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INVITED ESSAY

Culture Digitally: Habitus of the New

Zizi Papacharissi and Thomas Streeter
with Tarleton Gillespie, organizer

Editor's Note: *The Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* has committed to publishing this series of dialogues, which is why, even though as Editor, I maintain a practice of not publishing my own work in *JOBEM*, this exchange features some of my thoughts as produced for *Culture Digitally*

Zizi Papacharissi

Culture Digitally is a collective of scholars, gathered by Tarleton Gillespie (Cornell University) and Hector Postigo (Temple University). With the generous funding of the National Science Foundation, the group supports scholarly inquiry into new media and cultural production through numerous projects, collaborations, a scholarly blog, and annual workshops. For more information on projects and researchers affiliated with *Culture Digitally*, visit culturedigitally.org or follow @CultureDig on Twitter).

In these dialogues, they are encouraged to grapple with theoretical questions, but to do so quite a bit faster than the glacial pace of publishing typically allows. We imagine them as the digital equivalent of the scholarly exchange of letters between

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Thomas Streeter (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) is a faculty member of the Sociology Department of the University of Vermont since 1989, and has taught for the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California. His 2011 book, *The Net Effect: Romanticism, Capitalism, and the Internet* (NYU Press) is a study of the role of culture in the social construction of Internet technology.

Tarleton Gillespie (Ph.D., University of California, San Diego) is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at Cornell University. He is the author of *Wired Shut: Copyright and the Shape of Digital Culture* (2007, MIT Press) and co-editor of *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Mediation, and Society* (2014, MIT Press, with Pablo Boczkowski and Kirsten Foot). His current research examines the policies and enforcement mechanisms being established by social media platforms around contentious content.

pre-eminent scientists. The thinking is meant to be raw and provocative, a chance for the dialogue participants to prod each other beyond their own certainties.

Inspired by an exchange between Zizi and Tom that began just after our first workshop in 2011, I asked if we could use Zizi's idea (itself built on Bourdieu's work) of the "habitus of the new" as the opening salvo in a dialogue about how to think the "state of permanent novelty" that seems to pervade our experience of, and often our scholarship about, new media. Are we in a state of permanent novelty, or does it just feel that way? Is this a powerful "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1977) or an illusion strategically manufactured? Either way, where does it come from, and what are its implications?

Tarleton Gillespie, co-organizer of Culture Digitally

Zizi Papacharissi:

What is new?

Back in the early months of 2000, I entered the academic job market at the peak of the dotcom bubble. Stock prices were on the rise, market confidence was high, and IPOs were becoming the *lingua franca* of a seemingly endless succession of high tech startups. Ironically, only a year later, the bubble would burst, leaving dotcom employees wheeling out stacks of personal files on Aeron chairs they had managed to salvage out of bankrupt, prime real estate offices. But that was a probable future few spent time envisioning a year earlier. With a Ph.D. in New Media, I interviewed at several academic departments that desperately wanted to hire in that area, but were also apprehensive about what it meant to have a "new media person" on their faculty. Some did not want to miss out on the next big thing, while others wondered what the fuss was all about. So, without fail, folks interviewing me always asked: "What's so new about new media?"¹

The intent behind the question varied from playful, to friendly, to hostile. Like the well-advised doctoral student I was, I had an elegant response ready. I don't even remember what it was. But my gut reaction was to answer by simply saying: Well, what isn't new about new media? Were you able to read the newspaper online yesterday? And what isn't going to be old tomorrow, and new the day after?

I guess I did not really see the point of answering a question that would require me to defend the newness of something. Ultimately, what is new is deeply contextual and subjective. What I consider new may not be so new to someone else, and so on. I also was not too interested in constructing categories of old and new and playing comparison games, especially if the whole point of the "new" is that it is going to soon be redefined (as old, or no longer so new) by what succeeds it later. In the same manner, what is new is defined, or incubated by that which is considered old. New \neq forever.

I do not mean to suggest that we should not historicize change. On the contrary, I would like to do so, but without asking questions that place the new in competition with the old. I am more interested in processes of continuity and change. If I were to answer the question today, I would say that what is so new about new media (and new media of the present era, in particular), is the state of permanent novelty that

they introduce. For traditional media, like newspapers and television, this means that content formulas and business models that worked as recently as yesterday may not work in a few months, or days. For individuals using these media, this requires a form of fast-paced adaptability and accelerated literacy that is frequently mischaracterized as “digital nativity”—this trend characterizes an era, not just a single generation.² And for media we consider new, this implies sustaining a state of constant change and permanent evolution.

