

Cyberspace, as it currently exists, is not just a space, but a discourse about a space—a name given to a certain desire for a social space whose contours are emerging from within late capitalism. This discourse is defined by the proposal that a new and electronically-constituted space must be created in order to manage the increasingly large field of information that has come into being through the activities of globalized late capital and the social welfare state. The strategic goal of the proposal is this: rather than controlling the informational topographies that exist in any given geographical place, these places are interlinked and combined into a networked electronic topography. The ability to actually create and define an apparently independent, electronic geography allows control to be “built in” to the space in advance via the use of standardized data formats and protocols for use. Cyberspace must be addressed, therefore, in terms of how it participates in established power relations and in terms of the degree to which these relations are altered, amplified or transformed by their extension into a new space of social activity.

If cyberspace is continuous with the networks and institutions that comprise late capitalism, it is not unreasonable to suspect that power relations in cyberspace will be similarly continuous. . . . Surveillance in cyberspace is detached from a fixed and/or central position and is dispersed over the entire network and automatized in the standards and protocols that define cyberspace’s practical functioning. Everything in cyberspace is only ever data and, as such, standardized formats and protocols are employed which ensure that all data-objects and subjects find their place within a recognizable and reproducible structure. In order to make cyberspace a stable and secure space, controlling mechanisms are required which record and monitor the activity within it. Surveillance in cyberspace is thus an architectural and geographic principle which renders the “space” of late capital’s informational networks visible in order to control it. It makes the space intelligible to its (virtual) inhabitants while, at the same time, making those inhabitants visible to whatever mechanisms are necessary for controlling and policing the space.

—Dale Bradley

Excerpted from “Situating Cyberspace,” *Public 11: Throughput*, 1995.

Day

“If Fascism promises beginnings of the day, representation exposes the interests of the middle of the day; then the owl of Minerva, flying at dusk, may reflect on the remains of the day—the ruins of the morning’s hope, the actuality of the broken middles.” {Gillian Rose}

—Paul Kelley

Excerpted from "Beginnings of the Day: Fascism and Representation," *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 42.

Dead

The dead are my entourage; I carry them with me as I move through time and space.

The spirits of the dead are occasionally able to manifest form, which is why we can see them, but more often their shapes dissolve into what we call time, or sometimes distance. I imagine people moving across the North American continent from east to west: the hordes of newcomers journey across the shifting landscape, passing through vast expanses of space that were previously inhabited by living things, including rivers and rocks. These living things died or were killed and so became ghosts, and the places they once inhabited forever exude a trace of their presence, through transparent shadows that reveal the actions that constituted their life and death.

We walk across the distance that we have come to know as the present, and vestiges of the past cling to us, like an old perfume barely able to scent the surrounding air but which provokes a glimpse of memory, a hand smoothing our hair as we weep into a pillow. The dead radiate a presence that over time blankets the earth, and we live inside the effects of this layering, even if we cannot remember what to call it.

It is time to allow ghosts into our understanding of cause and effect.

I finally understood that I carry the dead with me during a visit to Barcelona last year. I witnessed a performance - if you can call it that - on the Ramblas, amidst the flower shops and bird stands and gold-painted samurai soldiers and flamenco dancers. It was a sunny day, and I had already drunk a great deal of Spanish champagne. I wandered through the crowd in the buttery afternoon spring of the Mediterranean coast, and I saw a man with his dead children; and he made them dance. A blank-faced man had set up a folding backdrop decorated with crudely painted angels and birds flying against the faded turquoise of the heavenly background. On top of this makeshift theatre he had placed a small electric amplifier and cassette player. He faced his audience of tourists and strollers and played a repetitive tune on a tin whistle, accompanying the vaguely Celtic taped music that came out of the machine perched on top of the images of celestial bliss.

