# *Thanks for Watching: An Anthropological Study of Video Sharing on YouTube*
## By Patricia G. Lange
## Study Guide - Digital Cultures Course

### Chapter 1 – Introduction (pp. 3-31)

The introduction explains the multi-year ethnographic research project and the book's goal of re-theorizing core anthropological concepts by studying socially-oriented video bloggers on YouTube. It explains how the book will challenge discourses such as the supposed offline/online binary, over-hyped concerns about narcissism, and assumptions that anonymity online cannot spur meaningful interaction. It introduces how Lefebvre's concept of rhythm analysis will be used throughout the book.

**Key Words:** video blogging (vlogging); ethnography; participant-observation; community; reciprocity; chronotopes; posthumanism; narcissism; anonymity; monetization; commercialization; Lefebvre's rhythm analysis; video's "pace of receptive vitality"; "third wave of networked access"; computer modalities

### Discussion Questions

1. What is "YouTube"? What is its history? What are its multiple meanings and connotations of usage? How might it serve as an orienting framework for studying sociality through video sharing?

2. What is anthropologist James Clifford's idea of a "partial view" of a culture? The book offers a "partial view" of YouTube (6). How does any study of YouTube represent a "partial view" of its uses and meanings? Why does the book say it will offer an "alternative narrative" of YouTube (6-7)?

3. What is the book's methodology? How does temporality and Lefebvre's idea of rhythm analysis inform its approach? How does its methodology differ from prior ethnographies and studies of digital interaction?

4. Examine the lines of evidence that the book draws on for its analysis (11-14). Why might it be useful to involve multiple types of data in the analysis? What might be learned from interviews, observations, examining videos, and actually participating on the site that might not be learned from the other methods?

5. Many studies of YouTube focus on analyzing videos. How might other forms of data collection deepen understanding of maintaining sociality through video sharing? Does a person studying video sharing need to maintain their own channel/account on the site they are studying to understand it? Explain.

6. What is the "third wave of networked access" (17-18). What are the first two waves? How close or far are we from achieving democratized access to the internet? What is meant by "internet access"?

7. How does the book define "modality" in its analysis of video sharing? Why might focusing on "degree of intensity" and "type" of mediation be more productive than analyzing online versus offline interaction?

8. Why is terminology about networked interaction complicated (18-21)? Is YouTube interaction real? Virtual? Actual? Physical? How is interaction between online and offline " blurred" in your experience?

9. Scholars have claimed that video is inherently narcissistic. Why does Lange argue that it is problematic to use pathological psychological terms to characterize everyday video sharing? What criteria should be used to determine when media is narcissistic?

10. Online interaction is said to be anonymous, yet Lange argues that this is an overstated assumption. Discuss how certain in person interactions are experienced as anonymous, and how types of online interaction take place between people who know each other.

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 1**

Boellstorff, Tom, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T. L. Taylor. 2012. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Burgess, Jean, and Joshua Green. 2018 [2009]. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Gauntlett, David. 2011. *Making Is Connecting*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Lange, Patricia G. 2009. "Videos of Affinity." In *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, 228–247. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden. [available online]

Lefebvre, Henri. 2004. *Rhythmanalysis*. London: Continuum. [Chapter 1, "Critique of the Thing;" Chapter 3, "Seen from the Window;" Chapter 8, "Conclusions"]

Nardi, Bonnie. 2015. "Virtuality." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44: 15–31.

Strangelove, Michael. 2010. *Watching YouTube: Extraordinary Videos by Ordinary People*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

**Chapter 2 – YouTube Initiation: Participating Through a Camera (pp. 32-68)**
Lefebvre argued that social insight may be revealed by attending to cycles and stages of interaction over time. This chapter analyzes the initiation phase of joining YouTube and argues that online narcissism claims are overblown. The chapter identifies a centripetal, creative, and social force pulling YouTubers into a democratized vision of sharing videos, thus illustrating Jenkins' idea of "participatory cultures." The book also tackles criticisms of participant-observation. Participating through a camera collapses observation and activity in a way that reclaims this concept in video making circles and in anthropology.

