Pleasure and Desire in-between Information Technologies: Synthesizing Chun & Galloway

Abstract
How can we think of information technology as politically charged? And how should we respond to its penetration in everyday life? In this essay I explore Wendy Chun’s and Alexander Galloway’s arguments. I argue that Chun accommodates Galloway’s approach by treating technology as materiality and as ideology. Finally the concepts desire and pleasure extricate that synthesizing Chun’s and Galloway’s approach provides new possibilities for an alternative methodology.

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Introduction

Information technology has an indefinite impact on society. Public debates on the influence of technology widely assume that information technologies have the potential to dehierarchize power structures. This popular perception promises that networks have a liberating potential and will grant its users new kinds of freedom. Yet, not all of these freedoms may be what we wanted or desired. The paradox of technology transforms the functional question of ‘what are information technologies and are they new?’ into the political question ‘what information technologies do we have and what will they become?’. The key problem then is to understand information technologies as historically and politically charged.

Media-archaeologists Alexander R. Galloway’s ‘Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization’ and Wendy Hui Kyong Chun’s ‘Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiberoptics’ problemise the politics of information technologies and networks (Galloway: 2004, Chun: 2006). Both authors critically examine the relations between cultural formations and information technologies to delineate how information is connected to power in the age of the Internet. The reading of Galloway’s ‘Protocol’ with Chun’s ‘Control and Freedom’ provides a platform for the intellectual debate about Internet, networks and new media related issues.

This paper places both works within the field of new media studies to investigate which methodological approach is best suited to explain and describe the impact of control technologies on fiber-communities. To bring Galloway and Chun together, this paper summarizes both books to pinpoint similarities and differences. It synthesizes Chun’s and Galloway’s approach using the Foucaultian concept of pleasure and the Deleuzian concept of desire. I will argue that Chun’s works adds to Galloway’s work that is de rigueur. She enriches our current understanding of information technology by adding subjectivity and desire. Including subjectivity and desire as productive forces of the technical could help us imagine what technology might become.
Galloway’s Protocol

In ‘Protocol’ Galloway seeks to ‘give face’ to the contemporary system of control: protocol. The concept protocol refers to the technology of organization and control operating in distributed networks. It is a widespread control apparatus, or ‘distributed management system’, that is inherent to the material infrastructure of the Internet (Galloway, 2004). Galloway seeks to explain how distributed networks themselves offer a novel form of control and how computational information is tied to power. To frame this question, he draws on the works of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. Within this framework, protocol is regarded as the panopticon of the Deleuzian control society. It is the material core that governs and brings into being certain participatory techniques and behaviours.

Galloway maintains that understanding the functioning of protocol requires a materialistic understanding. He states:

“Protocol is a circuit, not a sentence.” (Galloway, 2004: 53)

Following Karl Marx, Galloway argues that information technologies subsume the visual episteme of the Enlightenment. Information technologies, protocols, languages, and computational algorithms erase the visual. They negate their own object because of the naturalization of power. That is to say, biopower devises itself by producing power relations that construct ways of looking and thinking about reality. The naturalization of power thus states an a priori rule of protocol as the embodiment of power.

Because protocol is materially immanent, (non)human actors are required to behave according to the protocological code. It creates cultural objects and engenders life forms by making immaterial desires concrete. For Galloway, the best response to protocological control involves exploiting protocol as political tactic. He advocates the tactic of engagement through which protocol is pushed into a state of hypertrophy. The concept hypertrophy demonstrates that to exploit protocol we must re-direct our actions and motions. We should not fight against it, but explore its vulnerabilities ‘inside’ the laws of protocol. Protocol itself becomes the object of resistance in which
its form could be reshaped. This political tactic of engagement is a necessary condition to imagine a protocological future that offers new forms of organization. Galloway’s ecological journey demonstrates that protocol is the dominant hegemony in the age of distributed networks. The material substrate of protocol is dialectically regressive and this offers opportunities to change its topography.

Chun’s Freedom & Control
In ‘Freedom & Control’ Chun investigates how and why the Internet has been accepted as a medium that is indistinguishable from paranoid control. For Chun, this phenomenon is due to the ideological conflation of two paranoid myths: the Internet as total control, and the Internet as total freedom. Both myths are based on the illusory promises of empowerment. For example, the regulation to access content (i.e., dividing content into good or bad) delegates power to its users. These myths assume that individuals using technology determine the result. The promise of empowerment, however, ignores how technology itself determines or forms the result and its users. It seeks to resolve offline political problems using online technological solutions which in turn generate mass surveillance paranoia.

