

THE ‘CYBER DASEIN’: POLITICS, SURVEILLANCE, STATE AND LEGITIMACY OF AND AROUND THE SELF

by

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Abstract: *Social Media is today a part of everyday life and as such it is an ingredient of the dasein of the individual. From a cultural as well as a philosophical standpoint, social media can be said to shape people and create new trajectories in life. My purpose in this paper is to investigate and critically eavesdrop and theorize, but carefully evade ordering experience with theory, the possibilities and circumstances that social media has given birth to and is capable of begetting, especially in the Indian context. I attempt to explore the political, ideological, and psychological sides of social media, especially Facebook, and try to study, with recourse to tools from Cultural Theorists from Mikhail Bakhtin in the early Twentieth century to John Suler in the present day, what roles surveillance, counter-surveillance, cyber-linguistics, freedom, and law play in the creation of the new self which is a resident of a cyber as well as an offline society.*

Keywords: *Surveillance, Counter-Surveillance, Law, Politics, Cyber-Dasein, Hyper Virtual, Foucault, Bakhtin, Suler*

Crude statistics suggests that more than one-fifth of the Indian population is onboard facebook from time to time. If the youth is in question, then the percentage is definitely much more than that - a probable half of the Indian teenage population has some presence on the social media. Logging on to facebook is now as much a daily chore as is breakfast or a visit to the washroom in the morning. To be honest, a quick peek into facebook is the last thing most people do before they fall asleep and the first after they wake up. All else is axiomatically secondary. My purpose in this paper is to investigate and critically eavesdrop and theorize, but carefully evade ordering experience with theory, the possibilities and circumstances that social media has given birth to and is capable of begetting, especially in the Indian context.

From a cultural as well as a Philosophical standpoint, the most immediate striking point about social media is how it shapes people and creates new trajectories in life. A personal anecdote, which I will attempt to theorize, is worth sharing here. Very recently, the events at JNU and

HCU have resulted in nationwide excitement and unsettlement. But there's a catch which is however not unique to these events. With the events in these places going on, my facebook newsfeed was literally flooded with posts related to the continuous developments that were taking place. Rarely did I receive any post concerning other events. Posts from Newspapers, Magazines, TV Channels, Groups I was a part of, and most importantly from people in my friend list were concerned with these events. What I did not realize then was that it was I who had denied the entry of other updates. I had shut myself out of other events. But how I did I do it unconsciously? The answer, though very simple as I later found out, is one of great importance Culturally, Philosophically and Politically. It was me who had subscribed to 'certain' pages, had 'certain' friends, and was a member of 'certain' groups. All of these came from my choice, from my very conscious selection, the result being that I had closed myself out of 'other' worlds which then seemed to be totally non-existent. This is where the idea of the 'Cyber-Dasein' comes in.

By being friends with those on my list and not being friends with those that are not on my list, I had refused to hear their voices. By subscribing to certain pages, I had also subscribed to their ideologies and negated others, and by affiliating myself to the groups I was a part of, I was interpellating myself. According to Zizek, ideology succeeds - not because it "interpellates" us to do its bidding like robots - but because we want it to succeed. To quote him, 'I don't recognise myself in it because I'm its addressee, I become its addressee the moment I recognise myself in it' (Storey, 1992, p. 83). In effect, I propagate what is 'always-already' in me and unconsciously refuse entry into the world that runs parallel to my newsfeed. This paradoxical 'unconscious refusal' (for how can refusal be unconscious?) needs further scrutiny. The answer is not an obvious one. Extending the anecdote I presented above in search for a common ground leads to the following conclusions - every facebook user like every human being has his/her own 'always-already' condition for no individual can by any means escape "being thrown" (geworfen) into the world. These conclusions, however, are not conclusions in the absolute sense for the social media too, is in a state of becoming. We will discuss this process next.

