as the Greeks understood it, was not merely the

use of tools to produce things, but rather also involved the very essence of art as a means

of creating materials. Technology, as a study of *techne*, is also as much about artistry as

it is about enframing, as Heidegger would have it. The very nature of creating

technology is predicated upon the essence of transmitting these combinatory and

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chiasmic systems of thought into coherent patterns of recognition. What Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic model helps us to imagine is the conscious relationship between the technology and the artistry; by applying this combinatory model for thought processes to the art of technology, we no longer need to remain with in the narrative without understanding the essence. The narrative itself becomes the very transmission of essence.

This is anathema to the poststructuralists/postmodernists, but to us it is a breath of relief in the stifling hell of mimetic representation. The true heart of the contrast between poststructuralist/postmodern and phenomenological discourse is that there was a conscious decision from the very inception of philosophical thinking to reject *noesis* for *mimesis*. *Noesis* simply means "thought" in Greek, and form the very beginning, From Plato until now, we have accepted that there is no *thought* but rather *representations* of thought. But if the chiasmic model of thinking, the swirling around of information and experiences, produces actual thought, then the mimetic models we have heretofore adopted have proved themselves to be deficient in understanding the inventive nature of technology. This is the reason we give in so easily to the master-slave dichotomy concerning our relationship with technology; it is the reason my students did not see through the façade of the technology: we fail to see the *noesis* in the artistry of technology. Technology exists because we need a way of transmitting *noesis*; therefore, *noesis* should be the center of the next theoretical position concerning experience and technology. Grounded upon the foundation of phenomenology, *noesis* may simply be the examination of how we present ourselves through technological means. The chiasm with its intertwining of different types of information stands as the perfect analogy for the future of technological consciousness, and the theory of *noesis* itself can combine the

processes of invention and artistry together with the discussion of experience and essence.

The strength of this position depends upon our understanding that our technology constitutes a power unlike any we have every seen before in human history. But this is not to say that we are the mere products of history; rather, this is an exaltation of the relationship we have to the past while acknowledging that we may also freely construct the future. The relationship between conscious experience and technology has been tenuously described before, but now we may have a stronger model to base our ideations upon. That technology is the transmission of conscious thought processes rather than merely a representation of them shifts the discussion away from our being enslaved by technology and towards our command of the essence of technological consciousness. This *noesis*, predicated upon the analogy between the mind-brain combinatory approach to thought processes, is inspired by phenomenology over poststructural/postmodern discourses; instead of Foucault's genealogy, Merleau-Ponty's chiasm can serve as the model for philosophical inquiry into the nature of technological consciousness. Maybe if we shift our focus from representation to transmission, we may have a better understanding of how our technology influences us, and how we influence the course of technology.

One way to understand this convergence of ideas is through the Cognitive Sciences and the idea of the embodied and extend mind. The embodied and extended refers to an emerging concept within the philosophy of mind that addresses the question as to the division point between the mind and the environment by promoting the view of active externalism. This view proposes that some objects in the external environment are

utilized by the mind in such a way that the objects can be seen as extensions of the mind itself. Specifically, the mind is seen to encompass every level of the cognitive process, which will often include the use of environmental aids.

The primary body of work in the field is "The Extended Mind," by Andy Clark and David Chalmers. In this paper, Clark and Chalmers present the idea of active externalism, (similar to semantic or "content" externalism,) in which objects within the environment function as a part of the mind. They argue that it is arbitrary to say that the mind is contained only within the boundaries of the skull. The separation between the mind, the body, and the environment is seen as an unprincipled distinction. Because external objects play a significant role in aiding cognitive processes, the mind and the environment act as a "coupled system." This coupled system can be seen as a complete cognitive system of its own. In this manner, the mind is extended into the external world. The main criterion that Clark and Chalmers outline for approaching the use of external environmental objects utilized during cognitive tasks as a part of an extended cognitive system is that the external objects must function with the same purpose as the internal processes.

In "The Extended Mind," a thought experiment is presented to further illustrate the environment's role in connection to the mind. The fictional characters Otto and Inga are both travelling to a museum simultaneously. Otto has Alzheimer's Disease, and has written all of his instructions down on in a notebook to serve the function of his memory. Inga is able to recall the internal instructions within her memory. In a traditional sense, Inga can be thought to have had a belief as to the location of the museum before consulting her memory. In the same manner, Otto can be said to have held a belief of the

location of the museum before consulting his notebook. The argument is that the only difference existing in these two cases is that Inga's memory is being internally processed by the brain, while Otto's memory is being served by the notebook. In other words, Otto's mind has been extended to include the notebook as the source of his memory.

