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#### Debate has transitioned towards a new era of digi-technics. The game we are playing right now, Zoomcraft, is a fictional simulation of what we remember as debate – it appears to a resemble the real world but is only a simulated virtual playground. Debate’s investment in technics of space and Zoom through things like a belief that this new medium creates better debates, pushes us towards our zombification, exhausting the body till its collapse

Hunsinger ‘20 (Jeremy Hunsinger is a co-editor of the journal Learning Inquiry and has published in FastCapitalism, The Information Society, Social Epistemology and other leading academic journals, “On the Current Situation: Normal Violences, Pandemics, Emergencies, Necropolitics, Zombies, and Creepy Treehouses?” in *Fast Capitalism*, Volume 17 Issue 2, 2020, Pgs 5 – 10)

University Technocultures Universities have their plural subjectivities, and universities co-construct some of those subjectivities through its use of technology. This co-construction is shared by the faculty, the information technology groups, the rest of the administration, the students, and the inter- university groups in which they participate. University technocultures have also been complicit in the neoliberal mismanagement of the university. The technocultures are part of the academic semiosphere, interacting across the university’s shared subjectivities and materialities. The new modalities of technocultures that ally with online learning are embedded within the broader popular and historical understandings of the university and its contexts. Building the facilities of a virtual university is one piece of this new technoculture, just as the first founding of medieval universities articulated the technics of yet another technoculture tied to the scriptorium, lecture hall, and auditor. While they can throw much light upon each other, the workings of new university technocultures do not exhaust the full range of structural change occurring with informationalization in the global economy and society(Luke 2006) It is within the informationalization and marketization of the global economy and society that universities have found the pandemic. The structural change they are facing requires them to address the populations in new ways in the current pandemic. The university technocultures also increasingly play a part in the more extensive university presentation, logo, or branding(Holloway and Holloway 2005; Hunsinger 2003). The university technocultures participate in those aspects of identity creation. The technocultural identity comes to embody a representation of the university and participate in the system of semiological warfare. Universities have both generalizable aspects and specific aspects of their technocultures. These aspects construct relations between universities, but also between universities and their constituents. These constituents imagine the way university varies with the perspective of those technocultures. Technocultures have sought integration into the university’s work but have instead become significant parts of the university’s work. Faculty, staff, and students spend considerable time and effort learning these technocultures and their technological systems to perform successfully within them and to be able to do their increasingly technologically burdened jobs. While this burden is not new or profoundly different from other informationalized institutions, it does cause specific problems in the university, which is already comprised of distinctively different knowledge ecologies and knowledge cultures as found in academic disciplines, interdisciplinary fields, and transdisciplinary arenas. Most of these disciplines, fields, and arenas have their technocultures based on their knowledge ecologies and cultures. The modes of knowing within the university frequently exist in ecological tension. This tension allows them to be exploited, transformed, or concretized in the state of exception of the pandemic. COVID-19 has provided university technocultures an extraordinary opportunity to centralize their utility in areas where they were used but not necessarily seen as central. To some in the university, the rapid transformation of the centrality of technology is extraordinary violence, and for others, it is a normal violence. University technoculture is escaping its bounds. Instead of servicing the masters, the technocultures are framing and becoming the masters. The pandemic has canceled the boundary-work, which was keeping technocultures bound(Gieryn 1983). However, the speed of the pandemic intervened, and emergency politics became the justification for the institution’s transformation(Honig 2011; Trnka 2020). COVID-19 spread, and university life changed. This change opened a model of technological expansion that cannot be closed. More and more of university life is mediated by information technology and university technocultures. The legitimation of the transformation lacks fundamental justification beyond necropolitical neoliberal risk marketization. The pandemic also has its normal violences and its necropolitics. We usually accept them as a normal part of the medical apparatus, such as triage, protective clothing, hospitalization, ventilation, etc. In the context of daily life, these too become extraordinary measures, but in the context of a pandemic, they become subtly normalized. This normalization is the process for extending and transforming education, a subtle normalization of extraordinary violence into normal violence. The extraordinary violences possible in online education is becoming normal violences in the age of the pandemic. Diagnosing the Crisis In the state of the exception of emergency politics, COVID-19 allowed the university to ignore and/or break norms and rules(Agamben 2005; Honig 2011; Short 2020). Even in the state of exception, many university administrations showed constraint perhaps in deference to faculty governance structures, or perhaps wisdom. However, in the pandemic emergency, universities could bend and break some norms and rules. They could cause violence to those norms and those who hold those norms. Some norms could not be broken, and it is illustrative to think about why. With the emergency closure of the brick-and-mortar campuses, universities had to condone some rule-breaking behavior in their classes, such as having class remotely or out of the scheduled time. Few if any universities reconsidered what it meant to finish a class or what accounted for the credit that the class represented when finished. The credit was perhaps more important than the class itself. The bureaucratic institution was perhaps more important than the teaching/research institution. The neoliberal crisis of COVID-19 started long ago and is entangled in the devaluing of life in neoliberal necropolitics. Universities exist contrary to devaluation of life, in favor of increasing the value of life. In contradicting the neoliberal tendency to reduce people to purchasing power, productivities, and consummativities; the university is antithetical to neoliberal bureaucratic management(Baudrillard 1998; Dant 2004; Hunsinger 2015, 2019). Universities take the human being and attempt to make it a complete scientist, scholar, thinker, critic, citizen, or any valuable subject. Faced with the contradictions between the public good of higher learning and the neoliberal need to privatize, marketize, and profit from all goods, the university is caught in a global crisis in which base survival of parts of the population is more important than the goods it provided. This crisis of the university has been constructed over the last fifty years(Mirowski and Plehwe 2015). The history of neoliberalism is the constant attack on public goods and any social programs providing them in favor of the commercialization and privatization of those goods(Harvey 2011; Mirowski 2014). The current crisis is about money; the concentration of wealth, otherwise known as capitalism. Neoliberalism is centrally about capitalism and the fictions of the market. The pandemic was merely a trigger for the crisis that is transforming the university; the real crisis is the hegemonic public ideology of neoliberalism. The crisis will not be solved by curing the pandemic either. It must be resisted based on the missions of universities as public goods. The pandemic caused universities to cease on-campus operations or cease the use of their physical campus. The physical campus, in part, symbolizes the university’s value and existence. The shutdown did not end the university’s work or even the term. Instead, most universities decided to deliver their teaching online and finish relatively normally. Importantly the ‘deliverable’ of the ‘certification’ of the ‘course’ or ‘class’ needed to be completed, and the student needed a ‘grade’ or ‘mark’ demonstrating their ‘completion’ of the ‘course,’ demonstrating their ‘knowledge’ or ‘understanding’ of the material they ‘learned.’ In short, the university’s bureaucratic imperative took the highest priority. Students needed to ‘complete.’ Students, of course, were under pressure to complete their coursework and progress and graduate, as they always are. They migrate on their slow march from the reserve army of capitalism to the army of production, as is a normal violence of capitalism. As bureaucratic luck would have it, the internet exists and provides a mediated space for interactions using video, audio, text, and other media. Learning has been online via the internet in various parts for well over 40 years, mostly mapping the university’s bureaucratic form and classrooms into internet-based media. Online learning has been remarkably successful, but it is profoundly different from the use of the internet entailed by emergency remote teaching. Online learning usually takes months to develop and years to perfect into a quality education by teams of professors and professional developers. Techniques have been practiced and developed over the years to deliver high-quality teaching and interaction. Granted, Mooc providers and similar companies have made models, reduced time, and perhaps found efficiencies to exploit. Emergency remote teaching initially was left in the hands of the professors with little guidance from instructional design. Worldwide, it was primarily a ‘do what you can’ solution, accelerated by the pandemic. Most professors did quite a bit and delivered an end-of-course experience meeting the imaginations of the students. This exercise in inefficiency satisfied the bureaucratic imperatives of the university. Universities accomplished this exercise quickly, administratively, and with limited democratic input. Students progressed, graduated, and some joined the army of production. The shared governance, collegiality, and community of the university were not spared the violence of the state of exception. This emergency remote teaching is in/arguably different from online instruction for those attempting to maintain the difference. For those that do not want to preserve the difference, the two are the same. It is now clear to even those that resisted online education; online learning can be pursued, and credentials awarded. We should expect further investments in online learning. The argument will be made on the acclaimed successes of emergency online teaching while ignoring the myriad of failures. We have seen this argument for online learning before, and we have seen the counterarguments too. However, what we have now is the possibility of the emergency to force the change and concretize the extraordinary as normal. The extraordinary is reifying the bureaucratic imperatives as being above or more important than the public good of higher learning. It is the privatization of the public goods in neoliberalism during the crisis triggered by the pandemic. Emergency Remote Learning and Creepy Treehouses Most faculty have a sense of learning that they build into their learning environments, their syllabi, and their courses. Frequently their understanding of learning is not related to learning as much as it may be related to other mental performances that have come to represent learning(Baudrillard 1994; Remtulla 2008). This problem stems from many faculty’s reliance on a sense of learning modeled after their (nostalgic) memory of learning. Within their understanding of learning, many more have the cognitive bias of relying primarily