FILE NAME: Patkane_Careering_7Nov2016

Speaker Key:

S: = Speaker Pat Kane

R1: = Respondent 1

R2: = Respondent 2

R3: = Respondent 3

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S: Thank you very much everyone for turning out, this is a rather grand shell for what I thought was going to be a very intimate graduate and post-graduate seminar, so enjoy the drama of the room at the very least!

S: I am very grateful to be invited to speak to this as I was last month, and as soon as I went to the Ego-Media site and looked at the prospectus and looked at the research agenda, it completely chimed with me on a number of levels. What I want to do with the presentation tonight, which I thought might be useful for you, and I guess you are all involved academically in this area, yes? Are some of you involved with the actual Ego-Media, or the digital aspects? Okay.

S: What I thought might be quite useful for an academic context, just looking at the relationship between media, expressivity, subjectivity, culture, is if I went through a bit of a bio-graphical journey about my usage of my own academic background from the early 80's as a young under-graduate at Glasgow University interested in doing English Literature, literary theory and film and television studies, and how that laid a kind of groundwork. It gave me a set of rules of thumb and was a resource for my subsequent media career or careering and with the full ambiguity of that term.

S: I thought it might be quite useful for you as academics, just to see something which truly has happened to me which was that when I came upon a certain complex of ideas, in the early 80's, coming out of literary theory, coming out of film theory, coming out of continental philosophy and that as a launch pad to many, many, different areas. This theoretical and scholarly and conceptual backpack was actually practically useful to me in my career which ended up being very much about the relationship between ego and media in that I was a musician straight after I left college.

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S: I left university in 1985 and have been sort of figuring out what the relationship is between my ego, the audience's subjectivity and the media between us sort of ever since for the last 30 years. I am very much aware that I am kind of an odd specimen, and am happy to be a specimen, and am happy for you to ask me questions of Ego-Media, the phenomenon of Ego-Media itself.

S: I have been a musician, a named musician. I have by-lines in newspapers. I have parlayed that celebrity and political and civic movement, so I am sort of the object of analysis, but in the course of that existence, I have actually had a relationship, whether it is a coherent or clear or even a regular relationship with the body of theory is maybe for you to judge. I thought it might be interesting to tell it, and tell the story of careering, thinking about reflexivity, coming to a deep understanding of play as a life in the media. I think I have probably capitulated my first two slides after this…hold on… and I just wanted…

S: So, just for the academic among you, I started off being inspired by, I guess what you would call reflective and discursive theories of self and agency relating to the work of people like Anthony Giddens, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault and that sort of sustained me for a period of time and I started becoming more interested in theories of creativity that then would look at the self as a sort of social energy. I know vitalism is probably the correct term, but sort of a vital protean energetic self, so from a reflection of discuss our self-constituted through language, you know super aware of its own processes and of the processes around about that constitute it.

S: Shifting from that to something that's actually looking more for a kind of vital energy that would perhaps keep one going through the contingencies of a media career. As it were, almost reflexivity can get you so far [laughter] and then you need a bit more of a spark to keep you creating and responding and coming up with new content.

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S: So, I became, in recent years, as Max* has been saying, I have been interested in play. I have written a book called *The Play Ethic*. What I have become deeply interested in, in a relationship between the evolved human nature and human sociality in a way that 20 years ago I would have been warned off doing because it would have seemed like socio-biology, or it would have seemed determinist, but I have become much more interested in a relationship between a biological and an evolved account of human creativity and how that explains my own practice and cultural forms in general. That has been the intellectual journey, and if you stick with me for the next 30 minutes, you will see it portrayed through books and artefacts and quotes, so, sort of, have your theory head on and hang on to your hats. Okay.

S: So, this first journey of a reflective Ego-Media subject 1982 to 1988, pop music and the interpolated constructed self. These are the books that I was reading at the time. One is called Theories of Authorship, which was a book of film theory edited by John Caughie. Another one was called Sound Effects by Simon Frith, who I came to know in later years and was a major music academic, sort of sociology of music academic, but also became a judge for American Music Prize. Theories of Discourse and Introduction by Dan Macdonell who sadly died just at the end of my course, but who gave me what is a reasonable first chapter from Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus which I only recently understood in the last three years, which she gave me in 1982, so that's how long I have been struggling to try and figure out what Deleuze means.

S: Movies and Methods by Bill Nichols, again another theory book. Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory, which was an extraordinarily important book for people in my generation, but particularly for myself, was the full range and history of theories about literature and aesthetics but with a very strong left political sensibility all the way through it, and it really prepared me to make arguments and make the case for my art, as it was a very politically engaged time, it was the mid to late 80's. Thatcher was regnant. It was a very helpful book, it was a very practically useful book in giving me a sense of how you could talk publicly about your aesthetic as a political practice, I was making political claims on the world, so Eagleton's book was very helpful in that respect.