Attached to the man's body by an elaborate system of wires and metal pipes was a family of home-made marionettes. The puppets were tied by their hands to wires which were in turn affixed to the pipes, which jerked as the man played his whistle. The marionettes moved their hands in time to the music, but their bodies were suspended an inch or so above the

ground and their feet swung free, skipping and fluttering as they danced. The man's face was expressionless as he played, and the empty-eyed children looked as if they were under water as they waved their hands and dangled above the brown army blanket he had placed on the pavement, waiting to be filled with the monetary manifestations of the dreams and longings of the spectators. The man must have had two dozen puppets attached to his body, including birds and other strange creatures. All had carefully painted faces, and most looked human. More or less. Some were dressed as small blond boys in striped shirts, and these danced among the dark-haired women dressed in old-fashioned rose coloured silk gowns.

I was transfixed by this scene, and stood there for most of the afternoon. It made me think: the puppets are always with him, but every day the man straps them on and animates them and in the end makes money from their presence. They exist, but he decides when it is time to bring them to life.

I finally made my way back to my shabby pension as dusk began to fall. I was tired from walking and still slightly drunk from all the wine I had consumed during the afternoon. I could not stop thinking about the puppet man on the Ramblas. I lay down on the lumpy bed but was unable to sleep. I found myself contemplating Fox Island, a small island in Puget Sound, a salty fjord that cuts into the north-western part of Washington state. I imagined soaring above the landscape, seeing the fir trees and fields of wildflowers and sand bars jutting out into the dark green saltwater of the sound. I saw the island as it was in my childhood, wild and clean with few signs of people, except for the odd shack inland, the cabins of the summer people hugging the coast, and the occasional solid house of people who had decided to live on the island year round. I saw my grandparents' house, perched on the bluff above the rocky beach, huge windows facing the shifting waters of the Sound, thick tangled woods rising up behind. In my vision, the house was empty.

As I imagined the house perched on Fox Island, I began to see something else. The houses facing the waterfront began to seem crowded by other signs of habitation, people milling about the beaches, canoes going to and fro, people fishing and collecting shellfish from the beach. Activities that were less recognizable were taking place on other parts of the island, and some seemed to be of a ceremonial nature. The midden on the beach near my grandparents' house began to fill with discarded oyster and clam shells and other detritus of everyday life, and I could hear faint songs in the distance. I saw other people arrive on the island, wearing the clothes of the last century, looking around them and nodding with satisfaction. They moved among the others, and slowly began to increase their numbers. The older wooden structures began to disappear, but their faint outlines could be discerned behind the buildings that replaced them. I finally

saw my grandparents, who had built their house in the nineteen-fifties, walking across their land and gazing out across the Sound, oblivious to the people pressing against them.

I began to perceive the link between the puppeteer on the Ramblas and what I was seeing on Fox Island, and came to recognize my relationship to the dead. I understood that even though the spirits of history exist separately and autonomously from each of us, and this sense cannot be destroyed, there is always something I must do to bring them alive. Ghosts of the past inhabit space and move around us, but we take care to bind them to our bodies, and finally none of us can live without them. We get into trouble when we try to pretend that we don't need them, that they have nothing to tell us.

But perhaps there is more. The house on Fox Island was very often an uneasy place, a place where people battled one another, sometimes openly, sometimes by ambush. The people living there were unable to figure out how to make their lives work, and sought to draw others into the house as a possible remedy to the atmosphere of constraint. Yet despite all the marriages and the friends who moved through the house, we continued to distrust one another. The island was supposed to be a haven, a place where one could go to get away from the demands of everyday life. The children, and later the grandchildren, would stay at Fox Island as a way of recharging depleted psychic batteries. Although the stay often had the opposite effect, we continued to visit.

We have been told that a small bird moving its wing on one side of the globe causes a hurricane on the other: this is one kind of causality, or at least a way of experiencing the world that seeks to recognize the subtlety of its interweavings. Imagine this subtlety working through time, through a landscape that is continually changing, yet that nevertheless always remains the same, existing as a kind of matrix for those who pass through its umbra. We pass through; and so do the spirits that walk with us. Sometimes the spirits hold us back; sometimes they spur us forward. Most often, we decide to drag them behind us, barely noticing the heavy impediment created by their presence. Left to themselves, they stride beside us as we walk, at times swirling around our bodies and pressing in on our flesh. It can become difficult to breathe.

