

chapter 1: *televisual terrain*

section one

media spatialities and the construction of normalcy

Media worlds can be thought of as constituting, in Yann Moulier Boutang's words "new spaces of enclosure"¹ such as the space of television, the 'footprints' of satellites, the space of the internet and mobile communications. Underlying or superimposed on these possible spaces are other bounded spaces, phenomena or entities such as geographic space, national space, diplomatic space, sovereign space, urban space, transport space, inside and outside spaces, legal and illegal spaces, resistant spaces and what might be called 'architectural media space'. Each of these spaces engenders its own unique community.

There is now and always has been vast power attached to who controls the media, who controls the information flow. Such control is the reality of human history, however it has its unique contemporary form. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's view is that "modern

power is not at all reducible to the classical alternative 'repression or ideology' but implies processes of normalization, modulation, modeling and information."²

How do people perceive the world they live in? World views are deeply cultural, and in looking at contemporary media art this dissertation will essentially be dealing with 'first world' people and cultures that make such art. It will look at the kinds of worlds they inhabit and hence initially needs to ask how such worlds are constructed, how and why the flow operates. How the world's reality principle is kept intact. Historically, media reuse or 'appropriation' art, wherein the artists positioned themselves as 'outside' the media flows, employed the deconstructionist strategy enabling viewers to *better see* the way media operated, and to interrupt the flow.

Curiously though the media flow is itself constantly interrupted. One could argue that the essence of contemporary media is interruption and fragmentation. Commercial television news exists in the spaces between the advertisements. People have to stay watching. A Channel Nine News Producer used to always say, regarding the structuring of the news broadcast, after an advertisement "get them back in with a car accident," a murder or otherwise macabre fatality.³ As Paul Virilio says: "television exposes the world to the accident. The world is exposed to accidents through television..... television is a media of crisis, which means that television is a media of accidents. Television can only destroy."⁴

The television medium is also a regime of normalization. The only time I have ever seen a break in the even flow of the news, outside of the occasional transmission problem, was an extraordinary segment on the 6.30 news on SBS TV.⁵ It was from the BBC, and was the story of the 30 January 2002 State of the Union 'Axis of Evil' speech given by

President George W. Bush. Whoever had cut it had zeroed in close on the mouth of Bush as he delivered the axis of evil pronouncement, so that there was nothing but a speaking mouth in the frame. They had then altered the clapping of Laura Bush and others in the audience right down to a drugged level of slowness. The sound was as normal, but the vision was of crazy framing and strange speeds. It was much more like a piece of video art than the smooth surface of nightly news. It was not repeated on the 9.30pm broadcast; instead there was an entirely different BBC segment on the same story – maybe the earlier news editor hadn't fully realized what they were putting to air. Somehow it slipped through – a singular, never to be repeated media moment. Perhaps it was a BBC protest, using the medium, in the way the story was cut, edited and effected, to state a position in regard to the Bush administration. This is the kind of lengths today's subversive producers of television have to go to break through televisions' regime of normalization. Even the extra-ordinary rescheduling of news around crisis like the outbreak of war, the funeral of Diana or the 9/11 disaster becomes 'normal.'

I will now look at this process of televisual normalization and its relation to the state war machine. In 1961 United States President Eisenhower in his now legendary outgoing speech said that the US must “guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex.”⁶ The term morphed a while ago to *military entertainment complex*. Recently it has morphed again to 'militainment'. The derivation of the word entertainment is from *entre-tenir*, to hold between, to suspend. The idea is that entertainment suspends the activity of the workday, providing a structured rest from productivity. As Australians in 2003 work the most hours (along with the North Americans) of any workers in OECD countries, it appears that there is little time away from work to dwell in the space of entertainment.

The traditional notion that there was a difference between news, current affairs and other forms of entertainment is also no longer the case – all is info-militainment today.

The increasing militarisation of contemporary society was heralded in George Orwell's 1948 book *1984*. One of the key slogans of Ingsoc's (English Socialism) Newspeak was "war is peace."⁷ Foucault suggests that war is required as a perpetual, quasi-religious sacrifice without which no society could hold together for long.⁸ The methods of institutionalizing the militarizing tendency are increasingly sophisticated. John MacArthur – author, journalist and publisher of Harper's Magazine – addressing the question as to why there are no large scale anti-war protest movements in the United States since the 2003 Iraq war began said: "over the last couple of decades the military has become a scholarship program for poor kids who can't afford school. Now, you don't hear from their parents because they don't have any money or any power or any clout."⁹ The world sees this televised cast of thousands daily in the Iraq war, a huge, on-going media event.

Back home, as if to counter-balance the siege mentality (Australia under threat from outside forces, and increasingly from those 'inside') – and to take up whatever time Australians have when they are not at work – there are now vast amounts of lifestyle and home improvement television shows exhorting people to do more, consume more and work harder to renovate their lives. Viewers live as if they are already on television. They are lining up to be part of the relatively cheap home shows which are a slim cover for sponsorship and advertorial. Such television infotainment or reality dramas are hosts for advertisements and hence the narratives must be pliable enough to not disturb but enhance the reception of ads. The machinic assemblage that is the militainment complex is structured around the consuming subject, one who does not stray too far outside the bounds of appropriate behaviour *as seen on television*.

human perceptual apparatus

How has this closed loop reality come about? Is it hardwired into the brain? N. Katherine Hayles speaks of Humberto Maturana's idea that no information from the outside world reaches the inside of the organism as such. His point is that any information coming from the outside bounces off an interface, and as it bounces off that interface there is a trigger or a reaction inside the organism. This perceptual apparatus, the interface, is not just like a filter through which information is passing, rather it is an active construction of the world in response to what is happening in the environment. She says:

This may sound like it is quibbling, whether you talk about information passing through a filter or active construction, but in fact epistemologically it makes all the difference. It is pointing out the fact that there is no world for us without an active construction through our perceptual processes, which always constitute a perspective or a standpoint from which we experience reality.

So it goes from a model from where you would say: 'the world exists and we see the world' (that is the old model), but in this new model you would say: 'we have an active engagement with an unmediated flux which we can never see in itself, but what we do see is our experience of that flux.'

Epistemologically it emphasises the active construction of the world out of sensory processes, through which we come in contact with something which we can never see from an Olympian viewpoint. We construct it through all the sensory apparatus that are particular to our culture, our species, our individual

*organism... And of course there is the overlap with what other humans see for example. For me the important point is: one always experiences reality from a perspective. There is no such thing as seeing reality without a perspective. As Maturana says: 'Everything that is said is said by an observer.'*¹⁰

Maturana would claim that each living system thus constructs its environment through the “domain of interactions”¹¹ made possible by its *autopoiesis*, or self-making.¹² He claimed that it is the circularity of the its organization that makes a living system a unit of interactions.¹³ What lies outside the domain of interactions does not exist for that system. The use of Maturana’s ideas here sets up an interesting conceptual model for thinking about media spatialities, and media reuse by artists, as when N. Katherine Hayles says (in the above quote) that “there is no such thing as seeing reality without a perspective” I am arguing that this ‘perspective’ is one which is organized by the media, and television in particular. In this new century the state construction of this ‘perspective’ is more pervasive than ever.

