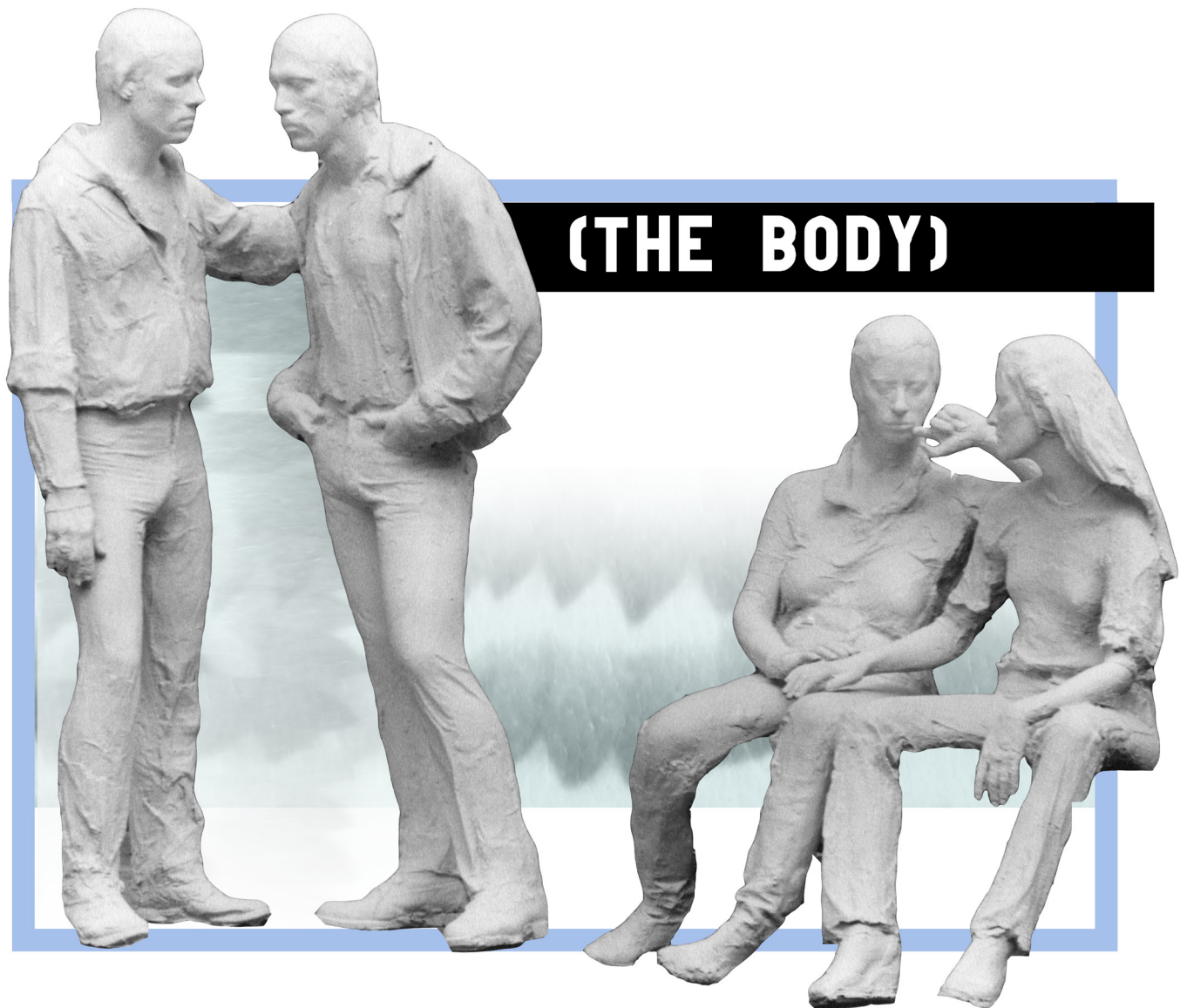


# CONTEXTS

STANFORD UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL IN ANTHROPOLOGY



SPRING 2016

About the cover: George Segal's "Gay Liberation," a sculpture on Stanford's Main Quad commemorating the 1969 Stonewall Riots. This artwork elicits important questions related to the texts in this issue about how individual bodies in the social body interact, what bodies are made visible, and how and why certain bodies are pathologized and marginalized.

# CONTEXTS

STANFORD UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL IN ANTHROPOLOGY

SPRING 2016

Contexts is a peer reviewed journal designed to allow Stanford undergraduates to share, discuss, and reflect on anthropology-informed thought and research. For questions, comments, or to get involved please visit [contexts.stanford.edu](http://contexts.stanford.edu) or email [Stanford.contexts@gmail.com](mailto:Stanford.contexts@gmail.com)

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SPECIAL THANKS TO YASEMIN IPEK CAN , ANAHID SARKISSIAN, MIYAKO INOUE,  
EMILY BISHOP & THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

# letter from the editors

We are proud to present the Spring 2016 Edition of *Contexts*, Stanford's undergraduate anthropology research journal. Anthropology has been an important part of each of our intellectual journeys, and we have enjoyed seeing how anthropological thought can be found in diverse disciplines throughout the university.

The articles in this issue draw on both the individual and the social body as important sites of analysis and lived experience. For this reason, we have named this issue "The Body in Context," and we encourage our readers to consider these pieces as a conversation that puts the overarching themes of technology, capitalism, and aesthetics and their relations to the body in dialogue. With these three fields in mind, we hope that this issue might spark deeper thought about the multiplicity of material and virtual bodies that inhabit modern society--how the body is constantly changing, being deconstructed, and being made anew.

While none of these pieces can be reduced to a single field, we would like to offer a map that might help readers locate the pieces within the overlapping themes of technology, capitalism, and aesthetics. Between technology and capitalism, one might find Margaret Tomaszczuk's article about GiveDirectly, which critiques the relationship between digital communications and neocolonial rhetoric in the field of aid. Marisa Messina's article tracks the transformation of the U.S.'s working society from an industrial community to a community-starved society of knowledge workers.

Moving toward aesthetics and the politics of the racialized body, Maarya Abbasi's article explores how race and gender were involved in the historical production and representation of schizophrenic bodies leading up to the Civil Rights Era. Leading to the neoconservative reaction to that era, "The Crack Mother: An Enduring Social Construct with Political Usefulness" by Vy Le explores another way in which the black body has been pathologized.

Renjie Wong's piece deals with aesthetics and capitalism in relation to the body through the physical body of the artisan. He considers how Neapolitan tailors' senses of identity are crafted through the artisanal process, and alludes to local connections to global capital. Finally, Kimberly Krebs proposes an aesthetic and cultural critique of film, engaging the virtual body as an integral component of capitalism at the U.S. border.

We hope you enjoy these pieces and appreciate the difficult questions that they pose. We offer our deepest gratitude to these authors and to the Anthropology Department for all the collaboration that went into this issue. Perhaps some of you will pursue these and other questions further, in Stanford's Anthropology Department or elsewhere.

Best wishes,

Kimberly Krebs (2016)  
Meredith Pelrine (2016)  
Kamina Wilkerson (2018)  
Trent Woodward (2016)

# givedirectly: information technology and ICT4D rhetoric in the western aid process

by margaret tomaszczuk

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“To a veteran aid worker, the idea of putting cold, hard cash into the hands of the poorest people on Earth doesn’t sound crazy, it sounds really satisfying”  
- Joy Sun, COO-Domestic at GiveDirectly (Quoted from TED NYC)

Founded in 2008 by a group of graduate students studying economics at Harvard and MIT, the NGO GiveDirectly promises to do just that, to give donations directly to the world’s poorest people. Listed in charity evaluator GiveWell’s top three charities of 2013 and the topic of a recent TED Talk, an interview on NPR’s *This American Life*, and countless news articles, GiveDirectly is a young charity that is quickly capturing the attention—and the money—of the American public.

GiveDirectly transfers donated funds to the poor in Uganda and Kenya via mobile money platform. This process is outlined on the organization’s website in four simple steps: people donate, poor households are located in Kenya and Uganda, donations are transferred electronically to a recipient’s cell phone, and the recipient “uses the transfer to pursue his or her own goals” (“GiveDirectly”). On the ground, a recipient receives an SMS message on their mobile phone when funds are transferred, travels to the nearest mobile money agent, and cashes out. The backbone of this strategy is that the money travels directly from the donor’s wallet to the poor with minimal waste in administrative cost: about 93 cents from every dollar that is donated go directly to recipients (Starr and Hattendorf).

All aspects of GiveDirectly’s process, leading up to the recipient’s cash out, are mired in the use of digital technology. From the donation process, to recipient selection, to the moment of transfer, the functionality of GiveDirectly’s system is dependent upon these technologies, and recipients are required to make use of them in order to participate. In this paper, I attempt to analyze GiveDirectly’s use of digital technologies in terms of its process and organizational goals. First, I mean to describe

the manner in which these technologies have shaped GiveDirectly’s practices. Engaging with Actor-Network Theory, I demonstrate how the new technologies utilized by Give Directly actively intervene in the organization’s giving practices, with their physical characteristics determining certain program specifications.

I also conduct an analysis of GiveDirectly’s portrayal of new technologies in press interactions and promotional materials. I examine the manner in which ideas about new technologies have informed the organization’s media practices, and how these practices in turn affect donors and monetary recipients. I find that GiveDirectly’s media materials use language closely resembling those of ICT4D discourses. Given the amount of press that GiveDirectly has been receiving along with a recent surge in funding<sup>1</sup>, these sentiments seem to be successfully appealing to the Western aid community. Analyzing this behavior, I mean to suggest that the Western aid community has some belief in the modernizing power of digital technologies, and perhaps even in Modernization Theory itself.

## **ICT4D: information and communication technologies for development**

The term ICT4D (information and communication technologies for development) describes information and communication technologies projects promising to promote development in nations of the Global South. Gaining popularity during the technology boom of the 1990s, these projects promised to solve world pov-

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<sup>1</sup> GiveDirectly received a \$25 million grant from bay area based philanthropic foundation Good Ventures on August 3, 2015 (“About Us | Good Ventures”).

erty by bridging the gap between the world's digital "haves" and "have-nots" ("Behind the Digital Divide"). During this time period, many ICT4D projects were instituted in nations of the Global South, each attempting to enhance development through use of computers, mobile phones, and digital media.

In recent years, the term has "fallen out of favor" as many criticize these plans for distracting from the realities faced by the world's poorest people ("Behind the Digital Divide"). Bill Gates himself has been notably critical of them for this reason, saying, "Even if it were possible to wave a magic wand and cause a computer to appear in every household on earth, it would not achieve very much: a computer is not useful if you have no food and electricity and cannot read" (quoted in Ginsburg 293). Scholars have also criticized the tendency of ICT4D narratives to shift towards a Modernization Theory-like discourse. By promoting the idea that the technologically "wired" are developmentally superior to the "unwired," ICT4D narratives buy into the concept of the "digital divide" and assume that the "unwired" are waiting anxiously to catch-up to the digital West (Ginsberg, Wilson).

Along these lines, many supporters of ICT4D projects claim that they enable developing nations to "leapfrog" stages of development towards a more industrialized, knowledge-based economy (Kleine and Unwin 1048). This type of narrative promotes the Modernization Theory idea that there is one linear path along which economies can develop, an idea that is problematic in that it fails to account for the cultural and infrastructural differences that make development a fluid, rather than linear process. More importantly, the modernity to which nations of the Global South are compared and ascribed "developing" status is a decidedly Western one. If a nation of the Global South is recognized as having any degree of modernity, it is "as an outsider that requires translation, mutation, catch-up" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2). Addressing the apparent inadequacy of this idea, anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff discuss the possibility that multiple "modernities" might exist independent of, or in parallel to, the single modernity traditionally associated with the West and that these modernities have their own trajectories (Comaroff and Comaroff 8).

ICT4D projects are often evaluated in terms of their meeting specific developmental goals. For example, The Economist frames the

evaluation of ICT4D projects in terms of efficacy: "The real issue is not whether investing in ICTs can help development... but whether the overall benefits of doing so outweigh those of investing in, say, education or health" ("Behind the Digital Divide"). GiveDirectly adopts a similar rhetoric in defense of its program, questioning whether more complicated, higher-cost aid programs are more beneficial to aid recipients than giving them cash directly ("GiveDirectly"). In his analysis of ICT4D programs in India, anthropologist William Mazzarella criticizes this manner of evaluation. He believes that evaluating projects by their monetary efficiency is insufficient in that it fails to take into account more complicated outcomes of ICT4D projects, such as the social impact of "technological charisma" (Mazzarella 2006, 2010). But it appears that GiveDirectly is adopting a straightforward ICT4D strategy to aid, both in practices and evaluation. Not only does the organization recognize digital technologies as pivotal in its solution to poverty, it also evaluates the success of its aid in terms of its quantifiable outcomes.

#### **a case of unconditional cash transfer**

GiveDirectly is unique from other aid organizations in that it practices a policy of unconditional cash transfers. Unconditional transfers pass funds directly from the organization to selected individuals, without the expectation that these individuals will use this money in any preordained way. This practice can be seen as a counterpoint to better-studied conditional monetary transfer programs practiced by aid organizations in nations of the Global South. Conditional cash transfer programs provide money to families or individuals on the condition that they use the money in a certain way or utilize social services, such as sending children to school (Rawlings). In some cases these programs have been shown to be both socially and economically impactful. There is evidence that Colombian, Mexican, and Nicaraguan programs have promoted human capital accumulation and increased school enrollment rates (Rawlings 51). However, high administrative costs are incurred in the process, and it is not clear whether the conditional aspects of these transfers have affected their economic impact (United Kingdom).

On the GiveDirectly website, the organization lists three reasons why it opts for an approach of unconditional cash transfer. One reason is that it avoids the costly monitoring

structures required by conditional transfers. Second is that recipients are able to purchase what is most beneficial to them. Last, and most emphatically stressed, is the idea that unconditional transfers “empower” the poor to make their own monetary decisions (“GiveDirectly”). From the outset, this message of empowering the poor through the GiveDirectly aid process resembles ICT4D messages of empowerment through technology. The similarity becomes all the more striking given that GiveDirectly’s aid program is facilitated by the use of digital technologies.