on models of their most successful learning. Some may not have reflected on the reasons for success, but a tendency persists in replicating the learning conditions and institutions where the faculty member is comfortable. These are usually traditional settings like classrooms or lecture halls with all the implications of technologies of the self(Foucault 1988). The faculty members have normalized a sense of learning and context, which might not be about learning as much as it is about them and their historical trajectories within their familiar architectures. One example of this phenomenon is the recognition of learning styles related to modes of perception; arguing that slides help the visual learning, or that the lecture is great for aural learners. Many students and faculty still hold that some people learn better through different perception systems, and we must provide access to different models. This idea of learning styles is widely accepted and generally known to be false according to current research(Antoniuk 2019; Kirschner 2017; Riener and Willingham 2010). However, that it is shown to be false and is generally contested hasn’t deterred its acceptance in practice and ideological dissemination. Student’s preferences do have implications for learning, but not as learning styles. Still, many professors and university administrators believe that learning styles are real and should be addressed. They create a preference for design based on learning styles, but it is not the only problematic issue in the design of learning environments. The construction of preferences in learning is not only the professor’s preference but also related to the historically built architecture available to them to use. Hopefully, it is also constructed between their students and the broader ecologies of learning. The bricks-and-mortar university physically embodies these learning activities’ shared spaces, their ideologies, and praxis, much as businesses represent ideologies and practices in their formal design. Albeit, sometimes people’s spaces also embody ideology and praxis outside of and beyond their architectural limits(Bourdieu 1992). It is tough for an instructor to ignore the built-in projector, the computer connection, the whiteboards, much like it is hard for students to ignore the rows of desks, the windows, the constructed front of the room, or other arrangements of the learning space. The technologies of the classroom, as currently imagined, tend to address and reify specific questions of instructional design and learning. They tend to present expertise, tools, and knowledge in an industrial-age disciplinary ideology(Ediger 1987; Foucault 1979; Illich 1971). Classroom design, like any technological choice, is a set of political decisions(Winner 1980). The chosen technologies exist within an ecology of meaning. The technologies signal things and audiences interpret them. What they interpret has implications for what and how they learn. University technocultures, as such, have an impact on learning, and they are not necessarily aiding higher learning, though parts of the curricula (hidden, null, etc.) are always learned. Notably, many university technocultures have a clear tendency to reproduce the politics, affordances, and norms of the prior generation’s classroom, lab, or seminar environment. Almost all traditional course management systems model the course and its related histories. For instance, in Second Life, where you can be anything and do almost anything, many universities designed buildings where students sat in front of a teacher who stood in front of a simulated whiteboard. Granted, some faculty did otherwise, building simulators of testes, pollination, and schizophrenia(Ando et al. 2011; Beard et al. 2009; Jeffers 2008). While it does take imagination and application to make such experiences for one’s students, the learning outcomes were significantly higher in simulations and educational games than in the recreated classrooms. The virtual classrooms were something easy for educational technologists to build and consider within the university technoculture. They were far easier to brand, for instance than a simulation of schizophrenia, which was created by a faculty member. The faculty and institution’s retreat to comfort and familiarity is not necessarily anything other than the response of a set of highly time-pressed and stressed people. They are people bound by their limitations, trajectories, and traditions. However, they continually reproduce choices modeling the classroom and the traditional forms in which they learned. They rarely take risks, and the implicit ideology known as ‘best practices’ exemplifies their limits. Best practices that arose in the context of a few months of a pandemic are rarely ‘best’ and likely rarely ‘practiced’. Granted, the retreat to traditions and norms is the continuity of the disciplines and the performance of the signature pedagogies of those disciplines. It is also why it is tough to teach outside of one’s home discipline and part of why it is so challenging to be genuinely interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary as disciplines are the mental contexts of faculty performance, comfort, and/or familiarity of one’s education. Given the differences in pedagogies and disciplines, it is strange that certain paradigms seem to be becoming paradigmatic in the age of emergency remote teaching and remote management of the university. That is the Zoom© meeting and Zoom© meeting as a classroom. Zoom© has become the killer app of the university’s remote administration. Shortly after it introduced into administration, it was introduced as the killer app of online lecturing. Anyone who has participated in enough classrooms has seen classroom zombies. These zombies are students who are completely turned off, checked out, or otherwise no longer participating in the classroom. Similarly, Zoom© zombies, sometimes called zoombies, are prevalent both in online Zoom© classrooms and in other meetings(Anon 2020; Dovey 2020). The manifestation of this human response as not being ‘there’ in the face-to-face classroom has been extended to not be there in Zoom© meetings. The main difference is that the Zoom© Zombie has tools to appear present and participating. Zoom© lectures and meetings are full of zombies, and many faculty might not be able to tell. Zombies are coming to embody the technoculture of the Zoom© lecture as one would suspect they would, especially those who have studied online learning, or televisual learning have seen. The talking head and even the TED talk lose its efficacy for learning after the user has spent much time coming to terms with the medium. The loss of effectiveness is because much of the pedagogy of the Ted Talk or talking head assume engagement and thought; whereas the slides and video tend to be non-engaging and unthought. Zombies have always happened in neoliberalism, as people become parts of the productive machine (Brabazon 2016; Lauro 2017; Peck 2010). They are part of the acceptance of our mortality and the death, in part, of our capacity for autonomy. This form of neoliberal zombies is a rejection of wasted time, wasted effort, and wasted outcomes of the practice in which they are performing as zombies. The Zoom© zombie cannot ‘leave’ the meeting, but they must appear to be there. Zoom© zombies are much like many neoliberal zombies who cannot leave their jobs but produce much less than the hours they work. These zombies have the appearance of being at work in a service economy, which has become equated with work. Simulating work has become work (Baudrillard 1994). By using Zoom©, universities are promoting a certain zombification of our students in the name of what the university imagines and supports as a good learning environment. They are promoting a pacification of the student. They also are training a generation of neoliberal zombies for remote work. University technocultures and design choices matter immensely. They create zones where learning occurs, but when we abandon those physical zones in times of emergency, we enter into a less determined zone(Hunsinger 2011). The zones are ordered by infrastructures and are zones of semiological warfare. The technological choice of universities and the technological choices of faculty members (if they have that level of academic freedom) are contestable in shared governance. Shared governance rarely enters technical decisions. Technical decisions by professors and the leaders of their technocultures are informed by their knowledge, their familiarity, and comfort with the field of technological possibility in front of them. One particular metaphorical example of this is the creepy treehouse, which is sort of what Zoom© has become institutionally (Hunsinger 2019; Stein 2008). A creepy treehouse is when a professor uses their position to require their students into a technological choice for teaching or otherwise that the students wouldn’t choose, and that choice makes the students feel creepy. The emergency institutionalization of Zoom© is very much along these lines. Students did not initially choose Zoom©, though they increasingly choose it due to their increasing forced familiarity with it. A more intuitively understood example of this might be something like having students visit a dance club in Second Life that the professor attends regularly. The familiarities of a dance club could be problematic in some ways. The interactions possible might be excellent, but it could end up being very uncomfortable for all involved. Zoom© does cause discomfort and worse for some students, as do services such as video- based exam monitoring because the creepiness is a genuine invasion of privacy. Granted, you can block out and use backgrounds and foregrounds to achieve some sort of blocking on Zoom©and other services. Still, the sense that a person has of sharing their space through video lends itself to the feeling of a breach of privacy, and in all practicality, it is. I do not think that I know of any students who would want their professors in their personal or private spaces. Similarly, I would hope professors would not want to be there. The student’s sense of relation is what changes with these interfacialities. The relations of power change, as do the ties of intimacy (Krämer and Haferkamp 2011; Livingstone 2008). Those relations in Zoom© or video monitoring are much different from the classroom. The classroom is a shared space, and for the most part, people consider their computers to be private devices and tend to use them privately. People do use computers for work. They also differentiate living spaces from workspaces and private spaces in both. Students, usually in shared housing or living with parents during the pandemic, do not necessarily have the liberty to define their spaces as workspaces and private spaces. Because of that, they are using video in their spaces will inevitably infringe upon privacy. Not necessarily intentional infringement, but positively a sensible infringement, and it will change students’ relations to their learning and their machines (Hunsinger 2019). In the end, other interfaces are better than Zoom© for privacy and inclusion. Even Second Life is better, as are the educationally oriented Open Simulators. They can also be a creepy treehouse, but they do allow much more significant privacy and control for students. The context of time is important to consider here. The emergency accelerated migration from classroom teaching to remote classroom teaching, the use of Zoom©, and similar tools were rapid and unmitigated by deep reflection and technological investigation/consideration. We made most of these technological choices not based on best practices, but on an immediate sense of ‘fit-to-purpose.’ The creepiness starts with the assumptions forcing the decisions and the contingencies and continues by forcing the technological choices as required. The rapid transition and the continued rapid transition are causing, in part, choices to be made, that would and should be made differently, specifically more inclusively. While students are being creeped out, uncomfortable faculty are trying to ameliorate the situation by justifying and legitimizing their actions in an institutional and best practices mode for the university bureaucracy against the students’ choices. We are creeping students out, and this is just another stress on top of many that they and we already have.

