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The Old and the New: Nam June Paik

Author(s): Patricia Mellencamp

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# The Old and the New

Nam June Paik

Patricia Mellencamp

In 1993 for the Venice Biennale, Nam June Paik initially proposed to title his exhibition in the German Pavilion *Electronic Super Highway: "Bill Clinton stole my idea!"* His brash claim comes from a 1974 document commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation, in which Paik proposed connecting Los Angeles and New York with "multi-layer to broadband communications networks, such as domestic satellites, wave guides, bunches of co-axial cables, and fiber-optics. The expenses would be as high as the moon landing, but the ripple effect 'harvest' of byproducts would be numerous."<sup>1</sup>

As an incredulous curator said: "Frankly, we did not believe you [about Clinton's plan, not Paik's]. However after reading *Time* . . . we have grown wiser: the Electronic Superhighway is no longer the crazy fiction or an intellectual utopia of a little Korean Guy."<sup>2</sup> Paik concluded his 1974 "media plan" with a second prophesy that had already come true: "One hundred years ago Thoreau wondered: 'Even if the telephone company succeeded in connecting people in Maine with people in Tennessee, what would they have to say to each other?' The rest is history."<sup>3</sup> More of Paik's highways, later.

Video entered the cultural vocabulary of the United States in the mid-1960s as a technology *and* a futuristic set of electronic possibilities lifted freely from the tech talk of computer inventors. And it was video, not computers, that lodged itself simultaneously within activist politics and the art scene, zigzagging between counterculture communes and the cultured art world. Dropouts and artists alike extolled sci-fi principles derived from information theory and cybernetics.

Information was energy, process, and power—which had to be dispersed to the people through *video*. As *Guerilla TV* put it, "Only through a radical re-design of its information structures to incorporate two-way, decentralized inputs can Media-America optimize feedback."<sup>4</sup> Video would foster new communities and radical politics; it would challenge commercial TV ("beast TV") *and* art—two leftovers from what was called "product culture."

The art historical legend begins earlier, in Korea. Paik, a Marxist ("Koreans are not as docile as other Asians. It was partially just radical chic"), left Korea in the 1950s to study music in Japan. An aesthetics degree and thesis on

Arnold Schönberg in hand, he then went to West Germany. ("At the time, it was popular for every young, rich Korean to go somewhere in the Western world. I chose Germany first . . . because it was said there was no modern art in America in the fifties.") There, and forever, he bonded with John Cage ("I came to the U.S. *only* because of John Cage") and the other theorist/practitioners of Fluxus.<sup>5</sup> He literally attacked the piano (and the musical tradition it represented, scaring Cage in the process) and then the TV set in performance events. (Now Paik collects classical TV sets, using them to create lovely human monuments and intricate collages.)

Paik moved to New York in 1964. The story of video art is what I call a primal story, and it begins here, at the Liberty Music Store, with Paik's purchase, using U.S. grant money, of a Sony portable video camera and recorder from Japan's first shipment of equipment to the U.S. As the tale is remembered, Paik's first video recording occurred that very day. As he was on his way home, his cab intersected with the Pope's visit to New York. *Voilà!* The results were previewed to an art audience that same night: video art was born. (The irony of Japanese consumer technology in the hands of a Korean in New York filming the Pope and triggering an art movement funded by NEA and the Rockefeller Foundation is delightful indeed. Perhaps this is why it has been told for now thirty years.)

Video's ease, simultaneity, and immateriality snugly fit with performance art and happenings, Conceptual, kinetic, and Pop art. Anyone could be (and was) a video artist, which caused Bill Viola to say somewhere of early videotapes that life (particularly an artist's life) without editing is not all that interesting. This period also saw the U.S. revival of the historical (European) avant-garde—particularly the critique of art institutions (in retrospect, a critique of the business of art). Today museums are in fashion, along with art and celebrity artists. Art has always been a prime commodity for financial markets. Right after hog, grain, and futures prices come the art auctions in the *Wall Street Journal* (with a direct correlation between U.S. trade, tourism, and the price of international art). In 1995 the neoclassical economics of art is in high style, and big bucks are seen as a very good thing. But in the 1960s and 1970s, money was not valued by many intellectuals or artists. Materialism was strictly dialectical