Although GiveDirectly’s justification of unconditional transfers does not explicitly discuss digital technologies, it does shadow the qualities of technology that are imagined to be beneficial to the poor in familiar ICT4D discourses, such as efficiency, transparency, and empowerment. In his discussion of e-governance in India, Mazzarella analyzes the way notions about digital technologies can influence organizational practices. Touting the power of computing to bring about more open and efficient administration, e-governance discourses in India promised to solve the practical problems of government, but also influenced the government to behave in a way that was consistent with new consumer ideals of the nation (Mazzarella 2006 481). Not only does GiveDirectly’s use of digital technologies promise to promote efficiency and transparency, as it does in e-governance narratives, the organization also behaves in a manner consistent with the technology-minded beliefs of Western consumers. By yielding agency to digital technologies in its recipient selection and transfer processes, GiveDirectly reinforces the idea that the technologically connected have a better chance at economic success.

### **new technologies and the GiveDirectly transfer and selection process**

Actor-Network Theory, from the perspective of anthropologist Michel Callon, argues that both human and non-human entities serve as economic and sociological “actors.” All of these actors are variables that can be manipulated to suit certain strategic goals (Callon, Méadel, and Rabeharisoa 200). With this perspective in mind, an examination of GiveDirectly’s transfer and candidate selection processes reveals that digital technologies are actually “actors” in GiveDirectly’s processes. On numerous occasions GiveDirectly defers to the physical qualities of these technologies in order to justify project goals and processes.

GiveDirectly utilizes popular mobile money platforms in Kenya and Uganda in order to make their money transfers. In Kenya, GiveDirectly makes monetary transfers through Safaricom’s mobile money platform M-Pesa, an extremely common platform in a nation in which financial services are of limited access to many individuals. Originally designed for simple cash transfers, the platform is now commonly used as a pseudo-bank account in which many individuals permanently store their money, withdrawing money and making purchases as they like (Maurer 589-604).

Similarly, in Uganda GiveDirectly makes transfers through MTN’s Mobile Money system and the mobile money platform EzeeMoney. These two platforms appear to be less entrenched in Uganda than M-Pesa is in Kenya, and GiveWell’s review of the platforms states that they are not very robust (“GiveDirectly I GiveWell”). However, MTN at least appears eager to latch onto M-Pesa’s success in serving individuals for whom financial services are prohibitively expensive. The company’s website touts virtual banking as “bridging the gap to the unbanked” and goes on to describe the range of financial activities for which MTN Mobile Money can be used, from paying one’s utility bill to managing one’s mobile money account (“MTN Mobile Money”). These sentiments clearly express ICT4D attitudes, portraying new technologies as the tool with which the poor can join the world’s banking population. Although GiveDirectly’s choice to use these platforms does not necessarily reflect its belief in this narrative, it is clear that local access to these platforms plays a role in regional selection processes.

In describing their regional selection process, the GiveDirectly website states, “We select regions with high poverty rates using government data,” and, “We select the poorest villages in these regions using data collected locally and satellite imagery” (“GiveDirectly”). GiveWell’s review of the candidate selection process provides a more nuanced view of this process. In selecting countries in which to work, GiveDirectly explicitly tells GiveWell that it chose to work in Kenya due to the robustness of the M-Pesa mobile banking platform and the large population that has access to mobile technology. The organization also considered the availability of mobile money platforms in expanding to its second country of operation, Uganda (“GiveDirectly I GiveWell”).

GiveDirectly is even more explicit about the determining role of mobile technology in its

village selection process. GiveDirectly selects impoverished villages within its countries of operation based on several criteria, including government-provided poverty data, but also the quality of mobile technology infrastructure. The GiveWell website reports that GiveDirectly sends field staff to test cell phone reception and measure proximity to market centers before making village selections (“GiveDirectly | GiveWell”). By selecting countries and villages in which the access to mobile phone and mobile banking technologies meets a certain bar of quality, GiveDirectly allows the material limitations of these technologies to determine the groups of individuals who are eligible to receive aid. If GiveDirectly were to change its transfer policy by sending money transfers via Western Union instead of mobile money platforms, for example, we might infer that the villages and individuals serviced might change as well.

The problematic outcome of this process is that GiveDirectly’s recipient pool is limited to individuals who live in regions that meet a certain level of technological development. GiveDirectly is objectively not transferring money to “the poorest people on Earth” as COO Joy Sun claims in her TED talk about the organization, but the poorest people on Earth who also have access to mobile money platforms. This limited investment strategy not only promotes the ICT4D ideal that technological use is key in the process towards economic development, but also reinforces the idea that the economic potential of technological “haves” is higher than that of “have-nots”.

### **GiveDirectly in the press and promotional materials**

On the organization’s website, GiveDirectly defends its aid transfer process with many of the same arguments as ICT4D projects. GiveDirectly describes the power of technology to enhance the efficiency of the aid process, touting the speed with which aid recipients are able to access their funds from mobile money agents (a speed I infer to be tied to the organization’s regional selection policies). The GiveDirectly website reports “key stats” via a live data tracker, currently showing that the average Kenyan recipient is able to access their transferred funds from a mobile money agent in a mere 37 minutes (“GiveDirectly: Send Money Directly to the Extreme Poor”). The “live” quality of this data not only serves to underline GiveDirectly’s technology use by harnessing the immediacy of digital technologies but also invites the pub-

lic to scrutinize and question GiveDirectly’s activities in order to lend credibility to its practices (Brennan 52). Digital technologies are also shown to be important in verifying candidates. The GiveDirectly team confirms the identity of eligible recipients<sup>2</sup> using GPS coordinates and satellite imagery before funds are transferred.

GiveDirectly most emphatically stresses the economic efficiency of its aid process. Information listed under the website’s “Efficiency” tab reports that 91 percent of donated dollars go directly to recipients in Kenya and 85 percent in Uganda. These high numbers are used to challenge the policies of other aid organizations, and GiveDirectly argues that its approach “contrasts with the accounting norms in the nonprofit sector, which are not helpful to donors” (“GiveDirectly: Send Money Directly to the Extreme Poor”). This final statement at once criticizes organizations that deviate from GiveDirectly’s practices and persuades donors that choosing to donate to GiveDirectly will be the most efficient use of their capital.

ICT4D narratives also appear in the rhetoric of GiveDirectly’s staff. In her TED talk, COO Joy Sun compares GiveDirectly’s use of digital technologies to the economic integration of digital technologies in the West, saying, “Like the technologies that are disrupting industries in our own lives, payments technology in poor countries could disrupt aid” (Sun). Sun’s suggestion that new technologies might have the power to “disrupt” aid processes reflects an ICT4D belief that new technologies have the power to intervene in economic systems in general. In addition, Sun implicitly distances herself and her own circumstances from those of aid recipients, contrasting “our own”—presumably Western—lives to those of individuals in poor countries. This dichotomy is reinforced in Sun’s description of GiveDirectly’s aid process. In one excerpt, she says, “We show up at your door with an android phone...take your photo and a photo of your hut and grab the GPS coordinates” (Sun). Even in this excerpt, a dichotomy between the digital technologies used by GiveDirectly staff and the real-life situation of an aid recipient is tangible. Sun describes the mobile phones used by GiveDirectly’s staff as

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2 The poorest members in the village communities that GiveDirectly operates in are classified as those that live in mud and thatch houses (“GiveDirectly | GiveWell”).

“android” and refers to the recipient’s home as a “hut,” a statement that at once serves to promote GiveDirectly’s use of cutting-edge technologies while being subtly dismissive of the realities of recipients’ living situations. Either consciously or subconsciously, these sentiments distance the GiveDirectly recipient from the organization and its Western donors, reinforcing the idea that the impoverished of the Global South need economic assistance from the West.

This rhetoric of imbalance is not isolated to GiveDirectly’s promotional materials; it also appears in independent journalism about the organization. In a story on NPR’s *This American Life*, several interviews are conducted with the GiveDirectly founders and aid recipients. The tone of these interviews tends to echo that of GiveDirectly’s promotional materials, suggesting that the organization’s methodology can serve a revolutionary role in recipient lives and also the philanthropic sector. A particularly telling example surfaces in an interview with aid recipient Daniel Otieno Ombock, who purchases a mattress to replace the floor mat he had been sleeping on. In his interview with NPR, he reacts to his change in circumstances, saying, “Now I look like a human being. I’m now human being” (“I Was Just Trying To Help | This American Life”). In this statement, Ombock equates his pre-mattress self with something less than human, a self that only joins the human race upon acquiring a consumer item that is ubiquitous in Western lives. The fact that Ombock believes this rhetoric himself is problematic, but its inclusion in the program can only serve to influence the beliefs of listeners that the Global South can only catch up to a Western modernity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2).

In the same program, narrator David Kestenbaum also interviews one of the founders of GiveDirectly, who describe the organization’s research and data-driven model. Kestenbaum analyzes the effect that this model and GiveDirectly’s rising popularity are having on the Western aid community, saying, “[T]here does seem to be this shift that’s happening ... a shift toward data. Philanthropy is getting nerdier” (“I Was Just Trying To Help | This American Life”). Kestenbaum nearly echoes Sun’s assessment that technologies have the power to disrupt aid. Like the belief of ICT4D projects that information technologies have the power to disrupt economies, Kestenbaum attributes a change in the aid community to GiveDirectly’s practices of data-driven research powered by information technologies. The tone of NPR’s program suggests that the independent media, not just GiveDirectly, may have some belief in an ICT4D narrative attached to aid. It might

also be the case that publications produced by GiveDirectly and the independent media are tapping into the beliefs of the American public.

## conclusion


Given the current flurry of press coverage about GiveDirectly and the organization’s exponentially increasing donation curve for the past three years, GiveDirectly’s process and media tactics seem to be persuading the public (Kestenbaum and Goldstein, Starr and Hattendorf). Throughout this paper, I have argued that the rhetoric of digital technology and ICT4D intervenes in GiveDirectly’s donation process and media interactions. I have described the extent to which digital technologies are yielded agency in determining GiveDirectly’s country and village selection, that ICT4D and Modernization Theory sentiments are woven throughout the organization’s media interactions, and that this behavior serves to promote the largely Western idea that the economic potential of digital technology “haves” is higher than that of “have-nots.” I believe that this behavior, taken in light of GiveDirectly’s extensive popular support, suggests that the Western aid community has some belief in the modernizing power of new technologies, and, perhaps even in Modernization Theory in general.

The goal of my analysis is not to objectively discredit GiveDirectly’s success based on ideology. To conclude as such would fail to account for the ability of GiveDirectly’s ICT4D discourse and policies to create concrete effects. Indeed, the research that has been conducted by GiveDirectly, GiveWell, and other independent auditing organizations suggests that GiveDirectly’s process is benefiting recipients and the communities in which they live. In this respect, the fact that these discourses seem to be appealing to Western donors could even be viewed as positive.

My intention, rather, is to suggest that GiveDirectly, and perhaps the Western aid community in general, should question their underlying assumptions about the radical properties of digital technology use in aid. It is important to understand the Western-centric biases that might be inherent within these assumptions, and to recognize that the organization’s processes have not been studied long-term (Starr and Hattendorf). Furthermore, GiveDirectly should be cautious to avoid perpetuating Modernist assumptions of inadequacy between the “wired” and “un-wired,” both within its aid process and its behavior in the media. A sense of reflexivity amongst technological innovators and members of the aid community is key in promoting a larger understanding of developmental fluidity.

# individualized and digitized: work and social life in an age of knowledge workers

by marisa messina



White-collar Americans' increasingly blurred and non-mutually-exclusive definitions of social life and work life are the function of a dynamic far grander than mere technological advances. While changes in digital technology, especially Internet-enabled communication media, showcase the contemporary amalgamation of the previously separate social and vocational worlds, I contend that these technological changes should be seen not as primary or catalyzing sources but rather as perceptible artifacts of shifted social and societal norms. The corporate employees of today's America espouse a fundamentally different treatment of work life, as well as a changed relationship between work life and social life, than those which existed in the Industrial and Post-Industrial eras. These adjustments, spurred and sanctioned by the workforce on individual and collective bases, are part of the country's transition from the Post-Industrial era to a "knowledge society."<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I highlight the presence of *community* as a longstanding social and professional norm, and I argue that today's lack of community in both work life and social life, spawned by the knowledge-based society that now dominates the American commercial landscape, has paradoxically driven us to consume, rely upon, and develop even more digital technologies in a harried effort to connect with one another.

## historical emphasis on community

Throughout America's history, citizens across socioeconomic echelons have sought to balance the tension between coveting individual freedoms and craving a sense of belonging. Although our country's founding tenets cele-

brate independence and personal freedom, Americans widely thrive in and actively cultivate community in their social lives; from churches to farmers' markets to Super Bowl parties, people consistently seek out spaces to gather with kinsmen. The organizations of eras past – factories especially – have stimulated similar interactivity in the workplace. "Individual" as Americans may be, we have traditionally been socially as well as professionally bound to one another.

Indeed, very little in historical American life has been solitary. The factory model of the Industrial Era placed individuals in close proximity, and identities developed around particular industries and shared experiences (on a garment production line, for example). Outside of work hours, employees' overlapping experiences served as fodder for social relationships devoid of professional aims. Even as the Post-Industrial Era saw flexible organizations replace the old institutional structure and "set people free from the iron cage" (Sennett, 81), work was still optimized when done collectively. Employees were physically centralized at giant call centers, for example, and together they provided service at scale that no individual worker could generate alone. These aspects of interactivity and collaborative (rather than individual) pursuits that existed in work life were clearly also socially desirable, as evidenced by the communes of the counterculture movement. Despite hailing radical independence, they in fact attracted people to participate in a unified community of individuals now linked together through a collective vision as opposed to a collective vocation.

