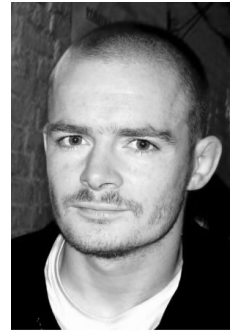


Authors Note:

As always, this is a work in progress and I would love to hear any feed back, comments and especially discussion or criticism of the points raised here, if you loved it or hated it.

<http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com>



Last night CandieJunkie committed suicide. Earlier in the day he announced his intention to overdose live on web cam. Many people replied, were involved, contacted officials and Myspace friends in an effort to save him. Still we all watched his Justin.tv channel for almost 8 hours before we saw police enter his room, quickly check him, then cover the web cam. I hope this article in no way trivializes what it discusses; the apparent suicide of a young man or the cry for help and attention that it may be. When we know more about the topic we can more accurately address the sadness and seriousness of the event. For the moment this article just discusses the mechanisms that worked, how they worked and illustrates how important it is for social researchers, anthropologists, sociologists, culturologists, etc, to get to grips with what is happening out there.

Sets and Overdose

An Hero¹: Further explorations in the techno/media/self scape.

This article further works through how I, as an internet social researcher or cyber anthropologist can conceptualise the “web”. I look briefly at Alain Badiou's project on sets, and while it may not be directly applicable I feel it is a good starting point. Then I work through the rather macabre example of a suicide made public (is web cam publicising?) and how people engaged with it.

Perspective

As I have discussed in “Locating the site of internet social research”² and “Consumo-Production”³ it is crucial that we take a site specific research perspective. That is to say, our valuable respondents inhabit distinct internets, “digital youth culture” (if there is such a thing) engages specific internets and so our research should reflect this accordingly.

Alain Badiou

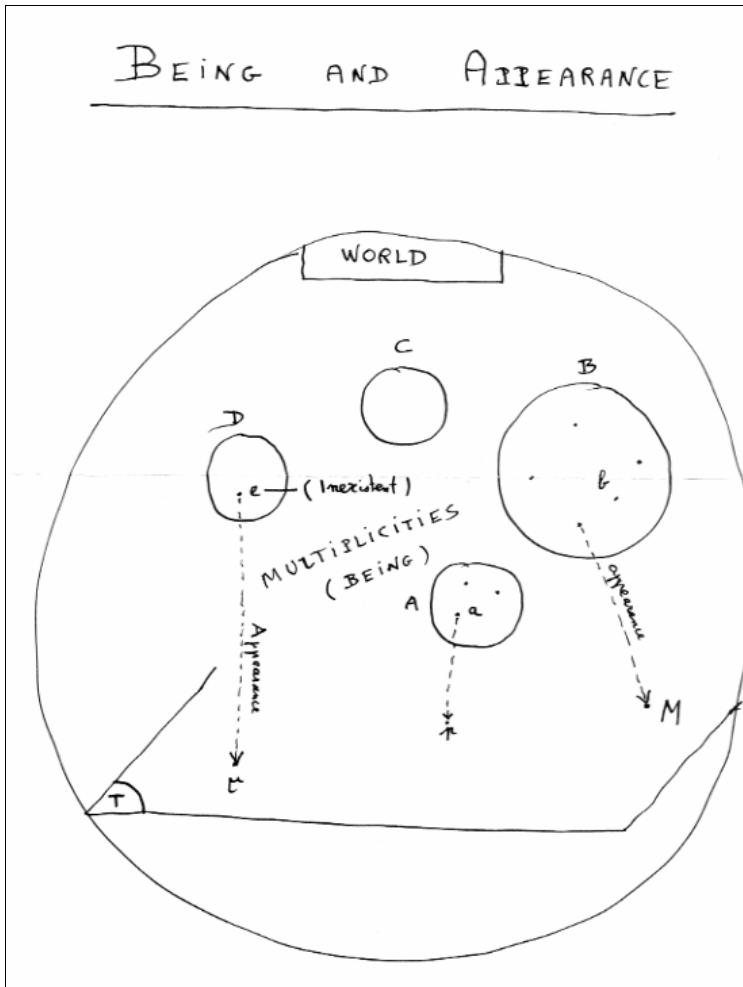
While Badiou confines his project purely to philosophy (Sedofsky 1994) we can consider sets within our conception of the internet. That is to say, we conceive of a singular internet (the way traditionally we

1 “An Hero” is a slang term used to describe a person who has committed suicide, or as an instruction to commit suicide. “He became an hero”, “she an hero'd” or “Just an hero IMO”.

