THE IRREDUCIBLE I:
Space, Place, Authenticity, and Change

By Cecilia Dougherty

Introduction

The Site of Change: Observation

> If there is one area where the achievement of
> consciousness comes into its own as a truly essential
> act, it is the realm of everyday life, where every passing
> instant reveals once again that the dice are loaded and
> that as per usual we are being taken for a ride.

> Raoul Vaneigem
> *The Revolution of Everyday Life*[1]

The achievement of consciousness occurs in the struggle, in
the moments of daily life, for awareness of what sort of life is
being lived. Making observations in the process of daily life is
the initial step in the struggle for awareness. The first things that
become noticeable to the observer are the connections of objects
to the space they are in, to each other, and to the larger frame of
the room, house, or landscape. One observes the space itself,
what part of it seems to be in use and what part of it is not as
differentiated; one also notices traces of what was once there –
traces of paint or old signage, a tree stump, the uneven surface
where pavement becomes cobblestone. We make these
observations not as part of a scientific survey, but informally
over the course of many realizations, memories, and associations
that attach themselves to objects and places. Often these
associations are not personal, nor are they necessarily
impersonal or general, but are based on the significance placed
there by the workings of consumerism. American popular
culture, for example, no longer springs from the grassroots of

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[1] Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* trans. Donald Nicholson-
Smith (London: Rebel Press, 2006), 11.

American daily life in an organic pastiche of things, gestures, music, and other aspects contributing to a common American sensibility. It springs from processes of consumerism such as trending, branding, and mass marketing, and it has taken over almost every sphere of daily life. Consumerism determines that our connection to daily life is second-hand; we must first submit to the re-creation of daily life for us by the corporation, and then we must forget that there is an authentic one waiting to be located and activated. But if the dice are loaded against us, as Vaneigem insists, we ought not be playing this game.

Corporate control of the space of daily life, including within the intimate space of each moment, makes everyone a subject of the corporation and prevents us from having an authentic relationship to our environment. Observation is the most basic act of resistance to corporate culture. The observer sees the space she occupies and becomes aware of the connections between herself and objects, people, events, etc.; she begins to construct a different geography and trace another history. She notices where her body ends and where everything else begins. This act of delineating the difference between the body and its surroundings, and therefore the self from everything else, is a tool for differentiating authentic space from corporate space, and for locating the space of the state as well.

Corporate space is the space of consumerism, and the space of the state is the space of authority, but consumerism is also a system of control. The function of the state regarding the population governed is to maintain a situation of control, a situation in which pathways to the mainstream are already mapped out, creating the status quo, a situation of cultural stasis. Creating a situation of stasis and control as the normal environment of everyday life results in the homogenization of culture and the regulation of daily life through routine. For the state, homogenization is a means of maintaining control through limitation, and for the corporation it is a way to control capital and the distribution of goods, to claim and exploit the earth's resources, and to control the conditions of human labor. The world as it appears now does not represent an unchangeable order of things; it represents systems of control. Locating

authentic space is a beginning step first in identifying systems of control; secondly, it enables connections to be made between the state-corporate alliance and the individual and collective quality of life; and thirdly, it enables the subject to begin reclaiming his identity. The demarcation of the body from its surroundings opens a space for the realization that something else is possible. Change begins with resistance of individuals, and eventually groups and collectivities, to the demands and incentives of corporate capitalism. Resistance to consumerism is resistance to global corporatism.

I use the terms "subject" and "individual" somewhat interchangeably to refer to a person's present state of being, although these terms do not always have the same points of reference. Subjectivity is a position, a place from which the individual emerges into the social realm, but it is not a fixed entity. It is an articulation of the individual as she constructs her identity and is an articulation of the tendency of society to place the individual within a set of characteristics and expectations as well. Subjectivity had been a topic of a major cross-discipline dialogue in art, film, and literature during the 1980s and 1990s. The dialogue failed to discern the origins and value of specific subjectivities within their own communities or within a global community, however, but succeeded in changing the nature of representation and communal perceptions of difference. The conversations about identity suggested a multi-centered perspective, re-arranging the center-and-margins organization of the social into a model that more closely reflects the idea that diverse perspectives are engaged in the construction of the present moment, as an interchange, a give-and-take, rather than within the unequal relationships as prescribed by a social hierarchy based on race, gender, class, citizenship status etc. Identity politics, as it is called, succeeded in calling into question not the origins of specific identities but the origin of the political function of marginalization, and asserted that difference and diversity are effective measures against homogenization and control.

