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[Keyword 1] **Manipulation:** Media Technologies and Narrative as Tools of Power

To manipulate something, in English, is a word meaning to handle, or to exert control in a typically skillful manner. It has a simple yet fascinating etymology. Manipulation comes from the French manipulation, which comes from the French manipule meaning “handful.” Manipule is built from Latin roots “manus” for “hand” and “plere” for “to fill.” To fill one's hand is to literally grip onto something with one’s hand, which ties the manipulation to the graceful motor function that made humans so dexterous.

Our appendages also connect us to cyberspace via interfaces with phones, computers, virtual reality, it is like the appendages that once grabbed the pen to write have transcended to a whole new scale of manipulation. In contemporary society, manipulation through media technologies and narratives have transcended mere influence and, through the evolution of academic disciplines coinciding with the political agendas of institutions and states, to culture, to media, – manipulation has become a popular way to understand the dynamics of how information is produced, disseminated, and consumed. It has reached a level of formalization and standardization that requires careful analysis and treatment.

The clinical definition of manipulation is rather different from its roots. A diagnostic including traits of manipulative tendency in an individual is associated with narcissism as a personality trait of people who are willing to exert social influence on others, including acts that distort the reality of the people they seek to exploit. One could visualize a manipulator grabbing the fabric of space-time with their hands and distorting reality.

This entry will historicize keyword “manipulation” through investigating instances of mass psychological manipulation. Both narratives of culture and the influence of media technologies play an important role in shaping the formal elements of manipulation: who is doing What goal does the manipulation work to achieve? What is the outcome of the manipulation?

For example, 1975-1990 saw manipulation of academic subjects Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies due to neoliberal policy-making of Margarat Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Cultural Studies and Ethnic Studies originated independently from each other. Ethnic Studies evolved out of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. For Cultural Studies, founding scholars Raymond Williams, who wrote on culture and society in the late 1950s, and Stuart Hall who was the director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in 1968, were both British Scholars who wanted to chart the British working-class shift from Labour Party to the Conservative Party before Thatcher came into power. Michael Berube says in an opinion article for Chronicle of Higher Education, ”Indeed, Hall was writing on Thatcherism—and recognizing it correctly for the radical break it represented—just as neoliberal ideology was beginning to discover its powers“ (Berube 2009).

Then, according to Henry Giroux:

Within the past decade, the field of cultural studies has developed a broad following in the United States. In the most general sense, cultural studies signifies a massive shift away from Eurocentric master narratives, disciplinary knowledge, high culture, scientism, and other legacies informed by the diverse heritage of modernism (Giroux 1995).

In contrast to the European context, the transfer to U.S. Cultural Studies was guided by traditions of critical theory, ethnic, and diversity studies. Giroux’s cries that American culture

traditionally "has been a culture of exclusion, one which has ignored the multiple narratives, histories, and voices of culturally and politically subordinated groups" was already being addressed by Ethnic Studies since the 1960s (Giroux 1995). In the US, those striking and protesting in campuses (including UC Berkeley) fought for the creation of the Department of Ethnic Studies, which had real connections to the student activists of Third World Liberation Front.

Cultural Studies proliferates on top of these foundations without being directly tied to activism, obscuring the original meaning of the organizing it took to establish a department of Ethnic Studies at American universities. Cultural Studies erases the fight for Ethnic Studies with student protests and activism to become congenial with the same institutions that violently oppressed them only decades ago just to be granted funding and legitimacy. Stuart Hall himself offered a worried critique of the dangers of Cultural Studies being globalized:

So I simply want you to know that my own feeling is that the explosion of cultural studies along with other forms of critical theory in the academy represents a moment of extraordinarily profound danger. Why? Well, it would be excessively vulgar to talk about such things as how many jobs there are, how much money there is around, and how much pressure that puts on people to do what they think of as critical political work and intellectual work of a critical kind, while also looking over their shoulders at the promotions stakes and the publication stakes, and so on (Hall 1992).