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FIG. 1 Nam June Paik, *Global Groove*, 1973, color video, 28 minutes. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.

except for Andy Warhol, who always saw art as business: "Business art is the step that comes after Art."<sup>6</sup>

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What was in style were critiques of art's traditions and forms, for example, Cage on music, Merce Cunningham on dance, Jackson MacLow on poetry, Joseph Beuys on politics/art. (Although these critiques were recently labeled deconstruction from literary theory, demolition is more accurate. Deconstructors always find more, whereas these guys looked for and found less, a minimalist aesthetic.) Cage and Cunningham, along with Charlotte Moorman, appeared regularly in the videotapes of Paik, whose eclectic, high-voltage style included rock 'n' roll early on, inspiring MTV (*fig. 1*). His video gang included art critics like Russell O'Connor and Gregory Battcock, Allan Kaprow, and the video artist Shigeo Kubota, his partner in art.

In later pieces the regulars were joined by Laurie Anderson, Peter Gabriel, Philip Glass, David Bowie, Lou Reed, fashion designers, more rock musicians, and New York comedy performers. Eventually, Paik's video performance/repertory company starred in live, global events—Paik's satellite broadcasts *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* in 1984, *Bye Bye Kipling* in 1986, and *Wrap around the World* in 1988. Paik's description of his first New York–Paris satellite broadcast in 1984 is very funny:

*There was a French specialist in the transmission booth. But he thought I was an expert. He did not know that I was a techno-idiot. He left the mixing booth out of reverence to me just before the transmission went live to 40 million viewers in Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Korea. . . . I was only 52 years old, which alone spared me a heart attack. Who was in charge? Whose show was it? I don't know. I will do my last live TV show in 1999, December 31. I'd better stay healthy.*<sup>7</sup>

John Hanhardt's many scholarly writings emphasize Paik's use of comic irony, popular culture, and the everyday.<sup>8</sup> Yet Paik's everyday is far from ordinary—informed as it is by serious art and scientific knowledge. In the same way Paik

sees television and other Pop culture artifacts through his idiosyncratic aesthetics. But the Paik case is made through Fluxus. In contemporary catalogue essays Wulf Herzogengrath and Hanhardt (influential video scholars and Paikians, although this sounds too Star Trekkie for art; I am merely a Paik aficionada) place Paik at the center of video history illuminated through Fluxus. This intellectual coalition of thinkers/performers was anti-high art. Fluxus "picked up the mantle of the historical avant-garde, questioning the elitism of art," "debunking institutions of the art world . . . overturning the jargon of art history with playfulness and humor."<sup>9</sup>

Playfulness didn't come only from Fluxus, nor was it there from the beginning. In a lovely interview with another Paikian, David Ross, Paik says that the "old left 'suffered' for the masses and had revolution, while the new left 'enjoyed life and had revolution.'" Paik attributes his shift to (1) Moorman, who "hated rehearsals" and changed the "character of the pieces from agony to libido"; and (2) "the new video generation." "My first friends were Fluxus people, who were always anti-something . . . the new video generation was pro-something, 'constructing' a new society with the new tool of video."<sup>10</sup>

As Kate Millett says: "In Fluxus we thought of ourselves as 'the children of Duchamp.' It was even logical, we were still youngsters; here was an old man and a monument." But she remembers the past as arduous: "Flux persons in hostile new worlds, surviving the local culture through one they formed around themselves." She wonders of Paik: "If Tokyo was hard [for a Korean], what was it like in Germany? Maybe he had . . . perfected that manner of being a foreigner, a refugee artist: thick skinned, a little strange, a little funny . . . ineffably an outsider."<sup>11</sup>

Thirty years have passed since the famous purchase at the Liberty Music Store (a great day in the history of shopping, which is a lot like buying art, and a landmark for what Raymond Williams, after economists, called consumer durables). Paik is old enough to be a grandfather. Cunningham's performances are popular events, regularly reviewed as brilliant. Cage, Moorman, and Beuys (and other art heroes) are dead. Yet curators, scholars, keepers of the faith, and now this brief piece, have been telling the same founding story of video art in every catalogue and essay—as if no one had heard it, as if it were the eternal explanation, as if nothing had changed, including Paik's work.

