



## The Selfie Assemblage

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As digital technology becomes increasingly powerful and portable, means of self-expression have fundamentally changed. To speak in this media milieu is to tweet, update a status, or post photographs to social networks. These forms of self-expression provide new means of communicating the self and articulating a sense of connection to others. The selfie, a form of self-portraiture typically created using smartphones or webcams and shared on social networks, has rapidly risen into the common visual vernacular and seems to accent a culture obsessed with itself. While labels of narcissism abound, the selfie also invites a different consideration about the complex nature of networked society. At the moment of capture, a selfie connects disparate modes of existence into one simple act. It features the corporeal self, understood in relation to the surrounding physical space, filtered through the digital device, and destined for social networks. Each of these elements appears in relation to the others, attracting competing logics and languages of belonging and expression into one quick photograph. In other words, the selfie exists at the intersection of multiple assemblages (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Wise, 2005) that draw complex and often contradictory subjectivities together. In this essay, I examine the selfie as a representational form within locative media that enunciates each of these inherent dimensions as it manifests within a constellation of assemblages. This positioning allows for critical examination of selfies as entanglements of subjectivities within a massively mediated and networked society.

### Assembling Subjectivities in Locative Media

Media studies scholarship has embraced the physicality of media, recognizing that digital media use has moved from stationary screens into our pockets. De Souza e Silva (2006) described this media-interface shift as moving from “cyber” to “hybrid”: “Because mobile devices create a more dynamic relationship with the Internet, embedding it in outdoor, everyday activities, we can no longer address the disconnection between physical and digital spaces” (p. 262). Unbound from desktop computers, portable media devices provide users active Internet connections even in remote places. Users now exist in an always-on and always-connected world that seamlessly moves in an online and offline hybridity, speaking the multiple languages and embodying the various subjectivities between them.

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Given advances in smartphone technology, media scholarship has examined the new relationships between space, the user, and technology. Certainly, the increase of mobile and especially smartphone technology in public places has a direct impact on our communication behaviors, often in paradoxical ways (Drucker & Gumpert, 2011). As increasing numbers of smartphone users emerge in international markets, urban centers and rural areas alike feature an uptick in locative media use (Hjorth, 2007; Hjorth & Gu, 2012). Cities provide clues into how massively networked mobile technologies create "environment(s) of connection" (Lemos, 2010, p. 405). Yet, the mere presence of devices is not sufficient for understanding their larger social impact. It is vital to "think in terms of function, not devices" (ibid., p. 404) as new theorizing grasps at the social and cultural effects of our interactions through locative media. Mobility, understood as physical and digital, opens new considerations of the relationship between our devices and the physical spaces through which we travel. Farman (2012) contends that "since the two realms are so intertwined, the embodied practice of space on mobile networks strongly reinforces our sense of embodiment in the material sphere" (p. 23). This consideration extends to selfies, which attempt to represent the self as embodied in particular spaces.

Importantly, theorizing about locative media has embraced the always-on, every day, and everywhere use of locative media and location-based services. Hjorth and Pink (2014) conceptualize the networked user of locative media as a "digital wayfarer," whose "trajectory entangles online and offline as they move through the weather and the air, with the ground underfoot and surrounded by people and things, while also traversing digital maps, social networking sites, and other online elements" (p. 45). Parallel with this conceptualization is the circulation of selfies, created when navigating everyday spaces using smartphones and shared across networks. Exploring hybridity, initially understood in the context of gaming (de Souza e Silva & Sutko, 2009), and the ways that it impacts rhetorical expression can illuminate its creativity and constraints in the changing media landscape. For example, Hess and Herbig (2013) examine the physical National 9/11 Memorial alongside the smartphone apps designed to accompany it. They find that the digital experience of the memorial influences the primary read of the memorial site, with contradictory readings of the circulating meanings of September 11 resulting from the varying logics inherent to materiality and digitality. In short, reflections upon the relationship between locative technologies and rhetorical expression can illuminate the often complex character of hybridity as it pertains to the self and space. Selfies offer an important opportunity to reflect upon these practices.