**Key Words:** Lefebvre's rhythm analysis; narcissism; exhibitionism; participatory cultures; participant-observation; observation of participation; invisible wall in documentary filmmaking; videoactive context; centripetal participatory forces; media ideology; participation dilemma; prideful conundrum

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the typical origin story for YouTubers in the book when they first encountered the site? What was your origin story with regard to posting on social media? Have you experimented with different accounts, or have you maintained a single, consistent presence on each site? How does your self-presentation differ or stay the same across different type of social media?

2. Under what circumstances should a documentary filmmaker maintain an "invisible wall" of filmmaking, and what circumstances might invite more participatory, vlogging-style recording?

3. What constitutes "participation" on YouTube? Drawing on the definition by Henry Jenkins, does Lange argue that YouTube supports "participatory cultures" (36-37)? Explain. What is the role of a "lurker" in a robust participatory culture (50-54)?

4. What does it mean to say that a video is "narcissistic"? What are the qualities of a narcissistic video? Why does Lange argue that discourses of narcissism tend to be "cyclical"?

5. The text cites evidence that behaviors labeled narcissistic might actually be labeled "exhibitionist" (43-44; Maddox 2017). What is the difference? Why might it be important to make this distinction? What role does temporality play in expressions of video narcissism over time?

6. When should something be recorded and when should someone put down the camera? What does it mean to say "life is footage"? How do these views constitute "media ideologies" (56; Gershon 2010)?

7. Is participant-observation an oxymoron? How do criticisms of this concept potentially reinforce outdated Cartesian mind/body dualisms?

8. Why does Lange suggest that the video drum circle is an apt metaphor for creating video sharing platforms that support sociality? How does it promote what Lefebvre referred to as "eurhythmia"?

9. What does Müller mean by the "participation dilemma" (67)? How are digital participants faced with a "prideful conundrum" (67; Lange 2014) when learning new skills in public? Is there a solution to these dilemmas?

10. How did Lange's role as a participant in the community impact the data she collected and the analysis in the book?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 2**

Griffith, Maggie, and Zizi Papacharissi. 2010. "Looking for You: An Analysis of Video Blogs." *First Monday* 15 (1). [available online]

Jenkins, Henry, with Katie Clinton, Ravi Purushotma, Alice J. Robison, and Margaret Weigel. 2006. *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Chicago, IL: MacArthur Foundation. [available online]

Krauss, Rosalind. 1976. "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism." *October* 1: 50–64.

Lange, Patricia G. 2015. "Vlogging toward Digital Literacy." *Biography* 38 (2): 297–302.

Lange, Patricia G. 2007. "The Vulnerable Video Blogger: Promoting Social Change through Intimacy." *Scholar and Feminist Online* 5 (2). [available online]

Maddox, Jessica. 2017. "'Guns Don't Kill People . . . Selfies Do': Rethinking Narcissism as Exhibitionism in Selfie-Related Deaths." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34 (3): 193–205.

Müller, Eggo. 2009. "Where Quality Matters: Discourses on the Art of Making a YouTube Video." In *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, 126–139. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden.

Purcell, Kristin. 2013. *Online Video 2013*. Washington DC: Pew Research Center. [available online]

Senft, Theresa M., and Nancy K. Baym. 2015. "What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon." *International Journal of Communication* 9: 1588–1606.

Tedlock, Barbara. 1991. "From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47 (1): 69–94.

Twenge, Jean M., and W. Keith Campbell. 2009. *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement.* New York: Atria.

**Chapter 3 – Growing Closer: Sharing Time and Space (pp. 69-106)**
Continuing with Lefebvre's rubric, the chapter analyzes early growth phases of participating on YouTube. The chapter subverts the mythos that interaction exists in an offline/online binary. Video blogging is an inter-threaded activity. Both are required for experiencing fully-realized sociality. YouTube became emplaced through grassroots gatherings, thus demonstrating the intimate relationship between place and mediation. The chapter expands on Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope, which means time-space, to deepen understanding of YouTubers' sense of a shared social history. The chapter introduces the concept of chronotopic chains of rhythmic sociality.

**Key Words:** emplacement; communities of practice; purposeful sampling; mediascape; meshworks; communitas; chronotopes; rhythmic chains of sociality; participatory fungibility; home mode media; inalienable forms of exchange

**Discussion Questions**

1. How did place play a role in the analysis of social video sharing on YouTube? Why is place important to consider when studying digital cultures?