The story has been under feminist siege—first by Martha Gever in 1982, then amplified by Martha Rosler at Video 84 in Montreal and reiterated in *Illuminating Video*, and elaborated further by Marita Sturken.<sup>12</sup> Even in these polemical critiques of myth or "sanctification," the familiar story is retold. And Gever, Rosler, and Sturken are not wrong. The cultural tale of video is, of course, more complex. Also suspect is the inscription of a founding video father, no matter how anarchic or international his paternity. Let's be honest.

Artists create their own legends, with critics and scholars as eager scribes.

But I think this endlessly told tale of video's founding, conflated with the persona of Paik (an act Gilles Deleuze calls "legending"), covers up something else.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps it represents our nostalgia for the good old days when art wasn't art, men were boys (Beuys), and the left was clearly separate from the right. Then, we knew immediately which side we were on. Being an activist then provides credentials today. Ross (a former "idealistic video hippy," now the director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York) reveals how much things, including our politics, have changed: "For a long time I thought that the video artist would destroy the museum as a site and would destroy the idea of broadcast television. But I found that I was very wrong." Paik impishly interrupts: "Luckily you were wrong."<sup>14</sup>

The story is a ruse, a fallback, concealing how little has really been said. Amid the many writings on Paik (and video) are few analyses that move beyond taxonomy, technique, or citation. Why? The expanse of Paik's range (painter, designer, collagist, and theorist), the sheer amount of Paik's work (which is difficult to comprehend!); its internationalism; its movement between forms (performance, tape [single and multiple channel and live satellite], installation, sculpture, and collage); its recycling and transforming of previous images, circling back and moving forward at the same time; its accessibility and conceptual clarity that allow us to "get it" immediately, all contribute to making Paik seem overwhelming *and* too easy. We ordinary folks get it—on some level. (Then affect was *not* in style.)

Paik's respect for the audience resembles Deleuze's model of the simulacrum.<sup>15</sup> For Deleuze the simulacrum circumvents mastery because it already includes the angle of the observer. Thus, the viewer/auditor is in tandem with the maker and can transform and deform the images. Like a brilliant serial joke, Paik's work is reciprocal and experiential, a *process* that completes itself *through our response* (a point Hanhardt has made). It's not that the work speaks best for itself, but that it always speaks with us—no matter who we are. Criticism doesn't need to explicate, enrich, or complete the process.

Paik's recycled repetitions have created a style similar to Deleuze's (*not* Jean Baudrillard's) simulacrum: not a degraded copy, but a positive, joyous one that denies privileged points of view and hierarchies. It negates both original and copy, both model and reproduction. *The Selling of New York* is an early example. Initially the title referred to 1972 tapes broadcast during programs on late-night TV in New York. Segments from these broadcasts appeared in subsequent videotapes. In 1975 parts were reedited to comprise *Suite 212*, itself reedited in 1977. In one of the sections of *Suite 212*, O'Conner, the art critic as a performance artist, ponderously intones statistics. A woman in a beauty parlor angrily talks back to this authoritarian talking head. This

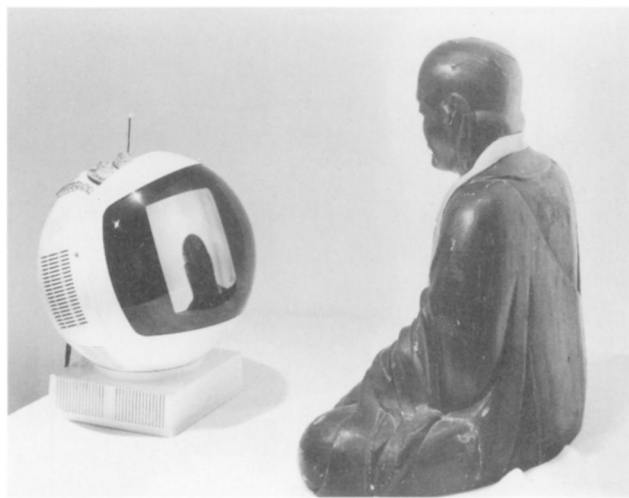


FIG. 2 Nam June Paik, *TV Buddha*, 1974, mixed-media video sculpture. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

talking head appears in a peep-show screen at a porno parlor; a woman taking a bath shouts at this irritating speaker. Finally, a masked cat burglar steals the noisy TV set. Blessed silence through theft. The male voice-over of information and statistics is ignored by an active audience that turns it off.