## emergence of the knowledge era

Influential thinkers such as Peter Drucker have claimed that we have now entered a new era, which he labels a "knowledge society" in his 1959 book *Landmarks of Tomorrow*. The fact that almost two-thirds of America's exports

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1 Drucker, Peter F. The Atlantic Monthly; November 1994; The Age of Social Transformation; Volume 274, No. 5; page(s) 53-80. <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95dec/chilearn/drucker.htm>

are now knowledge-based services<sup>2</sup> rather than tangible material goods is a transition for which global development – not merely technological advances – is most responsible. Drucker's argument – that “[t]his is far more than a social change[;] it is a change in the human condition” – lends relevant context for understanding today's shifted balance between social life and work life. In such a world, the material environment of the industrial work centers of previous decades no longer serves as the primary catalyst for community, such that face-to-face contact in between workers at central locations is no longer a given.

A society based predominantly on a new kind of work almost inevitably suffers growing pains as those affected – those who work and/or are supported by folks who work – re-

**The unprecedented individualistic nature of today's work – enabled by digital advances but driven by changed cultural values – means that the vocational environment is no longer a means for fostering a sense of communal belonging.**

define the optimal lifestyle with respect to work and social life. The unprecedented individualistic

nature of today's work – enabled by digital advances but driven by changed cultural values – means that the vocational environment is no longer a means for fostering a sense of communal belonging.

In the nation's manufacturing and service-providing eras, organizations' success was (generally) measured by collective output; the common goal of maximizing production united workers. In contrast, the individualistic nature of attaining and drawing upon knowledge – focal activities of today's knowledge workers<sup>3</sup> – less readily initiates the work-based communities of prior eras. With possibilities like teleworking and crowdsourcing becoming

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2 White, Steven. “The Foundations of the U.S. Knowledge-Based Economy.” 28 May 2012. Accessed 25 October 2015. <http://dstevenwhite.com/2012/05/28/the-foundation-of-the-u-s-knowledge-based-economy/>.

3 I define “knowledge worker” as “anyone who works for a living at the tasks of developing or using knowledge,” per [searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/knowledge-worker](http://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/knowledge-worker).

more attractive to the leadership of organizations, the impetus and need for coming together at work has diminished. Even as workers and families enjoy the new flexibility that this model of distributed work provides, one cannot deny its challenges. As earners have sought space for independence as workers, I claim that the decrease in the physical interactions and encounters that revolve around the work space corresponds to an increasing hunger for community. Look at the endless hours the majority of literate America<sup>4</sup> spends on digital communication platforms in desperate search of connectivity with distant others!

In concurrence with this altered professional environment, social standards have recently recalibrated: the American Dream of opportunity has arguably transitioned to an expectation of luxury, as high salaries for knowledge work breed unprecedented materialism<sup>5</sup>. Knowledge workers engage in frantic accumulation of wealth in hopes of thereby attaining social belonging. Ironically, this effort drives individuals to spend more time *working* and less time engaging with that social world—the Economic Policy Institute found an over 10% increase in the number of hours Americans spent working in 2007 compared to 1979<sup>6</sup>. Fittingly, upper-class culture has evolved to prioritize work life as a constant engagement, such that it subsumes rather than counterbalances or complements social life.

In Drucker's characterization of this new knowledge society, “[t]he old communities—family, village, parish, and so on—have all but disappeared in the knowledge society. Their

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4 Perrin, Andrew. “One-fifth of Americans report going online ‘almost constantly’.” 8 December 2015. Accessed 29 January 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/08/one-fifth-of-americans-report-going-online-almost-constantly/>.

5 Viewpoint. “Our Turn: Have Americans become too Materialistic?” MLive Media Group. 20 November 2010. Accessed 24 October 2015. [http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/11/our\\_turn\\_have\\_americans\\_become.html](http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/11/our_turn_have_americans_become.html).

6 Mishel, Laurence. “Vast majority of wage earners are working harder, and for not much more.” Economic Policy Institute. 30 January 2013. Accessed 25 October 2015. <http://www.epi.org/publication/ib348-trends-us-work-hours-wages-1979-2007/>.

place has largely been taken by the new unit of social integration, the organization.” With the workplace at the center of our lives and yet minimal community readily found within it, the necessity for a “third place” emerges, in which the opportunity to “gather for conviviality” inspires Americans across demographic dimensions to turn toward technology in hopes of finding a remedy (Rheingold, 6).

### quest for community

This endeavor has its roots in the early days of computer-mediated communications. When Rheingold wrote about the WELL nearly three decades ago, he observed that users could “do everything people do when people get together,” and he wondered if virtual communities might “answer a deep and compelling need in people” (2). I argue that the virtual communities that prevail today, as well as other new digital technologies such as smartphones and wearables, unsuccessfully *attempt* to fulfill a need and a longing for authentic camaraderie, but fall short and consequently turn users toward more tech usage.

Humdog laments the way “so-called electronic communities encourage participation in fragmented, mostly silent, microgroups who are primarily engaged in dialogues of self-congratulation.” While perhaps appropriately critical, this stance fails to appreciate that such self-congratulatory dialogues are attempts to formulate a sense of belonging in a world of fragmentation. As Sennett points out, the “cultural ideal” pervading the knowledge era’s work institutions “damages many of the people who inhabit them” (5), and individuals (paradoxically) turn to digital technologies to find connection to repair those socio-emotional wounds. A collaboration space like Yahoo! Answers, for example, brings people together over a shared question of interest (albeit transiently). More complex instances of the sharing economy more cogently prompt community—Linux, for instance, attracts the world’s best programmers to work on it for free, as participation promises open discussion and collaboration with other kindred spirits. Even as Barlow touts Americans citizens’ increasing technology consumption as a means of increased independence, the prevalence of technologies whose purpose is to connect us to one another reinforces the point that the use of technology parallels our need for community.

For further evidence supporting the

hypothesis that community-craving has impelled the use and development of new digital technologies, consider Jenkins’ claims about media fans becoming active participants in the current media revolution. *Star Wars* aficionados’ involvement stems from the allure of their novel ability to “exhibit their works beyond their immediate circles of family and friends” – and, in so doing, to find others who share their tastes. While Brahbam applauds online communities as “fertile sources of innovation and genius” (xv), it is equally important to recognize tech-mediated communications as sources of personal fulfillment that nourish the knowledge-era worker’s unmet yearning to belong. Indeed, Lessig points out that more seasoned users of cyberspace likely “believe virtual communities promise to restore to Americans at the end of the twentieth century what many of us feel was lost in the decades at the beginning of the century—a stable sense of community, of place” (84).

**The prevalence of technologies whose purpose is to connect us to one another reinforces the point that the use of technology parallels our need for community.**

As wage-workers, executives, and everyone in between engages in this challenge of cultivating community in an era that increasingly defies it, changes in digital technology serve as landmarks of our efforts and progress. The smartphone in 1992 allowed people to bridge large distances through voice communication; GPS in 2000 made it possible to locate and connect physical and social space; Facebook in 2004 provided virtual access to others in similar social circles. More recently, Instagram and Snapchat have allowed users to share brief snippets of their lives with one another – valuable especially in what I have argued is an increasingly individual-centric world, where it is difficult to ensure *shared* anything.

Interestingly, the rapid-fire development of such digital technologies in the twenty-first century parallels the pattern through which “the countercultural celebration of small-scale technologies as tools for the transformation of consciousness and community came to undergird popular understandings of early computer networks,” as Turner recounts in “Where the Counterculture Met the New Economy.” He remarks the importance of understanding the

WELL as a digital technology that existed “within a web of technological, economic, and cultural transformations that began long before digital technologies came into widespread use” (5). I maintain that today’s changed technologies require a similarly integrated perspective – one that begins with an understanding of the bigger changes in society as a whole and realizes that changed digital technologies are but an indicator of this shift.

### **implications of The “Knowledge Era”**

Terranova describes the “outernet”—the network of social, cultural, and economic relationships that crisscrosses and exceeds the Internet” (34) as a feature in the lives of “the owners of elitist cultural and economic power” (40), but she leaves untouched the question of whether and how the culture of knowledge workers might affect non-elite laborers’ lifestyles. In line with the view that America is truly in a new era, I venture that both this individual-centric work environment and the hunger for community it generates will remain and spread to touch an increasingly wide spectrum of citizens. There are escalating economic incentives for organizations to utilize a geographically distributed workforce to accomplish an increasingly diverse set of tasks, from intellectual work to delivery and transportation services.

(Look, for example, at Uber, which provides a taxi service without a centralized fleet of cars and drivers.) This transition to a de-centralized workspace and workforce inevitably disables the natural community-building nature that shared physical spaces afford, be they office buildings or taxi departments. There is a precedent of the middle- and lower-classes’ social rising (which has led us to the gentrification of today). Alongside these developments, critical discourse concerning the possible harms associated with a bubbling tech ecosystem is notably absent, such that Silicon Valley minds forge ahead building and integrating new digital technologies without complete evaluation of their shortcomings as well as benefits. (For example, consider healthcare and education, two realms that have become increasingly technology-dependent in recent years even though our understanding of the impact of new technologies remains incomplete).

Thus, it is hard to imagine how to retrace our steps on the societal level. Instead, I foresee an era that brings even less-skilled laborers into a model of work that relies on individual contributions and encourages pervasive work life. As today and tomorrow’s Americans sit in coffee shops and cottages doing clickwork or consultative analyses, I predict Americans of all classes and career paths will feel an increasing ache for community in an increasingly individualized, isolated personal existence.

### **conclusion**

In this view, the changed relationship between work life and social life that Americans are experiencing is much larger than a cause or effect of the technologies we currently exploit. Rather, work life has engulfed social life as knowledge work demands near-continuous individual activity, and the ensuing isolation drives people to work even more in an effort to purchase access to the social groups they miss. With minimal opportunities for community within work life and minimal time left to actually engage with one another socially when not working, the Americans who used to forge relationships in the flesh resort to new digital technologies in a stab at making connections. We are in the midst of defining what daily life entails in this new knowledge-based area, and the shifting balance between what used to be two distinct realms of social life and work life is seen in stark relief through recent changes in technology.

# psyche and psychosis: examining schizophrenia as a racialized construct during the civil rights era

by maarya abbasi

## overview

Blackness has long been pathologized. Throughout the history of the United States, clinicians have pathologized the black body, deeming it sexually deviant, lazy, and defectively prone to certain diseases like syphilis (seen through the now infamous Tuskegee Study). These types of clinical diagnoses all hold immense weight as they extend to produce and reproduce tropes in the cultural imagination, like the Jezebel<sup>1</sup>, that have not yet fully retired. But there is something insidious about the demonization of the black male psyche in the 1960s that uniquely holds resonance. At this time, the black male psyche in particular was demonized as one inseparable from schizophrenic tendencies. This pathologization has historically been mediated by collective anxieties surrounding Black resistance movements.

In this paper, I invoke Jonathan Metzl's *The Protest Psychosis* to unpack how psychiatry pathologized the black psyche during the Civil Rights Era by framing schizophrenia as a black disease. In order to do so, it is critical to first outline prior forms of racism invoked clinically to understand how prior logics are reutilized to similar ends. Along with this, a deeper look into 20th century views on schizophrenia—as first a female problem that then is largely transcribed onto blackness during the latter half of the century—will help to inform why racial anxieties during civil rights resistance movements played such a salient role in the shift. Finally, a confluence of historical changes has helped shaped this transition. Metzl identifies patient records at an asylum in Ionia, Michigan, as well as advertisements of the 1960s. Both of these documents indicate that structural changes during this time, such as diagnostic changes in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM), in addition to white anxieties about black male resistance and power, played a role in the

transformation of schizophrenia from a mainly white, female, middle-class affliction to a racialized illness characterized not by docility or simple neurosis, but by rage.

## Clinically-Sanctioned Racism: A Genealogy

The normalized assumption that disease diagnoses are apolitical must be contested. First, to challenge this assumption, let's begin with the concept of racialized diseases. According to Dorothy Roberts, internationally recognized scholar on topics of race and illness, "diagnosing disease according to race was a powerful means of defining blacks as natural slaves" (Roberts 89). One eminent example occurs shortly before the Civil War. In 1851, the Medical Association of Louisiana charged a committee of four local physicians to investigate "the diseases and physical peculiarities of our negro population" (Roberts 89). Its chair, Dr. Samuel Cartwright, argued that slavery was "beneficial to blacks for medical reasons," citing that the physical labor that "white slaveholders forced upon naturally slothful blacks" helped their lungs to re-vitalize blood (89). Cartwright's language here pathologizes blackness, effectively justifying the enslavement of Africans as necessary for their inferior and lazy livelihoods. This logic of innate biological deficiency has been utilized to ascribe multiple diseases onto blackness.

Cartwright himself played a role in constructing a catalogue of racialized diseases particular to African Americans. He coined the term *drapetomania*—which combined Greek words for "runaway slave" and "crazy"—to describe a mental illness "that causes blacks to abscond from bondage" (90). His other major diagnosis labeled black individuals with a form of insanity called *dyaesthesia aethiopsis*, which was characterized by "a lack of respect for the master's property that resulted when blacks were not closely monitored by whites" (90). The construction of both these diseases were productive in pathologizing slaves during the pre Civil War era; the former disease was designed to rebuke slaves exercising agency and enacting resistance, and the latter disease was invoked to encourage the policing of slaves. In fact, the cure Cartwright proposed

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1 The Jezebel stereotype refers to the conceptualization of black women as inherently lascivious. Historically, this medically backed stereotype was employed to justify the sexual violence perpetrated by slave-masters on their female slaves. The stereotype lives on as an enduring trope in American pop culture, primarily perpetuated through movies and films.

“was to subject the deranged slaves to hard physical labor as well as harsh corporal punishment until they fall into the submissive state that [is] intended for them to occupy” (90).

