Book Reviews

Childhood's Secrets: intimacy, privacy and the self reconsidered
Max van Manen & Bas Levering, 1996
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The meaning of privacy and the right to privacy for children rarely if ever enter the debate that people wage about the ways that childcare is provided and education is organised. (p. 160)

Max van Manen and Bas Levering have attempted to provide an account of the ‘inner self’ of childhood that is both useful and applicable to those who work with children. The central theme concerns notions of secrecy and privacy with the purpose of influencing pedagogical techniques. As they write:

Adults who have become more perceptive of the experiential and pedagogical dimensions of secrecy, privacy and supervision are more likely to know how to act and how to delve into relations and situations. (p. 158)

Childhood's Secrets draws upon a metaphysical notion of the self which develops through childhood experiences of secrecy and privacy, and, according to the authors, is a little-researched area in need of academic attention. The work of van Manen and Levering offers teachers a deconstruction, and examination of the pedagogical implications, of the notions of secrecy, privacy in relation to the developing self. In reviewing this book I shall devote my attention to how the authors themselves construct the notion of the ‘inner self’, and the validity they ascribe to it.

Childhood's Secrets contains much that can engage teachers in the early childhood sector—developing pedagogical frames of reference which address the changing childcare environment, one which the authors accuse of subjecting children to increasing levels of institutionalisation, reducing the opportunities for private childhood experiences (p. 158).

However, van Manen and Levering demonstrate little knowledge of the pre-primary sector. This is not to say that van Manen and Levering are overly critical of the sector. They acknowledge that making an example of the ‘daycare’ institution is intended to highlight the more fundamental implications of an increasingly institutionalised ‘Western’ society (p. 153). Yet the developments in early childhood curricula and how the self is ‘educated’ and ‘nurtured’ receives cursory attention in Childhood's Secrets.

Van Manen and Levering define secrecy and privacy through a series of anecdotes, following Simmel:

The keeping of secrets ... is one of the greatest achievements of human beings: The secret produces an immense enlargement of life. (p. 7)
This 'enlargement' of life includes the development of an inner world—a second world influencing the ways in which individuals interact with 'primary reality'. Van Manen and Levering discuss the multiple meanings attached to secrets and secrecy, particularly in regards to the relational nature of the secret. The authors categorise three types of relational secrets: existential, communicative and personal (p. 11).

'Existential secrecy' is that which remains unknown to us about the inner selves of others. 'Communicative secrecy' concerns the extent to which any person can effectively communicate with others without aspects of the communication being lost (p. 12). 'Personal secrecy' defines that which consists of keeping personal secrets:

Secrets are always relational. Secrets are commentaries about human relations as well as commentaries about the relation of the person to his or her inner self or inner life. (p. 13)

The authors describe a variety of expressions, terms, gestures and physical experiences, associated with secrecy and privacy, which can allow the development of feelings of intimacy and self. A physical space that entertains dimensions of secrecy can also invoke in children feelings of suspicion, fear, suspense, or nostalgia through the memories attached to the space that was occupied. The variety of emotions which children can illicit from the spatial experiences of secrecy can, Van Manen and Levering suggest, effect the development of a child's imagination positively or negatively (see pp. 20–35).

Physiognomic features of secrecy and privacy delineate relationships and, regarding pedagogical implications, suggest adults need to question how non-verbal language is acquired—the socialising factors which teach children to interpret non-verbal communication. Children often experience adults interpreting their non-verbal gestures, apparently revealing their emotions or thoughts—hence the child may feel 'transparent'. In a reversal of this relationship, the study of youth subcultures has shown that acquiring certain physiognomic attributes can render the adult with the sense that their teenager has a secret sphere inaccessible to them.

How adults talk of lying distinguishes young children as lacking the developed sense of self to fully entertain secrecy, being unable to fully distinguish between fact and fiction. A young child tells stories or fibs, while at about seven years a child is considered both able to lie and, importantly, be trusted. At the same time, as children develop a sense of the distinction between truth and untruth, and begin to learn that lying is frowned upon, they also learn that telling the truth can meet with similar social disapproval. Meanwhile the adult world of lying entertains complexities of its own, such as when it is conceived as better to not tell the truth.