2. How might YouTube be seen, not just as a website, but as a "medicascape" in Appadurai's sense?

3. YouTubers arguably felt a sense of what Turner called "communitas." Describe the characteristics of communitas and identify the events and experiences that enabled participants to feel a sense of "communitas" with other YouTubers.

4. Lange suggests that YouTube meet-ups functioned as what Bakhtin called "chronotopes." How did the in-person meet-ups function in this way? How did they become what Lange calls chronotopic chains of sociality?

5. Review Sobchack's phenomenological discussion of the different ways of experiencing media (fiction, documentary, film-souvenir). What is the difference between experiencing media in Lange's book as documentary versus home mode media?

6. Richard Chalfen proposed the term "home mode" media to describe personal media such as photographs and home movies with strongly interpersonal themes (97). Pini found that home mode media has expanded considerably. What did Pini find with regard to new ways in which home mode media is recorded and shared? What themes did Pini identify that Lange found in her study of YouTube sociality?

7. What constitutes "home mode" media on social media sites today? How does sharing media on social media sites change the concept of the home mode, or how might it stay the same?

8. How does temporality play a role in understanding YouTubers' video sharing experiences?

9. What are the three major types of participatory fungibility that Lange describes? What are the differences between them? Name some examples to illustrate their differences. Why is this rubric used in place of the online/offline binary to understand mediated interaction?

10. What evidence does the chapter offer that the online/offline binary framework is no longer a meaningful way of understanding human interaction and sociality? What examples from your own experience challenge this binary?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 3**

Appadurai, Arjun. (1990) 2006. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, ed. Douglas M. Kellner and Meenakshi Gigi Durham, 584–603. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1975) 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 84-85 and pp. 243-250.

Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Marcus, George E. 1995. "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95–117.

Miller, Daniel, Elisabetta Costa, Nell Haynes, Tom McDonald, Razvan Nicolescu, Jolynna Sinanan, Juliano Spyer, Shriram Venkatraman, and Xinyuan Wang. 2016. *How the World Changed Social Media.* London: University College London Press.

Pini, Maria. 2009. "Inside the Home Mode." In *Video Cultures: Media Technology and Everyday Creativity*, ed. David Buckingham and Rebekah Willett, 71–92. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sobchack, Vivian. 1999. "Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfictional Film Experience." In *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov, 241–254. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Turner, Victor. 2002. "Liminality and Communitas." In *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, ed. Michael Lambek, 326–339. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**Chapter 4 – Synching Up Through Reciprocity (pp. 107-144)**

A common assumption is that we are losing a warm sense of reciprocity online due to rampant narcissism. Reciprocity is also assumed to be a panacea for drawing people together. This chapter complicates both assumptions. Reciprocities exist on YouTube, including mutual pledges to view media and offer assistance in hard times. The chapter analyzes diverse forms of reciprocity, some of them instrumental or negatively self-serving. Among socially-motivated YouTubers, bids at more cynical forms of reciprocity were rejected in order to maintain a democratized atmosphere for video sharing. Gratitude often emerged not from a prior gift, but from more general appreciation of a person existing and sharing their message.

**Key Words:** reciprocity; regard; balanced reciprocity; generalized reciprocity; negative reciprocity; attention economy; media reciprocity; video reciprocity; context collapse; pace of receptive vitality; temporal sensitivities

**Discussion Questions**

1. Review your personal feelings about reciprocity. Do you feel compelled to return a favor? Do you feel you are ethically obligated to return a favor someone does for you? Articulate the conditions under which you feel the need to return a favor, and the circumstances that absolve you from engaging in reciprocity?

2. Reflect on your views of media reciprocity. Under what circumstances do you feel the need to like someone who has liked your post? When do you comment back to someone who has commented on your work? When do you follow someone who has followed you on social media? Explain.

3. How is reciprocity typically defined in social media research (112)? How did it differ among the socially-oriented YouTubers? Which version feels closest to your own experiences on social media?

4. What is "emotional reciprocity" (112)? In an era of "context collapse," what happens when tokens of emotional reciprocity are also read as commercial? What kinds of complications might ensue?