### **The Selfie Assemblage**

As a social practice, the selfie serves as a reminder of our contradictory existence in hybridity. Much like any act of rhetorical expression, selfies are purposeful and offer cultural reflections and interpretations. While the easy explanation is that selfies exist as emblems of a narcissistic contemporary culture, a deeper reading of selfies instead provides insight into the relationships between technology, the self, materiality, and networks. Selfies exist in a unique moment in human technological history, one that invites consideration of the multiple worlds that individuals inhabit (Hjorth & Pink, 2014), the nexus of the intimate self, public spaces, locative technology, and digital social networks. The relationship of self, device, space, and network can best be understood as a Deleuzian assemblage. *Assemblage* "refers to the dynamic collection or arrangement of heterogeneous elements (structures, practices, materials, affects, and enunciations) that expresses a character or identity and asserts a territory" (Slack, 2012, p. 152). For

selfies, the concept of assemblage provides a way of seeing the relationship of device, its connected networks, and the material spaces it documents and the user's relationship with each of them. Wise (2005) recognizes that assemblages "select elements from the *milieus* (the surroundings, the context, the mediums in which assemblages work) and bring them together in a particular way" (p. 78). With locative media carried in pockets across the globe, selfies serve as "enunciations" (Slack, 2012, p. 154) of the assemblage within this technological milieu.

Selfies exist as a constellation across multiple, heterogeneous planes of existence and conjure the complex relationship of self, space, machine, and network:

*Assemblages* link subjects (whether individual or collective), via networks and activities, to particular arrangements of bodies, technologies, and materials in order to do something—to enable the production of surplus value, to produce citizens, to move or secure populations or resources, to expand human knowledge and develop technologies, to manage and direct force and violence, to create community and solidarity, and so on. (Wiley, Becerra, & Sutko, 2012, p. 186)

As digital manifestations of material existence—that attempt to portray our material substance—selfies display the often contradictory and complicated nature of media and material logics. They underscore the tensions in digital and material existence, each operating as its own assemblage. Selfies are, on face, about the self, yet they long for—require, even—sharing to be considered "true" selfies. They document the tangible material around us territorialized as unique places and opportune moments. They afford for users the means to materialize the self via their immediate photographic composition in everyday existence, giving credence to our emplacement in the here and now. Contained in pockets and purses as users travel, and held at arm's length as selfies are composed, smartphones document the spatial and temporal coordinates of a life that is simultaneously extraordinary and mundane.

Yet selfies are ephemeral, quickly circulated, discarded, and forgotten. In short, taking a selfie displays the unique position—the touching down—of the subject existing within multiple subject positions, or within the larger constellation of assemblages that "explains the complex, changing, and apparently idiosyncratic patterns of mobility, emplacement, social interaction, and communication that characterize a life" (Wiley, Becerra, & Sutko, 2012, p. 189). This is not merely because of selfies' networked quality, although they inherently exist as networked images; rather, it is because of the presumption of the selfie as existing in multiple spaces simultaneously. They conjure a dual sense of mobility, of bodies moving in both physical and networked spaces, with each carrying its own subjective experiences and articulations. Thus, the selfie assemblage is a constellation of multiple elements of existence within contemporary technological culture that expresses—even copes with—the affective tensions of networked identity: the longing for authenticity through digitality, the conflicted need for fleeting connection with others, the compulsion to document ourselves in spaces and places, and the relational intimacy found with our devices.

In what follows, I offer a multidimensional analysis of these complex relationships as they are cartographically placed on the user and expressed in the selfie. Each dimension serves as a point of entry

into understanding the various qualities of selfies along with that dimension's relative "style or way of talking, a style of enunciation" (Slack, 2012, p. 153), including the creative touches enabled by devices, manipulations of spatial orientations in materiality, corporeal positioning of the self and others, and the language of Web 2.0 content. Hjorth and Pink (2014) see these overlapping relationships as "situatedness in ecologies of place" (p. 42). The application of assemblage to selfies and their articulations provides insight into how selfies operate rhetorically and what their function in society might signal for individuals. Assemblage and articulation, as concepts, are useful for understanding that technology is "integrally connected to the context within which it is developed and used; that culture is made up of such connections; and that technologies arise within these connections as part of them and as effective within them" (Slack & Wise, 2005, p. 112). Within technological culture, selfies illustrate the complexities and desires inherent to smartphones, networks, and self-expression. As rhetoric, selfies provide clues into meaning-making practices expressed through vernacular visualities composed on devices that follow users from intimate spaces in the home to public places and shared across social networking sites. Situated within the larger articulations and assemblages of technological culture (Slack & Wise, 2005), selfies enunciate representative practices of the self with spatial, temporal, material, and networked existences. Read within a larger constellated assemblage, selfies enunciate the affective experiences found within and between each element.