The basic work of identity politics began with an investigation of different bodies. The space of the body is not the same for

everyone. In Western societies, as in the United States, people who have been classified as different, including entire groups and entire populations, are in particular relationships to their socio-political milieu based chiefly on their assigned difference. In order to be different, there must be an idea of sameness, or of the mainstream. For groups that have been marginalized and identified as being outside the mainstream, the space of the body is a heightened socio-political space. Gender, ethnicity and race, religion, aboriginal status, reproductive status, citizenship status, sexuality and patterns of loving, property ownership and states of homelessness all represent specific areas, for example, where the body of the individual may be legislated additionally. In other words, there are typical factors determining whether or not the individual may have more laws applied to him. Specific laws apply to entire populations that are given group classification that may or may not reflect the history of that group, but which always reflect the relationship of that group to authority. Some laws are written into a code while others are enforced through custom.

In her essay, "marginality as a site of resistance," bell hooks describes the everyday-ness of marginalization, and the everyday beginnings of resistance. Writing specifically about African-Americans, she states:

> Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin.

> There were laws to ensure our return. To not return was to risk being punished. Living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. . . . Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center . . . and on an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary vital part of that whole.

> This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided us an oppositional world view.[2]

hooks' statement describes the radicalizing influences of systematic identification of an entire population as racially marginal, who understand their oppression to be a group oppression. She states that acknowledgement of a racialized system was "private." However, it is the "structure of our daily lives" that impresses "an oppositional world view" on the private consciousness. The creation of an oppositional group consciousness begins in the private acknowledgement of oppression, at the level of the individual in assessment of the structure of the everyday. In America, racialism has been encoded in a system of laws, such as the former system of apartheid in the South, as well as in social customs, which affect aspects of behavior and mobility. The system of Southern apartheid is over, but crossing the line of customary social behavior continues to require tricky negotiations. W. E. B. Du Bois' major work, *The Souls of Black Folk,* has continuing relevance not only as historical record, but also in terms of his insight into the troubled association of African-Americans to the police and the criminal justice system, a relationship that has not changed significantly since the publication of his book in 1903. Modern policing remains heavily influenced by previously official systems of racial segregation, and law enforcement takes seriously its inherited responsibility to enforce the old social arrangements, where the behavior of people of color is always under suspicion, for example, and their myriad intentions are presumed to be primarily criminal. Even to assume the demeanor of innocence and the behavior of the status quo becomes suspect.

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[2] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center,* (New York: South End Press, 1984), quoted in bell hooks, "marginality as a site of resistance," *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures,* ed. Russell Ferguson and others (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), 341.

Resistance to oppression begins with awareness of the possibility of punishment, and of the specific relationship of the threatened body (in "private acknowledgement") to the socio-political environment within the moments of daily life. Laws affect different individuals and groups in the same location differently, and they either demand or prohibit actions at the level of mundane activity. Writer Georges Perec finds evidence of the consequence of different bodies within the same space when he describes the path he took in 1974, from his own room, hallway, stairs, building, street, and neighborhood, that lead to a doorway that showed evidence of his mother's presence, before she was transported to Auschwitz:

> First a single storey building with, on the ground floor, a doorway (blocked up); all around still traces of paintwork and above, not yet completely rubbed away, the inscription
>
> LADIES' HAIRDRESSER
>
> Then a low building with a doorway giving on to a long paved courtyard on several different levels (flights of two or three steps). On the right, a long single-storey building (giving in the old days on to the street through the blocked up doorway to the hairdressing salon) with a double flight of concrete steps leading up to it (this is the building we lived in: the hairdressing salon was my mother's).[3]

The state had created a differentiated space out of the collective space, based on Perec's mother's identity. Both Perec and hooks describe the phenomenon that Du Bois calls a 'double-consciousness,'[4] wherein an individual is able to see the whole situation, including the situation of exclusion and difference as well as the situation of the status quo – two types of space in the same location. Perec's writings and studies of space, which are