Marshall McLuhan wrote that the one thing fish don't see is water, that is, the basic conditions of their own environment.¹⁴ In Maturana’s way of thinking, our environment is our *interface to it* and this is equally hidden to us as water is to fish. To expand on this point: if we live in a closed “domain of interactions”¹⁵ and are unaware of the conditions of this closure, as fish are unaware of water, then we also do not know the limits of our thinking, imagining it boundless. We are largely unaware of how our worldview has been constructed (for us). This dissertation argues that ‘worldviews’ are shaped by a range of forces which speak through the media and other information apparatus – that the individual perception machine, that *interface* which shapes our view of the *unmediated*

flux Katherine Hayles speaks of, is in itself deeply mediated. Made for (and by) television, radio, the press and the internet – the conduits of contemporary culture.

Exactly how Maturana's interface – the human perceptual apparatus – is constructed is a key question of this thesis. Vilem Flusser would argue that human agency has long gone, that what we see is an expansion of what he calls *apparatus of capture*¹⁶ proceeding with only their own advancement at stake. He warns against the kind of thinking that "behind the images it uncovers secret, superhuman powers at work (for example capitalism) that have maliciously created all these programs instead of taking it for granted that the programming proceeds in a mindless automatic fashion."¹⁷ Deleuze has a different position: "One can of course see how each kind of society corresponds to a particular kind of machine – with simple mechanical machines corresponding to sovereign societies, thermodynamic machines to disciplinary societies, cybernetic machines and computers to control societies. But the machines don't explain anything, you have to analyze the collective apparatuses of which the machines are just one component."¹⁸

How might we see the 'collective apparatus' Deleuze invokes in action? Taking the McLuhan fish/water metaphor further, and articulating the 2003 global reality, Dr. Nancy Snow, author of *Propaganda, Inc.: Selling America's Culture to the World* says:

The propaganda war is the most integrated part of the New War; it's the part of the war on terrorism that is probably the most hidden from view but the most pervasive. I like to say that we're the fish and propaganda is the water. We're in a surround-sound of language and image control. Think about how quickly the

*administration declared a WAR on terrorism. Once war is declared, debate is done.*¹⁹

The following example, drawn from the North American situation, may shed more light on one of the collective apparatus' currently in place. At a certain point soon after 9-11, a small group of powerbrokers inside the Bush administration believed that they could use this event to go after Saddam Hussein. There was no known link from al'Qaeda to Iraq. Even the CIA couldn't come up with anything. However the Bush administration set about to manufacture connections in people's minds and succeeded, using the media, to the point where, as reported in the Washington Post, in February 2003 half of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein was involved in the al'Qaeda attacks on The World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.²⁰ According to this source, this figure increased by September 2003, to seven in ten Americans believing that Saddam Hussein had something to do with the 9/11 destruction, and 8 in ten believe he had links to al'Qaeda.²¹ While Hussein and al'Qaeda come from different strains of Islam and Hussein's secularism is incompatible with al'Qaeda fundamentalism, Americans instinctively lump both foes together as Middle Eastern enemies. "The intellectual argument is there is a war in Iraq and a war on terrorism and you have to separate them, but the public doesn't do that," said Matthew Dowd, a Bush campaign strategist. "They see Middle Eastern terrorism, bad people in the Middle East, all as one big problem."²²

This misconception appears to have been surgically enhanced by the Bush administration, even though they claim to have not advocated this connection. In follow-up interviews, respondents to the Washington Post poll were generally unsure why they believed Hussein was behind the September 11 attacks, often describing it as an instinct that came from news reports and their long-standing views of Hussein. For example,

Peter Bankers, 59, a New York film publicist, figures his belief that Hussein was behind the attacks "has probably been fed to me in some PR way," but he doesn't know how. "I think that the whole group of people, those with anti-American feelings, they all kind of cooperated with each other" he said.²³ Remember the words uttered by George Bush soon after the World Trade Centre attacks: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."²⁴ This is a clear construction of an 'inside' and an 'outside' space. The Washington Post article quotes Kim Morrison, 32, a teacher from Plymouth, Indiana, who described her belief in Hussein's guilt as a "gut feeling" shaped by television. "From what we've heard from the media, it seems like *what they feel* is that Saddam and the whole al'Qaeda thing are connected," she said (my italics).²⁵ Bush's opponents say he encouraged this misconception by linking al'Qaeda to Hussein in almost every speech on Iraq. Deborah Tannen, a Georgetown University professor of linguistics who has studied Bush's rhetoric, said even a gentle implication would be enough to reinforce Americans' feelings about Hussein. "If we like the conclusion, we're much less critical of the logic," she said.²⁶ The Bush administration and the American people need this conclusion to continue justifying the losses accruing in Iraq, and in fact their very presence.

cognitive dissonance

Consider another recent global case in point, the so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction that formed the basis of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Any trace of these 'WMD' has so far failed to materialize and all documentation regarding such weapons is increasingly found to be fraudulent and/or just plain wrong.

The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) reports that 41% Americans (as of late June 2003) believed that WMD have been found. Among those who approved of the decision to go to war and were not just supporting the President (53% of the overall sample), a 52% majority said the US has found weapons of mass destruction, 48% said they had not or did not know . Among Republicans who said they follow international affairs very closely – and thus may also be more exposed to media reports promising leads – an even larger percentage – 55% – said weapons had been found, with 45% saying they had not.²⁷ Respondents also seem to be unconsciously rewriting history in their minds, in stating different reasons than the ones given at the time to go into the war, the main one cited (after WMD) being that Saddam Hussein was an oppressive dictator.

Steven Kull, director of PIPA, comments that for some Americans, their desire to support the war may be leading them to screen out information that weapons of mass destruction have not been found. “Given the intensive news coverage and high levels of public attention to the topic, this level of misinformation suggests that some Americans may be avoiding having an experience of cognitive dissonance.”²⁸

According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (that is, beliefs and opinions). When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. Two factors affect the strength of the dissonance: the number of dissonant beliefs, and the importance attached to each belief. According to Festinger, there are three ways to eliminate dissonance: (1) reduce the importance of the dissonant beliefs, (2) add more consonant beliefs that outweigh the dissonant beliefs, or (3)

change the dissonant beliefs so that they are no longer inconsistent.²⁹ It looks like the third option has been adopted in the aforementioned cases.

Kull thinks that to some extent this [WMD] misperception can be attributed to repeated television and press reports that there has been a promising lead in the effort to find evidence of such weapons, reports that are not counterbalanced by prominent reporting that these leads have not been fruitful.³⁰ He goes on to say that there is also reason to believe that this misperception may be unconsciously motivated, as the mistaken belief is substantially greater among those who favored the war.

