Construction

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1:    First, fold each sheet in half along the vertical axis.

2:    Using a craft knife or scalpel, cut a horizontal slot along the centre dotted line of the first sheet. (pages 1/2/11/12)

3:    Then cut along the dotted lines on all the other sheets. Make sure to cut to the very edges of the paper.

4:    Stack the folded sheets in ascending order with the even numbers at the top. Curl the bottom half of the second page (pages 3/4/19/20).

5:    Thread the curled page through the centre slot of the first page. Repeat this process with the third (pages 5/6/17/18), fourth sheet (pages 7/8/15/16) and fifth sheet (pages 9/10/13/14) with the even pages in ascending order.

6:    When all the pages have been threaded through, check the pagination. Finally, fold the booklets in half along the horizontal axis.

suggestive. It points to ways in which particular elements of phone use might be felt more intensely than others; and might indeed become excessive, breaking out into spaces beyond the phone. Following this line of thought it is tempting to suggest that mobile spaces compel attention because they produce an accelerated, intensified, sense of freedom of movement and of speed-up – a sense which might spill over from the phone space into others spheres of life. Connecting to a mobile space is often experienced as going 'live'. That is, with a mobile the user can move at (communicational) speeds that neither, walking, riding or even flying, can accommodate, even though they have come to seem natural. In these spaces the user is also produced as a highly mobilized subject, as somebody able to keep up with contemporary life. Perhaps this explains why I pay more attention to the live mediated transactions on offer through my mobile than to the 'live' live events of the street.

7. The Selfish Phone

'If you don't have a mobile, people don't care about you....'
(Sussex University Student).

Finally, I want to suggest that mobile commands attention by *offering* a form of attention. Within the newly-created and individualized bubble of the call or the return call, the user is always needed and wanted: flattered by attention on the one hand, able to control the demand for a response on the other. There is a form of compensation going on here: the space of the city is often

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HOW MANY MOVEMENTS?

CAROLINE BASSETT

DIFFUSION *Species of Spaces*

Many of interactions hosted by mobiles comprise humdrum, banal, often apparently unnecessary conversations. On the other hand they are clearly *compelling*: phone space is often prioritised over local space, and phone use has very quickly become an integral part of everyday life. Anybody who has looked at phone use amongst other people, who has considered their own use of the phone, or who has witnessed the irritation phones cause in certain public spaces, will be aware of this conundrum. How can it be explained? First, I stress that in making a distinction between the kind of spatial economy afforded by the mobile and that offered by the personal stereo, I am not looking at the question of aesthetics. The relationship between the priority afforded to one space and the neglect this attention affords another, might be considered in relation to the affective priority one kind of space claims over another without specific reference to the question of the aesthetic qualities of that space. In fact it seems not just useful but necessary to look at affect since, without considering the affective or invested, the conundrum I have set out above cannot be addressed at all. The point perhaps, is to set aside the content of mobile phone calls and consider instead but the forms of connections mobile telephony allows, the *processes* it enables. The key here is to consider not the content of the phone call, but the process of making or receiving the call. What makes this kind of space compelling, is not what it contains, but what communicational experience it offers the user. Considered this way the mobile's attractions become more evident – and some use characteristics that are otherwise baffling – for instance the tendency of much phone talk to remain at the level of the phatic or the gestural – also become more explicable.

Crary, citing Binet and Fere, suggests that 'attention increases the force of certain sensations while it weakens others' (Crary, 2000: 39). I think this is

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'How Many Movements?'[1]

'[T]here are two texts which simply alternate: you might almost believe they had nothing in common, but they are in fact inextricably bound up with each other, as though neither could exist on its own.....but....only in their fragile over-lapping ...' (George Perec, *forward to W*, 1996)

1. th ground wher u walk

'I left my pictur on th ground wher u walk...'
(A text message poem, *Guardian, Online, 7*, December 5th, 2002)

In the city where I live advertising flyers are often taped to the ground by those who post them. In rain-soaked England, the images dissolve very quickly; but the taped outlines remain far longer. These empty squares produce *ad hoc* grids; hop-scotch pathways through the city. I often find myself falling into step with these grids when I use my mobile; not entirely absent-mindedly, but not entirely intentionally either. This is how I walk when I am talking into another space, when I am walking *here* but listening *there*, receiving or sending text messages, making or taking calls.

