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Digital Marketing and the Culture Industry: The Ethics of Big Data

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Digital Marketing and the Culture Industry:
The Ethics of Big Data

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

by

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Abstract

Instead of the steady march of the one percent growth in ecommerce as compared to total retail revenues in the last decade (to comprise about nine percent of the industry at the close of 2019), we have witnessed leaps now to over twenty percent in just the last year. Scott Galloway marks the pandemic as an accelerant not just of digital marketing witnessing a year of growth for each month of quarantine but as an accelerant of each major GAFA firm from market dominance to total dominance (Galloway 2020; Fisher 2014). Viewing these trends from the standpoint of critical marketing requires revisiting first-generation critical theorist reflections on the American dominance of the global culture industry. Insofar as GAFA digital marketing practices highlight their transition from mere neutral platforms to shapers, creators, and drivers of cultural content, we need to complement marketing's praiseworthy achievements in statistical modeling (like SEM) with a sufficiently critical and theoretical contextualization. In this sense, while my investigation of big data will certainly countenance and explore its statistical (as algorithmic) innovations, what I capitalize as Big Data connotes the manners in which these large reserves of behavioral exhaust shape culture—domestic and global, home and workplace, private and public. The focus on ethics in each of these three articles follows not just moral norms, social practices, and associated virtues (or vices), but also the important ethical domains of compliance, basic rights, and juridical precedent. In the first article, I focus most exclusively on the manners in which GAFA algorithmic personalization tends to employ the alluring promise of individual tailoring of service convenience at the social costs of echo chambers, filter bubbles, and endemic political polarization. In the second article, I seek to devise a data theory of value as the wider context for my proposal to advance a new marketing mix. My tentative argument is that the classical subject as constructed by these platform domains has now juxtaposed the consumer and firm relationship. The true value

creators of the workforce of the digital marketplace are its users as prosumers: an odd mixture of consumer, producer, and product. While the production era took nature as the collateral damage to its claims upon mining limited raw materials, the onset of a consumption driven economy harvests psychic and behavioral data as its new unlimited raw material with its own trails of collateral damage that constitute the birth of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2018). In the third article, I turn to systemic racism in American sport with the focus on the performative rituals sanctioned, censored, and sold by the NFL as its foremost culture industry. In this last article, I also seek to develop a revamped epistemology for critical marketing that places a new primacy on the voices and experiences of those most systemically marginalized as the best lens from which to advance theories and practices that can disclose forms of latent domination often hidden behind otherwise an uncritical acceptance of the NFL culture industry as fundamentally apolitical leisurely entertainment.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Article 1: Of Algorithms and Mimesis—GAFA and Digital Personalization	11
Article 2: A Labor Theory of Value for the Digital Age	43
Article 3: Sports Marketing and the Jay-Z/Kaepernick NFL Debate	74
Conclusion	102
References	114

List of Published Papers

Article 1: 'Of Algorithms and Mimesis: GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) and Digital Personalization,' *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*, published April 2020.

Article 2: 'Towards a Social Epistemology for the Reflexively Defiant Prosumer: A Labor Theory of Value for the Digital Age,' *Journal of Marketing Management*, special issue on Deromanticizing the Market. Status: revise and resubmit.

Article 3: 'Epistemicide in the American South of Washington, du Bois, and Garvey: Sports Marketing, Lazy Reason, and the Jay-Z/Kaepernick NFL Debate.' *Marketing Theory*, special issue on Hierarchies of Knowledge. Status: under review.

Introduction

In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno sought to offer an inter-disciplinary reconstruction of the many conditions that culminated in the Nazi rise to power and the ensuing Holocaust (1949/1953). As both professors were German Jews that eventually had to seek political asylum in the United States to save their lives, they set forth laying out the moral, historical, religious, economic, social, and psychological conditions leading to the rise and fall of German authoritarian rule.

Most instructive for our present purposes would be a streamlined focus on the third of their four-chapter masterpiece that initiated what became Frankfurt School Critical Theory as the early origins of critical marketing. The third chapter entitled “The Culture Industry,” lays out a complex narrative of the subjugation of European, national, and global culture to mass modes of production. On the one hand, they lament the complicity of major political elements of the failed German system as intricately tied to German national, international, and global monopolies over certain markets. With the common upbringing of Horkheimer and Adorno in Frankfurt, much of their early musings on this point comes from IG Farben, head-quartered in Frankfurt with nothing short of a global monopoly over the chemicals industry.

On the other hand, once in exile in the United States, Horkheimer and Adorno experience a bit of culture shock as they initially land in New York City with the intent of setting up the beginnings of their critical theory institute as housed at Columbia University. There they are surprised at the monopolistic influence of American culture industry that had adapted the same tools for market dominance that IG-Farben did in its regional, national, and global dominance over the chemicals industry. On the other hand, that observed that New York music, advertising, news, financial, and entertainment industries determining the global dissemination and

marketing of American culture through many media, including but not limited to jazz, radio-driven promotions, information dissemination, global interest rates, and mass culture movies, plays, and comedy. On the other hand, their shock is only amplified when they try resetting their roots much further West and are exposed to the early stages of the Hollywood/LA similar cultural monopoly of regional influence over fashion, film, and entertainment media that then marketed the American culture of consumption internationally and globally.

Since Horkheimer and Adorno spent great amounts of time in both NY and LA while they were drafting *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, what is often viewed too narrowly as a scathing critique of German (and European) roots to authoritarianism, is a wider critique of the (failed?) Western Enlightenment project of modernity as a progenitor of individual consumption as a mass culture of sameness. If the defining features of modernity include the various achievements of the democratic rule of law, the prevalence of free market exchange, the balance of bureaucratic rule with the onset of individualism, basic liberties as innate rights of the species, Horkheimer and Adorno are among the first to question the presumed march of history towards modern progress. Especially in their reflections and critiques of the culture industry, they judge that the conflation of United States achievements (and ensuing victory in WWII) with a hint of skepticism as to what really merits moral, social, economic, and political progress.

The genius in the reflexively self-critical candor of their work is that it eventually leads to the legitimation of critical theory as the Germanic school to replace the preceding currents of Enlightenment rationalism (Leibniz/Kant), German idealism (Hegel/Fichte/Shellling), German romanticism (Nietzsche/Schopenhauer), and resource egalitarianism (Marx/Engels). It is in this spirit that critical theory endures to this day in a multitude of forms as critical race theory, critical data studies, critical management studies, critical architecture, and critical literary theory.

Most pertinent to my present purposes would be the onset of critical marketing as a fledgling discipline when compared to its wider critical theory lineage.

Jumping to the present, critical marketing's adherents find it at something of a critical impasse: will it endure as an autonomous enterprise or collapse more broadly into just one minor branch of a broader consumer culture theory? The purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate by way of examples that there is still much to uncover in the untapped first generation of critical theory (Horkheimer and Adorno) in order to move critical marketing beyond its present limitations of either an over-reliance on second generation critical theory (Jurgen Habermas and his acolytes) or an over-dependence on post-colonial critiques of modernity that in their celebrations of plurality as tending toward cultural relativism.

In an odd counter-historical turn of events, it is my view that the three most pressing domains of critical marketing applications—from big data (Article 1), to moral debates over the dignity of labor (Article 2), and to the rising racial conflicts of our day (Article 3)—fit best in the context of first-generation critiques of authoritarianism and its various excesses. While the thematic focus on the cultural industry borrows heavily from first generation critical theory, I am really taking a second-generation (Habermasian) corrective approach to these current and past (first generation) critiques of modernity and authoritarian distortions with an appeal to strengthening the democratic checks upon markets that have shown again and again an incapacity to self-regulate. In other words, what each of my chapters of the dissertation have in common are various failures of democracy (Habermas as second generation) that are due authoritarian excesses in the culture industry (Horkheimer and Adorno as first generation).

The first chapter on algorithmic personalization argues that GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple) are exactly the sorts of monopolistic threats to democracy that

Horkheimer and Adorno foresaw in the culture industries—beginning with the Germanic IG Farben, but then extending to US monopolies over global entertainment, media and information dissemination, and technological innovation (predominately military in origin but then rendered civilian). With the transition of what the relevant literature calls big data (just the excesses in data accumulated in the immediately aftermath of new computational technologies applied to markets and commerce) to Big Data (as the onset of Web 2.0 with GAFA platforms morphing from mere neutral service providers to the major cultural content influencers) carries the onset of a new threat to one pillar of modernity: democratically majoritarian constitutions. While I do not get too deep into quibbles over whether GAFA sufficed to tip the election scales in Brexit, the 2016 US Presidential elections, and beyond, the GAFA contributions to fueling and profiting upon endemic political polarization are close to irrefutable.

The second chapter builds upon these themes by reorienting the focus away from the digital citizen as docile consumer of the GAFA services of Internet 2.0. The predominant focus then became the shift to platform participants as the true source of GAFA market dominance through user generated content as the labor producing it requisite troves of data. In this respect, I look to the global dissemination of the initially American trend of the consumer as prosumer as a global disruptor of functional markets. With literally billions as laborers on what I term a labor theory of value, the consumer morphs into the prosumer. That is, free platform services come with a catch. The consumer risks reification as a commodity through the accumulation and resale of data as product (the new oil). In that sense, the consumer and not the platform service are the real exchange product for exchange in digitally driven marketplaces. Moreover, there is a double movement of labor exploitation insofar as user generated content increases the value of the data product increases with time as a more premium entity with more complex, rich, and temporally

extended labor inputs. And as the data increases in value, the platform values increase, leading to a wider societal gap between billionaire data gatekeepers and entire continents of relatively uncompensated but never off the clock data producers.

In the third chapter, I turn to the culture industry of sport, particularly in its distinctly most profitable American form: NFL football. I look at how the NFL in a post-9/11 era took what was initially a cultural rite of unity, solidarity, and return to normalcy and slowly turned it into a racially stoked distortion of political virtue. In a prolonged historical reconstruction, we find a long history in the US of using the mass culture display of sport in ways that typically place the interests of white owners and a white consumer base as the default norm in steering how persons of color, especially blacks, ought to express and not express their cultural identities. In the case of Colin Kaepernick and the framing of his anthem kneeling as unpatriotic, many white observers (backed by white owners and a white President) but forth an either/or: either respect the anthem and stand or take your politics out of our entertainment. Upon reconstruction, this was a false dichotomy that belied the historical narrative insofar as the American military was the first mover toward politicization in paying the NFL (and all other major US sports leagues) hundreds of millions of dollars to use pregame, halftime, and commercial appeals to supporting American troops as a ripe recruiting group for new soldiers and as a mass market appeal to support of the military and all its operations as akin to national virtue. As a case in point, when Kaepernick was told by the President, owners, and countless fans to take his politics out of football, he had already been privy to a bi-partisan and Republican led (McCain and Flake) committee finding that reconstructed more than a decade of undue influence of the US military over the cultural masses through American sport. What already was public knowledge in the NFL and confirmed by Congressional oversight was that it was misleading to the American

public to view these militaristic displays of patriotism as free acts of service on the part of each major league and its teams, when they were actually paid ads, time spots, and even staged seemingly spontaneous events (like a troop member surprising a family in a half time homecoming or troop families plugging their local teams during game breaks).

In a brief introductory outline of the avowedly American dialectic to big data algorithms, to the labor contributing to platform valuation, and to the covert politicization of American national and international cultures of professional sport, I posit a classical hierarchy of knowledge as the common thread to these three cultural domains. As such, it is my contention that the marketing mix of the 4 P's—product, place, promotion, and price—initiated by McCarthy presents a particular hierarchy of American marketing knowledge regimes that has stood the test of time. As geared toward the conventional marketing manager, it defines what constitutes legitimate forms of academic and industry forms of marketing practice. It has served as the institutional framing for marketing and its attendant framing discourses since its postWWII enunciation into its Cold-War context American forms (Tadjaweski). Since then, marketing in the US in both scholarly and professional practice has seen teeming arrays of marketing mix extensions, addendums, and revisions that have nonetheless proven mostly effectual in merely further entrenching the prevalent marketing mix hierarchy of knowledge.

In good dialectical fashion, juxtaposed to this starting point with the 4Ps would be its counterpart: the 4Cs. So, despite its unshakable hierarchical status as defining the norms of the field, the most viable alternate narrative to the hegemony of the 4 P's/marketing mix comes from the 4 C's/consumer mix. As an institutional expression of industry and academic transformations tied to innovations in integrated marketing communication, the success of the consumer mix comes in accentuating the consumer-facing tenet of the marketing mix knowledge regime more

than competing with it. This is from borrowing its guiding norm from the distinctly American spirit of the promotion/advertising third branch of the 4 P's: moving the consumer tastes, sentiments, and rationales behind their purchasing patterns more and more to the center of cunningly cooperative promotional angles. The moral justification for such an approach is decidedly thin as these consumer-directed, consumption-based knowledge regimes base their warrant on the maximization of rational utility as individual consumer satisfaction.

We might note though that the abiding success of the 4 C's stems from its communicative potentials, with its avowed proclamation to coopt consumer feedback into the production (as copromotion) loop serves as the initiating step in the birth of the marketing prosumer. In what amounts to a crucial dialectical advance beyond the initial classical frame, and towards the big data marketing mix the consumer phenomenological construct morphs into a prosumer marketing mix (Toffler 1980; Thompson 2019; Cova and Dali, 2009). This subtle transformation occurs in a double sense. First, consumers move up toward the front of the supply chain as coproducers of goods and services (Cova and Dali, 2009). As such, their input from consumer as fellow producer brings added value to products with questionable exchange return for their labor. Second, and more troubling, the consumer becomes product insofar as their data trail becomes the new oil for exchange under the proprietary claims of the major platforms (as non-accountable self-policing governance regimes) that regulate the information economy (Thompson 2019).

As further context from consumer-facing IMC promotion to prosumer, Lauterborn's 1990 enunciation of the consumer mix 4 C's—customer value, convenience, communication, and cost—derives from the extension of marketing quasi-science further in two strategic moves at once that are intended to displace an outdated marketing mix. On the one hand, would be the

aforementioned shift in American marketing toward dismantling the marketing mix internal knowledge hierarchy with its more horizontal industry-to-consumer/consumer-to-producer feedback loops. This communicative approach functions as a counterfoil to the purportedly vertical assemblage of the marketing manager-to-consumer classical hierarchy. On the other hand, instead of a hierarchy of knowledge regimes, the consumer mix presumes the epistemic advantage of leveraging as many possible stratified sources of consumer insights dispersed across a variety of promotional media (in contrast to purportedly outdated, less versatile, and more ossified managerial regimes).

Contributing to the ongoing viability of the consumer mix in our current information age would be the host of technological, social, legal-political, economic, and competitive environmental changes that continue to call for industry and academic transformations moving toward instilling greater consumer trust, reciprocal engagement, and a wider dispersal of sites of power. This would entail replacing the academic strategies and industry practices tied to topdown firm to consumer promotion to the value-added strategy that comes, ideally, with inclusive communication between and among all relevant stakeholders. However, in the wider context of context, what seems to resonate as a more democratic modicum falls well short of its communicative promise. On more critical analysis, (in a nod of affirmation back to the opening insights of Horkheimer and Adorno) the consumer mix amounts to more of the same. Since marketing success gets recast as a more cunning cooption of the consumer into the production process, the tradeoff of valuable communicative input yields little to no actionable compensation (Bowman, forthcoming, working consumer MT; Posner and Weyl 2018). As the optimization of integrated marketing communication channels takes its measure of success from profit maximization, even the grandiose appeals to social marketing and the new moral conscience of

corporate social responsibility reduces in praxis to the undeniable fact of shareholder value over stakeholder value (Galloway 2018).

As we develop the phenomenological scope of the synthetic stage of the prosumer marketing mix in our brief overview, most relevant to our present purposes, the onset of the platform-driven digital marketplace has led to the 4 C's prosumer dynamic to begin to mimic, further entrench, and even exacerbate the prior 4 P's manager-to-consumer knowledge hierarchy. In all fairness to initial spirit of the reorientation provided by the consumer mix, a consumerfocus seems the lesser of two evils as the onset of the ubiquitous digital platforms purportedly compensates consumers as co-producers/prosumers/data-laden co-products with the provision of free services. However, despite my reservations against both the marketing and consumer mixes, rather than argue for the primacy of one set of industry praxis and pedagogical framing in the 4 P's versus 4 C's marketing knowledge regimes, I would instead like to make two key moves in effort to reconstitute a morally viable big data prosumer marketing mix.

Firstly, while contrary to historical development, the future of a workable big data marketing mix requires the synthetic integration of the consumer mix into its academic and industry practices at the earliest strategy stages in deriving any marketable digitally driven business plan (Graham and Ahuja, 2016). This would entail a candid archeology that admits to a historical reversal of the marketing strategy beginning with the consumer mix in its consumer and digitally facing IMC outlook. True to form in most phenomenological dialectical reversals, we must only thereafter execute the marketing mix as the secondary step of product sales, promotion, and implementation—especially since the output of the IMC promotional process is the necessary precondition of the real product: the data and not the free service.

Secondly, given the necessary melding of the marketing and consumer mixes, we need a new mix to connote a revamping of conventional practices for the information age. What I term the big data marketing mix concedes the crucial role of GAFA platforms and ongoing data harvests in our contemporary digital marketplace dominated globally by these American firms. However, at the risk of confusion—but for the sake of conceptual and phenomenological consistency—I take license to use descriptive label of the big data marketing mix as conceptually interchangeable with my prescriptive call for a reflexively defiant prosumer across all three articles. This conceptual move is necessary to acknowledge the instrumentalization of consumer as co-producer of their embodied big data as product. As pertains to the latter, in the spirit of our ensuing focus on digital marketplaces as encroaching more and more deeply into the politics of the body, the data-driven social fact that consumer has fully morphed into prosumer in the double sense of i) producer of data exhaust and as ii) lucrative product.

In sum, the reflexively defiant prosumer emerges in the first chapter as the necessary buffer against personalization algorithms that divide rather than unite democratic polities. The critical prosumer emerges again in the second chapter in a more fined grained analysis of where data platforms have amassed their monumental valuations through the mindset of a data theory of value with consumer as both product (data) and producer (Internet 2.0). In the last of the three chapters, it also seems basic moral reflexivity that if sporting institutions are going to politicize an international entertainment industry with a deceptively patriotic marketing and ad campaign, that its participants (and laborers) ought to have a say in the extent to which they allow themselves unwittingly to serve as entertainers and political ambassadors. And, if they answer politicization with counter-politicization, we would not grant them full democratic status as reflectively defiant prosumers if they were mere extensions of their owners' will.

Article One

Of Algorithms and Mimesis—GAFA, Digital Personalization, and Freedom as Nondomination

Algorithms tacitly guide our digital communication. They implicitly govern the escalation of online consumption. But we hardly affirm their ubiquitous presence. They discreetly record and personally guide our search engine queries. And, as such, they exert more influence and sway over our decisions, actions, and knowledge than perhaps our closest confidant.

Multidisciplinary reflection ought to reorient the practical and ethical domains of critical theory to address such brazen technological insurgency. In order to reconstruct a sufficiently critical narrative of algorithms steering social, economic, and technological enculturation, we revisit Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* approach to mimesis—or tacit imitation. This offers a crucial step in furthering the emancipatory aims of the Frankfurt school into the realm of the digital. Mimesis—when redeployed reflexively—can provide a check on the past, current, and future hegemony of the American mass culture industry.

First, for the normative guidance necessary to orient our analysis of the empirical cases, I develop a taxonomy of liberty common to an array of voices in the growing critical scholarship concerning the corporate-friendly policies that govern the increasingly global digital marketplace. Because the wider problem is with the American culture industry rendered global, I opt to focus primarily on American policy critiques that expand Horkheimer and Adorno's original critiques of radio, telegraph, television, and telephone to extend to the mass culture industry currently produced by social media. The general line of argument that unites an array of policy theorists would be that the personalization algorithms used by contemporary digital

marketing monoliths threaten the basic liberties necessary for the healthy functioning of a republican democracy.

Second, the early Frankfurt school concept of mimesis offers the best analytic prism for problematizing how algorithms function. Only by adapting the ontological horizon of these otherwise discreet personalization algorithms can we expose them as nascent forms of systemic domination (Berry, 2014, pp. 190–193; Bryant, 2011; Harmon, 2002; Jarzombek, 2016; Noble, 2018).

Third, I turn to the contemporary quartet of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple (now bearing the pejorative acronym GAFAM in the attendant social scientific literature) as taking on many of the domineering trends continually associated with the American mass culture industry. This will provide a more comprehensive casting of personalization algorithms as manifestations of the instrumental reason that first-generation critical theory warned against not just in their reflections on mass culture but also in their critique of racial polarization (Bilic 2018). The alternate employment of communicative reason can transform such algorithms from the inside out—particularly when rectifying social polarization through healthy mimesis as reconciliation (Allen, 2016, pp. 168, 174–175; Berry, 2014, pp. 189, 192). As a concluding step, I appeal to David Berry’s notion of algorithmic iteracy (185–193). This initiates a program for communicatively drafting an interdisciplinary set of capabilities required for salvaging freedom as nondomination. Otherwise, we risk tacit culpability in the adoption of a sidelined observer’s view. As a call to action from Berry’s critical digital studies, continued acceptance of the hyper-specialized academic bounds of one’s intellectual domain serves tantamount to active participation in the polarizing demise of republican democracy (Berry, 2014, pp. 195–214).

I. Freedom, Market Socialization, and Algorithmic Digital Personalization

Before delving into specific cases, we ought to approach the algorithms behind digital market personalization from the perspective of creating a conceptual taxonomy of manifestations of liberty. Then, upon later rendering the conceptual schema actualized in praxis, we can better critically assess and weigh what we ought to find desirable as consumers (short term) versus citizens (long term). Once laying out the prevailing terrain to the digital marketplace with a schema of liberty that includes two variations on the predominate market-oriented approach, the dialectical assimilation of these competing market perspectives leads us to a richer conception of republican freedom better suited to our civic wellbeing as consumers and citizens.