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[3] Georges Perec, "The Rue Vilne," from "L'Infra-ordinaire," in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* ed. and trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Classics, 1999), 214.
[4] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Signet Classic, 1995), 45.

quoted and discussed throughout this book, contain instructions on how to shape a conscious awareness of where the individual body ends and where everything else begins; this becomes a tool for understanding the effects of the process of identification on the experience of daily life. Acts of observation, and the formation of individual and collective identity, take on a political function within a social realm structured on hierarchies of power and authority, based partly on categories of identity, and socio-economic stratification. Michel de Certeau claims that the corporation has marginalized everyone, alienating everyone from the production of culture by commoditizing culture itself, not only in creating a commodity culture that might exist beside or within an authentic culture, but in creating a situation where all culture is a product of corporate engagement. In this case, which Certeau claims is the situation of the present, everyone remains in the margins. Social injustice is not a social problem. It is an economic problem created by corporate activity and allowed or promoted by the state. Unjust systems such as the system of slavery in the Americas, and racially unbalanced systems of criminal indictment and incarceration, for example, are based in economics rather than in actual differences between populations. Social injustice is not a root cause of social problems, but is part of the business plan.

Corporations have no single fleshly body that exists in relationship to its environment the way humans exist in relation to ours. The corporation exists as an entity to which specific laws apply, and under certain laws in America, corporations have acquired the status of persons. These laws create a relationship of the corporate body to the environment in which the individual body is not a factor. The corporate body has no clear point of separation, no skin that separates it from its surroundings. The corporate environment is everywhere. The corporation makes decisions that affect the quality of the everyday life of large segments of society, taking control of the means of making a living as well as taking control of culture, of the way the contemporary is built and the way the built environment is utilized. Corporations enfranchise individuals and groups by providing them with buying power. The corporation is promiscuous, and will provide goods or invent a

new range of products based on the buying habits of any of the categories of population, within a system of trending and branding that it has established to measure and control buying habits. Although it seems as though choices are being made, this is a closed system. The corporation has set up an inauthentic culture in which habitual consumption is the norm. In order to find some relief from consumer culture, the consumer must consciously "opt out" of the system that surrounds her. But corporate influence extends beyond the production of consumer culture. The corporation exercises control not only of the consumer, but also of governments, legislation, working conditions, ethics and value systems, landscapes and natural resources, ecological systems, and the international regulation of land use, commerce, and uses of the military. Corporations function like wealthy governments, on a transnational level across political borders and national boundaries.

It is necessary to begin resistance of global corporatism at the level of daily life, first, in order to reclaim possession of authentic consciousness, and then to be able to speak collectively through the diverse realities that constitute the collective quotidian. Theorist Félix Guattari claims that planetary survival itself is at stake. Understanding what is possible within the realm of the everyday requires an examination of space: living space, social space, physical space, and the space of representation. It is necessary to replace consciousness based on a hierarchical organization of society that depends on categorization, separation, differentiation, and the homogenization of culture, with an awareness of the presence and function of systems of interrelationship that represent an authentic construction of everyday life.

Although individual identity is always open to question and change, from within and without, subjectivity is the location of consciousness and a vital point of connectivity to a system that includes not only other individuals, but also collectivities, ideas, nonhuman participants, and catalysts of interactivity. The system formed by the interactivity of these elements represents the world as it actually functions, with or without state and corporate systems of control that conceal this functioning, and

also opens pathways to a more just and balanced world. Subjectivities and collectivities are diverse, and relationships are complex and often contradictory. The content of alternate belief systems and radical ideologies that form through individual or collective experience, however, do not form the basic matter of these networks of resistance. The basic matter of networks of resistance is the fact itself of non-hierarchical connectivity. The system of non-hierarchical connectivity accommodates varied belief systems, cultural difference, contradiction and paradox. A non-hierarchical system of connectivity is not a structure or a means of categorizing; it is a system that merely describes connections and affinities. In other words, it changes continuously, representing the organization of elements as connections are formed. The reality of any situation is a measure of the influences that contribute to the situation and is not a closed circuit of cause and effect.