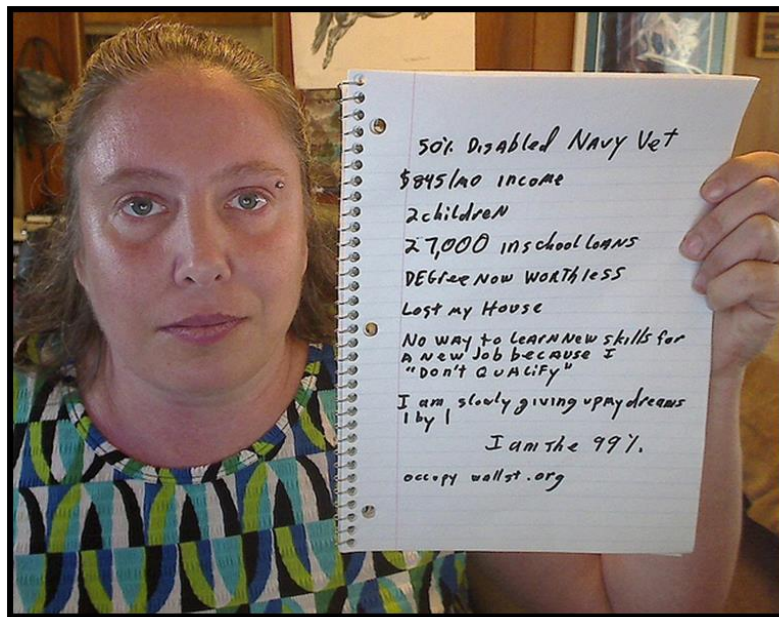
The selfie assemblage articulates four elements: the self, physical space, the device, and the network. First, selfies presume a sense of authenticity, even though they are staged performances. Second, selfies are emplaced. Taking a picture in private or public places is a unique act of place expression, even while networked dissemination of the photograph compresses space. Third, selfies are about our locative and networked media technology, which provide filtered understandings of the material spaces and bodies around us. Finally, selfies presume a networked audience and its language of Web 2.0 content, meaning that they invite digital-vernacular expression and user-generated content typical of this era (van Dijck, 2009). To analyze selfies, I locate examples of selfie trends and instances when the limits of selfie photography are discussed. Often, finding discussions of the bounds of technological use between users can illuminate the cultural and social significance of media (Baym, 2010). To close the essay, I examine the selfie as an enunciation in a constellation of assemblages, reading selfies within larger systems of production, knowledge, and community.

### **The Self**

At a primary level, selfies accent the self. As photography, they powerfully represent and authenticate, although because they are taken on digital devices with accompanying editing software and are designed for networked dissemination, they also signal a performative self (Goffman, 1959). As enunciations in the assemblage, selfies are best understood through their stylized language of the self, which often features a sense of representational authenticity. In an era when the photoshopping of images is frequent, selfies are typically understood as spontaneously performed but rehearsed, lending them a character of performed legitimacy. Taken and retaken to find that perfect angle, selfies are staged performances, yet they also invite users to state that they indeed were at that vacation spot, ran into that celebrity, or lost that weight. While questions persist regarding online deception and authenticity of

identity (Baym, 2010), selfies provide “real” glimpses into the corporeal presentation of self. As evidential discourses, selfies generate a sense of corporeal ethos—a proof of an emplaced and embodied self.

Again, while staged, they purport an intimate sense of self that is honest and accurate: This is me, right here, right now. One early selfie trend that offered a powerful understanding of authenticating discourse developed from the Occupy movement, which decried the accumulation of wealth in the wealthiest 1% of the population while showing solidarity with the other 99%, the “rest of us” (DeLuca, Lawson, & Sun, 2012). At the height of the movement during the Great Recession, selfie images of the 99% circulated widely featuring handwritten explanations of personal hardship and financial woes of the average citizen and ending with the statement: “I am the 99%” (see Figure 1). The personal, handwritten note coupled with the raw emotional face typically looking directly into the camera imbued these selfies with a strong sense of authenticity. Similar cases to the Occupy movement include images stating “I’m a feminist because . . .” or “I need feminism because . . .,” which highlighted reasons why feminism was important to the individual. In these cases, selfies invite a consideration of ethos, of how the character of the self is honestly portrayed—laid bare, even—by the camera’s lens and personal, handwritten messages.