For Deleuze the simulacrum affirms divergence and decentering—apparent in Paik's increasingly monumental installations of hundreds of video screens in *Fin de Siècle* (1982) and *Chase Manhattan Bank* (1993). For the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, *The More the Better* was a video tower of 1,003 monitors, resembling the Empire State Building or a wedding cake.<sup>16</sup> Our initial fascination within these high-intensity works ends in contemplation. This meditative gesture is even clearer in some of the earlier installations, *TV Garden* (1974–78), *Moon Is the Oldest TV* (1965–76), and *Fish Flies on Sky* (1982).

While a nod is often made to the premises of Eastern philosophical and spiritual beliefs, the story is set within Western art and thought. For example, regarding Cage, a disciple of Zen, Rosler speaks of his "sudden epiphany to provide instantaneous transcendence." She does not, I think, understand the rigorous discipline (and years) it takes to achieve or recognize this experience. For many Westerners it is more difficult to quiet the mind than land on the moon. Rosler's use of the phrase "anticausative Zen Buddhism" also makes little sense.<sup>17</sup> Within the laws of karma and the cycle of reincarnation, there is no linear logic of human progress.

Zen Buddhism does not depend on dualities, thoughts, or words. Truth and meaning can be found in silence and understood through experience. Paik's works get the attention of the mind, the eye, but go beyond thought to *experience*. Thus, meaning does not come from the outside, from words. It comes from within, which is not to say that this is always true for Paik's work. But often it is, as in *TV Buddha* (fig. 2)



FIG. 3 Nam June Paik, *Beuys*, 1988, mixed-media video sculpture. Shizuko Watari Collection, Tokyo.

and *Video Buddha* (1989), the latter with a thickly bronzed monitor before which a stone Buddha sits, gazing upon his closed-circuited image. In answer to an interviewer's question, "Are you a Buddhist?" Paik replied, "No, I'm an artist. . . . Because I am a friend of John Cage, people tend to see me as a Zen monk . . . I'm not a follower of Zen but I react to Zen in the same way as I react to Johann Sebastian Bach."<sup>18</sup>

After enlightenment (which Paik treats lightly, as he does reincarnation, joking about it), the goal of Buddhism (and Hinduism) is to be joyful, lighthearted, content with what comes, accepting of all things with equal vision. The goal is not the material or physical pleasures of this life, merely one short reincarnation among many. Zen Buddhism, like Hinduism, is the practice of daily discipline (which is liberating, empowering, and as Gandhi said, infinitely harder than going into battle). Paik's work possesses an extraordinary clarity wherein complex ideas are made simple, simply delightful. This luminous and prodigious output can come only from discipline. When Paik spoke of his friends, it was the same discipline he admired. Of Cage, Beuys, and Allen Ginsberg: "They were all perfect and reliable people who paid back every moral debt and social favor. Their personal behavior was such that they could have

succeeded in any other field. This is very far from the outlaw image they projected."<sup>19</sup>

Through discipline we gain steady wisdom and freedom, known as liberation. We become detached from emotions, achievements, and possessions. We become the witness, the seer—like Cage, Moorman, and Beuys, who have died only to be reborn as video sculpture in Paik's work.

*Cage's* seventy-five-inch body is made from portable, antique or classic, wooden TV sets, strung together by piano wires, with hammers for fingers. Only the head, the face, is a different TV classic. *Cage* is balanced, stolid, and very funny. Like many of Paik's other TV statues, videotape plays on all monitors. *Charlotte Moorman* (1990) is slightly off kilter, built of antique TVs, with a violin hanging from one arm (the infamous cello) and a baton in the other (her self-directing). Her performance "Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes" (1971), in which she bowed TV monitors that formed a cello (the video sculpture piece by Paik is called *TV Cello*), is recalled in this new statue by Paik, a monument of a famous personage in the history of art. *Beuys* (fig. 3) is powerful, with a huge monitor head, wearing an even bigger real hat. His arms are small, askew monitors; one holds a wooden sled, à la "Rosebud." A wolflike dog is watching a Watchman TV beneath his chunky monitor legs. *Bogie and Beuys Hat* (1989) consists of ten matched but varied TV monitors sitting atop a brim of ten portable radios. The titles are very generous.