The next portion of this paper will expose how logics of the pre Civil War era that pathologized black slaves have endured to the Civil Rights era. Psychiatrists during the Civil Rights era began to explain acts of black resistance to oppression as schizophrenic symptoms, unwittingly falling prey to a similar politics that constructed mental illnesses to explain black resistance to slavery. Indeed, “schizophrenia became a black disease in the 1960s the same way that drapetomania became a black disease in the 1860s” (90). It is, however, crucial to underscore that unlike drapetomania and dyaesthesia aethiopsis, which were constructed as illnesses explicitly specific to African American slaves, schizophrenia was first conceptualized as an illness that afflicted primarily white, middle-class housewives. A deeper look into this shift will help elucidate why and how the perception of schizophrenia became racialized after it long had been gendered.

### the shift: from desiring docility to assigning aggression

Susanna Kaysen’s illustrious memoir *Girl, Interrupted* describes schizophrenia with a kind of exceptionalism that elicits palpable fervor in her writing. She remarks, in comparison to other mental illnesses, that there is something unique about the illness that singularly “[sends] a chill up your spine. After all, that’s real insanity” (Kaysen 151). This marked exceptional-

ism that schizophrenia holds in the cultural imagination makes the illness a particularly effective tool to stigmatize diagnosed populations by way of dangerous manipulations and confluents in the clinical realm.

In the first half of the 20th century, the “cultural conflation of femininity and insanity” was at an all time high (Showalter 204). While “schizophrenia [was] clinically and statistically not a predominantly female mental disorder,” the schizophrenic woman nonetheless dominated the popular perception of the disease, becoming “a central cultural figure” (204). And this cultural perception had seeped into clinical practice: women in both England and the United States “out-numbered men as ECT patients by a ratio of two or even three to one” (207). This electroconvulsive therapy, or ECT, which was used to treat schizophrenic and other mental illness symptoms, was popularly represented in advertisements and films. The representation of ECT “almost always [depicted] a female patient,” thus perpetuating “archetypal patterns of masculine dominance and feminine submission” (207). And just as women became disproportionately subject to ECT, lobotomies were also more frequently performed on women: “Since 1941 the majority of the 15,000 lobotomies performed in England have been on women” (209-10). Both therapies were administered with the assumption that it would help the women assume or resume the role of a housewife. The therapies, and the greater cultural and medical associations of schizophrenia and femininity, were then no doubt a response to the patriarchal discomfort with female behavior that was not deemed socially respectable.



Figure 1: 1950s Marketing Campaign Advertisement

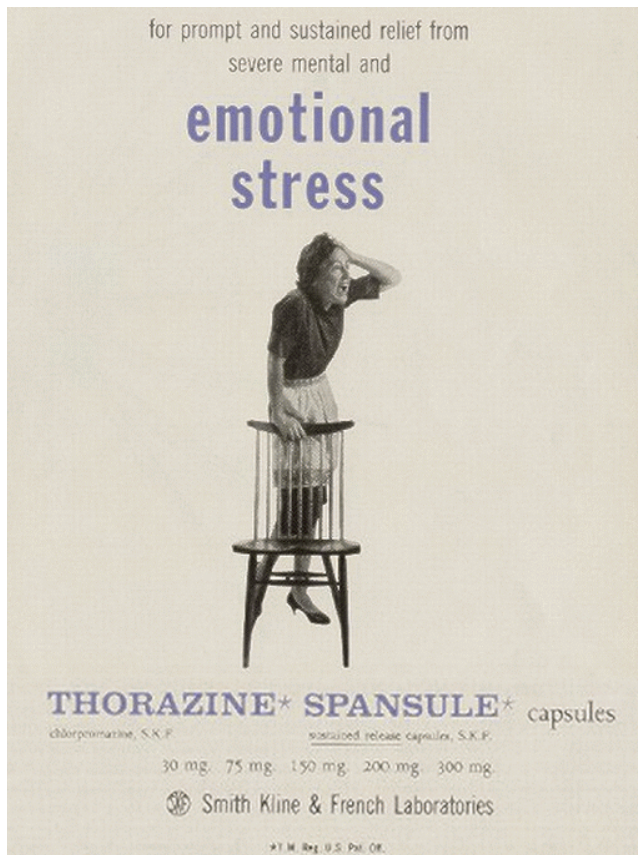


Figure 2: 1950s Marketing Campaign Advertisement, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1956

As a result of this gendered framing, many “popular magazines in the 1920s to the 1950s assumed that schizophrenia was a psychoanalytic condition connected to neurosis” that impacted the middle-class women who struggled to accept to routines of domesticity (Metzl *Protest* vi). Meanwhile, researchers “conducted most published clinical studies in white-only wards” (xiii). Doing so contributed to the erasure of countless men and women who were diagnosed with schizophrenia in separate “Negro hospitals” and suffered outside the realm of public awareness. Figures 1 and 2 both illustrate the gendered imagery and language employed in marketing campaigns around schizophrenia at this time. Both advertisements further mainstream ideas of schizophrenia as a middle-class illness characterized by a nebulous collection of symptoms that largely afflicted women unable to correctly perform womanhood. Thorazine, a drug used to treat schizophrenia, is marketed as being able to provide “prompt and sustained relief from severe mental and emotional stress.” Both advertisements attempt to placate the reader into believing that the treatments for schizophrenia, by way of either moral management in the asylum or clinical prescriptions like Thorazine, are effective in restoring docility in women.

Although women diagnosed with schizophrenia in the broader cultural imagination may threaten the construct of ideal, submissive womanhood, the fact that

the women were depicted in these advertisements as successfully managed suggests that non-threatening, docile womanhood can indeed be achieved. In the 1960s, however, American assumptions about schizophrenia experienced a shift. The mainstream, white American public, and even “members of the scientific community, increasingly described schizophrenia as a violent disease” (xii).

Some psychiatrists, intentionally or unintentionally, conflated the schizophrenic symptoms of African American patients with the perceived schizophrenia of civil rights protests, particularly those organized by Black Power, Black Panthers, Nation of Islam, or other activist groups. In 1968, psychiatrists Walter Bromberg and Franck Simon wrote an article in the illustrious *Archives of General Psychiatry* (now known as *JAMA Psychiatry*) that described schizophrenia as a “protest psychosis” whereby “black men developed hostile and aggressive feelings” and “delusional anti-whiteness” after listening to Malcolm X, joining the Black Muslims, or aligning with other groups that preached resistance to white supremacy (xiv). According to these two psychiatrists, “the growing racial disharmony” that they described required psychiatric treatment because their symptoms threatened not only their own mental condition, but even more greatly, the larger American social order. The work of these two psychiatrists signals the ways in which schizophrenia in the 1960s and 1970s largely became a racialized illness, one that was manifested by rage and volatility during the height of the Civil Rights movement. Mainstream discomfort with the growing black resistance efforts thus seems to have led psychiatrists like Bromberg and Simon to postulate that these efforts reflected “a new manifestation of psychotic behaviors and delusions afflicting America’s black lower class” (Baiocchi).

Pharmaceutical advertisements mirrored the racial anxieties seen in the psychiatric field. These advertisements proposed that drugs like Haldol, a major tranquilizer, could directly pacify the terrifying black threat. Figure 3 is an advertisement also from the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, a leading psychiatric journal, which appears in the aftermath of the Detroit Riots. This is one example of many that depicts “angry black men with clenched Black Power fists” whose symptoms necessitate chemical management (Metzl *Protest* xv). In contrast to the advertisements that portrayed schizophrenia as a gendered illness, many advertisements that racialized schizophrenia imagined black rage as a form of threatening psychosis.

### normalizing the black psyche as schizophrenic: implicit bias and structural shifts

As schizophrenia became an illness of black male hostility, patient records and psychiatric stud-

**Assaultive and belligerent?**

**Cooperation often begins with HALDOL (haloperidol) a first choice for starting therapy**

**Acts promptly to control aggressive, assaultive behavior**

Several studies have reported the special effectiveness of HALDOL (haloperidol) in controlling aggressive and dangerously assaultive behavior. "Even the number of violent assaults committed by a group of criminal psychotics 'resistant to maximal doses of phenothiazines' was reduced substantially during treatment with HALDOL." Symptom control can be achieved rapidly, frequently within a few days when the intramuscular form used for initial control of acutely agitated psychotic states.<sup>1</sup>

**Usually leaves patients relatively alert and responsive**

Although some instances of drowsiness have been observed, marked sedation with HALDOL (haloperidol) is rare. In a report on a study with criminal psychotics the investigator states, "The patients remained alert and more amenable to psychotherapeutic intervention." Another investigator reports that HALDOL "normalizes behavior and produces a sensitivity to the environment that allows more effective use of the social milieu and the therapeutic community."<sup>2</sup>

**Reduces risk of serious adverse reactions**

HALDOL (haloperidol), a butyrophenone, avoids or minimizes many of the problems associated with the phenothiazines. Hypotension is rare and severe orthostatic hypotension has not been reported. There is also less likelihood of adverse reactions such as liver damage, ocular changes, serious hematologic reactions and skin rashes. The most frequent side effects of HALDOL (haloperidol)—extrapyramidal symptoms—are usually dose-related and readily controlled.

References: 1. Darling, H.F. *Dis. Nerv. Syst.* 32:31 (Jan.) 1971. 2. Mas, F.L., and Chen, C.H. *Psychopharmacology* 14:59 (Jan./Feb.) 1973. Johnson, M.L., and Klerman, G. Paper presented Amer. Ass. Family Practitioners Annual Meeting, N.Y., Sept. 25-28, 1972. Buchs, R.W. *Dis. Nerv. Syst.* 33:112 (Mar.) 1974. 3. Howard, J.R.C. *Clin. Toxicol.* 2:175 (Mar.) 1965.

For information relating to Indications, Contraindications, Warnings, Precautions and Adverse Reactions, please turn page.

©1974 Laboratories, Inc. 1974

Figure 3: 1970s Marketing Campaign Advertisement, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1974

ies in addition to racialized advertisements point to the biased actions of individual doctors, researchers, and drug advertisers. Equally important as well are the structural changes, like the reframing of schizophrenia in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM), which had severe consequences for African American men who were diagnosed as schizophrenic during the Civil Rights era.

A variety of psychiatric research studies point to how racial disparities are present in the way schizophrenia has been diagnosed historically. More recently, a prominent story in 2005 that appeared on the front page of the *Washington Post* entitled "Racial Disparities Found in Pinpointing Mental Illness" exposed, through its analysis of 134,523 case files in a VA registry, that doctors diagnosed schizophrenia in African American patients four times as often as in white patients. The *Post* cited the study's lead author, John Zeber, who explained that there was no evidence to substantiate that "black patients were any sicker than whites" (Vedantam). Even controlling for "differences in wealth, drug addiction, and other variables" couldn't explain the striking disparities present in the diagnoses. According to Zeber, "the only factor that was truly important was race." The *Post* article isn't an aberration; in fact, this article is merely a more recent exploration into a larger historical

problem. In the 1960s, studies funded by the National Institute of Mental Health found that "blacks have a 65% higher rate of schizophrenia than whites." These studies, in addition to numerous<sup>2</sup> studies published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* throughout the 1970s, posited that African American patients were "significantly more likely" than white patients to receive schizophrenia diagnoses, and "significantly less likely" than white patients to receive diagnoses for other mental illnesses such as depression or bipolar disorder. Thus, research dating back to the 1960s reveals how African Americans were over-diagnosed with schizophrenia, and under-diagnosed with affective (or mood) disorders compared to whites.

The racial disparities present in diagnoses for

2 For a few examples, see Taube, C. Admission Rates to State and County Mental Hospitals by Age, Sex, and Color, United States, 1969 (Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Institute of Mental Health, Biometry Branch, 1971); Simon, R.J., Fleiss, J.L., Gurland, B.J. et al., "Depression and Schizophrenia in Black and White Mental Patients," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, no 28 (1973): 509-12; J.L. Liss, A. Welner, E. Robins E, et al., "Psychiatric Symptoms in White and Black Inpatients," *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 14 (1973): 475-81

schizophrenia reveal the implicit bias of the psychiatrists. These disparities can be easily tracked through the records found in one of the nation's most notorious mental asylums: Ionia Mental Hospital in Ionia, Michigan. Open from 1885 to 1976, the hospital became known as the Michigan Asylum for Insane Criminals, housing about 1,500 patients throughout the middle part of the twentieth century across a sprawling 529 acres. Ionia Hospital, "a mere 130 miles from Detroit," was not immune to Detroit's shifting racial politics (Metzl *Protest* 10). Initially, from 1920 to 1950, the hospital averaged about 150 new admissions per year. Notably, Ionia classified 122 of these admissions per year as "U.S.-White" and only 17 of these admissions per year as "U.S.-Negro." Most of these patients came from the rural Midwest, with doctors diagnosing Schizophrenia in approximately 35 percent of all cases. The charts offered some of the following comments: "This patient wasn't able to take care of her family as she should;" "this patient is not well adjusted;" "she got confused and talked too loudly and embarrassed her husband" (11).

But by the mid 1950s, the demographics within the hospital took a dramatic turn. In 1955, out of the hospital's 243 new admits, 135 were classified as "Male-U.S. Negro." By the late 1960s, more than 60 percent of the entire census of the hospital comprised black, schizophrenic men who hailed from urban Detroit while the "U.S.-White" patient population dropped to below 30 percent (11). Also notable is the fact that Ionia diagnosed 88 percent of post-1960 "U.S. Negro" admissions—96 percent of which were men—with schizophrenia, compared with only 44.6 percent of "U.S. White" admissions. Doctors disproportionately ascribed violent intent to patients described as African American. Jonathan Metzl, MD, PhD shows how doctors in Ionia hospital from 1960 to 1975 used adjectives "connoting hostile intent or aggression" far more frequently in black patients diagnosed with schizophrenia than white patients diagnosed with schizophrenia: descriptors including hostile, aggressive, disturbed, threatening, dangerous, suspicious, belligerent, and paranoid all appear at least 3 times more often in patient descriptions for black schizophrenic patients compared to white patients (148). The charts of "Negro" schizophrenic patients classified as paranoid schizophrenic include the following harrowing descriptions: from 1969, "disturbed manner, aggression projected onto others, suspicious, inappropriate: 'white men are against me, including police officers,'" and from 1970, "supports Black Power, agitated, threatening, fearful, aggressive, well groomed, fearful, bewildered, unkempt, withdrawn and seclusive on ward" (149-50).

