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ALIENATING MARX (ISTS) FROM THE COLD WAR INTO SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

Abstract:

Marx's Machine Age theory of capitalism ascribes a unique driving role for alienation and argues new modes of production emerge from past modes of production. Presently so-called surveillance capitalism is superseding Machine Age capitalism and distributing wealth unequally to a 1% global elite. There are debates about what alienation is at work in this changed epoch. Premised on Marx's idea that modes of production are born in the previous epoch along with the alienation that works with them, a hypothesis about how today's Internet enables both endless free speech, while inversely and simultaneously, enabling endless spying with impunity is presented here. The hypothesis is a conceptualization of alienation labeled as "known unknown", which emerged with the rise of anti-communism, neoliberalism and development of a military-industrial-complex. The historical-comparative argument is: "Communist hunting" intelligence agents, scientists, and contractors, backed by neoliberal economists, built a military-industrial-complex that obligated them to both known and not know, national security secrets that alienated them from US constitutional free speech and adjoining social movements. Their alienation was congealed in their interactive inventions - the Internet, pc and cell phone - devices that today dialectically give customers the ability to express free speech endlessly in electronic memory form, while inversely giving spies unlimited access to that speech with impunity. This process works in tandem: enabling appropriation of data for government surveillance and service fee payments for corporations. This hypothesis is juxtaposed with historical facts, to test if present modes of production and adjoining alienation are evidenced in the earlier epochs. Research draws from Cold War history, political economics literature and the Errol Morris film about Donald Rumsfeld, titled, The Unknown Known (2013).

Keywords:

Introduction

A digital/surveillance mode of production and exchange society emerged from Cold War era - an era that sought to purge all things Marxist, Socialist and Communist from the US. Today digital/surveillance infrastructure helps enrich 1% of the population, enabling them to appropriate nearly half the world's wealth in less than half a life-time (Phillips 2018) and the same infrastructure enables telecommunications companies and intelligence agencies to appropriate endless electronic memory about customers (Zuboff 2019). There are debates about the alienation working in tandem with this powerful new appropriation. *Alienation* (2014) by Rahel Jaeggi, offers Frankfurt School theories about alienation in the digital age. German critical theory applied to the concept of alienation in a digital world is represented in this survey. Jaeggi views alienation as a dialectical process of appropriation to build up the self and the self's agency. Christian Fuchs critiques *Alienation* and states his epistemological assumption is, "Internet research is predominantly a positivist science that lacks grounding in social theory and tends not to reflect on the Internet's larger presuppositions in society." (Fuchs, 2016, p. 153) Both A*lienation* and Fuchs' article categorize forms of alienation and reification (Fuchs, 2016, Table 5.3). Fuchs book, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* reiterates Marx's theory of alienation (Fuchs 2014, pp. 32-34; Marx 1978/1844, pp. 66-125) while Jaeggi's book ranges broadly over theories of alienation from thinkers such as: Butler, Dewey, Foucault, Frankfurt, Fromm, Goffman, Habermas, Hegel, Heidegger, Honneth, James, Marx, Mead, Nietzsche, Nussbaum, Rorty, Rosa, Rousseau, Sartre, Turkle and many more. The kinds of alienation Fuchs or Jaeggi conceptualize may exist and if so, wouldn't their roots be in the previous mode of production?

The hypothesis for known unknown alienation proposed here, offers a hypothetical example of alienation rooted in an earlier epoch, that today functions in tandem with appropriation in digital/surveillance capitalist economy. The hypothesis is: military-industrial-complex and telecommunications company employees often know secrets about national security related work and yet are suppose not to know them – a contradiction that fosters a kind of alienation that pivots on capitalistic relations of production and exchange (employment). This internal contradiction is compounded by the fact that Americans are proud of US constitutionally protected free speech rights (which according to The Citizens United Act allows corporations to be individuals). But for employees who shoulder trade, corporate, job and national security secrets, free speech isn't always an option, or it is a dangerous option, as whistleblowers like Daniel Ellsberg, Edward Snowden or Bradley/Chelsea Manning have demonstrated (Greenwald 2014). People harboring national security, job, trade, political, corporate and even crime related secrets can't or don't always exercise free speech. So when other people do exercise free speech, to protest against national security, corporate, employer or government abuses, those who harbor secrets for employers may feel resentful - or feel like they are missing out or are excluded or feel any number of feelings. The solidarity these employees might otherwise feel towards a social movement such as the New Deal programs or an anti-war movement may be compromised, by knowing and not knowing so-called national security secrets. The known unknown alienation of the Cold War era military-industrial-complex employees was manifest in their computerized and interactive inventions – the cell phone, the pc and the Internet. The inventors of these devices have dialectically delivered to us, through these devices, a mode of

Internet production and exchange that allows both unlimited free speech for those who wish to express it – which includes a multi billion dollar on-line pornography industry (Lane III, 2000, p. 293) - and unlimited spying capability with impunity, for spies, whose freedom of speech may be compromised.

Methodology

Like an earlier publication about alienation, titled, "Habitual Interactive Estranged" (Packard 2018a) which imposes Marx's alienation theory (Marx, 1978, pp., 70-93) on a contemporary context, this article is Marx inspired, historical comparative in method and adheres to Marx's idea that each new epoch is pregnant with the one that will forcefully replace it (Marx, 1990/1867 pp. 916, 928-9). This article however, is a flow of argument hypothesis imposed on American Operations Research (OR) and US military-industrial-complex history, to explain a kind of alienation that Internet inventors experienced from knowing and not knowing national security secrets. The inventors infused this known unknown alienation into their inventions and today it functions in tandem with appropriation in a digital/surveillance production and exchange mode. Historical facts in the literature review below help explain how known unknown alienation is/was intertwined within the social relations of the military-industrial-complex and the neo-liberal social scientists who helped rationalize it's operations and budget. The complex includes: Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) which became Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in 1958; Special Operations Research Office (SORO); RAND, which contracted many Chicago School economists to US Operations and Research (OR) programs; major corporations like Boeing, Northrup, Booz Hamilton, IBM, General Electric (to name only a few) and a network of universities, institutes and labs that provide basic research. DARPA was formed and funded to counter "the Communist threat" and its scientists and engineers pioneered development of the Internet (Jacobsen, 2015). "Known unknown alienation" is a tentative label for the hypothetical alienation discussed here, inspired by the film, *The Unknown Known* (2013). "Operations research" (OR) means "the systematic effort to determine preferred courses of action applied to military or industrial operations" (Hitch & McKean, 1960, p. 41). The "Communist threat" includes Keynesian economics, the New Deal programs and later, the terrorist threat. The hypothesis thesis is juxtaposed with Red Scare, Cold War, Vietnam War and neoliberal economic history. Discourse between filmmaker Errol Morris and two-time Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld in *The Unknown Know* is analyzed followed by a conclusion.