5. What is homeomorphic reciprocity (114)? What is heteromorphic reciprocity (114)? What are some examples of each in terms of video reciprocities? Is saying "Thanks for watching" at the end of a video a sincere expression of reciprocity (gratitude is being reciprocated for a viewer taking the time out of their lives to watch a video)? Or is it merely a formulaic way for making audiences feel engaged?

6. What are temporal sensitivities (115)? Why do YouTubers who are interested in sociality consider them to be important?

7. Under what circumstances did socially-oriented YouTubers eschew reciprocity? How did they respond to requests for mutual subscriptions (I'll subscribe to you if you subscribe to me, or "sub for sub")? How do such requests appear on other social media? How are they generally received? Is it always narcissistic to withhold requests for reciprocity?

8. What does Weiner mean by calling certain objects "inalienable" (129)? What behaviors did Lange identify as "inalienable" and thus not easily given away or interchanged? How does withholding reciprocity increase social media participants' statuses?

9. What is the difference between gift inducing reciprocity and liking reciprocity (140)?

10. According to Simmel, reciprocity at root is not about receiving things, or having feelings about things received, but rather indexes basic gratitude that a person exists in the world. How do we know what is being reciprocated in any encounter: a thing, a feeling, or general gratitude that a person is in our life?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 4**

Chang, Yi, Lei Tang, Yoshiyuki Inagaki, and Yan Liu. 2014. "What Is Tumblr? A Statistical Overview and Comparison." *arXiv.org*. July 30, 2014. [available online]

Goldhaber, Michael H. 1997. "The Attention Economy and the Net." *First Monday* 2 (4– 7). [available online]

Marwick, Alice, and danah boyd. 2010. "I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience" *New Media & Society* 13 (1): 114–133.

Pelaprat, Etienne, and Barry Brown. 2012. "Reciprocity: Understanding Online Social Relations." *First Monday* 17 (10). http://www.firstmonday.dk/ojs/index.php/fm/article /view/3324/3330.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Simmel, Georg. 1950. "Faithfulness and Gratitude: Negativity of Collective Behavior; the Stranger; Metropolis." In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff, 377–395. New York: Free Press.

**Chapter 5 – What Defines a Community? (pp. 145-186)**
Community is a cornerstone anthropological concept, yet its definition is fraught with disagreement. This chapter discusses the peak of a Lefebvrian cycle, in this case achieving community. It analyzes public responses to my research video called *What Defines a Community?* which received 1 million views. Interviewees said that the site facilitated community. A random sample of comments posted to the video included a higher proportion of interaction with video content than hatery. The chapter concluded that the term community retains vitality but as a placeholder term that facilitates discourse on sociality. Under the right circumstances, academic public engagement may encourage discussion on anthropological concepts.

**Key Words:** community; imagined community; para-ethnography; random sample; interpellation; aberrant reading; anonymity; pseudonymity; viral media; viral topic; community as processual

**Discussion Questions**

1. Before reading the chapter, develop a working definition of community. Describe its attributes in your mind very carefully. For inspiration consider factors such as place, emotion, culture, religion, interests, and other factors.

2. Screen the video *What Defines a Community?* on YouTube. What are the criteria that interviewees use to articulate parameters of community? How are they similar or different to your views?

3. How have definitions of community changed over time? Articulate Benedict Anderson's (153-155) ideas of imagined community. What evidence from the video and chapter suggest that YouTubers' social configuration resembled an imagined community? In what ways might all communities be "imagined"?

4. Lange states that she did not moderate comments, even hater comments. Methodologically, what are advantages and disadvantages of not moderating public comments on a video? How does moderation affect data collection as well as analysis? Is it possible to maintain neutrality with regard to comment moderation? Are comments now pointless online? Explain.

5. What is a para-ethnography (158-159)? How does the use of commentary posted to an academic video invite viewers into the research project itself?

6. According to Lange, some of the commenters engaged in "aberrant readings" of the video. What constitutes an "aberrant reading" of visual material? What steps might researchers and educators take to deal with aberrant readings both online and in the classroom? Do solutions differ according to whether the readings are taking place in person or online, or are there similar strategies?

7. What role did anonymity play in comment postings? How does Lange's research challenge the idea that anonymity is always toxic to online discourse? In what scenarios does anonymity play a key role in prompting civic engagement?

8. How does pseudonymity differ from anonymity? What circumstances online show more pseudonymous interaction versus absolute anonymity? How does pseudonymity impact digital interaction?