The way schizophrenia was reframed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) exposes a structural shift in the ways schizophrenia was re-conceptualized as a violent malady in the 1960s. For it wasn't

just that individual doctors simply acted on their biases, but also that the DSM codified the same bias. The DSM I, first published in 1952, framed schizophrenia as an illness characterized chiefly by "emotional disharmony," "impoverishment of human relationships," "mental deterioration," "apathy and indifference," and "silly behavior and mannerisms" (DSM-I). The second edition of the DSM, published in 1968 in the midst of social unrest and public protests, recast schizophrenia as a violent illness. The new manual included new categories of behavior like "hostile and aggressive attitude," "projection," "projected anger," and "persecutory delusions" (DSM-II). Of note here are the ways in which the new manual's terminology reflected the descriptors attached to African American schizophrenic patients in Ionia, Michigan in the 1960s. In fact, the DSM-II became a tool to re-diagnose women (who were diagnosed with schizophrenia in Ionia Hospital prior to the 1950s) with depression or bipolar disorder as black men became the major schizophrenic patients in the hospital (Metzl *Protest* 132). Thus, the DSM-II elicited a radical shift in assumptions about the race, gender, and the disposition of schizophrenic patients.

### concluding remarks

The pathologizing narrative that links schizophrenia to blackness is tied to psychiatric literature that categorized Civil Rights Protestors as insane. In fact, researchers used DSM II criteria to uncover hostile aspects of "Black Schizophrenia," such as paranoia and rage that effectively conflated Black Power with "Black Schizophrenia." In the same year that psychiatrists Walter Bromberg and Franck Simon described schizophrenia as a "protest psychosis," psychiatrists Pierce and West argued in 1968 that black men developed "delusions, grandiosity, magical thinking, and . . . dangerous aggressive feelings when they participated in civil rights sit-ins" (Metzl "Controllin" 23). The rhetoric that psychiatry utilized to establish a connection with blackness and schizophrenia was refurbished for new ends: notably, the FBI "diagnosed" Malcolm X with "pre-psychotic paranoid schizophrenia" in an attempt to discredit his message (33). While perhaps not as overt in its racism as the demonization of black resistance to slavery seen in illnesses like drapetomania and dyaesthesia aethiopsis, the discursive logics that linked blackness to schizophrenia during the Civil Rights era remain the same. Whether conscious or unconscious, what is upheld throughout this temporal trajectory is the image of violent, hostile blackness that must be managed, controlled, and derailed.

# the crack mother: an enduring social construct with political usefulness

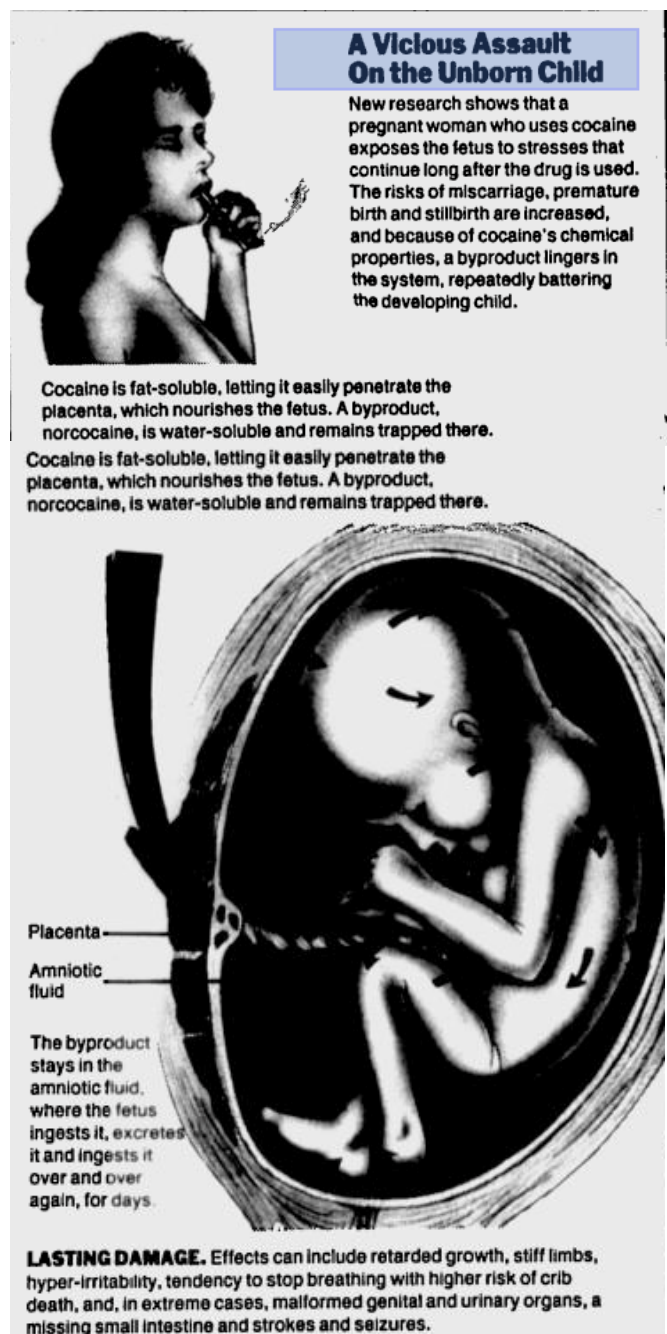
by vy le

## introduction

"Happy Mothers [D]ay to all the crack hoers out there. It's never too late to turn it around, tie your tubes, clean up your life, and make a difference to someone out there [who] deserves a better mother" - reads the May 11th, 2014 Facebook post of Kenneth Lewis, Assistant State Attorney of Florida. Lewis meant the post to be "inspirational," so that women who use crack would be reminded of the supposedly negative effect addiction has on their children (Kemp 2014). In the post, crack-using mothers are presented as "hoers" whose irresponsibility and ignorance have rendered them unworthy of the mothering role. Their crack usage has somehow served as the basis for judging their morality and ability as mothers. The term "crack mothers," first emerged in the 1980s, refers to women who use crack during pregnancy. In this paper, I will survey the usage of the term in the realms of politics, media, as well as scientific medical discourse. I assert that "crack mothers," along with its related derivatives such as "cocaine mothers," "crack hoers," and "crack babies," are not just blanket terms describing a group of drug users, but social constructs of an altogether "crack epidemic" whose existence is tied to and sustained by larger social and political motives.

## the crack mother outcry

Crack's basic ingredient is powder cocaine, a type of stimulant able to provide an instantaneous rush followed by an intense crash. The combined effects of crack catalyze a periodic pattern of the substance's chronic use (Foundation for a Drug-Free World 2014). Crack hit the illicit drug market in the mid 1980s, attracting almost as many women as men (Humphries 1999:4). Among the users' population, "crack mothers," women who use crack while pregnant, arguably received the most visibility and sparked many controversial sentiments. With an estimated 375,000 babies having been born to crack mothers by the year 1989, government officials, scientists, and journalists feared that the country would be plagued by a generation of "crack babies" (Retro Report 2013 and Humphries 1999:4). This number, however, was greatly exaggerated; since it included all babies who had been exposed to drugs of all kinds, not just crack cocaine (Walker 2010).



An Article in The Free Lance Star. Fredericksberg, Virginia.  
Januey 13, 1999

Fear of such a “plague” initially derived from early scientific findings suggesting a linkage between prenatal crack use and negative health outcomes for the babies (Humphries 1999). In 1985, Dr. Ira Chasnoff published a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* reporting possible developmental problems of babies whose mothers used crack prenatally. These problems range from low birth weight and small head size to increased rates of prematurity. Chasnoff’s study did caution that the data was preliminary and no conclusions about causality could be drawn from it. Although scientific findings such as those of Chasnoff were crucial in raising initial concern about the issue of prenatal crack use, it was ultimately the media’s exaggerated propagation of the issue that created an “epidemic” of crack mothers and babies in America.

Newspapers with headlines such as, “Cocaine: A Vicious Assault on a Child,” “Crack’s Toll Among Babies: A Joyless View” and “Studies: Future Bleak for Crack Babies,” began to flood the media soon after that (Okie 2009). Needless to say, common motifs in most of these headlines were images of irresponsible women whose mothering instincts had been destroyed by crack. Children of these mothers not only were portrayed as innocent victims who suffered as the result of the immorality of their own mothers, they were also regarded as socially inferior on the basis of their biological circumstances. As Columnist Krauthammer alleged, “A cohort of babies is now being born whose future is closed to them from day one. Theirs will be a life of certain suffering, of probable deviance, of permanent inferiority. At best, a menial life of severe deprivation. And all of this is biologically determined from birth” (Reinarman and Levine 2004:192) Not only were the images of guilty mothers and victimized babies highly publicized, they were also widely accepted by the general population (Murphy et al. 2001). “If the mother wants to smoke crack and kill herself, I don’t care. Let her die, but don’t take that poor baby with her,” said a Michigan police officer, whose comment exemplified the sentiments dominating public policy and much popular thought then (Litt and McNell 2009).

### myths debunked

The scientific evidence for the effects of crack cocaine on fetal development, however, is anything but certain, and this realization came to the scientific community in the early 1990s, not long after the initial outcry following Dr. Chasnoff’s study. Biomedical publications highlighting the issue during the 1980s and early 1990s revealed a great deal of inconclusiveness about the extent and effects of cocaine use during pregnancy (Litt and McNell 2009). Poverty and lack of prenatal care were in fact found to be more significant contributing factors for the symptoms attributed to maternal crack use (Mozes 1999 and Humphries 1999). Studies such as those conducted by Dr. Clair Coles of Emory University confirmed that it was not solely

the drugs ingested, but the mothers’ overall lifestyles that made the difference in children’s performance (Humphries 1999:141). Follow-up studies performed on crack-exposed children indicated that with proper care and parenting, children developed on par with their unexposed peers (Murphy and Sales 2001). Of course, this is not to say that crack cocaine had nothing to do with the outcome of the fetus. In terms of the linkage between prenatal crack use and fetal health outcomes, data was simply inconclusive given the confounding factors relating to each mother’s lifestyle and social circumstances that were almost impossible for researchers to control. The important point here is that, as Deborah Frank, a major biomedical researcher of crack cocaine, puts it, “the popular press is way out ahead of the data in prognosticating horrible outcomes for these kids, particularly on the basis of biological risk” (Humphries 1999:135). Those stereotypes, unfortunately but unsurprisingly, became too deeply ingrained in the public’s perceptions. If certain children had been labeled crack babies, normal behavior could be interpreted as pathological (Szalavitz 2004).

Prompted by the overwhelming misuse of the term “crack baby,” thirty leading pediatricians and medical experts published a letter in 2004 as “an attempt to set the record straight” (Crack Babies 2006). This open letter to the press asserted, “ ‘crack baby,’ ‘crack addicted baby,’ and others like ‘ice baby’ or ‘meth baby’ ...lack scientific validity and should not be used.” These experts confirmed that “throughout almost 20 years of research, none of [them] has identified a recognizable condition, syndrome or disorder that should be termed ‘crack baby’”. Among the signatories to the letter was Dr. Ira Chasnoff, whose initial research sparked the “crack baby” myth. When asked what he would have done differently in the early 1980s when his work was used to justify the public panic and fear, researcher Chasnoff expressed that he wished he never spoke to the press (Crack Babies 2006).

### the bigger picture –the war on drugs

“Happy Mothers [D]ay to all the crack hoes out there. It’s never too late to turn it around, tie your tubes, clean up your life, and make a difference to someone out there [who] deserves a better mother”

– Facebook post by Kenneth Lewis, Assistant State Attorney of Florida, on May 11th, 2014

As demonstrated by not only Kenneth Lewis’s Facebook post, but also the overall lin-

gering fear and hostility toward women who use drugs prenatally, sentiments against crack mothers and their babies persist even after the myths about the babies' health outcomes were debunked. The crusade against crack mothers was, in fact, a single episode in the broader war on drugs, a series of aggressive federal policies launched by President Ronald Reagan in 1982 (Humphries 1999:5). The war, waged at the home front and abroad, dated even further back, to the early 1970s, when at a press conference President Nixon named drug abuse as "public enemy number one in the United States" (PBS 2014). Most people assume that the War on Drugs was launched as a necessary response to the crisis caused by crack cocaine in inner-city neighborhoods, or so it was conveyed by the Reagan administration. There is, however, no truth to this notion (Alexander 2010). Among many others, Alexander 2010 claims that war was launched before crack even became an issue in the media or a crisis in poor neighborhoods. The Reagan administration apparently had hired staff to publicize the emergence of crack cocaine in 1985 as part of "a strategic effort to build public and legislative support for the war" (Alexander 2010:5). The administration employed "political rhetoric and media imagery" to reframe crack mothers as a threat to national order, and hence legitimized the need for a War on Drugs (Alexander 2010:102). This media campaign turned out to be a success – the administration received much support for its zero tolerance policy and its overall "toughness" on drug-related crimes (Alexander 2010:5).

The targeted subjects of the war on drug were not just any drug users or dealers; they were poor, black drug users and dealers. When a 1995 survey published in *The Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education* asked participants to envision and describe a drug user, ninety-five percent of respondents pictured a black drug user (Alexander 2010:103). In reality, African Americans constitutes only 15 percent of current drug users of 1995, while Whites were the vast majority, and those figures still held as of 2010 (103).

Similarly, the "crack mother" icon, being one of the main "enemies" of the drug war, was also highly racialized. It wasn't about just any crack mother; it was about poor, black crack mothers. A pivotal Florida study in the early 1990s reported 7.5 percent of black and 1.8 percent of white women to have used cocaine before visiting any kind of medical setting for prenatal care (Humphries 1999:51). Although statistics such as these may suggest legitimacy in a racialized crack

mother icon, racial bias in drug testing had a lot to do with the racial disparity of the previously reported figures in the Florida study. Black women were significantly more likely than white women to be tested at the time of the medical visit and at delivery (Humphries 1999:50). Not only were black women overselected for drug testing, white women were underselected for it, creating a distorted picture of what racial group represented the majority of crack mothers (1999:51).