2 <http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/12/locating-the-site-of-internet-social-research/>

3 <http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/17/consumo-production/>

conceive of “being”) and just like Badiou suggests we at least wash our thoughts with an idea of multiplicity, allow a plurality to “being” I suggest we do the same to the internet. People do not navigate the internet but rather a specific internet. (Badiou 2007)



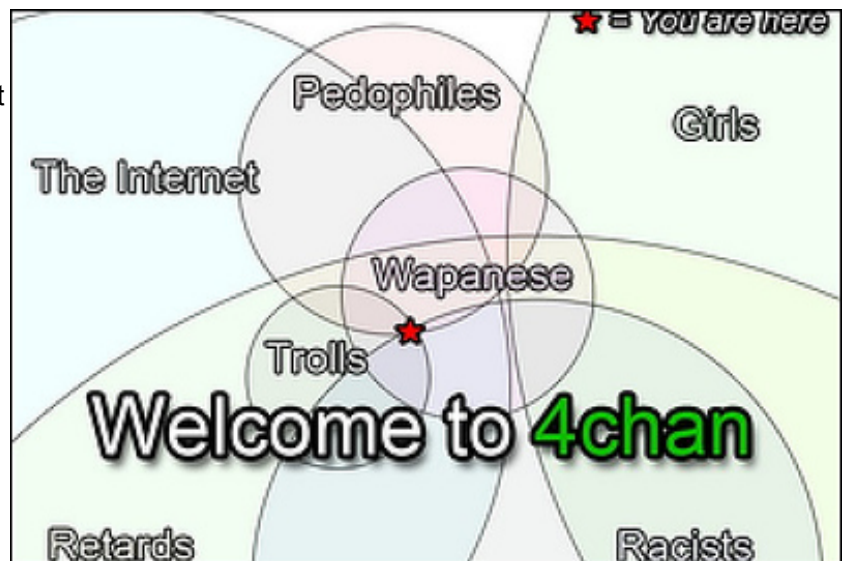
Left (Badiou, 2006)

This image represents a sort of Venn diagram of being and appearance. As I mentioned above, and I'm bastardising Badiou's concept here, I am taking the logical apparatus and applying it to a real world research perspective (at least I am hoping to).

Below is an image from 4chan⁴, produced by an anonymous user (called “anon”). It indicates a specific location online, a point of intersection.

This is how we locate the site, by the inhabitants of the sets that intersect. Importantly, as I have discussed in “Locating the site of internet social research”⁵ and “Consumo-Production”⁶, I conceptualise the site of research across a techno/media/self scape⁷.

Right (Anonymous) (Notice “No Girls on the internet” the internet set and girls set are mutually exclusive)



4 Using the “random” section of 4chan.org has taken me no closer to describing it. I am currently writing an article around a thread I made where “/b/ described /b/” for now; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4chan>
 5 <http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/12/locating-the-site-of-internet-social-research/>
 6 <http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/17/consumo-production/>
 7 See Appadurai's work on scapes in

People engage specific pathways online, they have sites they regularly check, mediums they interface with continually, they have favourites, and off-line they discuss communal locations that they visit individually. A brief example; when asked, people will say the social networking site bebo is for younger people, who later graduate to facebook and that myspace is for more alternative types.⁸

Therefore, it is essential, that researchers concerned with producing empirical, reliable data, direct their attention towards specific *internets*, in this instance specific techno/media/self scapes.

An Hero or An Hoax.⁹

There's a chance that a great many people, thousands even, myself included watch Abraham K. Briggs die last night/yesterday. I came into the office to do some writing. In the writing up phase I still check some of the sites I researched over the past year. Which, after a few clicks lead me to a post called "Ask a guy who's gonna overdose (again) tonight on cam anything". It was started by CandieJunkie, aka Abraham Briggs.

By the time I started watching the video stream on justin.tv CandieJunkie was already motionless and a little while later the police entered his room and then quickly covered the web cam.