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S: Another book that was helpful in that respect was Catherine Belsey's Critical Practice. I guess in terms of, you know, our sociology or an ethnographic account of Ego-Media, these are books that kind of gave a young musician and writer a framework, a very strong explanatory framework of the world, with a kind of self-creation and creativity and this idea of reflexivity, of being in a world where everybody is permanently aware of the processes that constitute them. That theoretical claim is very, very amendable for a young content creator, a young artist creator. That idea that this is how reflexivity and self-awareness is how the world actually is, this is what we value about the world, it is very empowering for one as a song writer or as a writer.

S: Just a little bit of dwelling of some of the concepts. You know, to think of Althusser's idea of the subject, something produced by discourse is actually emotionally to enjoyably throw yourself upon the cultural archive. If Althusser is telling you that the subject is an effect of discourse, then that means that you can actually throw yourself into genres, throw yourself into styles of writing, throw yourself into styles of music and expect that it will constitute you, so it's almost a learning tool. So Althusser almost becomes a kind of learning tool, so I am going to throw myself into James Brown, throw myself into Thomas Pincham, I'm going to throw myself into all these things and I am going to be constituted by throwing myself into that discourse. The authority of Althusser gives you the confidence that it is a risk that you can take. For me, this is a personal journey.

S: Again to think about Lacan and the account that these are, you know, condensed memories of how I was thinking about this stuff at the time. Lacan's idea of the self being forged by entry into the symbolic order, that self always susceptible to pressures from desire, from the unconscious, and that desire is endless and is produced at the very moment that the self is made, and once you grasp that almost poetically and metaphorically, it is powerful. It makes you think that there is a permanent bubbling potential at the heart of your career. It's a motivating concept once you grasp it.

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S: I have talked about Eagleton, and I have to say there is an essay in the *Movies and Methods* by the editor, Bill Nichols, which is called *The Work of Culture and the Age of Cybernetic Systems* and this is written in the winter of 1988, and there is a little graphic in that. A picture of a man leaning over a woman at a computer terminal, and the title of the picture is "The only thing more powerful than the boss [inaudible] computer" and I wrote a song on my first album called The Only Thing More Powerful than the Boss. The song was about two computer operators', entirely inspired by this essay, two computer operators in America who decided to rest the system and turn it against the employers. So, in a sense, that's a story partly about the promiscuity of sources that go into young person making their music, but it's also again, what I would like to… the message I would like to give from this lecture to humanistic scholars is that it is really not as if, what would seem the most abstruse, abstract philosophical text don't have an inspirational impact on the students who master them. They really do and I can say, you know, quite clearly, that this particular body of thinking, again which focused myself on the processes which constructed myself and gave me a sort of confidence to be loose and open and adventurous and enterprising in that sense, which was big at the time, but I think I am happy to regard it as a more fundamental openness to change into creativity but the theory helped, it really helped.

S: Again, this is a kind of slightly weird history, but the title of our first album was taken from a body of essay's called *Seduced and Abandoned: The Baudrillard Scene*, which I picked up from Compendium Bookshop in Camden Town at the height of it's pretentiousness in the late 80's.

S: Again, I am just slightly repeating myself here, but it's the idea that certainly when you are going into the music business where there is a strong… often you are trying to get to the port main stream… there is a strong emphasis towards the power of format and genre. The songs have to be three and a half minutes long, you have a certain structure that you have to conform to, there are pressures to make it radio worthy that come from the record company, from the producer, and you're challenge as an ambitious post punk, which is what I was, was to try and figure out how to keep these formula's.

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S: These genre's vital and full of energy and open to different kinds of influences and certainly the idea that there was a kind of, as Lacan and the French post structural's would talk about it, our desire that you would let yourself open. You would push at your conventionalism and would allow random, odd, in urgent things to happen. The idea that's how life was, that's how you were and that's what powerful art was, was a crust of the norm with desire cracking through it.

S: Again, practically, existentially what is bio-graphically useful and motivational to be a post punk in a music scene, which was trying to figure out how to maintain that spirit in a music market that was becoming very, very dominated by, you know, massively dominated by commercial matters again. Whether it was the rise of MTV or whether it was introduction of the CD, it was a very, very heavily commercial, hyper commercial, often globalising commercial world.

S: The world of early 80's pop and radical theory, you know, helped me think that there was movement and possibility in a scenario that could look incredibly conformist and normative in terms of the kind of music that has been made and the expectations in business, so one felt the 'sugared pill' was the constant metaphor for the idea that you would be bringing something in somewhere in the semiotic construction of your art. Whether it would be a lyrical reference, or whether it would be an image that would point discerning listeners to some completely different world of possibility or alternative knowledge or politics or philosophy and again, to have a dialogue with developing scholarship at that time in critical theory was sustaining. I think that would be a way to describe it, it sustained me.