Guilt, shame and embarrassment, add to the level to which a child may feel the disparate nature of the inner and outer self when secrets are exposed and the child has a sense of being 'seen naked in public'. Guilt forms a relation between child and parent characterised by a form of indebtedness, and alleviated by confession.
Childhood itself, contains an important aspect of secrecy, in that the very concept of childhood begs questions which the adult world cannot readily answer. Childhood is, in fact, a relatively recent social category that is artificially created. Socially and biologically childhood is considered to be a period of vulnerability necessitating nurturing, and education/development is required to enable the child to become fully formed:

... the view of the child as dependant prompts the adult to respond with a sense of responsibility and vocation to the child's needs. It is in connection with these views of vulnerability, immaturity, and dependency that the notion of secrecy arises. (p. 139)

This secrecy arises through the requirement of keeping aspects of adulthood from the immature being, thus defining what it is to be a child. In a multimedia society this partitioning is becoming increasingly problematic, with the ability for children to have increased access to media, which contains aspects of the adult world. Postman's suggestion that this endangers the very concept of secrecy, and childhood, is one which the authors dispute, suggesting childhood will continue to be a secret to the adult world, and children will in no way necessarily lose the experience of secrecy through increased access to adult culture.

Van Manen and Levering claim that literature, particularly fiction, enables a 'penetrating insight into the variety of human experience(s)' underpinned by secrecy (p. 54). The appeal of fiction, according to the authors, is a sense of the hidden, to be discovered through a relationship with the text.

While literary sources may provide us with a more implicit, vicarious, nonconceptual understanding of secrecy, philosophical sources may assist us in pursuing some of the more conceptual and cognitive explications of the phenomenon of secrecy in our personal lives. (p. 55)

Kant ascribed personal and social secrecy to the notions of morality and dignity in a world of imperfections. Reserve, in particular, was that which enabled the self to maintain some level of self-esteem, and self-interest underpins this reserve in that secrets of a personal nature, that reflect on ourselves and our dignity, are much easier to re-serve than those imparted to us concerning a third person.

Van Manen and Levering maintain there is an important distinction between secrecy/reserve and privacy. Privacy defines an absence of relationship rather than the nature of relationship between the self and others, and is 'a necessary condition of human life without which personal morality and dignity would be hard to imagine' (p. 60). Privacy manifests itself as a cultural paradigm exercised in a variety of physical techniques:

The experience of secrecy, reserve and intimacy may ultimately find their genesis in the fundamental condition of privacy: The possibility of privacy, of separating oneself from others, makes possible secrecy, reserve and intimacy. (p. 60)

An important historical development for the notion of privacy was the Christian
confession, wherein the discipline of civilians moved from the public to the private sphere, and had significant influence in the forming of inwardness. The individual was expected to 'practice self-study, scrutinise one's conscience, and examine one's soul' in confessing to a priest in the confessional. The Reformation further established the role of the individual and the notion of the inner self with a completely autonomous confession.

The authors suggest an analysis of the intimate and moral aspects of privacy opposed to the content-specific focus of secrecy can enable a development of the understanding of, and interaction with, children and their 'independence, personal power and positive autonomy'. However, for van Manen and Levering, the metaphysical notion of identity associated with the body and memories is, in philosophical literature, highly problematic. Developmental psychology and analytic theory 'have done little to clarify the subjective or lived meaning of identity' (p. 90). Social science theories, which attribute the emergence of identity of self to the child's relationship with, in the first instance, the primary caregivers, fail to provide a theoretical explanation of the development of the self that is not developed from 'the meanings we give to identity in everyday life, while these theoretical concepts are simultaneously estranged (abstracted) from these meanings'. Questions of how, why and where the self emerges from are not answered by concepts of 'self and other (as) two egos that are already conscious of themselves as they influence each other' (p. 92). Rather they describe how concrete social interactions enable the self's individual 'I' and social 'me' self to emerge and develop.

The child's bodily conceptions are a more significant development of self-identity. The embodied being is one in which the conceptual separation of mind and body ignores the 'immediate, visceral knowledge of self that develops in a child as he or she discovers their corporeality through, for instance, hiding games. When the body is hidden, the self is hidden 'and so the emergence and meaning of identity may first of all be sought in the growing awareness of one's corporeal nature' (p. 95).

