m3

Baudrillard:

"…What is unemployment today? It too is a a sort of artificial satellite, a satellite of inertia, a mass with a charge of electricity that cannot even be described as a negative charge, for it is static: I refer to that increasingly large portion of society that is deep frozen. Beneath the accelerating pace of the circuits and systems of exchange, beneath all of the frenzied activity, there is something in us—each of us—that slows down to the point where it fades out of circulation. This is the inertia point around which the whole of the society eventually begins to gravitate. It is as though the two poles of our world had been brought into contact, short-circuiting in such a way that they simultaneously hyperstimulate and enervate potential energies. This is no longer a crisis, but a fatal development—a catastrophe in slow motion."

Economic catastrophe in slow motion—

M3 is a research project occupying around multiple fields of inquiry— aesthetic-erotic, economic, technological, philosophical.

M3 deos this research using real time performances, installations and digital artifacts, the following issues:

Ontology:
system and environment
open (exogenous variables) vs. closed system (endogenous variables)
system vs world
network space (and its influence on) and real space
Tangible media (media which is mapped to matter)

Action:
Play: rule bounded games vs free play
discrete, problem solving visions of the world vs. topological, pliant visions
novel experiences of writing in the world

Experience:
technology's conditioning of social formations and social fragmentation
reformation of subjectivity by means of pliant media and experience

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Deleuzian notions of subjectivity
emergent theater (script generated vs. immaterial)
Disappearance of the body in the mesh of the network—(A MAJOR THEME IN m2)

Means by which to shift the testing field from inside to outside (that is, from the framed space of the gallery/performance space to embedding the performance space outside in the world—both in the physical domain (as social acts) and the virtual (as information technologies imbedded in the world – networks) sponge utilizes multiple media to re-imagine performance in the current state of IT…the forms of web-network/sound-architectural installation/theater will all be used to explore where we can push the notion of performance for both spectators and creators…

M3 aims not to build objects but processes and experiments that set, in experiential terms, the play of phenomenom and perception in the world under a microscope/telescope—unearth multiple experiences /modes of living.

Where we were-M3 discussion in October 1998

Earlier discussions of m3 centered around formal questions. Chris' and Xin Wei's interest in networked models of performance, Laura's interest in an earlier idea of constantly shifting the role of spectator and performer during the course of an event (a room where spectators could look into the performance (for a single individual). As the discussion wore on, certain thematics began to emerge: notions of system and what is outside of the system, breakdown of society in slow motion, informational systems' real impact on human experience, multiple perspectives on how to view performance currently. Much of the discussion centered on earlier ideas from the failed Stanford proposal for a production of Heiner Mueller's Mauser…particularly the ideas of external , real time data from the world influencing the world inside a performance. Much of this was generated particularly by Chris' interest in economic flows--In October of 1998, we proposed the following scenario that, at the time, we believed had promise:

3 SPACES-Two of these spaces are interconnected by place. The third is only connected in time to the other two.

ROOM 1
Going by the old definition: THEATER   NETWORK
INSTALLATION   ROOM 2   ROOM 3

Event I: Takes place in Room 1. Event is that of an installation that is eventually transformed into a theater. How this transformation was to take place (whether it took place simultaneously or pre-post) was never determined. The room was to be filled with objects ("objects with imbued social properties") which people could play with. We never knew exactly what these objects would be—several emails going back and forth among us proposed some examples: interfaces (i.e., "matter") that would be used to trigger media. We also knew, however, that whatever these "things" were or would be, that they should be interfaced to some kind of media (MATTER TO MEDIA THEME GOING BACK TO M2's EXPERIENCE OF VIDEO/HEAT). Some of the devices possible included:

ETUDES

(1) bundles of fibre optic cable with projection going through that could be used to literally weave images in space, (2) speech painting: microphones imbedded in objects would pick up words from spectators/performers that would be broadcast along the walls/floors of the space, (3), interactive furniture that would allow participants to interact with it and thus change the quality of the overall room environment., (4) howling clothing…all of these devices would somehow be prototyped and tested as etudes in the course of a residency somewhere. Xin Wei wanted to play with (1) fiberoptic video as a step toward massaging structureed light (de-narrativized video) in a material way, (2) splashing voice around as a way to de-logofy speech, (4) howling clothing as a material erotic conversation.

We looked at this first room as a large playscape of sorts…play, however, meant different things to different people:

For Chris, it meant the notion of construction-of literally being able to build and shape a media space, for Laura, the shifting notion of play between spectators/observers/performers and for XW, the notion of "coordinated activity" … here, however, play meant for all somehow- free, non rule-based…one working title which Chris came up with was "Sandbox."