This way of walking is something like the pavement game children play, the game where stepping on the cracks between stones is prohibited because the ground is full of monsters only held at bay by this ritual. Children engaged

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personal, and perhaps so free, are actually neither individual nor private spaces. Rather, they can be viewed as collective constructions. They are *socially symbolic*.

Notes

1. In *Species of Space*, Georges Perec asks his readers to investigate 'how many movements'; it takes to dial a telephone number.

2. As it is by the web site - as Matt Hillis amongst others, points out (Hillis, 2000).

3. In *Approaches to What*, Georges Perec asks his readers 'how many movements does it takes to dial a phone number? Why' (Perec, 1997:211).

4. Frederic Jameson has suggested that the narrative text 'draw[s] the Real into its own texture'; and might thus work to map the world as dream or prayer (1981:81).

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in these games operate with extra care: every step matters. For me the inverse is true, I am operating in a distracted way: each step matters *less*. This outside city space engages my vision, but I am not necessarily attending closely to what I see in this space, and I am certainly not seeking to control it. Rather, I am focussed on a second space, the auditory space opened up through the phone. It is there, into that space, that I direct my emotions and my intellectual attention – and it is into that space that I seek to be *heard*.

The spatial economy of mobile telephony is complex. To explore it demands consideration of the dynamics not only of virtual space (the bubble into which we speak when we make a connection), but also of physical space as it comes to be penetrated by virtual space. In this sense, whenever a mobile is used it connects not two spaces but four or more. Mobiles play a part in the production of contemporary space. They also play a part in the production of contemporary subjectivity since to ask how the connections mobiles make are produced, maintained, re-produced, and understood is also to ask how this kind of technology might allow the negotiation of new forms of subjectivity. It is this negotiation that I look at here. And I begin by looking at what has ended.

2. The 'incarceration vacation'

'The more you see, the less you hold…[this is] a dis-possession of the hand in favour of a greater trajectory for the eye' (de Certeau, 1984, 113).

'You Extend From What You Walk On'
Gretchen Hofner, from *Crow in Heels*

Back in the 1970s, in the *Practice of Everyday Life*, the French theorist Michael de Certeau contrasted the embedded perspective produced by walking in the city at ground level with the strategic viewpoint from on high, a view usually enabled by technology (de Certeau, 1984). For de Certeau walking was a spatializing, *narrativizing* practice. Those who felt their way through the streets, tracing out their own trajectories, produced a second, ghostly mapping of the city; one that confounded the official city of the planners and architects - at least for a time.

Today I still walk in the city. But I am no longer a pedestrian in the old sense because I am no longer embedded in my immediate locality or environment, even when I walk, rather than go by car. The penetration of the old spaces of the everyday by mobile phone users now largely goes unnoticed; routine and habituation mask what is an extra-ordinary shift. Today the city streets are full of virtual doorways, opening into other places. Countless ways through, ways out, and ways in to the city space, are constructed and de-constructed by a myriad of mobile phone owners, who transform as they use. This change in space means that today I can walk here in the streets and simultaneously connect with other people in far away spaces. I find new perspectives, and not only because I can be *reached* on my mobile phone but also because I can use it to *reach out*. (The difference between the mobile phone and the Walkman inheres in this distinction; the mobile, unlike the Walkman offers the possibility of remote intervention). One way to describe this is simply to say that my perspective has shifted. Another way would be to say that I have more than one perspective available to me. Perhaps it is already clear that

between' mobile bubbles and city streets. More specifically, consideration of the mode of inventory can suggest something specific about the processes of translation that go on in relation to the mobile phone use, and in relation to forms of mobile subjectivity. In short, the inventory makes it more feasible to consider narrative processes even in the fractured conditions within which we operate.