#### This reliance on technology as a means to facilitate engagement expands the datafication of students and development of machine learning processes that overcode subjectivity in favor of surveillance pacifying debaters within the limits of Zoom.

Matthews et al ‘20 (Benjamin Matthews, Zi Siang See, and Jamin Day are authors and researchers at the University of Newcastle that publish on questions of technology and crisis, “Crisis and extended realities: remote presence in the time of COVID-19”, October 20 2020, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165#articleCitationDownloadContainer)

Social challenges of remote presence Another aspect related to Psi is the notion of how fluid or ‘translucent’ an XR experience might be in terms of social relating ([Erickson et al., 1999](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). As innately social beings, we constantly and subconsciously rely on myriad social cues to moderate and enhance our day-to-day interactions with others. Body language and facial expression, slight shifts in posture, variations of vocal pace, tone and loudness, use of gestures, modifying our physical distance and initiating or withdrawing from conversations are all examples of the subtle cues and tools we rely on automatically during social inputs and outputs ([Clark, 1996](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). Traditional video conferencing approaches such as Zoom impose substantial limits that impact the fluidity of these social experiences. As posited by [Sander and Bauman (2020)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165), and experienced firsthand by many during the recent pandemic, video conferencing can introduce a type of friction that reduces many of the verbal and non-verbal cues we rely on for fluid, natural social interactions. For example, audio lag or poor microphone hardware might force a user to speak at an uncomfortably loud volume; subtle shifts in voice tone can get lost in the digital noise; and lack of direct eye contact, hidden body language or technical hiccups such as lag can hinder the natural flow of conversation ([Venter, 2019](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). Individually, these are typically minor annoyances that can be easily surmounted. Combined, and over extended periods, the cumulative effect of increased cognitive load can result in feelings of exhaustion and ‘Zoom fatigue’. Relative to in-person communication, XR approaches will need to address many of these same problems to increase Psi in terms of social presence. Nonetheless, immersive, virtual environments allow users to moderate their social interactions in more fine-tuned and subtle ways and have potential to enhance social fluidity by increasing the clarity or granularity of interactions. Being able to turn towards, or move away, from another’s digital avatar; programmatically vary the loudness of others based on their proximity; or incorporate hand-like gestures, are examples of mechanisms that could facilitate a greater sense of Psi in terms of social presence ([Teo et al., 2019](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)) XR and inclusive design The ethical dimension of the expanded use of these technologies must also be mentioned, and the topic is broad. There are clear dangers, for instance, in the development of photorealistic impressions of humans to become avatars, such as criminality through identity theft and negative psychophysical impacts created by self-perception and body image, such as weight perception ([Thaler et al., 2018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). Facebook Reality Labs recruited expert leading scholar in the field Yaser Sheikh from Carnegie Melon to assist, and he brought with him a capture technology known as the ‘Panoptic Studio’ ([Joo et al., 2015](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). At Facebook, the updated version of this technology is known as the ‘Sociopticon’, and is made up of 180 high-resolution, high-frame-rate cameras that permit a process of machine learning to build a model of how our clothing and bodies move ([Rubin, 2019](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1329878X20967165)). The irony of these terms for a mode of surveillance and mapping that leads to a one-to-one, high-fidelity representation of your real self will not be lost on students of history, Bentham, Baudrillard, or for that matter, Borges. If identity theft is already a problem, those problems will be amplified and particularly in their capacity to create trauma for individuals exposed to strongly immersive XR.

#### To act like all is normal is the process by which Zoomcraft becomes naturalized. This treats Zoom as a transparent window you can look through and see that things outside are just like before. It’s not enough to not play, we must force an engagement with the change that has just happened.

Ayers ‘20 (William Ayers, formerly Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) has written extensively about social justice, democracy, and education, and teaching as an essentially intellectual, ethical, and political enterprise. His books include A Kind and Just Parent; Teaching toward Freedom; Fugitive Days: A Memoir; Public Enemy: Confessions of an American Dissident; To Teach: The Journey, in Comics; Race Course: Against White Supremacy; and Demand the Impossible! A Radical Manifesto, “OK, Zoomer!”, April 27 2020, https://critinq.wordpress.com/2020/04/27/ok-zoomer/)

Yes, yes, I’m teaching my classes on Zoom. It’s weird for me, but I’ve got it (I think) and, against my will and better judgment, I feel a little thrill and a burst of relief each time class ends without the internet exploding. I push all the right buttons, issue all the appropriate commands. Oh, joy! So here we are, suddenly, all of us: distance learning, e-learning, online teaching, virtual classrooms—the whole bewildering turmoil. I soldier on, necessarily but not happily, all the while with an irritating chorus of cheerleaders in the background pushing me forward: “online learning is an excellent way to increase student engagement and differentiate instruction;” “digital tools save time and do the heavy lifting by providing ready-to-use lesson plans, instructional materials, and assessments;” “distance learning can continue delivering instruction without disruption even in events like snow days or the COVID-19 pandemic.” Every line offends what I know to be true about teaching, and my sense of what it can achieve, but, wow! snow days or COVID-19—that pretty much covers the waterfront; wait! better add floods and fires and extreme weather. I was particularly annoyed when I saw my neighbor Arne Duncan, former Secretary of Education, on TV finding, as always, a silver lining in the catastrophe (after Katrina, you may remember, he famously declared that New Orleans was now liberated to create a whole new school system from scratch!), this time ushering in the pandemic as dress rehearsal for the “classrooms of the future.” Come on, Arne— Zoom is not the future of classroom life or teaching. In fact, that response betrays a staggering ignorance about the nature of each. When I saw Arne jogging while on my walk the other day, I suppressed the desire to strangle him, and, fortunately, remembered that I couldn’t get closer than six feet. Of course distance learning is nothing new—I took a correspondence course on figure drawing in the 1950s (a bust in my case, although I liked the colored pencils) and was tempted to take another on body building offered by Charles Atlas (the advertisement in the back of my comic books promised I could transform myself from a “97-pound weakling” into a tough guy who would never again allow a bully to kick sand in my face at the beach—of course I didn’t have a beach, but whatever). Correspondence courses and distance learning stretch in all directions—back to 1873 and the founding of the US Society to Encourage Studies at Home, onward to 2008 when salvation was offered in the form of MOOCs, or massive open online courses. A colleague of mine at the University of Illinois at Chicago told me in 1995 that e-learning represented the end of educational inequity: “In the remotest village in the Third World, or the most segregated poor neighborhood in this city, a student will be able to access the best professors and hear the best lecture ever given on Romeo and Juliet!” OMG! The “Great Books Program” has been around for decades, and the “Great Courses,” a series of video classes produced and distributed by the for-profit Teaching Company based in Chantilly, Virginia, claims to have developed over seven hundred courses and sold over fourteen million copies—once again “the greatest scholars and their classic lectures.” So with these and other entrepreneurs already up and running, along with the millions and millions of books out there, why are we even bothering with Zoom? Or classes. Or bricks and mortar. Or professors. A colleague with experience in distance learning told me that online classes are to actual classrooms what frozen pizza is to home-made pizza: similar ingredients but a vastly different experience. Staying with the metaphor, pizza delivered is straightforward and concrete, as well as often delicious; real classrooms can be delicious as well, but not because the teacher/pizza person “delivered instruction.” Teachers might write books and record lectures—I’ve done both—and those can be more-or-less delivered into the waiting hands (pizza-style) and upturned heads of hungry consumers. Classroom teaching is quite different—it’s a relationship, a transformative journey for everyone involved. That’s why good teachers come to class ready to teach, but also primed to see, to hear, and to know their students as three-dimensional creatures, much like themselves, each the one-of-one, each a member of the group—an intimate encounter that cannot adequately take place at a distance. The teacher comes as a student-of-the-students, prepared to change lives, and simultaneously prepared to be changed by the propulsive, life-altering energy that’s released whenever a human being’s mind expands or rearranges itself.

#### Uniqueness flows aff – the switch to online and digital education represents a prototype and larger lab experiment that is supposed to demonstrate the effectiveness of education technologies. Even after the pandemic is over, we are on the brink of a full integrated and datafied world in which education transitions to the remote full time. Voting aff is the only way to challenge this by destroying the success narrative distributed within debate. A ballot represents the insertion of the aff into the research agenda of debate to the point where we can’t look way, forced to confront the horrors of the activity by making it hypervisible.