S: Okay. So, we did have hits. The biggest hit was a song called Labour of Love, which was a song actually completely inspired by Gramscian theory. I can talk about that later if you want, but I then, as Ego-Media was aware, that I had a certain amount of resonance as a public and civic figure and started to use that. I associated myself with various political causes in Scotland at the time.

S: I was involved in T.V chat shows as the articulate pop star and I realised that celebrities could be deployed to bring ideological arguments to the fore, or critical arguments to the fore, in traditional media circumstances.

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S: Again, there is a self-grounding confidence that you need to have in order for you to maintain your cool in front of a live television camera or in front of a T.V interviewer, but it is also good to know that you are in a context and you are aware of the wider context that this particular media performance is in.

S: So again, the scholarship here is like a kit bag of resources that one just reaches into to maintain one's stability, and in circumstances that can be incredibly demanding. They are incredibly demanding because you are trying to create critical ideological or critical spaces in circumstances where you are talking to a Radio One D.J or you are talking to a newspaper journalist or you are talking to a Saturday morning television kid's show and you have to maintain your ability to insert something in there and then deal with the consequences of that.

S: Big ideas, big philosophical concepts anchored me in that circumstance, particularly Habermas. I mean, again, moving on from something that is very deconstructive, but Habermas came along in my life as a philosophy or language that presumed that no matter what was happening at the higher level of rhetoric or distorted communication, that there was a fundamental subjectivity between yourself and the world, and between people and the communities.

S: I found that, I was very much aware, I went to a seminar in the late 80's which Habermas gave at Edinburgh Law School and he often talked about he had a "faith" that no matter the cultural derivation of the person in front of him, he would be able to communicate with that person.

S: So again, I'm beginning to be dis-satisfied with that post-modern reflex of permanently self-critical idea, it's exhausting. Reflexivity is exhausting and it is particularly exhausting when you are in the process of constructing it for a media career. So, I was looking for more resources. I was looking for more, I guess, humanist resources. So, I found it in Habermas.

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S: I began to find it in theories of nationalism that came from people like Tom Nairn and Ernest Gellner and I mean, certainly, just starting to bring the idea of a collect of national identity as a positive thing rather than something that is just a 'bug in the system' when you are trying to be a young media careerist. One is aware of the negative overtones of the ethnic identifications of thinking that the Scottish nation has a future, so I reached for theory, and the theories that I reached for were people like Tom Nairn and Ernest Gellner.

S: So that is some of the resources that I was using to anchor my activism as a pop musician in the public sphere between 1988 and 1993 and again, how this theoretical resource works for someone doing Ego-Media is that it gives you a constant sense that you are above and beyond any particular context that you are in. It allows you to be sanguine about the shockwaves that your particular intervention makes, you can think about it in the context of theories of media or theories of wider cultural and national change.

S: Okay. So, I deployed enough Ego-Media to get myself elected as Director of Glasgow University in 1990. I beat Tony Benn. I'm sorry that I beat Tony Benn, but I did.

S: I lost my major record contract in 1991, partly because my sense of political intervention had pushed it too far for the record companies and one wasn't an attractable media performer anymore. The political associations became problematic for them and that meant that my career movement into something quite different.

S: I was able to use the celebrity that I had generated from pop music and to take that by-line and shift it to other areas of the media. I also was a ten-finger touch typer which my mother forced me to do when I was 17, and for which I have forever been entirely grateful – 45 words per minute if you are asking!... you may not be… but trying to be a useful specimen here.

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S: This is a very interesting era for a tale about how, someone who is an active trader in commercial media relates himself to scholarship of the time. I think there is a connection between myself moving into a kind of freelance zone in which I was moving from gig to gig. I wasn't operating, everything was particular and episodic and zero hours. The gig economy I think they call it these days. I was absolutely doing the gig economy very rigorously between the years of 1992 and 2000.

S: I think it's completely fixed that I began to be really interested in networks and network theories, and thinking about networks and the power of soft technology to shape society. I think I believe that my first Compuserve account was in 1993, and I think my singular experience with that Compuserve account was finding three magazines online that two years before I had only seen in a bookshop in Columbus Circle in New York, and seeing that in a house Partaig. So I had that early 90's tangible experience of the power of networks, simple from people a sort of technophile, and wanting to use my Amstrad for the next possible purpose.

S: I think from the cybernetics essay that I mentioned just before, I began to be incredibly interested in network thinking. *Wired Magazine*, the editor of *Wired Magazine*, Kevin Kelly who wrote a book called *Out of Control*, which is still an amazing book that looks at how networks operate in culture and nature.