In reference to a networked model of reality, this paper discusses what can be called the "irreducible I," which is the experience of being an individual within the networked system, in a state that cannot be reduced to specific or permanent relationships to self, society, or place. Even at the level of DNA, which is not so much a marker of identification as it is one of change, the self is irreducible. In the intimate moments of the everyday there is revolutionary potential in negating a search for an essential core self and asserting, instead, one's irreducible identity.

Space and Place: Location

The irreducible I requires space. After discussing the importance of developing a consciousness of the everyday through observation within the intimate experiences of the everyday, this book examines the place of daily life. Space and place are defined and delineated in relation to each other and to the organization of space. Space itself is an entity without a concept. It may have ground, sky, air, or directionality, but it could signify anything or nothing until it acquires objects and markers of human activity. Space is also the area we travel

through to go from one place to another. Small spaces exist between objects, and between buildings. Large and small spaces provide a reference for scale, and also for time, since larger amounts of space can be perceived in terms of the length of time it may take to travel from one point to another. Space and time are presented as inseparable elements of the same reality. Place is articulated space, whether by architecture or ritual, and represents the arena of the social. Place is where society is built. Human need occupies the center of our concepts of space and place, and both space and place change through time, in memory, and by use. Traces of earlier societies may not always reveal what a particular place may have signified to them, and in losing the memory of that significance the place changes, returning to its status as unspecified space, or acquiring a new use and new significance in another society.

Representational space is discussed in terms of the spatial sense that enables differentiation and categorization of ideas, traits and characteristics. Representational space is where a separation of specific elements of society into situations of sameness and difference occurs, and where the functions of identity within a common perception of society as a whole are determined. The irreducible I uses the space of representation to continually update itself. This involves not only a network of language, imagery, speech and sound, for example, but also the influences of the perception of self and other, based on aspects of society that govern representation. These include the establishment of behavioral norms, perceptions of racial and gender differentiation and the meanings these might have within other spheres of society. These latter aspects of representational space do not so much govern the representation of difference, per se, but govern the basic perception of difference. Representational space is where the concepts of the norm and the status quo are formed.

In the context of this writing the space of society is the organized space of the collective consciousness of groups, cities, and nations under specific governance or tradition, as well as the global networks of telecommunications. Society is formed on communication, interaction, trade, and culture; society is the

space of human culture, whether that culture is authentic or corporate, just or unjust, extended over a large or small area, or even isolated. Society is the invention of human interaction. Society is also represented by the formation of "place" out of "space," the organization of space into zones of meaning and reference, the use of language and other forms of representation that communicate meanings, and references that facilitate the organization of space.

Non-places and interstitial space are the final fragments of this chart of space and place, both of which refer to actual physical space as well as cultural conditions and states of mind, but one type of space could be said to represent an escape from the other. I use the term non-places to refer to the architectural infrastructure of the globalized market place as well as the electronic spaces we enter on a routine basis. Non-places include international hotel and restaurant chains, supermarkets, and shopping malls as well as the familiar spaces of computer operating systems, software windows, and smart phone applications. "Non-place" is a term coined by anthropologist Marc Augé to describe architectural spaces that are devoid of regional references, not only in terms of design and materials, but also in terms of value systems. They are homogenized, familiar places, meant for temporary use rather than for settlement – places we pass through while traveling, or places where we stop briefly to rest, to conduct business, to go shopping. To architectural historian Hans Ibelings, what Augé calls non-places are the culturally neutral zones of leisure and business that signify the borderless sphere of global commerce. The non-place, whether it is physical or wired, is a connected place, and because our world has been completely mapped and our contacts are on a global scale, non-places are important ports of call.

Interstitial space has a vital role in the social realm as well. It is often unregulated and noncommercial, disconnected from the surveillance of authority and the constraints of scheduling. The term refers to time, occasion, and activity more than to a type of physical space, and it refers to escape as well as discovery. This is a place where time is one's own. The interstitial spaces of

childhood and youth are different from those of adulthood. The term refers to activities such as art making, poetry, lovemaking, daydreaming, and partying – essential activities for maintaining perspective, and perhaps sanity, and for the expression of a mutable and continuously forming subjectivity. Interstitial spaces may be tiny zones of autonomy, or the entire milieu of creativity. They may be moments of chaos or moments of meditation.