Consideration of attention/inattention rather than presence/absence on the one hand, and of the inventory that distends, rather than the database that compresses, on the other, come together to suggest an approach to thinking about (telephonic) mobility and everyday life that does not focus on dis-connection and fragmentation, as an assumed starting point. Rather, it produces a focus on how connection and continuity get made across and between different spaces. Finally perhaps it is possible to use the mode of inventory to say something about the nature of this space/these spaces and the nature of this practice of space/spaces as a *social* practice. The mobile phone is an(other) example of the dialectic characteristically operating around information technology – which offers us more freedom and simultaneously exerts over us more control. This dialectic might be opened up precisely by exploring the numerological production of a space – not as a technological space only (one operating according to the rules of logic) but rather by reading this technological space as a material *social* construction. Regarded as a practice of space, and as a practice that makes space, the mobile phone draws up the cultural conditions under which it itself is made – all the species of space – into itself: like a map, a dream, or even like a prayer might do[4]. Paradoxically then, these private bubbles into which we speak, these bubbles which demand our attention, in we find a particular form of self validation, in which we tend to speak one-to-one – these spaces that seem so intimate,

With the numbers ascribed to them, with the number ascribed to the caller. The inventory includes a certain degree of codification – in this aspect it reflects Perec's on-going engagement with numerology. But, like other experiments with numerology and even automatic writing, inventory-making is also always a *poetic* process, albeit a peculiarly automated one. The inventory allows for the systematic collection and ordering of objects, but it also guarantees that the list so collected, will itself be productive, will have new implications. The space produced through the inventory is in this way also 'space as invention.' As Perec put it: space is a doubt.

Let me now return to re-consider my claim that the database might well be re-thought through the concept of inventory. This claim may sound as though it over-stretches what is in a sense a literary conceit. However, one reason why Perec's sense of the inventory is useful here is because it underscores a real difference between two ways of thinking about the database operations. The first of this would be to understand the database as a technical architecture (this essentially is what Manovich does). The second approach looks at the database as it is used. This second way of thinking insists that the user is brought into the loop. Why does this matter? All databases involve codification – and therefore a process of compression and randomisation (the compression of the non-absolute into the reductive mode of the pre-programmed experience). However all database *use* also involves a process of decompression or translation – and this is a process in which the user is implicated, a process that does not end with a technical operation. Many kinds of databases tend to become inventories when they are accessed. For this reason the inventory offers an alternative to the database as a way of accounting for movements in and out of databases, for movements in and out of virtual spaces in general, and perhaps for movements 'across and

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the (negative) place accorded to information technology in de Certeau's consideration of the dialectics of power, control and freedom is challenged by the case of the mobile.[2]

Let me turn from walking to riding. Elsewhere in the *Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau explores a train journey as an 'incarceration vacation' - a space in which passengers submit to the discipline of the rails but where they paradoxically find some freedom from other responsibilities; where they are *made* un-accountable. For de Certeau there is some pleasure to be found in this unexpected freedom – and some allure in the expanded if prosthetic expansion of perspective it offers the traveller. Perhaps De Certeau himself could sometimes find compensations in technology. Here, at any rate de Certeau brings the human into a close relation with the technology in question, which in a sense becomes the grounds from which her vision extends: what she 'walks' on.