**Figure 1. Occupy Wall Street selfie.<sup>2</sup>**

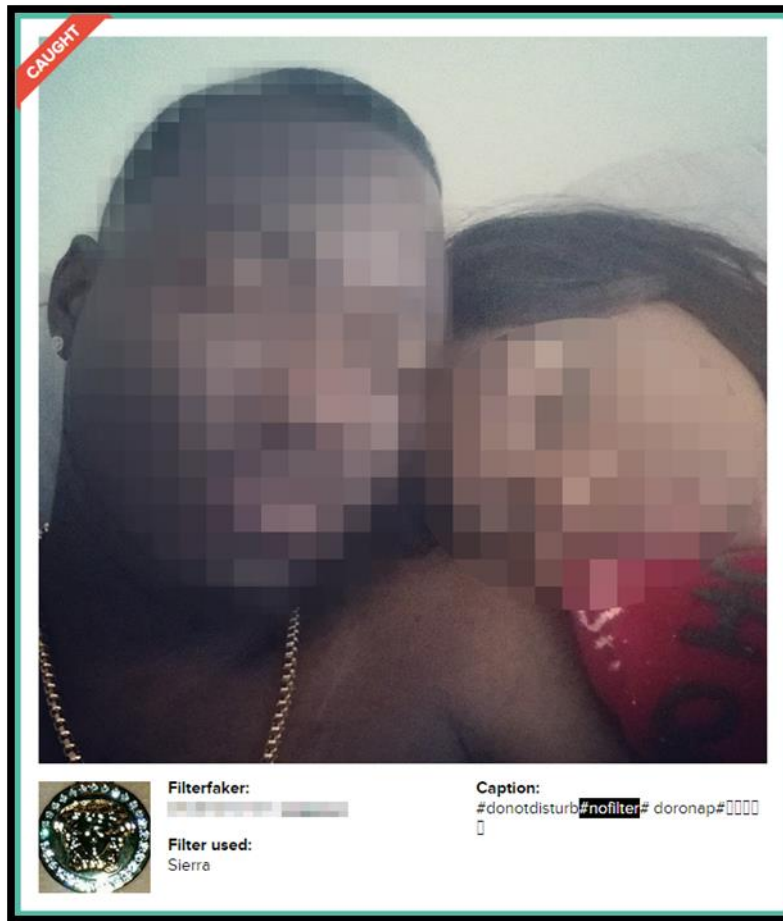
<sup>2</sup> Some of the faces of the selfie photographers in the figures have been blurred to maintain privacy, especially at times when these images may have been recirculated without the consent of the original photographer. In others, such as this Occupy selfie or the Chernobyl selfie below, the identity of the original was likely meant to be maintained or has been requested to be maintained in its original form.

Another way to understand the self-authenticating nature of selfies is to examine those instances of *selfie fails*, which include moments when images are filtered—digitally altered through Instagram or other smartphone apps—*otherwise faked*, or *too authentic*. Each of these illuminates the limits of authenticity expected of selfies. Filtered selfies are exposed by users who recirculate the original images with photoshopped areas circled or pointed out in red (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. A photoshopped-selfie fail.**

Also, the hashtag *#nofilter* links instances when users display selfies without using digital filters. However, to claim *#nofilter* is to be subject to debates over the veracity of the image. The website *Filter Fakers* (2014) calls out cheaters who manipulate digital photographs through Instagram but claim that the image is the original (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. A screenshot from Filter Fakers showing a faked selfie.**

The *otherwise faked* selfie, similar to the photoshopped selfie, includes instances when users attempt to display, for example, their bodies in a more positive light but actually manipulate the image with techniques such as pushing up a bicep to appear larger than it really is. Finally, the *too authentic* failed selfie includes those instances where the user has included something too personal, such as the selfie taken in the bathroom with embarrassing products present and the night-out-at-the-bars selfie that accidentally features someone vomiting in the background (see Figure 4). The language and styles of “real” material existence, which cannot be photoshopped, compete with the stylization of digital photography, which invites manipulation. The material body is pressured to be carefully manicured through exercise and cosmetics, but the network should not see those elements of self-care. Instead, the body should be perfectly *and* authentically presented. The selfie enunciates a destabilized sense of self, one that is caught between competing ideals and stylizations.