Literature Review

US Red Scares and New Deal Backlash, early communist purging activities: American fear of Communists is long standing and tied to fear that communism curtails individual freedoms, particularly the freedom to enrich oneself though private enterprise. "Reds" is slang for people who are godless, dirty, deprived, socialist, sexually immoral and un-American. US Intelligence agencies associate communists with outside agitators who want to provoke violence and dupe contented citizens into challenging the status quo (Donner 1981 p. 14-15). The first Red Scare was in 1919-20 at the end of World War I and in reaction to the Russian revolution. Propaganda intimidated supporters of communist ideas. J. Edgar Hoover was made head of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation – which later became the Federal Bureau of Investigation

(FBI). Hoover was tasked with "gathering and coordinating all information concerning domestic radical activities" (Murray, 1954, p. 193).

A Second Red scare, in the 1940s and 50s was a reaction to "New Dealers" who staffed President F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs (Storrs, 2013). The New Deal was inspired in part by Keynesian or institutional economic planning and designed to protect the public against the ravages of unfettered capitalism and lift Americans out of the Great Depression. The Depression spurred various economic responses; the inter-war period saw a plurality of institutional approaches to economic policy (Morgan and Rutherford, 1998). But many capitalists were opposed to New Deal programs, seeing them as possible "stepping stones" towards a communist or even a Nazi style take-over of private business. Capitalists and neoliberal economists feared the kind of government coercion of industry that happened in Nazi Germany or Mussolini's Fascist Italy (Packard 2018b; Short, 2012). Capitalists wanted national resources privatized. Fears and resentments like these fueled a social and political shift towards neoliberal economics among businessmen, politicians, the military and the intelligence agencies, who used the Red Scare and Cold War politics, to justify countering and undermining New Deal programs and purging the government and private sector of New Dealers and/or Communists (Brinson, 2004; Leeson, 2000; 2008; Storrs, 2013).

At the heart of this neoliberal, free market vs. government regulated economics feud, is the contention over whether the public's welfare is best served by government protection against corporate extremes (*meaning government protects the public by regulating industry*) or if the public's interest is best served by protecting corporate interests, thus preserving a strong market economy which serves the public's interest (*meaning government protects capitalism against communists, while letting the market provide for the public's welfare*). It was this debate, applied to the radio broadcast industry and the US Federal Communication Commission (FCC) that triggered the first Un-American Activities Commission investigations - in search of communists to purge from FCC positions (Brinson 2004, pp. 10-12, 25-54). The FCC regulates the broadcasting industry according to the Communications Act of 1934, which mandates FCC decisions must be made in the public's interest. Brinson's *The Red Scare, Politics, and the Federal Communications Commission, 1941-1960* details how Martin Dies, a Texas House of Representatives Democrat, formed the House Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and along with corporate executives in the broadcasting industries (television and radio) mobilized to undermine the FCC.

The FCC was formed to deal with the issue of regulating frequency ranges and licensing of radio stations. The Radio Act of 1912 set a precedent for government control over the broadcast industry, but did not give the government ways to enforce the licensed broadcasting. As frequency regulation problems increased a new Radio Act of 1927 was legislated, along with a Federal Radio Commission to enforce the act. This Act was more successful at regulating what was fast becoming a multimillion-dollar industry. Brinson reports:

> Five years later, in 1940, those figures escalated to a total of $166
>
> million in revenue generated by the radio networks, accomplishments
>
> that could not have been achieved without the enormously successful

> Radio Act of 1927 Indeed the Radio Act and its guardian Federal
> Radio Commission were so effective at repairing and regulating
> the radio industry that President Franklin Roosevelt successfully
> persuaded Congress to expand the Commission's scope. The
> Communications Act of 1934 reconstructed the Federal Radio
> Commission and gave it regulatory authority over all forms of
> communication including broadcasting, telegraph, and telephone.
> Virtually all the operating and licensing requirements contained
> In the Radio Act of 1927 were carried over to the 1934 legislation,
> especially the public interest requirement (Brinson, 2004, p. 9)

This is an example of a successful institutional, Keynesian or New Deal program. The government helped regulate and foster the profitable new media industry, while mandating it be operated with public interest requirements. Legislation was improved in 1934 and Larry Fly was appointed Chair of the Commission in 1939. Brinson writes, "Fly was a New Dealer who made no secret of incorporating New Deal policies into regulation of the broadcasting industry" (2004, p 19). This set Fly and the FCC on a collision course with: the Dies Committee; the powerful television companies and networks; and with the politicians who saw mass media as critical to their campaign and political interests. Rather than passively allowing the media industry to "guide" the FCC, Fly and the Commission actively pursued New Deal style legislation in the interest of the public. Fly hired Columbia University professor Dr. Goodwin Watson, a social psychologist and authority on propaganda techniques to oversee the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS). The Dies Commission launched an investigation of Watson claiming he was a Communist and then investigated all the other FCC staffers.