**Williamson et al ‘20**(Ben Williamson, PhD, Chancellor’s Fellow at the Centre for Research in Digital Education; Rebecca Enyon, PhD, Professor of Education, the Internet, and Society at Oxford; John Potter, PhD, Professor of Media in Education, founder of the DARE Collaborative (Digital Arts Research in Education), “Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency,” *Learning, Media, and Technology*, Volume 45, Issue 2, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17439884.2020.1761641?scroll=top&needAccess=true>)

In one key area we feel Learning, Media and Technology can and should make a more direct contribution to knowledge and practice during the COVID-19 pandemic: the switch to online and digital education formats and the rise of ‘remote’ forms of teaching and learning as a consequence of mass closures of schools, colleges and universities. **In this moment of pandemic politics,** where contests are being fought at multiple scales and levels over the ways to handle and resolve the crisis, distance education has become a widespread matter of concern for political authorities, education businesses, charities, teachers, parents and students alike. **Education has become an emergency matter, and along with it, educational technologies have been positioned as a frontline emergency service.** In recent years Learning, Media and Technology has become a key publication for critical studies of education and technology. Other outlets have responded to the rapid switch to online education with useful guidance, advice, and references to extant research from promising studies that might support educators to make the best of this new educational emergency. **But the need remains for critical reflection on the planetary pivot to digitally mediated remote and distance education.** We have no wish to denigrate or criticize online distance education, but rather, the aim of this brief editorial is twofold. **First, we want to raise a series of critical cautions**, based on previous papers and special issues published in the journal, **against simplistic and opportunistic claims that educational technologies are a ready-made remedy for the current crisis. Second, we want to issue a call**for future research **to examine**, in up-close detail, **the effects and consequences of the expansion and embedding of digital technologies and media in education systems, institutions and practices across the world.**We don’t necessarily see these issues as new or unique to the pandemic, but they are currently being experienced more acutely and affectively by educators, students and parents around the world, from the early years through to higher education. Within our own specialist area of research and practice, **pandemic politics is now playing out through attempts to thoroughly embed** public **education systems and practices**, at international reach, **in increasingly powerful technological systems.** We raise here four significant issues in education and technology for reinvigorated exploration. The political economy of pandemic pedagogy A distinctive approach to pedagogy has emerged as a global norm in the opening months of 2020. Distance education, remote teaching, and online instruction are not new approaches to pedagogy or curriculum design, but they have taken on renewed salience. Debates have already commenced on social media about whether to term current practices ‘emergency remote education’ in contextual recognition of the extraordinary circumstances in which they have been developed and deployed. These ‘pandemic pedagogies’ have also become the focus for the education technology industry. Since the effects of the coronavirus crisis on education systems first became apparent in south east Asia early in 2020, education companies and technology businesses have ramped up their marketing of products to support online learning considerably. Many companies, including videoconferencing and educational content providers, have offered up previously for-fee services for free for temporary periods, alongside celebrity figures posting livestreaming educational content from workouts and dance classes to guest lessons and online Q&A sessions. To a significant extent, these charitable offers have provided many tools and resources to enable educators to meet the high demands of switching to online teaching under extremely tense conditions and in tightly compressed timelines. Perhaps more importantly, they may help parents, now responsible for supporting their children’s remote education, to keep their children occupied, active, and mentally stimulated during periods of population lockdown, isolation and quarantine. Yet at the same time, it appears clear that certain **actors in the edtech industry are treating the crisis as a business opportunity, with** potentially **long-term consequences for how** public **education is perceived and practised long after** the **coronavirus has been brought under control.** The marketing of these products to teachers, by email and online on social media, has been intense, as the closure of schools and colleges has become an opportunity for the edtech industry to prove its benefits, to extend its reach, and to grow market share. Early in March 2020, the investment bank BMO Capital Markets predicted a spike in edtech stocks. ‘While we are uncomfortable citing “winners” in the coronavirus situation, some companies may be positioned better than others,’ it claimed. ‘Specifically, those that specialize in online education could see increased interest should the situation worsen’ (EdSurge 2020). Edu-businesses such as Pearson have made their online learning services available for free to new subscribing institutions, and launched packages of ‘homeschooling’ advice, resources and guidance. Many of the world’s largest and most successful technology businesses have also expanded their educational services rapidly, including Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Zoom. Markets have long been a central concern of the global edtech industry, but the pandemic may have presented it with remarkable business opportunities for profit-making, as well as enhanced influence over the practices of education. In a recent special issue of Learning, Media and Technology, Hillman, Bergviken Rensfeldt, and Ivarsson (2020) speculated that education systems may become increasingly platform-based, especially those systems that already exhibit a high degree of decentralization. **The ‘platformisation of schooling’, in a context where ‘schooling as an institution has already been broken-up, decentralised and marketised’,** they argued, **is already leading to ‘a situation** with little state governance **where the dominant technical platforms are amongst few centralising powers uniting schools as a national school system’ and ‘global commercial platforms incorporated into public education risk challenging education as a public good’** (Hillman, Bergviken Rensfeldt, and Ivarsson 2020, 7–8). Their political economy analysis of educational platformization suggests the need for serious caution regarding the expansion of edtech and other platform companies during the coronavirus pandemic. At the present time, public education has been forcibly decentralized into students’ own homes, largely disaggregated from the institutions and practices of education and instead repositioned as a form of homeschooling mediated by technology tools, edu-businesses and other institutions. Many edtech businesses have in fact been seeking to finesse the model of ‘distance’ education for years. They have sought to make education available remotely from schools or campuses, while also inserting platforms as intermediaries between educational institutions and their students, acting at a distance to shape the possibilities of teaching and learning. **The current state of ‘pandemic pedagogy’**, in other words, **may not be** seen by some businesses as **simply an emergency response to a public health and political crisis, but** as **a rapid prototype of education as a private service and an opportunity to recentralize decentralized systems through platforms.** Beyond simple market-making strategies, a range of coalitions and networks has formed to promote forms of online learning as both a short-term response to the pandemic and a long-term ambition for whole education systems. The Global Education Coalition announced by UNESCO, for example, is an international partnership intended to help countries mobilize resources and implement ‘innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education remotely, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches’, both in order to ‘mitigate the immediate disruption caused by COVID-19 and establish approaches to develop more open and flexible education systems for the future’ (UNESCO 2020). Its partners include Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Zoom alongside influential international organizations the OECD and World Bank, all now aligned to the common mission of extending online education globally. The World Bank has actively worked with government ministries around the world to enable online education, while the OECD has begun to talk of COVID-19 as a crisis of ‘human capital’ development, and of the pandemic as ‘an opportunity for experimentation and for envisioning new models of education and new ways of using the face-to-face learning time’ (OECD 2020). These policy-influencing international organizations are now enabling private platforms providers to extend their reach into previously unattainable territories and spaces. At the national level, coalitions are also promoting their own forms of remote education. In the UK, the Department for Education issued a £300,000 grant to Oak National Academy, a startup online school backed by Teach First (the private teacher education provider) and researchED (an influential network promoting research evidence of ‘what works’ in the field of education), at the same time as the public broadcaster the BBC revamped its online Bitesize catalogue and iPlayer content for home learning. The US-based Wide Open Schools, similarly, was established by Common Sense Media and powered by Salesforce to provide ‘a free collection of the best online learning experiences for kids’, with partners including Khan Academy, Google, YouTube, Apple and Zoom. **Dominant styles of education policy** that have historically distributed power to multisector networks **are now empowering private companies to become infrastructural substrates** to public education, **in ways that may solidify and consolidate in years to come.** These snapshot examples indicate how the new pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices of online education, remote teaching and homeschooling have become embedded in political and economic contests. **There is also a geopolitical angle, reflecting how technology companies from the US and China have sought commercial advantage and expansion in education** (Knox 2020). **Global tech platforms are being empowered alongside national and international policy-influencing organizations that seek ‘human capital’ as the key outcome of education. Emergency education models are being treated as prototypes for education systems to emulate far beyond the pandemic.** Although, then, in many respects the switch to online education around the world has been haphazard and chaotic in practice, critical studies will need to locate these changes in the broader political economy of the COVID-19 pandemic, its antecedents and long-term consequences. Digital inequalities during the pandemic As articles in this journal have consistently shown (e.g., Beckman et al. 2018) not all young people are the well connected, digitally savvy, ‘digital natives’ that the rhetoric around young people and technology would have us believe. Instead, there is significant variety in the ways that young people can access, navigate and use the internet and other new technologies, with an important minority who are excluded entirely. As schools close due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and many teachers look to digital means to connect to their students, education policy makers are beginning to realize that the rhetoric around young people is incorrect, and now some young people are excluded from much of their education and their social networks. This has led to a well-meaning response – to try to get these young people connected as soon as is possible. But many of those arguing for a move in this direction have not worked in this domain before or are aware of the many past home access schemes to get all young people connected. All young people should have the ability to access and skills to use technology effectively and safely to achieve their own goals (educational and otherwise). Yet it is extremely hard to get such schemes right. Three common questions that such schemes have to address are: What is an adequate level of digital access? At first glance, this seems to be an obvious question – provide laptops and / or internet access to those who don’t have it. But access is not a dichotomous measure, it is multifaceted. It is about the quality of that access. For example, do all children need their own device? If not, how many young people could reasonably use the same device? What is the age group that such a scheme would impact the most? Is a mobile sufficient, or do young people need a laptop for learning and education? What are the minimum technical specifications a device should have? What kind of internet connection is sufficient? How can young people and their families be supported to technology in the home? Young people who do not have digital access at home are likely to have less digital skills than their peers, and it is likely that their parents and guardians also do not have strong sets of digital skills. Using the internet contains multiple opportunities but also risks. How young people are supported to develop those skills and help protect them from harm is central. Typically, strong filters are placed on devices that make them less usable and less like the digital experiences of their peers. Instead, expert support is required (from teachers or others) to help young people and their families navigate the internet in a safe and effective way; and also provide them with ways to get assistance if the device breaks or the internet fails. How can longevity of the scheme be assured? In the rush to connect young people, quick fixes are being sought, where devices are to be borrowed and internet connection provided free of charge for a short period of time. However, this uncertainty over ownership and responsibilities stymies use and often causes a great deal of stress as families feel under pressure to begin paying for the internet once the initial ‘free’ period is over. Ideally devices should be given to the young person and their families to ensure they have agency over what they use it for and why; and there needs to be clear guidelines about what happens when the internet gets stopped, with significant care not to push families in to continuing with a scheme that cannot afford. Beyond these three questions, there are also some fundamental issues that need to be agreed upon. **A central focus needs to be defining what ‘success’ for a particular scheme would mean.