The fields from which I draw information and inspiration include literature, film, journalism, popular culture, telecommunications theory, geography, sociology, critical theory, philosophy, anthropology, and architecture. The topics one field brings to the discussion cannot be raised except in relation to topics across the range of influences, each a specific facet of the same phenomenal moment. Therefore the study of aspects of space cannot be separate from the study of aspects of representation, or corporate influence on culture and the authority of the state. The glue that holds this analysis together is a mixture of environmentalism, feminism, thoughts on expertise and commonness, and the influence of identity politics. The silver thread that runs through this piece is a search for the processes that enable the expression of authentic identity and an experience of autonomy.

The writings of Perec were the initial inspiration for beginning this project. The essays in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* can be checked against many common experiences of daily life. The study of the meaning of actions taken in situations in everyday life led to a study of Situationist practices and ideas about the relationship of the individual to the state, and of working conditions to the construction of consumerist culture. Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations*, and Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* were influential texts and are referenced throughout this piece, and, like Perec's work, remain relevant today. Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau's analyses of the relationship of space, and kinds of spaces, to consumerism were influential as well in terms of understanding the breadth of corporate influence on the construction of the spaces of daily life.

Journalist and activist Naomi Klein's writings about globalization provide eyewitness accounts to the sphere of the international anti-globalization movement, as well as insights into specific corporate strategies for controlling the space of daily living. Klein's writings have been paired with those of Perec, unlikely as it may seem, in order to connect the record of intimate experiences of daily life with organized campaigns against spectacular consumerism, ecological disaster, and the destruction of the local. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan provides a thread, similar to that of Perec, which runs through this piece. Tuan's discussion of space and place in relation to the idea of home and homeland brings many of these disciplines together, providing a view of the practical necessity of human social relations and the establishment of a physical basis for culture.

Félix Guattari and sociologist Bruno Latour provide key texts that describe networks and systems that can be activated against the rigid structures of political and economic hierarchies, structures that many falsely believe to be naturally occurring social structures and the only ones we have within which to live. Guattari's *The Three Ecologies* is an explication of eco-systems that are currently out of balance – mental, social and environmental – and his writing is a passionate plea to restore balance on all levels. Guattari sites the ongoing emergency of women's poverty and oppression as having roots in the exploitative practices of globalization, and makes clear that women's lack of civil rights, sexual independence, educational rights, and level of autonomy equal to that of men in many societies is an indication of systems out of balance, a condition that effects individual psychologies as well as the health and strength of communities. The individual level is important and, as the term implies, all ecologies are interconnected. Latour's *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, is another key text, describing a world always in flux, never completely situated, and constructed as a series of possibly endless networks. Latour's theory of sociological practice has been adapted to a general theory of interconnectedness, and I adopt this perspective in both the form and the content of this writing.

I refer to the feminism of Luce Irigaray as well, although it is a very different feminism from my own. Irigaray, like Guattari, seeks balance, but in terms of a balance between what she considers to be the two distinct cultures of the masculine and feminine. Working together, towards a situation of the common good, and meeting over a "bridge of respect," would allow for both the expression of independent identities and the giving of mutual support in the creation of one unified realm of the social. Irigaray's radical feminine is powerful and complete in her self, but she is also firmly rooted in the social. Gender is not the construction of either society or of sexuality, but refers to actual bodies. This must be acknowledged and established within a collective space where neither dominance nor submission can determine capacity for interaction.

Avital Ronell's writings, interviews, and lectures have been influential in terms of the practice of theory – the need to perform and embody the actions one is thinking and speaking about, to test them out. Her work presents theses, questions, and observations that are to be reached and utilized from many facets, approached from different angles, each providing a different reflection of the observer and of the points in question. Ronell's questions about scientism, certainty, and experimentation, bring into focus the complex system of how knowledge is acquired; she examines this on the level of intimate moments of the acquisition of knowledge, as well as on the level of the public agreement by which knowledge becomes official. Ronell's denial of the usefulness of the concept of genius and the explicit usefulness of the concept of stupidity is a feminist gesture. Gendered bodies can introduce the value of stupidity as a negation of masculinist strategies for organizing the world by means that must exclude everything but the single answer, the fact that will provide an affirmation of the initial hypothesis. But testing can be used otherwise, as a "kind of humiliation," when new knowledge requires the "willing[ness]

to rescind" that which is discovered to be false, "in service"[5] to political action.

