

(EM)BODIED PRIVATIZATION AND COMMUNIONATIVE ENCLOSURE IN MCLUHAN'S GLOBAL VILLAGE: MOBILE PARKING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER RESTRICTED PIECES OF THE DIGITAL STREET

GRAHAM POTTS

BROCK UNIVERSITY, TRENT UNIVERSITY, WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY, YORK UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION:

PRIVATE (COMMUNION) COMMUNITIES: WYCHWOOD PARK AND ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

Accepting that architecture styles and urban planning are representative of the present tense cultural dominant¹ it is illuminating to map Marshall McLuhan's long-term choices in his private and public residences over the theoretical constructions that were built from within these spaces: to use as analogy; as illustrative of distinctive and constitutive worldviews in his work; and/or to see the mediation by McLuhan of the cultural dominant imbedded in his architecture. McLuhan's public residences in Catholic education institutions - primarily St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto - have previously been discussed in a similar vein as illustrative², as has the influence of his belief in Catholic Humanism in his overall thought and theoretical project, and the ensuing blind spots³. This communion-ative aspect of his work is commonly glossed over in popular cultural invocations of McLuhan, and their one-sided (mis)use of his aphorisms that occludes that which is not euphoric and utopian.

What I would like to suggest here is that something analogous may be said of his choice of private residence in the private community of Wychwood Park in Toronto, and that we can see in his public residence today, and specifically in its organization of (municipal) parking-space, a generalization of the logic that organized and structured McLuhan's Wychwood Park. That like the Catholic Humanism that rests with McLuhan's constructions from within the academy, the cultural dominant of the space of Wychwood Park lies in McLuhan's work. This is liberal (or libertarian) individualism subjected a priori to a (free) market.

Wychwood Park, where McLuhan lived for the duration of his career and time in Toronto is a small and highly exclusive gated enclave within the core of the city where the residents continue to have control over much of the local infrastructure, including roads and parking, because the community is privately incorporated. This pocket universe stands in apparent contrast to the "public" rules, taxation, and supported infrastructure, especially at the municipal level of government that fully surrounds it, and arguably, that it relies upon⁴. Looking at this space we can see how it is situated within and thereby relies/encloses/restricts upon the public space of the City of Toronto in a similar fashion to how the denominational space of St. Michael's College relies/encloses/restricts upon the secular space of the University of Toronto. One can then say of McLuhan's (largely) non-comital attitude when pressed on the practical and lived implications, for individuals and/or communities, that would follow from their greater mediation within the parameters of a free market liberal individualist system, that this absence (and its contradictions) was mediated from or in his choice of space for living.

The privatized infrastructure, use, and iterability of the space of Wychwood Park is or becomes mirrored in McLuhan's picture of the Global Village and what has become subject(ed) subject(ivity), in and through the axiomatic of digital architectural reduction into binary building blocks. This holds

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true whether we look at the building blocks of the Global Village in their material, digital, and/or augmented/blended form (which are always also spaces). It is an enclosure and foreclosure through systemic finiteness and/or abstracted total reducibility to a marketable and/or mediated thing that is fundamentally built into the architecture of binary computer coding. Which is to say all of the hyperreal mediated world and everything which follows it in ontological order and in episteme structuration today. And as quantum computing where one space can possibly/actually be many - always possibly "becoming-[s]"⁵ - remains a though experiment and hypothesis, this makes McLuhan's hypothesized mediation and our material/actual mediation, like with the reduction performed to make marketable the heterogenous, reliant on a fundamental dichotomy of "1s" or "0s." This removes the actuality of multiple-states and "différance" and ~~strike through~~⁶ or the other "third terms" of the various deconstructionism(s)⁷, except as a simulacra of these (no longer possible) "events," through their systemically reduced foreclosure/enclosure.