** In the past, outcome measures of such initiatives have often focused on whether access is provided – e.g., a laptop is delivered and an internet connection set up. This is reasonable, but then other assumptions, that are not based on any evidence, are made about the ‘inevitable’ positive benefits the scheme has brought to the young person and their family. However, we know that the benefits from using technology vary widely, with those better off tending to benefit more educationally and socially. Digital connectivity is important, but it does not overcome all inequalities young people face - during COVID-19 or otherwise. It is crucial to consider how any access scheme connects with the broader plan for providing young people with a distance education of quality. Schools have many roles and purposes, and providing distance education at this time for all young people is hugely challenging. **Education is not one thing and is not experienced in the same way.** The inequalities in our school system and wider society are only exacerbated by the current crisis. It is therefore really important that all schemes, digital or not, work together to support less well-off young people and schools. A holistic vision will work better than a piecemeal approach. As readers of this journal know, **technology is not a neutral entity that simply does good when people have access to it – it is complex and social cultural artefact.** By putting technology into homes that are already likely to be struggling financially, and suffering more since the COVID-19 outbreak, the internet will provide access to their teachers, information and social support, and all of these things are important. However, the internet also provides: payday loan companies and gambling companies with easier access to families who are already struggling financially, content and people that young people should not have access to, and data brokers with more information that may negatively impact the families’ future. This, taken together with the problems that we often see with ‘EdTech’ companies and the kinds of digital education on offer (Sancho-Gil, Rivera-Vargas, and Miño-Puigcercós 2020), means that we need to think about dealing with digital inequalities in a different way. The primary reason these families do not have digital access is because of a lack of material resources due to social inequality. These economic realities do not go away as a result of a laptop scheme. Indeed, as this pandemic continues, more and more young people and their families will be in financial hardship and inequalities in society are likely to widen. Technology cannot fix social inequality. Though access schemes will help (if done well) it is important to think more holistically and in the longer term. We should not simply think about the issues of digital inequalities in relation to questions of access, but instead to see this time as an important moment to support, regulate and design an inclusive digital future for us all, that is part of a society that is more socially just. Social, educational, health and digital inequalities have never been clearer. Perhaps now is a time to make a more decisive set of significant social and digital changes. Spaces and hierarchies in pandemic times: re-locating digital pedagogy Being in lockdown in pandemic times and working from home, for those of us fortunate enough to be on the right side of inequality and with the opportunity to do so, means further consideration of the ways in which spatial and temporal relations are changed in the (digital) work we do as educators and researchers. **There is no simple mapping of offline onto online that can escape the essential disjuncture between what is possible and what is impossible under these circumstances**, no matter how many times parents and/or educators are told that it is easy and that the ‘digital’ makes it so. Articles in Learning Media and Technology in recent years, in pre-pandemic times, have explored what happens when **technological devices** are brought from home into school, critiquing the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) movement, and exploring the ways in which they **alter relations in classroom space-time** (e.g., Alirezabeigi, Masschelein, and Decuypere 2020). The lockdown in many countries occasioned by **the pandemic requires us to hold the mirror up to what happens when classroom space-time travels** in the other direction, **into the home environment, introducing the poly-synchronous world of learning in the digital age into the rhythms of family life.** We might call this the Bring Your Own School Home (BYOSH) movement. In this environment, personal screen-time is taken over at the same time as **the physical spaces of the home are colonized and co-opted.** Those grappling with the delicate ecosystem of parenting in the digital age realize that this is anything but remote learning. It is up close and personal and **with the customary territorial trade-offs of colonization.**The promise of both the infotainment value (as in the recent BBC here in the UK providing celebrities as teachers) and **the familiar hype of ‘anytime’, ‘anywhere’ learning** are ever present except that this **carries the** potential promise, or **threat, of ‘all the time’ and ‘everywhere’.** So, routines are disrupted, but not in the ways nor in the places imagined by ed-tech advertising; **spaces are invaded by devices and screens which have now**, like the eponymous character in Diana Wynne-Jones’s novel Archer’s Goon (2000), **melted into the foreground** and, finally, roles are renegotiated and re-imagined under terms and conditions no one thought would ever apply. Schools, colleges and universities are of course reacting in different ways in this BYOSH environment. Expectations are calibrated differently in different contexts with, at local level in the UK, some headteachers and university chancellors sensibly lowering expectations and pressure on all parties. Transitioning from offline to online teaching and learning has long been found by its earliest researchers and exponents to be complex, problematic and evolutionary, though it can be done by managing the unrealistic expectations that you will be doing substantially the same thing with time, space and material artefacts as you did in face-to-face teaching. As you know by now, if you are currently working at distance with students, you won’t be doing the same things. If you are also, perhaps, a parent or carer, simultaneously in receipt of ‘online learning’ to ‘deliver’, you will know the additional attention and **cognitive overload** only too well. In the recent ‘looking to the future editorial’ for Learning, Media and Technology (Selwyn et al. 2020), the authors speculated on ten areas towards which critical educational technology researchers should be directing their attention in the next ten years. It was written in pre-pandemic times but anticipates, in many relevant ways, how **the locus of control of pedagogy needs to be questioned and** even **relocated, away from remote, unaccountable, unethical systems and into the hands of educators and communities. The** final **idea** in that piece **opens up more exciting and ambitious possibilities than those routinely voiced as technology making things more ‘effective’, speaking instead to the everyday creativity of** what they label **‘convivial technologies’. Here we could invoke the notion of practices which speak back to power, where the direction of flow is not about ‘content’ being delivered downstream by algorithm but about more open, agentive and productive spaces for both learners and educators.** We might find these ‘third spaces’ in practices around digital media in an era when testing and performativity measures are relaxed through circumstances beyond the control of the neoliberal imaginary and where these difficult times produce surprising and hopeful outcomes. Certainly there is work to be done on each of the following: the due diligence associated with the educational technology industry in these times; addressing, not glossing over, the inequalities we see around us; and with paying attention to how we can better identify the practices which flatten hierarchies and generate a productive pedagogy for the times in which we live and work. Emergency edtech experimentation Our final reflection here is on the ways that **emergency remote teaching has been positioned in ‘experimental’ terms.** According to an article in Quartz magazine, coronavirus has catalysed the world’s biggest educational technology (edtech) experiment in history. With 1.5 billion students out of school and hundreds of millions attempting to learn solely online, the experiment will reshape schools, the idea of education, and what learning looks like in the 21st century. (Anderson 2020) **This idea of experimentation makes remote learning students**, teachers and parents **into laboratory subjects whose contingent experiences and activities are being observed for insights about the future of edtech itself.** The global edtech experiment is also an opportunity to produce very large quantities of student data, as students are forced online into data-intensive digital learning environments at unprecedented scale. **For researchers and organizations** invested in data scientific forms of analysis in education, as Zimmerman (2020) put it in The Chronicle of Higher Education, **coronavirus is an opportunity for a ‘great online learning experiment’:** Coronavirus … has created a set of unprecedented natural experiments. For the first time, entire student bodies have been compelled to take all of their classes online. So we can examine how they perform in these courses compared to the face-to-face kind, without worrying about the bias of self-selection. It might be hard to get good data if the online instruction only lasts a few weeks. But at institutions that have moved to online-only for the rest of the semester, we should be able to measure how much students learn in that medium compared to the face-to-face instruction they received earlier. The argument exemplified by Zimmerman is that the coronavirus crisis is a natural experimental opportunity for education data scientists – both those in academic education research and analysts working in edtech companies and other edu-businesses – **to demonstrate the effectiveness of online education over face-to-face teaching.** Zimmerman even argued that it should be considered a kind of moral responsibility for universities to use the chance **to figure out if online education outperforms in-person teaching, even though,** he said, **‘if students showed more gains from online instruction, professors who teach face-to-face classes – like I do – might find their own jobs in peril’** (Zimmerman 2020). The data scientific dream of measuring learning at scale in order to develop a precise understanding of the benefits of remote instruction is clearly animating part of the effort by edtech businesses and associated researchers to utilize the coronavirus emergency as a mass data-gathering and analysis opportunity. **And this might ultimately**, as Zimmerman suggested, **lead to a consolidation of online instruction and, as a consequence, exacerbate worker precarity for educators.**The possible contraction of higher education as an on-campus experience, and a shift to remote instruction and learning, is already concerning many educators. The effort to position pandemic pedagogies as a natural experimental opportunity for education data science to ‘prove’ the benefits of digital teaching exemplifies the ways that ‘datafication’ has been presented as a transformative force in education in recent years. As Jarke and Breiter (2019) put it in their introduction to a special issue of Learning, Media and Technology on ‘The datafication of education’, **‘the education sector is one of the most noticeable domains affected by datafication, because it transforms not only the ways in which teaching and learning are organised’ and raises expectations about ‘increased transparency, accountability, service orientation and civic participation but also associated fears with respect to surveillance and control, privacy issues, power relations, and (new) inequalities’** (Jarke and Breiter 2019, 1). **From this perspective, efforts to datafy the student experience of education during the pandemic need to be understood as an extreme manifestation of longer-term aspirations to render education legible as numbers through increasingly pervasive technologies and techniques of surveillance.** **The COVID-19 pandemic is being treated as a laboratory experiment in mass-scale datafication of education in ways that might further empower and advance the interests of data-driven edtech companies, researchers and advocates. As millions of students sign up to new platforms in order to be able to access education during the pandemic, long-running concerns over data privacy and the use of data for student profiling and control need to be brought back into focus.** Towards future research We raise the four discussions above as critical reflections on ongoing significant changes with potentially long-term consequences for education generally and for research and practice in digital media and learning specifically. **Pandemic education may also illuminate something of longer-term changes in the relationship between technology and society, with digital services adopted unproblematically as solutions to any problem** (also reflected in current tensions over surveillance and privacy implications of ‘contact tracing’ apps). Yet these are not all necessarily new issues or problems. Contributors to Learning, Media and Technology have for many years been confronting questions and challenges of the political economy of edtech, digital inequalities, spaces and futures of learning, and datafication of education. The coronavirus emergency has intensified and expanded these. Rather than calling for a specific research agenda related to coronavirus, our more modest hope is that the journal will continue to act as a key source of scholarly knowledge and critical analysis on **issues around education, media and technology** that **have long, contested histories and uncertain futures. The pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices characteristic of education in 2020 call for a reinvigorated approach to research on educational technologies and media that is driven by critical and theoretically informed analysis.** Learning, Media and Technology remains a key forum for original research in these areas. **We welcome contributions that not only take the current pandemic as their focus or context of analysis, but continue to advance our understanding of historically and contextually specific education and technology-related policies, practices, and problems that are now more urgent than ever.**