S: Emmanuel Castells book *The Rise of the Network Society*, or his trilogy of the *Network Society* and again incredibly useful and expedient for a freelancer to have the idea of there being a tension between the net and the self, which is Castells great concept in the *Network Society*. The net being the hypertext that he was beginning to sort of perceive, really quite early in the mid 90's, which is now sort of thoroughly realised 20 years later, and to the social media landscape that we have at the moment. Castells could see how this was going to play out at the level of subjective experience. He talked about in that 1995 book not virtual reality, but real virtuality.

S: The actual experience itself in the age of hypermedia and hypertext and multimedia and multi-text was itself a very, very mobile, fluid phenomenon and it's been fascinating to dwell on the fact of coming upon a text like this. A well promoted and well marketed text, and I sort of came upon it through the usual routes, through broadsheet papers and so forth but to be prepared for the last 20 years by reading and engaging with Castells in the mid 90's is something I have always been incredibly grateful for.

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S: It is worth noting that it was expedient to my career. At that particular time, I was an idea hungry freelancer, not just trying to survive but actually responding to the proliferation of media forms that were happening as a consequence of media deregulation, and as a consequence of the penetration of networks and everyday life.

S: I think it was Frederic Jameson's essay on post modernism, the cultural logic of a late capitalism that said that whenever you see the word "media" read the word "market" and that was very much my experience at that time. When you saw media you saw market, as in you saw trading and commercial and freelance opportunities. It is something that I am going to have to brood on a little bit more about where the chicken and egg came in this. Whether the theory drove the network culture or network society or whether the network society was emerging with theory. I think there was a lot of social science fiction about what people like Castells and Kevin Kelly were writing that was stretched way beyond what the technological capacities were and way beyond what the nature of the network culture was. I think they were involved in, as I would call it, social science fiction.

S: I think one of the things about embracing network thinking is that, and one of the most interesting things about, you know, the network enquiry, or the enquiry into networks that came from future but was obviously coming from sociology and urban studies, was the way that it jumped as Wilson would say, in a conciliant way from thinking about networks and society, to thinking about networks and nature. Then maybe also thinking about networks in the mind and again one of the interesting things about ideas culture or the marketplace of ideas, or the ecology of ideas and the concept of Ego-Media, you know, people telling the stories through media forms, is that the resources are really thick on the ground.

S: The third culture that I mentioned there, which was a book by John Brockman, which is a sort of collection of writers that sit at the juncture between humanity and sciences. I think that came out late 90's. It is available.

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S: If you are media sensitive. If you have a cultural radar that is looking for ideas and concepts morphing and melding and connecting with others, it is fairly easy for this stuff to come to you. This is coming to me, not in an academic context, it is coming to me in a business context. A reader's context, someone who surfs the magazine shelves, but it is beginning to surf an increasingly rich internet where people are beginning to use it as a kind of "commons of knowledge", I think is a phrase that we all know now.

S: My freelance life, media life, absolutely fit extremely well with this growing interest and the idea of the network as an explanatory trope and metaphor and image for how the world actually works, and maybe also not just how the world works, maybe how I work as more than just a reflective creature but maybe also as a biological creature, so that was interesting to go through that. It was interesting to go through that using this knowledge as a kind of, I guess you could call it a kind of excuse to justify the wildness of one's career at that time. The idea that one was just kind of an adaptive creature jumping from gig to gig and option to option and being that adaptive and adaptability was the prime virtue. You know the relationship between that and the marketisation of society we can discuss. There is theory giving me an anchor in a somewhat more turbulent time.

S: So, all the way through this I am doing the traditional thing, writing columns. I was given two pages to edit in the Glasgow Herald. For a period of time, I was ambitious as I could be with them. A new paper was being launched, I was pulled on to that as a founding editor. Again, the Ego-Media component of this is quite challenged because you are being asked to be a kind of "on the editorial mast head" and not necessarily out front.

S: I think one of the interesting things about Ego-Media is the degree to which one embarks, why one embarks on a media career. I think there is probably quite a lot of therapy to be done in that respect. I may be a therapeutic object at the moment but the idea of being involved in an editorial process and shaping an editorial process in creating a platform that enabled other voices was attractive. It was good if you were going to be involved. If you think the world is operated by networks and as a fluid and energetic network process, then the newspaper is a good place to be in, particularly as the digital realm was opening up, it's a good place to, as it were, in the (inaudible 00:34:49) at the moment curate a set of possibilities. Now a curator feels very much like being an editor. So, that was a sort of a bit of a diminution of Ego and the Ego-Media.