Brinson reports, "Between 1940 and 1960 FCC commissioners made appearances at minimum of 80 House investigations and 96 Senate investigations, with peak attendance during the 77th Congress (1940-1941) and the 84th through the 86th Congresses (1955-1960)." (2004, p. 15) The investigations crippled the FCC's ability to regulate, and cost the FCC its leadership as Fly resigned under the strain of on-going investigations. The rapid growth of the television industry also strained the FCC because they brought technical issues to the FCC that were ultimately beyond it's ability to fully test or regulate on its very limited budget (Brinson 2004, pp. 12-3). Eventually the FCC changed into an organization that operated to protect the industry market, rather than trying to regulate the industry. It was the media industry, with its power of mass communication and its huge profits that made it the first industry target for organized free-market, anti-communist, anti-New Deal purging activities.

1950s Cold War era: Red Scare communist purging activity continued into the Cold War years of the 1950s, with the in-famous McCarthy hearings that interrogated Hollywood entertainment figures. Protecting secrets and national security became a media sensation when former State Department official Alger Hess was convicted of perjury, physicist Klaus Fuchs was apprehended in 1950 for passing nuclear secrets to the Soviets, leading to the discovery, trail and execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg (Stone & Kuznick, 2013, pp. 230-235). In 1956 Senator Joseph McCarthy was censured and investigations curtailed. To Hoover however, this

appeared to be a setback on subversion control. Acting on his own, he began a secret FBI program called COINTELPRO to "disrupt, expose, discredit, and otherwise neutralize the United States Communist party and related organizations" (Halpern et. Al, 1976, p. 112; Stone & Kuznick, 2013, pp. 235). COINTEPRO was used against Martin Luther King, John Lennon, anti-Vietnam War protestors and many others - a form of punishment for past political actions, without trail (Donner 1981, p. 20).

Hoover had opened an investigation into Soviet espionage in Hollywood and Berkeley, code-named COMPIC for Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry. He was convinced of communist infiltration among intellectuals and artists. He recruited a young actor named Ronald Reagan. After FBI agents visited Reagan's Hollywood home in 1946 Reagan became allied with the FBI. Like others in the 1930s Regan supported FDR and government New Deal programs, but he turned against New Dealers and/or Communists during the Cold War era. It was dangerous to appear to be a communist and "hunting communists" became beneficial to Regan's career prospects. Reagan helped the FBI to target communists in Hollywood (Rosenfeld, 2012, pp. 124,510).

Subversion and keeping national security secrets became important concerns in the academy since the Pentagon was investing millions of dollars into basic research programs in universities across the country (Rohde 2013, p. 106-7). Chicago School sociologist Edward A. Shils authored a book about the subject of secrecy, titled *The Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Policies* (1956). The book is oriented against the abuses of the McCarthy hearings and towards an "equilibrium" theory of balancing privacy, publicity and secrecy in a free country. Shils grapples with the contradictions of justifying national security secrets in a free country that protects privacy, freedom and free speech. He defines secrecy as "privacy made compulsory" (Shils, 1956, p. 201). He takes a neoliberal position that government protects private industry - and everyone is responsible for protecting national security, which may mean sacrificing personal privacy. Shils makes complicated Chicago School style cryptic arguments about secrecy, publicity, restriction and overflow, control of communists, subversion and espionage. Shils' book foretells future debates regarding privacy protection laws - or the impossibility of them - as taken up by lawyers like University of Chicago law professor Richard Posner. This exemplifies how the Chicago School approach spread beyond economics, into other disciplines (Emmett, 2011 pp.112-3). Sixty years later, Scott Horton's book *Lords of Secrecy: The National Security Elite and America's Stealth Warfare* (2015) confirms secrecy has corrupted the government and left Americans without power to regulate decisions by a power elite. Horton like Shils, calls for " a healthy balance among the needs for secrecy, privacy and publicity . . . " but a balance in favor of the public's right to know. (2015, p. 202)

1958 to 90s the duo-rise of the military-industrial-complex and neo-liberalism: To maintain western power against the communist threat in post-WWII Europe, the US cultivated alliances with North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) countries, financed the Marshall Plan in war torn Europe and fostered a "containment" and cold war strategy towards Stalinist Russia (Stone & Kuznick, 2012, pp. 209-213). Although the US won WWII, showing the world it had the atomic bomb, it immediately began preparing for war with the Soviets. After the Soviets launched Sputnik 1 and 2 in 1957 the US initiated the arms race and the "military-industrial-complex,"

which former President Eisenhower considered an organized "set of powerful interests groups that threatened American democracy and sought new weapons regardless of the actual need." (Schlosser 2013, pp. 175-6,199).

In 1958 Congress wrote the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) now known as Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) into an Air Force appropriations bill with a $520 million initial funding and a $2 billion budget. ARPA facilitated research projects between military contractors, think tanks and universities. William Godel who pioneered putting satellites in space for intelligence gathering purposes (Jacobsen, 2015, p, 94) was a primary force behind ARPA. Goebel believed America would fight wars with technology and counterinsurgency on a global scale. Godel pioneered Project Agile, a high tech counter insurgency R&D program based in Vietnam after President Kennedy approved funding for a Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam to develop counter insurgency weapons to be used against the Viet Cong. RAND scientists, along with CIA Maj. Edward Lansdale, a communist insurgency expert (the inspiration for the "The Quiet American" and "Ugly American" movies) (McCoy 2009, p. 377) joined Goebel. Project Agile and Igloo White were operations that essentially wiretapped the jungle with radio-controlled seismic sensors, microphones, heat and urine detectors, which transmitted signals to a centralized computer center. The pacification technology pioneered in Vietnam was eyed for use in US "domestic programs, especially those directed at dis-advantaged subcultures". (Levine, 2018, p. 30). The counter insurgency program in Vietnam expanded into the torture, terror and murder Phoenix Program (2018, pp. 18-37) RAND contractors Anthony Russo and Daniel Ellsberg thought Project Agile was a racket used to enrich private military contracting firms (Levine, 2018, p. 33) In 1969 Ellsberg leaked boxes of the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post,* informing the public that the government had lied for years about Vietnam being a civil war – rather than a war of aggression by the US (Stone & Kuznick, 2013, pp. 384-5).