#### Our intervention cultivates technological citizenship and allows ZoomCraft players to exercise agency over media.

Mirrlees and Alvi ‘20 (Tanner Mirrlees, associate professor of communications and digital media studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and Shadid Alvi, professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, “Edtech Inc: Selling, Automating and Globalizing Higher Education in the Digital Age,” Taylor & Francis Group, 2020)

The real core of what academics do best, aside from the critical import of research, is to support the conditions for the creation of well-educated, thoughtful citizens who are able and willing to participate in a self-governing democracy (Dewey 1966; Kincheloe 1999). Academics are not trained or very eager to manufacture “highly qualified personnel” (HQP), in the parlance of government and business, for capital to exploit. This is because education is not a business, and academia is not about selling a piece of paper that at the end of students’ fouryear journey signifies they are now ready to be a worker who gleefully meets the employer’s every demand and are “qualified” to cope with entrepreneurial gig work. Rather, “Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself” and as such, “The educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end” (Dewey 1938). If the social process of education is to be ascribed other-directed values and ends, then these ought to be public and democratic ones (Dewey 1966). At its finest, is a social process for all people to develop knowledge about themselves and others in relation to modern social life. In short, instead of cranking out atomized units of HQP for capital, higher education is excellent and successful when empowering citizens to cooperatively create themselves as “high-quality collectivities” (HCC), build up their capacities to make “cognitive maps” of the social structures that limit and enable their agency and inspire them to act to identify, understand and solve real earthly problems. But what specifically do we mean when inviting higher education to encourage and practice “technological citizenship”? Citizenship is often conceptualized as the “individual possession of rights against the state and corresponding obligations to it” (Barney 2007, 11), but another important conceptualization of citizenship “is a way of knowing and acting, a way of being in the world, a practice” (Barney 2007, 11). In this regard, technological citizenship refers to four rights: the right to knowledge about new technology; the right to participate in decision making about the design or diffusion of new technology; the right to informed consent about new technology in society; and the right to limit new technology’s potential endangerment of society (Frankenfeld 1992). With regard to practice, technological citizenship refers to the day-to-day activity of making value judgments about technology in society “in both the moral and ethical spheres, judgement about means and ends, judgement about justice and the good life” (Barney 2007, 37). Ideally, these rights and practices combine to form a citizen who is interested in and informed about new and emerging technologies before they become entrenched, so they can meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes through which technologies are designed, diffused and used in society. It is important to cultivate in students the knowledge and skills required to be competent technological citizens and to invite them to pass judgment upon technology, including EdTech. Effective technological citizenship would thus entail the capacity and willingness to ask questions like, What is a good education? What type of education do social justice and democracy need? What role should new technology play in higher education? What ends should we direct our new technology toward? Although we can radically disrupt and transform higher education with these digital technologies, should we? If digital technologies are having negative as opposed to positive impacts on higher education, should we stop it? Can we control it more effectively? How? When we ask questions about and evaluate which new technologies to develop, which to deploy and how to deploy them, we need to carefully consider costs, benefits, risks and opportunities. Let us try to preemptively think through and evaluate the potential positives and negatives of technological innovations before we choose to adapt or adopt them in our institutions and communities. Technological citizenship invites us to attempt to determine what actions, from a range of possibilities, we ought to pursue and encourages us to explain why an action is more virtuous compared to another, and with regard to a larger ethical framework. When we collectively ask hard and contentious questions about the development of technology, the use of technology and the actual or possible effects of technology, especially with an eye to what is right and wrong, good and bad, we are really asking questions about how we want to live with technology in society, and ultimately, how we want to live at all. Before, during and after a new technology is propelled into the world, as many people as possible should be informed about and involved in the discussion. By doing so, we open a space for educators and students to exercise agency. Technological citizenship is a challenge and an opportunity for 21st-century educators, and we encourage educators across all disciplines to do more to empower their students to develop the knowledge and skills required for participation in the public sphere and in democracy. In the neoliberal university, where the primary role and goal of an education is to turn consumers into the workers and entrepreneurs of a nebulously defined future, cultivating critically and analytically minded citizens may seem of little value. Yet, the pedagogy of technological citizenship offers a much needed, timely and entirely relevant balance to the reigning vocational impetus to equip students with technical knowledge and skills so they can serve whatever employer demands their labor power. We encourage educators to do more to empower students to think and act critically about the political economy of EdTech and to explore the ethical and moral dimensions of EdTech in society. We also propose that everyone involved with institutions of higher education push themselves to become better technological citizens. Doing so offers us some defense against being pushed inexorably forward by the EdTech industry’s attempt to determine the future ofhigher education in the name of progress, which is actually a camouflage for profit. It also lets us move more cautiously toward a future of higher education expressing human-centric and conscious design. As technological citizens, university administrators, professors and students can be better positioned to collaboratively reflect upon and deliberate about the advantages and disadvantages of digital technologies so that we, not the owners and promoters of EdTech, remain the social agents of conservation and change in 21st-century higher education.