Hall here is echoing the paradox of neoliberal philosophy: morals and justice do not always align with profit and attention. Cultural Studies discourses policy for meaningful change while being structurally unable to critically change the institution in the ways that they theorize. Michael Berube from the Chronicle of Higher Education article thinks:

Cultural studies can do a better job of complicating the political-economy model in media theory, a better job of complicating our accounts of neoliberalism, and a better job of convincing people inside and outside the university that cultural studies' understanding of hegemony is a form of understanding with great explanatory power—that is to say, a form of understanding that actually works (Berube 2009).

It is no wonder that Cultural Studies does not accomplish what it should theoretically promise, it manufactures indifference by not being critical enough, but to what degree does Cultural Studies subsume and defang the revolutionary roots of Ethnic Studies?

To further analyze, Jean Baudrillard's theory on orders of simulacra can help us analyze different orders of manipulation. Baudrillard argues that media narratives create simulations—representations that lack any original reality but are accepted as more real than the real itself. In this hyperreal world, signs replace reality, and manipulative media create a distorted perception where the simulacrum is believed to be the original. This hyperreality blurs distinctions between truth and illusion, leaving the audience unable to differentiate between manipulated narratives and objective reality. In his 1983 *Simulations,* he historizes the existence of different grades, or orders, of simulacra. In analogy to history, he defines second order simulacrum as the industrialization of the first order simulacrum:

A new generation of signs and objects which comes with the industrial revolution. Signs without the tradition of caste [...] They will no longer have to be counterfeited, since they are going to be produced all at once on a gigantic scale. The problem of their uniqueness, or their origin, is no longer a matter of concern; [...] Which is to say the series, [...] the relation between them is no longer that of an original to its counterfeit - neither analogy nor reflection - but equivalence, indifference. [...] Only the obliteration of the original reference allows for the

generalized law of equivalence, that is to say the very possibility of production" (Baudrillard 1983).

Cultural Studies is the second order simulacrum of Ethnic Studies because they repackaged, mixed up, and shattered into a million pieces the origins of Ethnic Studies, a history without the history of struggle, protest, and Black liberation in America. On the other hand, Cultural Studies circulated as an academic discipline born out of a separate, surrogate context of Britain's class struggles. In this way, academic institutions have effectively destroyed the original meaning and context that Ethnic Studies came from by letting it be subsumed by the more influential and popular mode of Cultural Studies discourse. It traps the audience in a perpetual and circulating present moment—a fundamental pattern in instances of mass psychological manipulation.

The radical break that Cultural Studies served for critical Marxists in the UK was highly applicable and relevant in the context it originated from, but the influx of Cultural Studies into American universities and the effect it produced shows how the mass reproduction of identical critiques rapidly fires, multiplies, and eventually, like Baudrillard's conception of the 'masse' which, as humdog writes, "absorbs energy and personality and then represents it as spectacle," and cyberspace is where the "purest manifestation" of this mass exists (humdog 1994).

To bring it back to today's New Media culture, Lev Manovich's brings forth the theory of Cultural Analysis in 2020 following the tradition of Ethnic Studies to Cultural Studies. It weds the seminal theories from the 1960s-2000s with the industrial data science methods and an intense focus on the theory of computational media. Manipulation, in the context of media, involves covertly shaping perceptions and behaviors. Manovich discusses the computer as a "manipulator" in "What is New Media?" due to its capacity to reshape analog media through

numerical computation, thus bending the viewer's mind to the "mental trajectory" of unseen designers (Manovich 2020). The cultural studies legacy breeds theories of how interactive computer design often disguises manipulation as choice, erasing the distinction between genuine preference and algorithmic nudge. Useful and applicable to the technology, but detached from any real, material meaning.

The times have shown that the impact of Cultural Studies far overshadows the mere existence of Ethnic Studies, as there is an indifference to the origins that each discipline was created out of, and therefore an obliteration of the original meaning and desires of the movements. They show an ever accelerating digital sphere that systematically absorbs all the information given to it completely dislocated from any time but the immediate present.