Questions that arose from thinking through these notions:

1. What do people do in room 1? Play with objects which are connected to one another and interfaced to the computer (i.e., interfaced to laser discs, samplers, etc). Idea was to see what kind of logic of relations would emerge out of an unstructured "play" session. What kinds of "coordinated activity" could or would occur? FLESH TO SYMBOL (and back again). Room 1 definitely could be looked at as an installation (hence, Mario Durham at YB concern that this was "installation" and not performance).
MAIN THING WAS THAT WE NEVER HAD A CLEAR SENSE OF WHAT THIS ROOM WAS OR HOW IT WOULD BE STRUCTURED.

2. In terms of the "objects" in the room, we discussed several times about putting together a team of people to work on the "interface" portion of the project. Some interest early on in sponge developing unique "product" interfaces that we could market down the line—this lead from our discussions about XW connecting to Interval Research…an option which as all appeared to close now due to Paul Allen's hacking away at the art side of the business. (ideas circulated around furniture, interactive toys, etc).

3. Thematically on ROOM 1:

        Flexible environment—in the first part of the "performance"(the installation) the gathered viewers/spectators work to shape the environment they inhabit. Each interface could change the room in a specific manner—observation of others interacting (here, the binary of performer/spectator breaks down).
HOW TECHNOLOGY MEDIATES SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONS—
HOW THE IDEA OF "INTERFACE" OPERATES IN THE SOCIAL REALM
(QUOTE FROM EARLY M3 DOCUMENT:

subject of the research: how technology mediates and conditions new environments that make possible new types of social formations.
m3 is a performance built in a modules. it is not an object but rather a series
of investigations in multiple performance forms (lecture/installation/performance/net)
that aims to explore how contemporary technologies alter and manifest radically different forms of social relations and interaction--in particular, how the notion of

interface and the complex configurations and relations between human and technological
"experience" fits together..how technolgy conditions our perception and how
...social effects and ramifications...the project involves creating two types of social formation"
1. internal--the making of the work as the discplinary boundaries surrounding any particular system are
erased

2. in the external event-

experiment:

to build an environment (lets say a sandbox) which consists of a series of interfaces--
interface here is defined as any system that allows a connection between
human input in the physical world to be translated into computation.--

PART I

the first part of the experiment involves the building of a series of interfaces--
the interfaces themselves will consist of visual and architectural elements
which will be developed by a team of "experts"--these experts are not only
engineers but social planners, an organizational neurophysicst, a composer,
video artist and sponge internal..etc...the interfaces are developed by this cross discplinary
team of artists and scientists

server-collaboration begins in distributed environment--

the result is a flexible environment-a sandbox as model where in the first hour of the performance, the
gathered viewers can work alone or in groups to shape the environment
they are in...each interface can affect the room in some specific way (change the overall acoustic shape,...)
each group can spend a certain amount of time in the
"box" or playroom and after their allotted time elapses, can observe others interacting

PART II

an inverse theater where the spectators become the performers--the participants are led from the first room
to an identical room...here they observe a scripted performance--a series of events which is interconnected
with media and in which media is controlled from both internal as well as external sources (events outside).

Other ideas that emerged in discussion of Room 1:

-what are the ways in which the "toys" are networked with each other? How does
someone else's play effect someone else in the same space (real and networked)?
(note: these are still interesting ideas but would certainly need more than YB's resources
to do)

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Event II: ROOM2-Theater space

Second space: Always knew that we wanted to frame the overall "performance" with the traditional trappings of the proscenium. Many ideas discussed—always a certain notion of a performance which, while appearing to operate in a standard way, would work at a threshold level—you would see and hear it but somehow it would always be fading in and out—as something which was being played in front of you but somehow was a phantom at the same time—Chris and Laura discussed this type of event early on-particularly after Chris saw St. Francois de Assisi in Salzburg and Dumb Type in London—the notion of stillness occassionally broken by blasts of sound, movement and light and other media—discussed ways in which this could be accomplished in the traditional setting of performance…
Later discussions focused on the room being controlled from without (from variables out in the world). Open system subjected to the larger environment-world—(a tug of war between performers and the interfaces, which would guided by outside information flows—fighting between the performers)…

THEMATIC: If Room 1 was a machine-a space without rules that would enable a radical kind of experiential "learning" where social meaning and context emerged in a sustained cooperation between individuals who did not know each other (THIS IS UTOPIAN, TO BE SURE) then Room 2 was a machine with rules-driven by a tension between endogenous/exogenous variables—meaning would now be "overlayed" from the world outside—