The impulse of this intensifying awareness 'bodies forth', so to speak, from the corporeal being of the younger child who gradually discovers his or her own body, and thus a self, in the separation from the other. In this process the intersubjective space between self and other receives its social articulation and differentiation. (p. 95)

Van Manen and Levering propose a necessary theoretical acceptance of a developmental stage of pre-identity that, as a precursor to the development of the self, suggests the pre-identity child fails to differentiate between the body of the other and the body of the self. As the child discovers 'body-difference' a concomitant discovery of inwardness is experienced and hence the latent identity emerges. Merleau-Ponty's introceptivity and extroceptivity portray the child as initially experiencing the other as an introceptive experience, of something missing when it is moved from the child's sensory perception. Extroceptive awareness of body develops through the realisation that, when exploring one's own body, there is simultaneously the sensation of being touched and of touching. A further development of the sense of body is encountered through one's reflection in a mirror. The child may, according to
Merleau-Ponty, initially conceive of the reflection as another presence, rather than 'me', it is another 'me'. The child is then equipped with the stimuli to understand that he or she is visible to the other, that 'there can be a viewpoint taken on him', and that the other can see the body, but not the self. The specular image offers the opportunity for the emergence of self-identity and an inner self that is aware of the capability of secrecy—experiences which 'may bring about new forms of understanding and new relations between the child and his or her social and physical world' (p. 98).

The authors suggest that humans possess a 'more or less stable' inner self as part of a unique identity with which one can know oneself despite changes to one's identity over time that may render us as a different person to those from our past.

We know our secret wishes and desires, and we know how some of those wishes and desires may have changed and how these changes may have contributed to our evolving sense of our personal identity and inner self. (p. 98)

The Cartesian rationale for the experience of the inner self, while entertaining a certain validity for the authors, has not in any concrete fashion enabled the experience of the self to be one which is easily explained through a process of introspection. The range of inwardly experienced sensations raises the question of whether we have a singular self-identity, or that we are more appropriately defined as having multiple 'selves' which are context-dependent.

So the view of the self as constantly changing under pressure of social and biographical influences seems incompatible with the view of the self as marked by an individual inner core. (p. 99)

To marry the concept of the self as singular, and unchanging, to that of the multiple self van Manen and Levering acknowledge Paul Ricoeur's separation of identity into 'self-sameness' and 'selfhood'. The former is temporal, changes over time externally and internally; while the latter is the aspect of self-identity which remains the same. These notions require both an other and the possibility of self-narration, enabling the maintenance of secrets. However, the authors stress theories such as those of Ricoeur and Merleau-Ponty do not provide any 'conclusive theory', or remove the shroud of ambiguity from, the self, yet they enable the 'thinking of possible relations between the meaning of self and the pedagogy of secrecy' and therefore the implications of the practices of secrecy on the formation of the self.

Secrecy cannot exist, it is argued, without some form of self—'if skeptics and radical postmodernists are right and the self is just a modernist illusion, then secrecy, too, would seem to be an illusion' (p. 101).

To conclude it appears problematic to attempt to study the 'pure self' through some kind of introspection or direct gazing inward, as in some forms of meditative practice ... One reason is, of course, that our reflections must be propelled by the self that is trying to discover itself through reflection ... [I]t is possible to see the eye indirectly, as we do by
looking in the mirror. Similarly, it may be possible to indirectly experience the inner self in the experience of secrecy. (p. 102)

The authors discuss the relational nature of the self and secrets using the work of Ryle, Wittgenstein and Donaldson to describe how the philosophical notion of the self is one which entertains a relation between the self and other that is 'an incomplete, dynamic, ongoing and developing communicational experience'. Self-understanding is dependent on the understanding of others, which is achieved through communication. The level to which we understand our inner-self is hence contingent with the level to which we understand others—yet we could not possibly know either fully.

Pedagogically, it is important to have a knowledge, through supervision, of the child, and yet allow the child to entertain its inner self through secrecy and privacy. In this relationship it is suggested by the authors that children themselves want simultaneously to become independent, to establish individuality, and to have the support of the adults close to them—inferring that to be a good teacher or parent one must know when to accommodate either requirement. In a Western society where more and more children 'seem to become more mature, independent, sophisticated, and socially competent at an earlier age than did their parents' the question is raised whether this is due to children being institutionalised at younger ages, through the necessity of childcare, and hence not appreciating 'the regular world' outside of the manufactured environment of childcare centres. Furthermore these institutions lack privacy. It is an increasing social phenomenon where private time to one’s self is ever-diminishing.

Private time is an essential ingredient in the establishment of one’s own self, through self-reflection and self-motivation.

The importance of the experience of privacy for the development of personal identity or inner self makes the need for privacy, in our culture, a pedagogical requirement ... The right to privacy is also a general human right, based on the principle of human dignity. (p. 159)

The educational environment is one in which children’s learning is 'homogenised' through pedagogical techniques such as the communal blackboard, and national curriculum and assessment, encouraging 'sameness rather than uniqueness'. Van Manen and Levering criticise a pedagogy in which learning, for children, is largely a process of 'becoming clear about the meanings that adults give to the things of the world' rather than experiencing their environments for themselves.