Project Agile and the other military information gathering programs that used human information gathers like the SORO contracted social scientists (Rohde 2013) generated more data than the military wanted to use. ARPA turned to Joseph Carl Robnett Licklider, commonly known as Lick, to develop computerized systems that could process intelligence data with less human labor power. Lick was in the forefront of the 1950s and 60s trending "cybernetic vision." In 1962 as Director of ARPA's Command and Control Research division, Lick used ARPA to push General Electric, IBM and the computer industry towards interactive computing and established computer science programs at Universities across the country but always tying them closely to the US military establishment (Levine, 2018 p. 51) By 1966 Lick was planning the ARPANET - an interactive computer network. In 1969 Stanford and UCLA were the first to go live on ARPANET. In 1972 ARPANET was used to transfer and share military intelligence files on antiwar protestors and civil rights leaders, with the Pentagon, demonstrating how Internet technology could and would reduce the need for human labor in intelligence gathering. (Levine, 2018 p. 187)

In 1960 RAND contracted economists Charles Hitch and Roland McKean, published a funding plan to pay for this new national security industry. Their book, titled, *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age* (1960) presents a plan where tax revenues, tied to a percentage rate of

national GNP are given to the Pentagon for arms development, without much apparent oversight (1960, p. 28-31). The US economy will finance the military-industrial-complex even when there is armistice (p. 320). R&D is to be conducted by scientists under contract with corporations like Lockheed Martin, McDonnell Douglas and Northrup Grumman, and Booz Allen Hamilton in conjunction with universities. These joint university/military research ventures created a network of scientists who were seen by the FBI as both valuable and a liability to, national security; Hoover saw universities as prone to communist insurgency (Donner 1981, p. 13; Rosenfeld, 2013).

Post-WWII America capitalists and conservative politicians saw communist threats not only in war torn countries of Europe and in Russia, but also inside the US government and the academy. Cloaking themselves in anti-communist rhetoric (Brinson, 2004, p. 3) conservative businessmen, neoliberal economists and politicians expanded the backlash against New Dealers. This became a duo-powered, neoliberal and military/government community backlash that expanded through the 1970s and 80s enlisting the support of powerful leaders like US President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, Nobel Prize winning neoliberal economists Friedrich A. Hayek and Milton Freidman and Paul Volcker, head of the US Federal Reserve. Just before the world wide depression of 2008 gutted the American economy, economist David Harvey argued the shift to neoliberalism had successfully marginalized planned or socialized economic programs across the world, while reestablishing, in the digital age, an elite class and huge global wealth inequality (Harvey 2005, p. 79; Phillips 2018). It appears neoliberalism is as much a weapon against the so-called communist threat, as contract defense weapon development is – and in fact they are intertwined through the social relations of the military-industrial-complex. For example, Charles Johnston Hitch (1910-1995) was an American economist recruited into RAND in 1948 after being a member of the Oxford Economists Research Group and serving in the OSS (which became the CIA). Hitch headed RAND's Economics Section. He became Assistant Secretary of Defense to Robert McNamara and later was the President of the University of California at Berkeley (UCB), replacing Keynesian economist and UCB President, Clark Kerr in 1967 (after California governor-elect Ronald Reagan took office and dismissed Kerr) (Marginson, 2016, pp. 9-10; Van Horn et. al. 2013, p. 248-9; Rosenfeld, 2012).

Hitch co-authored *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age* (1960). The plans laid out in this book were preceded by a 1958 proposal developed by a Rockefeller Brothers Fund Report (1960, p. 58). John D. Rockefeller subsidized the University of Chicago from its beginning in 1892 (van Overtveldt, 2007, pp. 23, 45). The university was often dubbed "Standard Oil University" and its' School of Economics, became known for being the most neoliberal, anti-Keynesian economics program in the country. In *The Chicago School* Van Overtveldt quotes a passage from Mirowski's *Machine Dreams*, which sums up the "three commandments" of Chicago School style, neoliberal economics:

> Its first commandment is that the market always "works."
>
> in the sense that its unimpeded operation maximizes welfare.
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> Its second commandment is that the government is always
>
> part of the problem, rather than the solution. The third

> commandment is that the demand curve is the rock-bottom
>
> fundamental entity in price theory, and that attempts to "go
>
> behind" the demand curve in order to locate its foundations
>
> in the laws of utility or "indifference" . . . were primarily a
>
> waste of time and effort. (Van Overtveldt Mirowski, 2007, p. 9;
>
> quoting from Mirowski, 2002, p. 203-4)

Hitch and McKean's funding scheme takes money from New Deal regulated government programs and gives it to privatized military contractors, whose spending quotas are un-accountable, thus "free" of regulation. When the military-industrial-complex became hitched to the US GNP the merger was a victory for neoliberal capitalism, since government doesn't regulate the military-industrial-complex, but subsidizes it with tax revenues, for the public good of national security - as provided by the market of the military-industrial-complex merchants; it appears neoliberal business interests made pro-active moves to avoid the struggles that ensued when the government regulated the radio and TV industry.

The 1950s US economy had been robust with unions, regulated business and taxation of the rich. Hitch and McKean were optimistic the economy would be able to subsidize the cost of a national security complex; but they warned what is spent on national security will only come at the sacrifice of social welfare expenses, such as schools, hospitals, socialized health care, etc. (Hitch & McKean, 1960, pp. 2-3,27,40, 357). Apparently the economy could not grow enough to pay for both social services and the military-industrial-complex; assuring that New Deal programs would be financially starved. The authors are even optimistic that an economy can be revived after a thermonuclear holocaust (Hitch & McKean, 1960, p. 323). The authors stress the need for secrecy for national security and mention that totalitarian countries seem to be better at keeping national secrets (1960, p. 338). This idea of "national security" takes on a powerful and mysterious character, as it becomes code and rational for dividing the public into those who are not privy to certain kinds of information and experts, who "know" (and/or don't know) about secret government projects and "black box" budgets (millions of dollars that go into CIA budgets but are unaccountable).