Clear representations of the irreducible I can be found in the writings of Kathy Acker and Laurie Weeks, as well as in the films of Barbara Hammer and Charles Atlas. Both Acker and Weeks write from the position of attempting to embody and represent fractured and multiple subjectivities, telling stories through a narrator constructed of a multiplicity of voices. The person of the narrator remains fractured and multiple, but never falls apart and never congeals into a single idea of being, one that has a center and is properly named. Hammer is engaged in a very different quest from the construction of multiple female selves but her conclusion is the same: identity is not fixed for longer than a moment. It is authentic when it is able to express its necessarily superficial nature, an identity that skims surfaces; it finds itself inside of action, and changes within situations as well. Charles Atlas represents identity differently, letting the differently-identified subjects speak in the passionate vernacular of their own difference. His work introduces transsexual identity to the discussion of being and becoming, and relativizes identity as an act of making decisions based on factors routed in the social as well as the subjective to the point where these become the same thing. In this case, there is no bridge between the experience of the self and the experience of the social. What crosses over here is not only gender, but all assertions of identity and identification based in the body. It is not simply that persistent and deeply felt perceptions are what matter most, it is definitely the body that matters, but more than that, crossing genders asserts that the body cannot exist outside the realm of the social, in respect to the realm of all bodies.

Architect Teddy Cruz, artist and educator Ricardo Dominguez, and poet Gloria Anzaldúa provide a perspective that runs along nineteen hundred miles of the Mexico-U.S. border, where the

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[5] Avital Ronell, Eduardo Cadava, and Jean-Michel Rabaté, "On Testing, Torture, and Experimentation: The Test Drive," Slought Foundation, March 15, 2006, http://slought.org/content/11317/ (accessed August 8, 2012).

transiting of identities – from south to north, and then back again many times over – is the commonest of occurrences. The U.S. Border Patrol has the duty to fix the border, to make it impenetrable and stop the migration that has been going on for generations. But the migrants, likewise, have a duty. Their duty is to keep the border zone as a space of continuous drifting of bodies, ideas, materials, money, language, and culture. They are a constant reminder that what America has taken from Mexico is only on loan. A permanent shifting of geographies from Mexican to American has never taken place and the migrants who come north for work, and go south again with money and supplies, keep this border fluid and open. The culture of the border is neither American nor Mexican, and like the people themselves, is a *mestizo* culture that absorbs the colonizer in order to prevent assimilation.

Tuan's thoughtful insights fill out the political space of border transit and give it a deep history, explaining that the most mundane aspects of attachment to place are the longest-held and the strongest. In the midst of research for this work, Occupy Wall Street erupted, bringing the occupation of land, space, and language into the forefront of national discussion. Encampments across a wide area of the United States de-territorialized the American landscape, rendering state borders superfluous, while regional and local policing became subject to global scrutiny, making clear the global nature of contemporary policing practices. As short-lived as this series of demonstrations was, it raised questions about the possibility of occupying, or re-occupying, already-occupied land. Native American activists responded to the Occupiers by providing indigenous perspectives on American activism and their own responses to the problems of corporate globalism. The work of Native activists John Paul Montano and Clayton Thomas-Muller give critical insight to the issue of whose land this might be, and who may claim it back again. The traditions of the colonists and their ancestors, and the value systems that determine their relationship to place, are vastly different from the traditions of the nations who existed here when the Europeans first landed. But no one has remained stuck in time. A simultaneous re-territorialization is recommended.

Donna Haraway has been, like Perec, an underlying influence on this project. Her negation of a dialectical approach to activism, science, social theory, and other models of interactivity creates an opening through which the opposing binaries of the past rush out, and a cross-species frame of reference rushes in. The bifurcated human becomes whole again; and furthermore, s/he is a willing participant in promiscuous exchanges with human, nonhuman, machinic and other agents for change – for mutation.