... the significance of the secret for the meaning of life can be summed up in one sentence: The structure of the meaning of life, and of the many things that dwell like secrets in our very being, is that it fills us with wonder and that it can never be completely unveiled. (p. 158)

The search for meaning itself and some glimpse of revelation may be more gratifying than some absolute final disclosure—access to the final secret of the Law, answering: 'Why am I here? Who really am I?' (p. 171)
The review of van Manen and Levering's work reflects the comprehensive nature of *Childhood's Secrets* and its potential application as a source for inspiring the sort of pedagogical questioning necessary in 'educational' and 'nurturing' environments. The length of the review somewhat limits the space available to critique all its aspects. This critique will focus on two general issues, which relate to the entire text. The first concerns a certain contradiction inherent in van Manen and Levering placing the concept of the self, and the positive assumptions attributed to individuality, self-esteem and the like, outside of, and opposed to that which they consider pedagogically damaging to the development of the self. Van Manen and Levering have provided some clear examples of the problematic of the self. The second criticism addresses the role of the early childhood centre in society and in the development of the self. It is not a purpose to defend the sector, rather to develop their questioning further in the light of the first section of this critique.

Rose, in *Inventing Our Selves*, provides a genealogy of subjectification and, in particular, challenges the role of the various psychological disciplines in the formation of the liberal democratic autonomous individual. Rose draws largely from Foucault in suggesting that contemporary Western polities use the expertise provided by the 'psy' disciplines to govern from afar through the notion of the self as an individual responsible for the conduct of themselves, their self-management, self-esteem, self-motivation etc.

Psychology has ... participated in reshaping the practices of those who exercise authority over others—social workers, managers, teachers, nurses—such that they nurture and direct these individual strivings in the most appropriate and productive fashions. It has invented what one might term the therapies of normality or the psychologies of everyday life, which translate the enigmatic desires and dissatisfactions of the individual into precise ways of inspecting oneself in order to realise one's potential, gain happiness, and exercise one's autonomy. (Rose, 1996, p. 17)

Rose suggests then that education has an important role in the individualising of the self through the use of the 'psy' disciplines in surveillance and classification of children. Van Manen and Levering, in contrast, suggest the monitoring and categorisation techniques used in educational environments from pre-school onwards, and the lack of privacy they impose, reduces the positive experiences of individuality. As 'self'-proclaimed modernists they normatively maintain that the self, individuality, inwardness, and secrecy and privacy exist beyond Rose's genealogy. They support an acceptance of the self, and a wariness of a certain 'postmodern' negation of the universality of the subject. Their deconstruction acknowledges cultural specificities and historical shifts regarding the self, yet does not treat the issue of how contemporary Western society has rendered individuals as subjectified (Rose, 1996, p. 92).

If psychology has played a key role in the technologies that produce the modern subject as a 'self' of a certain type, this has not been merely through its individualistic, adaptive, and behaviouralist branches. For in
contemporary rationalities and technologies of government, the citizen is
construed and addressed as a subject actively engaged in thinking, wanting,
feeling, and doing, interacting with others in terms of these psychological
forces and being affected by the relations that others have with them.
(p. 78)

Childhood's Secrets is, then, similarly induced into the process of giving the subject
meaning and value, 'fulfilling and beneficial to our families, ... and the collective
well-being of the nation (ibid.)' constructed by a certain truth that is ascribed to the
psychological investigations into the self that have enabled us to be subjects, despite
its suspicion of 'psy' theories of the emergence of identity. The 'psy' disciplines have
enabled the essentially Western phenomenon of an 'individual' who is observed,
classified and normalised through the family, the school, the job and the health
system and, in and through this process, defines and regulates themselves (Rose,
1996). Privacy, and the private sphere, becomes problematic as a space free from
these regulations, as one is not free from an individualised regulation. The liberal
freedom of rational and autonomous individuals is then similarly problematic.

Children, in the family, the early childhood centre, the school or at the doctor's
surgery, are as much a part of this individualising process. The school and pre-
school centres have, furthermore, significantly enabled this classification process to
fit the individual through the spatial creation of an environment in which children
can be observed and classified, tested and 'taught'. Through subjectification in the
classroom, children are then constantly judging themselves against the norms
provided by the teachers.