Anna Kornbluh expands on how digital media has accelerated the process of manipulation in her book *Imaginary*. She describes a concept called "immediacy style," where the rapid circulation of images, information, and narratives overwhelms the psyche, leaving audiences with anxiety, depression, and a repetitive reproduction of imagined selves in search for a feeling of the original. Kornbluh argues that this hyper-stimulation of the "torrent of images" in cyberspace not only manipulates emotions but also alters cognitive processes, trapping viewers in a feedback loop of high-speed consumption. She says it defines "an age of hyper-circulation—a flood of intense immanence in cultural aesthetics, that eerily conforms to contemporary conditions of oil swells and aquatic surges" (Kornbluh 2022). Her words echo the main idea of her essay, "Extinct Critique," "Out of steam, critique backs fossil fuel," reminding us that America has been consuming more and more energy and overexploiting natural resources bringing us past the point of extinction. Something must be down to somehow *reverse* course before the world burns up. The immediacy style assures that nothing is done to change the

operations of oil companies, bitcoin/ai computing centers, and Israel's genocide campaign, and each day there is inaction more is lost and will never be recovered.

Adorno and Horkheimer expound on this pattern of mass manipulation in *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception from Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They point out, "Advertising and the culture industry merge technically as well as economically" through "mechanical repetition of the same culture product" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944). Mass culture is exposed to the same culture product over and over again, and through repetitions, large industries can manipulate reality for consumers who must participate in this culture because it is the only option. Institutions have figured out how to use the age of hyper-circulation as a method to manufacture indifference via industrialization and are using it to extract profit. Even engaging in critical fields, such as Cultural Studies, has been structurally turned into a second-order simulacrum will not build enough of the world up to radically change it. Adorno and Horkheimer continue to say that "The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944). It must be argued that fossil fuel manipulated mass culture psychologically into suppressing revolt. It just can't be the case that when someone has a good idea that will solve some systemic injustice and wants it to transform reality for the better, that idea shouldn't even be tried or be given attention to and it would instead be better to do nothing. It just can't be. There must be influence or manipulation that suppresses these cultural desires. Examples of Freud's theory of sublimation and desire come up with Adorno and Horkheimer, even though Adorno argues that the approach to desire inflicted by industry teaches repression of one's desires. The culture industry's promise of pleasure and escape is metaphorically compared to a

"promissory note" that is never cashed in; the actual experience it delivers is always deferred, never reaching the fulfillment it seems to offer.

One of my personal favorite essayists, humdog, in her essay "Pandora's Vox: On Community in Cyberspace," expresses concern over the commercialization of online communities, observing how users willingly surrender their personal data in pursuit of virtual socialization. This voluntary exchange makes them unwitting participants in a system where corporate entities monetize their emotions, thoughts, and interactions. She underscores that these communities are not liberating but are controlled networks fostering the illusion of freedom, turning users into products. Her insights echo modern concerns about the commodification of personal data. She says "the reality is that cyberspace is an increasingly efficient tool of surveillance with which people have a voluntary relationship" and some cultures are manipulated into pouring their guts out their guts online but the platform is not owned by them and the data is categorized, repackaged, and shipped away to other buyers to perform industrial data analysis for future advertising and marketing campaigns.

Finally, Jeffrey Sconce, in *The Technical Delusion*, explores how electronic media historically generated feelings of estrangement—and paradoxically, generated feelings of healing from estrangement. He delves into the psychological effects of media technology on society, framing it as both a source of mental illness and a lens through which the insane find solace. Sconce identifies this relationship between media and psychological manipulation, suggesting that those who feel most estranged are paradoxically drawn to media narratives that reflect or justify their mental states. In this light, manipulation becomes a cycle, trapping vulnerable individuals in a digital ecosystem that reflects their fears and beliefs. Manipulation just needs to trap individuals in a system that is circular, for they are minimal systems that can simulate the

infinite passage of time. One will never reach the end of a cycle and it can be easily seen how controlling it is to influence individuals to behave in this way. Another key point from Jeffrey Sconce is how the invention of electromagnetism and technology themselves have a strange manipulative effect on those who are psychotic or paranoiac. This is a collective, cultural effect of mass manipulation, and the clinicalization of mental disorders of technical delusion become part of mass popular signs of meanings:

This presentation [of the schizophrenic] has become so familiar, so emblematic, that popular culture recognizes the "tinfoil helmet" as the signature marker of the electronic paranoiac. Typically deployed for humor, tinfoil helmets are actually a rather desperate technology, an improvised attempt by the insane to seal the cranium from bombardment by the malevolent energies, signals, beams, rays, frequencies, and transmissions that seek to colonize brain and body (Sconce 2019).

Because the manipulation of electronic media is so pervasive into the psyche of mass culture consumers, the fear of being secretly manipulated is one that is only a common symptom of the cause. The fact is that we are all secretly manipulated through the self-commodification and compulsory need to reproduce our identities new, each day.

Thus Cultural Studies becomes the Culture industry, as Adorno and Horkhemier demonstrate that the industry reproduces to the same signs over and over into a "barbaric meaninglessness". Much like the affordances of digital technology, cultural studies created a lot of good frameworks for critiquing globalization and identifying western hegemony in the world. It has colored the disciplines of media communications theory, political economy, ethnographies, and most importantly Marxist and semiotic thought. But, it is important to trace the history of being divorced from the material conditions it draws from– in the revolutionaries of the Civil

Rights Movement and the protest and activism against Police violence that fought hard for Ethnic Studies existence inside the Institution. Any authentic struggle, under Imperial and colonial powers, is squashed out and replaced by something controllable and pro-Capital.

All of these examples highlight mass psychological manipulation with new media and narratives. They show how cyberspace accelerates systems of manipulation by establishing a new age of hyper-circulation that rapidly expands the amount of content in the digital sphere in a dizzying manner that expands so quickly to infinity that it pings back to emptiness—indifference. Industrial institutions have been identified as stifling radical progress in this keyword entry, with support from theorists, Baudrillard, humdog, Kornbluh, Jeffrey Sconce, Giroux, and Adorno and Horkheimer.

Manipulation

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[Keyword 2] **Nostalgia**: Cultural Memory and Manipulation

"Nostalgia" derives from the Greek nóstos (homecoming) and álgos (pain), was originally coined in the 17th century to describe the profound homesickness experienced by Swiss mercenaries. This etymological origin situates nostalgia within the context of suffering and dislocation, signaling its complex role as a psychological and cultural phenomenon. The concept has evolved significantly, shifting from being a medical term for the purpose of curing the human sufferer, nostalgia is born out of a history of war, to a widespread cultural and emotional experience. Nostalgia is the longing feeling of being away from a home or source of comfort or desire. It can be experienced through media and can be experienced through narratives

This entry will explore the keyword "nostalgia" as it reveals the transformative shifts from a historical medical condition to a complex cultural and emotional phenomenon, analyzing its role in contemporary societal dynamics and its manipulation in various cultural contexts.

The use of nostalgia for manipulation is evident in the fashion industry, as illustrated by Vivienne Westwood's retrospection in the 1980s, where she sought to revive historical styles to resonate with modern sensibilities. Apparently Westwood was "unconcerned with historical authenticity, making fashion for the present oriented toward present-day sensibilities, and the same could be said of New Romanticism and other 1980s youth cultures that mixed elements of past styles without any regard for their origin or context" (Becker 2023). As with the subsumed

status of Ethnic Studies into American Cultural Studies at the institutions of knowledge, paralleled with the immediacy style of neoliberal policies of mass control, and now with nostalgia. Nostalgia plays a role in the creation of a mass popular culture who imagines collectively but without any attachment to one true reality: “In the fantasy culture of the 1980s there is no real history, no real past” (Becker 2023). Nevertheless, nostalgia became an even more important ingredient of the pop culture critique of the 1980s. “We are inundated by images from the past, swamped by the nostalgia that is splattered all over Thatcherite Britain,” exclaimed music critic Jon Savage in a 1983 article titled “The Age of Plunder.” Over the course of his article, his argument shifted, concluding, “It is a characteristic of our age that there is little [...] of any real sense of history, as the present is all that matters” (Becker 2023). How was it possible for the present to be swamped by the past and, at the same time, interested only in itself? Because it drew on the past in a decontextualized and dehistoricized manner, using only those elements resonating with itself.