The point I am making here is that people believe the media. It has the aura of objective truth around it, still. It is possible to manipulate this 'aura' of authenticity by suggestion, by dropping hints in certain directions. It is always made easier by the original circumstances – the lie of the land, so to speak. As a result of Americans feeling under attack and their increasing political isolation, their heartfelt collective desire for nationalism and patriotism has allowed them to be careless with the facts, aided by a behemoth media machine. In general, Americans want to support their president. They do not want to believe that he is wrong, especially when American lives are being lost. This desire is played to perfection by the Bush administration's Carl Rove: "an absolute genius at media manipulation – he makes [the Blair government's] Alastair Campbell look like a second-rater."³¹ The apparent ease of Rove's success is to some extent explained by the fact that ten years ago in the United States there were more than fifty media outlets, today after massive media concentration, there are between five and seven.³² The US media situation is relevant to Australia, as we now have the same kind of entrenched concentration of media ownership.

Among the 'coalition of the willing' partners, in the wake of the Iraq war, all kinds of media ownership deals are underway, seemingly as payback to a compliant media. Both the ABC Television in Australia and the BBC in England are under repeated review for their conduct during the war, having been charged by their respective governments with bias. The ABC appears to have come out relatively unscathed but this is not the case for the BBC for which, at the time of writing, the situation is becoming increasingly difficult and complex. In the examples cited here the relation of the state machine to the media machine – Deleuze's collective apparatus – is apparent.

Australia is one of the few countries left in the world with terrestrial delivery. One could argue that it is the easiest system to control. The present Australian Government, like its UK counterpart, has the largest public relations machine in the history of Australia. It is highly centralized and spends more on PR and advertising than ever before.³³ Despite this, the 'children overboard' debacle appeared to leak from under the information shackle and escape government control. Such events however seem to have little effect in the polls; the 'PR state' seems to have Australians right where it wants them in that it doesn't really matter whether what they say is true or not, people are happy to just hand over the reins to the government's promise of homeland security to get on with their home renovation. This situation now bears a striking resemblance to the US mediated political landscape.

Likewise the media is increasingly the only public sphere available, and it is deeply controlled, as are all of the new spaces of enclosure. I am thinking here not only of talkback radio, but of 'serious' shows like SBS *Insight* which purport to offer 'debates' on current topics but actually offer no debate at all, just a series of voxpops within a strict televisual format – here no-one acts out of turn, there is no misbehaving, all play exactly

by the institution's rules, well trained as they are by the all seeing eye of the media. And as Mark Davis has observed in his book *Ganglands*, the Australian media is dominated by a particular generation of baby boomers and hence hardly representative. A glance at the recent 'Power' issue of the *Australian Financial Review Magazine*³⁴ again confirms this entrenched generational power in Australian 'public' life.

However, the media *infrastructure* carries within itself the potential for its own destruction. Satellites rule the skies above us and in the world war on terror little is now more vulnerable than the shadow land of satellites in orbit. These are potential nuclear attack targets. The view from the RAND corporation is that within the next five years not only Russia and China, but also Pakistan, North Korea and even Iran may acquire the ability to carry out such attacks. The US itself, as a cornerstone to the 'New American Century' doctrine is committed to retain American nuclear supremacy. The effect of such an 'outside' nuclear attack on a satellite would be far reaching as the ensuing nuclear cloud would affect many other satellites for months and years to come, mainly by eroding their solar panels and leading to inoperability. An attack would do most harm to the US, which owns most of the more than 250 satellites and which depends more than any other country on space systems. Such an attack would substantially damage the US and world economies (replacing the ruined satellites could cost tens of billions of dollars, in addition to the cost of losing their services) and would seriously damage the US military which relies heavily on civil and commercial satellites for functions such as communications and weather forecasting.³⁵

This new threat is one amongst many illustrating in fact just how vulnerable communications and media infrastructure is. The internet is already a subject of panic over cyberterrorism, hackers and criminals. In a political coup, the first aim has always

been to get control of the television stations. This is another reason why a compliant, media-addicted populace is better for the state. One which has no desire for independent media, but is happy to be lulled to sleep at night by dreams of a backyard water feature. Imagine the world when the media and communications systems came crashing down. How would people live?

It would be the end of the virtual world as described by John Grey, author of *al'Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern*, here writing about the film the Matrix:

Even when we are not insulated in this way [that is, plugged into walkmans etc], our world is deformed by the mass media. Each day, we may encounter a filthy environment and dysfunctional public services, but in the virtual world conjured up by interactive television we are all only a moment away from wealth and freedom. For many people, this fantasy world is more compelling than their disjointed everyday actions and perceptions. The Matrix shows the logical outcome: a dream-filled half-life.³⁶

television and addiction

One of William S. Burroughs' key insights was his understanding of the fundamentally intertwined functioning of Control and Addiction systems, as a "cybernetic and informational aggregate which includes both subjection and enslavement taken to extremes, as two simultaneous parts that constantly reinforce and nourish each other."³⁷

This is the idea underlying a more playful take on televisual addiction by New York curator Joshua Decker, who presented the exhibition *Cathode Ray Clinic #1* and wrote:

Imagine the world without television. What would your life be like? Who would you be? How would things look? No more Saturday morning cartoons, MTV, Dan Rather, Home Shopping Network, football, The World Series, late-night stripper shows, I Dream of Jeannie re-runs, cereal commercials, Star Trek, Bill Moyers, Seinfeld, Public Access, BET, Court TV, The Simpsons, The Weather Channel, CNN, David Letterman, or whatever else turns you on. Suddenly, it will all have been turned off; we would have been turned off. Television would become a strictly contraband drug, as the already entrenched mass addiction, the great tube habit, clamored for satisfaction.³⁸

In this work people entered the gallery for a 'fix' of television, which is perhaps not as absurd as it sounds, given that the televisual conduit has distinct neurological effects. Psychophysicist Thomas Mulholland found that after just 30 seconds of watching television the brain begins to produce alpha waves, which indicate torpid (almost comatose) rates of activity.³⁹ Alpha brain waves are associated with unfocused, overly receptive, emotional states of consciousness. "A high frequency alpha waves does not occur normally when the eyes are open. In fact, Mulholland's research implies that watching television is neurologically analogous to staring at a blank wall."⁴⁰ Alpha waves are present during the light hypnotic state used for suggestion therapy hypnosis.

Then there are the experiments conducted by researcher Dr Herbert Krugman of the US General Electric Company which showed that while viewers are watching television, the right hemisphere of the brain is twice as active as the left, a neurological anomaly. "The

crossover from left to right releases a surge of the body's natural opiates: endorphins, which include beta-endorphins and enkephalins. Endorphins are *structurally identical* to opium and its derivatives (morphine, codeine and heroin.)⁴¹ Humans are renowned for wanting to repeat things which bring them pleasure, these are said to be *habit forming*. The left hemisphere, which appears to 'turn off' while watching television, is the critical region for organizing, analyzing, and judging incoming data. The right brain treats incoming data uncritically, and it does not decode or divide information into its component parts. "Rather, it processes information in wholes, leading to emotional rather than intelligent responses. Humans cannot rationally attend to the content presented on television because that part of our brain is not in operation."⁴²

Television watching shuts down the higher brain regions (the midbrain and the neo-cortex) and most activity shifts to the lower brain regions (like the limbic system). The neurological processes that take place in these regions cannot accurately be called "cognitive." The lower or reptile brain simply stands poised to react to the environment using deeply embedded 'fight or flight' response programs. Moreover, these lower brain regions cannot distinguish reality from fabricated images (a job performed by the neo-cortex), so they react to television content as though it were real, releasing appropriate hormones and so on. Studies have proven that, in the long run, too much activity in the lower brain leads to atrophy in the higher brain regions.⁴³

This 'flight and fight' response assists in explaining the popular addiction to televised sport. Krugman's research shows that television watching becomes habit-forming, particularly if it also embeds some kind of on-going narrative into our psyche, as a hook or a passport to viewing pleasure. This gives the viewer a reason or desire to watch that

program again, rather than another program. Program-makers therefore work to construct characters and programs which develop this pleasurable and emotional relationship with the viewer, to keep them coming back for more.