SEMIOTIC STRUCTURATION: GLOBAL VILLAGE STREET (FORE/EN)CLOSURES

In the digitally mediated or augmented/blended form-spaces that in the first instance constitute the "Global Village," to be in any sense is to have been privately mediated into being, be it in the physical space, its building blocks, ones body, ones mind, or ones thoughts (including those that compose what is generally referred to as self understanding). This is the case for the only way to view them, and the material of the space that they overlap: Google Glass[®] (use) providing a pictographic illustration of what is the general condition; or how we see what is around us only through a branded smartphone whose interactive screens like any website only offer the illusion of being there, in the phone, and are materially and proprietarily elsewhere. This also holds for the mobile apps for smartphones that structure/suture traffic "flows," like Google Maps[®], and in the proprietary and specific apps which allow for the continuous mobile regulation and payment of public parking that is being introduced in the City of Toronto and on the campus of the University of Toronto. The apps and restricted mediation hardware and software that illustrate the electronic sense and senses that McLuhan spoke of, as exteriorization, are here rather shown as also a radical interiorization, and found in the interior of McLuhan's public residence. In this sense the species being and being intelligible is subjected to an enclosure (movement) on and into what once had been invariable walls of the subject and body for McLuhan's (free) market liberal(ism) and McLuhan's Catholic Human(ism).

If we follow Virilio's universal dromoscopic theology as the dystopic extension of McLuhan, this is a total substitution in real time of "the real," and a telematic withdraw from life. If viewed as or even potential-simulacra - Baudrillard's (heretic) always-present conjecture - it becomes a secular (dis)possession of the walls of the liberal subject as they are written or mediated into being, first online, then offline, and finally in the present-tense now as an indistinguishable circuit. This instantaneous circular movement of the image-ination where Baudrillard and Virilio collide as McLuhan's Apostles is in this instantaneous village-like proximity, in this materiality of mediation: mediated self-images and pieces of the city (or university) and its base components, all a substitution of a simulacra, and/or a simulacra of a substitution that becomes ontologically primary due to the speed of it's diffusion, rate of "circulation,"⁸ and digital permanence, by being always there when compared and queried, in contrast to the analogue. The mediated space of Wychwood Park, the parking at the University of Toronto, and the coding of the material and existent Global Village and its mediated cities all express the same movement: they overwrite, first as the signifier that becomes the signified in pure digital spaces, second in augmented/blended form-spaces, and finally in material spaces, through a process of historicism and ownership signified in the digital record, recording, visualization or mapping exercise. And in becoming universally reliant on this medium of intangible material and social semiotics we self-flagellate into a state of irreversible glaucoma over that which digitality can not enclose or otherwise totally appropriate. Which is to say that that which can not be so mediated and hypervisualized is no longer (the) 'matter that matters'.

The restrictions in the hardware and software of the (digitally navigated) streets that we find in digitally materialized semiotics generally came about with the intrusion of exclusively held signs from

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the market into and as conditioning techné for digitality as medium⁹. This makes sense, if one wants to make surplus value greater, which the victors in a free market situation are tautologically conditioned to do, as cultural or juridical norm and/or law, past the point of (ir)rationality. We can see this in that the relative and intangible nature of a brand's worth or worthlessness not to mention success should be - but is not - a logical circumvention of the classic profit motive and calculation. This is branded-capitalism that operates by stamping a name that signifies and makes restricted subsequent ownerships and uses.¹⁰ The contemporary importance of branding in (free) market capitalism(s) must be noted here: the former's role in providing the non-rational, non-economic, and non-free or clear basis of subject and (subjected) individual interactions, transactions, and systemic support in more "advanced forms" of the latter.

To buy things for accumulation, resale, or use, where with the odd exception - i.e. internal medical devices and implants - the object stays external to the self is a very different form than the contemporary branding moment of digitalized capitalism where branded mediating devices and technologies magnify the subject(ed) self. Today copyrighted and restricted bites and pieces can be found within - counter liberal and Catholic Humanist discourses on the sanctity of the person and body - and are henceforth a priori (re)constituted forward and backward in history from the frozen but totally circulated present tense. Restricted techné is required for one to have the real ability (which is utterly hyperreal) to engage in action, to express oneself, and have a (now secondary) ownership over the organs that act with one's name. This holds even in self understanding (and with literal seeing) of these magnified and electronically exteriorized bits and bites of the central nervous system: this is the digitally rendered path that leads to restrictions that move from binary language, over and through bodies and onto and over material space. This is what happens when legally protected stamps start acting as more than just a sign and referent to a subsection of a specific commodity or thing: when these stamps get verbed, adjectived, and nouned in a medium that can enact a materiality.