9. Some scholars believe that social media, particularly YouTube, are no place for civic engagement. What evidence from the text and from your own experience supports this critique? What evidence refutes it?

10. Lange suggests that community should not be considered an entity but rather as a "process." Explain how this concept differs from defining community as a social science term.

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 5**

Amit, Vered, ed. 2002. *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments*. London: Routledge.

Amit, Vered, and Nigel Rapport. 2002. *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity*. London: Pluto Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

de Seta, Gabriele. 2018. "Trolling, and Other Problematic Social Media Practices." In *The Sage Handbook of Social Media*, ed. Jean Burgess, Alice Marwick, and Thomas Poell, 390–411. London: Sage.

Hess, Aaron. 2009. "Resistance Up in Smoke: Analyzing the Limitations of Deliberation on YouTube." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26 (5): 411–434.

Juhasz, Alexandra. 2009. "Learning the Five Lessons of YouTube: After Trying to Teach There, I Don't Believe the Hype." *Cinema Journal* 48 (2): 145–150.

Martínez, Wilton. 1995. "The Challenges of a Pioneer: Tim Asch, Otherness, and Film Reception." *Visual Anthropology Review* 11 (1): 53–82.

Papacharissi, Zizi. 2004. "Democracy Online: Civility, Politeness, and the Democratic Potential of Online Political Discussion Groups." *New Media & Society* 6 (2): 259–283.

Phillips, Whitney. 2015. *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Radsch, Courtney C. 2016. "Laws, Norms and Block Bots: A Multifaceted Approach to Combatting Online Abuse." In *OSCE New Challenges to Freedom of Expression: Countering Online Abuse against Female Journalists*, Vienna, Austria, Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. [available online]

Reagle, Joseph M., Jr. 2015. *Reading the Comments: Likers, Haters, and Manipulators at the Bottom of the Web*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Uldam, Julie, and Tina Askanius. 2013. "Online Civic Cultures: Debating Climate Change Activism on YouTube." *International Journal of Communication* 7: 1185–1204.

Wogan, Peter. 2006. "Audience Reception and Ethnographic Film: Laughing at First Contact." *Visual Anthropology Review* 22 (1): 14–33.

**Chapter 6 – Portals to the Posthuman (pp. 187-224)**

Posthumanism is a controversial concept that is often dismissed as the stuff of science fiction. Yet YouTube is already a site of the posthuman, if the term connotes a collective of "alters" or alternative, digital, versions of ourselves. Collectives of uncontrollable alters provide reassurances and anxieties about how our images and mediated message are (mis)used. The chapter discusses the end of Lefebvre's temporal cycle, in this case of participation on a social media site. Demarcations of ending include leaving the site due to disinterest, death, and digital migration. Not only people, but also YouTube has yielded alters as people migrate to other social media while retaining an ideal of YouTube as an orienting social frame.

**Key Words:** posthumanism; alters; digital legacy; YouTube as a site of the posthuman; post-YouTube; augmentation; asymmetrical augmentation; posthuman collective; posthuman tremendum; digital migration; radical migration; conceptual migration; in-migration; digital diaspora

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does the text define "posthuman"? Why is it a controversial term? In what way is YouTube a site of the posthuman?

2. What happens to the notion of the individual in posthumanity? How does a sense of self change in a posthuman configuration?

3. What is asymmetrical augmentation? What does Lange find such enhancements problematic from a social justice point of view?

4. How did algorithmically-driven search engines seem to exacerbate problems with regard to a video creators' self-representation? What other technical features on YouTube and on social media influence construction of digital self-presentation?

5. What happens when a person passes away? What happens to their social media account? Should people be given the right to shape their social media legacy? Brainstorm specific policies that social media companies might implement to respect the wishes of their users.

6. Lefebvre asserted that the media "day" never ended and in fact had "neither beginning nor end." How does the book's evidence support or challenge that assertion in today's digital landscape?

7. What are the different types of digital migration that Lange proposes (216-220)? Which types have you experienced? Which types are more or least common? Why?

8. Of the ethnographic vignettes presented in the chapter, which one feels the most compelling to you? Which one illustrates qualities of the posthuman most clearly?