The ideological conflation of myths with technology demonstrates how agency and subjectivity have changed. That is to say, how these paranoid narratives change usage, parlance, and interpretations of self and reality. According to Chun, these transformations are constantly disseminated and regenerated in the historical-political systems of the Internet. Human and non-human actors generate meaning as subject or object because we are all inherent to the system. Because we are ‘in circuit’, the system itself comes into being.

Like Galloway, Chun combines the works of Foucault and Deleuze. She traces the genealogy of popular perceptions of technology and technological protocols by connecting mythologies with the reality of fiber-optics. That is to say, making the invisible and internalized political power relations of networked contact visible. This enables us to understand how sexuality, race and behaviours are negotiated through fiber-optics. Thus, how fiber-optics represent the Foucaultian ‘technologies of self’
(Foucault, 1988). To delineate the *subjugated knowledge*\(^1\) hidden behind the myths of information technology, Chun affiliates control with freedom.

Following Foucault, Chun states there are no power relations without resistance. In Chun’s case resistance is a self-produced technological formation. Resistance is thus inherent to the systems in which it operates. Because power is fuelled by resistance, power cannot grow or emerge without acts of resistance. In the age of fiber-optics power is implicitly exercised by the technological apparatus itself as well as the myths misrepresenting the source of power.

The myths of freedom versus control implicitly design our experiences by colouring it. They racialize and sexualize the Internet’s content and form and eventually generate paranoia. To move beyond these paranoid responses to technology and explore technology’s democratic possibilities, Chun proposes a new understanding of subjectivity. Conflating myths with technology paralyses freedom: the myths are forms of constraints that re-establish rather than abolish power relations. Freedom should not be understood as a neutral being or free spirit, but as a subjugated force that is in a constant state of becoming. Chun states,

> “Freedom cannot be reduced to something innocuous. Freedom entails a decision for life and death. This choice is more pressing than ever because biopower has been made symbolic (minus the symbolics), if not semantic.” (Chun, 2006: 296)

Chun opposes a repressive hypothesis of fiber-optics to biopower: freedom is paralyzed when conflated with control. We must refuse current understandings of freedom and take fiber-optics literally to see their democratic possibilities. Understanding freedom as an integral part of technology and subjectivity, allows us to investigate possibilities that go beyond control.

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\(^1\) According to Foucault, subjugated knowledge is a whole set of knowledges that are either hidden behind more dominant knowledges (Foucault, 1980: 82). These knowledges can be revealed by critique, can be explicitly disqualified as insufficient to their task, or can be elaborated. This concept is closely connected to the Foucaultian concept of ‘power/knowledge’: knowledge of how people’s behaviour can be affected.
Similarities Chun & Galloway

Chun and Galloway open up new issues concerning information technologies with a new depth and precision of analysis. Both provide well-researched correctives to popular and academic thinking about the possibilities of information dominion. These accessible and thorough accounts provide new media studies not only with philosophical but with practical and technical understandings of information technologies. They enables us to reconfigure thinking about subjectivity, information systems and the everyday in relation to new media.

The contributions of Chun and Galloway for new media discourses lie in their methodology. They turn the descriptive question of ‘what networks do we have’ into the political question ‘what networks do we desire’. For Chun and Galloway, information technologies exist in ‘dual’ spaces: they exist at once as material opacities (i.e., networked media as form consists of specific layers) and as representations of content (i.e., networked media hides its operations and/or functioning within a larger political-economic context). Because information technologies literally construct and structure ways of seeing, knowing and doing in the world, we have to understand their underlying algorithms. Evoking these structures requires a political and technical approach. An approach that acknowledges technology’s materiality – its specificity – to develop an awareness of that recognizes and articulates the politics ‘behind’ information technologies. This approach is what Katherine Hayles calls medium specific criticism (Hayles, 2001). Although Chun and Galloway have a different understanding of the technical, both interrogate a number of general assumption about information networks. These interrogations produced a fundamental recasting of basic ideas on the exercise of power, the characteristics of control, the characteristics of resistance, and profound investigations of subjectivity and desire.