Andy Clark's work explores a number of disparate but interrelated themes. Many of these themes run against established wisdom in cognitive processing and representation. Typically, our common or 'folk' psychology tells us that thinking is a matter of forming veridical representations of the world such that we may properly interact with it. According to this sort of account, when I walk into a room my senses reconstruct a copy of scene before me in my mind. Thinking becomes a matter of considering this inner model and issuing orders appropriate to my desires. The job of the mind becomes one of constructing accurate representations for processing by some inner executive. This folk psychological model which forms the basis of much research in Artificial Intelligence immediately involves us in several intractable problems. The greatest of these is an informational bottleneck. If it is the job of the senses to reconstruct an inner model of the real world, there will always be too much that needs to be processed before timely action can take place. Clark writes:

> I ask the reader to consider the following possibility. Suppose it were discovered, by some arcane mixture of experimental design and non-invasive neuroimaging, that integration and update always occurred not at the moment new information is received but later, at the moment the outdated or otherwise affected information would have been called upon by some process of recall or action-selection? Behaviourally, this system

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would look just like us. Should we say that it nevertheless fails to be a

true believer, just because it uses a routine more akin (in computer science

terms) to compilation than interpretation? I see no reason to do so. The

system is surely every bit as rational as we are, it simply deploys its

resources in a somewhat different temporal sequence. ("Intrinsic" 6)

For Clark, we really need very little information about the world before we may act

effectively upon it. We tend to be susceptible to a 'grand illusion' where our impression

of a richly detailed world obscures a reality of minimal environmental information and

quick action. We needn't reconstruct the world within, as the world is able to serve as its

own best model from which we extract information on a 'just-in-time' basis.

According to Clark, the dynamic loops through which mind and world interact are

not merely instrumental. The cycle of activity that runs from brain through body and

world and back again actually constitutes cognition. The mind, on this account, is not

bounded by the biological organism but extends into the environment of that organism.

Consider two subjects carry out a mathematical task. The first completes the task solely

in her head, while the second completes the task with the assistance of paper and pencil.

By Clark's 'parity principle', as long as the cognitive results are the same there is no

reason to count the means employed by the two subjects as different. The process of

cognition in the second case involves paper and pencil, and the conception of 'mind'

appropriate to this subject must include these environmental items. In fact, Clark writes

one of the most salient analyses on how the writing process is actually a phenomenology

between the mind and its extensions through writing technologies:

Take the familiar process of writing an academic paper. Confronted, at last, with the shiny finished product the good materialist may find herself congratulating her brain on its good work. But this is misleading. It is misleading not simply because (as usual) most of the ideas were not our own anyway, but because the structure, the form and flow of the final product often depends heavily on the complex ways in which the brain co-operates with, and depends on, various special features of the media and technologies with which it continually interacts. We tend to think of our biological brains as the point source of the whole final content. But if we look a little more closely what we may often find is that the biological brain participated in some potent and iterated loops through the cognitive technological environment. We began, perhaps, by looking over some old notes, then turned to some original sources. As we read, our brain generated a few fragmentary, on-the-spot responses which were duly stored as marks on the page, or in the margins. This cycle repeats, pausing to loop back to the original plans and sketches, amending them in the same fragmentary, on-the-spot fashion. This whole process of critiquing, re-arranging, streamlining and linking is deeply informed by quite specific properties of the external media, which all the sequence of simple reactions to become organized and grow (hopefully) into something like an argument. ("Natural-Born" 18-19)

Clark concedes that, in practice, the criterion of equal efficiency is seldom met. Nonetheless, he believes that the boundary of 'skin and skull' is arbitrary and cognitively

meaningless. If the paper and pencil used by the second subject become a virtual 'paper and pencil' visible on a monitor and controlled by a silicon chip implanted in the head, the differences between subjects become less clear and Clark's hypothesis becomes more plausible. Clark foresees the development of cognitive prosthetics, or electronic brain enhancements, as only the next logical step in the human mind's natural integration with technology. Clark's research interests also include wet wiring and other human-electronic integration experiments, as well as technological advances in immediate human communication and their utilization in society.

Another important work in this field is Robert K. Logan's book *The Extended Mind: The Emergence of Language*. Logan explains how language emerged to deal with the complexity of hominid existence brought about by tool making, control of fire, social intelligence, coordinated hunting and gathering, and mimetic communication. The resulting emergence of language, he argues, signifies a fundamental change in the functioning of the human mind – a shift from percept-based thought to concept-based thought. From the perspective of the Extended Mind model, Logan provides an alternative to and critique of Noam Chomsky's approach to the origin of language. He argues that language can be treated as an organism that evolved to be easily acquired, obviating the need for the hard-wiring of Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device. In addition Logan shows how, according to this model, culture itself can be treated as an organism that has evolved to be easily attained, revealing the universality of human culture as well as providing an insight as to how altruism might have originated.

This dissertation has been at best an overview of the complexities of the phenomenology of Texts and Technology. We must allow for a different discussion of

textual practices and interpretation in our discipline if we are to understand the intersection between the mind and the text. We are at a point where we can move past the analysis of materiality towards the discovery of consciousness at work in the digital environment. This would open our field of study up to power possibilities, as we can make connection with other fields such as Philosophy and Cognitive Science. We should not be too exclusive in our study of the digital text; instead we should accept that there is a phenomenological power at work here, one that moves our definitions of the self and selfhood away from the Poststructural and the Postmodern towards something more empowering. The digital environment provides us with the ability to learn much more about our cognitive processes because we now have the ability to actually see how ideas come to life and are transformed through the creative process. Digital texts bring the human to life in a way that other communications mediums have not yet attained. Therefore, I offer this phenomenology as the starting point for understanding Texts and Technology.

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