If we (hyper)link this neurological approach of the effect of watching television, to Maturana's interface – the perceptual apparatus which is not just a filter through which information is passing, but rather an active construction of the world in response to what is happening in the environment – we find that the response to television by the brain (as constructing the interface to the world) can never be particularly active, nor of a high cognitive level, as those levels of cognition are literally 'switched off.' This is reinforced by McLuhan's parallel comment that the one thing fish don't see is water, that is, the conditions of their environment. We live inside a media saturated environment, which is only becoming more intense, yet to us it is normal, nothing extraordinary. What we begin to see is a picture of a people transfixed by media, living emotionally *inside* the media flow, unable to separate reality from what they see on television (an aspect which is then reinforced by other media like radio and print). This mediated reality builds up a coherent world view, a "domain of interactions"⁴⁴ forming the 'perspective' Hayles speaks of when she says: "There is no such thing as seeing reality without a perspective."⁴⁵

section two

"The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" ⁴⁶

Section two of *televisual terrain* has three main components. The first will look at the European non-commercial televisual world from the late 1950s to the early 1980s compared to the American and Australian situation, as a way to approach the new spaces of televisual enclosure. It will then move on to discuss contemporary television communities and narrative (including reality television), then will briefly look at the on-going dream of public television and artist access.

Television – the light-emanating box in the lounge room that millions of people stare into day and night – is the point through which the world at large enters the privacy of the home. Television is not a medium like paint or clay but a mode of distribution – its *materiality* is of glass and electricity, and paradoxically, of no material at all. American media theorist Stanley Cavell states: "I will characterize the material basis of television as a current of simultaneous event reception."⁴⁷ Its *materiality* is immaterial in that its broadcast moment is more or less simultaneous with its moment of reception, joining its viewers together in "an electronic nonspace."⁴⁸

These virtual communities of television watchers are deeply geographic and historic, however they do have limits. There are those inside and those 'outside' of the community. Such bounded, geographic and historic communities come to bear the weight of specific 'audience memory'⁴⁹ though ironically, in an Orwellian doublethink manner, such communities have also to bear the weight of historical amnesia.

global and historical televisual communities

A significant difference between the Western European media landscape and the Australian/US media world was the presence (or not) of commercial advertising. It's hard to imagine from an Australian perspective, but for European countries up till the early 80s all television was state-run and did not take advertising. The only advertising was that which came in isolated blocks of five minutes before and after the news each night. There were no program interruptions. The conclusion to be drawn is that Australians – following the introduction of television – grew up inside an interrupted and fragmentary televisual space similar to North America. In Australia, as in the US, we had an abundance of commercial stations whose sole *raison d'être* was advertising revenue and market share. We had more American programs than they had of ours.

The US has never had a state-controlled media, though you could say that the entire media landscape is now state controlled and increasingly part of the state apparatus. Australia had the ABC and later SBS which are state-owned television stations, while in Europe there were only state controlled stations until the early eighties. In Eastern Europe it was all state controlled.

Such historic and geographic situations determine the different kinds of literacies we now see in narrative constructions, and have done so since the introduction of television. The consequences of these various media landscapes can be seen in the kinds of responses to mass media by artists living in, for example, the 'European media zone' and those living inside the 'North American/Australian zone.'⁵⁰ Such implications will be

addressed in chapter 3 *mediazone*, particularly in relation to the European reception of American Pop art.

This text will primarily look at 'western' media and art practices. 'Other' cultural spaces are largely outside the dissertation's scope.⁵¹ However, some examples of the force of television as a 'space of enclosure,' particularly soap opera are too powerful to not mention here. A documentary which aired in Australia in 1997, called *Telenovella* dealt with South American obsessions with the telenovella.⁵² It charted the relation between media ownership and control, and narrative content of the respective telenovellas in Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil. Such telenovellas (like soap operas, but with limited life spans) are typically 180 episodes long and run one after another continually. The Mexican telenovella industry is dominated by one company called Televisa and churns out dubbed soaps for export to almost every country in the world. In both Brazil and Mexico, where there are strong connections between media and government, the soaps were the usual fare of love story dramas, watched obsessively by a public who seemed to live in two realities – one reality, the fantasy life of the telenovellas, the other, their drab everyday lives. In 1995 this documentary⁵³ claimed that one company, Globo, dominated the media in Brazil with 60 million viewers and 75% of the market. In a three hour block every evening Brazilians watched various telenovellas. As soon as one series is finished, another is ready to begin. In one incredible incident in December 1992, the very popular 22 year old soap actress Daniella Perez was murdered hours after the episode aired of her breaking up with her male lover. It was soon discovered that the actor who played the lover had murdered her (even stranger, with help from his wife), as he had "confused reality with fantasy."⁵⁴ At that same moment, Brazilian President Collor was being impeached in Brazil's Parliament on charges of corruption – an unprecedented event. Newspaper editors were in a state of confusion as the latter event

should have been the most critical event happening in Brazilian public life, yet the newspaper headlines for days to come were dominated by the murder of the soap star, as this *is what the majority of people wanted to read about*. Fantasy won over that other more tawdry world of political reality.

A situation in Venezuela was quite the opposite. Remembering Alexander Kluge's affirmation that for those without a public arena there is nothing but *political death*,⁵⁵ in this case the telenovella *became* the public arena. In late 1993, in a country where the government of the day run by President Carlos Perez clearly did not have total control of the media, a telenovella, *Down These Streets*,⁵⁶ came to air with characters modeled on the Perez government. It exposed the powerbrokers and 'mates' whose tentacles controlled everything for Perez. Interviewed for the documentary, the French Ambassador of the day to Venezuela said he always watched the show to get an inside view on the country. When a huge corruption scandal broke the program makers reacted quickly, and were able to write, shoot and edit on a daily basis for weeks as Perez was deposed to face corruption charges. For an incredible media moment, the Venezuelan people saw in the telenovella not empty romances and domestic dramas, but television based on 'real' events in their country as they unfolded. They were glued to the screens and eventually were out on the streets, celebrating the downfall of Perez.