Over the decades neoliberal victories usurped many of the gains of the New Deal (Morgan and Rutherford, 1998). The FCC was tamed and communications technology was developed for war in R & D programs. Out of R&D programs like ARPA came weapons and the Internet. Once the Internet became fully operational it was rapidly and quietly sold off to private companies (perhaps the neoliberal business community did not want a repeat of what had happened earlier with radio technology). Levine reports on how Stephen Wolff helped privatized the Internet in *Surveillance Valley: The Secret Military History of the Internet* (2018). Essentially the National Science Foundation (NSF) an educational program, had a special "Net backbone" infrastructure built for academic purposes, which it allowed IBM and MCI to use for private business purposes, without letting either the public or other market competitors know about the deal. Levin writes:

> In short, the NSF directly subsidized the MCI-IBM consortiums
>
> National business expansion. The company used its privileged

position to attract commercial clients, telling them that its

service was better and faster because it had direct access to

the national high-speed backbone. Stephen Wolff understood

that backing a telecommunications company like MCI could

lead to a situation where a handful of powerful corporations

controlled the newly created Internet, but he brushed those

dangers aside. As Wolff explained in an interview at the time,

his main objective was to bring a viable commercial Internet

into existence. Regulating fairness and competitive practices

was someone else's job. On a very basic level, he was right. His

objective was just to build a network, not regulate it. The problem

was that by building the network, he was also building an industry

and, by extension, laying down the basic rules that governed and

regulated this industry. These were intertwined. (Levine, 2018, p. 123)

Levine goes on to explain how "Wolff's laissez-fair management style" fell under fire since it gave unfair market advantage to some networking companies but not others (not because it short-changed the US taxpayers). The Internet, born from taxpayer funded research, was privatized in the midst of Ronald Reagan's Presidency – the heyday of neoliberalism, when everything was being de-regulated and privatized. Again Levine:

The Internet is perhaps one of the most valuable public

inventions of the twentieth century, and decisions made

by a few key unelected officials in the federal bureaucracy

 set the Internet on the certain path to privatization. There

was no real debate, no discussion, and no oversight. It

was just given away, before anyone outside the bureaucratic

bubble realized what was at stake. (Levine, 2018, p. 120-1)

According to Zuboff, being able to regulate the industry without much government oversight has liberated the GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) and telecom industries to embrace what law professor and author of the *Black Box Society* Frank Pasquale describes as "free speech fundamentalism" with a "cyber-libertarian" ideology. Zuboff writes:

Their legal teams aggressively assert First Amendment principles

To fend off any form of oversight or externally imposed constraints

That either limit the content on their platforms or the "algorithmic

orderings of information" produced by their machine operations.

As one attorney who has represented many of the leading

Surveillance capitalists puts it, "The lawyers working for these

Companies have business reasons for supporting free expression.

> Indeed, all of these companies talk about their businesses in the
>
> language of free speech. (Zuboff, 2019, p. 109)

Today six of the richest people in the world, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim Helu, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerman, Larry Ellison, and Warren Buffet reap profits from telecommunication companies that owe their technological origination to taxpayer paid-for-research conducted in government funded OR programs. Much of that wealth redistribution has happened since the advent of digital technology and its' adjoining electronic memory processing capabilities. The military-industrial-complex distributes wealth upwards (Phillips 2018, pp. 221-262) and appropriates customers' personal data (Zuboff 2019).

Post 9/11; the Patriot Act; Outsourced intelligence gathering and whistleblowers

The crisis of 9/11 gave the government a new enemy to displace the "Communist threat", namely the "terrorist" and "the leaker" – those who hack information systems and leak national security secrets. The PATRIOT Act was passed, allowing third party tele-communications industries to hunt for terrorists in electronic meta-data (Harris, 2010, 2005; Shorrock 2008). Whistleblowers like Julian Assange, Bradley/Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden and others, warned the world that the US military-industrial-complex had expanded into a network of private tele-communications companies that worked with government intelligence gathering agencies to spy on people's electronic communications the world over (Greenwald, 2014). The mode of production had shifted from mechanical to electronic and digital in secretive ways, both in production and in the privatization of the Internet; many people harbored known unknown secrets - alienation. Some people externalized those secrets and became whistleblowers. The rise of whistleblowers corresponded with an increase in classified government documents. As more government memos became classified the divide between those who know (and don't know) secrets and those who pay for the national security but are not privy to knowing how their taxes are spent, widened. This contradiction presents an entry point for introducing discussion about the discourse between Errol Morris and Donald Rumsfeld in *The Unknown Known* film. Donald Rumsfeld is no stranger to the military–industrial–complex, having served twice as the United States Secretary of Defense and as architect of the Iraq War. Errol Morris, an acclaimed filmmaker of award winning political documentaries, such as the *Fog of War* is no stranger to promoting free speech and inquiry.

Donald Rumsfeld, Errol Morris and The Unknown Known

Filmmaker Errol Morris interviewed Rumsfeld for his movie about Rumsfeld, *The Unknown Known* (2013). Since Rumsfeld had written a monumental number of memos (called "snowflakes") in his long tenure with the government, so Morris had Rumsfeld read some of them. Morris wondered if Rumsfeld had ever actually read his memos since he signed legislation that caused massive human rights violations against Iraqi detainees. Morris focused his attention on Rumsfeld's evasiveness. In particular he focused on Rumsfeld's ideas about the "known and the unknown"; "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence"; and "failure of imagination" which Rumsfeld writes about in the opening pages of his biography, titled *Donald Rumsfeld: Known and Unknown* (2011). Morris did his own research about these phrases and added it to the movie as a special bonus feature. The Special Bonus, titled, Four-

Part Op-ed "The Certainty of Donald Rumsfeld" by Errol Morris consists of: Part 1: Three Reporters; Part 2: The Known and the Unknown; Part 3: A Failure of Imagination and Part 4: Absence of Evidence Isn't Evidence of Absence.