While conceptually all of this holds together, problem of specifics (which always haunts us) arose in terms of what this performance actually would look like—what the payoff to the viewer/participant would be--? Not resolved

Event III: Network space—

Not thought through. A vague idea emerged that somehow those on the net would follow and intervene in the performance in real time, thus complicating the effects of the interfaces---and complicating the performance---

NOTES AFTER DECEMBER 1998

GameMachine

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okay; then it really must be a game.

before I get to the juicy stuff, here's a brief 2 paragraph game rap
(please feel free to skip past; I'm probably way behind you two in this
sort of consideration):

1. Games (and I'm thinking of very young childrens games like hide & seek;
ring-around-the-rosie; london bridges etc) have a cycle of play (i.e. the
game proceeds until everyone is out or the loser replaces the winner
replaces the loser until everyone tires of the game (or it gets too dark to
play).

2. In such games the players have inter-dependant relationships which
facilitate movement, sequence, and duration. Furthermore, as the program
progresses so does the anticipation, enthusiasm, suspensfulness, and
apprehension of the players
with regard to each individual's continuing ability to stay in rapport
with the others that the group entity may complete its task.

This, of course, is just one model of "game" but it made me think "what
exactly is the relationship between Room 2 and Room 1; what makes it
significant as a game?

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yesterday, i went up to sf to see laura, we talked about m3 -- actually talked about m3
proper -- imagine that. she's cool to the idea of explicitly dealing with "play" and "game"
because they're terminally trendy right now.   i agreed that they may be trendy (is that
true?) but i thought we have much deeper things to say about these notions. laura also
said that the ideas raised so far about m3 are just revisiting ideas all the way back to m1.
i said, so what -- i think we haven't actually worked out the potential in a lot of the past
ideas, like system and exogenous. rule script improv play (in matter and in human
gesture). she agreed.   but she also wanted to bring in what i call more field-like or
topological perceptual images: like her MRI hallucinations, and also some fantastic
images built out of aquatic lifeforms.   i agreed that those forms have weird otherworldly
(to us landlubber humans) textures and dynamics that we could use to great effect in
abstracted form in dig video, etc., i thought that

1. these are just at the level of perception -- what are the big
philosophical/ethical/affective themes at stake?

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2. to advance the anti-object, anti-system campaign (two of my personal projects), i suggested that it still makes sense to START with a playroom with objects, ostensibly , apparently about rules, and then undermine it by the notions/experiences. eg. by moving to reconstructions of gestures by computer algortihm or by performer, and to smooth/continuous fieldlike patterns like the aquatic stuff, fibreoptic video, projections into water,sand, smoke, synthetic surface, etc.

The following is my Uncensored 'What If' Scenario for GameMachine;

A small antechamber (which for convenience I call Warm-Up) opens into Room 1 which opens into Room 2 which opens into another area I call Rest Zone. Warm-Up is the place of preparation and meditation. Room 1 is the place of learning and practice; Room 2 is the site of the Game; Rest Zone is the place of reflection, conversation, and strategy.

1. Group A waits in the Warm-Up.

3. Group A enters Room 1. They encounter stuff and do whatever they do. For a limited period of time, 10 m say.
4. Kids exit 1 and enter Room 2. The seating is elevated on all 4 sides (think medical theater or stadium). They watch the kick-off so to speak of the Game as our performers execute the first movement - I'm thinking something simple and "classic" like KP to K4. Again, a time limit, 5 m say.

5. Meanwhile, at the commencement of 4, Group B enters Room 1; 10 m etc.

6. Group A exits and enters a Rest Zone.

For the moment let's not worry about practicalities, but assume that this cycle actually functions.

What I find interesting is the possibility of a Player eventually replacing a Performer in the Game.

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How one enters the game would need to be a formal action. For example,
there might be a designated point of entry on the perimeter of the "field."
Performer's always enter the Game from this spot so that the schooled
Player by the time s/he is ready to play knows the routine.

To do this, we must invent a Game that has an objective, legitimate moves,
room for improvisation and invention within the rules of the Game, in other
words,
individual technique can be developed.

Without further elaboration, what interests me ishiow this model fits in
with the currents of M1, M2, and M3 (in its initial germination).
If you recall, the goal of M1 was to find the Ideal Spectator who would
learn the rules of our event and enter into it with appropriate actions.