This doesn't contradict the earlier research to do with the neurological impact of watching television, rather it supports it. The case cited here is an example of viewers relating to television in an emotional way. Not only could one argue that this televisual event was good for the country, in that it removed a corrupt leader, but it was also no doubt good for the station's advertisers.

contemporary television communities and narrative

This part of section two address ways that the audience engages with television, and the ways different shows function.

In television narrative space the programs are constructed around advertising. The multiple plotlines are segmentised – *chunked* – with ads in between. They must be interesting enough so that the viewer stays watching through the ads and remembers what it was they were involved in. As Norman M. Klein writes: “the television viewer learned to sustain interruptions and still retain a story (at least before the arrival of VHS). For generations now, TV shows have been designed in narrative fragments that are quite different from stories shaped for feature films.”⁵⁷

The narrative plotlines of most soaps, dramas and reality shows revolve around a core group of regular characters. The audience doesn’t need much exposure in order to identify a set of traits and characteristics, from which plot lines hang as scenarios develop. Klein writes that:

Only certain types can survive there; but to call them flat, and simply move on, is inaccurate. They must exhibit an emotional complexity, and at the same time, a machinelike instrumentality (hop in the car, get beaten up, forgive, forget, remember, jump, punch, do two-second double takes). Clearly not every character can manage this special balance and keep going every week, for years, even generations, if the show goes into syndication.....

TV characters....have to be too resilient to be changed by conflict. If they are not resilient enough, the concept of the show would have to change every week. That obviously would be a merchandising nightmare. The episodic character lives like a special weekly house guest, the kind who doesn't expect the bed made up anymore. As Todd Gitlin wrote:

*'Plainly, the route to syndication was in characters who became like little household gods. All the more motive for suppliers to concoct characters who promised to wear well. Perhaps most of all, the networks care which actor is going to realize the characters. Only as flesh and blood, as an actor, does the character exist for the audience.'*⁵⁸

Viewers recognize characters (as opposed to *identifying* with characters which is more a cinema mode of viewing) as being similar to people they know. Group-based shows revolve around what constitutes the characters as a *group*: they might be a family, like *Everyone Loves Raymond*; friends, as in *Sex in the City*; neighbours as in *Home and Away*, or co-workers, often solving problems, as in *Crime Scene Investigation*. Klein describes the bond between the audience and the character as *topological*, referring to the relationship between elements linked together in a system, for example a computer network. Klein goes argues that the episodic show is built around a 'buddy system' where the family, the small group of pals or the co-workers meet each week (on television) to renew their bond. He writes: "The conflict involves how the system (standing in for the viewer's relationship to the characters) survives from show to show..... Relationships go on the rocks, but marriages go on forever if the marriage still has high ratings."⁵⁹

This idea can be extended to a notion of the televisual community – it is one of friends, in this lonely world. As Brandon Tartikoff points out: “television is a personality medium. Viewers relate to the performers in their favourite TV shows as surrogate friends.”⁶⁰ This is as true for traditional style drama as it is for the new breed of reality television shows, which also engender communities of audience memory.

Advertisements also have characters in them, familiar faces and scenarios which may be repeated with slight variation over time, that is, a night’s or month’s viewing. Think of the characters in the ANZ Bank series; the plant nursery people to whom the bank is their friend, their trusted ally who will never let them down, never get in their way but will just be there, for them. The Bank as the one stable thing in the chaos. These ads make a direct appeal to middle aged couples with teenage children, particularly they are addressed to the woman of the couple. They are in a style of narrative that women tend to remember, that gets under their skin – fragmentary, emotive. The two ANZ Bank parents are cool and happy, the narrative is cutting edge style, that is, conversations off camera with a visual focus on details, gestures and the transitory moments in daily life. Advertising often uses the same techniques as contemporary television series. Ad characters and others like them appear across channels, that is, are familiar on all channels as horizontal markers over one day, whereas the other characters from actual television series only appear on what could be envisaged as the vertical axis of specific channels in specific slots on specific days. However the latter many appear so-to-speak *out of sequence* in station IDs at random times throughout the viewing experience – outside of their regular time and space slot – and also of course in promos for the show in the days leading up to that episode.

Televsual characters set comforting patterns for viewers, through their appearances and their timeframes of existence. They can be relied on to always be there, they show up at the appointed time, or maybe they just pop into your life as a surprise on a promo or station ID. The TV magazines reinforce this 'good friends' idea as they tell you both the real life stories of struggle and joy of the actors, as well as fill you in on story-lines to come.

And as good friends do, the television keeps an eye on you. One is 'watched' via the ratings system – it knows if you are watching or not, and increasingly the interactivity feeds back into the system what the viewer is thinking. For example, via the 'Good Neighbours' competition on the TCN 9 Today Show the station is allowed a privileged access to the values of the viewers, finding out who they think is 'good' and why.⁶¹

What we watch on television says a lot about how we are feeling as a nation, claims an executive from Campaign Palace: "in the nineties we were watching tales of alienation and dysfunction, like *Seinfeld*, but now what we want as a nation is to connect, and this is why we are watching reality television."⁶² Connect to what? And how? Connect to each other via the characters on the screen, as they connect with each other in these strange artificial situations? Connect to a wider, imagined community via the show? Connect and then be dumped once the show is over, though in the case of competitive reality show *The Block* the characters are lingering on, via magazines, recording deals and television advertisements. And of course, there is always the sequel, or just the next show in the pipeline. *Australian Idol* immediately filled the gap on Sunday nights left by *Big Brother*.

Robert Wallace,⁶³ series producer for Beyond's *Hot Property*, says of the interactive aspects of *Big Brother* (via the net and SMS) that SMS is being pushed as it makes more money than the internet mode. Recent figures show that Australians send 80 million SMS messages per week, and internationally 300 million SMS messages are sent per week.⁶⁴ The revenue from the *Big Brother* SMS voting is shared between the provider (who manage the phone-ins), the station (Channel 10) and Southern Star/Endemol. Each make millions out of the SMS 0055 number. "This is cream on top for Channel 10, who paid 26 million (to Southern Star/Endemol) for the show. It is 5 or 6 hours of airtime every week for months. *Big Brother* has turned Channel 10's fortunes around," says Wallace.⁶⁵ And so it seems has the follow-up, *Australian Idol*. Sophie Tedmanson, entertainment reporter for *The Australian* newspaper writes that more than a million people are using SMS to vote for the top three winners in the Australian version of the globally franchised show, the winner of which is crowned and receives a recording contract with BMG.⁶⁶ Tedmanson writes that in both the US and UK versions of the show, the runners up have then also soared up the charts, often eclipsing the winners. In this way, the stars constructed over a few months in the televisual space of enclosure quickly move on to inhabit another field of entertainment, allowing room for a new crop to come up in the televisual 'Idol' farm. These instant recording stars slide sidewise as it were into the space of radio and music television, and hang around event and endorsement space before being shunted off to shopping mall appearances, a move toward an eventual fall off celebrity planet.