The presence of the dead produces a fissure between each of us and the world we inhabit, a gap filled with moving shapes that muffles the sounds coming from outside. We can hear faint voices, but we are unable to recognize the words, or to unscramble the codes of the past. Sometimes the gap ruptures into an abyss, and we can't go on. Other times it appears as a diaphanous skin, and we long to reach forward and pull the thin film aside.

I am not suggesting that the dead wish to accuse us of being personally responsible for the injustices they suffered, but rather that they never quite

disappear, they never quite allow us to forget, no matter how much we have convinced ourselves that the past is something that happened a long time ago. Even when attempts are made to erase certain events or clusters of events from living memory, a trail can be found in the land and air and trees. The dead refuse to pass away, or at least not just because they are no longer here. History remains with us, and weighs upon us; and we carry it into the present.

What I'm wondering is this: is there a relationship—cause and effect, through time, through space with all the subtlety of a swallow's wing moving in the wind—between the unhappiness of a white family living in a nice, modern house on Fox Island and the fact that the island on which they play out their destructive battles was once used as a dumping ground for Duwamish people deemed unruly by the colonial bureaucrats of the State of Washington? Is there a relationship between my father's nightmares of fiery death in the Pacific war, and the fact that his dreams of wealth are built on a fantasy of China traders on the other side of the ocean? Is there a relationship between the illness I experience every time I visit the Pacific Northwest and the events that occurred there thirty years ago?

We are all haunted by the dead, but I want to make a distinction between the way each of us bears the trace of history and the psychological guilt some people experience as a result of what they are, for instance, white or a man or growing up in a family of bankers. Psychological guilt is easy: I was unkind to my neighbour; I stole twenty dollars from my mother's purse. I feel personally at fault and vow to be better next time. Guilt is ultimately self-referential, which is why it is so popular. The trace of history, on the other hand, reminds us that we are all complicit in a system that has had as its endgame some extremely unpleasant effects, effects that continue much as they began. History is inscribed on our bodies: I am a woman, and carry witch-burnings; I am white, and carry colonialism; I carry class privilege; I carry the events of my own life. It is pointless to feel personally culpable because of these accidents, but it is also pointless to pretend that these accidents have no consequences in the world. Acknowledging complicity is not the same as guilt, because guilt always seems to enforce paralysis while simultaneously redeeming the errors of the past. I feel guilty therefore it is not actually my fault, goes the tired old song. Complicity is not the same as desire; rather, it is a recognition of cause and effect. It is a recognition that we are trapped in the present. Every time you turn on a switch something dies, the elder told us. And you and I are quick to turn on that switch. The dead prefer to float around us, and occasionally move with us as we travel. They like to see new places. And at times they too want to forget the tribulations of the old days.

—Deborah Root

Death, Authorial

Theodor Adorno. Ambushed at his Frankfurt lectern by women chanting “As an institution, Adorno is dead.” They bared their breasts and forced “erotic caresses” on Adorno, who died a few weeks later of a heart attack.

Post hoc impropter hoc.

Aeschylus. Killed when an eagle carrying a turtle mistook the playwright’s bald head for a rock, and dropped the turtle on it.

Francis Bacon. While riding horseback in winter, Bacon fell to wondering whether snow could preserve meat. He stopped at a farm, had a chicken killed and dressed, then packed the body cavity with snow. From this he caught a fatal chill.

Jeremy Bentham. This reformer and Panopticon inventor left a fortune to the University of London on the condition that his body be preserved. The defunct Bentham was dissected, his head removed and mummified, his skeleton clothed and topped with a painted wax head. He now sits in a glass case in the Senate House of the university, holding a walking stick as if about to rise. On special occasions he is carried to the dining hall.

Thomas Hardy. When Hardy was dying admirers lobbied to have him buried in Westminster Abbey, but his family wanted him in Stinsford churchyard. The solution: a heart burial for the family, a London extravaganza for Hardy’s ashes. So, in due time, the ashes were interred with high pomp in the city, while his heart rode home, wrapped in a towel inside a biscuit tin.

Ben Jonson. Solicitous of posterity, Jonson pushed hard for his own interment in Westminster Abbey. Told there was no room for him, he promised he would only need a small amount of floor space: all they would have to do is bury him vertically. His narrow plaque—O rare Ben Jonson!—is a little over a foot long. Jonson was buried vertically, but not perhaps as he envisioned when he made his bargain: He was inserted head down.