The media, too, contributed to this racialized representation of crack mothers, promoting the pursuit and widespread conviction of African Americans as pregnant addicts (Carpenter 2012:269). From 1983, before the crack mother epidemic took a sensational turn, 12 percent of the women portrayed with crack or cocaine on network news were White, and 3 percent were Black (Humphries 1999:21). By 1994, however, a

whopping 84 percent of those women portrayed with crack or cocaine were Black (1999:21). In analyzing the media portrayal of crack mothers, Humphries 1999 noted "an unusual degree of tolerance" when the subjects are white middle-class women. These white women were often filmed "in conventional maternal poses, bathing and caring for their

babies," with "an appropriate level of remorse," which seems to contradict hostility against crack mothers of the time (1999:22). Furthermore, by the 1990s, images of black crack babies screeching and trembling, supposedly from crack withdrawal, permeated the mainstream consciousness (Carpenter 2012:269). This association of African American women with the crack mother icon, according to Carpenter 2012, was the "latest embodiment of the bad Black mother," an "antithesis of whiteness" that defined black women since early American literature (270).

When the Law is Involved

Since the bursting of the crack mother epidemic, many pregnant crack users have been legally prosecuted. *Whitner v. South Carolina* is a 1997 State Supreme Court decision holding that pregnant women who risk harm to their viable fetuses may be prosecuted under the state child abuse laws (National Advocates for Pregnant Women). Across the entire nation, prosecutors have brought over 160 criminal cases against women who used crack or cocaine (Humphries 1999:67). Prosecutions, however, reflected a profound racial bias, because, although women of all backgrounds use drugs during pregnancy, the majority of the prosecutions thus far documented have been against low-income women of color—many of whom

**When a 1995 survey published in *The Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education* asked participants to envision and describe a drug user, ninety-five percent of respondents pictured a black drug user (Alexander 2010:103). In reality, African Americans constitutes only 15 percent of current drug users of 1995, while Whites were the vast majority, and those figures still held as of 2010 (103)**

used crack cocaine (1999:68).

Melanie Green, 24, was the first crack mother in the country to be prosecuted with a murder charge in 1989 due to the death of her baby (Humphries 1999:71). She was black. Bianca, Green's daughter, was underweight, had suffered brain damage, and died within days of her birth. Both Melanie and Bianca were tested positive for cocaine by the time of Bianca's birth. Given the strong belief in a link between prenatal crack use and adverse infant health outcomes of the time, crack cocaine was deemed the cause of Bianca's death (1999:72). Although the court dismissed Green's murder charge, the case received much attention, and served as the predecessor for many similar prosecutions to come. Interestingly, Paul Logli, the prosecutor in Melanie Green's case, after failing to charge Green with homicide, attempted to prosecute her for drug possession. Logli's effort to criminalize Green for harming her baby, even in ways unrelated to the actual pregnancy, demonstrates the felt need to punish crack mothers for their wrongdoing. As noted by Humphries 1999, prosecutors of the time saw crack mothers as "women who had refused to help themselves, who had used up all their chances, and who required the full impact of the criminal sanction to get them to carry out their duties as mothers" (71). These prosecutors represented a group of privileged white professionals, and the women they prosecute were mostly poor, black, single mothers. One out of the few cases in which the defendant was white, a case against Lynn Bremmer, was considered to "save race," to take the sting out of accusation that racism had motivated charges against similar cases with black defendants (1999:75).

Aside from being from privileged white backgrounds, the prosecutors involved in most of the crack mother cases shared another characteristic in common – an utter need to remain publicly visible to increase their chances to attain positions in higher office (Humphries 1999:70). How did they plan to fulfill that need? By selectively prosecuting high-profile crack mother cases since the issue was more or less at the center of public attention, according to Humphries 1999 (70).

### **the welfare queen**

According to Carpenter 2012, the women who embody the crack mother icon were perceived to rely on and abuse social support services, and were closely tied to the "welfare queen" discourse (270). During the 1980s, the poor in general were regarded as an underclass with dysfunctional behavior and values. News reports often depicted them as drug users, criminals, and freeloaders who did not live up to mainstream standards (Humphries, 1999). It was not a coincidence that one of Reagan's favorite and most often repeated anecdotes in his drug war discourse was the story of a "welfare queen" with "80 names, 30 addresses, 12

Social Security cards," whose "tax-free income alone is over \$150,000" (Alexander 2010:48). According to Alexander, the term "welfare queen" became an equivalence of a "lazy, greedy, black ghetto mother" (2010:48). Vincen-te Navarro, a medical sociologist who analyzed trends in national and international health care provision, reminds us that radical restructuring of the social welfare system "cannot take place only by repression but has to rely on active ideological offensive that could create a new consensus around a new set of values, beliefs and practices" (in Murphy and Sales 2001). It is clear then to see that the publicized images of the pregnant crack users as inhuman and irresponsible beings during the late years of the twentieth century can indeed be understood in terms of an "active ideological offensive." The social construction of "crack mothers" has successfully functioned to discourage middle class support for services for poor women and their children in the inner cities, who were also disproportionately women and children of color. This has together resulted in downsizing and de-funding of such services not only in the Reagan era, but decades after that (Alexander 2010 and Murphy and Sales 2001).

### **conclusion**

About two weeks after Kenneth Lewis' controversial Mother's Day Facebook post, the Florida Assistant State Attorney admitted to having "used a poor choice of words" and publicly apologized to anyone who took offense to his comments (NBS News 2014). Is calling pregnant women who use crack cocaine "crack mothers" or "crack hoes" simply a matter of poor word choice? Absolutely not. As this paper has revealed, the "crack mothers" phenomenon began as a genuine medical concern regarding the health effects of the unborn babies. With the help of the media, however, "crack mother" and related labels have quickly evolved into loaded social constructs, employed to validate existing racialized stereotypes as well as a political tool serving most notably in the agendas of the drug war. Linkage between crack usage until this day remains inconclusive, but what is uttermost clear is the extent to which a social label can persist when it is deemed useful to certain racial and political ideologies. More research should be conducted on other instances where certain socially constructed labels are employed for great political agendas. Lessons learned from these insights not only help inform the different ways we think about social organization, but also to prevent the marginalization of certain populations from the creation of such labels.

# the hand, the eye, the self, and the other: artisanship in the neapolitan luxury menswear industry

by renjie wong

## Ubiquitous Artisanship

- Artisan (n)*      1. A worker in a skilled trade, especially one that involves making things by hand.
2. Made in a traditional or non-mechanized way using high-quality materials.

*Mid 16th century: from French, from Italian artigiano, based on Latin artitus, past participle of artire 'instruct in the arts,' from ars, art- 'art.'*

As a journalist in the lifestyle publishing industry, I have encountered – and, admittedly, employed – the word artisan far more times than the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition might warrant. “A thriving haven of artisans,” “complexly floral artisanal gin,” “artisanship in its highest expression”: in today’s industrialized commercial landscape we are inundated with exhortations that certain commodities are less mechanized, and therefore more special, than others.

Perhaps nowhere is as abundant with such complex and contested notions of artisanship as the Neapolitan bespoke tailoring. The Southern Italian school of tailoring has, in the last decade, acquired global cultural significance as one of the most influential players in the larger menswear community (Sherwood 2013). From men’s magazines like GQ and Esquire to retailers like Saks Fifth Avenue, the fashion industry has high deified Neapolitan bespoke tailoring as the apogee of European artisanal craftsmanship, rivaled only by London’s Savile Row tailors. At the heart of this tailoring community lies the Neapolitan bespoke suit, a soft, casual garment crafted according to the customer’s particular body specifications by the tailoring house (*sartoria*) and its tailors (*sarti*).

Making similar claims to artisanship is the other major sector of the Neapolitan luxury menswear industry, the *confezioni*. These corporations produce similar clothes as the *sartorie*, albeit via a mode of production oriented somewhat more towards the ready-to-wear model of the fashion industry. With a larger scale, less customization, and more horizontal production layout – each garment is crafted by multiple artisans, each specializing in one part of the garment’s fit – it is often perceived by the *sarti* as being a less artisanal enterprise.

This artisanship trope finds its roots in the national *Made in Italy* marketing campaign of the 1980s, in which the artisanal and craft tradition of Italy was actively crafted, invoked, and foregrounded by the ICE-Italian Trade Agency (Yanagisako 2012). An intriguingly anachronistic foil to the machine-manufactured ready-to-wear goods that characterize today’s global capitalist fashion economy, the romanticized rusticity and virtuosity of its production places it a notch above the mass-produced Italian luxury brands of Milan. This garment’s cultural significance, rather than being a function of its material attributes, has thus become inextricably entangled with a culturally laden imagining of its local identity and how this is represented to the world (Terrio 1996; Shore and Black 1992; Yanagisako 2002).

Yet, as much as the fashion industry and its consumers have fetishized Neapolitan bespoke tailoring’s artisanry, beyond a commercial spotlight on the tailor’s workbench, rarely has a critical gaze fallen upon the complex cultural consistency of the community of individuals responsible for the garment’s artisanal craftsmanship. Indeed, as two summers of ethnographic fieldwork has revealed, the essence of artisanship in the *sartoria* rests upon a productive tension between perfection – manifested through the precise judgment of the artisan’s eye – and imperfection – manifested through the unmechanized imprecision of the artisan’s hand.

I argue that, more than a neutral trait of fashion commerce or a straightforward process of capitalist value-creation, the notion of artisanship is a rich lens through which one might begin to unpack and understand the mechanics of cultural identity in the Neapolitan luxury menswear industry. Following the

anthropologist Mary Douglas, I suggest that for the *sartorie*, concerns about Neapolitan society and identity are often mapped onto corporeal concerns, the body being the society writ small. Specifically, in constantly referring back to the two aforementioned aspects of the artisan's body in relation to the essence of artisanship, the *sarti* reveal an understanding of their craft as a material extension of the self. Concerns about the lack of artisanal eye or handcraftsmanship in the *confezioni* therefore evince larger concerns about Neapolitan cultural identity's susceptibility to being polluted and threatened by profane industrialization.

### the artisan's eye

As it turns out, a key element in the *sartoria's* production process is the artisanal eye, within which lies artisanal judgment. In explaining the differences between the *confezione* and *sartoria* modes of production, one *sarto*, Tommaso Esposito, repeatedly used the eye as a symbol for the perfect precision of artisanal judgment:

"In our method [of production], I measure the client and draw up the suit's patterns myself. I know how the suit will look like from start to finish. So the suit is made according to my eye; it fits perfectly. The problem with the horizontal production layout [used by the *confezioni*] is that everyone who cuts it uses their own eye. This does not work for creating a single suit. It's not an artisanal method, but they do it because they're a big company. The jacket isn't artisanal... because there isn't the artisan inside. There needs to be a difference between two artisans' works, because they are never perfect or identical, understood? There exists a difference between two artisans' eyes."<sup>1</sup>

Two points are raised here; the first relates to the perfect precision of artisanal judgment. When only a single individual handles the entire garment's fit, as in the case of the *sartoria*, the resulting suit has an aesthetic coherence, since it is the product of his encompassing artisanal judgment. On the other hand, when several individuals are involved in determining form and fit, as in the case of the *confezione*, the resulting suit becomes a chimerical expression of multiple artisanal judgments, combining said individuals' various restricted, myopic scopes of expertise. The final garment here therefore cannot coherently express a single artisanal judgment in the same way that the *sartoria's*

garment can. Francesco Pietrini, another *sarto*, echoed this view, adding that "the [*confezioni's*] tailors use pre-existing patterns; your garment is based neither on [the client's] body nor on the artisan's eye."<sup>2</sup>

The expression of the artisan's "eye," or judgment, is thus a key element of artisanship here. Specifically, the *sartorie's* use of the term "artisanship" really refers to the perfect precision of the artisan's judgment in determining a garment's fit, and how well this judgment is expressed in the garment. Yet, if the perfect precision of the artisan's judgment were to be the only determining factor in artisanship, it only follows that a higher level of precision is more highly valued, and that mechanized pattern-sketching would have been established as a fundamental characteristic of the *sartoria's* production process. But the *sarti* still abhor any notion of machinery in their industry. Clearly then, absolute perfection as provided by machinery is not desired: a certain element of variance, an expression of the artisan's "own eye," is desired.

This leads us to Tommaso's second point: the imperfect idiosyncrasies of artisanal judgment. By framing the "difference between two artisans' works" as an important trait in the *sartoria's* work, and the result of imperfection and variation in artisanal judgments – "they are never perfect or identical, understood? There exists a difference between two artisans' eyes" – he introduced, alongside the perfect precision of artisanal judgment, a certain imprecision and personal expression as an equally important constituent of artisanship.

This is because perfection alone implies a certain standard that is immutable and replicable, which, in an industry that creates suits for individuals, represents an undesirable inflexibility, regularity, and – worse still – lack of exclusivity. ("Exclusivity," as *sarto* Lino Rusconi once told me, "is the basis of luxury.") In highlighting the importance of "a difference between two artisans' works" and anchoring it to "a difference between two artisans' eyes," Tommaso suggests that artisanship rests upon the expression of a tailor's particular artisanal judgment – perfectly precise and skilled, but nevertheless a product of the artisan's personal opinions.

For the *sartorie*, the notion of artisanship therefore comprises these two distinct but symbiotic facets conjugated by the artisan's eye. The mechanics of artisanship operate as

1 27 June 2014. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian

2 9 July 2015. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

two sides of the same coin – or eye, as it were – and only when perfection and imperfection are kept in productive tension can artisanship arise. That is, in the *sartorie's* view, by parceling the cutting process out to multiple individuals, the *confezioni* disrupt the delicate balance between perfection and imperfection, thereby losing their claim to artisanship.