Van Manen and Levering criticise such an environment in the terms of observa-
tion, classification and testing and the minimal levels of privacy. Yet for van Manen
and Levering these features, rather than being in some way generated by, and
generating, the self, are obstacles to the development of the self.

Assumptions of the moral necessity of privacy perhaps most clearly underline the
contradictions in Childhood's Secrets. The authors develop privacy as a 'Western form
of inwardness' (p. 159), culturally and socially specific and changing through time.
These aspects of the deconstruction of secrecy and privacy engenders the book with
a certain value in illuminating assumptions which teachers may often have little
concern for—assumptions regarding the experiences of childhood, how they have
changed, and are changing, and how there are multiple perspectives of the subjective
experiences of childhood beyond the liberal individual. Regardless of this, the self
remains a sacred human right throughout this deconstruction, ending with com-
ments concerning the meaning of life. If the meaning of life is then to be unreach-
able, creating what could be best described as the value of life for the authors,
wherein the problematic individual entertains a lifetime of searching for meanings
lost in communicative relationships with others, and hence with the self, due to the
existence of secrecy, life is then construed through language games. The post-struct-
turalist thinkers following Wittgenstein might then have much in common with van
Manen and Levering. However, their position on post-structuralism, inferred
through a brief chapter on post-modernism and the subject, is largely protective of
the universal self, sensing a certain danger in loosening a grasp on the liberal human subject and suggesting without the self there can be no secrecy, or vice versa. They acknowledge the pressures which come to bear on the notion of the self in a post-modern society wherein ‘… our experience of the self and our discourses about self-experience have become more complex …’. The post-modern self, they maintain is characterised by an ‘outwardness or superficiality’, devoid of the modern freedom and autonomy, and hence an inner self which is capable of secrecy. However, van Manen and Levering are cautious about the application of such theories of the self as it implicates, for them, an end to pedagogy.

Educators who have lost their sense of bearing and students who lack inner identity no longer have selves that need education. The loss of individuality would be complete … (yet) … the motivation for understanding the self, and for exploring the significance of secrecy in the formation of self-identity, is our proof that as postmoderns we keep at least one foot in modern time. (p. 125)

For early childhood education teachers, whose practices and workplace comes under largely negative scrutiny in Childhood’s Secrets, the contradictions in notions of the self are particularly relevant considering the recent developments in curriculum framework and the encoding of a similar subject within this framework. The aim of their work is to inspire practitioners into ensuring a suitable environment and pedagogical techniques to enable children to experience the aspects of privacy and secrecy important to the development of individuality. Inspiration for teachers, and parents, to create an environment in which children are not constantly responding to the demands of adults and other children is positive inspiration. However, the claim that daycare subjects the subject to an almost de-individualising process ignores the role of the daycare centre in the creation of the individual, outlined above. Furthermore, in offering a model environment for the development of privacy, secrecy and the self, van Manen and Levering seek salvation in the myth of the nuclear family—an instrument in the construction of the liberal individual as much as schools and childcare centres. The growth in childcare requirements can be traced through the societal transformation in Western society from extended family and community networks, to the nuclear family led by the male bread-winner of the welfare state, to the family of the last two decades, either single-parent families or nuclear families with both parents working. Childcare, and early childhood education (ECE) teachers then begin to represent the extended family, and an important feature of the ECE curriculum is recognition of this role. Do van Manen and Levering’s inferences about the negative aspects of the childcare environment then suggest the extended family environment is similarly damaging to independence and self-esteem? Whether at home with mum, or dad, or at a centre with twenty or thirty other children and four or five teachers, the liberal construction of the individual is the significant influence on a child’s development through the pedagogical techniques of ‘adults who are themselves constructed as individuals’ (Peters, 1996, pp. 40–41). What is more the very notions of adult and child apportion levels of
individualism—recognised by van Manen and Levering yet not in any way endangering the true notion of the self for them.

At the end of the day (millennium), to coin a popular political and economic phrase, as ECE teachers develop curriculum strategies they may do well to consider the implications of aspects of privacy and secrecy on the developing inner self of the children in their care. They would do equally well to consider the implications of a certain perspective of subjectivity that now, as represented in the national curriculum, more than at any time prior, incorporates their sector into the education system.