The mobile phone changes this dynamic. For the mobile phone user, travel no longer presumes a broken connection. There is no dislocation between the world of the train and the world beyond: not even the temporary dislocation the journey used to produce. Each world is shot through with the other. De Certeau called the train a mobile symbol (1984: 113). Today, mobile phones are at once a new symbol of a particular kind of contemporary freedom to move and act in multiple spaces, and a symbol of 'always on' accountability /surveillance. Now we have this new symbol, it is evident that the priority the visual is accorded in de Certeau's economy of spatial power and his sense of the automatic connection between the strategic and the scopic needs thinking about. That is, an older sense of the distinction between the landscape and the journey, and of the spatial dynamics under-pinning this

distinction, no longer pertains. These days, as mobile-equipped travellers, we operate in that speed-blurred band that used to demarcate the division between landscape and the fast-moving space of the train. Or rather, there is no longer a boundary, but only an *interface*. You are advised to 'take your world with you', when you go because this is the end of the incarceration vacation: with its unexpected freedom and its constraint. The question is what comes next.

3. 'How many movements'

In what follows, I address this question from two directions. First, I explore mobile telephony in relation to questions of attention, drawing partly on Jonathan Crary's account of the suspension of perception in modern culture (Crary, 2000). To me it is clear that a dialectic of presence/absence is at the heart of the spatial economy enabled by the mobile phone: the interesting questions cohere around *how* this dialectic operates. Considering presence /absence by way of attention is useful because it allows some rather abstract formulations concerning ICTs in general and virtual space in particular to be thought through in more nuanced ways – and in ways that relate more specifically to the mobile phone.

The second approach I make is centred on the inventory and here I begin with the concept of the inventory as developed by Georges Perec, another French theorist of the everyday. Perec combined a sense of the importance of the jumbled, half-forgotten objects and processes in the production of the everyday

11. Mnemonic operators

In *Species of Spaces*, his examination of spatial practices and narrative identity, Perec attributes extreme importance to the everyday. He argues that to recall the trivial, insignificant, ordinary details about a life, through the process of drawing up an inventory of that life is to open up the space of that life; to recall what is important about it. Our hoard of detritus is also our life's treasure *because* it is key to our identity over time, the key to who we are. The inventory, in other words, is the hook upon which is hung experience over time. Perec's inventories thus function as mnemonics, examples of the art of memory, or *artificial* memory (see Yates, 1966): they are reminders of who we are. The process of inventory turns Perec's past life into a memory palace, which is, in the manner of the oldest such palaces, both a system, and the memory of a system: both the means to remember a life and a life story. (In a sense remembered objects narrate Perec's life story back to him). I note here that like all forms of artificial memory, the mode of inventory is a mode of encoding and decoding, of compression and decompression. Today, the mobile phone functions as a mnemonic operator. In this case however, the mnemonic operation is not performed in order to recall a past life. Rather the mnemonic operation, the mode of inventory, *describes* some of the ways in which users operate in a world that demands that they operate in many places at once. The inventory thus describes the means by which individuals achieve a series of negotiations between and across the multiple overlapping *spaces* they inhabit simultaneously – to different degrees, in different *states* – when they use mobiles and other similar technologies.

The mode of inventory begins with the list itself. With lists of friends perhaps.

life, with a sense that this form of everyday life – the infra-ordinary as he describes it – might be investigated through various experiments with numerological systems. The mode of inventory as he develops it, is essentially one of these experiments. For Perec the inventory offers a means by which to codify experience and thereby to recall and record various aspects of everyday life. In his hands however, the inventory is not ultimately a reductive codification, but rather an expansive *narrative* process. Perec does not seek to explore the reduction of experience to the bullet point, the reduction of life to code, or the reduction of an 'organic' space to one technologically produced and therefore 'artificial'. Rather he unfolds worlds from their barest essentials. In his hands the inventory functions as a catalyst for a particular kind of distention[3] or decompression – for a *return* to an experience in all its complexity. As Perec sees it 'space as inventory' is also 'space as invention' (1997: 13). What he produces is a numerological system (a form of artificial memory, as I explore below) that is also a poetics: a way of re-making space that involves technical production and imagination. The concept of the inventory as thus described is suggestive. It helps develop forms of thinking about ways in which technologies such as the mobile phone operate – and for thinking about ways in which compression and decompression, encoding and decoding, can be understood as *more* than technical processes (although they are also always technical processes). At the very least, Perec's sense of the possible re-production of a complex space from the thinnest of possible cues – from bald lists, single items, the bare technical description of a process – *from the single act of calling up a number perhaps* – seems to me to open up ways of thinking about the translations between spaces performed by mobile phone users that get beyond the presumption that today we are simply in thrall to the pure logic of the database. Now, having 'inventorised' my two terms, I will continue, in the fine tradition of Perec, by *using* this inventory to open things up a little further.