To comprehend how information flows and technology affect (non)human behaviours and body-environment relationships, both authors date and reconfigure the works of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. We might even say that they have fused Foucault and Deleuze into a post-Foucault/Deleuzian approach. Chun and Galloway both use the Deleuzian control society to reframe the Foucaultian concepts of biotechnico power and bio-politics within the age of networked contact. Deleuze’s
‘Postscript on Control Societies’ has been crucial to Chun and Galloway (Deleuze, 1992). In that short essay Deleuze describes how ‘forms of apparently free-floating control [...] are taking over from the old disciplines at work within the time scale of closed systems’ (Deleuze, 1992: 178). Chun and Galloway use this Deleuzian stage to demonstrate how power has changed from bodily authorities (i.e., policemen, teachers, doctors and so on) to abstract and binary authorities (i.e., computer code and protocols). This reshaping of the architectonic form of power in addition to the naturalization of power within the realm of the digital computer lies at the heart of ‘Protocol’ and ‘Freedom and Control’. Although both authors draw on similar concepts, Galloway unlike Chun uses a dialectical approach to study the development of distributed networks. He states that the development of productive forces in networked contact is always a dialectical process. Information technologies create a whole new system of exploitation that is not only evident across the Internet, but also in the biological realm. Contrasting with Galloway’s Foucaultian contre-histoires² of technology, Chun moves beyond the dialectics of technology (Devyver, 1973). To understand technology not solely as heterotopia, but as rhizomatic subject/object³. This Deleuzian understanding of technology as multiplicity is for Chun a way to escape dialectics: to forget about dualisms and dialectical syntheses (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980).

Despite their different approaches to technology as ideology or political tool, Chun and Galloway both acknowledge the paradox of technology. In the words of Galloway: the protocological contradiction (Galloway, 2004). This paradox demonstrates that control in networked systems is endogenously distributed, yet arbitrary defined. It furnishes the basis of understanding the technical as inherently integrated into systems of control. As Galloway points out, information technologies bring openness and regulation into equilibrium. They homogenize differences and turn information in the hands of the technical. Like Galloway, Chun interprets networked systems as being in a state of paradox. Being both controllable and uncontrollable at the same time. She states that regardless of this contradiction

² This concept describes the relationship between different levels of historical analysis and how and why particular narratives resurface and are recontextualized for political ends (Devyver, 1973).
³ Chun argues that cyberspace has a mirroring ability. It is able to represent itself as utopia and as heterotopia. It disseminates what it destroys (i.e., the real and tangible body) and reflects what it denies (i.e., the ‘other’ virtual identity represented in cyberspace).
technologies cannot guarantee freedom nor control. That is to say, technologies cannot determine their result. Instead, she asserts that we need to go beyond a Galloway’s technological-deterministic understanding of technology and move towards a holistic understanding. An understanding in which technologies and subjects are in a constant state of becoming.

The close ties of Chun and Galloway demonstrate that there is much at stake when considering the results of the mainstreaming of information technologies. The fact that both authors reject semiotic research and prefer a technical understanding of systems in circuit bears significance. It attests that contemporary methodologies suffer from a lack of insight and need to be reconfigured. Chun’s and Galloway’s work suggest that if we want to understand what new media technologies are, we need to take the systems literally. That we need a technical understanding of technology to critically understand and reflect on technology’s workings within techno-culture.

**Differentiating Chun & Galloway**

So far I have outlined some transversal lines between Chun’s ‘Control and Freedom’ and Galloway’s ‘Protocol’. I asserted that both works can be seen to be building a vocabulary and methodology with which to address techno-cultural changes. It remains for me to address the differences between these two authors. Let me now zoom-in on two conflicting solutions to the following questions: how to resist control systems and how to understand subject-object relations in control systems.

To understand the face of our contemporary techno-culture, Chun and Galloway draw on two different interpretation of the technical. Galloway objectifies the technical, whereas Chun extends the technical by merging it with subjectivity. For Galloway, protocol is the embodiment of power. Power has become naturalized and objectified. Following Karl Marx, Galloway argues that protocol is second nature. This ‘model’ of protocol allows Galloway to assert that protocol is materially immanent. Protocol transforms immaterial desires into concrete objects. Because protocols are self-deterministic (i.e., they never contain their own protocol), we need to understand how computational data is connected to power. How the computer constructs ways of
seeing, knowing, and doing in the world and how it shapes our model of the world through computer use? To evoke the control structures of protocol, Galloway advocates tactics of engagement. This is what he and Eugene Thacker call *hypertrophy*. In ‘The Limits of Networking’ Galloway and Thacker argue that the only way to counter protocological power is to supersede resistance as political engagement. They state,

“There are two direction for political change: resistance implies a desire for stasis or retrograde motion, but hypertrophy is the desire for pushing beyond. The goal is no to destroy technology in some neoluddite delusion but to push technology into a hypertrophic state, further than it meant to go. We must scale up, not unplug.” (Galloway & Thacker, 2006)

Galloway and Thacker assert that hypertrophy is the deconstruction of the computer’s ontological status. It is the exploitation of technical vulnerabilities from ‘within’ the control system to reshape its form. Negotiating and exploiting the openness of protocol would enable users to sculpt its form into something that better fits their desires.