Part I is about Rumsfeld's first public use of the known and unknown terminology at a Pentagon news conference on Febuary12, 2002, five months after 9/11 and a year before the invasion of Iraq. Morris reports on the press briefing and interviews the three reporters who asked Rumsfeld for evidence regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. Here is the question from the NBC Pentagon Correspondent, Jim Miklaszewski, at the press briefing that prompts Rumsfeld to define the "unknown known":

JIM MIKLASZEWSKI: In regard to Iraq weapons of mass destruction and terrorists, is there any evidence to indicate that Iraq has attempted to or is willing to supply terrorists with weapons of mass destruction? Because there are reports that there is no evidence of a direct link between Baghdad and some of these terrorist organizations.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; that is to say we know there are some things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the later category that tend to be the difficult one. (Morris, 2013 b)

In Part 2 "The Known and the Unknown" Morris gives us his own description of these phrases and then he quotes from Rumsfeld's biography. He writes;

The known known, the known unknown and the unknown unknown seemingly have straightforward interpretations… Things we know we know- like the name of the president of the United States . .

And things we know we don't know – like the exact population of Kathmandu.. . . Things we know we don't know but we can look them up, say on Wikipedia. . . Or things that we know we don't but need to be investigated. . . It goes on and on and on. It begs us to answer the question what does it mean to *know* something? Or to *know* that we *know* something? Or to *know* that we don't known something? Doesn't it depend on *evidence?* As Rumsfeld tells the story, the known and the unknown are linked (see also aforementioned Feb 12 news conference) with the absence not the presence of evidence. Rumsfeld writes in his memoir:

The idea of known and unknown unknowns recognizes that the information those in responsibility in government, as well as in other human endeavors, have at their disposal is almost always incomplete. It emphasizes the importance of intellectual humility, a valuable attribute in decision making and in formulating strategy. It is difficult to accept – to know—that there may be important unknowns. The best strategists try to imagine and consider the possible, even if it seems unlikely. They are then more likely to be prepared and agile enough to adjust course if and when new and surprising information requires it—when things that were previously unknown become known.

I also encountered this concept in Thomas Schelling's forward to Roberta Wohlsetter's book *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, in which Schelling identified a "poverty of expectations" as the primary explanation for America's inability to anticipate and thwart the Japanese attack on Hawaii. Schelling's message was as clear as it was prescient: We need to prepare for the likelihood that we would be attacked by an unanticipated foe in ways that we might not imagine." (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. xiv)

Let's examine this passage.

As Rumsfeld writes, the known and the unknown recognizes that information is always incomplete. Correct as far as it goes. Information is always incomplete—do we ever have all the evidence we want or need? Of course not. But was the threat of the Japanese in 1941 or Al Qaeda in 2001 an unknown unknown or even a known unknown? Evidence was ignored or underestimated—in 1941 and 2001 – not because it was "unknown," but because it didn't fit a preconceived agenda.

Both Roberta Wohlstetter and Thomas Schelling, writing for publication in the early 1960s, were concerned with the possibility of a nuclear war—how to prevent it. Wohlstetter's book ends with an admonition, not a solution: (Morris, 2013,b)

We cannot count on strategic warning. . . We must be capable of reacting repeatedly to false alarms without committing ourselves or the enemy to wage thermonuclear war. . . . We have to accept the fact of uncertainty and learn to live with it. No magic, in code or otherwise, will provide certainty. Our plans must work without it. (Wohlstetter 1962, p.401)

Morris reports on the earliest uses of the phrase "known and unknown" that he can find. The phrases appear in John Keats's *Endynion* (1818) and in Robert Browning' *The Ring and the Book* (1869). Then the phrase appears in John W. Powell's 1881. "Sketch of the Mythology of the North American Indians." John Wesley Powell, a one-armed Civil War veteran who pioneered the Grand Canyon for the government, used unknown known and the known unknown as a way to distinguish savagery from civilization. Powel wrote:

> There is an unknown known; there is a known unknown. The unknown
>
> known is the philosophy of savagery; the known unknown is the
>
> philosophy of civilization. In those stages of culture that we call
>
> savagery and barbarism, all things are known – suppose to be known;
>
> but when at least something is known, understood, explained, then
>
> to those who have that knowledge in full comprehension all other
>
> things become unknown, Then is ushered in the era of investigation
>
> and discovery; the science is born; then is the beginning of
>
> civilization. The philosophy savagery is complete; the philosophy
>
> of civilization fragmentary. Ye men of science, ye wise fools, ye
>
> have discovered the law of gravity, but ye cannot tell what gravity
>
> is. But savagery has a cause and a method for all things;
>
> nothing is left unexplained. . . But when the plain on which we

> tread becomes a portion of the surface of the great globe,
>
> and the domed firmament becomes the heavens, stretching beyond
>
> Aleyone and Sirius, With this enlargement of the realm of philosophy
>
> the verity of philosophy Is questioned. The savage is a positive man;
>
> the scientist is a doubting man. (Powell, 1881, p. 22)

It's interesting that both Powell and Rumsfeld refer to the law of gravity in their writing about the unknown known. The author's note at the opening of Rumsfeld's *Memoirs* is four pages devoted to discussion of the "known unknown" phrase. Rumsfeld writes, "Known knows are facts, rules and laws that we know with certainty. We know that gravity is what makes an object fall to the ground." (2011, p. xiv). Rumsfeld is preoccupied with certainty, failure of imagination and absence of evidence; Powell writes that the savage is a positive man, while the scientist is a doubting man.