On the one hand, in what we might call consumer sovereignty, its initial appeal derives from its presentation as a proactive view of freedom. On this model, we gain a degree of autonomous self-governance in filtering the consumption choices made available to our social and economic worlds when mediated by an architecture of autonomous control (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 1, 52–57). As applied then to tech firms, insofar as individual persons have rights to autonomous self-governance, this would amount to norms of proactive self-policing of their content. On the other hand, as something akin to the flipside of the same coin, we can also point to the understandable appeal of more reactive stances defending one's liberty against outside sources of coercion. This conception of freedom as noninterference seeks to restrict intervention into the digital marketplace from other stakeholders like the domestic state, international/external regulatory bodies, or any paternalistic acts. In the context of big tech firms, this plays into the prevailing current of deregulatory policies that trust markets to self-correct and discourages state intervention as anticapitalistic.

Uniting both these strands of liberty would be the aura of consumer choice within a hypothetical free market absent of interventions. These initial categories to his taxonomy of liberty thus enable an appealingly unhindered pursuit of consumption tastes, preferences, and choices (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 174–175). Although these paired views of freedom as individual noninterference and liberty as consumer sovereignty have their respective merits, they both suffer from the shared dilemma of too much of a good thing by exalting individual liberty to the detriment of the public good. Moreover, they do not even deliver on the consumptive individualism initially promised because industries steer choices toward a systemic mass culture of homogeneity anyway (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947; Sunstein, 2017, p. 175).

As an alternative, through the remainder of this manuscript, would be defending what one might regard as a distinctly republican view of freedom as nondomination. As one abiding merit, we can reconstruct this more complex category as nonetheless boasting a thick heritage deep within the founding constitutional history of our nation. Such a view of liberty effectively mediates the dual roles of consumer and citizen by situating the market-mediated social preconditions for its effective flourishing somewhere between an unhindered libertarianism and a command-and-control material egalitarianism. Namely, it requires the material and social development of the communicative and civic virtues necessary for ongoing participation in a deliberative republic, without going to the extreme of calling for strict egalitarianism (Pettit, 1997, pp. 117–119). Such an account of freedom as nondomination includes the capacity for a degree of socioeconomic and market independence that does not require dependence on the arbitrary (or intentionally deceptive) goodwill of another. Moreover, nor does it allow for such unabated wealth that might enable one to corrupt public officials or to lord unlimited troves of material wealth over lesser citizens (Noble, 2018; Wu, 2018).

As applied to the contemporary structure of a digital marketplace (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019), our biggest concern resides at the interface of consumer satisfaction and ongoing socialization—particularly in the expanding domain of social media and the proliferation of news and information. In following Facebook, Twitter, Google, and others into the domain of daily news feeds, the republican-oriented assessment on nondomination views the positive short-term merits of consumer autonomy as undermined by the attendant long-term adverse consequences upon the most vulnerable in society. As an initial framing example from big tech tied directly to the above taxonomy of liberty, the free market justification often given to protect corporate rights to autonomy and noninterference comes at the cost of enhancing consumer and public good. Consider, for instance, Noble’s following example:

In the case of Google, because it is a commercial enterprise, the discussions about its similar information practices [to traditional norms of cataloguing information science] are situated under the auspices of free speech and protected corporate speech, rather than being posited as an information resource that is working in the public domain, much like a library. An alternative possibility here could be that corporate free speech in the interests of advertisers could be reprioritized against the harm that sexist and racist speech on the Internet could have on those harmed by it (p. 143).

At its worse, personalization couched falsely as enhancing freedom leads consumers as citizens to cascade into echo chambers, digital cocoons, and virtual gated communities. As empirical support, from here, we will reconstruct a litany of additional case studies whereby freedom as noninterference in one’s media consumption choices actively blinds citizens from exposure to contrarian views. This poses an array of dangers insofar as reflective encounters with novel and even eccentric modes of argumentation prove essential to sustaining a vibrant deliberating republic. In short, the hasty conflation of consumer autonomy and market noninterference with political liberty comes not only at a political cost but also at moral, epistemic, and—as I will emphasize in the ensuing sections—ontological deprivations. When depleting the necessary

cultural resources for socialization into certain civic virtues, our inherent capacities for socialization are rendered dysfunctional by sheer nonuse. Moreover, the uncritical acceptance of the commodification of our personalization data risks the deflation of one's ontology to the reified status of just another object among many with the billions of wired entities comprising the Internet of Things.

As far as American academia is concerned, the timely publication of *#republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* by Harvard law professor Cass Sunstein (2017) lent credence to not only increasing American skepticism toward big tech but also disclosed its disastrous democratic consequences (Lanier, 2018; Schneier, 2015; Wu, 2010, 2016). It also came at the forefront of a wave of critique that went beyond just social media into the wider domains of antitrust policy (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019; Galloway, 2017; Noble, 2018; Wu, 2018) and intersectional critiques of the oppressive forces of big tech on women, minorities, and the most socially and economically vulnerable (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019; Lanier, 2013; Noble, 2018, pp. 43–44). As the distinctly democratic contribution to serve as a prolonged set of cases, we will survey the growing capacity of social media platforms and their attendant algorithms to personalize content to construct what Sunstein originally coined as their Daily Me (1–30). While noting that the marketing message behind the Daily Me communicates a tenor of concern for the user's liberty to pursue their unique tastes, Sunstein warns that never has it been more salient to adapt the adage: buyer beware.

In contrast to serving consumer interests, he finds that the Daily Me accumulates and perpetually monitors individualized data to reify citizens into convenient mass-market niches. As a detailed list of practical illustrations, first, the pursuit of individuation by social media personalization can produce virtual gated communities that inhibit public encounters outside of

one's own digital filter bubble (Pariser, 2011). Second, increasing interaction with only likeminded others can stunt the nurturing of the most cherished aspects of both our spontaneous individuality and ongoing enculturation into a republican deliberative democracy (Noble, 2018, pp. 54–55; Sunstein, 2017, pp. 44, 46–48, 215–217; Wu, 2016, pp. 296–302). In contrast, willful consumer entry in interdisciplinary debates and ideology critique can produce the requisite civic mindset for openly pursuing exposure to serendipitous communicative exchanges (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 79–81, 231–33). Third, insofar as democratic republics require shared experiences with fellow citizens that might otherwise remain strangers, exposure to new ideas and experiences continually broadens the epistemic web of common knowledge dispersed best through a free and open public (Bohman, 2007; Sunstein, 2017, p. 49).

Although Sunstein mostly highlights changes in Facebook personalization to illustrate the dangers of the Daily Me, he stands at the forefront of a much larger civic danger. As a foretaste, for purposes later in our argument, keep in mind that Google, Amazon, Apple, Twitter, and others utilize similar such personalization algorithms with the attendant adverse social consequences (Berry, 2014, pp. 132–136; Galloway, 2017; Noble, 2018; Richterich, 2018, pp. 61–69). As two working examples from the social media news duopoly, Sunstein focuses on the unique role of algorithms in digital personalization as paving the way toward sociopolitical polarization. On the one hand, he highlights the June 2016 Facebook announcement to “Build a Better News Feed for You” by personalizing news feeds to select stories that are “subjective, personal, and unique” by matching users with the stories that matter most to them (Sunstein, 2017, p. 14). Tim Wu, the original scholar to coin the phrase net neutrality, adds to Sunstein's skepticism toward the Daily Me in finding in his studies on the robust history of the commerce of people's attention that

this dovetailed nicely with the site's invention of the "like" button—a particularly brilliant idea that could be put to noncommercial use (like approving a friend's engagement, or weirdly an announcement in memoriam) while also allowing companies precisely those in whom they'd instilled brand loyalty. Facebook allowed people to buy advertisements in one's news feeds, giving its advertisements more contextual relevance. Finally, those "like" buttons also justified Facebook's heavy investments in tracking technologies (Wu, 2016, p. 300).

On the other hand, Sunstein expands his skeptical case against digital personalization to include Google (3, 28, 53, 265n2; Noble, 2018). Here, we find the initiation of such personalization efforts by Google a bit earlier with their 2012 changes to their privacy policy to announce use of past search practices to link them to users and 2013 advent of the Hummingbird search algorithm in their strategic positioning for the increased ad revenue tied to the growth of voice activated search (Noble, 2018, p. 55). While receiving clandestine daily micro changes and periodic macro modifications, we also find Google obfuscating code "deliberately written to be unreadable by humans but perfectly readable for machines" (Berry, 2014, pp. 192–193). As the abiding rationale for these changes, Noble finds that

personalization is not simply a service to users but rather a mechanism for better matching consumers with advertisers...Google's personalization or aggregation is about actively matching people to groups, that is, categorizing individuals. In many cases, different users are seeing similar content to each other, but users have little ability to see how the platform is attempting to use prior search history and demographic information to shape their results. Personalization is, to some degree, giving people the results they want on the basis of what Google knows about its users, but it is also generating results for viewers to see what Google Search thinks might be good for advertisers by means of compromises to the basic algorithm (p. 54).

In brief summation, algorithmic settings to achieve such personal data profiles include tracing users' digital reports of likes, recording and storing troves of data on all past searches, creating a perpetual log of geolocations, and filtering news feeds aggregately based on likes conferred by friends and/or prior search histories.

With these filters, Sunstein finds that the personalization algorithms of Facebook and Google stealthily promise to satiate the naïve consumer desire to become liberated from cumbersome unfiltered general-interest intermediaries at the cost of producing considerable epistemic bias (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 14–15).

[D]ue to the effects of algorithmic filtering, Internet users are likely to be provided with information that conforms to their existing interests and, in effect, is isolated from differing viewpoints...A 2013 paper measures the effect of search personalization on Google, concluding that 11.7 percent of Google search results differ between users due to personalization—a finding that the authors describe as ‘significant personalization’ (Sunstein, 2017, 265n2).

This leads into the false perception of conducting objective searches and receiving unbiased search and news proceeds through what are actually layers of strategically filtered content (Noble, 2018, pp. 30–32, 36). In Noble’s words,

Google’s monopoly status, coupled with its algorithmic practices of biasing information toward the neoliberal capital and social elites in the United States, has resulted in a provision of information that purports to be credible but is actually a reflection of advertising interests (p. 36).

These personalization algorithms thereby divide deliberative publics previously served by generalized interest intermediaries into epistemic gated communities (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 9–10). In critical assessment, Sunstein contrasts these with public parks and streets as the healthy spaces for developing the civic virtues needed to engage in unfiltered encounters (pp. 34–35). As a proposed remedy, because civic virtue requires ongoing habitual socialization (as healthy mimesis later), he recommends counterfactually that we must hone our republican capacities for sometimes opting for what is publicly best for oneself and others as democratic citizens over market consumers. He advises that such a reflectively skeptical comportment ought to override what we might have otherwise chosen from a more strategically narrow consumer mindset (pp. 52–58).

II. Thinking Like an Algorithm as Digital Mimesis:

Anti-Correlation, Autonomy, and Object-Oriented Ontology

Much to the lament of proponents of republican democracy, the openly public spaces, parks, and sidewalks that made possible for serendipitous civic encounters with contrary-minded fellow citizens have been gradually replaced by technologically filtered spaces. Moreover, these digital paths to unhindered consumptive liberty employ algorithms as their covert regulative preconditions. So, as a propaedeutic thought experiment, if we always already inhabit such gated virtual spaces, I propose that we augment our otherwise surface-level opening critique of algorithms. In order to enter the cyber plane, we must conduct a deeper investigation into the ontological realm of the digital that so adamantly needs reform.

In order to dissect the digitalized filtering that he sharply juxtaposes with the mundane street encounters of a bygone past, it might aid his efforts if we infuse some shrewd thinking from what has, just in the last two decades, emerged as the first purely digital philosophical school (Berry, 2014, p. 103). With such a participatory concession of entering in the accelerating growth of the Internet of Things (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019, p. 25; Schneier, 2015, p. 16; Sokolova & Matwin, 2016, p. 367), we can more astutely assess the rationale provided by the leaders of this digital school that propose decentering the human subject. In attributing hypothetical agency to the array of entities constituting our wired lives, they espouse that we imagine becoming co-inhabitants but not lords over such a digital universe. As a technological corollary to Sunstein's mundane sidewalks, parks, and open public squares, we could imagine stepping into virtual mini-publics as mediated by algorithmic networks between connected objects. As a hypothetical democratization of the virtual, this school proposes we grant

due liberty and ontological agency to all technological entities along the auspices of object-oriented ontology (Berry, 2014, pp. 89–120; Jarzombek, 2016).

Simply put, the object-oriented ontologist advocates that we render our computerized world less anthropomorphic and promote an overall democratization of the digital (Bryant, 2011; Harmon, 2002). They suggest we adopt a flat ontology and situate human ontology on par with any other wired object in the Internet of Things. As part of their practical proposal, we thereby liberate digital objects from the correlational epistemology of subject–object relations that—they argue—constitute unwarranted exertions of ontological domination (Berry, 2014, p. 106). In order at least to entertain the subtle nuances of this novel school, for our purposes, such an ontological mindset ought to begin by conceding the irrefutable social fact that wired objects already exercise a wide scope of agency. To suggest otherwise would be to remain unreconciled to our social world as it presently stands. So, in following their lead, consider the following: what would it be like to think and act as an algorithm with real agency?

A two-tiered question warrants a two-tiered response. We will thus regard the query as stated at its respective (a) theoretical, thought-oriented and (b) practical, action-oriented levels. Since I am likely taking the reader into uncharted terrain, I will stay pragmatic to start, beginning with the latter (b) action-oriented approach.

To act (as hypothetical co-netizens of the #republic) like an algorithm entails engaging in purely pattern-seeking mimetic behavior (Berry, 2014, p. 126–31). Algorithms prove practically efficacious in a digitally constituted universe because their ontological comportment is primarily to follow the rules and guidelines of their program. They mime and imitate the patterns, plans, and operatives of their code language. We can thus grant them both subjective and objective agency as mediators of joint attention between code language and its iterative implementation

(Bellah, 2011, pp. 104–105). Likewise, if taken truly on egalitarian par with human subjects, we ought to construe all objects under the provincial guidance of iterated code as reflexively exchanging roles between subject and object. In an ironic twist, the object-oriented ontologist shows a decided preference for a democratization of the digital on the same logic of republican nondomination espoused by Sunstein—just extended one giant step forward to the republic of wired entities. In other words, the object-oriented ontologist seeks a digital domain in which human subjects relinquish their drive for absolute autonomy (and/or liberty as non-interference) and concede an ontological self-comportment as merely one of many agency-wielding objects. As the epistemology shifts to ontology, the moment of democratized nondomination gets juxtaposed to the antidemocratic position of human subjects exercising absolute dominion (Berry, 2014, p. 119; Jarzombek, 2016, p. 88).

As a radical extension of this thought experiment to neurology, the mimetic reflexivity between human subjects and wired objects finds common ground when viewing human neonatal mirror neurons on par with the mirroring/imitating capacities of algorithms (Posner & Weyl, 2018, pp. 287–292; Skees, 2015). For example, insofar as infants (and other mammals with brains) utilize mirror neurons in mimicking the expressions of caregivers, we might imagine that action-oriented algorithms exercise similar ontological agency even in their concrete restructuring of the social through their circuitry as quasi-mirror neurons (Skees, 2015, pp. 247–248). Following their innate if–then Boolean logic, we might also surmise the mirror-neuron activity serves as a precognitive solidarity-inducing mechanism for wired objects freely to enter and exit relations with other digital and nondigital entities. Akin to the mimetic loop of the joy and delight of a smiling baby or playing toddler reflexively acting upon affected subject(s) and observer(s) alike, we could regard the mimetic replay and observance of one’s preferred form of

graphic social media as exerting its own mimetic agency (Wu, 2016, p. 315). Every wired-object entry into these mimetic ontological loops thereby affects all similarly networked agents to comprise what Berry terms a society now regulated and governed by reflexive data (p. 144; Skees, 2015, pp. 237–245). To extend this metaphor of how we might grant ontological and thereby real social agency to social media images and wired devices, consider how a nursery of babies both cry and feel solidarity induced pain as a mimicked mirror neuron response originally initiated by one crying infant (and corroborated empirically by brain scans). Similarly, algorithms enabling the dispersed agency of broadcasting social media are regularly iterated through multiple systems of circuits simultaneous to countless other observers. Observed subjects reflexively become ontological objects through the mimetic virtual exchange, tracked following of such media, and concomitant shaping of aggregate social norms and mimetically reinforced behaviors. All affected—present, past, and future—are thereby shaped by such algorithmic enculturation into habitual familiarity with such imagery, maintaining its ontological singularity even amidst such manifest societal-restructuring plurality.

As another step to this thought experiment, we could enhance the human to algorithmic analogue at a much deeper level of complexity than just the mirror neurons human share with other species. However, for this last iteration, we encounter a slight glitch in our flat ontology, because that the human parent to child socialization nexus presents two distinct evolutionary anomalies over other mammals. However, even when granting evolutionary hierarchy to the biosphere, under the logic of object-oriented ontology, we do not need to extend such warrant of hierarchical domination to humans over their algorithmic corollaries in the technosphere. To illustrate, consider carrying over the following two evolutionary anomalies into the context of technological socialization.

On the one hand, human socialization shows an incredibly deep dependence of infants, toddlers, and teens upon parents for prolonged periods of mimetic socialization well beyond other mammals (Jaspers, 1953, pp. 36–40). During this expanded period, basic biological desires for eating, drinking, and procreating—and the associated communicative patterns of conferred recognition—all undergo incredibly long periods of thick enculturation (Shullenberger, 2016, p. 4). However, in the case of algorithmic ontology, not only might we grant similar such powers of enculturation to such digital codes, here we see where this neo-Heideggerian phenomenology aids our experiment by collapsing the descriptive and prescriptive realms. At least descriptively, we presently ought to concede the performative contradiction of claiming human dominion over enculturating algorithms. Again, as a social fact, it is the algorithmic and not the human that most mediate and govern our increasingly digitalized universe, particularly in the respective domains of enculturated consumption (Amazon), reproduction (online dating), and recognition (social media posting).

On the other hand, as the second evolutionary anomaly, humans exhibit a far superior ability in honing the praxis of incredibly complex skills when compared to mammalian peers. For instance, monkeys exhibit a very poor ability to throw objects with accuracy (Bellah, 2011, p. 86, 93–94). However, as toddlers, teens, and adults mimetically repeat a craft, trade, or practice over and over, we evince an uncanny ability to refine the craft to supreme accuracy, including the unparalleled rhythmic ritual capacity of keeping together in time (Bellah, 2011, pp. 86, 124–126). As we again expand our ontological universe to include the deep tacit enculturation of complex skills, how much of our work versus leisure balance gets determined by digital ontologies that collapse these paired domains of mimetic aptitude perfection (Berry, 2014, pp. 200–201)? Moreover, how much of our entertainment, athletics, and artistic expressions are

now mediated for their recognition through digital ontologies as socially scrutinized ritual warrants for conferred status (Wu, 2016, p. 315)?

So much for the action orientation of the thought experiment. We now must continue our ontological query to extend now to what it would be like to think like an algorithm. Again, we can appeal to mimesis in regarding the instrumental employment of conditional (if, then) Boolean logic sequences as the rules initiated by iterated programs for procedural repetition by algorithmic patterns and sequences (Kitchin, 2017, p. 17). To think like an algorithm would be to exercise ontological volition in resisting intervention in efforts to maintain an architecture of control over sets of problem-solving rules (Jarzombek, 2016, p. 54; Slessor & Voyer, 2016, p. 5). However, in line with the overtones of action maturation above, to think like an algorithm within the virtual context of truly exponential growth would be to pair stubborn procedural rule following with perpetual ontogenesis. Carrying this out further, thinking like an algorithm would entail an impulse toward extreme propagation of networked communities. If ontological clout comes by numbers, humans have been long eclipsed. Yet another social fact, consider that the sheer count of wired devices capable of following algorithmic sequences projects to extend more than four times the total human population by 2020 (Galloway, 2017; Schneier, 2015, pp. 16–17). This quasi-sociobiological matrix extends further than growth in sheer numbers. More so as degree of ontogenetic internal variance, thinking akin to the truly most complex algorithms requires imagining 30 or more programmers enhancing and modifying one's conditional coding sequences simultaneously (Berry, 2014, p. 140). And even though thinking like an algorithm has the social dynamics of ontogenetic communal growth as supported by teams of programmers, akin to human ontological compartments, it could also be deemed an extremely solitary and clandestine affair (Turkle, 2011). Because no one coder has cognitive access to the full

algorithmic sequence continuously adapted by 29 or so others, its distinctive ontological agency might rather perdure in conditions of existential solitude. If no one actor can claim holistic design for such algorithmic agency, in terms of the prevailing praxis of obfuscating Black Box coding inaccessible to any single human actor at any moment, we are at an impasse if pressed to answer how might one assign culpability for such internally diffuse ontological and norm-inducing agency (Berry, 2014, pp. 169–185).

As we have stretched the algorithmic to human ontological equivalences to their limits, it is here where Berry capitulates. Although he takes great pains to present the merits of object-oriented ontology on its own terms, in the end, as a proponent of critical data studies, he cannot accept the lax agency to black box coding as merely an unintended consequence of complex design. For all its merits as a philosophical school in reconciling us to our rapidly changing social world, he ultimately scorns object-oriented ontology as merely entrenching the status quo of an ever-more ubiquitous computational capitalism (Noble, 2018, p. 185; Wu, 2018, pp. 119–126). For Berry, even when considering the ontological and aesthetic merits to such visionary speculations, he never departs from his painstaking commitment to the emancipatory aims of critical theory. In contrast to object-oriented ontology, the most urgent ontological divide is egalitarian and humanist to its core. For Berry, the most troubling site of ontological domination comes through the proprietary algorithmic access claimed by elite computational capitalists (Noble, 2018, p. 143). We have yet another permutation of the false aegis of democratically egalitarian access to personalized consumption as a subterfuge intended to hide the entrenched hegemony of a select few oligopolies (Wu, 2018, pp. 127–139). Computational capitalism has so far successfully hidden under the radar with unprecedented expanses of wealth accrued by those

with privy access to algorithms mediating the lucrative propagation of mass culture (Berry, 2014, pp. 105, 118–120):

Indeed, the consequence of this is the inevitable emergence of a computational inequality in that the streams of the rich and powerful will flow faster and deeper...[with] the reduction of all knowledge to the result of an algorithm. The postmodern rich won't just think they are better, indeed they won't necessarily be educated to a higher level at all, rather they will just have the better cognitive support technology that allows them to be 'better.' They will have the power to affect the system, to change the algorithms and even write their own code, whereas the dominated will be forced to use partial knowledge, incomplete data and commodified off-the-shelf algorithms (Berry, 2014, p. 176–177).