Logo(s): Logos

McLuhan missed the importance and this moment of branded-capitalism, cloistered at St. Michael's College (within the University of Toronto) and behind and blind to the gates of Wychwood Park (within the City of Toronto). Naomi Klein, spatially co-situated in the open exteriority of these two spaces - as a student at the University of Toronto and then living and working in the City of Toronto starting in the late 1980s and 1990s - is therefore a proprietary complement with which to remix McLuhan as they both inhabited and were influenced by the same spaces when they produced their seminal works: Klein gives us branding and political economy, but relies on an identified "real," and a real that is ontologically primary for the possibility of progressive political action to occur; McLuhan gives us communication and big-picture notions of mediated subjectivities, communities, and space, but forgets to identify how it will be taken up and subjected to "real" existing rules and structuration.

Klein, in *No Logo*, "the bible" of the English speaking "anti-globalization movement" of the late 1990s said that "logos, by the force of ubiquity, have become the closest thing we have to an international language...we have almost two centuries' worth of brand-name history under our collective belt, coalescing to create a sort of global pop-cultural Morse code. But there is just one catch: while we may all have the code implanted in our brains, we're not really allowed to use it" because of copyright and other socio-legal restrictions¹¹. But while Klein's work finds a difference in degree and a difference of kind in the semiotic project of post-Fordist global capital than McLuhan would have encountered,¹² the relations and relationships looked at are framed in a criticism of "late capitalism,"¹³ or "neo-capitalism,"¹⁴ rather than one that looks at the (digitalized) medium through which branded-capitalism exerts itself, and enacts an ontological reordering of the self through branded personalized products, that create and utterly subject the hyperreal over and as the material of those spaces, and thereby comes to completely own the streets and (coded) architecture of the (singular) Global Village.

While Klein's analysis described the vast space for the branding project, it never places, imagines, or thinks we would accept the hyperreal as becoming either the condition for power over material reality,

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or as being subject to enclosure that would or can render finite all which can fall subject to its abstraction, which is to say everything. To extend Klein with McLuhan one then sees that private signs power first-world and BRIC capitalism, language, and bodies at the material level. At the architecture of digital and in augmented/blended form-spaces they are power, the law, the hail, and the total structuration and even being of the "subjects" that are no longer also "individuals," as well as the space itself. At the material level we can see the attempt at total containment, and the slippage and failure to make finite and subject to total control: I do not have a coffee in the morning; I have Starbucks®; Starbucks® does not own, in a proprietary sense, the central nervous system that it has conditioned. But where we are speaking of the digital and hyperreal, there is total foreclosure during branded mediation. I do not speak on a cellular phone; iPhone® speaks through Twitter® on AT&T®. I am not using my computer right now: Microsoft Word® on Apple® MacBook Air® is producing a Microsoft Word Document®. I do not look something up, search it, or research it; Google® is what is happening and being and the medium in which it is happening. What we see with the "electronic exteriorization of the central nervous system" through branded and otherwise restricted bodily organs is that the "I," or subject boundaries of self ownership of liberal individualism, or the body that Catholic Humanism cultivates for that intangibility (the soul) are all subjected (and) subject(s) to a total and finite subsumption. And remember, it is clearly seen, and only legally and legitimately seen and this mediated subject otherwise registered and a 'body with matter' in and through restricted spaces and devices.