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S: Again, this is just bio-graphical but I decided not to be an editor anymore and to write a book called *The Player* because my experience in a start up newspaper was so appalling that I decided I had to create a completely new paradigm for public life. I think it was the time when I discovered that my keystrokes were being counted and quantified by the Human Resources Department was the point at which I had to go. Again, in terms of Ego-Media, the thing that you do, if you realise that ideas travel through networks with power in the internet age, that can tie the effects of that power to you as an author, as an actor, then the thing to do is to write the book and ensure that when you write the book you launch it in the key newspaper, which was the Observer Life Magazine at the time, and to absolutely insist that the URL is at the end of the article. I remember having a very, very specific fight with the editor at the time who said "do we need to put this is? This looks a bit geeky." I said no, it must be there, you must put in www.theplayer.com, which persists to this day from the date when the article was published, which I think was either 1999 or 2000.

S: So, that went out to about 200,000/300,000/400,000 readership. It immediately had an effect. I immediately was getting hundred's of emails back from this article, which was a front page article on the supplement of the Observer and it's an absolute example of practical Ego-Media, and from the pure promotional marketing sense, I made sure that my name was clear. That my website was clear, that I was available to be contacted, but the intellectual opportunism of the moment is to, which I hope you can see building up from my combined interest in commercial cultural practice as it is explained by wider theories of culture and technology and society.

S: I really try to fuse it all together in the concept of *The Player*. The ideas that were coursing around at the time, a book I have recommended to many people, but if you really want to look at the range of thinking around about Brian Sutton-Smith's *The Ambiguity of Play* is an extraordinary work.

S: Again, I think the idea of writing the book was inspired by the oxymoronic nature of the title *Emotional Intelligence*. That was a power of emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman's book was a kind of oxymoron. Surely emotion and intelligence are antithetical, he brought that together.

S: So, the idea of a play ethic, the idea of something as antic and free as play being tied to an ethos, a way of life, our consistency of approach is what you do when you send out a meme into the network world. You need it to have a certain spark of energy or spark of immediate debate or dialect within the concept itself.

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S: So, then I launched the book and it has been, in terms of the pie chart of my life, which is a third music, a third consultancy, and a third sort of writing. It has been a consistent third of interest from the web, interest from digital culture and from an extraordinarily wide range of organisations that find you through the web and that find the idea through the web.

S: Literally, you begin with the pun of the *Play Ethic* and then your opportunity is to open them out to the range of scholarship or practical ideas or solutions that subtend from that. Well crafted, deliberately crafted, clearly placed, specifically launched meme. I would call it a meme. Deleuze would call it a concept, but a meme will do for me because it goes out into the world and it gathers as one force and it starts to be utilised by other people and it comes back to you in a changed form and you send it out again. To me, it feels like a memetic. It's genetic as in I've made it, but after a certain point, it clearly becomes memetic, it begins to have its own sort of power.

S: Just to kind of quickly get to the end of this. So, then, music sort of came back as a mainstream thing into my life. I will show you this slide which is hilarious… which is me in a programme called Hit Me Baby One More Time, their I am on stage, Hit Me Baby One More Time from the Brittany Spears song, is that correct? We got to the final and were beaten by Shakin' Stevens. None of you will know who Shakin' Stevens is of course...

S: Music came back in and there I was, ready with my theoretical references as usual. What had been interesting about coming back to the mainstream music business again, was that post Napster, the digital revolution really had wreaked havoc on the old business models that I remembered from the late 80's and early 90's. A real de-commoditisation of certainly the record, or the recorded music form, which caused huge institutional fuss and Metallica tried to sue the fans for downloading the records and all that stuff that was going on at the kind of top level, but you know, profoundly for me coming back to the music business, I sort of realised that I was going back into this petri dish for debates about what the nature of network society actually was.

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S: What was happening in the music business was that content by virtue of the culpability of networks and the end to end nature and the copyright flouting nature of digital networks, you know, all the stuff that one might have read a few years ago about the internet being a commons, or being a new kind of common space in a kind of semi-theoretical way was right in front of one. It was right in front of one on the basis of how do we make any money out of a system that has dissolved copyright around about the item that we were supposed to be parlaying which is fresh and original music. I would say that we had to take an ironic approach to our own business model.

S: You know, going back into the business you had to presume that ideas about people stealing your music or downloading your music or pirating your music was just ludicrous so this was a period of time when actually the net was in full flow, it was in it's full disruptive flow and we just had to presume that recorded music was essentially a kind of calling card, rather than a commodity.

S: Again, thank you very much, digital humour [laughter]. Thank you very much, publishers. Thank you very much Waterstones. Thank you very much smart thinking section in the bookshop.

S: There was lots of theory around to sort of help me think about these deeply but also profit from it. Lawrence Lessig wrote an amazing book called *Remix*. I don't know if any of you know the work of Lawrence Lessig at all? He was trying to convince hackers to defend the internet and he gave up with this and instead went off to try and reform Campion Finance for the last five or six years. But this book *Remix* talked about the hybrid enterprise. A hybrid enterprise that would make the most of the open commons, the amazing possibilities for connection with consumers and fans and other musicians and constituencies but could somehow also figure out how to do that old capitalist thing of enclosing something and selling it because you could control it.