Subjectivities: Inexpert Iterations

The network model is one I adopt not only as a description of the interrelationship of elements of every kind that form within each moment, but also as the description of how this particular work came into being. As connections formed between topics within the large diagram of my discussion, it became useful to look at the network model itself and to see how this structure might apply to the writing of this work. The consideration of subjectivity and placement needed an already activated space for expression. Placing a high value on lived experience provides a thematic background for the work at hand, and the creation of a body of work in experimental video over a period of twenty-seven years rounds out my field of research by including a deep familiarity with the artistic process. This paper takes for granted, similar to Certeau's observation that everyone has been marginalized, that most aspects of society are politicized. A transformation has taken place in the process of research and writing, fortunately. The use of ideologies to examine identity formation and to fix ideas about social structures, even progressive social structures, became obstructive, while the value of form, or of continuous formation, as the creator of the content of the social realm became increasingly apparent. As I drifted away from ideological thinking to thinking about society as a process rather than a product, or as a container or structure for the organization of populations, I was able to approach the question of subjectivity,

context, and space with tools that were themselves formed within the same system of affinities and connections.

Michael Anker's *The Ethics of Uncertainty: Aporetic Openings* is underscored by the refrain: "As something is coming to be it is always already becoming other."[6] This phrase sums up elegantly the function of time, place, event, and action that are fundamental to the perspective of this book. The ethics involved are social ethics. The responsibility to participate actively emerges from the opened pathways of possibility, within fields of uncertainty, in the formation of a shared future. The formation of a just society is a continuous process; it will not result in a finished product or a final contract between the members of a society and systems of authority. Ethics, within Anker's discourse, are not based on belief systems, but offer a kind of infrastructure for responsible decision-making within ongoing processes of becoming. Becoming is the state of being human, but it is also the state of things in general. Everything is always in the process of becoming something else, and this condition of continuous uncertainty is the foundation for social justice.

The subjective perspective becomes more interesting rather than less in a situation where change is the fundamental characteristic of being. Information gleaned in the intimate moments of the everyday is, likewise, more valuable rather than less. Information gleaned in the process of observing the everyday can be used to distinguish authentic reality from corporate culture, a fluid social realm from a static one, or the processes of change from those of spectacle. The spectacle is not merely that which occupies the mind or the consciousness of the spectator, or that which influences buying habits; it is effective in completely authoring and governing public as well as non-public space. Consumerism creates corporate space out of all space, and the individual who becomes the consumer is the subject of the corporation. Confessional writing, women's writing, writing from within the margins of society, the first person narrative,

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[6] Michael Anker, *The Ethics of Uncertainty: Aporetic Openings,* (PhD diss., European Graduate School, 2009), 11.

and the inexpert and inexact statements of everyday people provide countless examples of how the process of change, becoming, and awareness occur in the intimate moments of daily life. The personal account is the basis for noticing and observing the interconnections of the elements of the everyday in the formation of a clearer picture of what may be happening collectively and globally. This book is dedicated to keeping the subject and her inexpert perspective in view, even as the focus ring must always be readjusted.

Borderlines and Migrations: Becoming

The act of making observations within the intimate moments of the everyday and opening our eyes to what is around us opens our consciousness as well. We not only see the familiar world of hierarchies and bureaucracies, categories and boundaries that was structured for us by our governments and by global commerce, but we also realize that it is possible to see through those structures and participate actively in a borderless network that is already in formation. The milieu for radical social action is motion itself. The subjective self, the I, is mutable. The mutable I is linked to others in multiple and simultaneous exchanges of ideas, objects, processes, biologies, information, machines, etc. The conversation is unfinished, decentered and multi-dimensional. This is the network we have within which to reclaim the space of the everyday. The network is a diagram of the interrelatedness of objects, actors and agents within the realm of the social. The network is neutral, but it enables the formation of meaningful content and meaningful connectivity within a decentralized and non-hierarchical complex of influences and actions. The structure of the network and the connectivity of content are what matters. Fixed ideologies and disconnected disciplines may tend to open up within the diverse range of influences that heterogeneous connectivity engenders. Charters, resolutions and completed missions fall short of the capacity of the network.

The space of the network is the space of daily life. In considering the concepts of space and place, it becomes clear that these concepts must be analyzed in terms of the subjectivities and collectivities that make them significant. The places where we live and where we spend time are, for the most part, places that have been overlaid with corporate significance, and designed for the purposes of authority and control in the most mundane, or the most extreme, manner. An analysis of space, in human terms, is an analysis of migration and transformation – of becoming something else.