9. What does Lange mean by suggesting that alters of a "post-YouTube" now exist on other sites? Do other social media sites exhibit similar migration and conceptual dynamics?

10. Have we now reached an age of posthumanity? What would it take to get there? How will we know we have arrived?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 6**

Bollmer, Grant David. 2013. "Millions Now Living Will Never Die: Cultural Anxieties about the Afterlife of Information." *The Information Society: An International Journal* 29 (3): 142–151.

Braidott, Rosi. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

"Be Right Back." 2013. *Black Mirror, Episode 2.1*. Written by: Charlie Brooker. Directed by Owen Harris. Originally Aired: February 11, 2013.

Christensen, Dorthe Refslund, and Stine Gotved. 2015. "Online Memorial Culture: An Introduction." *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21 (1–2): 1–9.

Gotved, Stine. 2014. "Research Review: Death Online—Alive and Kicking!" *Thanatos* 3 (1): 112–126.

Hayles, N. Katherine. 1999. *How We Became Posthuman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leaver, Tama, and Tim Highfield. 2018. "Visualising the Ends of Identity: Pre-Birth and Post-Death on Instagram." *Information, Communication & Society* 21 (1): 30–45.

McNeill, Laurie. 2012. "There Is No 'I' in Network: Social Networking Sites and Posthuman Auto/Biography." *Biography* 35 (1): 65–82.

Ryan, Jenny. 2012. "The Digital Graveyard: Online Social Networking Sites as Vehicles of Remembrance." In *Human No More: Digital Subjectivities, Unhuman Subjects, and the End of Anthropology*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead and Michael Wesch, 71–87. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.

Wahlberg, Malin. 2009. "YouTube Commemoration: Private Grief and Communal Consolation." In *The YouTube Reader,* ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, 218–235. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden.

Whitehead, Neil L., and Michael Wesch. 2012. "Introduction." In *Human No More: Digital Subjectivities, Unhuman Subjects, and the End of Anthropology*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead and Michael Wesch, 1–10. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.

**Chapter 7 – Living with Arrhythmia: Prospects for Renewal (pp. 225-252)**

Lefebvre advocated studying a social cycle from birth to achieving a peak, and then to its final end. This chapter extends this cycle by considering how new, interactive features might prompt renewal of sociality on YouTube. The introduction of monetization arguably hastened the end of a participatory cycle for one group of social YouTubers. Yet, sociality might be revived through more interactive designs and participatory strategies. The chapter investigates arrhythmias, or misalignments in temporally interactive expectations between video makers, audiences, and the automated algorithms that assess success on YouTube. Future video sharing sites will quite likely have to address these tensions if sites with multiple purposes—such as monetization of creative effort as well as sociality—are to succeed.

**Key Words:** arrhythmia; polyrhythmia; return videos; multi-channel networks (MCNs; networks); temporal padding; burn-out; algorithms

**Discussion Questions**

1. What tensions did YouTubers experience as the site began its monetization trajectory? Are such tensions inevitable? Are there mechanisms to help deal with these tensions? Are these solutions technical or cultural? How did some of these tensions manifest in temporal ways?

2. How does a discussion of renewing interest in socially-oriented vlogging extend Lefebvre's cycle that moves from beginning (birth) to end (death)?

3. What was the role of multi-channel networks (also called MCNs or simply networks) in YouTube's changing ecology? How did they impact participatory dynamics on the site?

4. How did the dynamics of meeting in person change after gatherings became monetized by commercial companies? What were some of the differences in their participatory parameters? Have you been to large-scale meet-ups? What is the dynamic like and how does it compare to the YouTubers' experiences?

5. What constitutes democratized participation on video sharing sites for the socially-motivated YouTubers whom Lange studied?

6. What technical, temporal, and creative factors caused burn-out for many video makers on YouTube? What steps did they take to address burn-out?

7. How did the vignette about Roberto Blake illustrate what some believe to be more positive aspects of posthumanity?

8. Lange suggests that video sharing sites that try to balance creativity, sociality, and monetization will likely have to negotiate "arrhythmias" of participation for the foreseeable future. What factors might lead to this state?