The posters on bodybuilding.com's "Misc." section (where the thread started) had mixed reactions. CandieJunkie had posted these things before, people told him to "do it faggot" while some told him that life was valuable and that he shouldn't commit suicide. Others jumped into action just as he started to lie motionless on his bed. "Bulker" on the forum posts the following "Cliff notes";

- CandyJunkie creates thread telling Misc. he'll overdose himself again on drugs live on Justin.tv
- CandyJunkie posts the amount of drugs he's going to take
- Mods don't take it seriously because of his past trolling
- People egg him on
- CandyJunkie posts a copied suicide note
- People keep egging him on- He pops the pills and goes to sleep
- He breathes for a few hours, people think he's going to be alright and keep joking and trash talking on his JTV log.
- Some time later many people realize he was not moving.
- I find his personal details through E-detectivity, I figure out his name and number and location.
- Personal details posted on Misc. I request people to call the cops because I live in India and had no way to make International calls all by myself.
- People tell me he's a troll and nobody calls. Staberella especially is quite a huge cynic and says that he wasn't going to die on that kind of drugs, she insists nothing is going to happen and that people should just gtfo of the thread.
- I send an email to Miami Police on their official email on their website, Email not functioning!
- I call Miami Police from my dad's phone and speak to at least three cops and one person from the 911 line (whatever it is) for over 8 minutes about the situation, the people there do not take the case seriously and tell me to call the sheriff of his county, and give me the sheriff's number even after I told them I was speaking from a different country and that this was an emergency.

8 My own research

9 <http://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=112086241>

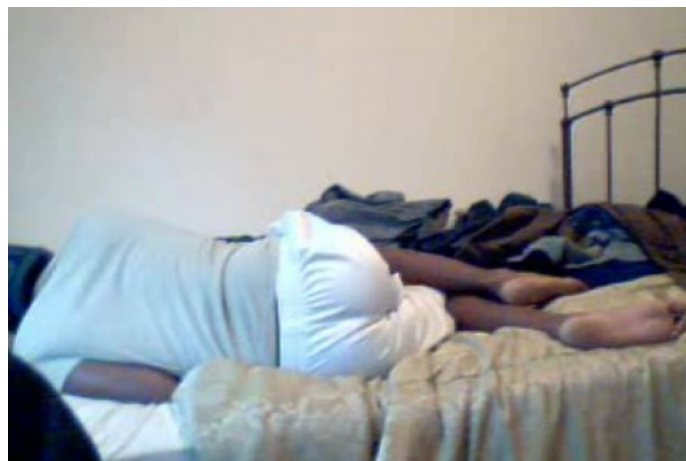
- I post the sheriff's number on the Misc. thread
- People tell me to quit worrying and that they're 100% sure its a loop and he's just fraudin'
- jjlee138 (Rep this dude) calls the Broward County Sheriff's office and speaks to them about the situation along with a couple of other people. By the time I called, it turns out 3 people had already called them about it.
- People wait for the cops to bust in on the JTV cam.
- Some people start thinking nobody called the cops, at least 5 more people call the cops, they were told the cops were on it
- 25 minutes after the first call to the cops, the cops bust in. They cover the webcam
- People speculating whether he's dead or not
- At this point of time a lot of people start deleting/editing their posts everywhere. PM me for the original thread content.
- Friends post messages on his Myspace worried about him, no response from him.
- His best friend posts a thread on the Misc. and informs the people that he's dead.
- Some people still think its a bluff

RIP Abraham Biggs.

As I said in the author's note, I do not want to make light of a potentially grievous situation. This is why it is so important that we research and discuss this issue.

In that light, consider the actions of "Bulker" from the techno/media/self scape. It makes a compelling case for looking at "the internet" from a perspective beyond virtual/real or cyber/flesh, etc. We see that "the web" is an aspect of peoples lives - a dimension of the reality they inhabit.

If this is true, and I keep hoping it's not, RIP CandieJunkie / Abraham Briggs.



(Image capture of "CandieJunkie" / Abraham Briggs during the ordeal yesterday/last night)

Reference List

Badiou, A. 2007 *Being and Event* Trans. by Oliver Feltham, Continuum Publishing Group

Badiou, A. 2006 Drawing from 8 March 2006 "Art's Imperative" lecture

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/1/1d/Badiou_being_and_appearance.png

Sedofsky, L. 1994 Oct Art Forum "Being by numbers - interview with artists and philosopher Alain Badiou - Interview"

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_n2_v33/ai_16315394/pg_1

Stokes, P. 2008 *Consumo-production*

<http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/17/consumo-production/>

Stokes, P. 2008 *Locating the Site of Internet Social Research*

<http://cyberanthropology.wordpress.com/2008/11/12/locating-the-site-of-internet-social-research/>