Yet constant change loses meaning if it does not have a lasting effect; if it does not transition from new, to the everyday, the commonplace, the habituated, the “old.” And, what is permanent loses its own relevance, unless it is able to incubate that which may be considered new. These of course are processes of continuity and change that have always set the stage for societies to move forward. What I then understand as the *habitus of the new* is this precise process that wraps the new up in rituals of practice, which simultaneously afford it continuity and yet in doing so, render it “un-new”—thus in a way setting the stage for further developments to follow (Papacharissi & Easton, 2013).

Tom Streeter:

I absolutely agree that “what is new is deeply contextual and subjective,” that what we really should be concerned with is processes of continuity and change.

My own entry into these issues, though, had an opposite inflection. I was a graduate student of James Carey in the 1980s, and was immensely influenced by “The Mythos of the Electronic Revolution,” (Carey & Quirk, 1970) which turned many of the claims about electronic novelty on their heads, arguing they were repetitions of cultural traditions going back to the pre-revolutionary period; the claim of new-ness itself was actually old. This demystifying approach worked particularly well when I applied it to cable television, which back when I was in graduate school was the “new media” that was quickly devolving into another one-way advertising medium, after having been given regulatory support with grand claims of interactivity, technological democracy, etc.

By the late 1990s, though, the tidal wave of the Internet was breaking over us, and I found that being skeptical about claims to novelty was a lonely position. Once, on the first day of a graduate seminar about media technology, I expressed doubts about the then-popular claim that the Internet was quickly making the nation-state irrelevant. One promising student walked out of the class never to return, because to her I was clearly a dinosaur who did not “get it.” Back then, it seemed plain as day to me that the stock bubble was a bubble, but it was very hard to say so out loud. If I tried to make the case, editors, administrators, and some colleagues would just start looking over my shoulder, searching for someone actually worth talking to.

But the fact is, one can’t talk about current media and communication without facing up to the problem of novelty. Partly this is because of our sources of funding. In 2000, I received a very comfy fellowship at Princeton’s Institute of Advanced

Study, which had received a grant from the Ford Foundation to study new media, an award that was largely inspired by the AOL purchase of Time Warner. The ordinarily skeptical leaders of the Institute saw the merger and decided that something important must be going on, and thus worth investigating. Now we know that the merger was a product of a business world gone mad, not directly of digitalization. (As the *NY Times* [Arango, 2010] put it, “To call the transaction the worst in history, as it is now taught in business schools, does not begin to tell the story of how some of the brightest minds in technology and media collaborated to produce a deal now regarded by many as a colossal mistake.”) But the fact is, the polity’s fascination with digital novelty, which surely was a necessary piece of the cause of that ill-fated merger, often enough pays our bills.

But it is also the case that, even if the world is awash in inaccurate or sloppy or exaggerated claims about digital revolutions, those claims sometimes shape decision-making and form the context of perception and embrace of communication technologies. They have a material effect, even if the relationship of the claims to the reality is not that of blueprint to building. And of course, the Internet does make a material difference; it is at least as novel as radio and film were in their first decades.

So I might qualify Zizi’s suggestions this way: the new is deeply contextual and subjective, but perhaps not “ultimately.” I’d like to reserve space for a broad historical discussion in which we can actually place technologies in a material context and in terms of their role in what the Annales School called the *longue durée* of history (Braudel, 1982). (Not easy: the book historians are still arguing the fine points of that, and their technology is 500 years old.) I think the idea of a “habitus of the new” is terrific, but I would also want to historicize it, treat it as a peculiar structure of our time, as a way of life, a set of expectations that a large swath of the global population has come to live with—in the last few decades—as a peculiar structure with its own effects and blind spots. What happens to industry, economies, and politics when we live within that habitus? And what do we overlook because of it?

Zizi Papacharissi:

This is precisely why I am drawn to the idea of a habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990)—because it historicizes the new by drawing attention to the practices that connect it to the present. These practices are reflective of habituated predispositions of the past and expectations we thus develop of the future. Unlike the concept of “affordances,” (Gibson, 1977; see also Neff, Jordan, McVeigh-Schultz, & Gillespie, 2012) which emphasizes attributes of technologies available to us at present as indicative of the potentialities embedded within them, the idea of the habitus is even richer. It is not a question of choosing one over the other, but rather of employing both to get a historically and culturally contextual understanding of the place of a technology in the *longue durée*.