Contrasting Galloway and Thacker, Chun interprets resistance not as a political act but as heterogeneously interconnected to systems of control. For Chun, resistance is inherent to the nonautonomous power of networks. Power thus always requires resistance and without resistance there would be no power or control (see Dreyfus & Rabinow: 1982, Foucault: 1980). Although experiences and desires are channelled through the control system, this doesn’t mean that technology as structuring agent determines the result. Protocol’s openness allows protocological objects and subjects to manipulate its form and therefore to explore protocol’s democratic possibilities. These manipulation possibilities demonstrate how control systems will fail without resistance. Because control systems are in constant state of collapse, they cannot reach their goal of totality and universalism. This difference between Chun and Galloway lies in their understanding of mind and matter (i.e., the body). In the introduction of ‘Protocol’ Galloway states that he is ‘largely concerned with bodies and the stratum of computer technology’ (Galloway, 2004: 18). He interprets the mind
or the spiritual as being matter\(^4\). In his passages about DNA and biometrics he states,

“[B]iometrics [...] considers living human bodies not in their immaterial essences, or souls, or what have you, but in terms of quantifiable, recordable, enumerable, and encodable characteristics. It considers life as aesthetic object.” (Galloway, 2004: 113)

Galloway transforms the ideological problem of life and existence into the material problem of coding. Chun, on the other hand, is more cautious in making such generalized statements. Instead, she asserts that power and resistance are symmetric processes that are part of the practice of existence. It implies a relation of power where subjectivity requires active participation of the object of transformation. The passage of becoming of substances is thus an intense continuum wherein subjects and objects simultaneously subscribe and make relations. For Chun, Galloway’s reduction of the subject to the mere question of belonging to matter is unsustainable. It implies a fundamental separation between the process of access and the process of the subject’s self-transformation. Conditions for change are not identified in the assemblage of multiple subject-object relations, but rather in the concrete forms of existence.

The technical solutions of Galloway and Chun to resist power in control systems could be associated with two methodological approaches: \textit{aesthetic materialism} and holism. Galloway asserts an aesthetic materialistic approach to delineating the \textit{desiring machine} of protocol (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972). In short, he seeks to understand the immaterial in the material. Although this approach is not exactly McLuhanesque, he tends towards reductionism. Galloway construes the semiotic as an unpractical tool for understanding and transforming technologies. Rather, we should exploit and deconstruct the material to understand and transform the mechanic system of control. This approach seems to disregard that protocols are created by humans. It also implies that vitality in mechanic systems can exist without

\(^4\) Galloway interprets the mind as second nature: the mind is naturalized in matter. That is to say, he synthesizes life and matter: matter is life, and life is matter.
human input or agency because human subjectivity is regarded as codified object. The objectification or codification of life converts power into a quantifiable force: the embodied currency of desire that channels its outcomes. It makes no distinction between subject-to-subject or object-to-subject interactions and risks of disregarding the productive forces of human subjects altogether.

Unlike Galloway, Chun has an holistic understanding of technology. She interprets technology as an ideology of both subjects and objects. Technology consists of syntheses of content and form generated by the multiplicity of assemblages of objects and subjects. For Chun, power relations in information networks cannot simply be explained through some technological feature, but rather through everyday usage and parlance. Chun argues that we need to understand the dissemination and regeneration of digital content as integral processes of technology, and subjectivity as a nonautonomous power. In other words, content-form and resistance-control are ‘different sides of the same coin’ (Chun, 2006: 71). Chun’s approach seeks to delineate two things. On the one hand, the historical contents that have been buried and masked in the formalized system of the computer code. On the other hand, unpacking the theoretical implications of the relations between perceptions of technology and technological protocols.