**Figure 4. A too-authentic selfie fail.**

### **Space and Place**

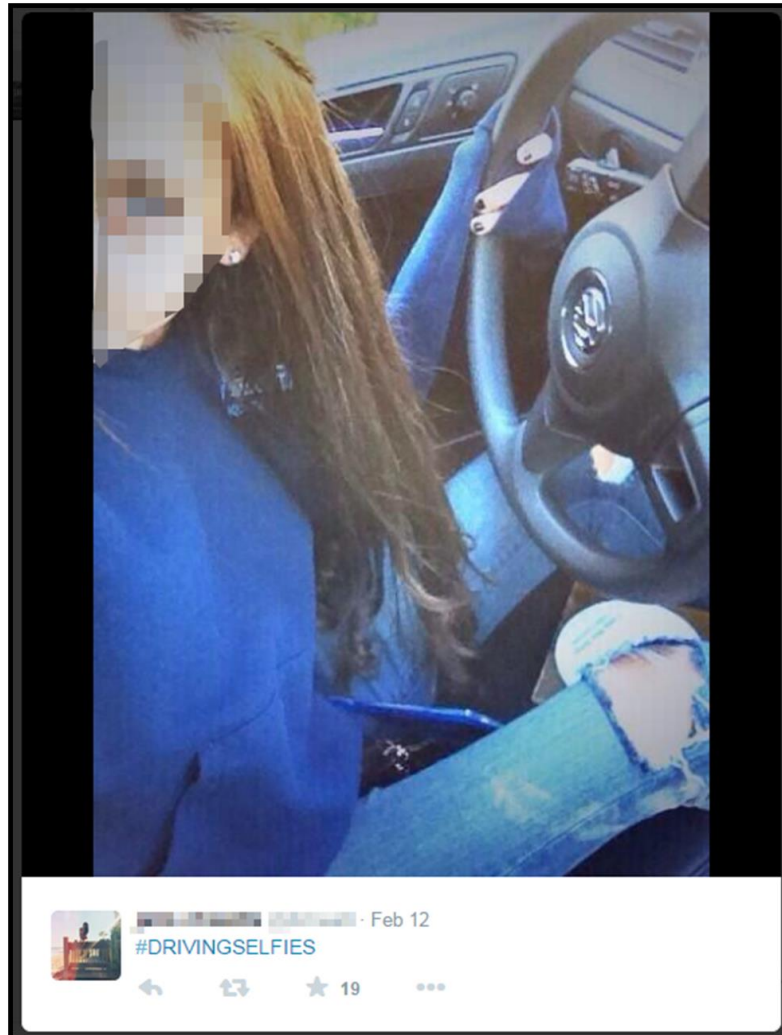
As much as selfies illustrate an expression of self, they are also characterized by a relationship to space and place. Taking a selfie is a form of place expression, meaning that selfies are about the placement of one's self in a place at a time. As locative media, selfies feature users navigating public spaces using technology. Mobile media invite considerations of everydayness as filtered through both our smartphone screens and the decorum found on social networks. Even the most mundane of spaces is worthy of social network sharing so long as the self is accented in relationship to that place. De Souza e Silva and Sutko (2011) argue that locative media invites a double perception about space: "Users simultaneously see their physical surrounding space, plus a representation of that same space mapped on their mobile devices" (p. 24). While typically understood through augmented reality, which overlays digital information onto the physical scene, double perception in the case of selfies reflects the representational quality of the user within the space and through the smartphone. Selfies invite consideration of the composition of the self in space as digitally and visually rendered. In other words, selfies visualize the user as emplaced within the physical surroundings and as digitally embedded into social networks. To take a selfie is to mark the temporal and spatial existence of the networked user.



In a sense, selfies articulate the intersection between materiality and discourse, speaking through visual and networked means at a kairotic moment where material space both opens up the possibility for opportune speech and constrains the photograph's composition. *Kairos* is a traditional rhetorical concept that argues that speech should be considered at the right, opportune time and context. As a contextual feature of speech, kairos also signals that rhetorical expression is performed with due reference to prevailing decorum (Hess, 2011). Kairos is altered in digital contexts because, in contrast with traditional rhetoric, "[d]igital exigencies may arise where the same topics might not have inspired such response, in part due to the features of speed, reach, and interactivity" (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2009, p. 501). Extending this to locative media more generally, the nature of kairos appears unique as users speak at opportune moments with audiences across physical spaces and digital networks. For selfies, the same applies. Smartphone selfies are carefully crafted, taken both as spontaneous and as rehearsed acts. They are spontaneous insofar as they are taken in opportune moments and in particular places. A kairotic selfie may feature a teenager desiring feedback on a new haircut or world leaders convening during Nelson Mandela's funeral (Mortensen, 2013).