Social Media, as we have claimed, is always in a state of becoming. Like Computer Software, facebook has its updates. It was quite an interesting discovery on my part that in the 'Popular Culture and Philosophy' series book 'Facebook and Philosophy: What's on your mind?' edited by Wittkower the word "selfie" does not appear at all. 'Selfie' became the Oxford Dictionaries International word of the year in 2013 and before that its existence (since 2002 in Australia? as OED suggests) was not even remotely as popular as it is today. The 'Timeline' usurped the virtual space of the 'Wall' in December 2011 and the 'Cover Photo' was added as a feature soon after. The 'Cover Photo' is another phrase that does not feature in the aforementioned book published in 2010. Further, the Facebook App is, in temporal reference to the book, a recent development. My implication in tracing these developments is that there will surely be, with no need of sounding prophetic, further developments. But whether these developments are 'improvements' remains to be theorized and seen.

People usually tend to see social networks as democratic spaces where information is both abundant and free of cost. It is true that information is mostly unrestricted and available without much effort but the belief that facebook offers a polyphonic space (in the Bakhtinian sense of the word) is not any more than partially true. This is perhaps the most problematic question regarding a social network. If facebook is a novel of a Billion characters interacting with each other, avoiding-blocking-searching-overlooking each other, the polyphonic possibility seems obvious. Wellek reads the concept of the polyphonic as consisting “of independent voices which are fully equal, become subjects of their own right and do not serve the ideological position of the author”. But, in light of what we have suggested earlier, it might be argued with equal, if not greater, claim of plausibility that the face-BOOK (and here we have the Book, or the novel) is not as polyphonic as it seems on the surface. Some question arise: If facebook is a book who is the author? Mark Zuckerberg? If that is the case, then mockingly and very correctly one can declare “the death of the author” with almost no fear of opposition. However, much more critical questions remain. How different is the face-BOOK from any other book and to what extent does it shape the ‘self’ - culturally, politically? The nuances can be intimidating. If we are to take recourse Bakhtin’s thinking, then first of all there is no denying the fact that the novel is polyphonic with all of the multiple voices unequivocally reaching the reader (who is also a participant virtually). But with the facebook, how many voices can the participant reader attend to and for how long? Also, as is suggestive of the anecdote that we can ourselves make a social network monologic by remaining prey to our ‘always-already’ conditioning. Here the question of the self outgrows into the political side of the cyber-self.

The question and problem of choice enters the scene when we engage with the political side of the study. If the voices one chooses to listen to is limited (which it is on both sides - me limiting access to others and others limiting access to me), it follows then that the amount of information one is conditioned and forced to receive, though vast in magnitude or amount, is narrow thematically and in diversity. We go back to Heidegger’s concept of “thrownness”. The Doors’ song goes “Into this world we’re thrown/ Like a dog without a bone/ An actor out on loan” and here we can think of ourselves as being thrown into the virtual world which is quite real insofar as it impacts our non-virtual life as well. Pre-conditioned, we are ‘thrown’ into the social network and even people who choose not to enter or die are present ontologically. With our “always-already” state ‘refined’ or ‘catalyzed’ through education and experience (which too are influenced by the always-alreadiness) we end up making choices on the social network - choices varying from sending friend requests and liking pages through playing games and exploring apps to infinite activities. The preconditioning implies that our choices, however heterogeneous they might be, have some pattern - some thematic commonality. For the argument to seem less abstract we might take an example: A certain Mr X had been ‘indoctrinated’ to subscribe to a certain religious belief, he likes football and is a fan of a certain club, his family unconscious and his social background has led him to take up a certain political belief, and among countless other factors he is fond of certain TV Channels and Newspapers and is introverted by nature. In effect,

this person is most likely to like the pages and participate in groups of his interests and thereby inadvertently shut off the worlds outside that. His political belief leads him to follow posts from people who share the belief and so on. It is to be noted here that we claim, by no means, that every individual narrows himself or herself down with such a strong demeanour of unconscious selection. What we do claim is that in most cases a person who likes football will inevitably end up receiving more posts related to football in his newsfeed than those related to cricket. To politicize, a believer in left wing politics will 'miraculously' receive more news of leftist version of news than rightist and thereby attenuate the possibilities of dialectical outcomes while also reducing the polyphonic possibilities and this will lead to a kind of Zizekian self-interpellation which is partly conscious and partly unconscious at the same time.