#### The focus on mechanical detail of Medication paired with the symbolic weight of the debate game reduces the world to a toy to be manipulated towards simulated activist ends – this produces an absorption into the everyday operations of the game which distances debaters from its implications and creates an impulse towards controlling the world

Schleiner ‘19 (Anne-Marie, PhD in cultural analysis from the University of Amsterdam and international lecturer on political sciences and game theory, “The Playful Citizen: Civic Engagement in a Mediatized Culture” p. 124-6)

In an activist simulation game, a play move is not only an inconsequential act of fun, but also carries symbolic weight by referencing real issues and world problems, for instance signifying whether a member of a threatened species like the polar bear in Polar Plunder (AIMS Games Center 2013) can find enough food under the ice for her cubs despite Arctic climate change. And yet, in spite of this added worldly weight and consequentiality, it is often difficult to take serious games seriously. Although game-makers set out to shock players with a moving diagram of harmful and tragic operations, players conversely succumb to the enchantment of lively, toy-like, mechanical processes within the miniature, abstracted clockwork game world, no matter how damaging the actual operations in the exterior world, regardless of how many dolphins are killed or how many tracts of rainforest are destroyed. The game asks to be played and mastered, inviting the player to enter into its cause and effect mechanical loops, regardless of the consequences—it is only a game, after all. The ‘toyness’ of the world of the game, the miniature abstraction of the model that announces itself as game, not life, contributes to this nullification of the game’s critical impact, as I will discuss further on. Moreover, I will argue that the operational movements running inside the game induce a complacency akin to what Martin Heidegger referred to as “everyday sight,” a way of “Being-in-the-World” already familiar to us from procedural interactions in the world outside the game (1927, 107). In order to better understand the effect of the procedurality of the game on the player, in this chapter I will draw on what may seem an unlikely and acontemporous source from outside the fields of game studies and computer science, where procedurality itself has often been accepted at face value as a positive rhetorical tool within games.4 In Being and time, his primary work devoted to forwarding a temporal, embodied phenomenological understanding of human existence, Heidegger theorized a common, everyday mode of being (ontology) and a mental framework that he understood as a submersion within the everyday circulations and procedures of the work-a-day, social world (Ibid., 78). This practical view of the workings of the world is what he refers to alternately as “everyday sight” and “circumspection” (2003, 107). A railway line transports workers from the suburbs to the city; the 4 Heidegger is often considered an apolitical philosopher, or judged for his Nazi era actions as a university administrator in Freiburg, and therefore might seem distant from political critique or philosophy. Even so, his deconstructive philosophical method was highly influential for critical theory in the latter half of the twentieth century, and informed, for instance, the deconstructive methodology of Jaques Derrida. Also, Heidegger’s phenomenological framework impacted political philosophers like Hannah Arendt and Georgio Agamben. The broken toy tactic: Clockwork worlds and activist games 125 suburban train stops to let a passenger off at an inner-city station guarded by a vigilant conductor who steps back and forth on the station platform. Such an interlocking set of functional workings, which we also see running compellingly in the toy city of Madurodam, is supplementary to Heidegger’s “Dasein in the They,” an immersed everyday orientation within the common world (1927, 167). We seldom question or “disclose” our place or the place of others in such work-a-day utilitarian operations, for to do so continuously would impede our ability to plug into the “equipmental workshops” we use to take care of daily business (Ibid., 105). The dilemma that confronts the activist game-maker is that the very procedural logic of the simulation game that he or she hopes to harness for a provocative critique has a bewitching effect on the player, comparable to Heidegger’s state of fascinated absorption in the practical workings of the world (1927, 107). Examples of equipment in Being and time, of clocks, hammers, planes, and needles, speak of a more rhythmic, mechanical, Industrial Age, but almost a century later, well into, much of our world is still composed of functional, instrumental relations, on and off the screen (Ibid., 99). Circuitous operationality has the Information Age found yet another abode in the weightless, abstract toy workings of computer games. And yet there are exceptions to this rule of the genre, ways for concerned citizens to design games that snap the player out of the hypnotic circle of toy operationality, via what I will refer to as the broken toy tactic. A rupture in the game catapults the player outside the comforting and rewarding operational sphere of the clockwork game world and induces him or her to critical reflection, contestation, or action. While analyzing two popular activist games closely, I will argue that the player’s shift from fascinated immersion in moving game world operations to a disturbed confrontation with a malfunction of play mirrors Heidegger’s anxious illuminations of the operational clockwork loops of the world that might arise when a tool, 6.1: September 12th – Game screenshot. 126 Anne-Marie Schleiner like his oft invoked hammer, is broken or missing (1927, 102). A break in the smooth functionality of the game discloses its operational logic in greater “totality” (Ibid., 105). For Heidegger, a “clearing” of everyday sight uncovers the disquieting temporality of “the who’s” existence, as well as illuminating his possibilities (Ibid., 167). Yet, in the hands of the concerned citizen game-maker, this unsettling existential pause or stop, this interruption of the game’s workings, is also a moment ripe for critical reflection and evaluation that precedes the formation of a political stance and possible action, the intended transformation of ‘games for change.’

#### **By interrupting and hijacking the smooth ebb and flow of** **Zoom Craft’s GameSphere it is possible to augment its narratives and reveal its own violence. Voting Aff in the face of the inevitable 1NC framework push will be additional aff solvency – because frustrating their desire for clash and their fairness – forces a moment of self reflection**

Reed ‘10, Scott. "Review of Gamer Theory." Reviews (2010). *Kairos Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 15*(1).) (Assistant Professor of English at Georgia Gwinnett College, PhD from the University of Georgia)//Elmer

What does it mean to do gamer theory? Wark's book is, if nothing else, a manifesto: less about a particular way of reading games than a “strategy guide” for a critical project. While each chapter develops part of a massive theoretical framework embracing critical theory, history, media theory, and sociology, each chapter is also simultaneously a performance of the very theory Wark is building. In those performances, readers can catch a glimpse not only of what it means to “do gamer theory,” but to also catch a sense of the kind of writing subject Wark calls on to do that kind of work. Who, ultimately, is going to play this game? Wark partially establishes the shape of gamer theory (and of gamer theorists) by contrast. One of his more notable targets, at least for the sake of my discussion, is critical theory itself. Referred to at one point as “hypocritical theory,” Gamer Theory strikes a pose of insouciant cynicism towards the hegemony of academic discourse and its often apparent impotence when it comes to solving the problems it claims to address. In perhaps his most inflammatory turn of phrase, Wark refers to critical theory as mere “hypocritical theory” – “indistinguishable from porn” it more resembles a sport (with star players and codified rules and positions) than an intellectual pursuit (151). Conversely, Wark reserves significant praise for the works of Martin Heidegger, who in contrast to (hypo)critical theorists, wrote “a strategy guide for Theory as a game of being” (160). Gamer Theory accordingly plays less toward the topographical formations of schooling and more towards trying “to describe what being now is” (150). On a more general level, Wark's cynicism toward academic literacy can be read more generally as a cynicism regarding education itself. The initial salvo is fired early, with Gamer Theory's first chapter targeting not just the metaphor of The Cave, but by extension the prominence of that metaphor's founder. Plato's Cave, after all, offers not only a picture of Plato's metaphysics (the separation of the subject from true “reality”), but also suggests the beginnings of a solution: philosophical discourse as an inquiry into the true forms of things. Gamer Theory, instead, is a far more quintessentially postmodern sort of project, one based on a deep-seated “incredulity” towards those “metanarratives” (Lyotard 1984, p. xxiv). Instead, “Gamer Theory starts with a suspension of the assumptions of The Cave: that there is a more real world beyond it, somewhere, and that someone – some priest or professor – knows where it is” (19). To “do gamer theory,” **then,** means slipping the bounds of the teacher/student dynamic, of the institutionality in which most of us work. As Wark playfully puts it later on: “Too much dungeon [referring both to John Nash's prisoners dilemma and Foucault's Discipline and Punish], not enough Dungeons & Dragons” (125). Gamer Theory's project – to point the way “to what being now is” – can, I think, partially coincide with spaces of institutional learning, but its real force is generated from without, and any attempt to fully contain it within schooling is doomed to fall flat. School is just another Cave that gamer theorists can find their way into and game their way out of. Gamer Theory's preference, however problematically rendered given its own reliance on the very theory it seems to dismiss, is to build a new subject position generated from outside schooling, from the scenes of “everyday” gameplay. The starting ground for understanding the world (and working to remedy its very real problems) is to acknowledge and engage the games/Caves of lived experience first. Perhaps in that sense, Gamer Theory aligns itself with principles of learning transfer that are increasingly an important dimension of composition studies, particularly with regards to how writing pedagogies can encourage learning across disciplinary fields. Kathleen Yancey (2009) writes that electronic portfolio pedagogy, for instance, encourages a union of sorts between not just the “delivered” curriculum, but the way that curriculum is subjectively “experienced” and “lived” (pp. 2-3). Wark's more profound gesture, despite its rhetorical baggage, has less to do with the cynical dismissal of schooling or critical theory and more to do with framing those (disciplined, sanctioned) pursuits as being no more or less Cave-like than the games we engage at home. The inherent violence of gaming, though, figures an interesting barrier to doing gamer theory productively. By “violence,” I mean not only to bring into view the violent content of many games, but also the larger epistemological violence of the digital itself. Much of Wark's exigence in developing Gamer Theory in the first place is the way that games represent the (technological, cultural, epistemological, rhetorical) hegemony of the yes/no, one/two logic of the digital; games are “the digital itself [made] into entertainment” (96). Being themselves constructed not just out of digital media, but out of systems of rules, games double-down on that violence, and it's because of that interpretation that Wark can suggest using games creatively (allegorically) to critique gamespace itself. Those creative constructions are where the gamer theorist has the most elbow room to “write.” Writing gamer theory is, then, a process of engaging games (digital games, but also the epistemological/critical games of schooling itself) in an effort to augment academic discourse in a way that responds critically and creatively to the “violence” that shapes us as subjects and writers. Indeed, as Wark quotes Guy Debord: “no vital eras were ever engendered by a theory; they began with a game or conflict or a journey.” To which Wark adds: “And perhaps now by a conflict within and against the game, and a journey through it to get beyond it” (224). In a turn of phrase reminiscent of the pop-culture engaged postmodern pedagogies of Geoffrey Sirc, Anne Francis Wysocki, and Gregory Ulmer, Wark frames the “journey through” gamespace – and by extension the “vital era” of intellectual work to follow – in contradistinction to the “serious work” of academic discourse: If [economic] game theory is objective, rational, abstract, then gamer theory is subjective, intuitive, particular. (124) The latter “territory” (which I had better call a topology instead) challenges and frustrates many of the most closely held goals and traditions of academic writing, or at the very minimum frustrates the institutional pressure to teach the norms of academic discourse effectively, and readers resistant to the notion of challenging those goals and traditions may find Wark's own idiosyncratic performance off-putting. That same performance, though, opens up Gamer Theory as not just a compelling theory about games and their situation in our mediated culture, but also as an interface for generating playful-yet-thoughtful approaches to gaming that blur the lines between formal and informal writing.