These new pieces are tenderly comic objects, metonymically personifying their namesakes. *Edgar Allan Poe* (1990) has a candelabra on one arm and a stuffed raven on the other. The antique TVs of *Van Gogh* (1992) are brightly painted, imitating his colors and brushstrokes, matched by the video images. His TV arm holds a painter's palette and brush. *Gertrude Stein* (1991) wears a delicate floral skirt and a strand of pearls over her TV torso, with flowery phonograph speakers as arms. Modernism is friendlier when it is built from TVs.

In their reincarnation as art, these legends of art and literature join other comical, political figures—*Lincoln* (1990), built of heavy, tall wooden antique TVs, topped off by a stovepipe hat; and *Benjamin Franklin II* (1990), flying an American-flag kite, with a bolt of neon electricity zapping between the antennae of his TV set head. Arata Isozaki suggests that Paik has discovered "the fragility or transitory quality of this new medium."<sup>20</sup> In the same way, he has uncovered the fragility and comic heroism of his friends' (and our) brief lives. Millett speaks of the "amazing beauty and innovation of his work in the fine arts. Anyone who can take an object as rigid and predictable and banal as a television set, and make something sculptural out of it, has transcended a great deal."<sup>21</sup>

While many video critics see TV as "a negation of history," Paik's work of the last decade is making TV historical. Paik's low- (and high-) tech stationary robots, built from



FIG. 4 Nam June Paik, *Alexander the Great*, 1993, mixed-media video sculpture. Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

old TV sets, are all about history—the history of design, of art, of TV’s centrality to our lives. They are a tribute to the past *and* a commentary on the present. The *Family of Robots* series speaks to TV’s fifty years of familialism, the news, network, and sitcom families. Unlike the movies, which are about romance and the youthful couple, TV constructs extended families, often including several generations.

The *Family of Robots* consists of *Mother and Father* (1986), comfortable, middle-class, nice, and very respectable people. *Painted Metal Child* appeared in the same year with monitors painted in psychedelic colors, a bit of a problem child. *Aunt* and *Uncle* came along in 1986 and in 1988. She is wider of girth, her lower torso/hips made of two protruding TV sets. (Face it, the aunt is hefty!) Uncle’s chest and arms are circuit boards, techno or suit-and-tie uncle. While the infamous *Robot K-456* of 1965 walked and performed bodily functions, movement for the *Family of Robots* comes only from TV, from the images on the inserted monitors. These funny, good-hearted characters are also a gentle reminder that the 1950s have returned in the 1990s—replete with marriage, big weddings, the suburbs, and children (and the return of *The Brady Bunch*) in yet another reversal of the 1960s, when the family, like marriage, was under attack.

The new will soon be old (and vice versa), and then collectible: “relics of technology” will be the “hot collectibles of the early 21st century.” The market for “vintage” televi-

sions (made from 1946 to the late 1950s) “didn’t exist five years ago. Now a futuristic ’50s Philco Predicta brings about \$175.” In addition, the “economic rise of Asia” will inflate the cost of things Asian, which will be good news to Paik.<sup>22</sup>

By recycling the beautiful detritus of technology, transforming hardware into exquisite Pop sculpture, Paik continues his (and the counterculture’s) ecological mission. Rather than contribute to the trash bin of disposable culture, he is preserving a history of techno design and style. (During the era of antique TVs, the U.S., not Asia, was the leading manufacturer and exporter of electronics. Today, only Zenith is still in the TV set business.) Fluxus seems years ago and far away—although the spirit lives on. After finally traveling to Korea and Hong Kong, I began to understand Paik’s Asian heritage (including his high-tech faith, style, and particular repetition).<sup>23</sup> Yongwoo Lee writes of the “Asian sensibilities that appear as wit and jest in the West, the allusions to the Asian philosophy of mindful living.”<sup>24</sup>

In the *Electronic Super Highway* for the 1993 Venice Biennale, Paik’s technology statuary are from an older superhighway.<sup>25</sup> *Alexander the Great* and *Catherine the Great* resemble Asian gods and goddesses mounted on animals. *Alexander* (fig. 4) is made from TV monitors (his torso is a squat, wooden console) and other electronic screen machines. Electrical parts, stripped of their casings (the intricately crafted, beautiful insides of electronics), make up