Going back to the paragraph where I mentioned an anecdote concerning events at JNU and HCU, we wish to see it in light of the ideas just discussed. To the people whose newsfeed was occupied by posts related to the events, those seemed to be the only things happening in the country at that time. It seemed to me, for example, that the country was in the midst of a revolution, a civil-war of some sort and due to the interpellative selection of which I was not conscious of and therefore did not question, nothing else seemed to happen anywhere else. By limiting ourselves under our thrownness wedded to our own affiliations, the polyphonic possibility - the democratic space - of face-BOOK was reduced if not discarded altogether. Baudrillard had suggested during the 1990's that it was media which brought a sense of happening to people who are open to be seduced by the media. In the context of a social networks, this process is at least twofold. First, in the Baudrillardian sense, all there is to these events are "signs without referents, empty, senseless, absurd and elliptical signs" (Sim, Loon, & Appignanesi, 2009, p. 156) for as he famously stated, "the Gulf War never happened." The second layer is the one discussed earlier, where we ourselves narrow down the possibilities of being dialectical by selection. Importantly, whatever be the source of the information - whichever page, group, or friend - social networks are postmodern pilgrimage sites because they are capable of leading users further into 'legitimation crisis'.

In shaping the Cyber Being, which in Internet Forums and Blogs is being called the Cyber Sapien, Cyber Linguistics undeniably has a very important role to play. I believe that we have, in the 21st century, evolved into building for ourselves a kind of virtual unconscious which supplements our off-line unconscious. Writing in 1899, Sigmund Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, showed how new symbols continually keep adding to our repertoire of dream objects and get manifested in our dream content. Freud took up the example of Airplanes and Zeppelin airships which were then starting to become a part of daily life. For Freud, these new objects were then beginning to participate in our dreams and could be read as metaphors for the phallus. My point of interest, however, is in how the newly discovered or the newly invented become a part of the unconscious and thereby influence the conscious. I am not trying to suggest that if my offline self is the conscious - the living, then the online self must be the unconscious. Rather, I am entertaining the thought that the events and symbols online remain, in a certain way, even

after one has logged out of facebook and shut down his or her device. Tim Berners Lee invented the web in the early 90s and with mass participation; it soon became a part of life. In India, this happened in this century and with the web 2.0 it is burgeoning right in front of our eyes at light speed. To say here that some people dream of facebook activity during their sleep would be simplistic buffoonery. Critically speaking, however, Cyber angst can and it does (as blogs and websites report) manifest in not only dreams but in offline interaction with human beings in the flesh. We return here to the 'self'. Facebook has its very own array of symbols, its own neuro-linguistic nuances to which we decidedly or inadvertently subscribe to. Why do I say "LOL" on a facebook comment or chat to my friend and not say "LOL" when I meet him or her in person? What are the implications of typing "ASAP" and hitting Enter and not using the same abbreviation on a phone call? To what extent do facebook emoji's influence in shaping the 'self'? Is there a facebook 'other'? How is intention related to iteration online?