The differences between Chun and Galloway demonstrate what is at issue in the age of information networks: it is not a question of whether information technology is new or good, but how the ever-growing assemblage of knowledge, power and technology constructs the world and ourselves. Of particular interest is the problem of the relationships between systems of power and phenomena of resistance. Or, the rule of systems of control. Whereas Galloway states that protocol works at the level of desire as the embodiment of power, Chun dissolves the imaginary contradiction of control versus freedom by exploring the interplay between power, knowledge and pleasure.
The Power of Pleasure & Desire

Connecting power, knowledge, desire and pleasure might help us understand how we can synthesize Chun’s and Galloway’s works. I argue that these books must be used, rather than read as theories claiming the truth of techno-cultures. What knits both books together is the relation between theory and society. For Chun and Galloway it is not a question of representation, but of relations by which societies produce theories, the world, and the self. To understand how Chun and Galloway analyzed these multiple relations, I draw on Michel Foucault’s concept of pleasure and the Gilles Deleuze’s concept of desire.

Michel Foucault states that power ‘must be understood […] as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization’ (Foucault, 1976: 26). For Foucault, every relation of forces is a ‘power relation’ (Deleuze, 1986: 72). Power, however, is not fundamentally repressive but is the physics of abstract actions. Power is situated in an arrangement whose internal mechanism produce relations through which actors are able to act. His conception of power is closely related to pleasure. Foucault’s pleasure delineates a formulation of the constitutive aspect of freedom within power relations. Because power can only operate on the terrain of freedom, we are able to understand forms of subjectivity as well as power relations themselves. Pleasure simultaneously problematises why we recognize ourselves as subject of desire and not as agents of pleasure. Thus, why does pleasure play a relatively small part in our theorization, reflection and ethics of humanity? According to Foucault, Christianity’s ethical discourse placed accent on the regulation of pleasures (Foucault, 1976). Subjects were supposed to gain mastery over one’s pleasures to become truly free beings. This assumption brought forces into play in which objects and subjects were analogous to ethical material. Foucault, however, rejected this repressive hypothesis by recognizing the dynamic and circular relations between acts, pleasures, and desires. And that we should understand pleasure as a productive force in power relations: to understand with what force agents are transported ‘by pleasures and desires’ (Foucault, 1976: 43).

As Foucault demonstrates, the concept of desire has a long philosophical and ethical tradition that could be traced back the Greek and Greco-Roman ethical discourse.
Generally, desire is understood as negative or a lack in being that strives to be fulfilled. Unlike Foucault, Deleuze seeks to rescue desire from the rhetoric of lack and tries to reconceptualize it in positive terms. For Deleuze, desire produces reality rather than alterity or lack. In ‘Desire and Pleasure’ Deleuze explains why he chose desire over the Foucault’s preference of pleasure. He states,

“For me, desire does not comprise any lack; neither is it a natural given; it is but one with an assemblage of heterogeneous elements which function; it is process, in contact with structure and genesis; it is affect, as opposed to feeling; it is “haecceity” (individuality of a day, a season, a life), as opposed to subjectivity; it is event, as opposed to thing or person.” (Deleuze, 1977)

Although desire and pleasure are both productive forces, desire functions at a different field: the field of immanence. It is the multiplicity of mechanic relations between power, knowledge and desire. Desire is continuously connected, transversely tied and created by abstract machines of desire, multiplicity, and creation.

What seems to be the main thrust of the Deleuzian conception of desire is the production of an alternative to the Foucaultian power/knowledge relations. For Foucault, pleasure and subjects are continuously and circularly created and enclosed by power. These systems of power function as disruptions and have an immediate and direct relation to the body and the fluidity of flows. For Deleuze, desire is the negotiation of a field of immanence. Desire denotes the deterritorialisation of assemblages, whereas pleasure denotes the reterritorialisation of assemblages (Deleuze, 1977). In short, Foucault’s pleasure seems to be on the side of

5 Deleuze’s field of immanence refers to what he calls his empiricist philosophy based on the empirical real rather than the transcendental.
6 Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze’s concept of machines could be understood as any point at which flow either leaves or enters a structure (Deleuze & Guattari: 1972). The body retains its own force of creating assemblages which allows desire to flow. Flow can be described as both belief and desire which are two aspects of every assemblage. For Deleuze and Guattari, the body without organs is desire: ‘it is that which one desires and by which one desires’ (Deleuze & Guattari: 1980).
organization whereas Deleuze’s desire simultaneously functions on the side of organization and on the side of internal and external lines of flight.

**Synthesizing Chun & Galloway**

The concepts of pleasure and desire can be used to synthesize the works of Chun and Galloway. I will demonstrate how both authors fuse these concepts as means to map techno-cultural experiences in the age of digital networks. This provides the basis for the argument that neither Chun’s nor Galloway’s work can be categorized as being solely post-Deleuzian or post-Foucaultian.