(LOOKING) THROUGH THE GOOGLED-GLASS, AND WHAT (REMAINS OF) MCLUHAN (ARE) FOUND

The total enclosure/foreclosure of the roads of the Global Village, the total rendering over, is found also today in Wychwood Park. Community members meet less and less in the flesh, even to mark the death of 'flesh'. Their space of interaction/interpassivity is (as for most) a mediated digital electronic exchange, as with the site of the enactment of the real gate or gate in the real - which is to say the same thing: a/the digitally mediated gate, with markings that are only visible to the "digital eye"¹⁵ - that separates the community from the rest of the City of Toronto¹⁶. Wychwood Park's privatized logic - which is a branded community logic - is generally expressed outside the gate as the (ontological) flatlining of the "vibrant" and "absurd" "multiplicity" of possible "becoming-[s]"¹⁷ of the material (world) and individuals into one becoming and one subject(ed) subjectivity. One becoming and one subjectivity only, that moves backwards to claim authority and ownership over the past, and from a present tense, that in being digitally mediated is utterly parceled and owned, it thereby institutes itself into and as any future, which becomes singular(ly) enclosed: digital mediation's historicism in and as "the" record which is digitalized and (totally) globalized, with anything for 'the bodies that/with matter,' now so instantly recallable that we really have a village like proximity to everything (once everything is mediated and distanced), and know who owns it all (be it piece of the self or soul or hardware or software) through domain (name) enclosure; here the enclosed/foreclosed nature of that which falls into the/a domain name as the/a condition for its being, just an example of the most obvious total foreclosure of subject(ed) space and its subject(ivity).

PARKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND TOTAL SUBJECT(ED)(IVITY): A CONCLUSION ON THE FORE/ENCLOSED HAIL

At the abstract level, for Althusser, one becomes subject to power through the turn in response to the hail of "hey, you there!" uttered by the representative of power. At the practical level, the various institutions of the state, such as the university and its agents, structures, and ideologies perform and enact this hailing and making subject. At the campus space that McLuhan and Klein shared, today the parking authority and its iterative power over subject material and ideological subjects shows the general condition: the finite transcription onto the flat (ontological) surface of the utterly reductive digital medium, bringing "dasein" into matter, and making of them the same (general) non-denominational digitally coded material: which was the human that drove the car, which was the car that was driven, which was the space in which the car and driver moved, which was the representative

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of power, as well as that which was the power which was over them. This is what the transference to mobile and remote smartphone enabled parking (apps) and the attendant organization of what was material parking spaces embodies.

This picture that follows of parking and its regulation on the campus being the general (and enthusiastically embraced) condition for the future of the City of Toronto, as with other urban municipalities¹⁸: the parking attendant holding a smart phone out in front of their body like an occult talisman, seeing the correct cars, their organization, and space, without looking up from the institution's smart phone, that has become the actual representative of power; the existence (or not) of a non-tangible circulation between the app on the smart phone that represents the driver - who here becomes but a conduit for a financial institution and not a/the flow - that makes a payment in and of hyperreal capital to the institution that is the university. Or adds to their original payment for an ownership over the virtually organized space in time and on the digital record without engaging with the car and its space: that the projectile and its passenger is here made fully secondary and contingent, as with the body and soul, means that we have moved beyond being able to work in Virilio's "dromoscopic" theology - as a possible "electric extension" of McLuhan's Catholic Humanism - and find a singular site of contradiction and collapse for the two absences noted at the beginning of this piece.