It might be said that a social network is a second symbolic order - a kind of double masking. In effect, it is a symbolic order within the symbolic order we are born into and this has both ontological and political consequences. As Žižek puts it "our social identity, the person we assume to be in our social intercourse, is already a 'mask'." "We are already masks off-line, then, because this symbolic order demands something of us even before we are born" (Wittkower, 2010, p. 271). Here, again we can of course think of the "always-already" condition we have spoken about earlier. "Before we are born we are given a mask in the symbolic order. We are given a name and our parents start to invest us with different fantasies and dreams about how we will be. We're all born into a language that we have to learn and obey. So whenever we speak of ourselves--or others speak about us--we are not merely interacting with others, but with the symbolic order as well" (Wittkower, 2010, p. 271). My contention is that there is an "always-alreadiness" about facebook too. Not only are we "thrown" into language (the original symbolic order) but also "enter" into another language within that language (the second symbolic order). If the original symbolic order is a mask, the social network is a second mask. Here I am reminded of the popular Japanese Anime show 'Naruto' where, in one particular episode, Naruto and his teammates try to see what lay beneath their teacher Kakashi's mask and find, to their disappointment, another mask underneath the visible one. In the first place one seeks to express the self through language. Language, whichever it is, almost always fails. It is always capable of not being an capable. "It is part of the structure of the letter," writes Derrida, "that it is capable, always, of not arriving" (Hill, 2007, p. 89). It is not implied, however, that the letter never reaches its destination. Then comes the social network. Here again, as incessant status updates point to, the urge for expression is greater because the possibility of getting heard is apparently much more. The irony however is that facebook or any other social network for that matter is a further condensation of linguistic possibilities. Let us take the example of the "like" button. Very recently, other buttons have been added so as to allow multiple responses to a post. But let us first look back to a time when there was only the like button. The absence of a dislike button has a commercial explanation but we can always ask - are these the only responses possible? Of course not. As of now, we have the 'wow', the 'laugh' and so on... Facebook, like any other

language is 'becoming' as we have said before - its symbolic capacities are expanding with each new feature. But it still remains subordinate to offline language which is itself subordinate to the language of the 'real' when it comes to the question of self expression. So, in effect, facebook diminishes, very brutally, the possibility of expression while giving more space of expression. Thus, when it comes to expression, to speaking out loud and clear, it is not we who are in control of facebook, but rather facebook (like language) is in control of us. We are not authors on facebook, facebook - in its extra linguistic way - is our author. And this reduction of the self is one of the causes of Cyber Angst!

Aligned with the previous argument of a social network being a language within language is the consideration that facebook is a society outside society and not within it as with the case of language. In facebook, we continually defer our physical social life because facebook is not only virtual, it is hyper-virtual - it is more sociable than what is social. In a way it is like pornography, which Baudrillard says, is "more sexual than sex" or like simulation which is "truer than true" (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 106) and hence its seductive nature. This side of a social network may be understood using a series of two paintings by Rene Magritte titled "The Human Condition" -



According to renemagritte.org, "The Human Condition displays an easel placed inside a room and in front of a window. The easel holds an unframed painting of a landscape that seems in

every detail contiguous with the landscape seen outside the window. At first, one automatically assumes that the painting on the easel depicts the portion of the landscape outside the window that it hides from view. After a moment's consideration, however, one realizes that this assumption is based upon a false premise: that is, that the imagery of Magritte's painting is real, while the painting on the easel is a representation of that reality. In fact, there is no difference between them. Both are part of the same painting, the same artistic fabrication. It is perhaps to this repeating cycle, in which the viewer, even against his will, sees the one as real and the other as representation, that Magritte's title makes reference." In the context of a social network, the painting can be thought to congruent to facebook insofar as it blurs the distinction between the real and the virtual but also merges them into a new fragmented singularity. The social network is as much a part of life as the easel is part of Magritte's painting and they have become a part of our being. We have, however, lost track of who is the host and who is the parasite. We can ask the question - is the online self a parasite of the offline self or is it the other way round - and end up in an Aporia. Lost in an universe of symbols both in flesh reality and cyber reality there is no way out and there can never be. It is impossible for cyber sapiens to go back to the virginal stage of the homo sapien for whom the internet does not exist. Donna Haraway in her 1983 essay 'A Cyborg Manifesto' celebrates the idea of the 'cyborg' - a combination of human and machine - as a way of escaping gender limitations. Today, most humans are inarguably cyborgs.