The eclectic mix of past styles from various eras, often devoid of their original contexts, exemplifies how nostalgia can be strategically used to evoke a sense of uniqueness and authenticity, appealing to collective cultural memories that are increasingly detached from their historical origins. As Becker's book *Yesterday: A New History of Nostalgia* puts it, the function of nostalgia in the Pop revival, cycles of retro-activism: “**The 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and even the 1960s were cannibalized, recycled, refracted and sprinkled with Third World and ethnic references.”** Becker helps to trace the transformation from acute homesickness to a broader, more abstract longing for the past, shaped by rapid societal changes. Becker posits, "modern nostalgia is often a response to the rapid pace of change and the perceived loss of stable, familiar reference points in society." This observation ties into Marshall McLuhan's analysis, where he

notes, "the deep nostalgia of an industrial society, a nostalgia bred by rapid change" (Becker 2023). Both perspectives highlight how nostalgia can emerge as a societal buffer against the disorientation and alienation triggered by fast-paced modernization.

Alvin Toffler in *Future Shock* articulates how the accelerated pace of societal change can induce psychological stress, making nostalgia a coping mechanism for societies grappling with the relentless advancement of technology and culture. He describes "a wave of nostalgia" as a natural response to these disorienting shifts, suggesting that this sentiment transcends simple conservative ideology, permeating various social and political spectrums.

Jean-Louis Baudry in *The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema,* articulates the second order function of simulations of reality through the framework of Psychoanalysis. On nostalgia, Baudry writes:

This would appear to satisfy and replace the nostalgia for a lost impression which can be seen as running through the Idealist movement and eating away at it from inside, and setting it in motion. That the real in Plato's text is at an equal distance from or in a homologous relationship to the "intelligibly real"—the world of Ideas—and "reality-subject"—"the impression of reality" produced by the apparatus in the cave should moreover be sufficient to make us aware of the real meaning of the world of Ideas and of the field of desire on which it has been built (a world which, as we know, "exists outside of time," and which, after numerous encounters, the conscious subject can rediscover in himself) (Baudry 1986).

Nostalgia reveals the yearning of people in mass, in globalized networks, for the times when the conception of authenticity, seeing something original or genuine, was possible. But on digital interfaces and screens, where the immediacy of no contradictions and no distinctions between the infinite representations of copies/simulations, there is also a perpetual yearning for

and therefore desire for something authentic. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the manifestation of desire is closely tied with the imagined (or perceived) lack of sustenance needed for a baby's survival. According to Freud: "To desire initially must have been a hallucinatory cathexis of the memory of satisfaction." Survival and insistence of bygone periods, an irrepressible backward movement" (Baudry 1986). Baudry articulates how the cinematic apparatus taps into deep-rooted psychological processes, akin to those described in Platonic philosophy, where the realm of ideas (or ideal forms) and the perceived reality are interlinked yet distinct. He implies that the cinema, much like the cave in Plato's allegory, manufactures a reality that satisfies and even replaces our nostalgia for a 'lost impression'—a yearning for a primal, authentic experience.

Furthermore, Baudry discusses how nostalgia in the context of globalized digital networks reveals a mass longing for times when authenticity—seeing something original or genuine—was conceivable. In today's age of digital interfaces and screens, where there is an immediacy with no contradictions and no distinctions between the infinite representations and copies/simulations, there exists a continuous yearning and thus a desire for something authentic. He correlates this phenomenon with Freudian psychoanalysis, noting:

Return effect, repetition of a phase of the subject's development during which representation and perception were not yet differentiated, and the desire to return to that state along with the kind of satisfaction associated to it, undoubtedly an archetype for all that which seeks to connect with the multiple paths of the subject's desire. It is indeed desire as such, that is, desire of desire, the nostalgia for a state in which desire has been satisfied through the transfer of a perception to a formation resembling hallucination, which seems to be activated by the cinematographic apparatus (Baudry 1986).