Wallace sees that there are two types of reality TV: the *observational* style – for example, *Hot Property*. These are a lot like documentary, the camera is a fly on the wall as the people go about a process (for example, to buy or sell property). "Each person has a different story to tell and the show captures a part of their life's journey."⁶⁷ Then

there is the *interventionist* style – for example, *Big Brother*. The producers create and manufacture the whole thing. There is generally an inducement to get them in and what they play for is the immediate cash, recording deals and other prizes, then subsequent endorsements and sponsorships.

Not everybody wants to be on TV. Wallace says that it is all about knowing how to play the camera. “You’ve either got it or you haven’t. There has to be a comfort level and confidence about the camera.”⁶⁸ People have to tailor their speech to potential delivery. He claims televisual *talent* is the ability of people to “project themselves and tell their story, to communicate, to spill the beans.”⁶⁹ Telling their story to a community of watchers extends these people’s lives into that community. It also changes the way people behave. “Have you noticed how often people behave as if in front of a camera?”⁷⁰ asks Robert Riley in conversation with Joshua Decker.

There is of course another reason that we are seeing so much reality. Wallace claims that reality television is cheap – for example, *Hot Property* costs around \$80,000 per half hour, \$160,000 per full hour. In comparison, the recently-axed (in mid-2003) drama *Always Greener* cost \$400,000 per hour, having to pay, for example, fully unionized wages and conditions.⁷¹

We can therefore expect to see a whole lot more reality on TV. It will continue to take new forms, as there is less to distinguish news and current affairs from fiction and reality television. We now see characters from various global reality shows getting together off-screen. For example, the fifth place winner of the 2003 *Australian Idol*, Robert (“Millsy”) Mills recently appeared to have a liaison with visiting celebrity, star of reality show *The Simple Life* and heiress, Paris Hilton. This affair was documented on page three of the

national newspaper *The Australian*, headlined “Fifth prize for an Idol: a night at the Hilton.”⁷² The pair were spotted by the newspaper the next day at the Melbourne Cup, Australia’s “biggest party.”⁷³ Their photograph together appeared again on page 3 of *The Australian*.⁷⁴ Was it a real affair or one simply staged for the cameras, and more importantly does the difference matter? The suggestion of the liaison was enough to hold media consumers spellbound. It no doubt provides an excellent basis for the on-going, mediated life on Millsy.

*But one is enslaved by TV as a human machine insofar as the television viewers are no longer consumers or users, nor even subjects who supposedly ‘make it’, but intrinsic component pieces, ‘input’ and ‘output,’ feedback or recurrences that are no longer connected to the machine in such a way as to produce or use it. In machinic enslavement, there is nothing but transformations and exchanges of information, some of which are mechanical, others human.*⁷⁵

We dream media. German theorist Frederich Kittler would say that “media determine our situation.”⁷⁶ We wake up and wonder how Phillippousis played at Wimbledon. We go to sleep and worry about the fact that war is coming. These things are known via the extensive network of media – radio, television, newspapers and the internet – which provide ongoing narratives by which lives are lived. We live life inside a vast and labyrinthine media-datascape, coiled around the planet and beyond.

Communities of television watchers are not just geographic but are deeply temporal as well. There is comfort to be found in such communities as the Kleinian ‘buddy system’. All across the nation people switch on at 4.30 pm for a dose of the *Bold and the Beautiful*, as some do for the SBS news every evening at 6.30 pm or every night at 7pm

for many weeks of *Big Brother*, or *Australian Idol*. Television is structuring time as it structures communities locked together in “an electronic nonspace.”⁷⁷ This televisual temporal structuring over large chunks of the viewers’ year becomes more pronounced as shows like *Big Brother* and *The Block* adopt increasingly sophisticated tactics. As it stands, television orders the day, the week, months and years, over generations. Whatever was essential viewing in the sixties, seventies, eighties, the nineties and beyond turned those viewers at some level into likeminded communities, able to laugh at the same jokes and cry on cue. Media have always engendered communities in both time and space, in contemporary culture these are being constructed more aggressively than ever. We see instant celebrities created in media cycles which are both intensifying and shortening.

Moreover, Klein argues that “each placement of gesture and clothing ties the story to the narrative continuum of audience memories, not to the plot of the show.... The subject is not the story, but the stylized transaction between consumer/audience and their television program.”⁷⁸ He discusses how the transactional base of the television viewer is different to that of the shopping mall wanderer – when you enter the mall, one begins as audience, then finally purchases, whereas in the movie theatre, one purchases first, then becomes an audience. On commercial TV, one is asked to dream as both consumer and audience simultaneously. Klein argues that “television is merely the machine, of course; and the convex screen is simply the site of exchange,”⁷⁹ increasingly augmented and enforced by other media forms like magazines and events and information and telecommunications systems like the internet and SMS.

The arguments presented here demonstrate how media is intensifying and networking over a variety of forms. The mediated spaces change the way we experience life by

colonizing and directing our interface to the world. Norman M. Klein posits an imaginary museum exhibition in the year 2087 on the subject of television where the catalogue essay would read:

*The 1980s were a turning point for the art of watching television. After forty years of home viewing, Americans had learned to adjust their economic and political life according to television programming models. Events in the world did not make sense unless they were scripted like television. Public crisis could be contained entirely within a simple, relatively portable space, the geometric fantasy of what lay inside the television screen. The art of watching properly came into its own, altering the act of reading, the act of entering a public place, the training required for a job, the way distances were perceived, the way rooms were designed and so on.*⁸⁰

public television and artist access dreams

This last part of section two will address the somewhat faded hopes of public and artist access to television.

There was a time in the seventies and eighties when there was a movement of artists working within the space of television. There was also, from the early seventies, a clear excitement over the medium of video opening up channels of communication that was apparent in the issues of *Radical Software* magazine (1970-74) published by the NY video collective Raindance. Patricia Mellencamp⁸¹ speaks of one of the key figures in

this group, Michael Shamberg, a former Newsweek journalist. In 1970 he was commissioned to write what became the bible for video collectives, *Guerrilla TV*. Some thirty years on, his take then on American information culture is still astute and insightful:

*The Black Panthers . . . were created by TV. . . . But just as the media created the Panthers, they can destroy them, because the Panthers have no ultimate control over their own information. . . . No alternate cultural vision is going to succeed in Media-America unless it has its own alternate information structures, not just alternate content pumped across the existing ones. And that's what videotape, with cable-TV and videocassettes, is ultimately all about. . . . Context is crucial to the amplification of an idea to prevent co-option.*⁸²

For Shamberg, Media-America was a positive concept linked to youth and the future. He believed that video and other electronic systems comprised an evolutionary stage in human development; videotape was "a natural outcome of media evolution, giving us increased control over our psychological environment." Mellancamp argues that this convoluted bio-logic (which paradoxically also argued a radical break with the past) was permeated by McLuhan and perched on Norbert Wiener's book *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. For Shamberg and others feedback was a central concept: "only through a radical re-design of its information structures to incorporate two-way, decentralized inputs can Media-America optimize the feedback it needs to come to its senses."⁸³ Robert Wallace's earlier comments on SMS 'feedback' is the depressing reality of what has become of Shamberg's innocent yet hopeful 1970s dream.