In either case, the act of taking a selfie is driven by a unique moment that is presumably deserving of capture. Simultaneously, selfies require decorum both in the composition of the photograph and in when it is taken. The aforementioned selfie between U.S. President Barack Obama, UK Prime Minister David Cameron, and Denmark Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt (Mortensen, 2013) pushed the limits of decorum, prompting questions of whether taking a selfie at a memorial service is an appropriate act in that space.

Although selfies are frequently taken in private settings, they also feature places that are notable and public. When taken in intimate settings, selfies often speak a language of "publicized privacy" (Sloop & Gunn, 2010). In public, the capturing of a selfie records a personal moment that is shared, oddly with people who are not necessarily physically present. Vacation spots, famous landmarks, and recreational destinations are all featured as primary elements of place for selfies. The Twitter hashtag *#drivingselfie* exemplifies the curious character of place within selfies. News outlets have carried stories of teens driving while taking photographs, offering the tags *#drivingselfies*, *#drivingtowork*, and *#ihopeidontcrash* (Popkin, 2013, see Figure 5).



**Figure 5. A public post to Twitter under #drivingselfies.**

Similarly, the Tumblr “Selfies at Serious Places” (2013) also highlights the insecurities involved with taking a selfie in inappropriate places, such as the 9/11 Memorial, Holocaust concentration camps, Chernobyl, or even family funerals (see Figure 6). While certainly pertaining to decorum, the discussion of limits displays how attentive to place and space selfies are.



**Figure 6. A screenshot from the Tumblr page "Selfies at Serious Places."<sup>3</sup>**

In documenting the nature of users in space, selfies have a vernacular of mise-en-scène in their composition, often adding filters and other digital manipulations to the image before disseminating them via social networks. Users consider the importance of place and the composition of the self in relation to the physical space as digitally rendered and shared through social networks. In this way, material spaces are not only framed by the device, they are re-presented and enhanced using Instagram or other smartphone apps. Whether filtered or not, the image is always already apprehended and transformed through the device and its framing of material space and bodies. As a point in the constellation of

<sup>3</sup> Curiously, this particular selfie was found by the original poster, who explained his choices for taking a selfie at Chernobyl. He has asked that the selfie remain unchanged on the Tumblr page and speaks of the photo with pride.

assemblage, the logic of digital and visual representation in the selfie commands a unique language of presence and emplacement. The device not only (re)frames the position of the body and materiality, it does so with a new language of space, place, and presence.

### **The Device**

The physical act of holding the device also signals the intersection of body and machine. Indeed, Wise (2012) offers assemblage as a way of examining our portable devices, such as iPods, iPhones, and PDAs, that looks at the process of orienting the body to the device. As the device becomes connected to the body, such as through earbuds or the thumb, it "shapes the space around it, transforms behavior, molds attention, distracts, focuses" (p. 161). The gesture of extending the arm with smartphone in hand inherent to the selfie speaks of the orienting nature of the technology to the space around us. The device serves as a filter not only through its use of software to alter an image but also in the ways that it frames and removes elements of the physical surroundings through the physical relationship of hand, device, body, and backdrop.

While self-portraiture has existed in various media, including photography, drawing, and painting, selfies are unique because of their reliance on smartphones and other locative technology. Certainly, it is possible to capture the self through other media, but doing so with a smartphone is unique for a number of reasons. First, smartphones operate as networked, locative devices that access the infrastructure of cellular towers and are disseminated into social networks. This understanding is important for the selfie because of the presumption and ease of sharing the image via social networking sites while at or near the material site being captured. Digital cameras can take similar images, but they do not carry the same networked quality. Second, smartphones frame the material world around the user and frame the user's body within the image. Front-facing cameras actively show the user what the image is going to be and how it will appear to others when shared. When taking selfies, users see themselves in their technology in multiple ways. Similar to Wise's (2012) idea of the changing material dynamic when using a keyboard or mouse, the act of holding out the smartphone at arm's length orients the material space and the user within the technology. As an assemblage of technology, the smartphone selfie invites a digital and visual grammar of the self and scene. The device becomes a technological overlay upon the material existence, requiring angle, light, and perspective in order to be best received by the networked audience.