10. Space as Inventory, Self as Experience

'Space as inventory, space as invention' (Perec, 1997:13)

'As a cultural form, database represents the world as a list of items and it refuses to order this list. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events). Therefore, database and narrative are natural enemies. Competing for the same territory of human culture, each claims an exclusive right to make meaning out of the world.' (Manovich: 1998)

Lev Manovich has written brilliantly on the tension between narrative and database, arguing that a database logic has over-whelmed narrative and is now the dominant cultural form (Manovich, 1998). Manovich argues that the database represents the world as an un-ordered list of items, while narrative produces trajectories of what seemed un-ordered. Seen this way around narrative becomes a subset of what is done with a database, with the latter as the central, defining, logic of a computerised society. I want to suggest here that the concept of the inventory can be used to challenge the claim that the logic of the database is always dominant. To make this argument I want first to briefly set out the logic of the inventory stressing its function as a mnemonic.

4. Attention and Imagination

Exploring the connections between attention and perception Crary suggests that in contemporary life '[i]ndividuals define and shape themselves in terms of a capacity for 'paying attention', that is, for a *disengagement* with the broader field of attraction, whether visual or auditory, for the sake of isolating or focussing on a reduced number of stimuli.' (Crary, 2000:1 my itals). Following Crary I understand that the category of attention is important both in the contemporary (highly technologized) production of the subject and in the contemporary production of space. The capacity to switch attention from one space to another is very evident in mobile phone use, since this has honed considerably our ability to engage/dis-engage from particular stimuli, and from particular kinds of spaces – and expanded the times and places when we can perform these rapid switches.

So what is going on here? To begin to answer this I return momentarily to my own distracted walking in the city on the one hand, and to the children's pavement game on the other. I think that both can be used to say something about the kind of role that paying attention (or failing to pay attention) plays in everyday spatial practices. In both of these cases it is clear that paying attention is not only about looking, and neither is it about where precisely the gaze is directed (about the angle of the gaze). That is, attention is not purely a matter of geometry. Rather, attention is *invested*. It is, as Crary puts it 'continuous with states of distraction, reverie, dissociation, and trance' (Crary 2000: 46).

Because it involves investment, attention clearly also involves a form of selection. Equally clearly, selection is not necessarily a free act on the part

formations, *and* in their political economy, social productions. It also means they are *connected* social productions. This is not to say that they are not 'real'. Indeed, these connected productions (amongst others) help *comprise* everyday life: Henri Lefebvre understood everyday life itself in spatial terms: partly as that which is projected into space, and partly as that which takes place *as space* (Lefebvre, 1991). To understand that everyday life is space, and that this space is partly produced through a collective imagination, is not to deny the force of technological change or innovation: to deny the extra-ordinary shift that the mobile has produced. On the contrary it is to seek to account for that force in all its specificity.

9. Reconciling Oneself

As we increasingly switch our attention from one place to another, each time at the expense of the last (perhaps because we increasingly seek sensation itself, over any sustained engagement with discrete content) our lives become fragmented. To some extent we become a 'patchwork of dis-connected states' (Crary, 2000:1). Something that is useful about attention is precisely that it is never presumes absolute presence – and cannot therefore presume absolute disconnection. When I switch my attention into my phone, I leave some part of myself behind. As a consequence I have some part of myself to return to: to reconcile with. Perhaps indeed, I need to think harder not only about and *what* and *who* I am *between and across* these states, *between and across* these spaces, but also about how I operate to make these moves in the first place. It is at this point that I return to consider Perec and his concept of inventory.