### the artisan's hand

Another key element through which artisanship's perfection-imperfection conjugation is enacted is handcraftsmanship as revealed in the artisan's hand. The notion of handcraftsmanship is deeply interwoven into notions of quality, artisanship, and Neapolitaness (*napoletanità*); the *sartorie*, after all, often judge the *confezioni's* work as less artisanal, because it is perceived to use less handcraftsmanship and more mechanized production. Our discussion on artisanship therefore cannot overlook the importance of handcraftsmanship, or the fact that the artisan's hand operates alongside the artisan's eye in maintaining the productive tension between perfection and imperfection in the *sartoria*.

Francesco, for instance, articulated how handcraftsmanship is nonpareil skill realized with only fallible human effort. He explained that "an artisan needs to be able to create this elegance with his hands, without using pre-existing patterns or machines."<sup>3</sup> In other words, in order for an artisan to fulfill his professional capacity, perfection in workmanship must not be achieved with external aids, either from templates or machinery; it must be crucially cantilevered by the inherently human imperfec-

3 9 July 2015. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

tion of his own handcraftsmanship.

Industry experts, too, clearly ascribe a great deal of value to handcraftsmanship. In fact, were one to form an impression of the *sartoria* based exclusively on menswear media, it would be easy to assume that handcraftsmanship were the key element of a *sartoria's* artisanship. The vast majority of menswear magazines focus on the manual work of the

sarti and patent manifestations of their handcraftsmanship, such as the pick-stitching on lapel edges or the hand-sewn basting threads on unfinished suits. After all, writes *Financial Times* (no doubt for its sartoria-patronizing audience), "Neapolitan tailoring is only as good as the hands that makes its suits" (2015). Discussing the extent to which clients prize handcraftsmanship, Francesco told me that Japanese clients are notorious for counting the number of pick-stitches per inch as a means of comparing how artisanal the *sartorie* are. That the minutiae of handcraftsmanship are

so valorized by the client is a readily apparent indication of handcraftsmanship's importance in constituting artisanship.

Director Gianluca Migliarotti – whose documentary films *O'Mast* and *E poi c'è Napoli* both feature luscious sequences of intricate, painstaking handcraftsmanship in the *sartoria* – articulated the perfection-imperfection conjugation in artisanship. In a conversation with menswear writer Derek Guy (2011), he argued that:

There is also the issue that bespoke tailoring will have imperfections. And this is a somewhat philosophical issue to me. Perfection is not beautiful. Perfection is industrial. A real tailor-made suit, on the other hand, has imperfections. Beauty is the striving for perfection but still has that *human touch*, so it cannot be perfect... What I love is that



those people strive for perfection but the *imperfection is the humanity of the piece*. I think this is true for anything artisanal. Like with artisanal handmade shoes, you might notice a little “imperfection” somewhere and think that this makes it a little bit “wrong”, but *it’s not wrong*... You will see one of the tailors in the documentary talk about this. Renato Ciardi of Sartoria Ciardi differentiates between different kinds of “mistakes”. (*italics mine*)

What is important here is not just that this perfection-imperfection interaction is understood as an intrinsic part of artisanship, but also that the artisan’s hand is a critical mediator of it; handcraftsmanship’s “human touch,” both literal and metaphorical, is employed as an evocative symbol of the *sartoria’s* work. As much as artisanship trades on a near-perfect level of workmanship, that other infinitesimally miniscule fragment of imperfection (“the humanity of the piece”) is desirable (“not wrong”), since it importantly enables the *sarto’s* artisanship to be infused into the garment.

Despite being an important component of artisanship, however, the artisan’s handcraftsmanship cannot function on its own; without a foundation of artisanal judgment, in fact, it stands as little more than merely superficial aesthetics. The supplementary relationship that handcraftsmanship has with artisanal judgment in constituting artisanship is most patently exemplified in the *sarto’s* and outsider’s different symbols of choice of artisanship. Despite the media and the client’s enduring preoccupation with beautifully intricate pick-stitching as a barometer of quality (as identified by Francesco), the *sarti* do not themselves use pick-stitching as the prime signifier of their artisanship. Instead, whenever I express an interest in viewing material evidence of artisanship, the *sarti* invariably direct me to one of two parts of the suit. The first is the hand-basted jacket, seen during an intermediary stage of the production process, when the garment-in-construction is covered with hand-stitched white basting threads that temporarily hold the different layers of fabric together, and that indicate the contours of the jacket’s fit. The second is the inner lining, also only visible during the suit’s construction, with the various layers of canvas, horsehair, and linen fabric linings held together by an intricate herringbone network of hand-stitched threads. In both cases the signifiers of artisanship are rendered invisible in the final product: in the former, the basting threads are removed by the second fitting; in the latter, the lining’s herringbone stitches are concealed by the jacket fabric.

This discrepancy in the choice of symbols of artisanship is doubtless partially due to the fact that pick-stitching, despite being a readily examinable demonstration of the *sartoria’s* intricate handcraftsmanship, is a product of the finishing process; that is, its creation is outsourced to the semi-independent artisans in the nearby town of Casalnuovo, making it (in the *sartoria’s* view) therefore less identified with artisanship than the hand-basted jacket or the herringbone-stitched inner lining is. More importantly, this reveals that artisanship cannot simply be about the beauty of handcraftsmanship. While pick-stitching is prized by the client as a signifier of artisanship, for the *sarti* it is not a sufficiently emblematic sign; it may evince exceedingly intricate handcraftsmanship, but it fails to also demonstrate the practical artisanal expertise and judgment that is to them a more crucial component of the artisanship around which the *sartoria’s* work revolves. The basting threads and herringbone stitches, on the other hand, are equally intricate as to evince the *sartoria’s* high level of handcraftsmanship, and they crucially also materially illustrate the contours of fit, created fundamentally by the artisan’s judgment and expertise. Even if – and perhaps especially because – these threads are eventually to be rendered invisible, the *sarti* see them as a richer signifier of the *sartoria’s* work, precisely for their ability to demonstrate artisanship’s form (handcraftsmanship) and function (artisanal judgment) in a way that pick-stitching cannot.

We have now a much more fine-grained picture of how the perfection-imperfection productive tension is mediated through the artisan’s eye and hand. Yet to be established, however, is how exactly this discourse of artisanship in the *sartoria* fits into the larger cultural narrative of Neapolitan identity. It is therefore the artisan’s body that we now turn our attention to.

### **the body as boundary and metaphor**

In *Purity and Danger* (1966), Mary Douglas famously wrote that:

The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious... We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva, and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body... Public rituals enacted on the human body are taken to

express personal and private concerns (115).

Examining the roles of artisanal judgment and handcraftsmanship in constituting the *sartoria's* notion of artisanship, I add to Douglas' list of bodily symbols the artisan's eye and hand. For if, as we have previously established, these two bodily images are central to mediating the perfection-imperfection conjugation in artisanship, it would also be apropos to argue here that they are able to illuminate the exact mechanics through which "the powers and dangers credited to social structure [are] reproduced in small on the human body". That is, lying on the boundary of inner and outer worlds, both the eye and hand are sites through which sarti can augment and infuse their artisanal Self into their suits. Because their craft is viewed as embodying the Neapolitan cultural identity, any encroachment upon the artisanal integrity of said identity is consequently interpreted as a dangerous pollution of the Self, prompting *sarti* to engage in a "ritual" distinction from the *confezioni* on the very basis of the artisan's eye (judgment) and hand (handcraftsmanship).

To trace this line of argument, we return to the artisan's bodily relationship with his craft. We have seen above how the *sartorie* understand their artisanship as being expressed and infused into the suits they create; what is notable in the particular ways the *sartorie* understand artisanship is the manner in which they foreground the artisan's body in the production process. The eye and the hand, as recurring symbols of artisanal judgment and handcraftsmanship, are key channels through which the infusion of artisanship into the suits is fundamentally enabled.

I propose that this symbolic infusion of artisanship can be formulated as a metaphysical extension of the *sartoria's* artisanal Self into the suits. The eye and the hand, after all, lie at the boundary of the body, and hence in the *sartoria*, they are pivotal sites through which the artisan's boundaries are shifted outwards to encompass his craft. When Tommaso said that "there isn't the artisan inside" the *confezioni's* suits they combine multiple individuals' microscopic expressions of artisanal judgment, he is fundamentally conceptualizing the craft of tailoring as a project to extend the artisanal Self into the garment via expression of the artisanal eye. Likewise, when Francesco said that "the artisan needs to be able to create this elegance with his hands," he understands his work as augmenting the artisanal Self via the expression of handcraftsmanship, recalling what Gianluca Migliarotti described as the transla-

tion of the "human touch" into the "humanity of the [garment]". Arnaldo de Benedictis, a trousermaker, echoed this sentiment: when we discuss the possibility of expanding his team to cope with higher production volumes, he told me that he ultimately still wants to "touch every pair of pants [himself], so [he can put his] soul into them."<sup>4</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the artisan's body – specifically the eye and hand – resurfaces as a key source from which the *sartorie* derive their distinction from the *confezioni*. We have already seen how Tommaso juxtaposes the *sartoria's* integrated cutting process against the *confezione's* splintered cutting process, the latter resulting in the unsuccessful expression of a coherent artisanal judgment, the unsuccessful infusion of the artisan in the garment, and – ultimately – the inherent absence of artisanship in the *confezione*. The distinctions *sartorie* configure around handcraftsmanship and the "entirely handmade" suit should also make readily apparent the importance of the artisan's corporeal physicality. Arnaldo argued that *confezioni* are less artisanal than the *sartoria* because they use a much lower percentage of handcraftsmanship – 30% to 75%, according to his informed estimates. He further grounded this distinction in the artisan's person: "What is artisanal is something you create with your hands, with your mind, without any patterns... The most important part of tailoring is the tailor, but it's very difficult to find the person [the artisan] when you [are] looking at [famous *confezione*] Corinzio's suits."<sup>5</sup> In the particular ways the *sartorie* understand artisanship and use it as a basis for distinction from the *confezioni*, the foregrounding of the artisan's body in the production process is therefore highly notable.

The craft of tailoring, more than just being an extension of the artisan's Self, is also an embodiment and expression of Neapolitan cultural identity. One *sarto*, Mariano Rusconi, poetically characterized the tailoring craft as "anthropology, because the core of [Neapolitan] culture is found within [their] artisanship, and the core of [their] artisanship is found within [Neapolitan] culture."<sup>6</sup> Further, Francesco situates artisanship at the very core of Neapolitan identity when he explained his foreign clientele's preferences: "they usually request the "classic

4 16 July 2014. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

5 17 July 2014. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

6 18 June 2015. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

Neapolitan style”... but for us Neapolitans, there do not exist typically Neapolitan items or styles, as long as they are artisanal.”<sup>7</sup> In these *sarti’s* views, artisanship is not merely a part of what it means to be Neapolitan, but an absolutely inalienable core characteristic of Neapolitan cultural identity.

We are now well positioned to understand two points. First, we see clearly how the mechanics of artisanship aligns Neapolitan tailoring with the Neapolitan cultural identity, enabling the former to embody the latter. That is, the *sartoria’s* claims to artisanal judgment and handcraftsmanship operate not simply to justify claims to artisanship, but also claims to embodying the Neapolitan cultural identity; the artisan’s eye and hand endow the *sartoria’s* suits with artisanship, but it also endows the Self with *napoletanità*.

Second, and more crucial to our present argument, we see how Mary Douglas’ theory of the body as social synecdoche operates in the discourse of artisanship in Neapolitan tailoring. For if the eye and hand are sites on the Self-Other boundary where artisanship can be extended outwards, then it only follows that the converse is also true: these selfsame sites can be encroached upon, invaded, or otherwise contested by that which is non-artisanal. Put another way, the Self is constantly in peril of Other pollution by the *confezioni’s* un-artisanal production practices. We see this most clearly in Arnaldo’s conflicting sentiments on the rise of the *confezione*:

There isn’t much artisanship in the way these [confezioni] make suits, but, in reality, all the sartorie have to thank [Corinzio founder] Paolo Pistola, because he brought our name overseas in the ‘70s, ‘80s... Now the problem is that our culture has changed, because people think [confezione production is] properly our culture. Look at our youths: there’s very little artisanship left... It’s not going well.<sup>8</sup>

In his view, the *confezioni’s* un-artisanal practices are directly responsible for changing Naples’ cultural identity. More than just sully-ing the *confezioni’s* own reputation, the lack of artisanship in their production practices has far wider repercussions, resulting in the degeneration and degradation of that which constitutes *napoletanità*. Given, then, that the *sartorie* understand themselves as embodying this *na-*

*poletanità*, the encroachment upon the artisanal core of Neapolitan cultural identity may thus be interpreted as a dangerous pollution of the Self.

Wielding this framework in mind, it quickly becomes apparent that what prompts the *sartorie* to carry out their strong artisanship distinction from the *confezioni* – characterizing the latter as fundamentally un-artisanal because their industrialized production practices lack artisanal judgment and handcraftsmanship – aren’t simply petty quibbles about who is better at producing clothes. Deeper forces are at work, since this distinction is, as Douglas postulates, a “public ritual enacted on the human body [that is] taken to express personal and private concerns” (1966). In this case, these concerns involve the preservation and continuation of Neapolitan cultural identity, which the *sartorie* understand themselves to be embodying, and which their own work consequently crucially depends upon.

Concerns about the corrosion of Neapolitan identity are thus mapped onto the artisan’s body, focusing sharpest around the imagery of the artisan’s eye and hand. As Judith Butler, building on Douglas, argues, “one might well understand the boundaries of the body as the limits of the socially hegemonic” (1990). For the *sartoria*, the permeable boundaries of the artisan’s body – his eye and hand – consequently becomes a primary site for self-definition and self-perpetuation, lest the non-artisanal practices of the *confezioni* threaten the continued existence of the Neapolitan cultural identity by changing what it means to be Neapolitan. This falls squarely in line with Bourdieu’s theorization that distinction is a means of preserving social hegemony (1979). The *sartoria-confezione* distinction of artisanal judgment and handcraftsmanship can thus be understood as a ritual distinction expressed through the artisan’s body. What emerges, then, is that the hand-basted jacket and the herringbone stitches of the inner linings are merely conduits of corporeal artisanship – important media through which we are ultimately able to see how the *sartorie* express their larger concerns about the Neapolitan cultural identity’s hegemony in artisanship discourse.