We have suggested that facebook is much more sociable than what is social. In other words, the idea is that a social network is, at least on the 'face' of it, a safer society than offline-society. The psychologist John Suler, in a manner that is not directly associated with Baudrillard's view, coined the term "the online disinhibition effect" to describe the phenomena that people engaged in online interaction "loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly." Suler notes, "While online, some people self-disclose or act out more frequently or intensely than they would in person."In Internet flaming, people post intentionally inflammatory or provocative comments, usually with no corresponding effort to engage intellectually with the relevant individuals or communities. This is a bit like defacing a public restroom with anonymously scrawled insults in the relatively private confines of an individual toilet stall. Those who post anonymous insults--whether it's on the Internet or in the restroom--feel free to ignore familiar social conventions. This feeling of freedom is what Suler refers to as the online disinhibition effect.... Here of course, we are reminded of the Carnavalesque which Mikhail Bakhtin saw as characterizing the novel. In brief, Bakhtin saw in the 'novel' a subversive genre which can play and dismantle social hierarchies in a fashion similar to that of the Renaissance festival of the Carnival where, during the course of the festivities, social hierarchies meant nothing. Princes dressed up like Paupers and Paupers dressed up like Princes with impunity. It was something which, to develop from Suler, could be called "the offline disinhibition effect". However, the festivities, as with facebook or any other social network for that matter, did not last forever and each individual, at the end of the festival, had to return inevitably to the social rank he or she was from. In the novel, Bakhtin saw the possibility to bring, though temporarily, "a world upside-down". Bakhtin had four factors in mind, which in most cases correspond to Suler's ideas in his

attempt at theorizing the disinhibition effect of the social network. For Bakhtin, firstly there is the “*Familiar and free interaction between people*” (Wikipedia, 2016) wherein the Carnival allowed random interaction between people - familiar and unfamiliar. (Reminds of Baudelaire’s poems like *Cake from Paris Spleen*) For Suler, first comes the “DISSOCIATIVE ANONYMITY” (Suler, 2004, p. 322). Suler writes, “As people move around the Internet, others they encounter can’t easily determine who they are. Usernames and e-mail addresses may be visible, but this information may not reveal much about a person...” (Suler, et al) The conceptual congruity is clearly visible when we account for the fact that the Carnavalesque, in allowing people to dress up as they liked, would grant them a considerable degree of anonymity. In thinking about “free interaction” another term that can be added to Anonymity from Suler’s vocabulary is “INVISIBILITY” which is surely an outgrowth of anonymity. “In many online environments,” writes Suler, “especially those that are text-driven, people cannot see each other. When people visit websites, message boards, and even some chat rooms, other people may not even know they are present at all”. “This invisibility,” he continues, “gives people the courage to go places and do things that they otherwise wouldn’t.” It is the ‘DISSOCIATIVE ANONYMITY’ coupled with ‘INVISIBILITY’ that makes way and allowances for “*Eccentric behaviour*” (Wikipedia, 2016) - the second of Bakhtin’s categories of the Carnavalesque. In the Indian context, it is the law that makes this easier. In 2015, the Section 66A of the Information Act, 2000 was stricken down. This act had previously seen people arrested for their posts and comments on Facebook, Twitter and other websites. There are manifold implications of this act and we shall discuss them next. Here it must be observed that it is this act that, among other factors, facilitates the online carnival in India - or to perform with impunity what Bakhtin calls the “*Sacrilegious*” - his fourth category. The “*Eccentric Behavior*” can be linked with what Suler calls “MINIMIZATION OF STATUS AND AUTHORITY” (Suler, et al). He writes, “While online a person’s status in the face-to-face world may not be known to others and may not have as much impact. Authority figures express their status and power in their dress, body language, and in the trappings of their environmental settings. The absence of those cues in the text environments of cyberspace reduces the impact of their authority” (Suler, et al) This makes the “free interaction” possible and easier and decreases the anxieties of communication. Online interaction, as a result, “feels more like a peer relationship” and so, says Suler, “people are much more willing to speak out and misbehave” (Suler, et al). This disruption of Status and Authority is the rudiment of the Carnavalesque. Bakhtin’s third category is the “*Carnivalistic misalliances*” (Wikipedia, 2016) which allow things and people that are usually separate according to the social norms to come together and coexist. One example would be that of Teachers and Students being ‘friends’ negating the everyday institutional or academic hierarchy outside the classroom and promoting the feeling of peer-ness.