Laurence Sterne. Sterne joked about grave robbers during his lifetime; but soon after he was buried in London, a friend attending an anatomy lecture in Cambridge realized in shock that the body being dissected was Sterne’s. The corpse was reburied, but in the 1960s a group of Sterne fans, hearing that the graveyard was to be turned into an apartment complex, exhumed the body for reburial. They found not one but several skulls with the body, along with a half-skull with its crown neatly cut away. This, they concluded, was the true relic, whose top half had been removed by the surgeon’s saw.

Emile Zola. Died of carbon monoxide poisoning in his bedroom under mysterious circumstances. Theories abound: either Zola was killed by anti-Dreyfus assassins who packed his chimney with soot to fill his room with coal fumes; or “by misadventure” (as the coroner ruled), a victim of

poor ventilation; or he brought on his own fate, having stuffed rags under all the windows to keep out drafts.

Requiesat in pace.

—Pam Brown

Difference

“There is singularly nothing that makes a difference a difference in beginning and in the middle and in ending except that each generation has something different at which they are all looking. By this I mean so simply that anybody knows it that composition is the difference which makes each and all of them then different from other generations and this is what makes everything different otherwise they are all alike and everybody knows it because everybody says it.” {Gertrude Stein}

—Susan Lord

Excerpted from “Composition as Explanation,” (1926) in *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. by Carl Van Vechten (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 513.

Divination (divinatio)

Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828 rev. ed.) states it is 1) “a prediction or foretelling of future things, which are of a secret and hidden nature, and cannot be known by any human means; 2) conjectural presage or prediction.” Divination is a form of questioning that goes back to the beginnings of pre-literate cultures. Sheep livers or ox scapulas in Mesopotamia and tortoise shells in China were cast into the fire to see what patterns might be generated to answer proposed questions. The pre-historic caves at Lascaux and Cosquer treat the rocky surface painted with ideograms as if it were a continuous material screen standing in-between the visible and invisible world. It is a physical support that must constantly be interrogated. This inscribed plane tangibly and graphically mediated between human beings and whatever lay beyond them. Oracles, omens, augury, then, were a kind of visual thought. Divination never involved communicating with things that might manifest themselves through words. Rather, to foreknow or even to know meant that information had to be extracted from visual signs through questioning.

In our era of the desubstantialized electronic screen, how can we pre-sage or project what is to come? Given our historical situation on the cusp of the third millenium, can we “thicken” our media supports once again, so that they acquire both magical and symbolic value?

—Barbara Stafford

Dorais Velodrome



1997/98, chromogenic print, 18 x 22 inches

—Stan Douglas

Eating

Meals have always been an important social ritual where people gather together and digest much more than food. Regular meals involve chewing over and swallowing ideas, discussing people and places, neighbourhood rumours and political conspiracies. Eating can be a vehicle for expressing affection towards family and friends, workplace loyalty, forbidden lust.

Globalization has changed the meaning of meals. People from the countryside have moved to urban areas to survive. The traditional group has disappeared. For a time meals were reduced to no more than the swallowing of food, and eating became a time when people experienced loneliness. The birth of the fast food industries was a response to this “aura” of loneliness. The longer one took preparing, eating, and cleaning up, the more unbearable the loneliness. McDonalds and Dairy Queen offer relief by eliminating both the anticipation that the preparation of a “meal” involves, and the tragic afterglow of loneliness produced by post-meal dish-washing.

It is no surprise that many people can be found in fast food restaurants: families with children in search of Disney products, students cramming for examinations, and vagabonds; they all spend time there. They do not need to communicate but can all exist together in a way that minimizes loneliness. There is no stress. But this is not “eating” in the traditional sense. What can we name this new concept?

—Maki Yagi

Ecology

The Greek roots suggest that “eco-logy” refers to knowledge (*logos*) of the home or dwelling (*oikos*). Ecology, which emerged as a scientific discipline in the latter half of the nineteenth century, is thus concerned with the relationship between organisms and their dwelling-place, or environment. One of its most important thematics has been an emphasis on