#### Policy is never complete – to resist action is to adhere to the rhythm of an algorithmically composed society

**Harney and Moten ‘21** (Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. "ALL INCOMPLETE" (2021): (Stefano Harney is the Professor of Strategic Management Education at Singapore Management University., Fred Moten is the professor of Performance Studies at New York University and has taught previously at University of California, Riverside, Duke University, Brown University, and the University of Iowa)//RKS Joey

The pathway to the lived experience of **impossible individuation** goes through rigid **conformity**, whose severed, separate performances are strictly accounted for. School is where the social contract is taken out on kids. In good schools, network’s eclipse of contact is enacted with great efficiency; in bad schools, an experiment might happen, either accidentally, where networks and the networked don’t apply, or under the protection of an idea of the alternative. The **loss** of **empathy** in the submission of the social to the contractual ought only ever make us want to ask, can there be cybernetic bruise? Cybernetic caress? **Cybernetic sensation**? This we do in remembrance of the general antagonism and the general strike we keep all but **enacting**, recognizing that these **questions** **arise** not from the fact of new computational hardware but rather from the values that animate **old** **computational software** – a spiritless theory of mind/hand coordination manifest most clearly in the reduction of reverent touch to instrumental grasp. It’s not that touch is nonviolent. It’s that we need lovingly to return such violence from **resource improvement** back to its multiple sources. We want to intensify our thoughtful feel of bad complicity in the interest of its brush against the good so that no one can ever say, ‘Watch me make my own way through this bullshit.’ The record shows, no one can take the blows and remain intact in the effort to remain intact, which is only given in the taking of the blows. If we want to fight for the good, we have to **overturn** the **bad** rather than navigate it by ourselves in crowded loneliness. It’s all nappy and out of all compass – dread, naught, knotty, naughty, dred as worn cover and rent vessel. The oldness, the oldheadedness of the people, is given in their recognition and refusal of this turbulence we go through. There, they study what also can’t be there. It’s like a band straining against development, trying to make a music that studies it while avoiding it. Is there a point where you can’t go on indefinitely? Is that space limited or unlimited? The broken document of a workshop that breaks out into poetry by breaking from the crafting of poems is a concert film. The record of thoughtful play becomes a play. Then what’s the relation **between** **absolution** and **insolvency**? Between insovereignty and the **refusal** of the **absolute**? Some loosening. **Embrace’s** turning **loose**. It’s like salvation is that present and absolute tactility of field, which is unified only insofar as it is unreachable and ungraspable. Do leaders solve or dissolve or both? Are they dissolved? Are they dissolute? Is solving to reduce? Is lysis on the way to incompleteness? Could the tragedy have been avoided if early on he’d said, “Hey fragment, don’t go home”? Then it’s not that we What does it mean to stand for **improvement**? Or worse, to stand for what business calls a ‘commitment to continuous improvement‘? It means **to stand** for the brutal speciation of all. To take a stand for speciation is the beginning of a diabolical usufruct. Improvement comes to us by way of an **innovation** in **land tenure**, where individuated ownership, derived from increasing the land’s productivity, is given in the perpetual, and thus arrested, becoming of exception’s miniature. This is to say that from the outset, the ability to own – and that ability’s first derivative, self-possession – is entwined with the ability to make more productive. In order to be improved, to be rendered more productive, land must be violently reduced to its productivity, which is the regulatory diminishment and management of earthly generativity. Speciation is this general reduction of the earth to productivity and submission of the earth to techniques of domination that isolate and enforce particular increases in and accelerations of productivity. In this regard, (necessarily European) man, in and as the exception, imposes speciation upon himself, in an operation that extracts and excepts himself from the earth in order to confirm his supposed dominion over it. And just as the earth must be forcefully speciated to be possessed, man must forcefully speciate himself in order to enact this kind of possession. This is to say that racialization is present in the very idea of **dominion** over the **earth**; in the very idea and enactment of the exception; in the very nuts and bolts of possession-by-improvement. Forms of racialization that both Michel Foucault and, especially and most vividly, Robinson identify in medieval Europe become *usufructed* with modern possession through improvement. Speciated humans are endlessly improved through the endless work they do on their endless way to becoming Man. This is the usufruct of man. In early modern England, establishing title to land by making it more productive meant **eliminating biodiversity** and isolating and breeding a species – barley or rye or pigs. Localized ecosystems were aggressively transformed so that monocultural productivity smothers anacultural generativity. The emergent relation between speciation and racialization is the very conception and conceptualization of the settler. Maintenance of that relation is his vigil and his eve. For the encloser, possession is established through improvement – this is true for the possession of land and for the possession of self. The Enlightenment is the universalization/globalization of the imperative to possess and its corollary, the **imperative** to **improve**. However, this productivity must always **confront** its **contradictory** impoverishment: the destruction of its biosphere and its estrangement in, if not from, entanglement, both of which combine to ensure the liquidation of the human differential that is already present in the very idea of man, the exception. To stand for such improvement is to invoke policy, which attributes depletion to the difference, which is to say the wealth, whose simultaneous destruction and accumulation policy is meant to operationalize. This attribution of a supposedly essential lack, an inevitable and supposedly natural diminution, is achieved alongside the imposition of possession-by-improvement. To make policy is to impose speciation upon everybody and everything, to inflict impoverishment in the name of improvement, to invoke the universal law of the usufruct of man. In this context, continuous improvement, as it emerged with decolonization and particularly with the defeat of national capitalism in the 1970s, is the continuous crisis of speciation in the surround of the general antagonism. This is the contradiction Robinson constantly invoked and analyzed with the kind of profound and solemn optimism that comes from being with, and being of service to, your friends. To be formed is to be formed in this rhythm, to be algorithmically composed, to be compelled to carry this rhythm but also to develop it, to **improve** it, to export and import it, which is to say that to be **algorithmically composed** is not just to be beaten but to beat. This beaten beating is what might be called **synaptic labor**. To answer the compulsion of logistical capitalism it is necessary not just to carry this beat but to improve it, not just to be available to this rhythm but to make this rhythm available, to assail with this rhythm, to prevail in this rhythm against the surrounding informality that unsettles this zero-one, one-two, with a militancy that is neither one nor its absence. What is synaptic labor? It is in the first instance to be opened involuntarily, by compulsion, capriciously, to this rhythm that kills. But this moment of equivalence, of subject embodiment, of exploitable nerve and affect is matched by a degraded discretion, an impulse to take the beating in order to be worthy of holding the whip, an impulse to plot the rhythm upon the earth, to regulate with the rhythm, to form roving beats against fugitive grooves. To **improve** the **land**, to make new the people, these old cries uttered over the killing rhythm come back intensively, invasively, internally in synaptic labor, which always begins with administering the beat to one’s own rhythm by **administering** a **one to own**. The drummer is discrete but indifferent. The rhythm operates by way of a line. This line is two, zero and one. It is an assembly line where the same is done and the same is improved, as if in courtship with difference, until it is done again. The forwarded email with a comment is the mundane *kaizen* of this rhythm. But this example is deceptive, too, because it is not action but composure, comportment, algorithmic composition that is at stake. Improvement occurs in synaptic labor mostly not through making, but through making more available for exploitation, a primitive accumulation of the senses, and expropriation of intention, attention, and tension. The rhythm operates by way of an assembly line that runs through society, through the social factory, not to make anything in particular but itself. The line of production is its own product. This was the real meaning of kaizen, the improvement of improvement: metrics, algorithmic composition for itself. This means another connection must always be made, and another zero-one opened by that connection. Every connection becomes an arbitrage, every nerve is **speculative** as it fires in synapsis with another **connection**, discrete, equivalent, discrete again in nervous metrics of improvement. This metrics is both neurological and pathological in the face of all undercommon measure. And it must pursue such fugitive measure by necessity, by the compulsion to make available and be made available to this rhythm everywhere, all the time, in the where and when of this killing beat.