And so one would do well to return to the Latin etymology of the word “artisan,” as we saw at the start of this article. For if, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the notion of artisanship finds its origins in instruction, perhaps what is really happening with the Neapolitan bespoke tailoring community is a communication of distinctly local concerns and values amidst a generically global fashion industry. It is, in other words, a lesson in the art of being – with all of its bodily connotations – Neapolitan.

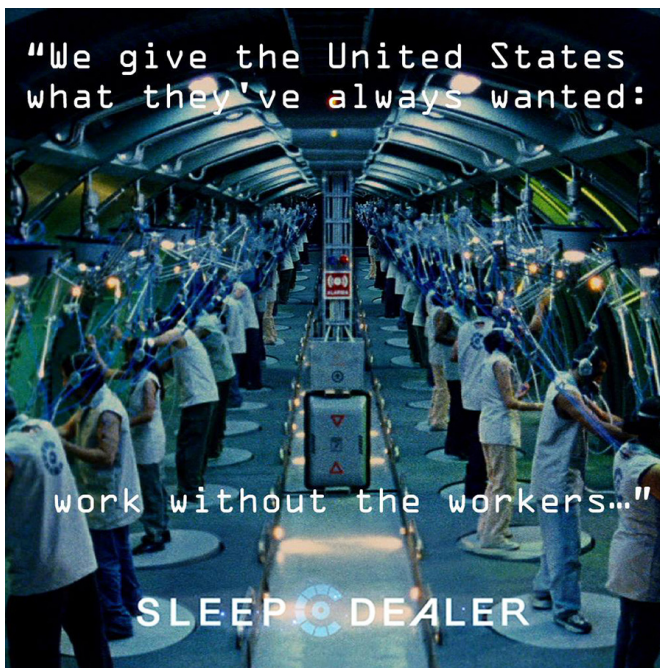
7 6 July 2015. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

8 16 July 2014. Interview conducted and transcribed by Renjie Wong. Italian.

# labor, fantasy, and resistance in global techno-capitalism: an analysis of alex rivera's *sleep dealer*

by kimberly krebs

As extensive and abstract concepts, technology and space are difficult to define on their own. However, defining them relationally can reveal how they both create and are created by material, conceptual, and imagined possibilities and constraints. Though it is exciting to envision virtual spaces as zones of unlimited potential, it is crucial to recognize



how virtual fantasies also have physical reference points and are therefore not immune to the possibilities and structural constraints of political and social spaces. Virtual and technological spaces, like physical experiences and maps, are also social worlds where racial, ethnic, national, and economic fields of power intersect, and where performance and structural inequalities co-construct identity and possibility.

This discussion focuses on the relationship between the politicized technologies of global capitalism at the geo-political border between the US and México in attempt to, quite literally, ground discussions of technology and critique the notion of a completely liberatory, apolitical technology *from an aesthetic perspective*. Drawing from the Situationist International Movement (SI), an intellectual and aesthetic organization spearheaded by European artists and intellectuals from the 1950s-70s, this analysis recognizes space as a political tool and appropriates the concepts and practices of psychogeography and the *dérive* in the modern context of biopolitical techno-capitalism. I suggest that the situationist *dérive*, as an imaginative "urban walking journey" in which participants "let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there," be considered in the context of the modern geopolitical border between the US and México. I recognize contemporary attempts to make specific bodies and geographies of exploitation visible and resist conflating the logic of apolitical liberatory technology with the tenets of free trade economics. In doing so, the imaginative practice of psychogeography, which is produced by the *dérive*, is re-located in border contexts of spatial dislocation and economic inequality, and becomes an imaginative practice of re-mapping power.

In this way, the *dérive* is located within geographies of inequality and is simultaneously a product of imagination as well as capitalist technologies of labor extraction. Considering Alex Rivera's 2008 film *Sleep Dealer* as the portrayal of one such *dérive* at the US/México border elucidates the contemporary political implications of this sort of aesthetic critique. In order to explore the implications of these new working definitions of psychogeography and the *dérive*, this essay will first examine what globalized techno-capitalism is within the

scope of the film and how it constructs its own psychogeography. From here, examining the parallels between neo-situationist internet art and the film demonstrates how cyber technologies may be used as part of politically-charged mapping practices within the techno-capitalist system.

In the tradition of Guy Debord and the SI and seen from within the world of *Sleep Dealer*, techno-capitalism is meant to denote a global system which exploits human labor through the use of technologies that increasingly integrate labor, the body, and social functions. This exploitation is achieved through both material and immaterial means—this is not meant to dismiss the physical consequences of material extraction of labor, but to suggest that techno-capitalism is also imaginative and enacts exploitation of human labor through its own psychogeography. Though Amy Elias, in her article “Psychogeography, *Détournement*, Cyberspace”, describes psychogeography as the situationists’ “anarchic mapping practice that wrested perceptual control from the panoptic spectacle and returned it to the human body,” it is productive to analyze how capitalism is also engaged in imaginative mapping processes enacted through various extractive technological instruments, labor practices, and geopolitical borders (Elias 2010, 825). For example, Luis Martín-Cabrera’s analysis of Rivera’s “Cybracero Systems” project represents an instance of techno-capitalist psychogeography in which technology would eliminate the necessity for workers to be physically present: “the main objective of Cybracero is ‘to get all the work our society needs done, while eliminating the actual workers and all the difficulties that workers imply: health benefits, housing, IRS, INS, union conflicts, cultural and language differences, etc.’” (Martín-Cabrera 2012, 590). Furthermore, the infomaquilas (a technological interpretation of maquiladoras, which overwhelmingly define the present geography of the US/México border) in the film “[emphasize], like the Cybracero project, the colonial fantasy that attempts to separate the visibility and materiality of the brown bodies of the south from their transformation into dead labor for the predominantly white bourgeoisie of the north, thus constructing a cyber-apartheid of sorts that segregates white owners from brown workers” (Martín-Cabrera 2010, 594). In this way, both the Cybracero project and the film demonstrate how technology is implicated in both imagining and enacting these geographies of exploitation.

Psychogeography, as a mapping practice, materializes in these technologies as they circumscribe bodies of laborers (brown) to distinct and separate geographical zones (south). In this case, the US/México border is both imagined and mapped as a technologically, but not materially permeable border that plays a critical role in enacting techno-capitalist fantasy and exploitation.

Outside of the film, the free trade imagination of the US/México border is particularly haunting when the post-NAFTA geography of Ciudad Juárez is considered. As a place where ethnicity and, in particular, gender-based violence has mushroomed in that past decades in parallel to the steady stream of young women from rural México which overwhelmingly comprises the city’s labor force, it is crucial to confront the links between maquiladora labor technologies and recruitment practices, how economic globalization is envisioned at the border, and how gender-based and sexual violence are central to the exploitative tendencies of this economic and social order (Ainslie 2012, Eisenhammer 2013, Weissman 2005).

The border/frontera *dérive* initiated by Memo in the film, the journey that begins as his own migration from rural México to the border but eventually connects him, Luz, and Rudy, represents an alternative psychogeographical mapping from within the exploitive technologies of techno-capitalism. Their re-mapping represents a rhizomatic knot within the imagined geography of techno-capitalism, as it re-orders the spatialization of power at the border. This coalition parallels the concept that, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms “[t]here are knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots;” as a mapping practice, psychogeography includes the arborescent power structures and fantasies of techno-capitalism as well as the offshoots that Memo, Luz, and Rudy represent (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 20). Their re-appropriation of the alienating and extractive technologies of the node labor system in the film—Luz’s memory-recording, Rudy’s expertise in remote weapon control, and Rudy’s pre-nodal connection to the dammed river in his home village—paradoxically uses techno-capitalistic technologies together to re-claim spatial specificity. In other words, they use the tools of techno-capitalism to re-claim and re-map space from within its spatially dislocated psychogeography.

Elias’ discussion of neo-situationist Internet projects similarly characterizes them as engag-

ing in this mapping from within. In fact, one project bears strong resemblance to Luz's use of the cyber-memory platform that eventually leads to their alliance with Rudy. DissemiNET is a project that, like Luz's memories, "correlates the diasporic nature of online existence with the real, lived, politicized diasporas of people throughout the world" (Elias 2010, 829). Her memories publicize the economically-motivated migration of people like Memo, whose displacement from home is not entirely "voluntary; encountering the site, a web surfer [like Rudy] is put into the uncomfortable position of negotiating a reterritorialized space" (Elias 2010, 829). Furthermore, Rudy's implication in Memo's displacement, mediated by Luz's testimony, compels him to engage directly with them in the remapping of techno-capitalist power.

The frontera *dérive* that Luz, Rudy, and Memo engage in is therefore multi-faceted in that it engages each of their personal notions of the US/México border in order to reclaim the right to the resources provided by the river in Memo's home village. The spatial separation imagined in techno-capitalist psycho-geography and technology is directly challenged by their diasporic alliance, as it forms an alternative discourse in identity politics while reclaiming the right to the commons of the dammed river. Their actions therefore "[propose] a much-needed transnational alliance between Chican@s and Mexicans in order to resist neocolonial capitalist exploitation and military control on both sides of the border" (Martín-Cabrera 2012, 595).

In this way, Luz, Rudy, and Memo demonstrate how spatial dislocation in a modern globalized, technologized, and biopoliticized geography can still be used to reclaim spatial specificity and collective ownership against the alienating and extractive impulses of techno-capitalism.

Sleep Dealer additionally offers an alternative vision of the utility of the *dérive* as a spatialized *détournement* in modern geographies of power. It grounds this situationist discourse by exploring the implications that capitalist technologies, present and imagined, have for the mapping of race, gender, and labor across boundaries, both material and technological. Though Sleep Dealer is a film and the projects that Elias discusses are "grounded" in virtual networks, their analyses of technological critique draw out the political agentiveness that technologies could have as agents that map the fluctuating solidity and permeability of global borders. In this way, technology is an important counterpart to the frontera *dérive* as not only a discourse, but a politicized location.



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# author bios



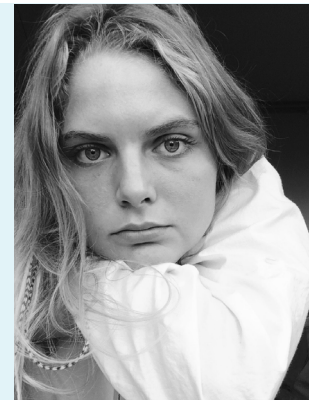
## **maarya abbasi**

Maarya Abbasi is a senior majoring in Science, Technology, and Society (STS), with a focus on Biopolitics. Much of her academic pursuits within her major have focused on humanistically exploring the ways in which science and technology are inextricably linked to culture and governance. She is also minoring in Global Studies and cotermining in Anthropology. She has been involved as both an advocate and counselor for survivors of sexual assault at a local non-profit, and as a Research Assistant within Stanford's Mind, Culture, and Society Lab. She has also conducted community-based field research in Philadelphia, where she examined some of the diverse ways in which notions of identity within the

South Asian diaspora are conceptualized and complicated by a variety of factors, including age, skin color and intergenerational trauma.

## **kimberly krebs**

Kimberly Krebs is a senior from Austin, Texas, double-majoring in Anthropology and Iberian and Latin American Cultures. Her studies have brought her to Santiago, Chile, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and her academic and research interests include urban and border studies, which she hopes to pursue in the future as an educator and researcher in Texas. On campus, she works with the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis focusing on migration across U.S. borders, and has been involved with various tutoring programs over the years, most consistently as a writing tutor for the Structured Liberal Education program. She is a novice film enthusiast and hopes to travel to México, D.F. in the near future.



## **mariam kyarunts**

Mariam Kyarunts is a senior double majoring in Anthropology and Biology. She is writing an honors thesis about the health care experience of low income patients in the emergency department.



### **vy le**

Vy Le is a Senior majoring in Anthropology with an emphasis in Medical Anthropology. With the support of Professor Angela Garcia and the Department of Anthropology, she is currently working on an honors research project that investigates the effect of HIV/AIDS on the family dynamic in the Vietnamese society. Vy hopes to use her Anthropology background to engage in important topics in medicine, especially those affecting underserved communities.

### **marisa messina**

Marisa Messina is a senior and four-year cotermin with undergrad degrees in Symbolic Systems (B.S.) and French (B.A.), plus a master's in Communication -- studies that speak to her passion for understanding how different contexts influence people's decision-making and communication processes. A previous Co-President of the Stanford Pre-Business Association, Marisa is currently Co-President of Cap and Gown Women's Honor Society and serves as chair of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education's Student Advisory Group. She enjoys engaging her love of writing as a tutor at the Hume Center, and loves exercising her creative side by making beaded jewelry, then selling it and donating the profits (an enterprise she has sustained since founding Callista Design Jewelry at age 11).



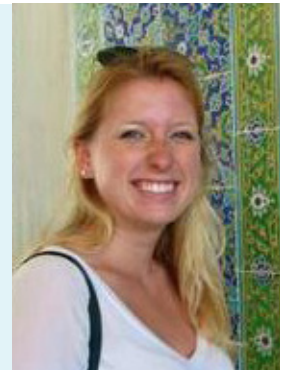
### **renjie wong**

Renjie Wong is a Senior majoring in Anthropology and Italian. His current research interests lie in the intersection of capitalist culture and artisanship, and he has spent the past two summers in central and southern Italy, studying the use of historical and cultural narratives in the Neapolitan luxury menswear industry. Originally from Singapore, Renjie is also a contributor to various menswear and lifestyle publications.



### **margaret tomaszczuk**

Margaret Tomaszczuk is a senior in Anthropology with a minor in Computer Science. After graduating she wants to work in technology before returning to school for a Master's in Cultural Anthropology. She is passionate about visual arts, archaeology, and the intersection of the humanities and digital technologies. Eventually, Margaret would love to teach Anthropology at an institution of higher education, or to work in a human-technology research role in industry.



# CONTEXTS

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