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The Politics of Cyberspace
Chris Toulouse & Timothy Luke (Eds), 1998
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In The Politics of Cyberspace, Toulouse (1998, pp. 1–2) notes that two of the most important spectacles that have characterised the 1990s are the collapse of communism, and the rise of the notion of cyberspace. The problem presented for educators by this juxtaposition of these phenomena is that the collapse of ‘community’ invokes a sinister sense of nothingness. In that nothingness, the American military’s defensive strategy of ‘cyberspace’ might be taken as a replacement for community. The ethereal domain of cyberspace could, in Nietzsche’s mind, be seen as a notion of ‘Will to Power’, a futile attempt to achieve security (which, according to him, it will not).

The subject of this review is The Politics of Cyberspace. The problem is how to ‘read’ a book about (cyber)space community under Kantian conditions where Euclidean notions of time and space are threatened. So a small digression is in order to provide a theoretical perspective. One question is what might this re-theorisation mean for the politics of education? There are important issues here. David Harvey (1989, p. 240), for example, points out that technological developments in electronics have compressed traditional scientific notions of time and space that are the primary vehicles for coding and reproducing social relations. As a result, he argues, we are forced to alter quite radically the way in which we represent the world to each other and ourselves. Clearly, education as a vehicle for coding and reproducing social relations is implicated. Mark Poster refers to cyberspace where ‘the subject has been multiplied and decentred, capable of being acted upon by computers at many
social locations without the least awareness by the individual concerned yet just as surely as if the individual were present somehow inside the computer' (Poster, 1995, p. 88). In a more radical vein, Poster argues that our conceptions of time and space have actually collapsed.

Since our usual account of experience is through Kantian categories of time and space, explanations such as those given by Harvey and Poster alter our conceptions of time and space as representations of the world.

Cyberspace also has a history. The origin of the term 'cyberspace' is generally attributed to William Gibson, the science fiction writer, whose book, *Neuromancer* (1984) defined it as 'consensual hallucination'. As it is currently understood, cyberspace 'is the conceptual "location" of the electronic interactivity available using one's computer (Byassee cited in Toulouse & Luke, 1998, p. 103, n. 52). The largest 'region' of cyberspace is the Internet, which was originally created by the American Department of Defence under the paranoia of the 'Cold War' for military research. The Internet has provided a system that allows communication despite the lack of industrial standards and coherent centres of control; its very dispersion and incoherence was seen as strength for national defence. Under the threat of nuclear war, no matter how many sectors of the system were destroyed, there would always be more nodes of power to continue. This strength is reflected in recent conflict where individuals relay information on the conflict to the world media from inside the opposition's territory despite the absence of all other media. In these cases, cyberspace could be said to be analogous to the process of metastasises of cancer. Under cyberspace, however, and in *contra* metastasises, the 'pathological' (decen-tred, uncontrollable) turns out to be the 'valuable' (freedom, resistance). With such reversals, meaning becomes problematic.

What, then, is the meaning of 'cyberspace'? Does it apply to any 'nowhere space' signifying a disembodied experience generated by software that produces a 'Virtual Reality' encounter? Cyberspace has been termed the 'Information Superhighway' (ironically, a linear analogy), 'artificial intelligence', the 'Matrix', or the 'Net'. Streck (Toulouse & Luke, p. 18) even suggests we might think of Gibson's consensual hallucination as a 'New York City of the mind'. The community arising on-line is sometimes defined (with reference to the real-world place of Siberia), as 'Cyberia'. Public concerns currently range from 'cybercops' (government censors), 'cyberwars' (encryption), 'cyberpunk' (science fiction), to 'cybernauts'—those with a disembodied experience (maybe 'out of their heads'). In ordinary terms, cyberspace signifies millions of users, each of whom is connected to a network of networked computers in almost every country, who download unlimited information, talk to who they want, shop at will, reserve hotels and airline seats, and discuss their special interests in 'chat rooms'; and this list is not exhaustive. Under cyberspace, space is a variable notion.

