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Mark Andrejevic, **iSpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive Era**, University Press of Kansas, 2007, 167 pp., $21.49 (hardcover).

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Sally McMillan[1] offers several informative models of interactivity in new media systems, each of which includes what many of us would see as the socially optimal structure; one in which the flow of communication and information is two-way and the level of receiver control is high. Other variants explored by McMillan emphasize audience activity and interface transparency, but in each example, the ultimate assessment is likely to be based on the extent of balance and equivalence in power and control between providers and users or consumers.

While McMillan's contribution ends with her explication of an analytical framework, Mark Andrejevic's new book provides us with the results of his own critical evaluation of the primary features of the interactions that make up what he calls "digital enclosures." His assessment is far from encouraging. Rather than enabling and enhancing the kinds of "two-way, symmetrical, and relatively transparent communication" that the promoters of interactive media have led us to expect, Andrejevic sees iMedia within iCulture serving the function of iManagement in increasingly broader spheres of activity. Andrejevic sees the kinds of widespread surveillance and monitoring that are normalized through interactive systems and services as enabling and enhancing the kind of Social Taylorism that almost seemed far-fetched when Frank Webster and Kevin Robins first wrote about it.[2]

Andrejevic provides well-chosen examples of the extension of control through surveillance in a number of chapters devoted to mobile communication and interactive television, exploring TiVo and other aspects of iCommerce along the way. While his mode of engagement is uniformly critical, an especially sharp tone emerges when he talks about what he refers to as iWar. Andrejevic does not hesitate to criticize the collusion between the government and the newly invigorated defense-electronics industry in the pursuit of the "War on Terror." Well-developed themes of participatory engagement and self-help take on a special character in the context of our reflexive engagement with our own status in an environment of heightened localized risks. The fact that these risks have origins in global relations that are beyond the reach of our active participation as partners in the identification of either goals or strategies of action is a point that Andrejevic makes again and again.

His analysis of the war on terrorism prepares us to think about some of the other "wars" that are being opened to faux enlistment by the responsible citizen-consumer. Like the wars on drugs, poverty, and crime, the neoliberal government that Andrejevic foresees is one that has been "fragmented into a collection of markets" that can be managed more efficiently by the private sector as long as the state

[1] Sally J. McMillan. Exploring models of interactivity from multiple research traditions: Users, Documents *and Systems,* pp. 163-182 in L. Lievrouw & S. Livingstone (Eds) Handbook of New Media, Sage, 2002.
[2] Frank Webster and Kevin Robins, *Information Technology: A Luddite Analysis*, Ablex, 1986.

continues, in the background, to provide access to the sorts of information and oversight that these operations require.

An all-too-brief chapter explores the ways that digital enclosure is transforming the political process into a market-like form, one in which the illusion of consumer sovereignty comes to replace the kind of popular control that idealized notions of democracy once assigned to the citizen. Andrejevic echoes the concerns about public relations and the public sphere that Habermas voiced so well, but he relies on Cass Sunstein to sharpen the distinctions between decisions about consumption and decisions about public policies and goals. While our decisions about consumption are governed by personal and private concerns, our political decisions reflect, ideally, a concern about the collective. For that reason, we ought to resist pressures toward the personalization and strategic management of politics.

Andrejevic concludes his quite comprehensive exploration of the terrain of interactivity with a surprising, but no less well-crafted engagement with postmodern theory. While many fear to tread too deeply into the morass of self-congratulatory rambling about "the savvy citizen" who is fully aware of the extent to which all politics is artifice, Andrejevic dares to suggest that we don't have to term citizens "dupes." Instead, he accepts that most of us need to be reminded that freedom of choice in this environment is little more than forced choice from an extremely limited slate of options.

The closing pages of his final chapter are used to recount the ways in which much of the new interactivity is asymmetric, and more critically, "is inimical to democracy insofar as it inhibits collective action, meaningful participation, and shared control." Although he recognizes the democratic potential that is inherent in the tech-savvy open source movement, he doubts that even this alternative approach to interactive participation is likely to supplant the dominant model of private accumulation. He leaves it up to his readers to find the ways in which the potential for egalitarian, democratic participation can be realized through interactive communication systems that have already been optimized for more efficient and profitable forms of control.