Despite their shortcomings, the thought experiments proposed by object-oriented ontology proved quite effectual in describing an all-too-familiar objective and social reality and not merely the musings of an obscure school of technological solipsists. However, in describing a world whereby human subjects and objects co-exist descriptively on an equal ontological plain, we face the old Heideggerian dilemma. Prescriptively historicized critiques of domineering systemic trends amount, at best, to performative contradictions (Berry, 2014, pp. 111, 117). Put another way, the collapse of the human and object distinction is precisely why these algorithms are so dangerous as they shape the content of a booming mass culture industry:

It is important to realize that this content is not chosen by human curators at the platform. Rather, the algorithm learns what content people will click on, and what content will cause them to stay on that platform longer, through many millions of small experiments; that is the content that is suggested and viewed. Exploitation and addiction caused by the optimization of the platform is a harm to the consumers because they are likely watching lower-quality content than they would choose if they were fully informed in advance about how the content is chosen, or perhaps if they had alternative platforms to choose among (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019, p. 44).

With these lessons in mind, now is time to subject to public review the proprietary claims over algorithms that fuel oligarchic, duopolistic, and monopolistic computational capitalism. As we return to the theoretical advent of a critical theory of the mass culture industry, we are reminded

to treat Horkheimer and Adorno's view of freedom as an emphatic concept with irreducibly prescriptive and descriptive aims (Berry, 2014, p. 93; Mager, 2014).

III. Culture Industry 1.0—Mimesis as False Projection:

Instrumental versus Communicative Reason

In their seminal *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno (1947) evaluated an array of expansions of the culture industry, focusing intently on the American monopoly over its mass production, consumption, and dissemination. In line with Sunstein's opening views on republican freedom, Horkheimer and Adorno forewarned against the sirens' call to endorse the culture industry's false projection of freedom as consumer sovereignty and/or liberty as noninterference. As the unifying thesis to the entire *Dialectic*, they expressly defend such an emancipatory view of freedom as nondomination. Their contribution to these contemporary arguments entails a more prolonged engagement with the sociobiology driving our mimetic impulses. We find it no wonder then that the prior engagement with the ontology of an algorithm took on such overt sociobiological overtones. As mimetically reflective of the unchecked material drives constitutive of mass consumption, a culture of misdirected drives not finding ultimate satisfaction cunningly undermine human emancipation (Wu, 2016, pp. 154–160, 301).

On their insightful probing of the internal social, biological, and psychological dimensions of mimesis, they magnify the ruin the mass culture industry can unleash on not only the private consumer as individual but upon entire social aggregates through false projection. First, agreeable mimetic impulses are pre-allocated to meet instrumental ends as portioned out by their respective industry specialization. Second, not only does the private individual suffer whereby “the effort of individuation is at last being replaced by the admittedly more breathless one of imitation” (2016 Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947, p. 126), but the suffering and resentment of stifled fulfillment grows

cumulatively. Third, insofar as the causal block to collectively stifled and repressed fulfillment gets falsely projected onto an alter ego, lines of errant culpability are systematically redirected. Fourth, the industrial line of filtered distortion moves from repressed subjects to alien object. Last, when serendipitous encounters with others do not adhere to the mass culture industrial mold, redirection passes culpability down the assembly line. It shifts away from the unsatiated individual and away from the industry itself to culminate in systemic projections of violence onto happenstance victims:

It [false projection] is the reverse of genuine mimesis and has deep affinities to the repressed: in fact, it may itself be the pathic character trait in which the latter is precipitated. If mimesis makes itself resemble its surroundings, false projection makes its surroundings resemble itself. If, for the former, the outward becomes the model to which the inward clings, so that the alien becomes the intimately known, the latter displaces the volatile inward into the outer world, branding the intimate friend as foe. Impulses which are not acknowledged by the subject and yet are his, are attributed to the object: the prospective victim (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947, p. 154).

Although the consumer sovereignty promised by the culture industry pre-reflectively ensures a mode of production that gives us exactly what we want, Horkheimer and Adorno challenged such blind trust in market induced socialization of manufactured hostility.

Each single manifestation of the culture industry inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole has made them. And all its agents, from the producer to the women's organizations, are on alert to ensure that the simple reproduction of mind does not lead on to the expansion of mind (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947, p. 100).

Akin to Sunstein's reflections on algorithmic confirmation bias, they thus lament the aggregate epistemic biases produced by the mass culture industry as stifling our very ability to function as thinking and reflective subjects.

While predating our pervasively embedded forms of technological social media, the consumer culture of the present ought to embrace the skepticism that Horkheimer and Adorno

originally levied against the ulterior motives of the mass culture industry. They foresaw the same dilemma Noble, Wu, Lanier, Morton, Sunstein, and a growing litany of others have again identified in challenging the enduring civic sustainability of the *#republic*. The myopic use of purely instrumental reason outright collapses any social differentiation between political autonomy and consumer. Technological rationality as domination thus presages Berry's newfangled coinage of its latest materialization as computational capitalism:

Interested parties like to explain the culture industry in technological terms. Its millions of participants, they argue, demand reproduction processes which inevitably lead to the use of standard products to meet the same needs at countless locations...The standardized forms were originally derived from the needs of the consumers: that is why they are accepted with so little resistance. In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly. What is not mentioned is that the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest. Technical rationality is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947, p. 95).

In this light, we ought to expect psychic alienation to take on material dimensions, especially with a widening economic gap between leaders and founders of these media monoliths and the publics they inconspicuously serve. In the meantime, the total capital accrued by their respective founders continues to grow well beyond the yearly domestic output of most small to medium size nations.

Moving in the direction of a data theory of value, Berry describes these new stockpiles of material inequality best as the newest wave of technical rationality wherein: "Knowledge and information is said to be the fuel of this new cognitive capitalism" (2014, p. 177). Because valuation of the cognitive capital rests upon algorithmic propriety, the imperialist quality behind these technically mathematical functions is through their ability to mold mimetic behavior by marketing everything under the auspices of one firm. These monopolist cultural industries have

succeeded in having always already introduced filter bubbles of false projection around those persons most immediately affected by their manufactured solidarity of hegemonic complicity.

From the American imperial standpoint, regardless of one's own attitudes toward the ills or merits of the free market, we cannot help but read prescient insinuations of Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Apple lending hermeneutic import to the ensuing lines:

The most powerful of cultural agencies, who work harmoniously with others of their kind as only managers do, whether they come from the ready-to-wear trade or college, have long since reorganized and rationalized the objective mind. It is as if some omnipresent agency had reviewed the material and issued an authoritative catalog tersely listing the products available. The ideal forms inscribed in the cultural heavens where they were already numbered by Plato—indeed, were only numbers, incapable of increase or change.... The more all-embracing the culture industry has become, the more pitilessly it has forced the outsider into either bankruptcy or a syndicate; at the same time it has become refined and elevated, becoming finally a synthesis of Beethoven and Casino de Paris (p. 107).

In the spirit of the perennial relevance of first-generation critical theory, the rationalized categories and catalogued products suggest strong complicity in requiring the algorithmic mediation of the major American tech industries for their cultural dissemination. Any claim to sovereignly exclusive ownership over the attendant algorithms continually updated through private access to organized hordes of numerical data likewise carries the presumed warrant over information from literally billions of users that (in the vain appeal to free market competition) no garage start up could hope to amass from scratch (Moore, 2016, pp. 9–12). As telling support, both tech and financial industries express absolute agreement over the clever coinage of big data as the new oil of the global economy. Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple race to become the world's first trillion-dollar firms (Galloway, 2017; Toonders, 2014; Wu, 2018).

IV. Culture Industry 2.0—The Rise and Dominance of GAFA Algorithmic Personalization: The Root Cause of Global and Domestic Political Polarization

Moving into a more critical assessment of the shortcomings of his probing work as the number and quality of critical voices has grown just in the 3 years since publication, given Sunstein’s naive emphasis on personalization as a phenomena best countered by exercising civic prudence in actively exposing oneself to serendipitous encounters, I side more with Noble and Wu. Specifically, I disagree with his dismissal of a wider systemic pattern of domination behind his claim that “Big Brother is not watching you and he is not watching what you watch” (Rehg, 2015, pp. 35–37; Schneider, 2015, pp. 257, 213–225). Because Sunstein misidentifies the ultimate source of algorithmic domination by dismissing the prospective of hegemonic culture monopolies, we ought not endorse his confidence in competitive market correctives (nor that of others like Posner & Weyl, 2018). These will not resolve the systemic domination produced by the enhanced power behind the unaccountable and nontransparent stores of data currently held by a small oligarchy of tech monoliths (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019; Galloway, 2017; Noble, 2018, pp. 163–165). Nonetheless, according to Sunstein, open market competition can be one way to counter the risks of monopolistic digital personalization:

Especially in light of the overriding importance of attention, some private companies will attempt to manipulate consumers, and occasionally they will engage in monopolistic practices. Is this a problem? No unqualified answer would make sense. A key question is whether market forces will reduce the adverse effects of efforts at manipulation or monopoly. I believe that to a large extent, they will, because competition for eyeballs is fierce, but that is not entirely clear. For example, Facebook is no ordinary competitor, and it has a lot of market power. But that is not my concern here. For a democracy, many of the most serious issues raised by new technologies do not involve manipulation or monopolistic behavior by large companies. By contrast, personalization via algorithm will be a central theme (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 28–29).

In whole scale disagreement, with the attendant algorithmic data showing increasing evidence of lacking transparency and accountability, we may have already crossed the Rubicon of no return without systemic and comprehensive reform of these monopolies on power, monetary influence, and openly public manipulation of minds and hearts (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019, p. 8; Schneier, 2015; Wu, 2018).

Moreover, to the more conservative reader, although the abiding focus on a critical theory thus far might be read and interpreted as unjustifiably swayed toward leftist ideologies, the macronarrative of monopolistic data hoarding by American tech giants ought also to sway the most libertarian political actors by virtue of an express commitment to fair competition in truly free market economy (Chibber, 2014; Moore, 2016, p. 33). More radically, Scott Galloway—as among the most practically salient academic voices in this domain—certainly makes an odd bedfellow with the likes of Horkheimer, Adorno, Noble, Wu, and Sunstein (with the latter two having served in the Obama administration). As a competent and successful tech entrepreneur and NYU marketing professor, Galloway proposes a reconsideration of American antitrust legislation.

Arguing in the name of free markets, he advises that we ought to break each of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple into three or more respectably more nimble, adaptive, and non-monopolistic mini-firms—this disaggregating the Big Four into a less hegemonic (and more competitive) big 12 or more (Galloway, 2017). However, even in their pared down forms, the legal–juridical claim to free-market protections of such data from full disclosure cannot be accurately justified in the name of consumer sovereignty over popular sovereignty.

Nonetheless, as another critique of Sunstein, even the most market-friendly consumer ought to never rationally consent to political outcomes that prove utterly arbitrary or subject to the whim of corporations that most profit from an endemic social context of polarization. However,

because Sunstein was able to foresee the dilemmas that personalization algorithms carried over into the context of political polarization, he did show hints of recognizing the latent power behind this unique ability to prescreen data with algorithmic filters set in place to aggregate perceived user preferences.

As algorithms become more accurate in the future, the company's capacity to prescreen posts for what users want to read will inevitably improve. In a way, that's great—but in a way, it really isn't (Sunstein, 2017, p. 124).

As a democratic theorist that can identify with Sunstein through our shared affinities for both deliberative democracy and a strong heritage of democratic republicanism read back into the founding of our nation (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 44–48), I would nonetheless decidedly take a more critical position of these monoliths than Sunstein's confidence in the market equilibrium to come. In siding with Wu, Morton, Lanier, and a growing number of voices that began on the other side of the Atlantic by pejoratively naming the tech giant quartet GAFA (Chibber, 2014; Moore, 2016, p. 62, notes 10 and 11)—for Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple—this is not merely a European fad (Galloway, 2017). Such calls, minimally for more transparency and maximally for invoking antitrust legislation, are continuing to spread transnationally and globally (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019; Galloway, 2017; Moore, 2016; Schneier, 2015; Wu, 2018, pp. 13–17). Moreover, the problem is systemic because contemporary social movements are typically driven by these homegrown American tech giants in a culture industry disseminated globally by a limited handful of platform service providers. Add to these a handful of clandestine but near omnipotent black box algorithms as the tacit governance of the ontological ubiquity of the Internet of Things, and every apparent gain in consumer liberty of choice serves further to schematize society into niche echo chambers (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 5–13, 114–118). As even the procedural processes of openly public debates are intentionally steered into polarized intractability,

the tragedy of such sensationalized stalemates of cynically competing extremisms nonetheless continues to achieve their innate purpose: increase market growth at all costs with destructively unprecedented displacement of total workforce employed (Galloway, 2017; Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019, pp. 6–8, 59). With these amped projections of extremism, not only does such willful social engineering behind personalization stunt civic openness by undermining the prospect for serendipitous encounters, it also reinforces tendencies toward radicalization—especially around volatile social issues concerning race, ethnicity, and immigration.

However, despite the wide agreement with Horkheimer and Adorno over the risks of personalization in stifling interaction with those outside our comfort zone, Sunstein more charitably concedes limited short gain benefits. Historical distance aside, he thinks that when these personalization metrics contribute to socialization networks with like-minded individuals and groups, they might even feed into an actionable political movement. For instance, take one of his preferred set of Twitter illustrations from the #BlackLivesMatter movement:

In a 2016 study, Deen Freelon and his colleagues gathered 40.8 million tweets that included #BlackLivesMatter and related terms and hashtags (generally consisting of the full and hashtagged names of twenty African Americans killed by police over the relevant one-year period). One of the central findings is that activists used hashtags, above all #BlackLivesMatter, for the purposes of both education and amplification, usually seeking to draw attention to what they saw as a form of structural racism (Sunstein, 2017, p. 80).

Although the consciousness-raising attention drawn to systemic racism can constitute an epistemic virtue, on my assessment, he also wants to eat his cake while retaining it whole. In the ensuing examples, we see further reason to listen to his concomitant warning that personalization as driven by consumer satisfaction most benefits tech giants when mini-publics remain ossified in their niche enclaves.

As Sunstein’s prime counterexample, in sharp contrast to republican democracy would be the balkanized republic of factions that Jefferson so famously warned against in his *Federalist Paper #10*.

If the public is balkanized, and if different groups are designing their own preferred communications packages, the consequence will be not merely the same but still more balkanization, as group members move one another toward more extreme points in line with the initial tendencies. At the same time, different deliberating groups, each consisting of like-minded people, will be driven increasingly far apart, simply because most of their discussions are with one another (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 70–71).

Specifically, with the increase of personalization to news feeds, social networking, and search optimization comes the attendant risk that otherwise socially differentiated preferences and opinions slowly homogenize. Creating the perfect political storm requires as its enabling condition the commodification of citizens as consumers from both bottom-up grassroots civil society and top-down through the ideological politics of ticket thinking (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, pp. 169–172). Therefore, the social media-induced cultural polarization conveniently mirrors the attendant political polarization always already waiting at the parliamentary or congressional level. Parties thus accelerate otherwise merely modest social polarization in having always already sold promissory voting to the highest special interest bidder.

As enhanced salience, we should also recall that Horkheimer and Adorno’s culture industry chapter in their seminal *Dialectic of Enlightenment* directly preceded their conclusive warnings against mimetic racist nationalism in their chapter on “Elements of Anti-Semitism” (Noble, 2018, pp. 110–118). This places us back into the contemporary manifestation of neo-populism fueled by the culture industry of digital personalization by turning to polarized counter reactions like those advanced as rival responses to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. For these, Sunstein concedes

that the ensuing social polarization not only reflected competing political persuasions in a diverse American republic but was also exacerbated and amplified by personalization algorithms:

Similar polarization can be seen with the use of #AllLivesMatter, a hashtag whose purpose was to offer a competing narrative to that reflected in #BlackLivesMatter, to the effect that it is partisan or parochial, or even racist, to single out “black lives” for special emphasis. The use of #AllLivesMatter is for identifiable purposes (usually conservative), and it appeals to people with identifiable views, critical of #BlackLivesMatter. Research has found that on social media, “the only lives that were significantly discussed within #AllLivesMatter are the lives of law enforcement officers, particularly during times in which there is heavy protesting.” It is clear that the #AllLives Matter hashtag arose to create an ideologically defined narrative, clearly showing polarization (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 80–81).

In what he terms the dilemma of confirmation bias, insulating oneself from opposed political stances and perspectives mimetically reinforces the ensuing unreflective confidence one asserts behind a polarizing position. The #AllLivesMatter movement likewise confirms key aspects of Horkheimer and Adorno’s earlier working definition of bad mimesis as false projection, insofar as (a) it confers epistemic supremacy to itself by virtue of taking up the more algorithmic-friendly universal conditional logic while (b) it identifies the legitimation of this standpoint with law enforcement officers holding the power on sanctioned use of violence.

To illustrate the latent risks to functional deliberative democracy when only interacting with like-minded individuals, he cites another sociological study of the communicative pathologies behind mimetic racial constructs. He first shows how control groups of five similarly constituted persons of a conservative persuasion inevitably became more certain of their convictions when only communicating with persons of the same persuasion:

After discussion whites predisposed to show racial prejudice offered more negative responses to the question whether white racism is responsible for conditions faced by African Americans in U.S. cities (Sunstein, 2017, p. 70).

However, Sunstein is careful to cast the dilemma not just as a problem particular to conservatives as he cites the similar trend toward enhanced extremism among those self-identified as having

liberal commitments prior to their own homogenous deliberations insofar as he found: “After discussion, Whites predisposed not to show racial prejudice offered more positive responses to the same question” (Sunstein, 2017, p. 70). Therefore, with confirmation bias feeding into social polarization from both ends of the spectrum, the dilemmas are amplified by social media. As polarization gets rendered systemic, it exacerbates monetized pressures upon candidates to opt for party line voting to secure precious national party funding. As a result, the communicative risk to deliberative democracy posits a scenario whereby political compromise might become increasingly volatile to pursue when public deliberation and procedural will formation are displaced from the public to the privately owned and mediated virtual.

Social media makes it easier for people to surround themselves (virtually) with the opinions of like-minded others and insulate themselves from competing views. For this reason alone, they are a breeding ground for polarization, and potentially dangerous for both democracy and social peace (Sunstein, 2017, p. 71).

As a lose–lose scenario leading us back in the directions presaged by Horkheimer and Adorno and confirmed by incidents like the 2015 Charleston, South Carolina church shooting murder of nine Blacks by White nationalists Dylan Roof that began with a Google search (Noble, 2018, pp. 110–118) and Charlottesville violence of September 2017. Incalcitrant posturing carries with it the latent potential of escalating into violent racketeering. Political solutions become more and more unlikely from both bottom-up and top-down when social media polarization borrows many of its talking points, leadership, and digitalized proof to confirmation biases from tech giants. After all, as profit-driven industries wedded to computational capitalism, they benefit most by the aggregate win–win economic scenarios for partitioning out variegated targeted niches to their respective highest ad-platform bidders. In the context of news exposure, publics are trending away from traditionally impartial general interest intermediaries toward social media personalization (and sensationalism) that most profits from clicks in cyclically reified climates of unmediated mimetic

polarization (Sunstein, 2017, pp. 17–20; Wu, 2010, pp. 299–319). In the marketing context of advertising, tech giants exponentially grow total ad revenues from both sides in contrast to the aggregate decline of ad revenue for conventional general interest intermediaries (Galloway, 2017, p. 113; Sunstein, 2017, p. 15). However, the problem is not hopeless insofar as Lanier and others have begun promoting no less than 10 good reasons one might consider dropping social media altogether (Lanier, 2018). Morton and her team of seven elite scholars echo his findings in citing a recent case whereby

Facebook users who were paid to leave the site for four weeks would up with higher subjective wellbeing than similarly situated people assigned to a group not offered the payment. Users who took the break from Facebook had a “large and persistent reduction in Facebook use after the experiment,” along with reduced political polarization and news knowledge (Committee for the Study of Digital Platforms, 2019, p. 39).

Given just the trends cited for social media alone, absent the infusion of a critical reflection and, in some case, eliminating exclusive ties to such platforms, the prevalent model proves not just unsustainable but socially unstable as content-driven tech giants continually reshape the cultural industry in their own image.

V. Concluding Goals for the Future:

Freedom as Non-Domination through Computational Iteracy

As a normative corrective to digital personalization as instrumental mimesis, we can find nascent roots to a reflective check upon such excesses in Horkheimer and Adorno’s lessons on the culture industry. There they juxtapose their critical comments on the misappropriation of instrumental norms with a normative corrective: healthy mimesis as reconciliation (Allen, 2014, p. 11; Allen, 2016, pp. 166–176). Following the spirit of Horkheimer and Adorno, the disclosure of the psychic vices of misplaced aggression is just the beginning insofar as consciousness raising

must be dialogically and communicatively complemented by real interaction. In that light, we need to construct public spaces not controlled by for-profit technological intermediaries to allow for the public rectification of instances whereby mimesis (even as an unintended consequence) falsely displaces the subjective identification of one's own misery onto an otherwise blameless alter ego.

In addition, civic responsibility in one's use of digital media will require an adequate education into the complex capacities expected in realizing Noble, Wu, Sunstein, Horkheimer, and Adorno's vision of emancipation as nondomination, especially when called to employ reflective mimesis to opt for democratic sovereignty over mere consumer sovereignty (Rehg, 2015, pp. 30–32). Berry fittingly provides us with a name for the requisite interpretive capacity he terms computational iteracy:

Having a grasp of the basic principles of iteracy is crucial for reading code and for undertaking critical theory in the digital age. This is because the ubiquity of computation and the way in which norms and values are delegated into algorithms create an invisible site of power, which also has agentic power. It is also the case that part of the critique of software has to be the ability to unbuild these systems, to take them apart and to provide critical 'readings' of them.... With the increase in ubiquity of these computer systems in all aspects of life, it is likewise important that citizens have the skills to understand and critique them (Berry, 2014, p. 189).

By playing off the notion of digital literacy in tandem with competence in reflexively interpreting the nuances of mimetically iterated code sequences, he has outlined what reflective mimesis would entail in these new contexts. If merely a strategic marketing aim of education into responsibly digital citizenship were not enough, algorithmic literacy must also actively circumvent polarization in the lamentably disparate domains of the academy.