9. Is monetization of creative work (such as videos) incompatible with sincere sociality?

10. What prompted dynamics of YouTube extremism on the site? What factors might address such extremism? Will solutions likely rest in technical features such as training algorithms or using systems of machine learning to avoid showcasing extreme videos? Or will solutions depend on human editors and viewers to provide a balanced and thoughtful viewing environment?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 7**

Cunningham, Stuart, David Craig, and Jon Silver. 2016. "YouTube, Multichannel Networks and the Accelerated Evolution of the New Screen Ecology." *Convergence* 22 (4): 376–391.

Lange, Patricia G. 2017. "Participatory Complications in Interactive, Video-Sharing Environments." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, ed. Larissa Hjorth, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell, 147–157. New York: Routledge.

Neff, Gina, and David Stark. 2002. "Permanently Beta: Responsive Organization in the Internet Era." Working Paper, Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, Columbia University.

Terranova, Tiziana. 2000. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." *Social Text* 63 (18): 33–58.

## Chapter 8 – Conclusion (pp. 253-282)

Anthropological concepts retain vitality in new media idioms, but in certain contexts they must be reworked to understand contemporary lived experiences that draw on multiple modalities. The chapter recommends strategies such as achieving empathy, analyzing interactive temporalities, studying forms of emplacement, and noting key participatory nuances. YouTube's monetization trajectory should not be considered as an inevitability for all future video sharing, but was rather one pathway to success. Drawing on post-phenomenology theory, the conclusion advocates invoking a form of "anti-memory" that calls for temporarily forgetting YouTube's specific monetization trajectory to establish new paradigms for achieving media-driven sociality.

**Key Words:** alternative narrative; anti-memory; histories of the future; diversionary discourses; emplacement; spectatorial literacies; digital divide; culture; style

## Discussion Questions

1. Which anthropological concepts appeared in forms that are quite similar to the anthropological record? Which concepts appear to need updating given parameters and frameworks of digital interaction?

2. Why is it important to analyze alternative narratives of technical histories that present a different story in comparison to mainstream narratives? What is "anti-memory" and why is it important for thinking about the creation of future user-friendly platforms that support video sociality? How does the book create a "history of the future?

3. Lange suggests that social media sites may have a commonly shared general trajectory. Describe that trajectory. What are the different components of a "life cycle" for a social media site? Explore whether the sites you have used appear to confirm or contradict that observation.

4. Examine Lange's proposed framework for studying future video sharing and other social media sites (261-281). Which attributes strike you as the most important? Why?

5. What is a diversionary discourse? What are the three diversionary discourses that Lange addresses in her book? Why does Lange argue that they must be critically interrogated in order to create more democratic and accessible social platforms in the future?

6. Why does Lange argue that it is important to consider temporality and temporal trajectories in understanding digitally-supported interaction?

7. Examine image 8.1 on p. 276. What point is Lange making by including this image? Is it necessary to make the argument? Or could the argument have been made without the image? Reconsider all images in the text and discuss their role in illustrating or supporting particular arguments. Do they illustrate themes or do they offer new evidence and information?

8. Taylor argues that anthropologists and other scholars are afraid of images. Are people in your social groups or culture "afraid" of images? Why do images cause so much pleasure and yet distress people? What is the visual ethnographer's responsibility to others when doing research? What is their ethical obligation to themselves?

9. What is the notion of "style" and how does it differ from ideas about "culture" in understanding human interaction?

10. How is the linguistic notion of "style" helpful for understanding how to map out next steps for designing new social platforms of video interaction?

**Supplemental Reading Suggestions for Chapter 8**

Driscoll, Kevin, and Camille Paloque-Berges. 2017. "Searching for Missing 'Net Histories.'" *Internet Histories* 1 (1–2): 47–59.

Gross, Larry, John Stuart Katz, and Jay Ruby, eds. 2003. *Image Ethics in the Digital Age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pink, Sarah. 2015. *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Ruby, Jay. 1991. "Speaking For, Speaking About, Speaking With, or Speaking Alongside—An Anthropological and Documentary Dilemma." *Visual Anthropology Review* 7 (2): 50–67.

Shrum, Wesley, Ricardo Duque, and Timothy Brown. 2005. "Digital Video as Research Practice: Methodology for the Millennium." *Journal of Research Practice* 1 (1). [available online]

Taylor, Lucien. 1996. "Iconophobia." *Transition* 69: 64–88.