The impossible possibilities of community media are exemplified in Australia with public

broadcasting organizations like Channel 31 in Melbourne and Metro Television in Sydney still awaiting the broadcasting utopia that seems destined to never happen. Geoff Morgan⁸⁴ writes that in 1974 a community access video project was initiated by community groups and the Australia Council leading to 10 video access centres and two resource centres being set up around the country. He says: “however, unlike overseas examples, community television in Australia was not attached to any television broadcast station.” Soon, the amount of programs being produced by these centres and from projects funded by the Arts Council and later the Australian Film Commission (and other film development bodies around Australia) provided the catalyst for the beginning of a community television lobby. However, he goes on to state that the programs being produced did not find a ready market in Australian television because “the format was considered unsuitable for network television.”⁸⁵ This early dream of both opening up the general space of broadcasting and within that opening a space for artists to broadcast has slowly faded to become almost nonexistent in both Australia and the US – just a far away memory. However, my favourite art show *Public Hangings* is broadcast on the public network, which offers some hope.

The question as to why a broadcast medium like television (or radio) has become a centralized medium – broadcasting out from a centre to a mass audience – is not because it is *inherently* a centralized medium, but that it was developed and used in this direction. Its organizing apparatus was a social structure which needed to communicate from center of power to the periphery (the viewer/listener). Alternative models of broadcast media exist including those public TV dreams outlined above, as well as the use of the television receiver as a light emitting object in the video installations of some artists like Nam June Paik and Dan Graham. The authors of *New Media: A Critical Introduction* say: “Recognising that a single media technology can be put to a multiplicity

of uses, some becoming dominant and others marginal for reasons that have little or nothing to do with the nature of the technology itself, is one important way of understanding what a medium is.”

What might be called a more paranoid approach to the production of images is taken by Vilem Flusser who articulated the idea of ‘the universe of technical images,’ which refers to any image produced through technical means, for example, cameras. A Czech Jew, he escaped World War 2 and lived 25 years in Sao Paulo, Brazil. His book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* published in German in 1983 was only translated to English in 2000. He writes:

Images are supposed to be maps but they turn into screens. Instead of representing the world they obscure it until human beings lives finally become a function of the images they create. Human beings cease to decode the images and instead project them, still encoded into the world ‘out there’ which meanwhile itself becomes like an image – a context of scenes, of states of things.....the technical images all around us are in the process of magically restructuring our reality and turning it into a ‘global image scenario.’ Since they are no longer able to decode them, their lives [humans] become a function of their own images. Imagination has turned into hallucination.⁸⁶

The collective apparatus we now have is increased concentrated control of media at every level, allied with close connections to government. Terminator Arnold Schwarzenegger has been elected as the Republican Governor of California, but just before this he appeared on commercials for a digital satellite owned by Rupert Murdoch, which is, in the Iraq war aftermath gaining a stranglehold over US digital television

broadcasting. Hasta la vista, baby...Norman M. Klein speaking of television says "And yet, it is what we have instead of boulevard life, to shape our unique modernity."⁸⁷

¹ Yann Moulier Boutang, "Los nuevos cercamientos: nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación, o la revolución rampante de los derechos de propiedad." Unpublished Paper. Quoted by Martin Hardie in the unpublished paper "A Shape of Law to Come?" private email, June 2003

² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 458

³ conversation with Robert Wallace, series producer, Beyond Australia, January 15, 2003

⁴ Paul Virilio interviewed by Louise Wilson "Cyberwar, God And Television: Interview with Paul Virilio," *Ctheory*, date published 12/1/1994 (cited online 10 July 2003) www.ctheory.net/text_file?pick=62. Paul Virilio adds "In this respect, and even though he was a friend of mine, I believe that McLuhan was completely wrong (in his idyllic view of television)."

⁵ SBS Television, *World News*, 30 January 2002

⁶ Interview with Dr. Nancy Snow, author of *Propaganda, Inc.: Selling America's Culture to the World* (cited online 1 October 2003)

<http://www.guerrillanews.com/media/cointel/doc744.html>

⁷ George Orwell, *1984*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1949

⁸ Andrew Hussey, "War without End" *New Statesman*, August 18, 2003 (cited online 15 October, 2003)

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FQP/is_4651_132/ai_107524589

⁹ John MacArthur, author, journalist and publisher of Harper's Magazine, interviewed by SBS Dateline 10 September 2003 (cited online 11 September 2003)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/>

¹⁰ Josephine Bosma, "Interview with N. Katherine Hayles," *nettime*, posted on 28

November 1998 (cited online 5 June 2003) <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9811/msg00064.html>

¹¹ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became PostHuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pg 137

¹² *Ibid*, pg 136

¹³ *Ibid*, pg 136

¹⁴ Mark De'Rozario "white magic" (cited online 7 August 2003) <http://www.k-gothic.net/whitemagic.html>

¹⁵ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became PostHuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pg 137

¹⁶ Flusser, Vilem, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, London: Reaktion books, 2000

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg 53

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pg 175

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- ¹⁹ Dr. Nancy Snow, author of *Propaganda, Inc.: Selling America's Culture to the World* (cited online 1 October 2003) <http://www.guerrillanews.com/media/cointel/doc744.html>
- ²⁰ Quoted in a paper delivered at the transmediale Festival by American academic James Der Derian in Berlin, February 2003
- ²¹ Dana Milbank and Claudia Deane, Washington Post Staff Writers, "Hussein Link to 9/11 Lingers in Many Minds" Saturday, September 6, 2003, pg A01 (cited online on 12 September 2003) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A32862-2003Sep5.html>
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Madeline K. Albright, "Bridges, Bombs or Bluster?" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2003
- ²⁵ Dana Milbank and Claudia Deane, Washington Post Staff Writers, "Hussein Link to 9/11 Lingers in Many Minds" Saturday, September 6, 2003, pg A01 (cited online on 12 September 2003) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A32862-2003Sep5.html>
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Program on International Policy Attitudes, "Strong Majority Continues to Approve of War with Iraq" (cited online 5 June 2003) http://pipa.org/whatsnew/html/new_6_04_03.html
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ L. Festinger, "Cognitive Dissonance" (cited online 20 June 2003) <http://tip.psychology.org/festinge.html>
- ³⁰ Program on International Policy Attitudes, "Strong Majority Continues to Approve of War with Iraq" (cited online 5 June 2003) http://pipa.org/whatsnew/html/new_6_04_03.html
- ³¹ John MacArthur -- author, journalist and publisher of Harper's Magazine -- interviewed by SBS Dateline 10 September 2003 (cited online 11 September 2003) <http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/>
- ³² Danny Schaeter, the mediachannel.org. See also "How CNN's Ted Turner Became an Anti-Trust Advocate", posted by Soenke Zehle to *nettime*, July 21, 2004
- ³³ Ian Ward, School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland "An Australian PR State?" paper for the ANZCA03 Conference, July 2003 Brisbane
- ³⁴ 'Power' issue, *Australian Financial Review Magazine*, Australian Financial Review, October, 2003
- ³⁵ Karl P Mueller and Elwyn D Harris, in "COMING SOON: Ten international security issues that are not getting the attention they deserve," *Australian Financial Review*, 4 July 2003, page 1-2 & 9. The Mueller-Harris sub-section on anti-satellite attack appeared on Page 2; they are both RAND analysts. First appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- ³⁶ John Gray, "Gimme the blue pill", *Australian Financial Review*, 11 August, 2003, pg 6-7 First appeared in *New Statesman*
- ³⁷ Mark De'Rozario "white magic" (cited online 7 August 2003) <http://www.k-gothic.net/whitemagic.html>
- ³⁸ Joshua Decter, 'Cathode Ray Clinic #1' exhibition essay, (cited online 15 July 2003) <http://www.apexart.org/exhibitions/decter.htm>
- ³⁹ Wes Moore, "Television: Opiate of the Masses" (cited online 27 October 2003) <http://www.familyresource.com/lifestyles/10/166/>
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.