In Part 3 Morris unpacks the "failure of imagination" phrase that Rumsfeld confuses with "poverty of expectations" in the forward written by Thomas Schelling for Roberta Wohlstetter's book about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor titled, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision,* (dedicated "To my favorite Magician.") RAND halted publication of this book in the 1950s but Thomas Schilling, an acclaimed economist, game theorist (Mirowski, 2002, p. 367-8), helped to publish the book after J.F. Kennedy became President and Robert McNamara, another RAND Operations Research (OR) economist, was working in the Department of Defense. Rumsfeld distributed copies of Schelling's Forward to many government officials. Morris unravels Rumsfeld's "failure of imagination" (to predict the bombing of Pearl Harbor) as a misinterpretation of Schelling's faulting of government and bureaucratic confusion for having allowed Pearl Harbor to be bombed.

Schelling and Roberta Wohlstetter fault the government (which is "always the problem") for not being vigilant and allowing Pear Harbor to be sacrificed. While Rumsfeld, who works for the government, claims the bombing occurred because of a "failure of imagination" that didn't foresee the event. The discourse running through *The Unknown Known* seems like the discourse of someone maintaining secrets for national and job security – couldn't secrets be a kind of unknown known? If Morris obtained information for viewers about why the US went to war with Iraq, it would have been surprising, given Rumsfeld's position, neoliberal orientation and work ethics. In "A Conversation with Errol Morris" Morris claims Rumsfeld is self-deceitful and convinced of his illusions in the face of evidence that contradicts the illusions. But one might also see Rumsfeld as congruent with the mindset and work ethic of the neoliberal Chicago School economists. Rumsfeld preforms his government job in a disciplined "Chicago Tradition" style (van Overtveldt, 2007, pp.19-44) and his argumentation style with the press might have been adapted from a Chicago School economics workshop (Emmett, 2011, pp.110-14). He speaks in an evasive way, which is in keeping with the Chicago School style of discourse, which entails the "capacity to absorb certain forms of criticism and thus deflect those criticisms away from the vulnerable areas in other subprograms where they might do the most damage." (Mirowski & Hands, 1998, p. 289).

Rumsfeld is a government employee who seemingly ascribes to neoliberal ideology. Perhaps he is conflicted since being part of the government means (according to neoliberal doctrine) he is part of the problem – not the solution. And working for the Defense Department means he has to keep this contradiction a secret for national security private industry related concerns. The movie shows how Rumsfeld did his job in a Chicago School style, with "Chicago Tradition" (Van Overtveldt, 2007, pp. 19-44) work ethics, with aggressive argumentation, endless memo writing, standing for hours dictating, by arguing in abstracts, by denial, by not apologizing, by using a strategy of surprise as the appropriate response to unexpected (or unknown) events, by his confrontational management style (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 456) and by contradicting himself. Rumsfeld contradicts himself, even at the very end of the movie where he quibbles with Morris over whether the correct phrase is the unknown, known or the known, unknown. In *Machine Dreams*, Mirowski unpacks the lives and theoretical work of many Cold War neoliberal OR (operations research) economists like Charles Hitch and Kenneth Arrow. While working for RAND, Arrow, like many of his fellow Chicago School economists, received a Noble Prize for economics (at least 9 Chicago School economists have received the Nobel Prize for economics) for his "impossibility theorem" (i.e. all goods are individual, there are no collective social goods), which became the foundation for social choice theory, replacing welfare economics (Marginson 2016, pp. 126-8). Mirowski points out that Arrow contradicted himself all the time (Mirowski 2002, p. 296-7).

Rumsfeld's family roots are in the Chicago area so it's not surprising Rumsfeld befriended the Chicago School's most celebrated economist, Milton Friedman, who he would ". . . turn to many times over the years for advice and guidance." (Rumsfeld 2011, p. 101). In 1976, a year after Rumsfeld became Gerald Ford's secretary of defense Friedman received the Noble Prize for Economics. That year Friedman was accused of being an accessory to human rights crimes because Chicago School economists restructured Chile's economy in the aftermath of the 1973 CIA assisted overthrown of democratically elected Salvador Allende. When General Augusto Pinochet took power in Chile, the so-called "Chicago Boys" a group of Chilean alumni of the University of Chicago, were tasked with implementing neoliberal reforms, in accordance with policy recommendations nicknamed "El Ladrillo" or The Brick. Chile's economy did recover – a victory for neoliberals. J. Daniel Hammond reports on this history, writing:

> Anthony Lewis portrayed Friedman, who had visited Chile in
> the spring of 1975 with Arnold Harberger, as the "guiding light"
> of the Pinochet economic policy, a "policy that could not be
> imposed on a free society" He attributed to Friedman the idea
> that a growing disparity of incomes between the rich and poor
> is part of the mechanism by which anti-inflation policy works.
> Lewis asked, "if the pure Chicago economic theory can be
> carried out in Chile only at the price of repression should its
> authors feel some responsibility? There are troubling questions
> here about the role of academics. (Hammond, 2011, p. 36)

In 1975, the Senate Select Intelligence Committee was investigating US intelligence operations in the wake of the Watergate wiretapping scandal and President Nixon's impeachment. Senator Frank Church, who headed the commission, published fourteen reports about illegal activities by the intelligence agencies and made recommendations for reform. Morris, points out the Watergate wiretapping scandal probably alerted Rumsfeld to be careful with his record keeping. Rumsfeld seems aware of the need for secrecy when he wrote: "The best strategists try to imagine and consider the possible, even if it seems unlikely. They are then more likely to be prepared and agile enough to adjust course if and when new and surprising information requires it—when things that were previously unknown become known." (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. xiv)

RAND whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* in 1971, leading to the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 (Stone & Kuznick, 2013, pp.384-388). With wiretapping and scandal in the Whitehouse, the Pentagon Paper leaks ending the Vietnam War and secret RAND and the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) operations in Vietnam (Project Agile and Igloo White) wiretapping the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail (Levine 2018, pp. 13-34, 26-7; Edwards, 1996, pp. 142-3) surely government contractors had reasons to be vigilant about keeping secrets for job security, as they sought another war to fill the void of Vietnam (Stone & Kuznick 2012, pp. 395-6). And there were incentives to develop technology to reduce huge paper documents (like the Pentagon Papers) into easy to delete electronic memory that also enabled keeping track of who downloaded documents. While spy enabling technology improved, government employees became more secretive – or more alienated. Russ Baker documents this time period in *Family of Secrets,* noting:

> Senator Frank Church, at least, seemed to have an inkling that
>
> something was afoot. "there is no question in my mind," he said,
>
> "but that concealment is the new order of the day." (2009, p. 259)

Rumsfeld published a handbook of leadership advice titled, *Rumsfeld's Rules* (2013). In Chapter Six, titled, The "Unknown Unknowns" Rumsfeld explains when a surprise occurs, such as an economic depression, it's easy to blame someone, rather than accept that "ours is world where uncertainty and surprise are the norm . . . One way of dealing with the likelihood of unknown unknowns is to bring a wide variety of people together and brainstorm the range of possibilities." Here is a counter to Schillings "poverty of expectations" warning. The movie and Rumsfeld's books show us how someone like Rumsfeld, or Kenneth Arrow or perhaps anyone who works in a secretive environment, but lives in a free society behaves, talks and rationalizes known unknown alienation. Such contradictions helped drive appropriation of tax dollars for a military-industrial-complex and fueled the changing mode of production as society shifted away from drafting, "snowflake" paper memos and tape-recording meetings on tapes, to an era when third party corporations keep electronic memory files on all transmitted communications and almost anything can be recorded with a cellphone.

Conclusion, Findings, Questions

The hypothesis discussed above is that known unknown alienation grew out of the Cold War work relations of military-industrial-complex employees who kept work related secrets for reasons of national, trade and job security. As a condition of employment, military-industrial-complex and telecommunications companies employees were/are expected to know certain things about work but also pretend not to know those things elsewhere – a kind of known and unknown contradiction that fosters alienation. This kind of alienation became manifest in the computerized, communications and interactive inventions of those military-industrial-complex employees – the cell phone, the pc and the Internet. The creators of these devices have delivered to us, through these devices, infused with their known unknown alienation, a mode of production that allows both unlimited free speech, (which includes a multi-billion dollar underground on-line pornography industry) for those who wish to express it and unlimited spying capability with impunity, for spies who use the internet.

These interactive spy capable communication and exchange instruments we depend upon for communication, work and exchange, also transmit a duo or split lifestyle to us as well, for no matter if the Internet user is a spy or someone engaged in free speech, there is an obvious split between the on- and the off-line life experience, a contradiction that is also a driving force for capitalism; unify the split and that driving force for capitalism is changed. There is profit being made in this kind of split user experience because people can't be on-line all the time, either for free speech or for spying – and yet many strive hard to unify that on-line and off-line life experience (generating hotly contested debates about possible Internet addiction) (Packard 2018a). Consider the so-called Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) disorder, where people are on-line habitually because they fear missing out on something. FOMO was coined by Patrick J. McGinnis, an American venture capitalist who introduced the idea of FOMO in a 2004 article in *HARBUS*, the student newspaper at Harvard Business School (Shoshana Zuboff's University). FOMO offers an example of the contradiction of trying to be on-line all the time, while one is living in an off-line context. Spies may also have a form of FOMO because it is their job not to miss out on a target's movements; likewise video gamers, drone pilots and electronic slot machine users may try to stay on target or on-line, as long as they can; but the impossibility of unifying the on- and off- line experience keeps the device user returning to the device.

The American Cold War creators of surveillance and communication devices lived split lives too, because they built the devices in secreted workspaces but outside of work they lived in a different, free society context (Levine, 2018 23-32). And "free society context" is neither an exaggeration or irony, if one considers how Israel has built up a military-industrial-surveillance-economy on top of Palestine – which has been turned into Israel's weapons testing ground and the world's largest prison (Halper 2015). A Foucault inspired *Discipline and Punish* analysis might be applied to a study of the punishing social relations of Israel's military-industrial-surveillance-complex aimed at Palestine or perhaps to the punishing effects of mass shootings, war crimes and war porn, which the Internet helps enable; then again it might not, given Richard Evan's critique of Foucault's approach to punishment and justice (Evans, 1996, pp. 880-891). The US spies on its' citizens but wages war and drone strikes in other countries. Palestinians are not citizens of Israel, which helps justify pacification and genocide of Palestinians by Israel.

The Internet user whether a spy or not is in a state of contradiction; the spy harbors secrets, and people who make on-line pornography do too. The Internet enables the endless activity of spying, pornography or hate crimes and harboring secrets to continue, with algorithms and FOMO helping to perpetuate the pattern. Horton claims the government is in crisis because of too much secrecy – how much crisis is hidden in the Internet? This known unknown alienation has historical roots, as argued here, in the Cold War communist purging and neoliberal enterprises of the ARPA, DARPA, military-industrial-complex and private corporate network. Case study analysis could expand this discourse but what is argued here seems viable, because harboring national, trade or job security secrets is a common work experience for many employees in intelligence, the military, government, law enforcement, aeronautics, politics, the sex industry, crime, surveillance and other industries.

When Morris interviewed Rumsfeld he asked him to tell the public something about why the US went to war with Iraq after the 9/11 attacks, since the WMD supposed to be in Iraq were never found. But Rumsfeld didn't offer any new information about why the US imposed regime change on Iraq and murdered Saddam Hussein. He dismissed questions with comments about "a failure of imagination" and "an absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." When known unknown alienation seems to censor the information we seek, is it up to non-experts to use imagination and free speech to seek evidence for answers? For example, we might imagine Pearl Harbor was wittingly sacrificed by the US military, since the loss would justify building up a military-industrial-complex with lucrative contracts paid for by US dedicated GNP (Hitch and McKean wrote "sacrifices" would be have to be made for national security). We might imagine that WMD were not found in Iraq because Iraq's WMD were dismantled and used to implode building Seven and the Twin Towers, during 9/11. We might imagine Cold War neoliberal RAND economists planning ahead how to make money with an emerging Internet mode of production. We might imagine what well paid government spies watch on the Internet.

Acknowledgements

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