The notion of space is problematic for education, which has almost ignored it. The politics of space is addressed in *The Politics of Cyberspace*—a publication that suggests that (cyber)space needs to be rethought in terms of the meaning of the Kantian notion of space. From another source and drawing on the work of the new French theorists (e.g. Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard), the critical
geographers (e.g. Edward Soja), and the critical architects (e.g. Kenneth Frampton and Christopher Jencks), Michael Peters (1996, pp. 93–94) remarks ‘“modern” educational theory has all but ignored questions of space, of geography, of architecture. The same criticisms can be levelled more broadly at the entire range of disciplines and fields comprising critical social theory’. Foucault (cited in Peters, 1996, p. 94) argued that ‘space is fundamental in any from of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power’. For Foucault, the power exercised in modern bureaucracies, is disciplinary, and is based on hierarchical observation, judgement, and examination under conditions of close and continual surveillance in carceral disciplinary ‘blocks’. Foucault names these blocks as the prisons, military barracks, hospitals, mental asylums, and, of course, schools. But as has been noted elsewhere (cf. Fitzsimons, 1998), computers allow ‘educational systems to operate outside the older model of what Foucault has termed the carceral society’. The point about the geography and architecture of space in deliberations over social life is the issue about how power is exerted over and through education under cyberspace. Is geographic or architectural space merely an analogy for cyberspace or are these spaces divorced from cyberspace? Since, according to Peters (1996), education has ignored questions of space, will educational theorising also ignore cyberspace, and what might be the effects of that?

In a fast-paced and highly informative book, *The Politics of Cyberspace*, the editors, Chris Toulouse and Timothy Luke have gathered together a timely and important collection that explains cyberspace, its history, its metaphors, and its impact on economics, politics, nation-states, legal regimes, and cultures. The work draws on two major sources of interpretation—Habermasian concepts of civil society on the one hand, and ideas about the fragmentation of culture of Jameson, Baudrillard, and Foucault, on the other. The eight chapters deal, respectively, with the effect of cyberspace on notions of: electronic participatory democracy (Streck); the normalisation of cyberspace (Resnick); politics (Roper); free speech (McIntosh & Cates); digital inequality (Luke); gender identity issues (Sampaio & Aragon); and intellectual culture, public spheres, and techno-politics (Kellner).

Not all the authors are optimistic. Streck, Resnick, Roper, and McIntosh and Cates, for example, do not find that cyberspace will generate an electronic Athena in the twenty-first century. Streck provides an account of this dystopian vision. He argues that with the development of cyberpunk—cybernet science fiction—dystopian visions began to sell as a literary genre. Selling this dystopian vision quickly overtook actually living the vision as envisioned by writers such as Gibson. Very soon, under what Dirlik (1996, p. 32) refers to as global ‘guerrilla marketing’ strategies, cyberpunk was stripped of its literary content and used primarily to sell commodities. As its particular subculture became a market segment, ‘control of the cyberpunk vision shifted from science fiction writing to advertising agencies and politicians’ (Streck, p. 20). In this process, its message was transformed into thirty-second utopian sound bytes to support advertising and political bias; cyberspace was transformed from dystopian to utopian visions. The reason is that the celebration of life made perfect is far more saleable in a nihilistic culture such as ours than the disturbing dystopian images of cyberpunk. This transformation, however, is para-
doxical. How will our liberal institutions, practices of justice, education, commerce, and family, cope with cyberspace, this ‘hyper-reality’? One negative possibility might be that cyberspace will soon be clogged with more people than it can support, and the inevitable result of all these phenomena, according to Baudrillard (1994), is the complete collapse of the system that supports them. If nihilism were to be entertained on a mass scale in liberal society, that society would break down.

Other articles by Luke, Sampaio and Aragon, and Kellner, emerge from a positive reading of post-modernism. These last three abhor the negative and nihilistic ramifications of post-modern fragmentation of culture by authors such as Baudrillard—the idea that we will, for example, be carried away on a sea of signifiers and lose ourselves. Luke takes apart the whole idea that cyberspace will promote equality when he notes that 40 million out of a possible 6 billion are on the web, and most of those on the web do not have easy access. ‘Prevailing notions of power, subjectivity, and community ... do not fully disclose the state of our world. Sampaio and Aragon also point to notions of power. From a feminist perspective, they consider that cyberspace offers an epistemological challenge to traditional conceptions of language and the social construction of essential categories. Cyberspace even challenges ideas that might offer women alternative spaces. As they note, there is no point in merely setting up alternatives that employ categories that are just as essential as the ones rejected. Sampaio and Aragon consider the possibility that cyberspace, which has no limits and no geographical place, might make it ‘impossible for women to claim a “place of their own” ... because no claims to a true woman’s space can be validated’ (p. 161). Microsoft, for example, is reported in Vanity Fair as capitalising on the idea that ‘The Microsoft Network thinks Virginia Woolf was right; WOMEN need a room of their own’. Sampaio and Aragon conclude that the ‘benefits (are) muted by the overarching limitation of cyberspace’ (p. 165). Their position is supported elsewhere by Kristeva (1987, p. 65) who argues for the ‘subject-in-process’, or self as a pluralism of relationships rather than an ‘organisation constituted by exclusions and hierarchies’. Kristeva rejects the essential category of ‘women’, fixed gender and tries to project a Subject beyond the categories of gender: What can sexual identity mean in cyberspace where the very notion of identity is challenged?