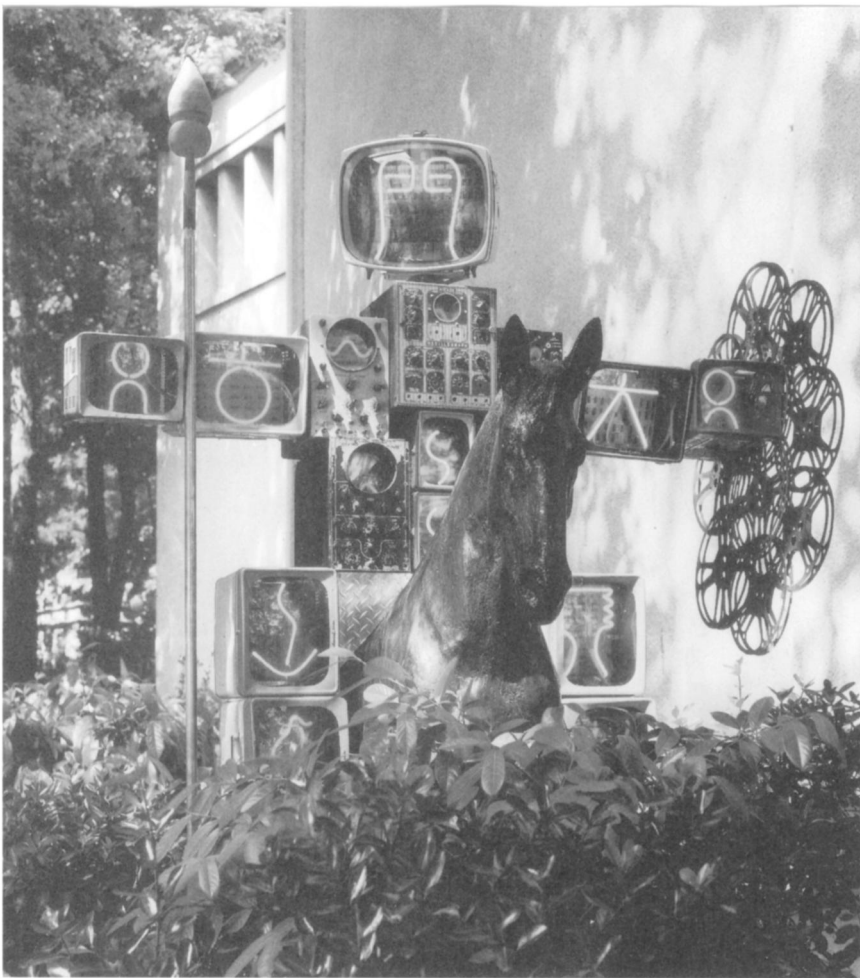


FIG. 5 Nam June Paik, *Catherine the Great*, 1993, mixed-media video sculpture. Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

body parts, with a shield of videotape reels. He proudly sits atop a real and big statue of an elephant, on a saddle of electronics. *Catherine* (fig. 5), astride a real horse statue, is composed of more delicate electronics—oscillographs, monitors, with 16-mm film reels as her shield. Green foliage, in homage to a quote from Beuys, surrounds both Catherine and Alexander. *Attila the Hun*'s body, a vivid yellow gasoline pump adorned with electronic gear, is riding a bicycle. *Ghengis Khan* wears a deep sea diver's mask, TVs form his backpack, and a Mexican sarape adorns the techno-figure astride a bicycle.

Paik's superhighway has two lanes—one leads to the past and historical forms of transport and communication, along with the "conquest, power, and rulership" of Alexander and his kind; the other stays in the present, the electronic highway, two big video installations with forty-eight projections and five hundred monitors. For Paik time periods exist simultaneously more than linearly, a conception of time true of most Eastern philosophies. "Thanks to technology, we can live not only in the future, but also in the past." "We have to go back and forth"; reliving history will be "an important content" for the new software.<sup>26</sup> Although he used the word, he didn't address the future.