These insights are crucial for understanding how contemporary media environments manipulate the viewer's perception, mirroring mechanisms ingrained in human psychology that are deeply rooted in our developmental stages. His analysis posits that the cinematic apparatus, much like the allegorical cave, generates an illusion so compelling that it replaces our need for the real with a fabricated reality that is equally satisfying. This replacement invokes a deep nostalgia not merely for the content viewed but for the experience of reality itself, which the cinema and similar media simulate. This psychoanalytical framework illuminates the pervasive influence of media technologies that not only replicate but also reinvent reality, thus skewing our perceptions and desires. By satisfying the longing for the unattainable—or what once seemed unattainable—through a cinematic hallucination, these technologies foster a unique form of nostalgia. It was not actually a nostalgia for the past but a nostalgia of an idealized past constructed in the present. It’s a nostalgia that yearns for a simplicity and authenticity that may never have existed, thus creating a feedback loop where viewers continuously seek satisfaction in media representations that are ever more lifelike yet fundamentally unreal.

In this way, Baudry’s theoretical perspectives contribute significantly to our understanding of how nostalgia can be engineered and exploited by media technologies. His analysis offers a critical lens through which to view not only cinema but all forms of media that structure contemporary life. His work prompts us to question the authenticity of our perceptions and the real effects of media on our understanding of history, reality, and ourselves. It challenges us to consider how our longing for the past is shaped not just by our personal memories and desires but also by the media apparatus that frames and reflects these desires back to us in a loop of continuous reinforcement.

Becker's reflection on the 1980s cultural milieu, through his engagement with critics like Jon Savage and Elizabeth Wilson, illuminates the complex manipulation of nostalgia within pop culture, which resonates significantly with Theodor Adorno's critique of the culture industry. Becker's analysis, enriched by Savage's remarks on the inundation of Thatcherite Britain with "images from the past," pinpoints a pivotal contradiction: the overwhelming presence of the past in a society purportedly obsessed only with the present. This paradox arises from a decontextualized and dehistoricized engagement with history, where the past is cherry-picked and reassembled to resonate with contemporary sensibilities—a past that comforts rather than challenges.

Savage's critique extends into a broader discourse on postmodernity, shared by Wilson and echoed in Fredric Jameson's writings, which contend that modern culture is characterized by a "real past" being supplanted by "an instant, magical nostalgia." This manipulation—where historical elements are distorted to fit modern narratives—aligns with Adorno's views on the culture industry. For Adorno, culture under capitalism becomes a commodity, and its authenticity is sacrificed for mass consumption. Nostalgia, in this context, is less about a true historical engagement and more about creating a product that sells, offering an escapist fantasy from the trauma and discomforts of the actual past.

This historical backdrop enriches our understanding of how nostalgia can serve as a tool of manipulation in the culture industry, as described by Adorno. The idealized past—be it the glorification of certain eras in fashion or the selective memory of national history—can obscure ongoing social struggles and complexities, promoting a static and often sanitized cultural identity that benefits existing power structures. This aligns with Lauren Berlant's concept of cruel optimism, where the nostalgic attachment to a "better" past or the promise of a globalized,

networked society acts as a kind of false consciousness, distracting from real inequalities and challenges.