The problem is that conceptual definitions of the notion of a habitus or its equivalents, from the work of Aristotle to the work of Bourdieu, are vague—perhaps intentionally so. The concept is meant to help overcome dualisms invited by “structure vs. agency” analyses, by placing emphasis on a set of habituated predispositions and practices. These generate comfort and homogeneity for the individual, by pointing to what is commonplace and expected. But, as practices, they attain meaning as they are enacted within communities, because the habitus is reflexive—Bourdieu refers to it as both structuring structure and structured structure (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). You can begin to see how the vagueness of the concept is introduced. I understand it as something that attains meaning to the extent that it becomes embodied in individuals. In that sense, we may speak of the affordances of Facebook or Twitter, but they attain meaning as they are embodied in individuals, as thoughts/ideas/actions/habits. Each individual agent’s personal habitus gets conflated with so-called “objective” structure (affordances + other more structured structures) to inform how the individual structures their own reality, yes. But the habitus is connected to the contextual environment, and so for me it leads to interesting questions that have to do with the contrast between, let’s say, the Facebook brand for sociality, or the Twitter recipe for publicity, and the different ways in which those are introduced in different cultures. For example, for someone like me who is caught daily between the Greek- and U.S.-based Facebook or Twitter habitus, this helps explain how the affordances of the platform are absorbed into everyday (mediated) sociality. It also helps trace how an affordance or potentiality might interpellate differently given the cultural or historical point of contact. And, it eventually helps trace how affordances evolve, and to think of affordances not as fixed properties but as evolving organic potentialities. So the concept of the habitus addresses fixity but also incorporates reflexivity.

Tom described this process very compellingly, from a slightly different perspective, in *The Net Effect* (2010). The processes I am describing are not unlike the way in which historic and cultural particularities inform qualities of the technology that we frequently presume to be inherent. Where it gets more interesting is that within the habitus of the new this reflexivity is accelerated. This is why, like Tom, what interests me is what happens when we live within that habitus and what we miss. What I think happens is that a certain graduality embedded within the notion of a habitus, the graduality that affords continuity the opportunity to reconcile change, is itself accelerated. So the reflexivity of the habitus that permits meaning-making processes is augmented. This accelerated reflexivity is both sustained and remediated via a habitus of the new; a set of dispositions that are invited and regenerated via a state of permanent novelty. What we miss may lie in exactly this sense of graduality—which of course does not refer to slowness, but rather a particular sequencing—or, our habitus of sequencing, if you will. I am the eternal optimist, so I have a hard time thinking in terms of what’s missed; but it is what is being re-adjusted.

And so what we encounter frequently in expressive tendencies online, for instance, is this form of movement, some call it affect, that is not yet formed and

will soon be invited to regenerate again (Dean, 2010; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). This general movement that drives, but does not necessarily direct, is characteristic of much expression that takes shape within the habitus of the new and connects it to many fields that involve or examine the economy, politics, culture, society. But the consequences of affective expression permeating, and, in some cases, dominating these spheres frequently prompts us to deal with not yet fully formed events as if they were fixed actualities. Consequently, policy tools and strategies we employ to address an event in flux treat it as though it were in fully formed stasis. This is the un-syncing/re-syncing of graduality, and the result of the new media affect/new media movement framed by historical context summed up by the habitus of the new.

Tom Streeter:

Yes, the thing is “practices are reflective of habituated predispositions of the past and expectations we thus develop of the future.” And yes, that was kind of my point in *The Net Effect*: because of the accident of how the Internet developed, we became habituated to stories of people using computers to throw established authorities into disarray: stories of surprising computer-related business start-ups, Apple, Google, and beyond; of peculiar digital inventions taking the world by storm; of Internet use by political rebels from Howard Dean to the Tea Party; of disruptive events that throw entire industries into disarray, like college students downloading music or uploading videos. We are so familiar, so habituated to those stories that we jump to the conclusion of technology-driven change even when there’s plenty of evidence to the contrary: the tech stock bubble, the Arab Spring.