Having seen how social networks are more sociable than the social, we might as well have a look at the other sides, which are not necessarily the darker sides. We are here not trying to say in a simplistic way that there are certain advantages and certain disadvantages, but rather trying to locate the sub-atoms of social media. Free Speech has perhaps been secured by the Indian law

itself but it must not evade observation how certain apparatuses can, and they do, function or are revealed to function with the cyberspace. Social Networks reveal people to some extent for not everyone maintains or is able to maintain a stable ideal image of himself or herself. Of Course, due to asynchronicity of communication, people can be careful of what they say online. Asynchronicity of response to online posts have a major impact on the overall cyber experience since people do not necessarily have to interact with each other in real time but can respond whenever they feel like responding and thus be more conscious of their responses and thus lay bricks to construct the 'ideal self' he/she cannot be in offline society. A social network then indeed becomes a novel where each person, i.e, each character projects an image of his or her ideal self or how one would like others to see them. This is a kind of counter-carnavalesque possibility where the character can very consciously nurture a very stable and arguably an 'enviable' image of oneself. We are here faced with the questions of representation. In one way, it is not counter-carnavalesque but rather a conscious-carnival - an extension of the license to be chaotic. To begin with, the Bakhtinian Carnavalesque unlike facebook was temporary. Onboard facebook, the feast goes on. For the social scientist or a student of digital humanities, it can be a substantial study of "the (individual) human condition" as well as the collective. Comments on facebook often bypass the performance of representation of individuals and make their epistemic positions visible. As a result, it becomes possible to study the areas of their cyber-dasein that reveal their ignorances and biases. Since social networks have equipped individuals with impunity, there are manifestations of what they think and feel making it possible to underscore the ideologies they are interpellated by. This is again much more possible than in offline society because impunity serves as permission for expression.

On the political front of the debate, of foremost importance is the issue of surveillance and counter-surveillance. The placement of the two surveillances in separate sentences is intentional because both demand equal scrutiny and also because both co-exist in the cyber world. When thinking of surveillance, many people who read novels might be reminded of George Orwell's novel 'Nineteen-Eighty-Four' and particularly its intimidating lines, "Big Brother is Watching You" which can and perhaps does bring a chill down the spine of readers. Orwell introduced to the world a new kind of fear, a new imagination to be afraid of, a new enemy which could follow the target like a sniper. One word that comes to mind, and which is taken from Orwell's vocabulary, is "unpersoning". Again, another film which will further illuminate our mindscape is the 2006 German Film "The Lives of the Others". In the film, we see the secret East German police keeping a dramatist under constant surveillance. His phones are being tapped, he is being followed, and even those close to him are under the all-seeing eyes of the East German Police. In the context of the internet however, the whole equation changes altogether. Now, as Doyle and Fraser (2010) say, "we are all empowered to spy on the spies...(and therefore)...the notion of surveillance surely has been turned on its head." They continue, "Gone are the days when only states, corporations and large Kafkaesque bureaucracies possessed the resources to spy and pry into the lives of powerless individuals. Visibility has become ubiquitous. We are all wearing open kimonos. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google--these online platforms have diffused