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indifferent: I am lost in the crowd, I am anonymous. On my phone, in my space, I matter. On the phone indeed, I have a certain form of presence and this may well compensate for any limitations in bandwidth, any constraints on the range, scope and scale of the reality in which I matter. Here then, is another way in which these spaces are inter-dependent. Attention on one stems from neglect a particular form of content, (a particular kind of sound, for instance) but rather *in* (as well as *to*) another space, and relates to it. At least as I read it, a form something that is integral to the dynamics of mobile phone use – a form doesn't seem to operate in the same way in relation to the personal stereo (although it quite clearly does pertain to some kinds of web-based interaction). Overall, what is being fetishized here (rather than aestheticized, in fact) is not a particular form of life: a life operating at a particular speed and intensity, but one that can also be controlled. Mobiles give their users an enhanced and risk free sense of 'being live/being alive', even though (because) this 'liveness' is maintained in an artificially controlled bubble.

8. The Collective Imaginary

It should now be clear that the spaces into which we shift our attention (and those from which we shift our attention) by way of mobiles, are not purely technological spaces. To some extent they are imagined. This simple proposition is important. It means that the city streets and the auditory spaces within which we connect are technically achieved spaces, *and* also, as a part of this, spaces of the collective and individual imaginary. It means that these spaces are, in their technical iterations *and* in their imaginary

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of the individual (either I am selected - which is to say my attention is 'caught' by a particular event, or I select something – which is to say I choose to direct my attention to a particular place). Free or not, since an individual's capacity to pay attention is limited, any selection is made at the expense of other objects/spaces. To pay attention is therefore to prioritise: to invest and to dis-invest. Below I ask how and why mobile space tends to be prioritised over the physical space, in the sense that tend to give it more attention, looking at this in relation to modes of perception, and in relation to sensation and affect. Finally, it is interesting to consider how forms of attention might organize the relationship between what is and what is not attended to. I think one reason that I follow the taped grids, empty of content, when I walk in these streets using my phone is that they echo my own state. In my absent-minded meandering I too am often there, but there 'in outline only'.

5. Modes of Perception?

'When you're expatriated, you're a little deaf, you can hear things but you can't get the full experience' (Radio 4, found voice)…

'There exists a gulf between the world according to sound and the world according to sight' (Bull, 2001: 241).

How far does the mode of perception within which the mobile operates relate to the way we prioritise mobile space over physical space? In the case of the mobile it is evident that use does involve prioritising one *mode* of perception

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at the expense of another. That is, when I turn my attention away from the streets and towards the thin thread of talk I prioritise the auditory at the expense of the embodied and visual world. (I could put this differently: my attention may be *directed away* from my embodied engagement with my immediate physical environment: most obviously when my phone rings). Pace de Certeau, this might be understood as a dis-possession of the hand in favour of a greater trajectory for the heard (see above). In his account of Walkman use Michael Bull explores how sense perception is engaged differently in relation to the aural than the visual. Bull suggests the personal stereo can re-organise urban space because it overlays it with a new and overwhelming aesthetic. Sound as he says, 'engulfs the spatial'. In Bull's account of the Walkman, the prioritisation of the auditory space is above all a means by which users re-aestheticize their everyday experience of urban space as a whole. This is often achieved often through a process of negation – as Bull puts it, in the case of the Walkman, the present becomes consumed by the 'far away' (Bull, 2001: 241). Bull's account is compelling and clearly speaks to other kinds of mobile media. However it is also clear that something slightly different is also going on in the case of mobile phones – not least because most mobile interactions do not pack a powerful aesthetic punch. As I want to go on to suggest, the satisfactions mobile space offers are located elsewhere.

6. Connective force

'We're forever meeting people who have watches, very seldom people who have compasses.' (Perec, 1997: 83)