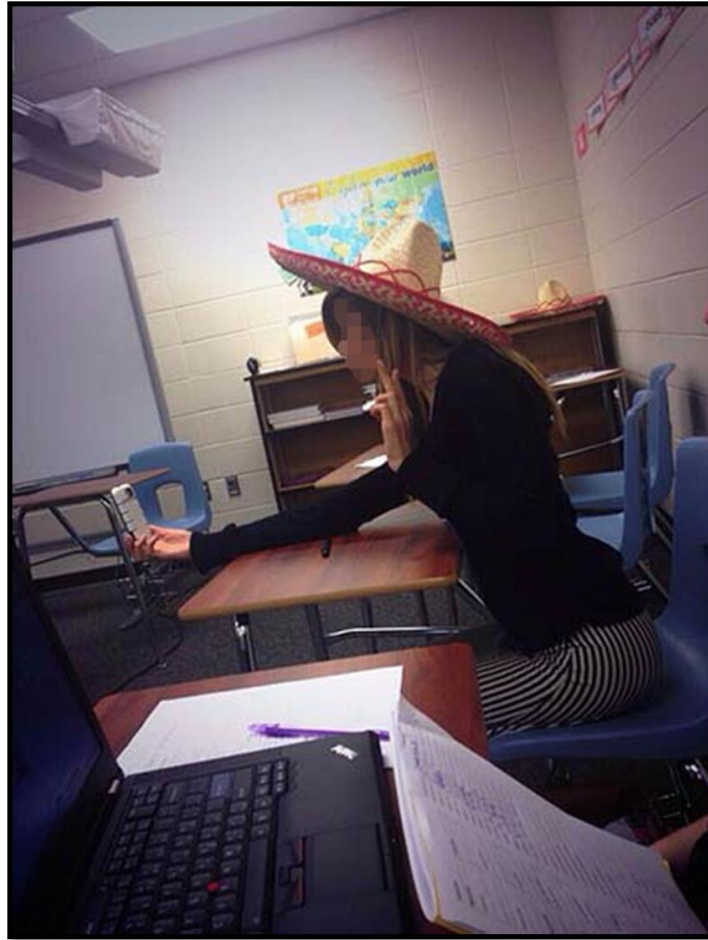
Facing our devices, we not only photograph ourselves; we capture a contextualizing, affective moment through our trust in technology. The intersection of body and machine, of analog and digital, enables users to generate new perceptions of both the self and the device. As Massumi (2002) puts it, "In the actual play between the digital system of the possible, its potentializing effects, and the analogic charge of virtuality both conditioning those effects and carried by them, new thoughts may be thought, new feelings felt" (p. 141). We trust the device to document the meaningfulness of being, to provide a memory of the moment, wherever and whenever that moment is. More than just pictures, selfies underscore the relationship between the body and digital technology through the relational corporeal composition with the device and through the networked spaces selfies are destined to travel in. As we click the photo button and upload, we express a desire to be recognized at this material moment, composed in digitality, understood through our smartphones, and understood as members of a networked

community. The smartphone links these multiple worlds, instantly collapsing the digital and analog, virtual and material.

### **The Network**

The final relationship inherent to selfies is their networked quality. While self-portraits have long been a tradition in photography, selfies are taken to be shared on digital networks and through location-based services (Hjorth & Gu, 2012). In this sense, they are understood as public acts and public artifacts. It is certainly the case that photographs of the self, even those taken in unusual places with smartphones, might also exist in private albums. However, private photographs do not fully qualify as selfies. Selfies imply circulation. In this sense, they are always public. When (re)circulated, selfies are given what Jenna Brager calls a "second life" and are "subject to disjunctures of meaning, misinterpretation and appropriation" (See Brager in this Special Section). As they slip out of the networked circles of friends on Facebook or Instagram, selfies are then read and reread outside of the control of the original photographer and within larger articulations of power and identity. In recirculation, the selfie can be placed within racialized and gendered frames regarding the appropriate use of technology to represent particular bodies. Indeed, the recirculated selfies represented above as "fails" highlight the potentially restrictive reframing of bodies as women are called out for attempting to present their bodies in particular ways.