power to the margins." The argument is: Web 2.0 has redistributed the faculties of surveillance and by doing so it has also democratized power. But a Foucauldian sceptic would perhaps ask whether this is indeed the case or is this actually a new kind of hegemony - a cyber-hegemony - which, while distributing power on the face, has actually, in secrecy, introduced a subtler form of surveillance? We are of course, in the first place, reminded of the NSA and the names like Edward Snowden and Julian Assange. As recently as 2013, Snowden disclosed information that the United States had been running global surveillance programs maintained by the NSA and the Five Eyes while Assange published enormous amounts of secret information through 'Wikileaks' and by doing so has become the arch-fiend of several governments. The thinker Antonio Gramsci, in his Prison Notebooks, had first used the term 'hegemony' "to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates" and had opined that it functions through "negotiation and consent". We are informed by Gramsci that the status quo is maintained as "a shifting balance of forces between resistance and competition". The impetus here, in thinking of social media, is on the phrase 'shifting balance' which inevitably leads to what Gramsci calls "a compromise equilibrium" (Storey, 2009, p. 65). In the texts and films mentioned before, power seems one sided. Winston Smith is helpless before Big Brother, the dramatist is helpless before the East German Police, Yezhov has been totally erased from history and so on. These are examples of the "negative dystopia" sharpened to extremity. Power relations, in the age of Web 2.0 are much more subtle. If there is unpersoning, it is there on an entirely new level, in the level of the the cyber-quanta. Conspiracy theorists and UFO enthusiasts, for instance, point out throughout the web that John Lear, a former CIA pilot and son of legendary American inventor Bill Lear, has been made an "unperson" for speaking out about the Area 51 issue. A simple search with the "John Lear removed from Wikipedia" yields more than 0.2 million results. With the apparent redistribution of power the individual has the illusion of power, the Foucauldian would say. He is equipped with tools to defend himself against surveillance, to be anonymous, to go 'incognito' on the internet. Almost all web browsers today provide an 'incognito mode' which is a promise of anonymity. Then there are companies selling software which can apparently hide the IP address of the user. Further, there are tracking software, sidekick apps for everyone to use. Some of them free from cost. All of these are, at least on the face, promises of power. Here we are not suggesting that all of these power-tools are just farces meant to fool the user straightaway. Rather, we could look at sides usually unnoticed any create a dialectic possibility. The facebook privacy policy claims that "it does not share personal information with third-party companies--but adds that, in order to comply with the law, it may give personal information to "government agencies"" (Wittkower, 2010, p. 230) and yet, as the Federal Trade Commission website points out, "Facebook promised users that it would not share their personal information with advertisers. It did."

Foucault, we must remember did not see surveillance as necessarily an evil force but was rather suggestive as to how surveillance played a role in the formation of individuals - the formation of the political, the social and of course the inner self. In his later work, he "focused increasingly on how individuals are shaped through language and discourse so that power resides in what people

believe to be true". It was his understanding that power functioned through "regimes of truth" which consist of how meanings are produced, how they reach individuals, how they are received and finally how they form a society that has a certain degree of homogeneity. As an end product, surveillance had a big hand in the manner by which individuals not only framed but defined themselves. Social media, therefore, with both surveillance and counter-surveillance involved, has a decisive role in the formation of the self - the psychological undertone being one that of heightened privacy on the internet. It has obvious political undertones too for the power game does not stop with the diffusion of power. If, before the Web had come along, surveillance was one sided and private knowledge was accessible only to the powerful, with the redistribution of power, surveillance through accompanied by counter-surveillance maintains the same power structure because the individual is much more susceptible always has more to lose than the 'government agencies' because the later can always take recourse to repressive apparatuses ready at its disposal to strike the final blow.

The self, it can be said in conclusion, has received something that is similar to a software update. Or perhaps even, an upgrade. These updates, however, do not merely consist of minor bug fixes as in the case of Computer Software or Mobile Apps but rather they include new ontological, epistemological, and teleological ingredients. Children are now, as an 'MTS Homespot Instant Wi-Fi' suggests, "BORN FOR THE INTERNET". The dasein is now a Cyber-Dasein, the Homo Sapien a Cyber Sapien, what Johan Huizinga called 'Homo Ludens' is not the 'Cyber Ludens' who plays online, Marx's 'Homo Faber' is the 'Cyber Faber' who makes his world online, Mill's 'Homo Economicus' is a 'Cyber Economicus' who earns and spends money online, and all of these are happening increasingly in India. And at the heart of all of this is social media. Once online, man never really can 'logout' or 'sign-out' again.

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