In summation, we ought to be careful in substituting for Dewey's maxim that "the only solution to the problems of democracy is more democracy" the techno-messianic lie of the cybertopia-to-come often floated by Silicon Valley that "the only solution to the problems of

technology is more technology” (Noble, 2018, pp. 61–63; Moore, 2016, pp. 19–20; Turkle, 2011, pp. 275–277). With uncanny insight into the prevalence and bombardment with photographic images as a defining feature of contemporary social media and search engine optimization, Horkheimer and Adorno presciently warned against treating the culture industry—which can only serve as an instrumental means—as a poor substitute for fulfilling our deepest aspirations for ongoing social reconciliation:

Through its inherent tendency to adopt the tone of factual report, the culture industry makes itself the irrefutable prophet of the existing order. With consummate skill it maneuvers between the crags of demonstrable misinformation and obvious truth by faithfully duplicating appearances, the density of which blocks insight. Thus the omnipresent and impenetrable world of appearances is set up as the ideal. Ideology is split between the photographing of brute existence and the blatant lie about its meaning, a lie which is not articulated directly but drummed in by suggestion. The mere cynical reiteration of the real is enough to demonstrate its divinity. Such photological proof may not be stringent, but it is overwhelming. Anyone who continues to doubt in the face of the power of monotony is a fool. The culture industry sweeps aside objections to itself along with those to the world it neutrally duplicates. One has only the choice of conforming or being consigned to the backwoods (pp. 118–119).

With risk of closing on the false impression that I were advocating an extremist position of rampant technophobia or a nostalgic return to nature, I would amend their concluding disclaimer that one might risk consignment to the backwoods only as a potential option upon the failed test of one preceding condition.

Although Sunstein regards global and domestic digital divides as likely to decrease as new technologies become more widely available to persons regardless of income or wealth (Sunstein, 2017, p. 29), I again would strongly disagree. Consider as yet a last counter case: the systemic inequality faced by poor people of color in the United States. Noble finds that in the more than three decades spanning from 1984 to 2007, the wealth inequality between Whites and Blacks quadrupled. This period is precisely when the information age was originally viewed as to issue

an all but guaranteed lessening of that gap. What we are faced with constitutes what Noble effectively terms algorithmic redlining:

This is not a result of moral superiority; this is directly linked to the gamification of financial markets through algorithmic decision making. It is linked to the exclusion of Blacks, Latinos, and Native American from high paying jobs in technology sectors. It is the result of digital redlining and the resegregation of the housing and educational markets, fueled by the seemingly innocuous big-data applications that allow the public to set tight parameters on their searches for housing and schools (p. 167).

In sum, a robust capability for human flourishing must include critical technological literacy as key to a distinctively republican freedom as nondomination that fosters the much-needed reflexive interplay between functional markets and democratic accountability (Wu, 2016, p. 344; Wu, 2018, p. 139; Sen, 1999, pp. 14–159). As a baseline rationale, this should include the nonnegotiable communicative capacity to have a voice in the circumstances that presume one's active participation, thus supplanting algorithmic agency with human reflection through a mix of culturally situated search engines such as Blackbird, BlackWebPortal, or Jewogle (Noble, 2018, pp. 150–151) and experiments with establishing public noncommercial search (Noble, 2018; Wu, 2010, pp. 299–319; Wu, 2018, pp. 179–181). A digital age driven by digital literacy ought to include democratic steering of virtual markets through a renewal of big case antitrust legislation that reinvigorates the progressive tradition of viewing the tyranny of unrestricted corporate tech power as the undisputed biggest threat to republican freedom in our new Gilded Age (Douglas, 2015; Wu, 2018, pp. 126, 131–139). This ought to ensue as a normative premise in the execution of any proposed scheme of action, especially in the ever-expansive virtual markets increasingly governed by the cunningly deceptive and overtly oppressive black box algorithms of GAFAs.

Article Two

Towards a Social Epistemology for the Reflexively Defiant Prosumer:

A Labor Theory of Value for the Digital Age

As epistemic reservoirs of near limitless data, leaders in big data capitalism have quickly become paragons of a new gilded age (Wu 2019). Their comprehensive ecosystems comprised of an array of digital virtual goods and forms of new interactive function of online retailers carry dubious statuses (Watkins, Denegri-Knott, Molesworth, 2016; Denegri-Knott and Molesworth 2013; Denegri-Knott and Moleworth 2010). On the one hand, their free services are a close approximation to necessary public utilities. On the other hand, proprietary capitalism warrants the funneling of their enormous spoils to a select few. At both national and global tipping points, species-wide platform strategies of willful consumer exploitation require developing a matching marketing strategy of critically emancipatory defiance.

In short, what seems too good to be true—a set of free services with no strings attached—is in fact too good to be true. GAFA platforms have built near trillion-dollar valuations upon introducing supply chain hierarchies to secure monopolistic holdings on the knowledge, data, and information garnered through their claim to offer content neutral, free platform services (Bilic 2016). As a global ideal, we ought to consider a worthy exchange value for such comprehensive data to include actively contributing to current and future public good, and the rectification of past harms. From the ethical perspective long missing, in a recasting of the reflexively defiant prosumer, we ought then to take it as a moral norm never to involve persons' embodied data trails in marketing schemes that, if fully disclosed, they could not reasonably accept. This also ought to include as a subsidiary norm that even if some data

tracking proves technologically possible, there are many such forms that cannot be warranted as a legitimate exchange—even in cases where persons affected do indeed consent to the instrumental treatment of their persons and bodies as mere appendages of the big tech machines.

What I recommend is first to give a history of the prosumer beginning with Marx's data theory of labor, into the birth of the information age foreseen by Toffler, up to a wide array of progressive calls of varying degrees to redistribute the economic and epistemic value to those from whom it originally derived. The extension of emancipatory principles in a speciesencompassing manner ought finally to break the myopic American stance on tech as best governed by the competitive logic of the free market. We ought to challenge its claim to benefit the individual consumer through its American proclivity to pursue species-wide data optimization (as computational capitalism) in the absence of deeper reflection on the social, moral, and political collateral damage domestically and globally (Thompson, Arnould, Giesler, 2013). As such, we ought to consider the uniqueness of the American context as the historical conditions that made possible the birth of the platform hegemon (Tadejewski, 2006)

In conceding that much more research needs to be done to address these intricately complex concerns, I conclude by gesturing at a conditional outline that concerns the managerial and policy implications as flip sides of the same coin. I recommend applying mandated data taxes upon firms that approach monopoly position, as proposed in the behavioral economic realm of corrective nudges. Their recasting as progressive epistemic taxes (otherwise known as datasharing mandates) might aid in disclosing the content of black box known unknowns while also setting region, nation, and species-specific thresholds for technological limits that ought never be breached. These amount to gains in the candid disclosure of the bounds of our rationality, thereby striving for justified true beliefs not only of the epistemic states (or lack

thereof) of the attendant machines but as anthropological insights into the invariably bounded nature of all manners of embodied, warranted, true belief in our inescapably incarnational information age.

I. Is Marxism Really Back?

Fuchs' Case for a Prosumer Driven Data Theory of Value

Here we take due heed to Askegaard and Linnet's petition for critical marketing to elide the trap of falling back into a merely more critical takes on the consumer as a subjective ego (2011). What he termed the context of context connotes a call for a return to critical marketing as an emancipatory science that regards consumer behaviors and trendy marketing strategies as deeply phenomenological in terms of their systemic, social, and species contexts. Similarly, I take this project to fall within the associated rubric of Thompson's efforts to enunciate a Foucauldian methodology he terms the analysis of market assemblages (or, playfully, AMA).

For the historical materialist context necessary to derive a digital theory of epistemic and economic value, Fuchs appeals to Marx's *Capital* Volume II, Part I on the metamorphoses of capital and their circuits, Ch. 1 on the circuit of money capital. Here he calls for revisiting Marx's classic M-C..P..C'-M' formula for the required insight into viewing digital labor as holding untapped economic and epistemic value for the masses. In short summation, he notes that the M-C represents the transformation of sum of money (M) into commodities (C). The intervening dots indicate the interruption of the process of circulation through the inherently social process of production (P) with its classical capitalist divide between laborers and owners. Then, at the back end, the process of circulation is again interrupted as C'-M' emerge as the abiding source of a growing structural alienation. The owners of the means of (data) production benefit disproportionately from their proprietary claims to productive

capital that leads us to redesignate commodities (C') and (M') as showing transformative economic (and epistemic) increase through the extraction of surplus value from labor.

In Fuchs' formulation of this labor theory of value (V), (V) is comprised of c (constant capital) + v (variable capital) + s (surplus value as profit) to account for the means by which capital exploits the surplus value made possible through the collective mode of production. In its initial industrial form, it came about in a manner that leads to estrangement of the workers from owners, workers from one another, workers from their labor, and, ultimately, worker from her or his species being (Fuchs 2019, pp. 64-65).

However, as Fuchs adapts this classical form of a Marxist labor theory of value (which Marx himself notes as an inherently irrational modicum of exchange) to the contemporary context of digital capitalism, the V (labor value) = c + v + s is represented by the constant supply of data as (c), the variable capital evinced by the transition to a context of data as the new oil whereby its abundance (rather than normal commodity scarcity) leads to higher aggregate valuations upon firms that have the most comprehensive abilities to scale complemented by the most tightly closed data ecosystems. This leads to the exponential rise in big tech firms as the owners of wider and wider empires of the new means of productive consumption (as prosumption) through the surplus value(s) generated by data that is essentially constituted by free prosumer labor in exchange for platform services. Thus, in an uncanny turn, the M-C..P..C'M' formula is one in which the data, when optimized, goes through a productive process of monetization (mostly through advertising and sale to third party entities) and commodification via the colonization of the commons. In further extension, in my own move beyond what Fuchs claims in his justifiably concerted emphasis on the unpaid labor of the digital prosumer, the C' connotes not just that labor but the double reification of the laborer now as both unpaid producer

and product. In turn, the capital production output of M' represents that new enormous monetary value (as captured in market valuations, monetized expressions, and financial exchange markets) of the collective aggregation of data and its perpetual market exchanges that comprise the new era of digital capitalism and its concomitant culture industries of techno-socialization (Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012; Berry 2014).

The vital contribution of Fuchs would be to lay out the perennial importance of Marx by showing how the *Das Capital* relation between the two Marxist formulae:

$V = c + v + s$ and $M-C..P..C'-M'$ applies to the user-generated content, Internet-mediated communication, and aggregate digital knowledge of the Information Age.

What is noteworthy in Fuchs' reappropriation of the work of Marx for understanding the paradoxes of digital capitalism—for instance, the near trillion-dollar valuation of Facebook with only 10% of yearly revenues going to labor (Arvidsson 2016), or the rise in structural unemployment due to technological innovations in the means of production—would be that he is not alone in his calls for a return to Marx's prescient prognostications. For instance, Hardt and Negri (2009; and a growing list of other interdisciplinary academics) share his proposition that the increasing colonization of the digital commons, together with the exponential growth in big tech firm valuations, leads ultimately for digital laborers, as prosumers, to unite and push for the similarly affected prosumers to demand the democratization of the digital means of productive consumption. Moreover, Foster finds that value co-creation requires further reflection upon how and when use value increases for the consumer as prosumer in contrast to the exchange value increases for firms that can offer a more premium price for co-creation with consumers to produce what they really want (Foster 2011, pp. 45-46).

II. Consumer + Producer = Toffler's Third Wave Prosumer:

The Socio-Cultural Context for the Body as Galloway's Target Market

Following Askegaard and Linnet's call for reading the wider context of context (2011), before we delve more deeply into the neo-Marxist complements to extend Fuchs' inquiries into the extent and nature of labor exploitation at the bidding of today's major tech firms, we ought to give a brief genealogy of the (re)birth of the prosumer. In his classic *The Third Wave* (1980), Toffler defends his own prescient analysis of the future to come with the guiding thesis that the Information Age in its birth pangs best explains the socio-cultural upheavals and major clashes to come about how best to organize society. On Toffler's diplomatically neutral view, he claims that both socialists and capitalists have a misguided reading of the unfolding historical and cultural epoch. While much attention is paid to rival capitalist versus socialism accounts of organizing society, he (and Pentland 2014 later) believes that both ideologies are meeting their respective ends as globally the species moves out of the industrial age into the information era. What Toffler notes too is that while the nomadic to agricultural era transition spanned millennia, and then the agricultural to industrial shift in waves took centuries, the transformative disruptions of the Information Age are all the more climactic as they can be isolated to the historical span of mere decades.

Given the hindsight of forty years of distance from his seminal work, we can see elements of history that did not exactly play out in the manner Toffler foresaw— specifically his underestimation of the powers of capitalism to colonize new means of production through proprietary claim. However, where we can certainly give him the benefit of the doubt would be his speculations concerning how the advent of the personal home computer would transform the body politic, including its prime localization in transforming the family, the workplace,

homeshoring, social and political institutions, the nation-state, major sources of economic valuation in an information era, and the attendant major disruptions in digital culture consumption patterns (Deuze 2006).

What Toffler did foresee was the manner in which Galloway, Fuchs, and others more recently judge that the personal computer, later morphing into mobile technologies (Simunkova 2019), and expanding its cloud to comprise the Internet of Things has led to a drastic increase into the prosumption typically tied to even the most passive productive activities of Web 2.0, primarily through leaving automated Big Data trails of geo-located consumption (Darmody, Yuksel, and Venkatraman 2017, p. 1096). However, what he did not foresee was the attendant accumulation of capital around a select number of hegemonic platforms. Akin to merely more of the same for the brief history of consumer-facing but industry-driven marketing, we again find another permutation of industrial-style managers dictating the global flows of information, market transactions, and norms of socialization in the relative absence of input from those most immediately affected. However, Toffler's concepts of Sector A and Sector B domains of work and exchange, follow his conceptual division of labor between Sector B consumer and Sector A prosumer. This very basic distinction provides the necessary framework from which we can understand the failure of the advent of our information era of big data not to have followed his predictions of the Sector A prosumer reentry back to its pre-industrial space at the center of social life and production.

In their differentiated forms, Sector A would amount to the domain of production dominated by prosumers who thereby lay claim to enough of the fruits of their production to maintain relative self-subsistence along with non-market exchanges of other locally situated prosumers. Toffler notes that these would tend to thrive best in relatively self-enclosed small

communities with limited external exchange (and thereby limited market-driven consumption) of surplus production in Sector B market exchanges with external communities. In contrast, Sector B finds its major sources of growth in scale in the industrial age that pushes the division of labor specialization to the point that little work (save for relatively uncompensated domestic affairs) rests in the sphere of prosumption. For Sector B economies, and their modes of productive consumption, most social transactions require markets to mediate consumption dependent upon a myriad of specialized industrial domains. Toffler's vision of the third wave, with its unmistakable transition to information and data as the new oil driving social organization, naively envisioned the home computer and the escalation of information as carrying a generally favorable resurgence of pre-industrial individual to family to local communal exchange prosumption (though, ironically close to Pentland's 2014 ultimate vision for the social physics to come, with no traceable/cited common intellectual lineage). With access to information in one's home, Toffler foresaw the prospect of new modes of familial organization whereby domestic labor would no longer be perceived as a less reputable source of uncompensated prosumption. As individuals, families, communities, nation-states, and the species generate information as the crucial modicum of exchange, he envisioned a new social era whereby a mix of species-wide and local exchanges of information would allow for localized units of prosumption and exchange. The resurgence of the prior Sector A age of the prosumer class became, for Toffler, the inheritors of new types of labor demanded at the decline of the industrial age.

While we can concede Toffler some fantastic insights as to how future economic, environmental, social, and political upheavals would issue forth the slow death of the industrial age as the predominant mode of the Sector B driven global economy (still found in the generally optimistic tenor of the likes of consumer culture theorists Ritzer and Jorgenson all the way up to

2010), the third wave he envisioned has emerged, at best, with increased prosumption overmatched by ever-greater divides between a decreasing total number of monopolistic proprietary owners of information fed by billions of prosumers. Although he errantly foresaw the prosumer as the key driver and proprietor of information creation and exchange, we are back in the old Marxist dilemma of prosumer laborers with scant access to the value of their data as labor (Cova and Dalli, 2009).

In other words, while one might see the free services offered by The Four as their self-proclaimed product as service—their true product amounts to the double exploitation of a) workers as uncompensated consumers that b) thereby experience upcharge in non-monetary and monetary costs for the use of value-added consumer-driven innovation (Cova, Dalli, and Zwick, 2011; Cova and Dalli, 2009). Given their increasing market valuations with every addition of platform subscriber as product, free data producing laborers as consumers of free services are certainly not individuals. Through these institutionalized practices that further entrench consumers in the aggregate as producers, the shared practices thereby constitute their target status as presumptive means and ends of the exploitative practices of the digital market (Hartmann 2016, p. 4). For a more prolonged exploration of the economic conditions behind the birth of the platform (and its growing interdisciplinary critiques; Galloway 2017), we ought to turn to the behavioral economic environment to disclose conditions under which prosumers might willfully submit to otherwise irrational modes of production and exchange (as Marx properly noted).

III. Customer Value + Product = A Data Theory of Value:

Assuming Bounded Rationality in Thaler's Economic Environment

As far as the relevant behavioral economic school of thought goes, I will take license to follow Thaler in loosely terming his rival(s) in terms of rational choice models, which he more pejoratively treats as continually waving (invisible) hands as their default correctives in gesture toward Smith's market equilibrium to come. Much of Thaler's *Misbehaving* (2015) tells the narrative of the rise of behavioral economics recruiting and gaining young converts, seeking institutional conferral of status via journal recognition, strategically securing key university positions, and leading to the concluding triumph of Thaler serving as the AEA (American Economic Association) President at the time of writing this narrative manuscript. Akin to Kuhn's notion of revolution, it is replete with heated conference exchanges whereby proponents of the entrenched school seem unable to differentiate anomalous cards in their deck from legitimate ones (Kuhn 1962; Bruner and Postman, 1949). The disclosure of wide gaps in perceptual and psychological framing lead the prevailing economic disciplinary matrices essentially to talk past one another in the use of the same concepts and data with their paradigm-specific incommensurable interpretations.

As far as the relevant background theory and set of concepts, the most significant to behavioral economics would be its avowed commitment to psychological realism in describing human action. In terms of a bodily analogy, Thaler exposes the inner workings of our nervous system, so to speak, as it draws upon sensory input to lead into concrete action. This loose analogy fits Thaler's use of conceptual realism in claiming that his embodied objects of description under study are Humans as opposed to their relatively disembodied rational choice

rival Econs (Thaler, 2015, pp. 4-11). As for the later term he also refers to as homo economicus, Thaler disparages it frequently by noting:

the inconsistency inherent in the behavior of an economic theorist who toils for months to derive the optimal solution to some complex economic problem, and then blithely assumes that the agents in his model behave as if they are capable of solving the same problem (Thaler, pp. 161-162).

Thaler and his acolytes thus charge the rival camp with a nuanced psychological antirealism by hypothesizing idealized conditions that have little bearing on real human behavior (and thus make for poor empirical descriptions of market behavior). As something of a conceptual counterfoil to the presumed innate rationality of the invisible hand, Thaler, Sunstein, and others highlight the importance of psychological (and market-regulatory) nudges in both shaping and correcting undesirable and desirable outcomes.

As for methodological assumptions, the key one would be Kahneman's path-breaking perceptual framing of following Herbert Simon's presumption of bounded rationality (Thaler 2015, pp. 22-23; 161-162). For an effective illustration, refer to the following introductory steps to adapt the insights of behavioral scientific descriptions of value attribution to developing a tentative theory of epistemic value for the data-laden products shaped by prosumers. On the rational choice model, increases in wealth (as our first representation of a valuation mode) ought to be experienced as roughly the same (and equally rational) across income groups. And, the loss of the same amount of money ought to be experienced as a loss in the same amount of utility value. However, for the three main guiding tenets of behavioral economics: 1) Humans behave differently than Econs. 2) We have empirical grounds to show that the endowment effect governs Human behavior. That is, we value what is in our possession more than what is not. 3) Humans show strong tendencies to mitigate losses more aggressively than pursue gains. This

loss aversion he claims as the ‘single most powerful tool in the behavioral economist’s arsenal’ (34).

In the data-driven context of prosumption, (1) explains the behavioral tenet behind the irrational trade-off prosumers perpetually undertake in their willing exchange of data production for free platform services. As for (2), this explains the innovations introduced by Thaler’s students when turning to the domain of digital marketplace—especially behavioral anomalies like single homing on one platform. And with respect to (3), loss aversion manifests itself in consumer resistance to radically alter habitual behaviors, specifically when switching or outright leaving a given platform that in the prevailing industry blocks to data interoperability might lead to the loss of access to years of data compilation.

According to Thaler, a good behavioral economist dealing with Humans (and not Econs) ought to assume that in a world of increasingly complexity, Humans both explicitly and implicitly use consistent rules of thumb (like the endowment effect and loss aversion) to make quick predictions and decisions. Since these evaluations can also lead to seemingly irrational outcomes, they must be assessed by economists from a stance that assumes a degree of epistemic humility in conceding Humans do not always have all the relevant information. For example, as practical experimental support of our valuation curve above, persons with \$300 vastly prefer (72%) to take another \$100 over a 50/50 chance to gain or lose \$200 more. Compare that to the behavior of Humans with \$500 that will tend (64%) to choose a 50/50 chance of either losing \$200 or \$0 over a sure loss of \$100 (Thaler, 2015, p. 33). What the rational choice model would dismiss as simply irrational gets recast by the behavioral psychologists as empirical support for the endowment effect and loss aversion that lead our collectively bounded rationalities to evince some systemic biases (Thaler, pp. 22-24). This

perceptual framing concedes that the rules of thumb within any bounded rationality may be framed quite differently, say across changes in levels of income and/or context of risk versus gain. The advantages that platforms enjoy in their wide adaptation of machine learning algorithms would be to glean perpetual access to contextual shifts, risk mitigation, and comparative trials of otherwise hidden behavioral patterns across localized communities and/or the species. These epistemic nuances to problem framing spill over into further psychologically imbued methodological assumptions that include platform target markets prey upon that psychological realism that Humans have a bounded will power (often know best but act contrary) and employ bounded self-interest (may not know what is truly best for them).