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1. Play.   See me remarks in my followup to my chat with Laura.   Do you
agree that play is terminally trendy?   I actually don't buy into the
positive value attached to being "un-trendy" because I don't buy the
romantic occidental notion of originality.   Chinese artists flourished for
4500 years without such a notion of originality, and there's something for
westerners to learn from this, I believe.   But this is wrapped up with a
long discussion of the occidental preoccupation with subject ego that I'd
rather soimply transmute directly into some sponge work that sidesteps
entirely such objects in favor of fields, topolgies and magmas.

2. What do you think are the big questions, heuristics, themes we can use
as blindman's canes in dreaming up m3?   Here are some, fusing from yours,
that I like:

A. How can we improvise atop an apparently rule-based system?
B. How do we play in language. And how do we play in matter?
C. Why do we play? (hmmm, no let's not do this -- it's not a question)
D. What's play in the world -- this is quite another notionthan game play ,
of give, elasticity, nonvoid gaps between things.
E. What's the relaion between play(D) and play(ABC)?   See book by Brian
Smith -- The Origin of Objects.

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4. Constructing worlds

Yes this is interesting -- does seems like a (boy-butch) gender thing ? even I suffer from this fascination but at a rather abstract level.   but maybe we can nuance it as more like a way to swim in mattermedia -- a way to put hands into the stuff, sweep,displace, create ripples out of unstructured matter.   is topological toy an oxymoron?

cosntructing a space is what i stil want to do with a certian unnamed sil val research lab, but there are some internal politics that may monkeywrench.

5. Explain me this, please: "modular construction systems like tinkertoys and erectorsets need the duration#of imagination..operate on a different time structure than computer games..."

6. I distinguish between PERCEPTION PLAYGROUND (Laura's MRI fits into this perceptualist domain) and GESTURE SPACE or CREATION SPACE.   Let's move away from perception (merely epistemology) to becoming.

7. The Mattel camera that embeds you into videospace is tip of iceberg. I witnessed some fascinating playspaces last summer.   I think that's a fantastic area to move toward, let's jump ahead.

What does it take to cross over from the observed to the observed?   How are scripted behaviors noticed in the wild, when we lift the performers out of the building or the stage and insert them into the patterns of ordinary life?   What is ordinary life?   Are there intentional patterns in ordinary life and if so, how are they correlated across multiple, human and non-human bodies?   We view m1/m2 /m3 as a sequence of phenomenological experiments.   The first, m1, was an experiment in the threshold of perception from the perspectives of the actors embedded in an everyday social setting. The second, m2, everts the world by projecting narratives stylizing solitude and isolation into screens embedded into a controlled space.   The third, m3, tries to merge these eversions via the paradox of open system.   Rather than an experiment following the norms of neurophysiology or psychology, m3 is an experiment in mystery and engagement written out in flesh and matter.

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(MORE TO BE ADDED FROM RECENT DISCUSSIONS)

From Chris' Dream of 3 spaces on 5/13/99

m3 prompts 3 states of experience conditioned through a post-industrial-technocratic informatic society-
state of being lost inside network-symbolic codes that rule experience
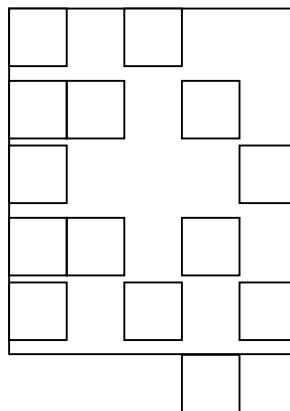state of zero sense-phenomenal impressions reduced to the threshold of experience
state of continuous-post subjective play.

INFORMATIC-CONTINUOUS
PUZZLE-T(opological) GARDEN

state 1: puzzle/state machine

10 x 10 box

must be a physical experience-light alone is already in the immaterial realm
modular box-sliding doors-some doors always fixed
how to solve the puzzle-get through it…what are the clues to help get through it…each group of participants re-arranges the game for the next group (depending on the possible combinations of solutions)
as people move the panels back and forth-tiny ultrasonic sensors are triggered-the existence of the sensors is unknown to the spectators—
Environment-closed world-post suburban muzak lead military control paradise—if the RAND corporation could have been built children's playgrounds or if they had designed game shows—this is a vision of the world which we just soon forget
--do people have a time limit to get through and solve the puzzle—one at a time—do they win something at the end?

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Net portion of the puzzle—experience is to complicate the visual (light) and aural atmosphere of the room from outside of the room (back to endogenous and exogenous variables)