

(p. 134), but Second Life and other online worlds that demonstrate just such reproductive play have since flourished.

Nonetheless, Nakamura's core theorizations travel very well, securing *Digitizing Race's* status as an essential read for media scholars and an excellent volume for graduate-level syllabi as well. She persuasively argues for the radical possibilities inherent in avatars for enabling both hegemonic and counterhegemonic digital racial formations. Despite the continuing rhetoric that states race does not matter, Nakamura reminds us that user-created representations online 'say it does, and it does' (p. 209).

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Manuel Castells, *Communication Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 592 pp., 234 × 156 mm, ISBN 978-0-19-956704-1 (hardback), \$34.95/£20.00/€24.99.

In *Communication Power*, Manuel Castells continues the analysis of what he has termed the network society, from a specific perspective – the one of power. He argues that communication is the fundamental source of power and counter-power in contemporary society. Castells illuminates how power and 'resistance to power is achieved through the same two mechanisms that constitute power in the network society: the programs of the networks and the switches between networks' (p. 47). The basic analysis is applied to power struggles between the global corporate multimedia networks and the creative audience (Chapter 2), the development of media policies in the USA (Chapter 2), framing and counter-framing in political campaigns, especially the framing of the US public mind before, during, and after the Iraq war (Chapter 3); to scandal politics in Spain in the 1990s (chapter 4), media control and censorship in the USA, Russia, and China (Chapter 4); and the environmental movement, the global movement against corporate globalization, the spontaneous citizens' movement that emerged in Spain after the al-Qaeda attacks in 2004, and the Barack Obama presidential primary campaign (Chapter 5).

The rise of integrative information, communication, and community-building Internet platforms such as blogs, wikis, or social networking sites has not only prompted the development of new concepts – web 2.0, social software, social media, etc. – but also a new techno-deterministic optimism that resembles the Californian ideology that accompanied the commercial rise of the Internet in the 1990s. Castells discusses the recent developments of the web and the Internet, but in contrast to the new web 2.0 ideology he does so by introducing his concept of mass self-communication in a techno-dialectical way that avoids the deterministic pitfalls of techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. For Castells, the contemporary Internet is shaped by a conflict between the global multimedia business networks that try to commodify the Internet and the ‘creative audience’ that tries to establish a degree of citizen control of the Internet and to assert its right of communicative freedom without corporate control. He employs in this context a notion of autonomy that remains largely undefined.

Castells shows the importance of inter- and transdisciplinary research for analysing the contemporary world by combining cognitive science and the analysis of communication power in order to understand how misinformation and the creation of misperception work as forms of communication power. He analyses the politics of misinformation with respect to the Iraq war as well as the political censorship and control of the media with the help of three case studies that cover the USA, Russia, and China. Four further case studies show how social movements try to reprogramme communication networks. Various methods of media counter-power are discussed in this context.

Manuel Castells’ *Communication Power* is a powerful narrative about the connection of communication and power in contemporary society that presents rich empirical details, illuminating case studies, and represents an original and insightful approach. It will shape the disciplinary and transdisciplinary discussions about communication and power in the coming years. The central new category that the book introduces is the one of mass self-communication. Good books bring up many new questions, so I do have questions and also doubts about Castells’ notion of power, the use of computer science terms for analysing society, the assessment and categorical description of the power distribution between global multimedia corporations and the creative audience, the feasibility of the notion of web 2.0, his notion of social movements, the role of the movement for democratic globalization in contemporary society, and the centrality of informationalism and communication power. When all this is being said, it remains no doubt that this book empowers the academic discourse about communication power.

Contemporary society is a society of global economic crisis. This has resulted in a return of the importance of economic questions, which are also questions about class, in social theory and has shown which huge power the global financial and economic networks have over our lives. The central political task might now be to develop counter-power against the commodification of

everything. The task for social theory in the contemporary situation is to develop analyses of power and potential counter-power. Manuel Castells reminds us that the role of communication certainly should not be neglected in such endeavours.

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Peter Ludlow & Mark Wallace, *The Second Life Herald: The Virtual Tabloid that Witnessed the Dawn of the Metaverse* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press), ISBN 978-0-262-12294-8, Hardcover, US\$29.95, Paperback, US\$15.95.

The Second Life Herald: The Virtual Tabloid that Witnessed the Dawn of the Metaverse is written by Peter Ludlow, a philosophy professor at University of Michigan, and Mark Wallace, a freelance journalist, but the former is perhaps better known to virtual words users as Urizenus Sklar (or simply 'Uri'), the muckraking virtual journalist who created the blogs *Alphaville Herald* and *Second Life Herald*.

The book – published in 2007 – focuses on the early days of two among the most influential Multi User Virtual Environments (MUVES) or virtual worlds: *The Sims Online* (TSO) by Electronic Arts and *Second Life* (SL) by Linden Lab, offering to the reader a very detailed and farseeing immersion into those 3D environments and the communities that flourished there or, in the case of SL, still flourish. It enlightens the philosophical and social underpinnings of the 'metaverse', digging in depth into how the relation existing between users and the community management policies developed by the two companies influenced the in-world communities' evolutionary paths.

It traces the way followed by Uri as a journalist, explaining how he was banned – for supposed violation of terms of service – from TSO due to his critical coverage of Electronic Arts behaviour when facing several in-world issues, and how traditional media worldwide picked up the story. This event led him to move to SL, where he founded the SL Herald, which soon became one