These methodological insights become even more germane to our impending line of query into the behavioral economics of digital marketplaces once we follow Thaler's extension of the upper right quadrant of our value theory curve function in the prior Figure. In the related Figure below, we extend the stakes well beyond \$100 incremental gains to \$100,000 gains and beyond. Consider for purposes of clarity the behavioral economic tenet of a diminishing marginal utility of wealth. This will aid not only our ensuing transition into understanding the curious behaviors of how individuals value (or undervalue) data but, more importantly, guide our understanding of how big tech firms and their proprietary decision-making value data differently than the characteristic platform user. For instance, as a counter-intuitive puzzle for Econs, the same \$100,000 change in wealth will vary by context as life-altering for someone with little money but for the rich person the gains in utility go relatively unnoticed. Additional gains evince a steep leveling of the upward curve as the aggregate marginal utility of wealth diminishes. Thaler thus notes that in application to the behavioral economics branch of prospect theory, the normative Econ theory of the firm errantly assumes profit maximization. In contrast, Thaler

appeals to the behavioral economics of Baumal to argue that sales/revenue maximization provides a better (more empirically accurate) model of the behavior of firms.

Moreover, at the individual level (Bezos, Gates, Zuckerberg), this makes sense since CEO pay depends as much or more on a firm's size than it does on profits. At the firm level (say, GAFA), this violation of the basic rational choice model that defies the assumption that firms maximize profit serves as a better description of the big four (five counting Microsoft) tech firms racing toward (and past) trillion-dollar valuations (Galloway 2018). In addition, while GAFA firms continue to break anti-trust fine records levied by the ever-cautious eye of the European Commission, Galloway likens these million and even billion-euro fines as akin to a \$5 parking ticket for occupying a prime \$10 an hour parking spot for days and weeks. In other words, the intended behavioral nudge towards action reorientation must be met with either exponential larger fines or outright structural transformation of big tech from the inside out (like the Marxist move of adding additional workers benchmarked in accord with each incremental increase in revenue).

The important framing of the behavioral dynamics would be a host of descriptive scientific claims. The first would concern what amounts to what I term the Hotel California effect. This refers to the generalized susceptibility of consumers to accept nudges set up by free service platforms (check in any time you like) to keep consumers within their comprehensive ecosystems (but you can never leave). Excellent examples of these would be the encroachment of GAFA firms into biopolitical marketing through wearables, whereby the nudge of say, potentially lower insurance premiums come only by convincing the consumer to enter into and remain within a behavioral surveillance system rendered perpetual (Zwick and Bradshaw, 2016).

Wear while sleeping to optimize sleep health nudges and associated ads for sleep enhancing services; wear while walking all day to count daily steps and compare to weekly, monthly, and yearly averages (and subject oneself to perpetual geolocation).

Secondly, descriptions of the sprawling ecosystems would be the manners in which the repeated use of these free services continues over time to have what Galloway calls a Benjamin Button effect (Galloway, 2018, pp. 96-99; see below that likewise defy traditional laws of the original Chicago School rational choice paradigm). What the alternative behavioral school proposes is that the prevailing nudges exploit our bounded rationalities systemically to stay within a given platform ecosystem, that now includes a wider empire of users under one megaplatfrom that pool together, for example, the combined data of Facebook psychometrics (2.5 billion), with the lightning spreads of viral contents on Instagram (1 billion users; acquired in 2018 by Facebook), and WhatsApp Messenger (another 2 billion users, acquired by Facebook in 2015). The same goes for the comprehensive nudges of Google to keep users within its ecosystem, comprising Alphabet, DeepMind, Gmail, Glass, Hangouts, Analytics, Android, AdSense, Nest, Scholar, Maps, YouTube, Earth, Images, and more.

Galloway thus creates a simplified analogy that he terms the algorithm of value. This tends to position GAF A firms in the upper right quadrant of firms assessed in terms of their number of receptors on a hypothetical y-axis and degree of intelligence on a hypothetical x-axis. For him, this algorithm of value (otherwise known as his T-algorithm for trillion-dollar valuations) represents their true current economic valuation and potential forward-oriented epistemic valuation.

If we were to reinterpret the algorithm of value epistemologically, while Amazon is leading the economic race past a trillion-dollar valuation (amped further by homebound social

distancing), Facebook holds the most epistemic value since its number of receptors far surpasses its rivals (with 2.5 billion users and growing, in addition to the acquisitions of WhatsApp and Instagram both with 1 billion+ users), to amount to near half the human population. Moreover, at the x-axis of intelligence, through the conferral of likes, shares, posts, geo-location, and psychometric profiling into no less than 14,000 categories, Facebook knows more about each of its users (and non-users) than any individual nation-state knows about its own citizens. So, according to Galloway, receptors + intelligence + the Hotel California effect + The Benjamin Button effect = a digital marketplace in which past data pools are becoming economically *and epistemologically* even more valuable as they combine with present ones, by adding volume, richness, and multivariate modeling complexity.

These jumps from mere rational choice economics, to behavioral economics, to the ensuing onset of the digital humanities with Pentland's social physics next, follows Thaler's preliminary logic of the growth of firms to unprecedented species-encompassing scales to enhance revenues. The comprehensive epistemological narrative posits reasoning in a digital age as disclosing the social ramifications of GAFA players steering, nudging, and controlling users' perceptions of their services in ways that exploit bounded rationality. As the global digital marketplace shift from neutral platforms to content providers in an informational economy, most informational media (especially cloud-based) must pass through GAFA.

IV. Convenience + Place = We Need a Digital New Deal:

Pentland's New Science of Marketing as Social Physics 2.0

Pentland builds upon the analysis of behavioral economics developed above by Thaler by virtue of one of Thaler's Nobel laureate behavioral economic predecessors: Kahnemann.

Pentland's own unique behaviorally driven research adds another layer of focus on mathematical connections between information and the flow of ideas. What he terms social physics, offers the nascent social epistemology to constitute a new social scientific basis upon which a prosumer marketing mix can be based (4).

As Pentland offers social physics as a novel and idealized conception of platform big data steered toward maximizing public good, we are back squarely in the domain of behavioral economics leading to nudges that reframe the legal-political environment. What he terms reality mining calls for social scientific nudges to correct unwarranted behavioral manipulation through the mathematical modeling of big data. Well aware of the paternalistic charge critics might advance against the prospect of behavioral intervention, his legal-political deployment of social physics entails individuals own the data that corresponds to their individual data footprint. For his reality mining experiments, participants consent to the use of wearable sociometric badges for data pooling, and thereafter agree to allow those trained in this new science to detect observable trends. Only then can the living clinical lab recommend data-driven and scientifically transparent behavior nudges steering innovations to enhance public good.

In a proposed solution to the aforementioned Hotel California dilemma, interoperability ought to free up the epistemic value of big data troves for uses beyond economic expansion of revenues. To ensure this, Pentland constructs robust institutional designs that makes a virtue out of the efficient flow of ideas. As an MIT professor adept in both teaching mathematics and entrepreneurship thus regards industry and academic partnerships as crucial to the enduring success of this new science. He envisions collaborative research teams that cut across proprietary industry silos, utilizing the best and brightest academic minds to analyze these enormous data sets—including prosumer collaboration in modifying studies in which they participate. These

collective research living experiments with social physics, includes the derivation of tech to maintain user anonymity, and government level assurances that they themselves will not misuse big data insights as mechanisms of systemic control and surveillance of their own populations.

We could certainly say that prevalent industry standards would lead any informed observer to advance a healthy skepticism toward restraints on institutionalized surveillance. However, in addition to Pentland's accolades in creating a mix of entrepreneurial and academic partnerships through a dizzying array of MIT team projects, he has also devoted as much scholarly and public-oriented service toward outlining the future of the legal-political environment of the age of the democratized platform. Pentland calls for nothing short of The New Deal on Data as a prerequisite for achieving the full potentialities offered by big data. In its brief definition, it provides the appropriate legal-political environment for 'workable guarantees that the data needed for public goods are readily available while at the same time protecting the citizenry' (17).

He first proposed its outline at the World Economic Forum in 2007. It has since helped shaped the 2012 Data Bill of Rights, and most significantly, both the 2012 EU declaration on Personal Data Protection and the EU 2018 GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) norms that have since gone global (181). While the nuances of each of these sizable contributions to the legal-economic environment far exceed the limits of our current investigation, Pentland has succinctly boiled down his basis tenets of the New Deal on Data to three basic principles derived from English common law on ownership rights of possession, use, and disposal. In Pentland's own words:

You have the right to possess data about you. Regardless of what entity collects the data, the data belongs to you, and you can access your data at any time. Data collectors thus play a role akin to a bank managing the data on behalf of its customers.

You have the right to full control over the use of your data. The terms of use must be opt-in and clearly explained in plain language. If you are not happy with the way a company uses your data, you can remove it, just as you would close your account with a bank that is not providing satisfactory service.

You have the right to dispose of or distribute your data. You have the option to have data about you destroyed or deployed elsewhere (Pentland 2014, pp. 180-81).

In short, what he proposes as the framing for the ideal flow of ideas draws on established consumer sentiments and precedent from European open banking initiatives. Off the model of holding big banks to account for not properly recognizing the nuances of each distinct and localized consumer environment (as akin to the 2008 US mortgage crisis in lending), it recognizes and attempts to rectify the otherwise exploitative relationship between big tech platform and their users' current status as vulnerable prosumers. The rights of possession, use, and disposal renders the data the proper product of exchange, thus liberating the consumer of free platform services from their prior status as proprietary product. In addition, it makes for a best-case scenario of consumer as producer by giving them a voice in how their data can be protected from misuse and instead operationalized for the public good. In this manner, by rendering the new institutional construct of the prosumer as equally individual *and* social, Pentland has reconciled the American marketer's/citizens' dilemma of an overemphasis on individuality as leading to myopic behavior that undermines both one's own interests and the wider public.

As it bears on marketing in particular, Pentland has likewise made a virtue out of the internal tensions within marketing as a discipline. On the one hand are those that currently

predominate as modelers that adhere closely to statistical quantitative analysis and data optimization as utility (profit) maximization. On the other hand, there sits the lone wolf in medium to large sized departments that views marketing more as a social science with interdisciplinary strands that cut across sociology, public policy, philosophy, anthropology, and qualitative modes of analysis. Pentland's marriage of the quantitative and qualitative comprises this new domain of social physics. It utilizes the modeling innovations tied to big data analysis to enhance the social scientific quality of more thickly durational studies in tandem with a greater richness of variables collected.

V. Communication + Promotion = Big Data as Prosumer Social Epistemology

Humphrey's Technological Environment of Platform Machine Learning

We cannot properly get a handle on how best to employ both Pentland's and Thaler's insights for our present purposes of deriving an epistemic theory of data value without a more prolonged engagement with the role of big data as regarded by the digital humanities (Humphreys and Alvado, 2017). This phenomenological approach to big data proposed by the digital is regarded by Humphreys as having two main dialectical phases (Wu 2010; Wu 2016; Humphreys and Alvado, 2017). The first phase of big data (intentional lowercase) would run up to about the mid-90s (Web 1.0) where the confluence of new computing powers, check out scan codes, electronic data bases of financial activities, location tracking devices, and the global adoption of these technologies led to a data surplus. Essentially, the stockpile of data amassed and memory capacities increased to the point where saving all the data became more expedient than sorting through what to discard. This then led to the ensuing practice of data mining firms to begin to experiment with these enhanced computational capacities to look for patterns in the data from which to glean insights into human and consumer behavior.

The second phase of (uppercase) Big Data (Web 2.0), amounts to what Humphreys and Alvarado term the emergence of the datasphere (2017). In their explanation the Big Data comprising the datasphere, they posit the organization/firm (O) as the apex of the new platformmediated epistemological hierarchy (Humphreys and Alvarado 2015, p. 734). When shifting to Big Data as framing epistemic claims within the datasphere (explanation to follow), reasoning becomes inherently communicative as any person one (P1) conveys information to any person 2 (P2). However, since that communication is mediated by machine learning processes (M), it becomes entextualized within the datasphere from the hypothetical epistemic stance of potential communication to an open-ended audience. However, buyer beware, since instead of this communicative reasoning as epistemically framed in terms of two or more interlocutors in reasoned discourse (akin to the discursive ideals Murray and Ozanne regard as essential for an emancipatory take on the Frankfurt/Habermasian reflexively defiant consumer), the latent incursion of Thaler's bounded rationality comes in (my elaboration—not Humphrey's) the manner by which any epistemic claim in the datasphere always already presumes a platform organization (O) as the tacit medium of communicative exchange. In other words, what seems to be communicative rationality is actually instrumental as the market-laden context of context can distort P1 to P2 communicative exchanges subject to its arbitrary (and black boxed) bidding (Zuboff 2019).

According to Humphreys, although he does concede some of the social benefits incurred due to Big Data innovation, the skeptical epistemological currents of our bounded reason also fully come into play. Humphreys argues that when we regard the exchange of information from claim maker to receiver as our prime focus—we miss the prime insight that the paramount

communicative exchange(s) occur between claim maker and platform (with all of its bounded framing as both enabling and constraining).

With these opening clarifications in mind, Big Data can best be described in terms of the confluence of a) statistical and numeric analyses of trends through (M/s) with b) its scope within (O) as capturing such scale so as to begin to glean insights concerning not just individuals but entire cultures (and species). This leads Berry, Fagerjord, and others to their consistent claim that there are no such disciplines to comprise the digital humanities without critical digital humanities (2017). Since users of the datasphere are also its prime prosumers, the compilation of data in big data (lowercase) does not and cannot interpret itself. As Big Data yield enormous datasets that must employ critical reflection even to discern how to direct (M) concerning what patterns to look for, we also must ask whose interests go into any particular read (O/GAFA firm) of the data and what are the ensuing effects upon society in the aggregate (as datasphere/species collective). In other words, since Big Data is always already a text of sorts open for interpretation, we would challenge any and all big data proclamations that the data speaks for itself since its dispersed readings from users versus firm/machine assemblages sharply diverge.

This leads into the critical humanities first premise that the newly rendered social interpretation of the datasphere must begin from a critically defiant epistemic disposition on the part of its prosumers. Since the datasets are enormous and do not speak for themselves, which patterns to search for reveal a particular epistemic stance on how best to read them. These hermeneutic decisions also require important contextualized judgments concerning what data to include and invariably exclude. Moreover, Big Data must be read critically since in leaving its exhaust trail, it also reveals who and what has been excluded. So, even in excluding, asking why some counties, zip codes, states, countries or continents are excluded in a dataset (or why some

leave bigger data exhausts) tells us something about the species that must invariably invoke the humanities as lenses for close reading.

The prime defenders of big data as mere happenstance exhaust (lower case) are selfmarketed as firms strategically positioned for their respective digital marketplace dominance: Google (search), Apple (computing product/service), Facebook (connect), and Amazon (consume). What do they all share in common? They intentionally obfuscate machine-learning algorithms in the lowercase liminal spaces between the outdated claim that the data speaks for itself and the aegis of their proprietary claim to the data as firms. Consider too that non-critical acceptance of platform driven machine-learning not only has profit motives at its heart, but this driving motive can lead users to low quality content and can lead to bodily harm and/or addiction (Gabriel 2015). The following Chicago Booth Committee findings on Digital Marketplaces put the dilemma as follows:

[D]isturbing examples of low quality content are YouTube recommended videos that lead the viewer to false or dangerous content. Prior to having these patterns made public and criticized, a Google search about the earth's geology would lead to a chain of recommendations that resulted in "flat earth" content; YouTube would offer teenage girls interested in diets videos about how to get anorexia, and so forth. It is important to realize that this content is not chosen by human curators at the platform. Rather, the algorithm learns what content people will click on, and what content will cause them to stay on the platform longer, through millions of small experiments; that is the content that is suggested and viewed. Exploitation and addiction caused by the optimization of the platform is a harm to consumers because they are likely watching lower-quality content than they would choose if they were fully informed about how the content is chosen, or perhaps if they had alternative platforms to choose among (Chicago Booth Committee, 2019, pp. 43-44).

Now, as these firms strategically position themselves as public utilities in the feigned interest of open information access or public health, they will indelibly continue to assume proprietary claims in steering the data users consume and produce. The sheer size of the data sets as the enabling conditions of the organization(s) as unrivaled epistemic webs appeal back to the public

(albeit proprietary) utility of otherwise free services so they can continue to exploit more widely by preying upon the crisis tendencies Marx saw would grow as capitalism colonized more of our lifeworld. They thus exploit the new bounded rationale of our species' dire needs for gratification, stability, and agency by putting to the forefront of our attention their ubiquitous services that play on the ruse of enabling the overall advancement of scientific, health provisioning, and public welfare aims.

We must therefore see Big Data as engaging in a social scientific endeavor that has shaping effects on the epistemic cultures both producing the data and enculturating subjects beyond mere optimization. Beyond just the framing of P1 to P2 interactions within the context of machine learning algorithm M, we must then recast the P1 and P2 primary relations as always already mediated by communicative steering and nudges in light of what is in the best interests of organization(s) as the power brokers of the species:

Deep machine learning, which is using algorithms to replicate human thinking, is predicated on specific values from specific kinds of people—namely the most powerful institutions in society and those who control them. Diana Ascher, in her dissertation on yellow journalism and cultural time orientation in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA, found there was a stark difference between headlines generated by social media managers from the *LA Times* and those provided by automated, algorithmically driven software, which generated severe backlash on Twitter. In this case, Ascher found that automated tweets in news media were more likely to be racist and misrepresentative, as in the case of police shooting victim Keith Lamont Scott of Charlotte, North Carolina, whose murder triggered nationwide protest of police brutality and excessive force (Noble, 2018, p. 29).

As pertains to democratizing data sets for the public good, this also takes us directly to the interconnected issues of pandemic ill effects experienced more adversely by persons of color. We are at a crossroads then between proprietary machine learning algorithms as mere platforms morphing into the lucrative domains of widescale public surveillance and optimizing medical data in the name of public health.

VI. Cost + Price = Prosumer Micro-Payments with Ben Button Squared:

Posner/Weyl Machine Learning as a Corrective for Competitive Barriers

As we transition to a competitive environment whereby Galloway remarks that the only real competitors to GAFA are one another, they each stand to benefit from a continuation of prosumers acting as if all affected were under the rational choice model of market competition for the best service. Since digital market exchanges characteristically occur at prices of zero (and below), then (so the argument goes) they must be in the consumer's rational self-interest (and ought not to be interfered with on a model of self-regulating equilibrium). In contrast, we saw behavioral economists regard the false pretense of a rational choice models as contributing to the problem. Insofar as digital marketplaces (the Organization as O in Humphrey's visual model of the datasphere) are driven to the forefront of our attention by a lucrative array of free services (Wu, 2016), they have shown a strong tendency knowingly to exploit our bounded rationality by generating systemic behavioral biases that allow them to surpass well beyond the tipping point of monopolization. This then threatens some of the fundamental assumptions that contribute to a functional invisible hand market, such as discouraging barriers to entry, leading invariably to the obsolescence of real competition, real exchange, and thus real markets (Wu 2018). It is here that the otherwise disparate paths of business schools, humanities departments, and the hard sciences (math, immunology, neuroscience) begin to collide.

As an attempt to mediate the disparate rational choice and behavioral economic impasse, Posner and Weyl propose what they term radical markets as the missing third way. On the one hand, they do agree with Galloway that big tech has moved to the point of monopolization. However, in slight accord with rational choice models, they propose modeling digital marketplaces as if they were virtual auctions that were guided by a mix of true market valuation

and desire to distribute goods on the basis of the proposed bidding. As one step toward rectifying the poverty and inequality that free markets can produce, they propose a micro-payment scheme somewhat akin to Pentland's model of individual data ownership. However, in contrast to behavioral economists, Posner and Weyl believe that machine-learning advances have accelerated to the point of directing the most efficient flow of market goods when framed in terms of their modeling of the perpetual digital auction.

As one of their prime examples, they argue that machine learning advances lead to something like Galloway's recognition of the Benjamin Button effect squared. In other words, not only does big data increase in aggregate value over time as it amasses more receptors and psychometric variables to triangulate, it also increases in iterated machine-learning breakthroughs that only come with enormous scaling. For a helpful visual rendering, see their explanation below for how the value of each data point in a Petabyte set increases in value not just in accord with Galloway's receptors + intelligence Ben Button formula, but also takes account of machine-learning advances that require tipping points for each that then leap to new valuations with each new epistemic gain = (Ben Button)².

For instance, their example drawn from machine learning as applied to facial recognition fittingly brings us full circle to our phenomenology of big data with the prime focus on the variegated gazes that come through visually driven epistemologies, this time as pertains to machine vision (Posner and Weyl 2018, p. 227). In their example, since the data sets needed to jumpstart machine learning are so large, and since the learning advances come about in iterated stages, that the valuation escalates as the scope of data sampling gets larger and larger. With more numerous data samples spurring on machine vision progression from the medium level sample complexity of human recognition, to the lower complexity of

labeled objects, to the highest complexity of action understanding, the value of data jumps at each stage of vision. So, not only does the monetary value of each individual sample grow in size over time (the Benjamin Button effect), but each sample same value grows exponentially at each new stage in the advance of machine learning (thus, Benjamin Button squared).

Note that on the conventional analytics of data valuation, while data aggregators might lead consumers to believe that each data input decreases in value relative to large pools of millions and billions, a different narrative emerges with Posner and Weyl's account of machine vision. While there are periods where sample size increases and data value levels off for a prolonged period, the escalating jumps in valuation occur as the value curve makes exponential jumps upward with each new stage of machine learning. This phenomena would amount to $(\text{Benjamin Button})^2$ through machine learning. This type of illustrate shows how platforms that can leverage mammoth data pools can continue to experience sizable economic growth even in periods of wider economic stagnation, rendering their data assets yet even more valuable than firms that opt not to data aggregate (Posner and Weyl, 2018, p. 227).

Since all platform data can be archived for resale back to the relevant suppliers that desire real time responses to consumer reactions to pricing with each scanned item, or even resold to third party data aggregators that need human faces for ML training in other domains. It is for these reasons that the Chicago Booth Committee on Digital Platforms exercised great caution against the likely abuse of machine learning data in preying upon vulnerable consumers:

A platform can analyze a user’s data in real time to determine when she is in a “hot state” and offer a good that the user would not purchase when her self-control was higher. Consider a supercomputer tracking a consumer, via her cell phone, around the town until she is tired or frustrated in some way, and at that moment presenting her ads and information about junk food. This type of exploitation could depend on input from devices such as eye-tracking sensors, the ability of AI to understand the emotion expressed in texts and email, and all the other data the platform has about the consumer combined at a very large scale....In addition, machine learning applied to big data may help differentiate well-informed and sophisticated consumers or workers from poorly informed or more naïve consumers, raising the possibility of further exploitation of those least prepared to resist it (Committee on Digital Platforms, p. 36).