Under the Foucauldian notion of governmentality, it could be argued that the purpose of free speech in a neoliberal polity is self-government. From a traditional democratic perspective this also is the case; state security is predicated upon self-regulating citizens. Under cyberspace, however, lines of juridical demarcation collapse; the autonomy of individuals, the principles of the free market, and the collective republic impulse, converge. Under privatised conditions of cyberspace, speech is commodified, even though it is constitutionally guaranteed from government interference in the United States. But, McIntosh and Cates argue that as with other commodities, private enterprise will consolidate and oligopolistic controls will be instituted.

In her evaluation of the uses of cyberspace by political parties in New Zealand, Juliet Roper employs the principles of Habermas’ public sphere to argue against a notion of consumerism that limits the notion of public to passive consumers. Her
The juxtaposition of Habermas with the market indicates the oppositional stance she takes. The problem with such resistance is that through consumers as the 'public' and its multiple niches as public spheres (Roper, p. 74), the market is winning, which indicates that the public sphere as imagined by Habermas is reducing. On a more optimistic note, Kellner finds a place for public intellectuals for increasing and democratisation and empowering individuals within techno-politics.

Progress is implied in the utopian visions delivered over by cyber-techno-science. But whether or not cyberspace will actually deliver moral and scientific progress, is not the issue; what is presented as progress in the age of floating signifiers in cyberspace, is the promise, the image. The image required for education is uninhibited access to information under the control of the individual. With such opportunities to improve one's self forever ('learning for life') and with unlimited information, Cyberspace has moved far away from the dystopian world of the Neuromancer. Cyberspace provides the technological structure to educate oneself in whatever image or promise is marketed next. The actual political, cultural, societal questions, then, are redefined as technological. And, since technology is a commodity (in a Heideggerian sense, e.g. Heidegger, 1977), the answers to those questions will be commodified too, 'cloaked in magical and supernatural modes of representation' (Streck, p. 24). Here, we have one possible reason for the diminution of politics under conditions of cyberspace.

This explanation of cyberspace as a consumer commodity is at odds with the metaphor of cyberspace as brave new technology with its inherent meaning (moral and scientific progress) firmly established in its material properties. As several writers in the edited collection argue, the unproblematic enthusiasm for cyberspace as the mode for the delivery of such desirable things as inclusion, friendship, egalitarianism, democracy, and community, are reduced to technological questions where, for example, 'all it takes to create a virtuous society is the right amount of copper and silicon' (Streck, p. 31).

Recently, a considerable literature highlighting cyberspace and how it makes available almost instantaneous flows and exchanges of information and cultural communication, has appeared. Some descriptions of cyberspace (e.g. Castells, 1996; Sassons, 1996) indicate that institutions fundamental to processes of governance and accountability are being radically reconfigured. As a result of cyberspace, 'state sovereignty', 'nation-based citizenship', and the 'institutional apparatus for regulating national "economies"', have been destabilised, perhaps even transformed. What then, are we to make of the popular technological idea that the concept of cyberspace is limited to a network of networked computers? From the ensuing discussion, it can be seen, rather, that cyberspace rests on a foundation of metaphors, visions, and practices, which articulate distinct and disparate meanings. That, in a nutshell, seems to be the point of the book.

This book may be one of the first about cyberspace to move beyond a focus on the kinds of community generated by print text. It addresses internal politics on the Internet, e-mail, user groups, and offers an interesting array of analyses of the political implications arising from the development of the World Wide Web. The book also contains lots of valuable websites as references for the points being made.
With the website references, the book could almost be studied independently under notions of cyberspace, as its subtitle suggests, as a 'New Political Science Reader'.

Cyberspace, then, as Luke points out, 'is not a notion about things to come; it is embedded within the material condition of many things already at work today' (p. 120). Clearly, a politically potent idea such as cyberspace will not be left solely to educationalists. Since cyberspace is a product of and embedded in the social, there is considerable importance to be attached to understanding where it came from, what it is doing, and to promote a debate about its impact on education. The Politics of Cyberspace provides relevant information to inform just that debate. Given the problem of space for education, I recommend it especially for undergraduate students as study material as well as a reference for researchers and writers who are theorising cyberspace.

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