Week 7 Homework

Jonathan Schreiber

CSC 300

“A suitable name for this philosophy is cyberlibertarianism, a collection of ideas that links ecstatic enthusiasm for electronically mediated forms of living with radical, right wing libertarian ideas about the proper definition of freedom, social life, economics, and politics in the years to come. Any attempt to philosophize about computers and society must somehow come to terms with the wide appeal of this widespread perspective, its challenges and shortcomings” (Winner, Cyberlibertarian Myths and The Prospects for Community).

“Their theory is that democracy is an impedance to capitalism so they need as little regulation as possible” (Solon and Siddiqui, Forget Wall Street – Silicon Valley is the new political power in Washington).

“Part of the reason might be that Silicon Valley, at a certain level, is not optimistic about the future of democracy. The more of a mess Washington becomes, the more interested the tech world is in creating something else, and it might not look like elected representation. Rank-and-file coders have long been wary of regulation and curious about alternative forms of government. A separatist streak runs through the place: Venture capitalists periodically call for California to secede or shatter, or for the creation of corporate nation-states” (Bowles, Tech C.E.O.s Are in Love With Their Principal Doomsayer).

One of the main arguments against Cyberlibertarianism is that it will effectively destroy democracy. As Nellie Bowles state in “Tech C.E.O.’s Are in Love with Their Principal Doomsayer” pointed out, the reason that Big-Tech Companies are all for welfare checks, regardless of pay, is that most people are expendable. There is no need for most of humanity anymore, as the world becomes more and more computerized. Therefore, by creating a “cyber democracy”, humanity would become more and more obsolete. And, in fact, it would not be a democracy, as the true power would lie in the hands of the Tech-Giants. This explains why many in the tech world are extremely liberal when it comes to social issues but want a completely hands-off approach when it comes to big business. It is important to consider that maybe the reason they are questioning democracy is that they want to be the ones who control the future after democracy.

One of the main arguments for Cyberlibertarianism is that by eliminating the structures of social, political, and economic organizations and replacing it with a “digital utopia” of sorts, individuals can achieve limitless opportunities for wealth, power, and pleasure. They disregard the idea of a “society”, which works together towards a collective good, and focus completely on the individual. If there were no responsibilities for the individual towards society, then they could focus their attention on what truly matters. Clearly, a society without any government regulation or bureaucrats would mean capitalism would run free. In addition, all of the innovation and technology would only continue to improve technology and society more and more. This free market capitalism, coupled with a digitalized world and an ability for everyone to access all of the “knowledge”, would lead to unprecedented levels of wealth for everyone…