Connotations of machine learning invariably affecting the expansion democratic governance over consumptive nudges occur in the above brief examples of tracking data pushing unhealthy food, data resale of private email content for purposes of sentiment analysis, and intentional targeting of those bodies deemed most vulnerable to exploitation—whether they be the elderly, the undereducated, or those already subjected to racial/ethnic systemic inequality.

Along the lines of racial injustice, insofar as even the practice of classification into taxonomies of groups and objects always already occurs within a particular historical context with its own conceptual heritage. Noble’s *Algorithms of Oppression* (2018) goes to great lengths to defend her abiding thesis that even the taxonomies of information classification (back to Foucault’s clinic nosology) employed by big tech platforms stem from a non-neutral historical backdrop:

Traditional library and information science (LIS) organization systems such as subject cataloging and classification are an important part of understanding the landscape of how information science has inherited and continues biased practices in current system designs, especially on the web....To date, much of the attention to information organization, storage, and retrieval processes had been influenced and, more importantly, funded by scientific research stemming from World War II and the Cold War....Information organization is a matter of sociopolitical and historical processes that serve particular interests (Noble, 2018, pp. 138-39).

Given Noble's intersectional background as a woman of color, with industry experience in retail targeting minorities and a doctorate in Information Science, she lends a privileged epistemic stance on how otherwise taken for granted classifications reinforce political interests. In this sense too, she lends credence to the attention Tadajewski, Thompson, and others have given to the distinctly American imprint on global marketing practices and conferral of institutional legitimation. Insofar as they and Noble cannot parse this American narrative from its World War II and Cold War contexts, the birth of the American big tech platform evinces a genealogy that will never strip its ideological heritage that ensconces computational capitalism as the abiding norms for legitimate praxis. As a counter illustration from such a critical slant, given the variations on sample complexity, if the sequencing of the machine learning process can be gamed so as to produce maximal monetary gains, we might ask the following: why can't scholars of the digital humanities reconstruct creative sequencing to achieve similar such epistemic gains? For instance, the Chicago Booth Committee for Digital Platforms found that strategic ordering of data points could likewise enhance values beyond computational capitalism when structured in accord with the right sequence of nudges. For example, since they posit that if I am an advertiser for a particular hotel, one might filter efforts toward platform users a) at a particular minimal distance from said hotel and b) within or above an income bracket as the two key metrics. However, the strategic filtering of a) through b) as prior, vastly increases the probability of psychometric targeting and decreases the scope of the ad spend (and thereby increases aggregate a + b psychometric value).

VII. Concluding Call for More Research on a Progressive Epistemic Data Tax:

The Politics of the Body Rendered Species-Wide and Localized

In his 2017 speech to engineering students in Russia, Vladimir Putin put it bluntly to his audience: the winner in the race to development AI technology will become the nation to rule the world. In an era of increasing digital nationalism—not only from Russia, but too from the United States, China, India, and others—we ought to return to Pentland’s species vision of enhanced communication technologies as the nervous system of the species. His helpful reminder and accompanying vision for social physics would see such aggressive moves toward digital nationalism as a lop-sided view—not only of our collective capacities—but also of our shared species fate as AI ties become more and more pervasive (Fuchs 2014).

However, as the rough outline of a sufficiently species-encompassing approach, if the confluence of Benjamin Button and Hotel California effects show exponential increases in the valuation of all data—potentially to surpass prior logics tied to perishable commodities like gold or oil subject also to conditions of scarcity—then redistributions schemes might be best to focus on the potential social welfare, political, and moral contributions of the epistemological status of the reverse-aging information pools (as the more valued entity, increasing, and not subject to scarcity). So, instead of merely enacting more aggressive monetary taxes and fines on GAFA[M], on my view, the most promising proposals encourage data/information/epistemic taxes of 10% or more once any given platform approaches monopoly position (Mayer-Schoneberger and Ramge, 2018, pp. 12, 167-171, 199, 203, 217; Prufer and Graef, 2018). Although such a data-sharing mandate requires much more theoretical development, it would certainly apply to Facebook and Google with about 2/3 of all 2019 ad revenues, Google with up to a 90% position on search in some domains, and Amazon’s domination of retail.

Since the data as information holds epistemic value not just for individuals but for the wider public, a randomized 10% (or more) public release of data for wider consumption could then allow smaller players competitive access into the fruit of psychometric targeting (Prufer and Graef, 2018). It could also serve explicitly political aims (revolutionary?) by beginning to pry open Humphrey's warranted concerns over unsupervised machine learning and the attendant known unknowns of big tech proprietary black box algorithms. The public data release would allow some enhanced accountability by reverse engineering some of the internal construction of proprietary algorithms—even if juridical measures permit them to remain such—by virtue of inferences drawn from their disseminated output. The data could also be mined and creatively explored by universities in realms as disparate as the digital humanities (with the evolving entextualization of culture through the internet's datasphere; see Humphreys and Alvado 2018, pp. 731-736), public health initiatives (particularly during and after the COVID-19 era; see Richterich 2015), and its random dispersal in the aggregate (moving closer to the public utility it masks itself as; Chicago Booth Committee, 2019). The public dispersal itself would be a necessary experiment in whether such data pools can even ever be rendered anonymous. With an eye to the critically defiant prosumer as including individuals *and* species as its target, we are only at the onset of a wider clinical experiment in preserving data privacy in all of its embodied forms that runs contrary to the data for sale valuation model of the prevalent GAFA nervous system nudges toward endemic double exploitation.

Article Three

Epistemicide in the American South of Washington, du Bois, and Garvey:

Sports Marketing, Lazy Reason, and the Jay-Z/Kaepernick NFL Debate

Can competitive free markets—specifically in sport and the entertainment industry—bring about racial reconciliation or do they further exacerbate systemic injustice? What should we say of the recent trends in American sports marketing in professional leagues bringing attention to systemic racism—is this progress or regress? As the symbolic gesture that brought about attention to systemic police brutality, should we shun Kaepernick’s kneeling during the national anthem for being unpatriotic, or was this a patriotic advancement toward rights for the marginalized? In a 2019 marketing countermove, when Jay-Z joined forces with the NFL with Roc Nation as its official entertainment mogul, was he a traitor in the cause for Black American justice, or a trailblazer in securing a black seat at the elite bargaining table?

In suspending a direct reply to each for the moment, what might these lines in inquiry have in common beyond highlighting the complexities of race in the contemporary American culture industry? According to Santos, in his *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (2014), each set of questions in their either/or framing falls prey to an epistemic injustice he terms lazy reason. For Santos, lazy reason amounts to a biased privileging of conventional Western epistemologies of the global North as if they were the default arbiter of truth and progress. He argues that in each instance raised above, what appears as a helpful dichotomy to order the terms of debate, once granted epistemic warrant as a worthy framing, morphs into a hierarchy of White over Black.

In a direct nod to Askegaard, we cannot understand the fuller context of context without expanding the intellectual and systemic roots to race in American sport further. So, in

acknowledgment too of deeply ingrained American epistemic hierarchies in the academies of American higher education, we will untap the potentials that B.T. Washington, W.E.B. du Bois, and Marcus Garvey to inform contemporary critiques of racial injustice in the sports culture industry. This requires a full-blown critique upon what Santos calls metonymic reason: ‘a kind of reason that claims to be the only form of rationality and therefore does not exert itself to discover other kinds of rationality or, if it does, it only does so to turn them into raw material’ (Santos 2014, p. 165). Here, by going beyond the characteristic dualisms of White metonymic reason, we can make multiple moves to cast a wider heteroglossia feeding into critical marketing theory (Thompson, Arnould, and Giesler, 2013).

Moreover, while too much attention in critical marketing has gone to phenomenological reconstructions of individual consumer tastes and expressions, we will trace out critically the macro-structural dimensions of this landscape in conceding to Santos that ‘capitalist development, colonial, and imperialism constituted the social and political context in which lazy reason evolved’ (2014, p. 166). This leads us to look critically not only at one of the most powerful assemblages of white male owners ever brought together—the 32 owners of the NFL—but to place them within a wider framing of the history of American sport as a White capitalist culture industry. Through the elitist episteme of metonymic universal truth, I turn in each of the remaining section to follow to a sustained exegesis of Santos’s critique of the five logics of epistemicide as applied in this new domain of the American sport culture industry. In undermining the metonymic logic behind each, he advances a subaltern critiques of Whiteness: the presumption of a monoculture of dominant scale, a monoculture of linear time, a monoculture of productivity, a monoculture of knowledge, and a monoculture of the naturalization of differences.

I. End to the Logic of the Dominant Scale:

Towards a Non-Dualistic Epistemic Framing of Reflexive Endogenization

While I will touch upon each of the questions raised in the opening paragraph, in the arguments to follow, we must first concede that, despite the attempts of his White critics to reduce his activism to lazy reason, Kaepernick is operating from a non-White, non-dualistic, non-hierarchical epistemology that cannot be pared down to patriotic or unpatriotic. As he continues to remain existentially and symbolically blocked from the league four years since his first kneeling, lazy reason dismisses him as immoral, disloyal, and unreasonable. However, his prolonged activism attests to the contrary as he not only stands firm in his efforts and but continues to deliberate, reshape, and refine his hopes, aspirations, and goals with considerable academic and service-oriented rigor that culminates in a comprehensive plan for the abolition of American White policing of blacks as tantamount to slavery reinstated (Kaepernick 2020). In his own words:

The political project of anti-Blackness has always been central to the enforcement of laws and legal codes in the United States. Sally E. Hadden's *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* lays out an irrefutable case that slavery and policing are linked both in logic and philosophy. South Carolina's 1701 Act for the Better Ordering of Slaves in 1701 declared that any enslaved African "resisting" a white person could be beaten (like Rodney King in 1991), maimed (like Jacob Blake in 2020), assaulted (like Marlene Pinnock in 2014), or killed if they "resisted" (like Korryn Gaines in 2016) or took flight like Rayshard Brooks in 2020 (Kaepernick, 2020).

Akin to his take on the monopolistic anti-Blackness to the American correctional industry as nothing short of white supremacy institutionalized, he likewise regards the white male NFL owners have over the American entertainment industry as another wave of anti-Blackness. In his inaugural essay to the 2020 thirty-essay series, he revised some his early 2016 critiques of police brutality. As he has since read up on the systemic injustice, researched the history of black

critiques of capitalism, interviewed the incarcerated on their experiences, visited Africa, and deliberated for years, he now concludes it is a waste of effort merely to call for internal police reform (Kaepernick 2020). For Kaepernick, the systemic nature of oppression of blacks 'is not a matter of bad apples spoiling the bunch but interlocking systems that are rotten to their core' (2020). Instead, he has carefully studied and researched the route of a long tradition of black nationalist athletes and intellectuals before him. In opposition to the free market as a modicum of racial reconciliation, he dismisses the logic of the dominant scale as just more of the same.

For Kaepernick, since monopolistic collusion was even already conceded by NFL owners when he won a 2018 multi-million-dollar settlement against the league and its owners, they essentially admitted to punishing his anthem protests, keeping him from competing, and falling prey to their own logic of their dominant scale that simply paying him off will lead him to relent. However, in a turn to the radical, he finds that the best hope for dismantling the systemic racisms of the sport, cultural, and prison industries comes through a dismantling the colonial vestiges of American free market capitalism as we know it. Moreover, his radical takes likely ensure even potential teammates would not welcome him back. In other words, while the public view is that owners continue to collude to keep him from NFL employment, insider Black reporters for the NFL indicate that Kaepernick stands near the top of it most hated players, by Black and White players alike, as most feel he had gone too far in unsettling the logic of the dominant scale (Bryant 2018).

In rejection of the dominant logic, he seeks to disclose the latent epistemic injustice to the scale employed along the lines of the subaltern critiques of Santos. The White terms of the scale comes from the initial framing of the Kaepernick anthem protests as an issue of patriotism (or lack thereof). After all, this epistemic framing was a strategic marketing ploy initiated by the

President of the United States, followed by the most elite of the billionaire NFL owners, that initially presented Kaepernick's kneeling to the American public on the fixed dichotomy of patriotic or unpatriotic. Then, behind what was masked as impartial reason, operated the default bias of an explicit appeal to a White American fan base, having been primed by corporate marketing elites to view the flag and the anthem with a particular set of assumptions deemed unquestionably patriotic then extended to any and all other kneelers in American sport. As such, according to Santos, the cunning of lazy reason occurs by positing a seemingly impartial epistemic judgment along an innocently horizontal either/or dichotomy. However, always juxtaposed to the horizontal dualism resides a deeply hidden knowledge hierarchy as vertically ordered.

According to Santos (and now Kaepernick), with the Western White North as the default epistemic judge and jury on all things concerning true historical progress, American growth of market capitalism has long been the default standard in marketing its own global image of geopolitical power. As proof, we turn to an earlier President with the 9/11 Bush mandate to fight terror by getting out to shop. Then, more covertly, Bush and the administrations to follow built on the ritual performances of the culture industry as fundamental to sustaining our national identity. With the shift from a land of industrial production to one of consumption, came with 9/11 the onset of sporting events as public arenas for paid military pageantry. Drawing on our cultural production of bodies as raw material, the marketing recruitment for fresh bodies became the modicum of exchange for more oil. So, once the dualism is set, what appears as a horizontal choice hides a vertical epistemic hierarchy, ready to lay down its warranted verdict backed with coercive power to drive capitalism, whenever and however necessary.

II. Escaping the Monoculture of Linear Time with a History of Black American Sport:

The Long Narrative of Race in American Sport Is Not a Tale of Progress

For some further necessary context to Kaepernick's athletic activism, we need to set up a working timeline that will gradually become more and more complex—to the point of deviating from our White standard national narrative of linear progress. As for how this bears directly on marketing, when another major black influencer in the culture industry, Jay-Z, announced his stunning deal with the NFL (8/13/19), he fell back into the linear narrative of progress in stating that after three years of Kaepernick, 'we need to move beyond kneeling.' The reactions were mixed. On the one hand, many celebrated that a black man had strategized his way to the elite of elite in American business in striking a deal between Roc Nation and the 32 NFL owners that comprise the uppermost tier of White American business enterprises. Even among those owners, Jay-Z's status as a billionaire places him among the ultra-elite cohort of the other 18 of 32 owners in the 10-figure club. On the other hand, many saw this as an unwelcome fissure in black leadership, with black pundits, entertainers, and athletes going even so far as to label Jay-Z an Uncle Tom (pointing to the seeming conundrum that Jay-Z previously sported a Kaepernick jersey during a 2017 SNL performance and publicly voiced support on multiple other occasions). Critics also wondered: would Jay-Z's own pursuit of blazing new ground for blacks to pursue financial interests on their own terms amount to a hindrance to the progress Kaepernick had made in drawing attention to the symbiotic relationship between American capitalism and systemic racism?

From the source of concern itself, it took Kaepernick a week to respond (8/18/19), and even those two tweets, in eluding lazy reason, were therefore layered with cryptic meaning that has gone over the heads of even the most intellectually astute observers. In its simple iteration, as

response to Jay-Z, Kaepernick first tweeted a picture and message of support for his brothers still kneeling during August 2019 preseason games even in the face enduring repeated death threats. However, even more significantly, the second tweet was lost in the lazy reason mix of consumer reactions to the Roc Nation announcement, its flurry of backlash and support, and rush of speculation over whether a signing of Kaepernick to a team was part of a deal Jay-Z had brokered behind the scenes (we know now, Kaepernick still remains unsigned).

In his second deeply reflective tweet he radically disrupts the linear narrative of progress presumed in the American ethos of moving forward to a better tomorrow. Kaepernick quickly renders lazy reason dazed and confused by initiating a direct call to redeem a lost intellectual Black Heritage that posits black minds over black bodies (Bryant 2018). On 8/30/2019 Kaepernick posted a Twitter shot of a highlighted paragraph from R. L. Allen's *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969) with the short comment 'Reading always gives me clarity.' While it was broadly overlooked as of little consequence, it strategically forces Jay-Z and any cultural participant to reckon with an internally diverse, non-linear, heritage of black nationalists of varying degrees, as Allen pays continual tribute to Washington, du Bois, Garvey, Cruse, and others. As a teaser, Kaepernick even offered some incentive for any stakeholder to crack the book by drawing explicit attention to Allen's thematic line 'What [they] seek is not an end to oppression, but the transfer of the oppressive apparatus into their own hands.'

In short, Kaepernick was explicitly calling out Jay-Z out for not just working alongside the NFL owners as oppressors, but in collaborating with the profiteering on its predominately black labor at 70% of players, with no black owners, and only 3 black head coaches. On Kaepernick's view, Jay-Z had come the closest to complicity in the hierarchical domination one could get without being a co-owner. However, perhaps worse, was that Kaepernick questioned

whether better and more engaging entertainment would ultimately help those consumers born Black and poor, most often facing premature death at the hands of White law enforcement in moments of greatest vulnerability with military service (rather than sport) as their best hope in a trade of their bodies for an exit to systemic poverty (Varman and Vijay, 2018).

Even then, the trouble with the highlighted tweet in its entirety is that in an American culture that now aggregately reads less than one book per year per person, unpacking it requires of the lay reader a graduate-level competence in Political Theory (like Allen's or du Bois's or Kaepernick's). So, for the sake of some much-needed clarification, our general task in what remains of this section is to do the tough intellectual work required to interpret the quoted (and tweeted) passage below in its initial temporal context of the Jay-Z/Kaepernick debate as an initiation into a much more complex dialectic that is all but linear in its tendency toward regression and circularity in the face of insurmountable material, psychological, and cultural obstacles. As such, we will do our best to situate it within a classical heritage bestowed by Washington, du Bois, and Garvey to trace out further lines of influence upon black nationalist movements of the past up into the present. This then serves as a window to disclosing the key distinctions between Jay-Z's and Kaepernick's respectively divergent use of marketing to address systemic racism.

As a further layer of multifaceted temporal context needed to interpret the full passage in Kaepernick's second tweet, Allen's quoted remarks are a Civil Rights era radical critique of the methods and motives of CORE (the Congress on Racial Equality), as it was founded in 1942 at the University of Chicago on a platform of pacifist racial reconciliation. That pacifist platform made it a social movement that eventually matured into a key player in the 1960s civil rights movements. However, part of the critique that black intellectual nationalist levied against it is

that it presumes the same unhealthy narrative of historical progress by pleading that those most affected remain submissively patient for the future hope a better tomorrow.

For the wider purposes of advancing American marketing theory's own epistemic deficit in critically assessing the tacit racial hierarchies of the American academy, it too makes an interesting case for redeploying some of its past critical roots into a race-conscious history of marketing. The tracing out of the financial trails supporting the CORE initiatives carry direct resonance with Tadajewski's critique and disclosure of the non-neutral political context to the birth of American marketing as a legitimate science in the age of McCarthyism (2006). In line with Tadajewski's eloquent reconstruction of the role of the Ford Foundation in advancing American training in statistics and mathematics as the scientific modeling that informs elite marketing journal methodology to this day, CORE found a similar ally in funding and direction from the Ford Foundation. With the purportedly justifiable fears of late 60's urban race-related violence that occurred between impoverished Blacks and law enforcement officials, the Ford Foundation sought to extend its corporate influence into quelling the violence, particularly in American urban centers that housed its largest manufacturing plants. So, for instance, CORE played the central role in getting Carl Stokes elected as the first black mayor of a major American city (Allen 1990; pp. 26, 76, 147-148, 190-191). This temporarily calmed Cleveland inner city ghetto unrest in its Hough area briefly after the 1967 election (but only to well up again a year later). Put bluntly, one implicit criterion for CORE support was political alignment with its integrationist and pacifist platform and disavowal of any influences from the rising tides of black nationalism (as both were grooming criteria met by Stokes).

As such, Kaepernick's main motive in highlighting the passage below is to recast Jay-Z, Roc Nation, and the nascent NFL social justice initiatives as the 2019 equivalent to CORE. And,

back to Tadjewski's conflation of American marketing practice and scholarship with explicitly political aims, rather than the Ford Foundation strategically utilizing its corporate resources and influence to maintain the status quo, this time it is the corporate might of the 32 NFL owners to play to Leviathan role of integration-as-domination peace-enforcers.

In summary, CORE and the cultural nationalists draped themselves in the mantle of nationalism, but upon examination it is seen that their programs, far from aiding in the achievement of black liberation and freedom from exploitation, would instead weld the black communities more firmly into the structure of American corporate capitalism. This reformist or bourgeois nationalism—through its chosen vehicle of black capitalism—may line the pockets and boost the social status of the black middle class and black intelligentsia, but it will not ease the oppression of the ordinary ghetto dweller. What CORE and the cultural nationalists seek is not an end to oppression, but the transfer of the oppressive apparatus into their own hands. They call themselves nationalists and exploit the legitimate nationalist feelings of black people in order to advance their own interests as a class. And chief among those interests is the desire to become brokers between the white rulers and the black ruled (Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 1969, p. 7).

The above long quotation was tweeted by Colin Kaepernick, August 20, 2019 as a photo of the book he was then currently reading exactly one week after Jay-Z's Roc Nation NFL deal signed 8/13/20. So, when rereading the tweet above in its multi-layered temporal valence, for contemporary application, substitute Jay-Z's 2019 Roc Nation partnership with the NFL for entertainment and social justice initiatives as the corollary to CORE. In short, Kaepernick believes that the capitalist motives driving Jay-Z's complicity with the white colorblindness of the NFL, its owners, and the newest wave of the pacifying American culture industry, will call it progress by simply inserting piecemeal reforms like the new ritual of including the black anthem. On Kaepernick's view (and the few remaining players loyal to his cause), even the dueling anthems reduce back again to dualist metonymic reason. Any black player standing for the new anthem and not for the old one is rendered doubly suspect. Kneeling for both is not a live option either, so standing for both becomes the metonymic default.

III. The Demise of the Logic of Productivity in the Militarization of Sport Culture:

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)—American Dream Meritocracy as Myth?