Paik's is a world of flow without origin and without destination, a world in flux. Recently, he wondered why intellectuals continued to support the ideas of Karl Marx and not John Maynard Keynes. "In the 1930s the artist was the

enemy of capitalism, in the 1990s, the artist may be the SAVIOR of capitalism (this is for Hans Haacke!)."<sup>27</sup>

Early on Paik touted the glories of interactive media, along with the relationship between information and art. Then and now he sees "information" as an opportunity for artists to make art or software: "We artists must help society INVENT something better, more profound than NINTENDO . . . [like] enjoyment of past history in Venice."<sup>28</sup>

But in the 1990s we hear the praises of "interactive media and information" sung by corporate CEOs more than hackers or artists. One paradox of contemporary culture is the gradual shift of such notions as technology from left activism to right conservatism. Today corporate culture has adopted verbatim and for profit the techno dreams of the 1960s video visionaries.

They call it "a network revolution." Networks are invisible electronic webs that "let people share information, exchange messages, and get together while remaining far apart." Along with doublespeak, networks "will propel changes more profound than the telephone and the automobile," "lessening the barriers of time and distance," "creating a transparent, fiercely competitive marketplace where many goods and services are treated as commodities."<sup>29</sup>

While the claims are grand, this is not a pretty picture. Shopping will be all-consuming, the virtual meaning of life. "Masses of home based consumers will underpin the multimedia age," with an "information superhighway more diverse

and more egalitarian than anything seen to date.” Instead of a meager five hundred TV channels, consumers can “tap into hundreds of thousands of multimedia services.” The big payoff will be ordering “pizza and a movie for a quiet night in.”<sup>30</sup> A pizza? All of this for that?

The new visionary is John Perry Barlow—a writer for the Grateful Dead with a visionary history that only began in 1987. He defended hackers on “the net” and issued jeremiads against business and government regulation. Deadheads listened, then the founder of Lotus and Al Gore. Barlow: “Government has no future.” There will be an “ad-hocracy” of individuals who “control their own fate. Corporations will decentralize, granting employees autonomy.” Cyberspace represents “the last chance for the triumph of the individual against dehumanizing institutions.”<sup>31</sup>

Until, of course, humans are replaced by intelligent agents—software programs that travel by command from computer to computer over networks, gathering information and assembling the results. “Agents are servants who can navigate the technological maze.”<sup>32</sup> Agents are becoming necessary because of the two “great ills” of the “information age”—too much useless information and the difficulty of finding valuable information.<sup>33</sup> Which brings us back to Paik’s 1974 Rockefeller document, the conundrum of “what would they have to say to each other?” The rest is history,” a prophesy for our future which is now.

Ten years ago Deleuze said that things were not “going well in contemporary thought,” now in a “weak phase,” a “period of reaction.” “What we’re overcome by today isn’t any blocking of communication, but pointless statements.” This is a beautiful analysis of informational culture. “The problem is not getting people to express themselves, but providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say.” There is a crisis of imitators. Imitators give “the impression that they’re improving on their model.” Culture needs to make distinctions “between imitators and inventors.” Inventors are “creators,” “mediators.”<sup>34</sup> For me Paik is a mediator, an inventor of art machines, and a maker of pointed statements.

#### Notes

1. Nam June Paik, “Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society, 1974”; reprinted in Klaus Bußmann and Florian Matzner, eds., *Eine DATA base/Nam June Paik* (catalogue for the Paik exhibition in the Venice Biennale, 1993) (Germany: Edition Cantz, 1993). All my gratitude to John Hanhardt for sending me this beautiful, smart catalogue.
2. Nam June Paik, “A Short Trip on the Electronic Superhighway with Nam June Paik,” interview by Florian Matzner, in *ibid.*, 130.
3. Paik, “Media Planning,” 110.
4. Michael Shamberg, *Guerrilla TV* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 12.
5. Nam June Paik, “A Conversation with Nam June Paik,” interview by David Ross, in Toni Stooss and Thomas Kellein, eds., *Nam June Paik: Video Time—Video Space*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 59.
6. Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 92. Warhol also said: “I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. . . . Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. During the hippie era people put down the idea of business [saying] ‘Money is bad,’ and ‘Working is bad,’ but making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.”