If one were to look out the window from the material site "St. Michael's College" as would have McLuhan while mediating on the future, one would not see this frozen image of King's College Circle; looking through the Microsofted Windows that pepper the hyperreal domain (name) of the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, simultaneously, in their copyrighted Google Map(ed)[®] and Google's Street (View)[®] form it could appear. What the latter sees - the (singular) "electronic eye" that de-realizes ~~différance~~ in the act of rendering it - is that the hail of power, through what was its representative whom is reduced to a (less than) animal (existence) that holds the mediated device which speaks, sees, and disciplines, is itself only recognized, engaged with, and responded to by the mediating device that paid for the parking, where the "subject" that was to respond has stopped being anything but a conduit - subject(ed)(ivity) - that here facilitates the circulation of hyperreal capital between sites of power: from (financial) institution to the institution (of the university); reducing power to a self-referential ultimate moment of speaking with itself. No slippage here with leftover time on the meter, or selling the unused ticket,¹⁹ as the parking paid is tied to the vehicle and its registration and to its driver that are now merely part of the space: the institutions fore/enclose and make finite the hail and response as part of the same moment. (One can of course picture the more perfect self-referential circulation that will occur when "parking" with the Google(d) Car, or with Volvo's existing program of self-driving cars²⁰, that fully responds and replies to the hail that happens without the need for a response from the subject, or subjects generally/(im)materially/actually: without any plural (and human) "I's" even necessary for the absolute "smoothness" of utterly "striated"²¹ and enclosed space).

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¹ c.f. Fredrick Jameson, *Postmodernism Or, The Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

² c.f. Douglas Coupland, *Marshall McLuhan* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2009).

³ c.f. Coupland, *Marshall McLuhan*; Arthur Kroker, "Digital Humanism: The Processed World of Marshall McLuhan," in *Digital Delirium*, ed. Arthur and Marilouise Kroker (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1997) 89-113; Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Minds: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* (Toronto: St. Martin's Press, 1985).

⁴ Jim Rankin, "Inside the weird world of Wychwood Park," *Toronto Star*, December 21, 2012, http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2012/12/21/inside_the_weird_world_of_wychwood_park.html.

The high value of the properties in the enclave is based in large part on the publicly incorporated land and city around it: a historical enclosure that is then historicized onto the present and future through legal heritage status.

⁵ c.f. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's use and latter appropriations within anti-humanist frameworks (i.e. Jasbir Puar).

⁶ c.f. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and other essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); and Derrida, "Différance" in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1982).

⁷ This also holds true for the unconscious or "objet petit a" of psychoanalysis, for that matter.

⁸ For a discussion of "circulation of content" that stands in for affective action(s) and the quantitative replacement of qualitative meaning c.f. Jodi Dean, "Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics," *Cultural Politics* 1(1) (2005): 51–74.

⁹ First as part of language(s) and discourse(s); then reinforced with socio-legal structuration(s); and finally, and different in the total reductionism of differences that it performs, which makes the first two moments more enforceable and is one of the reasons that its logics have won out as they support the existing victors, in the singular binary code that comprises the medium of digital mediation and from which the Global Village is built, and the local villages of contemporary cosmopolitan liberal globalization navigated and ordered.

¹⁰ This is true, even of a base commodity, like a staple food product, or coffee, and its use in the media. Here one builds up the name of that stamp, however the actors within this system will, so that that name has perceived value in and of itself, and then they charge as much as they can for that stamp (and what it subjects).

¹¹ Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 1999), xxxvi and 176.

¹² Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Random House, 2009.

Klein argues that globalized free markets are "disaster capitalism," whose organizing principle is "shock/exploitation."

¹³ Jameson, *Postmodernism Or, The Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism*.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁵ Arthur Kroker, *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Marx* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 169-202.

¹⁶ Rankin, "Inside the weird world of Wychwood Park."

¹⁷ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Random House, 1955); and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

¹⁸ On the introduction of smartphone parking payment in the full city of Toronto, c.f. Paul Moloney, "Cellphone payment coming to Green P parking lots," *Toronto Star*, April 9, 2014, http://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2014/04/09/cellphone_payment_coming_to_green_p_parking_lots.html

This can be extended and personalized over a full country, as one can see in the case of Singapore, and where the bill tells you where you have been.

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¹⁹ One can think of here the various blockages of Deleuze and Guattari, or attempts to undo and show the holes of totalizing transcription, say in Butler's or Foucault's re-reading of this process, erased as possibility and "becomings": a singular and full deconstruction of "vitality."

²⁰ c.f. Automotive News, "Volvo, Google begin testing self-driving cars on city streets," *Automotive News*, April 14, 2014.

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

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