Galloway argues that protocol is the embodiment of power that functions at the level of desire. We might even say that he interprets protocol as a desiring machine: a control mechanism that produces desire. Galloway’s understanding of protocol therefore seems to follow a Deleuzian rather than Foucaultian approach. In ‘A Thousand Plateaux’ Deleuze and Guattari state that every machine is connected to other machines (Deleuze & Guattari: 1980). Each machine simultaneously breaks and generates flows in the networks of machine. Alongside the network’s points of flight, organization and subjectivity are produced. Desire is thus a productive force and at the same time produced by flows in mechanisms of control. Although Galloway does acknowledge desire as productive force, he does not regard desire and subjectivity as produced by the protocological system. According to Galloway, one can resist protocological power by exploiting its technical flaws. That is to say, one can sculpt protocol by pushing it into a state of hypertrophy. He illustrates this sculpting ability using tactical media and Internet art projects. This assumption, however, disregards that the desire to sculpt protocol’s form is inherent to protocological power. It seems to challenge the Deleuzian conjunction of multiplicity, continuity and creation in systems of control. Galloway’s aesthetic materialistic understanding of protocol therefore gives the impression that it is more affiliated with Foucaultian pleasure than with Deleuzian desire.

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7 Deleuze’s lines of flight is synonymous to assemblage.
Chun, on the other hand, argues that paranoia is the model for the production of a human being capable of responding to ambivalent power relations. It is an active paranoia as process, not as medical condition. The politics of paranoia aim to break down the dichotomy between freedom and control, so that people can learn how to desire and how to enjoy ambivalent power relations in networked contact. Chun’s model of paranoia therefore has affiliations with Deleuze’s concept of desire. Seen from the standpoint of desire, paranoia is nothing other than an actively produced response to the biopolitical. It is the desire to handle with multiplicities and immanent relations that exist in our techno-culture. A desire that is historically coded and actively produced by systems of control. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Chun argues that the identity of effects (i.e., the systems of control) can only be obtained by means of an abstract machine capable of covering and creating assemblages that plug into and take charge of desire. It functions at the field of immanence that cannot be reduced to means of bordering. Chun’s response to Galloway’s ‘Protocol’ demonstrates this irreducibility of the biopolitical. For Chun, desire cannot be marginalized by the technical. Desire and protocological power like freedom and control are rather ‘two sides of the same coin’ (Chun, 2006). In addition to this Deleuzian understanding of paranoia as the desire for deterritorialisation, Chun also interprets paranoia as a kind of pleasure or reterritorialisation. Paranoia as means for a person or subject to ‘find themselves again’ in the overwhelming process of ambivalent power relations (Deleuze, 1977). Chun, however, refuses to accept paranoia as a proper way to explain and respond to information technologies. Like Foucault, she states that power and resistance are symmetrically distributed in information networks. This conflation of power and resistance is crucial to understand the technology itself, subjectivity as productive force, and the democratic possibilities intrinsic to fiber-optic networks. It enables us to imagine a nondelusion freedom in fiber-optic networks: the possibility of freedom beyond control (Chun, 2006).

Although their methodologies differ, both produce a Foucault-Deleuzian assemblage of desire and pleasure. They merge desire and pleasure into a hybrid concept that deterritorializes and reterritorializes power relations. Chun’s and Galloway’s usage of the terms allows us to interpret these works not as representations of Deleuze or Foucault, but as constructing new archaeologies of our techno-culture.
Conclusion
The works of Galloway and Chun delineate how information technologies are in a constant state of collapse. Technology is historically and politically charged and we need to understand its technical inners to explore its possibilities. Although both authors draw heavily on concepts of Deleuze and Foucault, ‘Control and Freedom’ and ‘Protocol’ should not be labelled as post-Deleuzian, post-Foucaultian or even post-Marxist. Both books mix certain concepts to a ‘new’ or hybrid approach to the biopolitical of information networks. Placing Chun or Galloway in one of these categories disregards the diversity and broadness of their research.

It should be noted, however, that Chun leverages Galloway’s short-coming by extending the power of protocological control beyond the technical as object. For Chun, information technology is an assemblage of power relations in which desire and pleasure productively force freedom and control to flow. Instead of creating paranoid representations of technology, we have to construct ideology neutral political theories of technology. These ideology neutral vocabularies and methodologies contribute to envision new kinds of information networks and to overcome techno-social obstacles.

The political paradox of information technologies provides a platform for critical debates on the relations between technology, theory and society. To guide these discussions and become fully engaged, new media theorists need to re-address networks in terms of materiality and subjectivity: as a plane of immanence.

Bibliography