With capitalism entailing the freely willed exchange of labor in a context of ongoing competition, Washington called upon post Emancipation Southern Blacks to cultivate a renewed attitude toward labor from the old modicum of coerced servitude to the new one of dignified selfrespect. His merit-based account of social standing as something earned and not merely given shows great resonance with the way Dyson characterizes ‘bright hustle’ in his 2019 biography of Jay-Z. The general spirit behind the shared conviction rests on the following reflexive maxim: the greater degree of liberty as non-interference, the greater the personal gains in merit, accrued skills, and inherent self-worth.

With Washington as a vocal critique of slavery, his moral qualms come more so from an institutionalization of stunted self-development and a devaluation of the innate dignity of labor than from any robust appeal to natural rights to basic equality:

The whole machinery of slavery was so constructed as to cause labour, as a rule, to be looked down upon as a badge of degradation, of inferiority. Hence labour was something that both races on the slave plantation sought to escape (Washington 2020, p. 11).

He openly laments the reciprocal losses the institution of slavery exerts upon whites that had lost innate capacities for self-initiative while blacks lacked both motivation to perfect skills that had little bearing on their overall prospects for social advancement.

Washington’s view of human nature also carried the assumption that skilled manual work lays the groundwork for virtuous discipline. This practice exerts its own shaping effect on establishing mental perseverance. On his view, the learning of practical skills and trades, rather than hindering the growth of the mind, provided a necessary condition for its eventual

flourishing. He affirms such a sentiment in observation of the exemplary effect one of his first colleagues had upon him in their shared labors at the early stages of the development of the Tuskegee institute:

I have always felt that Mr. Adams, in a large degree, derived his unusual power of mind from the training given his hands in the process of mastering well three trades during the days of slavery. If one goes to-day into any Southern town, and asks for the leading and most reliable coloured man in the community, I believe in five cases out of ten he will be directed to a Negro who learned a trade during the days of slavery (41).

In its most practical application, Washington always regarded the success or failure of his vocationally based Tuskegee institute as resting upon its ability to thrive in a competitive market environment based on skill and merit. Here would be one of many instances whereby Washington adapted the norms and practices of competitive industrial capitalism he so admired in the Northern White states to the regional and local conditions of the Southern Black states. The packed weekly and daily schedule of the Tuskegee institute comprised mainly of mutually reinforcing emphases on avoiding idleness, developing an industrious character through disciplined labor, and molding spiritual and moral discipline through virtues of charity, selflessness, and trust.

Washington's vision for market commerce forged a much-needed place for exchange as the most direct, practical, and common sensical resolution to the race problem. Insofar as his vision for the Tuskegee institute included the students themselves erecting every new building required on campus, it necessitated that Washington—and the students along with him—master new trades which even led to the introduction of new modes of commercial practice into the Southern states. His favorite illustration was brick-making that even included Washington pawning a watch—one of his last possessions—as a last-ditch effort to save the institute's final functional kiln.

The making of these bricks taught me an important lesson in regard to the relations of the two races in the South... The making of these bricks caused many of the white residents of the neighborhood to begin to feel that the education of the Negro was not making him worthless, but that in educating our students we were adding something to the wealth and comfort of the community. As the people of the neighborhood came to us to buy bricks, we got acquainted with them. Our business interests became intermingled. We had something which they wanted; they had something which we wanted. This, in a large measure, helped to lay the foundation for the pleasant relations that have continued to exist between us and the white people in that section, and which now extended throughout the South (50).

The practicality of his resolve to address the race issues of the day more by deed than word carried strong currents of pragmatism as mixed with an assumption that capitalism runs best as a system that rewards meritocracy.

So, how might we apply the above insights from Washington to the Kaepernick versus Jay-Z stark contrasts on meritocracy and American capitalism? Returning to the terms of the deal between Washington's affinity for intermingled business interest between Whites and Blacks, we could revisit the post 9/11 context of American sport as providing a much-needed site for displays of mutual solidarity among a jolted nation, its leadership, its labor force, and its disrupted economy. As often overlooked context to the Jay-Z and Kaepernick spat over NFL entertainment rights, in 2015, Arizona Republican Senators McCain and Flake launched an investigation (both Arizona Republicans) into dealings between the NFL and the military. This was an effort into investigating any truth to Kaepernick's claims that the overt displays of patriotism he rejected were really part of a wider military-industrial complex having already made the first move in politicizing football and American sport (Bryant 2018, pp. 204-205). At the peak of the President's disparaging of McCain right up to his death bed and past, the Commission's findings put the President's critiques of Kaepernick in a new light.

McCain and Flake disclosed a near two-decade long trail of payment by the military to the NFL for marketing campaigns of manufactured patriotism in exchange for multi-million-dollar compensation packages that continue to the present. In short, American sport at all levels (not just the NFL, but also NASCAR, MLB, NBA, NHL, MLS, and the NCAA) had been politicized by the American military as fair grounds for instilling patriotism and recruitment masked as a public service (Bryant 2018, p. 205). Note too that the 2015 commission findings of the NFL politicizing football came prior to Kaepernick's 2016 protests. In other words, while the narrative was that Kaepernick has politicized football, it was the NFL that was the first mover in associating military and police support with what was prior a relatively neutral domain. So, by association, Kaepernick is also charging Jay-Z with complicit participation in this ongoing pageantry that continues to amplify the public militarization of our nation internationally and domestically (almost 20 years post 9/11) with full player and owner knowledge internal to the NFL to this day. These displays of anthem pageantry go so far as heart-wrenching but staged 'surprise' reunions of service personnel abroad with family at halftimes, and jumbotron and televised service members likewise staged as paid supporters of each home team. In compliance with payment, they are instructed to cheer, look happy, have something military placed in the background, and told not to mention the opposing team so that 'live' support video could be reused. All this mass marketing gets done covertly in exchanges ranging from about \$10,000 an event to totals of multi-million multi-year commitments by some of the most visible American sport franchises (Patriots, Yankees, Cowboys, Warriors). So, in exchange for these lucrative military ads for recruitment, the NFL gets to appear as a public-oriented supporter of persons in military service in exchange for recruitment of its youth fandom as captive target market.

Since these findings render the NFL the first mover in politicizing the sport, his response to detractors that request he take politics out of sport, rejoins with a mutual call for the NFL to depoliticize itself by ending its market complicity with fascist military propaganda. As described best by ESPN journalist Howard Bryant in *The Heritage: Black Athletes, a Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism* (2018), Bryant remarks that ‘The military had made it a deliberate strategy to target kids watching their team as potential soldiers. The league should have been transparent about this’ (210). However, even more telling is Bryant’s ensuing interview notes from Lt. Russell Honore, a retired three-star lieutenant general, that openly shared his thoughts on the US military’s rationale for their covert marketing campaign:

The kids that go to [sporting events] have a pretty good tendency to play sports, and to be a warrior you need to be what we call a ‘warrior athlete.’ You gotta be able to run. You gotta be able to jump. You can’t be no fat ass. We need the warrior athlete. And the people who say they want to go to a game and don’t want to see the color guard on the field, I feel sorry for them, but we’ve got to recruit every opportunity we get to get the right young people who want to serve and participate (Bryant 2018, p. 210).

With Honore’s view made explicit, we ought to assume that a young Black audience comprises a good portion of that ‘warrior athlete’ target market. Bryant then continues by interjecting his own perspective as an alternative to Honore:

When McCain and Flake’s report was released, the Department of Defense didn’t even try to hide from it. They were just looking to recruit soldiers, and the ballpark, NASCAR, post-9/11 with all its ceremony, seemed to be a great place to find tomorrow’s infantrymen and officers. The leagues, meanwhile, didn’t acknowledge it was subjecting its fans to surreptitious recruitment, and the scam continued unchecked (Bryant 2018, p. 210).

For Kaepernick, in endorsing Bryant’s call to turn to developing black brains over instrumentalizing black bodies, he turns to reflective deliberation to carve out a renewed vision

of black nationalism that seeks to create a viable social infrastructure—in a slight gesture toward Washington’s reticence for politics—fully independent of white power.

On the other hand, Kaepernick makes for an intriguing counter case to Jay-Z, qualified by its own ambiguities. As likely to be applauded by Washington, Kaepernick has merited arguably the most honorific marketing influencer position in the sports entertainment industry: in 2018 he became the new face of the Nike ‘Just Do It’ marketing campaign at its 30th anniversary.

However, precisely from this position of influence, he has gone from athlete to public intellectual, authoring the first essay in a collaborative 30-essay series devoted to producing a prolonged multi-voiced argument geared toward gaining public support for the abolition of the US policing system as we know it.

IV. Collapse of the Monoculture of Knowledge—du Bois’s (1868-1963) Black Heritage:

Pluralist Republican, Black Communitarian, and Pan-African

According to Du Bois, on the elite representative model of our civic republican heritage, interference with the will of the majority and masses could be justified in cases where elites steer policy and legislation to protect the masses from either covert or overt sources of domination. For du Bois, in application to our present case, potential oppressors to resist would include avoiding indoctrination into the distinctly American culture industry of mass consumption. In simplest terms, Du Bois might envision a civic republicanism modeled in terms of an ideal of freedom as non-domination with both black and white cultural elites aiding in the steering of the wider masses away from mere quantitative increases in GDP for the sake of qualitative refinements in a culture measured more in character than dollars.

Despite their famous disagreements over the proper role of vocational versus classical education, on the one hand, Du Bois noted the contribution of Washington in bringing the industrious capitalistic spirit of the North to the historically agrarian South.

[B]ut as Mr. Washington knew the heart of the South from birth and training, so by singular insight he intuitively grasped the spirit of the age which was dominating the North. And so thoroughly did he learn the speech and thought of triumphant commercialism, and the ideals of material prosperity, that the picture of a lone boy poring over a French grammar book seemed to him the acme of absurdities (Du Bois 2001, p. 17).

However, his awareness of the contributions of Washington did not go without its fair share of critical challenges to his overall educational vision.

The function of the Negro college, then, is clear: it must maintain the standards of popular education, it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of the problems of race contact and cooperation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men. Above our modern socialism, and out of the worship of the mass, must persist and evolve that higher individualism which the centres of culture protect; there must come a loftier respect for the sovereign human soul that seeks to know itself and the world about it; that seeks a freedom for expansion and self-development; that will love and hate and labor in its own way, untrammled alike by old and new (35).

Therefore, in a point of wholehearted disagreement with Washington's conservatism, Du Bois' discomfort with too much an emphasis on vocational trade is matched by the related danger of lapsing into a purely material culture that levels out individual excellence.

Du Bois' ultimate hope for black America includes ongoing participation in a republic of letters that debates and critiques not just policies, proposals, and social problems but leads society on toward cultural advancement. In these dialectical stages of development, he would certainly endorse the spirit and strategy of Kaepernick (and Bryant) to seek the cultivation of black minds over black bodies as the best hope for systemic change through the critical debate encouraged by his thirty-essay series:

Honest and earnest criticism from those whose interests are most nearly touched,—criticism of writers by readers—,this is the soul of democracy and the safeguard of modern society. If the best of the American Negroes receive by outer pressure a leader whom they had not recognized before, manifestly there is a certain palpable gain. Yet there is also irreparable loss—, a loss of that peculiarly valuable education which a group receives when by search and criticism it finds and commissions its own leaders. The way in which this is done is at once the most elementary and the nicest problem of social growth. History is but the record of such group-leadership; and yet how infinitely changeable is its type and character! And of all types and kinds, what can be more instructive than the leadership of a group within a group?—that curious double movement where real progress may be negative and actual advance be relative retrogression. All this is the social student's inspiration and despair (18).

Insofar as the development of cultural excellence comes collectively and does so through a spirit of healthy competition for conferred entry into ever more rare modes of excellence, Du Bois sees no way around a culture of systemic domination if blacks have no seats at the cultural table. Moreover, since he is adamant to assert that blacks do indeed have a different heritage than whites in America and have one that is equally if not more so rich in its potential avenues of refinement, the rarified instance the culturally elite black that overcomes every hidden and perceived obstacle cannot succeed alone. Nor can they merely co-opt the culture of white Europeans at the loss not only of their own heritage but at a loss for America in general in potentially losing the contributions of one of the rare world-historical races:

Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men? If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic NO. And Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career (19).

Since the American intellectual heritage already boasts a heritage of African influences, even in light of centuries of oppression and overt dismissal by the standard White university canon, Du Bois sees no future for blacks and no future for America as we know it without drawing on the rich springs of its unique African heritage:

He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius (6).

On Du Bois' calculus, no greater honor could be bestowed by an individual or collective race than to have contributed in the co-authorship of the cultural progress of the American spirit as contributor on the world-historical stage of humanity. On the ideal of non-domination, such a cultural context must be enabled structurally through the requisite educational and spiritual institutions for the cultivation of minds and souls.

Work, culture, liberty,—all these we need, not singly but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward the vaster ideal that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give to each those characteristics both so badly lack. We the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer proponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes (8).

As one of the great merits of republican liberty as non-domination, Du Bois envisions a constitutional heritage whereby no one race ought to dictate the cultural, spiritual, moral, and artistic compass of the composite nation. As a last point of emphasis, as an endorsement of Santos's call for greater an end to White North epistemicide upon the global South, every new practical problem that arises has all the greater chance of resolution when regarded from multiple modernities rather than one.

[I]f...there is substantial agreement in laws, language and religion; if there is a satisfactory adjustment of economic life, then there is no reason why, in the same country and on the same street, two or three great national ideals might not thrive

and develop, that men of different races might not strive together for their race ideals as well, perhaps even better, than in isolation. Here, it seems to me, is the reading of the riddle that puzzles so many of us. We are Americans, not only by birth and citizenship, but by our political ideals, our language, our religion.... We are the first fruits of this new nation, the harbinger of that black to-morrow which is yet destined to soften the whiteness of the Teutonic today. We are the people whose subtle sense of song has given America its only American music, its only American fairy tales, its only touch of humor amid its mad money-getting plutocracy. As such, it is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideals; as a race we must strive by race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development (Du Bois 2001, "Conservation of Races," p. 5).

In sum, Du Bois envisions a context of cultural non-domination whereby the aesthetic judgments of what is most good, just, and beautiful are not decided by sheer power or economic might but by the degree to which they foster inherent excellence in the human soul of a nation to be led in new cultural directions with a ready reserve of refined Black elites ready for innovation.

Akin to the need for black marketing influencers well steeped in the history they actively reshape, W.E. B. du Bois and scholars in his mold like Bryant (2018) call for the formation and enculturation of a Heritage that regards the American black intellectual as the best hope for prolonged freedom. On this model, as applied to our current case, the black athlete inherits a mantle of responsibility to study and actively partake in a heritage of freedom as non-domination (Bryant, 2018, pp. 231-232). The rejection of a monoculture of sport history allows black scholars to see the achievements of Ali, Tommie Smith, and John Carlos as harbingers of the epistemic assault made on Kaepernick in the present.

V. End to the Naturalization of Differences:

Garvey's (1887-1940) Black Nationalist Pan-African Empire to Come

Despite some resonance with du Bois's calls for black race solidarity, Garvey indeed was much more radical in more than one sense. He called for nothing less than Negroes to unite in a collective emigration back to Ethiopia/Africa in order to establish a continental superstate/Empire. He was also endorsed capitalism while calling for upper limits on individual and corporate annual incomes (2014, Vol II, p. 72). He sought to establish his own Star Line shipping company as a model for African-owned business enterprise but repeatedly ran into insurmountable fiscal and organizational obstacles. He willingly engaged in discussions with the KKK and even judged them to be the only white group explicitly honest about their collective aims. He was not a citizen of the US, originally hailing from the West Indies. But he gave most of his speeches in New York city, set his home office in the middle of the Harlem Renaissance, and inspired waves of future American movements and sub-movements as much as, and perhaps even more so, than either Washington or Du Bois. Repeatedly, publicly, and regularly he vowed to pursue perilous and radical ends and gladly meet them in failure or death.

In an interesting dialectic that highlights the competitive internal heterodoxy of the history of African American philosophical influence, while Washington was the main target of Du Bois' critical reflections on the potential evils of making a fetish of market consumption and the material life, Du Bois becomes the Uncle Tom target of some characteristically aggressive *ad hominum* critiques from Garvey that mostly rest on Du Bois' purportedly elitist affiliations, his birth into circumstances of great privilege, his educational accolades attributable to outside (white) funding, and his perceived dismissal of the root problems leading to systemic black poverty (2004, p. 115). As such, Garvey claims that he better represents the interests and aims of

black Americans collectively. In contrast, Du Bois' representative role as a leader of the NAACP serves as a symbolic nod toward black assimilation to white culture and complacent acceptance of their permanent standing as economic, moral, and political subordinates. Here, we see in the tension between du Bois and the NAACP and Garvey with the UNIA as a precursor to Allen's critique of CORE and Kaepernick's critique of NFL social justice reform initiatives.

Akin to the evolving sentiments of Kaepernick, Garvey thus regards his leadership of the UNIA as a distinctly black nationalist fraternal organization as the more viable route to the real representation and defense of the common interests of black Americans.

This [the NAACP] is the kind of leadership that the United Negro Improvement Association is about to destroy for the building up of that which is self-sacrificing; the kind of leadership that will not hate the poor people because they are poor, as Du Bois himself tells us he does, but a kind of leadership that will make itself poor and keep itself poor in their desire for general uplift. He hates the poor. Now, what kind of leader is he? Negroes are all poor black folk. They are not rich. They are not white; hence they are despised by the great professor. What do you think about this logic, this reasoning, professor (2004, p. 118)?

On Garvey's black nationalist vision, the mass return to Africa becomes then the locus for the future ascendancy of a black superstate to compete at the global level with other collectively autonomous race empires that he saw rising to ascendancy and impending global dominance near the onset of the 20th century.

Let not our hearts be further troubled over Du Bois, but let fifteen million Negroes of the United States of America and the millions of the West Indies, South and Central America and Africa work together toward the glorious end of an emancipated race and a redeemed motherland. Du Bois cares not for an Empire for Negroes, but contents himself with being a secondary part of white civilization. We of the Universal Negro Improvement Association feel that the greatest service the Negro can render to the world and himself at this time is to make his independent contribution to civilization (2004, p. 119).

In the true historical verdict of temporal hindsight, Garvey may have won the debate. Although du Bois originally endorsed a pluralist American republic of non-domination, in outliving

Garvey, in his last decade, du Bois actually affirmed Garvey's prescient warnings of no hope for a functionally pluralist American republics, spending his last years in Ghana where his grave remains.

VI. Concluding Managerial Implications for the Past, Present, and Future of Marketing:

Of Sports, Race, and African Diaspora De-territorializing the Global South

As with the irony of du Bois claiming Africa as his final home, any historian of the American dynamics between sports and race sees an interesting glitch in the system once things go international. For instance, Bryant regards Robeson—All-American football player, activist, orator, singer, and actor—as an initiator of the Black Heritage of sports activism along the following line of events whereby an international and global audience magnified the domestic effect:

In the Spring of 1949, Paul Robeson, radical, anti-capitalist, Pan-African, gave a speech at the Paris Peace Conference and dropped a bombshell that in many ways would change American history. If the United States were drawn into a war with the Soviet Union, he said, American blacks should not fight. 'Why should the Negroes ever fight against the only nations of the world where racial discrimination is prohibited, and where the people can live freely? Never! I can assure you, they will never fight against the Soviet Union or the peoples' democracies (Bryant 2018, p. 34).

And this internationalist heritage of open support for Black athletes extended more broadly, more deeply, more visibly, and more disruptively through the strategic support and international activism of Dr. Harry Edwards, as Chairman of the O.C.H.R. (Olympic Committee for Human Rights) as Professor of Sociology and Black sport activist at San Jose State College. In his *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969), Edwards offers an insider take on his many disruptions of the national sports industry for the sake of international causes, culminating in the infamous 1968 Mexico City Olympics medal ceremony protest against the American-backed global decision to include apartheid South Africa in the 1968 games:

In a taped interview with Howard Cossell, Smith explained the pair's protest gestures. He stated, 'I wore a black right-hand glove and Carlos wore the lefthand glove of the same pair. My raised right hand stood for the power in black America. Carlos' raised left hand stood for the unity of black America. Together they formed an arch of unity and power. The black scarf around my neck stood for black pride. The black socks with no shoes stood for black poverty in racist America. The totality of our effort was the regaining of black dignity.' Smith later confided in me [Dr. Edwards] that the gesture of the bowed head was in remembrance of the fallen warriors in the black liberation struggle in America—Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others. The impact of the protest was immediate. The U.S. Olympic Committee, acting hastily and rashly, warned all other U.S. athletes, black and white, that 'severe' penalties would follow any further protests. Smith and Carlos were given 48 hours to get out of Mexico and were suspended from the Olympic team (Edwards 1969/2017, p. 86).

In contrast, while on less hospitable American soil, Kaepernick did not initially seek out a public display for his anthem protests, having knelt behind Gatorade coolers behind his team's bench for three games before he was even noticed. Once his actions went viral at that famous Chargers game, his first move was to consult with Edwards for advice. After conversing, both knew the backlash would likely cost Kaepernick his job, but, nonetheless, Kaepernick opted to continue since he, like Edwards, believed something larger than him was at stake (Bryant 2018, pp. 3-6).

For Bryant, the elite journalist of Black sports history for ESPN, this was sufficient to warrant Kaepernick inclusion in the Heritage of black American sports activism among the rare company of Robeson, Edwards, Carlos, Smith, and Ali. All held in common that were willing to stake their careers and public standing for the sake of combatting systemic injustice. Bryant actually finds it unsurprising that these international and Pan-African calls for justice are typically received more favorably to the general audience of the wider global public outside American soil.

Interestingly, three of the greatest landmarks of African American sports history took place outside the United States, a testament to this country's racist response to the emergence of black sports figures: Tom Molineaux fought the boxing

championship in England [1810]; Jack Johnson won the championship in Australia [1906]; and Jackie Robinson integrates baseball in Canada [1946] (Rhoden 2006, p. 119).

In drawing these concluding remarks, it might seem as though we are back again to the opening dualist logic—American home soil versus the more universal romantic cosmopolitanism that international sport invokes. However, we need not retreat once again back into the dualistic shell of lazy metonymic reason.