There are different layers to this: pundits and journalists draw on memories of fragments of historical dramas, like Steve Jobs’ introduction of the Macintosh, the early 1990s failure of the corporate world to anticipate the Internet, etc. Today’s teenagers, by contrast, might doubt that Steve Jobs deserved the accolades, but for them the habit of scanning for “the next best thing” in both technology and hipster fashion is completely taken-for-granted. So there are perhaps overlapping habitus, plural, not a singular habitus, at stake here.

But what’s missed? We have come to expect “revolutions” in the means to communicate, at the same time that, as a society, many of us have pretty much given up hope for change in, say, our dysfunctional politics, our dependence on the automobile, or the persistence of poverty. It’s too simplistic to claim people are “distracted” by their gadgetry; that low-flying form of false consciousness theory is not only arrogant (“everyone but me is distracted”), but it also ignores the limited but undeniable role the Internet *has* played in positive political reforms, and it argues from effect to cause, without specifying by exactly what means attention gets directed towards some things and not others.

This is one of the real strengths of this idea of a “habitus of the new.” In the book I traced the way the compulsive absorption of interacting with computer—is

that an affordance?—combined with the specific ways computers were introduced in the U.S. (via the institution of startups, clothed in the counterculture, repeatedly proving wrong the dominant corporate and government wisdoms) lent themselves to a romantic, individualist narrative: change, a.k.a. innovation, is supposedly the product of unique individuals expressing themselves, with unpredictable but glorious results. The whole thing lent itself to a sense of individuality that's open to expression and unpredictability but blind to most aspects of the social, to the necessities and blurriness of human interdependence.

But in *The Net Effect* I suppose I just explained narratives with more narratives. With the exception of occasional references to Raymond Williams' (1977) "structure of feeling" (which itself is more a description of a problem than its solution), I didn't offer much in a way of a generalizable theory.

So I am very intrigued by what Zizi calls "an accelerated reflexivity of sequencing" in the way the habitus of the new organizes our expectations. I'm not sure it makes sense to speak of a "Facebook habitus" or a "Twitter habitus"—wouldn't it be something more like a middle class teenage American woman's Facebook habitus, which would be distinct from, say a middle aged Chinese person's Facebook habitus? Bourdieu's examples—class-specific and education-related tastes and competencies, etc.—typically involved highlighting social *differences* in habitus, and I'd think one would want to make a similar move here. The reason Michael Dell has no Facebook friends is completely different from the reason a queer, poor teenager in a rural area has none either. (A caricature, here to make a point: as Mary Gray (2009) has shown, queer, rural teenagers are often able to develop networks of support, often leaning in part on Facebook and other new media. Surely, however, her analysis suggests that their habitus is a specific one, importantly inflected by their situated social position.)

But both Dell and the teenager are likely to share the accelerated reflexivity—if I understand correctly—that comes with an expectation of constant "revolutions" in communication technologies, and that makes them different from say, a CEO in the U.S. in 1960—Al Gore Sr., George W. Romney—who might have dreamt of both picturephones and a U.S. without poverty, but not of Facebook or its immediately pending successors.

Zizi Papacharissi:

So, all these examples are excellent and very much help me think through the idea of the "habitus of the new." With Emily Easton, we used the idea first to talk about how the affordances of specific platforms interact with our habituated predispositions for sociality, to suggest and invite particular movements or motions in how we integrate digital media into our repertoire of socially oriented behaviors (these include pro-social and antisocial or asocial tendencies, as all of these present personal statement on the social) (Papacharissi & Easton, 2013). So, we had described the following expressive and connective modalities that become prominent

as sociality emerges (and evolves) within the habitus of the new: (authorship as) disclosure, listening, and redaction.

Naturally, one might look at this typology and think, well, how is this different from how we practice sociality in general? In connecting with others and expressing ourselves, we disclose, we listen, and we then edit our social performances (or we don't edit, which is also a redactive exercise). And I would say yes, and that is exactly the point that the habitus underscores—the fact that these tendencies both change and remain the same—through processes of remediation that retain the familiar and invite some renegotiation, by inviting us to project the familiar as we colonize the new. The habitus, as a concept, is meant to reconcile the stark binary of agency and structure, so this would make sense.

The habitus of the new, which Tom astutely described as an organizing logic of expected revolution (ironic, right? Because don't revolutions attain revolutionary momentum precisely because they contain an element of the unexpected?) invites people not only to constantly readjust, but also to expect to have to readjust. This practice normalizes (or habituates) this processes of syncopated reflexivity (accelerated and interrupted at the same time). In the social sphere, we might say that as a consequence, many of our expressive and connective tendencies attain an unfinished texture—this is why I use the term “affect” so often, because it describes movement that has not yet been completed.