The manipulation of nostalgia, especially in the reconstruction of "Heimat" (homeland), illustrates its potency in shaping national identity and collective memory. As Friedrich Kittler discusses, "With World War I, it became necessary to sever home from soil. The protracted battles literally pulverized the tellurian foundation of the wars of peoples and nations" (Kittler 2021). This historical observation underscores the origin of our human feeling of nostalgia in a feeling of deep loss and dislocation. It is an interesting yet exemplary illustration of a pattern of mass manipulation: sometimes populations and cultures were living systemically *apart* from their homeland (in this case, war) yet the powerful symbology of home can be used to psychologically control the behaviors of those away from home. Nostalgia, from this lens seems to be a very fundamental desire and has been shown to sustain culture for periods of time. Janet Murray (2017) in *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, perceives the narrative potential of new media as offering rich, immersive worlds that could help redefine storytelling. While she acknowledges the potential for manipulation, she's largely optimistic about the new possibilities and engaging nature of interactive media. Kittler might say that her emphasis on the transformative potential of digital narratives underestimates the strategic manipulation that interactive and immersive media are also capable of achieving. One could argue that the nostalgia these new forms evoke could be weaponized by those in power to influence public sentiment.

Susan Stewart's insights in *On Longing* further elucidate how nostalgia manifests through tangible objects like souvenirs and collections. Stewart explains, "Thus there are two movements to the collection's gesture of standing for the world: first, the metonymic displacement of part for

whole, item for context; and second, the invention of a classification scheme which will define space and time in such a way that the world is accounted for by the elements of the collection" (Stewart, p. 162).This dual function not only captures but also manipulates the narrative of history, emphasizing how collections can recontextualize and thus manipulate historical understanding.

Stewart also provides a profound exploration of the role of kitsch and camp objects in the cultural landscape, particularly their interaction with nostalgia and material culture. Stewart examines how these objects mediate the past and present, suggesting a complex layering where the antiquation of the fad and the popularization of the antique coexist, leading to a rich saturation of materiality. This saturation is characterized by a deliberate overabundance of detail that, according to Stewart, renders materiality ironic and splits it into contrasting voices: the past and the present, mass production and individual subjectivity, oblivion and reification.

Stewart points out that Jean Baudrillard, in his work on *kitsch in La Societe de consommation,* describes kitsch as a phenomenon that results in the saturation of the object with details—a condition not uncommon in valued objects such as souvenirs and classic items for collection. However, she extends this idea to argue that kitsch does more than just saturate; it over-saturates to such a degree that the very materiality of objects becomes an ironic commentary on itself. This irony is not just a matter of style or aesthetics but has deep implications for how objects are integrated into and influence consumer culture.

Kitsch objects, as Stewart explains, do not function merely as personal souvenirs that relate to individual autobiographies. Instead, they operate on the level of collective identity, serving as markers of an era rather than markers of personal history. She writes, “They are souvenirs of an era and not of a self” (Stewart 2012). This shifts the role of kitsch from personal

memory to a communal narrative, making these objects powerful tools in the shaping of collective memory. They become souvenirs of an era, evoking a nostalgia that is less about personal longing and more about defining a shared past that shapes collective identity.

In the world of media and technology, Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations* complicates the narrative by suggesting that nostalgia can be manufactured through hyperreal environments where the distinction between reality and simulation blurs. In such spaces, nostalgia becomes "a simulacrum, a copy without an original," pointing to a deep-seated desire for authenticity in an increasingly artificial world. This perspective is crucial for understanding how nostalgia can be used to manipulate societal perceptions and memories, creating a longing for a past that never truly existed.

But Janet Murray in Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace (2017) centers the transformative potential of digital storytelling media, analyzing how new technological forms might reshape narrative traditions. Murray contrasts the "holonovel" with traditional sensory-based storytelling media like "the feely," portraying the former as a continuation of a long tradition of human storytelling, from ancient bards to nineteenth-century novelists. She argues that while new media like the holonovel offer immersive experiences that can enhance storytelling, there exists a risk that other forms like the feely might degrade these narratives, making them merely sensation-based and potentially destructive to the fabric of meaningful storytelling. Murray suggests that the evolution of media technology could lead to a scenario where storytelling mechanisms become so advanced and transparent that we no longer notice the medium—only the story's power and the truths it reveals about human experience. In a constructive manner, using critique to build the world up as Kornbluh would say, Murray's view not only captures the hopes for a future where digital media might deeply enrich human

understanding but also harbors fears of a dystopian outcome where the essence of humanistic traditions could be lost.

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