There are also good resources on the addiction nature of television at

<http://www.newint.org/issue119/light.htm>

Terence McKenna, in *Food of the Gods* says that "The nearest analogy to the addictive power of television and the transformation of values that is wrought in the life of the heavy user is probably heroin." (cited online 27 October 2003)

<http://www.familyresource.com/lifestyles/10/166/>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. The article also states: "For a brain to comprehend and communicate complex meaning, it must be in a state of "chaotic disequilibrium." This means that there must be a dynamic flow of communication between all of the regions of the brain, which facilitates the comprehension of higher levels of order (breaking conceptual thresholds), and leads to the formation of complex ideas. High levels of chaotic brain activity are present during challenging tasks like reading, writing, and working mathematical equations in your head. They are not present while watching TV."

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became PostHuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pg 137

⁴⁵ Josephine Bosma, "Interview with N. Katherine Hayles," *nettime*, posted on 28 November 1998, (cited online 5 June 2003) <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9811/msg00064.html>

⁴⁶ The opening sentence of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, New York: Ace Books, 1984

⁴⁷ Stanley Cavell, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Harvard University (cited online 1 October 2003) <http://www.newschool.edu/mediastudies/tv/channel4/links/text1.html>

⁴⁸ Norman M. Klein "Audience Culture and the Video Screen" in Hall, Doug/Fifer, Sally Jo, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990, pg 392

⁴⁹ Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990, pg 24

⁵⁰ As far as I am aware there is no comprehensive collection of Australian media art going back to the 1960s in Australia. This is a project waiting to happen, and could easily be tied in to technical research on digital archiving of audio visual material.

⁵¹ To give an example of how complex cultural readings are in say China, the following example will be cited from my own experiences:

In Beijing, in 1998, an artist called Zhao Bandi, who was part of the Sydney Biennale in 1998, mainly a painter with some Photoshop and installation practice showed a work which, at the end of a long day of talking with artists, really jumped out.

It was a kind of night street scene crowded with neon advertising signs and logos, photographed and then reworked in Photoshop. everything was normal, but he had substituted one of the neons with the slogan, NEVER FORGET CLASS STRUGGLE. It was so strong, and my friend and I were excited and really talking a lot about it, as if it were a heavy irony, until I noticed that the artist, the translator and Beijing based curator Mr Huang Du were very quiet -- kind of sad and reflective.

Then the reason become clear. They talked about how this slogan was one which they would have written as children in their note books over and over again, and how they would have to repeat it (and many others like it) over and over again. The three people were at school at the tail end of the cultural revolution and the beginning of 'open door'. It was written onto their bodies, their memories by hand, every day, over and over in a way that an outsider could never know. It was an example of the utter complexity of reading images in a cross cultures/cross politics/cross time histories, and also of how one may "know" the history of a place, that is: "life in the cultural revolution was like this...." but never fully or even begin to comprehend the reverberations of the personal histories within 'the big picture politics.'

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- ⁵² Alexandre Valenti (dir), *Telenovella*, Arte, In Fine Films, Image Productions, 1995, aired on SBS TV in 1997
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Jose Luis Brea, <no more tv> revised version for the “Tele[visions]” catalogue text, Kunsthalle Vienna, 2001 (cited online 30 June 2003)
<http://207.21.242.176/as/art/circles/decter%202.htm>
- ⁵⁶ Alexandre Valenti (dir), *Telenovella*, Arte, In Fine Films, Image Productions, 1995, aired on SBS TV in 1997
- ⁵⁷ Norman M. Klein, “Audience Culture and the Video Screen” in Hall, Doug/Fifer, Sally Jo, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990. pg 380
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., pg 382
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., pg 383
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., pg 375
- ⁶¹ Running during September 2003
- ⁶² TCN NINE, *60 Minutes*, broadcast on 10 August 2003
- ⁶³ Telephone conversation with Robert Wallace, series producer for Beyond International’s *Hot Property*, 15 August 2003
- ⁶⁴ Channel 10 *News at 5*, 6 October 2003
- ⁶⁵ Telephone conversation with Robert Wallace, series producer for Beyond International’s *Hot Property*, 15 August 2003
- ⁶⁶ Sophie Tedmanson, entertainment reporter, “Idol riches await not just the winner,” *The Australian*, Monday November 3, 2003
- ⁶⁷ Telephone conversation with Robert Wallace, series producer for Beyond International’s *Hot Property*, 15 August 2003
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Joshua Decter and Robert Riley in conversation “Talking Television’ (cited online 9 June 2003) <http://www.postmedia.net/02/decterriley.htm>
- ⁷¹ Telephone conversation with Robert Wallace, series producer for Beyond International’s *Hot Property*, 15 August 2003
- ⁷² Sophie Tedmanson, entertainment reporter, “Fifth prize for an idol: a night at the Hilton,” *The Australian*, Tuesday November 4, 2003
- ⁷³ “We are here for what we’ve heard is the biggest party in Australia” said Monica Cleveland, Melbourne Cup visitor, quoted in Barclay Crawford’s article “International field for our biggest party,” *The Australian*, Wednesday 5 November 2003, page 3. The numbers to the 2003 Cup were swelled by international visitors in Australia for the World Rugby Cup played in Sydney, October/November 2003.
- ⁷⁴ *The Australian*, Wednesday 5 November 2003, pg 3
- ⁷⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 458
- ⁷⁶ Discordia blog (cited online 3 June 2003)
- ⁷⁷ Norman M. Klein, “Audience Culture and the Video Screen” in Hall, Doug/Fifer, Sally Jo, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990, pg 392
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., pg 387
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., pg 387

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pg 401

⁸¹ Patricia Mellencamp, "Eternal Frame" (cited online July 2003)

<http://www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/extras/mellencamp2.pdf>.

⁸² <http://www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/extras/mellencamp2.pdf>.

⁸³ <http://www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/extras/mellencamp2.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Geoff Morgan, "History of Community TV In Australia" (cited online September 15 2004) <http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~matthewa/cat/History.html>

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Flusser, Vilem, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, London: Reaktion books, 2000, pg 10

⁸⁷ Norman M. Klein, "Audience Culture and the Video Screen" in Hall, Doug/Fifer, Sally Jo, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990, pg 395