But this conversation has urged me to think beyond the social sphere, and think more about how tendencies and tensions developing around the unfinished (which is richly afforded by the habitus of the new—as a telos/finality is interrupted by premediation/anticipation of the newer event) spill over to the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

For example, financial trading in a market structured not around actual value (=telos) but around expectation or anticipation of value not only got us into a deep financial crisis, but also makes it more difficult for us to get out of it. Further, we become accustomed to internalizing these developments with a measure of impatience or preoccupation with the “not yet”—so for example, we look for instantaneity not just in the investment opportunities that stung us but also in the fiscal solutions now being implemented in response.³

Take the case of Greece, for example.⁴ There are structural factors that led to the crisis there. And they are connected to actors claiming or not claiming agency within/upon these structures. A habitus of predispositions reinforces certain behavioral tendencies and tensions, and simultaneously makes it difficult to evolve out of the crisis (for example, most Greeks are not habituated to ask for receipts—they have not learned to, so they either forget to or feel socially awkward when doing so, which further compounds the structural problem of tax evasion and actors' inability to exercise agency in overcoming the corrupt structures). The accelerated reflexivity that drives markets is fueled by anticipation—but, the habitus adjusts with time to reconcile structure and agency, otherwise stability cannot integrate with change (which is the whole point of the habitus, per Bourdieu). The rhythms of the habitus of the new drive an economy that is global, structured upon markets

that turn profits by trading a commodity that is already elusive and rather liquid in form: information. The rhythms of the habitus of the new prompt an accelerated reflexivity that may not always be available to particular actors or supported by existing structures (or in the case of the EU, the lack of institutional structure supporting the Euro, coupled with the overabundance of bureaucratic governance bodies lacking any real fiscal agency).

Is this taking us off track? I hope not. I first became interested in questions related to what is new as a doctoral student reading up on late sixties/seventies scholarly writing debating whether economic changes structured around the prevalence of information as a commodity represented an “information revolution,” or just late stage of post-industrialism (e.g., Bell, 1973; Webster, 2006). I am still interested in what happens when capitalist markets try to capture and trade a commodity as elusive and liquid as information. So for me, social, cultural, economic, political, other consequences of the habitus of the new go back to attempts to commodify all forms of information (social, self-presentational, news and the news economy, economic, socio-cultural, and so on).

Class always presents the core of this equation, because all this remediates, and seemingly rearranges class attributes, but it does not eliminate or replace class structures presented by capitalist economies.

Tom Streeter:

So with apologies for my limitations and idiosyncrasies, let me try to very roughly summarize so far. If early in her career Zizi felt she was being asked to surf the unstable wave of “new media” while I felt submerged by it, we agree that, rather than taking for granted terms like “new media” that emerged largely from industry and treating them unproblematically as objects of study, we need to construct our own frameworks that better enable us to grasp the patterns of continuity and change associated with contemporary communication systems. (Jonathan Sterne’s [2003] piece on Bourdieu and technology does a nice job of making the case for that move away from externally given concepts.) Yet we live in a world in which ever-new and changing gadgetry seems to play a role in everything from secret habits of the heart to international political economy, so the problem of “newness” needs somehow to be addressed, if not taken as a given.

This is why I was so taken with this notion of a habitus of the new. As a concept, habitus seems to cut across subject and object, culture and technology, structure and experience. And it’s just plain evocative: twenty years into the “Internet revolution,” the sense that it’s not so much a point in time during which everything changes, but rather something constant, as a set of ongoing habits, is quite palpable right now.

The paper with Easton deserves the credit for creating the term, and does an excellent job of explicating Bourdieu’s broader framework and relevance, while initiating a fascinating explication of the sociological stakes of digital fluency (finally taking it beyond simple access to gadgetry, and beyond even the still gadget-centered notion of affordances), referencing disclosure, listening, and redaction,

but also a kind of recursive acceleration, and expectation of a very specific type of (and bounded) unfolding novelty. And I think the idea is too rich to be left at the level of, say, a “Facebook habitus” or a “Twitter habitus,” as if the platform and the habitus can be conflated; you’re right to end the paper with a reference to ongoing questions of class.