S: At that time as well the [inaudible 00:45:15] book *Empire* came out which was just this vast classically idealistic manifesto about how networks and the common nature of networks were far more powerful than capital itself and that there was a commonism, as they called it, that would exert it's power.

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S: This was the time of the carnivals against capitalism. So, there is a very rich stew of ideas here, coming to me and my partner and my brother, and a business partner, trying to figure out how to make money out of our free digital commons. The only solution we came to in this was to, actually [laughter], it's just the truth, the useful theory that helped us get through this process came from a peer to peer network thinker called Michel * Burns* who said "use what is ubiquitous to drive people to what is scarce" said this at a radical conference in London in 2006/2007.

S: "Use what is ubiquitous to drive people to what is scarce". What he meant by that was "Use what is ubiquitous" which is digital content, to drive people to what is "scarce", which is your performance in a room where you control the door and people have bought tickets. Or an object of merchandise that you can sell at that room, or an object that you have put an imprimatur on or as customised to the user.

S: Michel* Burns* also had another brilliant theory that completely fuelled us in building this model which is to say, and I am try to say it right… yes, I won't go back to that because I can't remember it… but the point was that the business model had completely changed in the music business performance and presence was the only way in which you could get money out of a room. The content and digital content in music was possibly financially devalued but had become a kind of social currency, a way to bring people into your community.

S: In terms of Ego-Media and in terms of the relationship between celebrity ego, artist brand name and networks, we got a lot of traction from until about the early 2010's from a platform called Ning. Has anyone heard of a platform called Ning? Ning was a way that you could customise your own social network, you could retain the database of your consumers, it was very, very modular, it could easily respond to flows of usage within it and on that platform we set off something called Hue and Cry Music Club.

S: Again, it was an attempt to have a relationship with the Network Society, with the capacity for users and consumers not just to trade with your content around the networks anyway. They wanted to generate their own content, to record you at concerts, for them to be your T.V. station.

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S: We just decided to embrace that entirely and the confidence to embrace that partly came from an immersion in network theory and an awareness of the transformative power of end to end commons based networks and in a way that helps us to flourish because we weren't railing against something we understood to be completely part of a trend of history.

S: This is perhaps changing now. I mean we might be in a completely different zone with the internet, with the app platform. The app world, which is a much more controlled way to deal with digital flows and digital networks, but for a period of time and maybe up to about three or four years ago, it was exciting to try and figure out new ways to make money out of digital torrent of content coming both ways of a very interactive audience. We weren't freaked by that and I put down the fact that we weren't freaked by that to the fact that for about fifteen/twenty years I had been thinking about society as a vital network entity and that helped that concept, helped deal with a real upheaval in a business model and a commercial business model.

S: So, to conclude, there is a great song Free Man in Paris by Joni Mitchell, does anyone know that song?

S: The star making machinery behind the popular song. I think the point to make in which Castells has made in his recent books, and I am still reading Castells and still getting so much from him, *Communication, Power and Networks*, he talks about a concept of mass self-communication which is kind of clunky but I think gets to the power of the net at the moment.

S: That is a star making machinery. I met at FutureFest last month someone who was an agent of YouTube stars. Do you know what YouTube stars are? These are kids that intensively self-present themselves. That is now a thoroughly managed process. There are kids who develop themselves and then are taken up by management companies and are then developed to be these spontaneous YouTube stars. So, [inaudible 00:51:55] have reacted to emergent popular culture in that way.

S: There is a picture of a YouTube star which I found today and above is a picture of Diamond Reynolds. Anyone know who Diamond Reynolds is?

00:52:12

S: Diamond Reynolds was the woman whose live streaming from her cell phone in July 16th 2016, Falcon Heights, Minnesota, after her boyfriend was shot and killed by a police officer during a traffic stop. Now there is mass self-communication in a very urgent way. It might sound meretricious to think that's star making machinery but I know that Diamond Reynolds has used her ability to communicate mass self-communicate herself in not remotely a dissimilar way that I was doing with media in the late 80's and early 90's but that doesn't require a multifarious apparatus of management and production and promotion. She has the T.V/news station at her hand and I hope that she does use her stardom, and I think she did use her stardom in the context of Black Lives Matter extremely well.

S: So, this is an instant question just in terms of Ego-Media problematic and it's something that we can maybe talk about at a broader level but, are the Ego-Media means/methods/facilitations, are they tools? You know if there are more stars.

S: I keep thinking about the 'fama', you know the roman definition of fame, the public display of character. If there is more public display of character available to more people, does this actually distribute leadership? Castells actually calls them symbolic profits in one of his trilogies 90's books.