7. Nam June Paik, “De-Composition in the Media Art,” in Bußmann and Matzner, *Eine DATA base*, 21.
8. See John Hanhardt “Dé-Collage/Collage: Notes toward a Reexamination of the Origins of Video Art,” in Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, eds., *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art* (New York: Aperture Foundation; San Francisco: Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990), 71–80; and *idem*, “Non-Fatal Strategies: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Age of Postmodernism,” in Stooss and Kellein, *Video Time*, 79–84.
9. Hanhardt, “Dé-Collage/Collage,” 73.
10. Paik, “A Conversation,” 57, 62.
11. Kate Millett, “Bonyari,” in Stooss and Kellein, *Video Time*, 110–13.
12. Martha Gever, “Pomp and Circumstances: The Coronation of Nam June Paik,” *Afterimage* 10, no. 3 (October 1982): 12–16; Martha Rosler, “Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment,” in Hall and Fifer, *Illuminating Video*, 31–51; and in Rene Payant, ed., *Video 84* (Montreal: Artexes, 1986), 242–51; and Marita Sturken, “Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History,” in Hall and Fifer, *Illuminating Video*, 101–24.
13. Gilles Deleuze, “Mediators,” in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, eds., *Incorporations, Zone 6* (New York: Urzone, 1992), 280–95.
14. Paik, “A Conversation,” 57.
15. Gilles Deleuze, “Plato and the Simulacrum,” *October* 27 (1984): 47–56.
16. His many monitored installations have become bigger, designed for prestigious public situations like the Olympics and shopping malls. Or as *Vogue* recently said, “Art has begun to boldly go where only car shows have gone before.” Memphis will present *Imperial Tombs of China* in the convention center (recently the site of a boat show), while Atlanta will open *The Sacred Art of Russia* at a mall/convention center. (I don’t think this is what the historical avant-garde had in mind when they critiqued the museum. Or was it?) See *Vogue*, April 1995, 218.
17. Rosler, “Video,” 46.
18. Nam June Paik, “Interview, 1992,” interview by Otto Hahn, in Bußmann and Matzner, *Eine DATA base*, H171.
19. Paik, “A Conversation,” 64.
20. Nam June Paik, “A Conversation with Nam June Paik,” interview by Arata Isozaki, in Stooss and Kellein, *Video Time*, 126.
21. Millet, “Bonyari,” 112.
22. Alexandra Peers, “Keep Everything,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 1994, R8. Because the boomer generation doesn’t accept the division between art and popular culture, Pop art will continue to increase in value, particularly that of Warhol. Folk art will soon be on its way out.
23. In the North Gate market in Seoul, I was overwhelmed by a repetition that was new to me. Hundreds of vendors have individual stalls, with twenty-foot-high pillars of the most exquisite velvets, brocades, silks, lace, and embroidered linens. There was enough fabric and color to cover the world. All this beauty and plenitude (and repetition) was amazing to me, but quite ordinary to Koreans. Village merchants would travel to the city late at night to buy cloth for their small shops. The market was both rich and poor. The Western idea of contradiction was quite out of place.
24. On the outskirts of Hong Kong, at the top of three hundred stairs overgrown with vines, is a Buddhist temple painted bright red and gold. Inside the temple is a huge, golden statue of Buddha, surrounded by one thousand small statues of Buddha, all with slightly different hand gestures, each in cubicles, or grids—just like Paik’s gridded video walls. In the courtyard are enormous statues of gods and goddesses astride fierce elephants and tigers.
24. Yongwoo Lee, “Nam June Paik’s Teenage Years,” in Bußmann and Matzner, *Eine DATA base*, 22–27.
25. The title for the 1993 German Pavilion of the Venice Biennale was *The Electronic Super Highway*.
26. Paik, “A Short Trip,” 131.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. G. Christian Hill, “All Together Now,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 14, 1994, R1, R8.
30. *Ibid.*
31. John Perry Barlow, quoted in Charles McCoy, “Visionary or Cyberspace Cadet?” *Wall Street Journal*, November 14, 1994, R20.
32. John Keller, “Info-Age Slaves,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 14, 1994, 30.
33. G. Christian Hill, “Cyber Servants,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 17, 1994, A1, A6. Numerous agents could perform many simultaneous tasks in many parts of the world, leading to “the ultimate rat race or a chance for more leisure as servant agents perform mundane, time-consuming tasks.” “Eventually people can launch their alter egos into cyberspace.” This would be a very good thing indeed!
34. Deleuze, “Mediators,” 281, 285, 287–89.

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PATRICIA MELLENCAMP is a professor of art history (film and TV) at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Her new book is *A Fine Romance: Five Ages of Film Feminism*.