The Net Effect drew connections between aspects of the embodied experience of interactive computing and the political economic trends, more evocatively than theoretically—e.g., the experience of setting up one’s first computer in the early 1980s, or the story of the dotcom bubble’s origins in the early 1990s, or the experience of the white collar worker’s experimentation with modems—so this all offers me a way to fill in a gap in that work. That’s my selfish interest here, and distinguishes my focus from the very important sociological focus of other work on non-dominant groups. (My stuff remains basically about rich White American guys, alas.) But I’m encouraged by the provocative suggestions about how one might draw connections between the European banking crisis and the structures of expectations—OK, the habitus—that came with the importation of a speculative, credit-driven, online-ish culture into Greece.

Two remaining issues occur to me, beginning with (a) levels of generality. It seems this is all a subcategory of the modern experience, of the “all that is solid melts into air” (Berman, 1983) character of industrial life. Perhaps it is better to frame it that way than as something that’s brand new with no precedent. On the other hand, (b) that then obliges one to put the habitus of the new in historical context. I wonder if it can be connected to the specific effects of living in a world shaped by Moore’s law (which is not so much a physical law as it is a mode of industrial organization, a way of coordinating expected constant change across an industry (see Ceruzzi, 2005; Lécuycer & Brock, 2010). Maybe Moore’s law has been playing an analogous role to standardized parts and/or the assembly line in the popular imagination in the first three quarters of the 20th century, with the difference being that it foregrounds change rather than sameness. That is, while both the assembly line and Moore’s law help organize both change and uniformity, the former foregrounds sameness and leaves change in the experiential background—“progress”—while the latter inverts the two.

Zizi Papacharissi:

Yes, this is how I view things, too. So while Moore’s law addresses how processes of accelerated reflexivity are integrated into modes of production, this idea of the habitus of the new helps us understand what accelerated reflexivity/permanent novelty mean for the social sphere, the sphere of politics, culture, the economy, and their convergence. The habitus of the new describes how societies absorb the tendencies and tensions presented by the organizing logic of Moore’s law. It describes what happens in societies where Moore’s law holds, where Moore’s law is the organizing logic.

If we want to give this idea of the habitus of the new some mainstream legs, I propose we think of it as the social rhythms of change and evolution. The idea describes the rhythmicality and musicality that change takes on, as it is absorbed into the everyday, and as it is incorporated into normality. But it also helps to talk about how we incorporate the new into our everyday rhythms, and how we allow it to refuel us and re-energize us, rather than subordinate us to its rhythms.

I am concerned, for instance, that, in the economic sphere, we have incorporated the new in a way that has brought out the worst in capitalism, in a way that has accelerated the rhythms of reflexivity into asphyxiated cyclical redundancy. Similarly, in the work sphere, the habitus of the new frequently creates more work rather than less; increasing inefficiency in the name of expediency. We could use machines to free up our minds, so that we can explore different ways of reflecting and reacting; instead, we are mostly caught up in endless circles of writing emails that just serve up the same routines, on a different platform. (Melissa Gregg's [2011] *Work's Intimacy* explores those phenomena in detail.)

Most of what I research has to do with how media support sociality. So I frequently deal with questions that have to do with how newer media contradict social norms, threaten privacy, and in general interrupt our established conventions for sociality. While important, these questions are not as grave as the ones I described above, in my mind. We will find a way to integrate these media and find a place for them in our social lives. But I am concerned that the rhythms of the economy, work, politics imposed by a misaligned habitus of the new will get in the way of us doing so. They will get in the way of using newer technologies to reimagine what we do, leaving us with technologies that just reproduce what we did before.

Ultimately, what's important is how we claim agency in the habitus of the new, so that what is new reinvents, instead of reproducing parts of the old that we can do without. The new is not the opposite of old. The dichotomizing of new and old into binary opposites only invites further missteps. The new is the opportunity embedded in the old.

Notes

¹See for example the first issue of *New Media and Society* published in 1999, and focused on this very question.

²Siva Vaidhyanathan presents a thoughtful critique of the Digital Natives thesis here: <http://chronicle.com/article/Generational-Myth/32491>

³For more on economic performance and performativity, see MacKenzie, 2008, 2009; MacKenzie, Muniesa, & Siu et. al., 2007; Pinch & Swedberg, 2008.

⁴For a brief overview of the situation, consider Mazower, 2013; Panegoutou, 2011.

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