S: Is Ego-Media a civic tool? Is it time that we allow people to star-ify themselves, celebrities themselves, narrativize themselves and celebrate that? It distributes a kind of symbolic bio-graphical power to many, many people, or is it a trap?

S: I have been reading in the last couple of days and preparing for this, you know, the persuasive case that celebrity culture, star culture is a way to just embed a kind of capitalist individualism. I mean, it's simply a way to keep people concentrating on their performance as individuals, their performance to particular powers to be, to decollectivize them, to rip them out of solidarities. I don't know. I don't know whether Ego-Media is a tool or a trap.

00:55:31

S: All I know is that from my experience over the last 30 years, is that from having had a lot of luck and a lot of perspiration but a lot of luck in getting into the media platforms that I have had. I have also had this constant meditation going all the time and almost a presentiment, almost an anticipation that the kind of agency that you get by sort of lucking out through the pop media circuits of the late to mid-80's to the mid 90's and maybe the early 2000's, always had a sense that was something that was going to become a social property.

S: It was going to become ubiquitous. Always had a sense in that it wasn't just ambitious chances, you know who would get their ego's in the media, always of a sense that it was going to become more system. My hunch is correct. I suppose my challenge is, I mean I as a truer artist and practitioner, I am in a stable situation, but I think it's a very interesting challenge and it's a challenge I will leave you with which is to say that to what extent should we advocate a kind of silence and invisibility in the face of celebrity culture. You know, to what extent are people anonymous, the hacker activists. To what extent are the dance makers who send their stuff out into the void with only a few vague signifiers attached to them and who believe that the power of what they are doing is about the collective joy rather than individual recognition.

S: Theoretically if you think that Ego-Media is basically capitalist individualism you will support that. You will support popular culture that it faces the subject that proliferates the media and I understand that theoretically, it is coherent with the theory, it is not what I did and the idea that, if not an authentic then at least a sort of coherent and integrated voice comes through the media matrix and states itself. Maybe that's the romantic artist in me, but I still think that has a power and a potentiality about it. I think it's a proper thing to grapple with. In terms of concept of Ego-Media, is it a trap for individualism or is it a tool for citizenship? I think that's a good question to end on and it's one I am grabbling with as a citizen rather than as a commercial person who is exploiting what he has to exploit.

S: I hope that's been interesting.

S: Thank you very much.

S: Any questions that you want to ask? Please, I am delighted to have one?

00:59:00

R1: Thanks very much Pat for giving us so much to think about, it's wonderful to share that story with us. We have got a roving mic here, please use it for your questions because we would like you to be recorded so that it is clear when people are listening to the tape what the answers are to. Would anyone like to start off?

S: We can just cut this part out. You can take as long as you want to do this.

R1: I wanted to start with a quick one which was the slide about James Brown because that is the one that you didn't speak about.

S: Again that was incredibly useful. That was a line from Simon Frith's *Sound Effects* where he wrote a chapter about authenticity. He noted in watching a performance of James Brown at the Apollo Theatre, that he watched it the whole day, and he noted that James Brown, the great avatar of sweaty soul funk, authenticity collapsed at exactly the same point in each one of his matinees at exactly the same musical bar and was helped off in exactly the same way. He was then brought back on stage with the same flourish by his assistant.

S: Now, if you read that as a young media theorising under-graduate and you want to be in the music business, you are in a very odd and queasy space because what James Brown does to you psychosomatically, how it makes you feel is full of energy and empowered. When you realise that is not a transfer from one human to another, it's actually a rhetorical effect, then you are in a situation where you are instrumentalising yourself. You are sort of thinking, okay, what I am doing here might feel good say because I am singing like my father, or say because I like what I am hearing, but when someone analyses that this is actually a series of moves designed to have an impact or an effect on an audience, it puts you in an odd but delicious place because you are in a sense, you are on the line, you are in the liminal space between being fake and authentic. You know between grooving from what you have and realising that one of your great estimations is constructing this performance, after performance, after performance. So, that's an ambiguous, but good place to be.

S: Sorry, you wanted to ask a question?

01:02:06

R2 Following on from what, to what extent in those earliest days do you think the sort of theory that you were reading helped you reflect on what you were doing, or informed what you were doing if you see what I mean. To what extent was it a motivator for… I mean was a sort of conscious aspect of "oh yes, I am presenting myself in a particular way and thus I could do blah, blah, blah" or a mixture of the two?

S: It's very interesting how the idea that you are sending out signs and that those signs are part of signifying systems or genres or codes that to some extent speak to you as much as you speak them.