Consider instead Santos's call for reflexive endogenization whereby pan-African expressions serve as a healthy rebuke upon one's limited neo-colonial national identity. As such, the affirmation of what otherwise might be treated as non-existent extends outward both to the global cosmopolitan human conscience and to the local. This seems best to carry on the spirit of Garvey and Kaepernick's heart for advancing the struggles of Black youth in one's home country and/or Black/African nation(s) of racial identity. As a case in point, we can conclude with an illustration outside the US that extends Santos's hope for affirming nations, races, and persons that White reason otherwise dismisses as non-existent. This concluding illustration I have in mind ought to be taken as a complementary case from Europe, beleaguered with its own struggles over sports and systemic racism, to provide some needed hope for the Kaepernick (and US/North/White) racial reckoning that frankly seems at its darkest hour.

My illustration starts with a question: Who won the most recent 2018 FIFA World Cup hosted in 2018 by Russia? A straightforward sports trivia answer would say France. However, it would also be remiss not to note that 12 of its 19 players were of African ancestry spanning no less than nine African nations. This Dream Team of European football included some of the best young players in the game today such as Kylian Mbappe (Cameroon/Algeria), Paul Pogba (Guinea), Hgolo Kante (Malta), Nabil Fekir (Morocco), Benjamin Mendy (Senegal), and more.

Since race debates in national sport on the other side of the Atlantic are no less divisive than our Kaepernick issue domestically, some commentators and comedians were deemed racist in mocking the French side by claiming that ‘Africa won the World Cup for France.’ While their collective solidarity under one nation is to be commended, it bears mention that I have witnessed firsthand in Italy the commonplace occurrence at many contemporary European soccer matches for fans to make loud monkey noises directed at blacks ‘to distract them’ whenever those claiming African origin on an opposing team hold the ball at their feet.

Akin to the NFL, FIFA has launched its own reform-oriented race consciousness raising efforts to little avail. That alone makes this unprecedented formation of multi-national solidarity all the more impressive. However, when questioning players their rationale for siding with France rather than some smaller nation of origin, the answer is relatively constant across the board: social marketing. Players acknowledge that each alone may have risked remaining in liminal non-existence to the sporting industry had they not openly strategized collectively to build a super team in all playing for France and thus drawing greater international attention to each home nation’s neo-colonial struggles with poverty, warfare, and continued systemic exploitation.

However, with racism as rampant in European sport as in the US, upon bringing their World Cup dream to fruition, the French players of African origin, led by Mbappe their 19-year-old sensation at the time, were quick to toe the line, affirming their French identity and love for France on social media, and praising it as a new melting pot model for Europe and abroad. Nonetheless, how did such a mix of personalities and identities work to form a team in a game where no single duo or trio can dominate? And how did they achieve it in a nation that still harbors a colonial past with its own systemic racism toward persons of color that likewise do not

fit its secular republican mode of laicite? The answer lies with its own French G.O.A.T.— Zinedine Zidane—as their coach and manager. Why did it work? As a concluding lesson, think Washington, du Bois, and Garvey and their differentiated but common calls for instilling Black models of reproducible leadership for fostering black solidarity one relationship at a time. That brings us to Zidane. He was born in Marseilles of Algerian descent but chose to play for France for similar reasons of that boil down to social marketing. Like the players he managed, he chose France as a young player to win a World Cup (1998) which he likely would not have been able to do with Algeria. He chose France in order to make a career beyond mere player to manager (the first ever to win three consecutive Champions League titles with Real Madrid from 2016 to 2018). This choice also allowed him to carry greater social marketing prospects in bringing his own parents, brothers, and sisters out of poverty, and, at the same time, inspire and bring international attention to Algeria and its colonial heritage, *and* still affirm his Arabic *and* African *and* Marseille urban poor identities. Back to the lessons gleaned from Santos, in a White world, playing for Algeria might have led him to be overlooked, and not having risen to the status of best in the game of his time (FIFA World Player of the Year 1998, 2000, 2003). So, again, who won the World Cup in 2018? Zinedine Zidane did for a second time with a full team of cohorts that could understand and appreciate the darker side of their coach’s narrative in likewise overcoming countless obstacles to stardom in a White world and White nation. This he achieved having walked in the shoes of his players, for the world to see, including a growing American audience of aspiring fans, players, and coaches. He nurtured and mentored the Cup’s second youngest team (at average ages of 26), the majority of whom carried a colonial heritage of African roots through a pan-African diaspora that continues to this day. As similar such narratives spread globally, fortunately, the future of sport as viable response to systemic racism

rests beyond the bounds of the United States and outside the metonymic control of the global North, resting squarely in the domain of conscientious social marketing as a means to forge cooperative global networks of black South resistance.

Conclusion

Concluding Reflections on The Birth of the Platform:

Bodies, Big Data, and the Prosumer Marketing Mix

Consider these concluding remarks as a prolonged practical illustration of what the platformization of consumer culture theory might look like. On such a model, we would consider the overall movement from Foucault's vision of a disciplinary society to Deleuze's notion of a society governed by control. In addition, in order to remain within the domain of critical marketing as a subsidiary form of consumer culture theory, we ought to remain optimistic concerning the overall prospects for emancipatory potential, despite the ubiquity of big data.

I. An Opening Case: The Panopticon Comes to a Store Near You

The following narrative account is based on true events.

A consumer went to their local grocery store assuming that their trip would culminate in opting to utilize the services of a store cashier clerk rather than self-checkout. Although the normal practice of this consumer was to check out by store clerk, on this occasion to the local store, the consumer had completed their shopping only to find that their sole option was self-checkout.

Upon proceeding to self-checkout, albeit reluctantly, the consumer was also to find a camera with a visible two-dimensional screen recording their face as they checked out their various purchases. Let us also note that the camera was fixated on the consumer's face such that it produced images that could allow any other viewer of that image to make relatively reliable judgments as pertains to race, gender, age, and/or height. Let us allow just the possibility that the camera and its various technologies might include abilities to approximate

threedimensional images pertaining to body weight, breathes per minute, and/or trace eye movements so as to glean insights concerning consumer sentiments.

Lastly, let us assume that the camera images at the checkout could produce a set of temporal four-dimensional visual streams that likely include timing mechanisms set internal to the apparatus. Given the likelihood of temporal record keeping, as is normal when the conventional cashier produces a receipt, such a data trail might conceivably lend insight into deeper historical context through images of the consumer's clothing, a record of whether or not the consumer was wearing a mask, or a possible mechanism internal to the camera that allowed it to match that consumer's image with future (or past) purchases. We might also surmise that the institutions making possible the aforementioned circumstances did so as an intentional nudge to habituate consumers into familiarity with self-checkout. While the motives might vary, nudges toward selfcheckout via camera surveillance might make it easier for that commercial institution to engage in digital triangulation a data trail of purchase habits, tied to a particular debit card, frequency over time, detect patterns from these institutionalized imaging, and perhaps even pursue cooperative endeavors with local law enforcement regimes.

Welcome to the world of big data.

II. The Panopticon Meets the Birth of the Platform

In such an age of big data marketing as having initiated the age of surveillance capitalism (Darmody and Zwick, 2020), the embodied movements, emotions, personal history, and

interactions with others amount to a corporeal tracking of the species. Such trends have been captured most eloquently by Emerita professor at the Harvard Business School, Dr. Shoshana Zuboff in her 2019 *New York Times* Book of the Year: *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the Frontier of Power*. She notes that the alarming trend of American GAFAs platforms colonizing both earth and space not only situates these marketing regimes as global information gatekeepers but also leads their competitors little choice but to compete by engaging in like-minded surveillance practices (as laid out in the self-checkout via camera above). Perhaps more troubling, this places big data aggregators squarely at the front of the supply chain of the flow of ideas with powerful enabling and blocking powers. As epistemic reservoirs of near limitless data, they have taken on the dubious status as paragons of a new gilded age and via their comprehensive ecosystems—the closest approximation to public utilities that computational capitalism could allow. At both national and global tipping points, species-wide platform strategies of willful consumer exploitation require developing a matching strategy of critically emancipatory defiance.

Returning to the ethical perspective long missing, we ought then to take it as a moral norm never to involve persons' embodied data trails in marketing schemes that, if fully disclosed, they could not reasonable accept (as evidenced in the opening scenario where the non-usage of self-checkout was not an option). This also ought to include as a subsidiary norm that even if some data tracking proves technologically possible, there are many such forms that cannot be warranted as a legitimate exchange. What I recommend is first to describe the phenomenon by developing what I term the big data marketing mix. Then, I would like to advance a prescriptive corrective from the stance of the reflectively defiant prosumer. I develop the latter in the spirit of Murray and Ozanne's original reflectively defiant consumer (1995),

particularly by focusing upon prosumer exploitation as contrary to the rational consent of all affected stakeholders (Cova and Dali, 2009, pp. 326-27).

In order to make the case for such an argument, I would like to amend the Habermas/Murray/Ozanne emancipatory dimension with the Foucault/Thompson call for an archeology of big data marketing assemblages (Thompson 2019, pp. 222-23). This takes its cue from Thompson in terms of what he depicts tongue and cheek as the AMA framework: the analytics of marketing assemblages (222). As a very broad overview of my attempt to construct a big data assemblage from some disparate knowledge hierarchies, I propose a Askegaard/Linnetinformed loosely constructed prosumer phenomenology of the context of context. Such a dialectical assimilation of the classical marketing mix as thesis, with the consumer mix as antithesis, thus results in the reflectively defiant prosumer/big data marketing mix as synthesis.

Moreover, while we will trace the genealogy of the prosumer mix from its explicitly American genesis in its academic form with Toffler and its industry form at the onset of the free service platform, the emancipatory dimensions of the project extend as far as the current and future scope of the information age and its now hegemonic platforms. Therefore, insofar as big tech modes of marketing socialization extend species-wide, we also ought to concede that a flexible mix of such complex assemblages will invariably take on an array of local, regional, national, and international forms. What might on the face of it seem a disgruntled attack on the American Marketing Association (AMA) in its industrial and academic forms by a marginalized bunch of surly critical marketers, I argue, could actually amount to its best hope at some semblance of a saving grace. The extension of its principles in a species-encompassing manner ought finally to break its myopic hold on the individual consumer and its uniquely Western

proclivity to pursue species-wide data optimization (as computational surveillance capitalism) in the absence of deeper reflection on the social, moral, and political collateral damage (Thompson, Arnould, and Giessler, 2013). In other words, since it might serve critical marketing well to embrace a widening scope of heteroglossia, we also ought to employ inter-disciplinary polyglots as our best allies.

III. Directions for Future Research on Medicine, Data Mining, and the Politics of the Body:

The Birth of the Clinic as the Birth of the Platform

Here we take heed to Askegaard and Linnet's petition for more critical marketing to elide the trap of falling back into a critical take on the consumer as a subjective ego (2011). What they termed the context of context connotes a call for a return to critical marketing as an emancipatory science that regards consumer behaviors and trendy marketing strategies as deeply phenomenological in terms of their systemic, social, and species contexts. Similarly, I take this project to fall within the associated rubric of Thompson's efforts to enunciate a Foucauldian methodology he terms the analysis of market assemblages (or, AMA). For Thompson, the clever spin on AMA (American Marketing Association) critiques its newest context of context. With its proclivities to view the onset of the age of big data as a way to capture the new digitalized consumer as dividual (Cluley and Brown 2015, p. 111), the wider context solidifies this newly myopic tendency in academic industries to reframe marketing science along lines of data optimization as systemic computational capitalism.

In the spirit then of both Askegaard and Linnet's call for renewed macro approaches to critical marketing and Thompson's call for viewing the myth of big data along lines of the early Frankfurt critiques of the myth of the Enlightenment, Foucault's birth of the clinic offers a fitting context of context for the critical analysis of market assemblages. Similar attempts have been

made in marketing literature to tie Foucault's analysis of prison to the consumer as object (Humphreys 2006), consumer acts of co-creation as akin to Foucault's notions of governmentality (Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008, pp. 175-177), descriptions of the myths of big data as reshaping what is taken as legitimate science (Thompson 2019), and even associated trends in behavioral economics as reinforcing elements of Foucault's critiques of neo-liberal capitalism (McMahon 2015).

While the clinic established the gaze as the necessary condition of the birth of the individual subject as an object, the platform promises individual personalization as the cost of consumer behaviors as object of datum. The clinic also gave rise to the open market as a special non-reciprocal contract between physician and patient, renewed in the age of big data in the trade of a platform free service for the generation of legions of unpaid data producers (Zwick and Bradshaw, 2016). Clinics give rise to data gathered in an individual patient's file; platforms give rise to untold troves of data exhaust (for instance, assembled by FB into any of 14,000 distinct categories and by Google's algorithmic feats nearing of a trillion categories). Lastly, as clinical discourse legitimized the hermeneutic limits of signification in medical science, platforms now welcome marketing departments, business schools, and even the university as itself a legitimizing industry into the newest extension of an uncritical acceptance of data capitalism as the implied context for legitimate marketing science.

Thus, what I will fittingly term the birth of the platform serves more as a critical experiment with some (troubling) parallel themes, than an explicit exegesis of Foucault's complex works. As such, I would like to explore structural symmetries between the birth of the clinic in medical science with the similar phenomenon in marketing science, particularly by exploring the effects upon the consumer and the modes of socialization they undergo as platform

subjects. Against the grain of marketing praxis and business school norms, we ought to assess critically the celebration of big data in line with the consumer (and thus their data) as the platform's most lucrative product. Essential to such an undertaking would be to draw most directly from Foucault's comprehensive analysis of spaces in light of the academic and industry modes of clinical method as initiating a new politics of the body and the spaces it inhabits.

Fitting for our purposes, in his *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault opens his 'Preface' announcing the work will be about spaces. As he provides a reconstruction of medical science as a practice in France from the mid-17th to late 18th century, he uses three notions of space. The first refers to the early clinical teaching of student by use of two-dimensional pictures and images in order to construct tables and lineages of disease under the rubric of nosology. The second entails the advent of the clinic as a three-dimensional investigation of bodies. This sensory marriage of sight, touch, and sound render bodies subject to the probing dissection of corpses as prep for clinical surgery upon the sick. Enculturation into this 3-D gaze teaches the praxis of seeing body ailments as tied to a spatial geography of organs, tissues, lesions, and bodily localization. The third conception accentuates the onset of a politics of the body by moving into the institutional space of the clinic as interface between medical science and the overall health of the entire French nation. We might even call this third sense of space four-dimensional insofar Foucault connects the advent of the clinic to the historical/temporal context of revolutionary France. In this last of three forms of spatialization, on the one hand, France sought to rid itself of aristocratic universities (and their limited applications derived from memorizing pictures and complex tables stemming from nosology). On the other hand, the new egalitarian thrust of the nation took the donor-driven sick houses of the impoverished as equally problematic with their marginalization of the diseased. Along with this extension of the political

to mesh with the corporeal came the more widescale health of the republic through the high potential for sick houses spreading communicable diseases throughout the populace.

In schematic application of Foucault's anatomical-clinical science to the new framing of space in digitalized marketing science, I would like to return to our initial example of the camera gaze watching over the docile consumer body. I follow the general spirit of Foucault and generate a loose archeology of the American platform as imaginative corollary to the French clinic. Let us call this the *Birth of the Platform*. In juxtaposition to the French clinic as pertains to the advent of medical science, I would like to explore the advent of the big tech platform as it ties to the currently evolving state of the business sciences—particularly marketing as taught and practiced in the United States.

Akin to Foucault's two-dimensional spaces, we had the pictorial images of the TV screen and print media as the advent of American promotional marketing. In the digital realms, these have morphed technologically to the home computer, handheld phone, in-home digital voice assistants, and a wide array of screened devices constituting the Internet of Things. For our purposes, this would also include any and all of the images produced by self-checkout lines at one's local grocer. Note too, we can add the layer of the camera recording of the body to a disciplining of the working consumer as prosumer. Not only can the consumer see the two-dimensional image of their face as they checkout the items, as an obvious loss prevention measure, but they are doing the embodied work of a laborer they have displaced.

Moreover, as marketing parries to adapt to the information age, as an academic science and industry praxis, we have grossly overlooked the three-dimensional spaces by which big tech platforms (like the early French clinics) have redefined how marketers and consumers view, treat, and direct their visual gaze upon bodies to include its own array of auditory and tactile

supplements. In a return to our self-checkout examples, the camera induced image is accompanied by the beeping scanner that thus warrants as legitimate scan and further confirmed on one's primary screen: something akin to a running receipt of purchase items. Pairing the objects purchased list, to the camera, to the auditory beeping, also shapes the consumer body into tactile movements that direct their gaze to search items transformed momentarily from edible and consumable items to a trancelike gaze directed upon barcodes.

Lastly, as we move to the institutionalized politics of the body with its varied social practices and schema, we are at the interface of Askegaard and Linnet's the context of context and Thompson's wider analytics of marketing assemblages. With the ubiquity and growth of the big tech platform, we must reflect further on the historical and temporal domains Foucault's classification of his third conception of space. As big data extends the limits of the Internet of Things beyond the terrestrial to celestial movement-tracking orbits, the four-dimensional qualities of this expanding multiperspectical and perpetual gaze shape how the contemporary politics of the body expands within and outside the cultural forms of marketing's traditional societal footprint. Akin to the spread of the practices of the French clinic that drove norms for international and global practices of clinical medicine (for better and for worse), the American big tech firm was the first to repurpose governing institutions, practices, and surveillance mechanisms through its civilianization of otherwise military technologies. Along Foucault's extension of space as body politics, a learned indoctrination of relative complacency that had begun in the US, with its elite universities, Silicon Valley heritage, deregulatory market culture, and acceptance of big data firms as the new apostles of culture (Striphas 2015, p. 407), they now extend globally with data enough to comprise a new social science of the species (Pentland 2014). Moreover, GAFA firms (especially Facebook and Apple) prey upon liminal promises of

re-enchantment, social belonging, and romanticized ideals of communality as siren lures for platform recruitment (Botez, Hietanen, and Tikkanen, 2020). With the false promise of platform communality as psychic remedy to the individualizing effects of modernized consumer as individual, the consumer left unsatiated turns to exacerbated cultural cycles of melancholia (Waickstrom, Denny, and Hietanen, 2020).

As we return one last time to the self-checkout example, the politics of the body were the driving source behind the true rendition of the opening account. In short, the particular local grocer mentioned was a pilot location, unbeknownst to the docile consumer for COVID-19 induced social distancing. So, traditional cashier checkout was really not an option for any consumer (Deleuze 1995; pp. 177-182). Each of the checkout aisles were replaced by self-scan checkouts with a few of the former cashiers dispersed as aids to their newly initiated replacements. Other cashiers were repurposed as greeters that encouraged mask wearing with signs but conceded no real powers of actionable enforcement for non-compliance so as to avoid triggering offended consumers from now frequent outbursts of obscenity, sit-down viral mini-protests that repulse onlookers, and the shifting march of the politicization of bodies from disciplinary societies to control societies (Hietanen, Andehn, and Wickstrom 2020; Deleuze 1995). Consider too from the 4-D stance that this particular grocer is a national and international chain. So, in short, the narrative described above also has documented footage of mask compliance per consumer, that can be triangulated with zip code data on one's debit card, racial profile, gender, age, overall consumption patterns, and even satellite geo-location if one opts to utilize the helpful in-store app that aids the consumer in finding products. Lastly, it is no secret that such data-based location tracking also aids stores in planning store layouts that yield bundle

purchases, maximal overall consumer sales, and even bidding among suppliers for data-proven high traffic eye level product placement, display, and allotted shelving space.

In summation, what are marketing scholars and practitioners to make of this? While in its nascent forms, much more work needs to be done in exploring what Foucault hinted at and Deleuze developed further: the transition from disciplinary societies with their models drawn from modes of industrial production to control societies with their models drawn from the advent of societies governed increasingly by digital code. Consider the prescient reflections from Deleuze in his 'Postscript on Control Societies' as both a final point of departure and a launching point for future innovative marketing research and practice in the domain of digital marketing ethics (Hietanen and Andehn, 2018). The relevance to this immediate project would be the marked transition from disciplinary societies to control societies as accentuated by new GAFA regimes of surveillance capitalism. Note especially the crucial shifts Deleuze notes in markets logics and the centrality of marketing he foresees at the advent of control-oriented societies:

Markets are won by taking control rather than establishing a discipline, by fixing rates rather than reducing costs, by transforming products rather than by specializing production. Corruption here takes on a new power. The sales department becomes a business' center or "soul." We're told businesses have souls, which is surely the most terrifying news in the world. Marketing is now the instrument of social control and produces the arrogant breed who are masters. Control is short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded, whereas discipline was long-term, infinite, and discontinuous. A man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt (Deleuze 1995, p. 181).

While these final reflections undoubtedly have a bleak tone that might seem cause for resignation, what Deleuze saw in the early 1990s only seems to have come to fuller fruition today with the full-blown global dispersal of surveillance capitalism in its distinctively American heritage. Absent of granting consumers access to companies' full databases, the individual can no longer willfully maintain control over their digital representations, even with the most

creative information externalization strategies (Zwick and Dholakia, 2004). This brings us back to our general moral norm whereby the critically defiant consumer as university professor and practicing marketer ought never to involve persons in a scheme of action, whereby if all details were fully disclosed, they could not reasonably consent. With Deleuze placing marketing squarely at the center of social, political, and moral power, what ought our response be when feigning naivete is no longer an option? The stakes are high and the stakeholders are of species magnitude. While critical marketing might still fare best at the fringes of a discipline controlled by relatively uncritical statistical modeling and an enthusiastic embrace of the prospects of digital marketing, business ethics can no longer take the easy route of mere utility maximization. After all, that model rendered social only approaches legitimacy when utility brings about the greatest good for the greatest number. One the converse model driven by the full disclosure of data surveillance practices and requires the rational assent of stakeholders immediately affected, marketing ethics in its broadest sense of including juridical compliance, might be the last best hope of regaining some semblance of democratic autonomy (Faraj, Pachidi, and Sayegh, 2018). In other words, the democratization of GAFAM from within, via consumer-driven social movements, has now become inseparable from all politics—that of the body (Featherstone 2010), the home (Brill, Miller, and Munoz, 2019), community (Lambert 2019), nation-state (Pasquinelli 2014), and region (Yeung 2017). Lastly, if Deleuze is right that surveillance control societies are indeed continuous and unbounded, the future of success in the domain of data ethics requires a marketing ethics of the species (Zwitter 2014).

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