The networked quality of selfies changes the nature of attention and distraction (Wise, 2012) relative to the network and to material space. The selfie's composition relies on the physical space but operates in a logic of presentation inherent to the network and its decorum. Selfies also pinpoint the user between material and networked spaces. As these planes of existence overlap, they carry differing conceptions of decorum and language use. Society has grown accustomed to experiencing public mobile telephony (de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2012), but as selfies become the digital overlay for understanding physicality, the tension between space and network is accented. Gordon and de Souza e Silva (2011) argue that location-based services inherent to locative media filter public spaces, meaning that having access to such technologies provides users a different reading of the public space than would be found without them. Those connected exist in hybridity and embody a co-presence with those around them and those online (Hjorth, 2011). Locative media generally carry a paradoxical balance between being simultaneously present in media and in public space. The tension between networked audience and physical public presence is also curiously recorded and shared through networks. For example, comedy website Smosh published a list of "15 People CAUGHT Taking Selfies in Public" (2014), which illustrates, albeit humorously, the competing participation in public and digital spaces (see Figure 7). The selfie, then, operates as a statement of co-presence, of embodying the physical, digital, and networked words simultaneously. It is an expression of multiple memberships to physical, public spaces and public networked places connected via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the like. In the constellation of assemblages, this conduit of expression locates users in a technological community and culture.



**Figure 7. An example of a "caught" selfie from Smosh.com.**

### **Reading the Constellation**

Reading the selfie through assemblage offers insight into the various connections between machines, physical spaces, bodies, and networks. The complexity of identity and subjectivity is accented by a mere tap of the screen as the user simultaneously expresses the multiple memberships and markers of physical and digital being. For members of a complex technological culture, the concept of assemblage provides a means of mapping the tension between representational practices and our devices. Furthermore, assemblage provides clues to the competing logics that circulate within machines, physical spaces, bodies, and networks. To read selfies as primarily self-oriented provides an entry point into selfies as cultural capital or statements of identity and individualism. Reading selfies as device-oriented underscores the relationship between technology and the body, while their networked quality speaks of the social relationships of mass dissemination. Finally, examining them in relation to physical space hints

at the relationship between materiality and digitality. Each of these orientations carries blessings and burdens as users attempt to speak in an era of infinite audiences while remaining bound in our materiality.

These assemblages also provide additional lines of thinking and of examining assemblages upon assemblages. Gazing into the front-facing camera and seeing ourselves means that we must also inquire into the ways we are personally implicated into the labor and production of our devices. To face our iPhones is to face the workers at Foxconn who struggle under difficult working conditions (Yee & Pomfret, 2012). Taking our phones out in public to snap vacation selfies signal membership not only in networked societies but also in a sociotechnological elite able to vacation or spend time accessing social networking sites. In these networked spaces, when we take and share selfies, we access a relatively centrally controlled infrastructure motivated by corporate profits (Goggin, 2010). Posting content to the network not only expresses a desire to be seen and the agency of circulation but also carries users into corporate-controlled spaces that profit upon the labor of Web 2.0 users (van Dijck, 2009). Finally, snapping that selfie articulates a sense of self that is read to be authentic but that also displays the uncertainty and fragmentation of self in contemporary societies, including the many desires and burdens of body-image politics. Sending the selfie out into networked spaces invites reframing of the body within racialized and gendered discourses regarding the appropriateness of bodies or the "typical" user of locative media. Failing to meet these demands within technological culture can invite subjugation of the body and self through recirculation, as seen in my examples above.

Technological culture accents and complicates each of these concerns, and selfies underscore our hesitations and revelries within this particular moment in technological history. As a convergence and constellation of multiple assemblages, the selfie highlights the competing and contradictory pressures of the geographical, social, and media milieu (Wiley, Becerra, & Stuko, 2012) and how the subject becomes multiply implicated in each area of existence. As a photograph, it is at once celebratory of this era and lamenting of it. As displayed in my analysis, the same networked audiences that celebrate sharing selfies also lambaste those who somehow do not fit the technological and cultural decorum found online. Enacting these multiple memberships in technology, networks, spaces, and bodies, the selfie signals the inherent tensions between materiality, digitality, and identity. As scholars reflect on these practices, we should pay attention to how users and communities grapple with the tensions and contradictions of each intersection of the selfie, thereby investigating the ways in which users consider their involvement and representative practices at each point in the constellation.

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