S: It's interesting because what it does is that it gives you, I guess what the meditators call, a kind of hovering above yourself in the midst of performance. In the early days it was. I guess people like David Bowie are the classic examples of people that you think are giving what they are giving, but they are hovering above themselves and are observing what they are doing in a million different ways. So the theory, the idea that I was doing this, but it was as much being done to me, and I was as much in a discursive space allowed for, how would I put it… sustainability in the music business. It's only when I started to do proper signing lessons, which I never did until sort of the last 10 years, that whole idea that you are consciously doing a technical practice and that you get that to a certain level and then rarely you leap from that practice into a realm that you can predict. That was kind of my experience, thinking I was a semiotic machine, you know, a desiring machine, you know. In the words of Angela Carter, but I got that more, I think better, as a musician later on when I started to do singing practice.

S: So, the concepts in my body in 1987 was I am sending out signs. I don't know whether I am generating or whether they are just there. In the late 2000's it becomes, you know, metaphor's that are about keeping it down or reversing the flow of air so that when you are breathing out you breathe in. These are conceptual distantiations from your authentic expression, you know, and a lot of people in the music business burn out and worse than burn out, just flame out entirely. I think my sense is because they line up their physic engines with their performing front pieces, you know, performing apparatus. I think that can be dangerous. So, I would have said, I think the Russian formula is called [inaudible 01:05:44].

01:05:47

S: I think estrangement as a theory for me was really useful because it helped me kind of observe sustainability, and I actually tried experiments. Experiments with certain ways of looking, certain ways of singing, certain ways of behaving, so the whole story of the art college and the art theory as it is fed into British pop over the years is a coherent story from way back. For me, I guess that kind of reflects and control, or at least reflects of awareness came from early 80's post structuralist, continental philosophy, that's what it did for me.

R3: Thanks, that was a really great talk and I think that one of the issues that we sometimes have thinking about digital culture is either there is a temptation to overstate the continuity, say "oh this is just a development of this thing" or to over state the rupture they represent and it was really interesting to hear about your experience of being a kind of guinea pig, or canary in the coal mine for lots of things. Self-branding and the gig economy, and even the quantification of keystrokes that you now hear a lot about. So, I guess I wanted to hear a bit more about whether you see online culture, in terms of a generalisation or an intensification of things, of if there are things that are sort of qualifiedly different in what the internet has done to culture.

S: It's interesting. I mean it has been a spooky experience to be reading about cybernetic systems and screen journal you know in 1984, 1986, 1987, you know and have a model of how there is a sort of homology between you know thought processes and networks and society.

S: It is quite weird to have thought about that idealistically at a time when I think people were thinking about systems in the late 80's and you were talking about post [inaudible 01:08:13], they were talking about the Fiat Factory floor and they were talking about Rovertisation and it was very big institutional you know.

S: So, it's sort of a validation of the creative and artist imagination that you can take an idea, like networks and think about them and generate a liberator culture, you know and anticipating that. I mean the great writer of this is Greil Marcus and *Lipstick Traces*, where he sort of does a history of punk but goes all the way back to the ranters and goes all the way forward to the situationists and goes all the way forward to the future.

01:09:06

S: Pete Townsend wrote a radio play in 1968 called, I think it was called Gridlock or Gridiron which talked about a network, a powerful network, that the people used through technology to rise up and cease the means of production or control society. You know, so it's artist and cultural practice in the commercial realm. It's very much about trying to take a standard formula and inject it with enough difference and enough novelty that it can be heard amongst the melee you know.

S: It's interesting, I have often thought that before there was Spotify and before there was YouTube and before there was the web, you know, there was the guy with the great record collection, or the guy with album covers that you could pour over.

S: Before there was the internet of articles, there was the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, I guess is a comparison to the British libraries here. You know, you would scan across a shelf and a world of periodicals were available to you so I sort of think in contra distinction to the nudge thinkers who, I don't know if you know about nudge thinking or nudge theory? It's kind of Homer Simpson idea of humanity, we are all inpatient, you now anti-futurist, out of control base emotions driven creatures and more into Lisa Simpson who plays a saxophone and is terribly idealistic. But I think that what is great, what was great about being a post punk musician was that at the moment of punk as it were opened up, MNE networks, I guess when you saw a band there was resonance there that you just had to chase down and you chased it down as well as you could.

S: The MNE was incredibly important at that point. MNE and Melody Maker as a kind of network space was an incredibly important institution. So, and partly why I wanted to tell this history, again as a kind of specimen, was to try and show that there has been, and certainly in the music business, there is a kind of passionate relationship to technology. They move first on synths; you know there is sort of an intensity that is sought out of musical instruments and musical expression that I think… Then maybe it is historically different now, maybe games provide that function now but certainly in the 70's and 80's when music was a semiotic super charger, you know it really was, and I have felt ready for 2016 from about 1985. You know that's sort of the title of the presentation you know.

It's also on the web, so find it at Patkane.global.