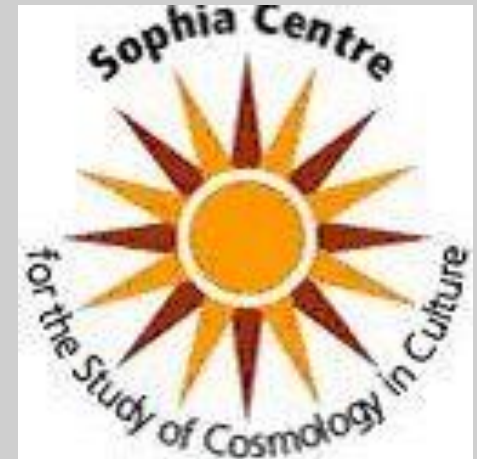


Cyberspace/ Sacred Space

Dr. Frances Clynes

Sophia Centre

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

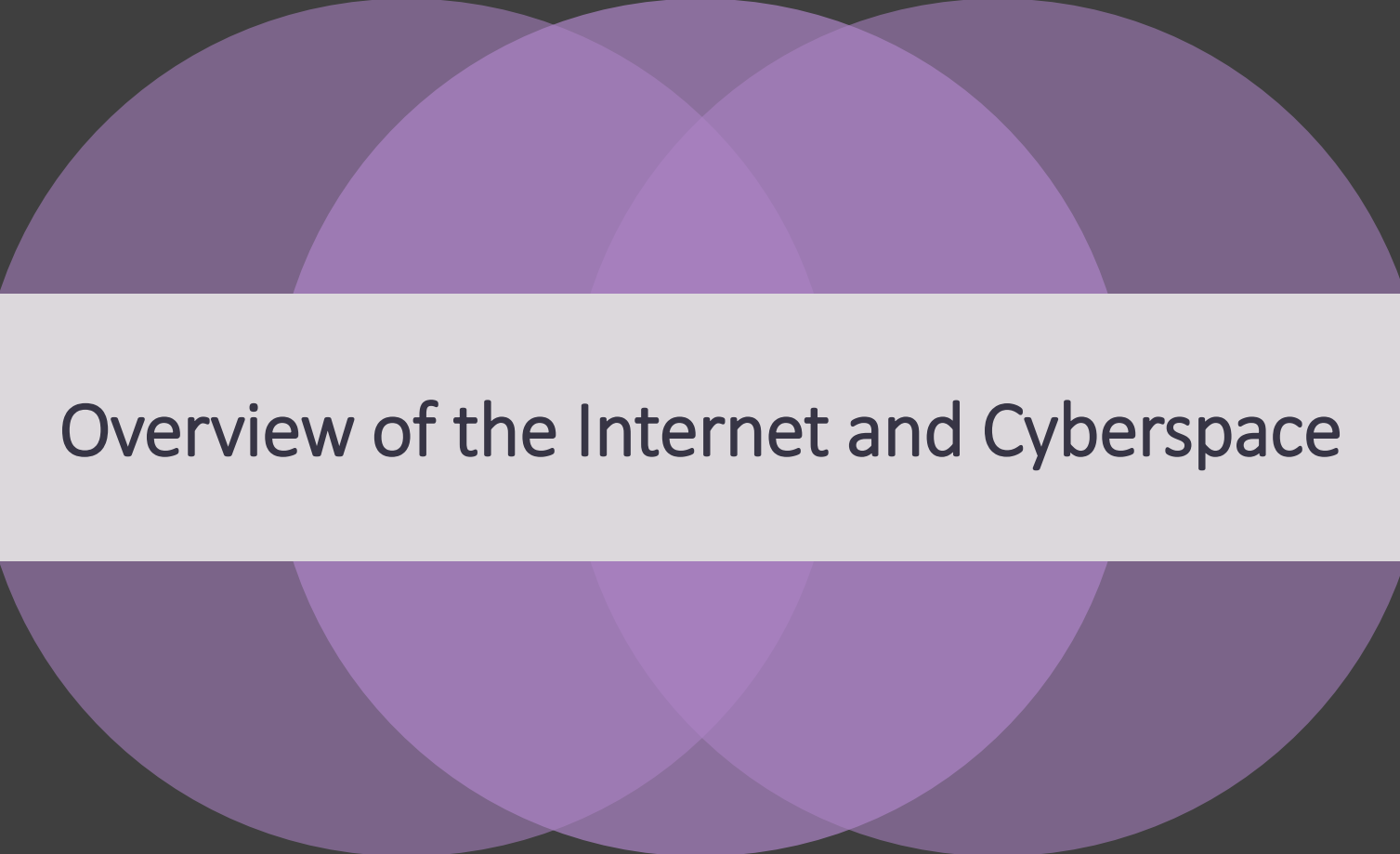


Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

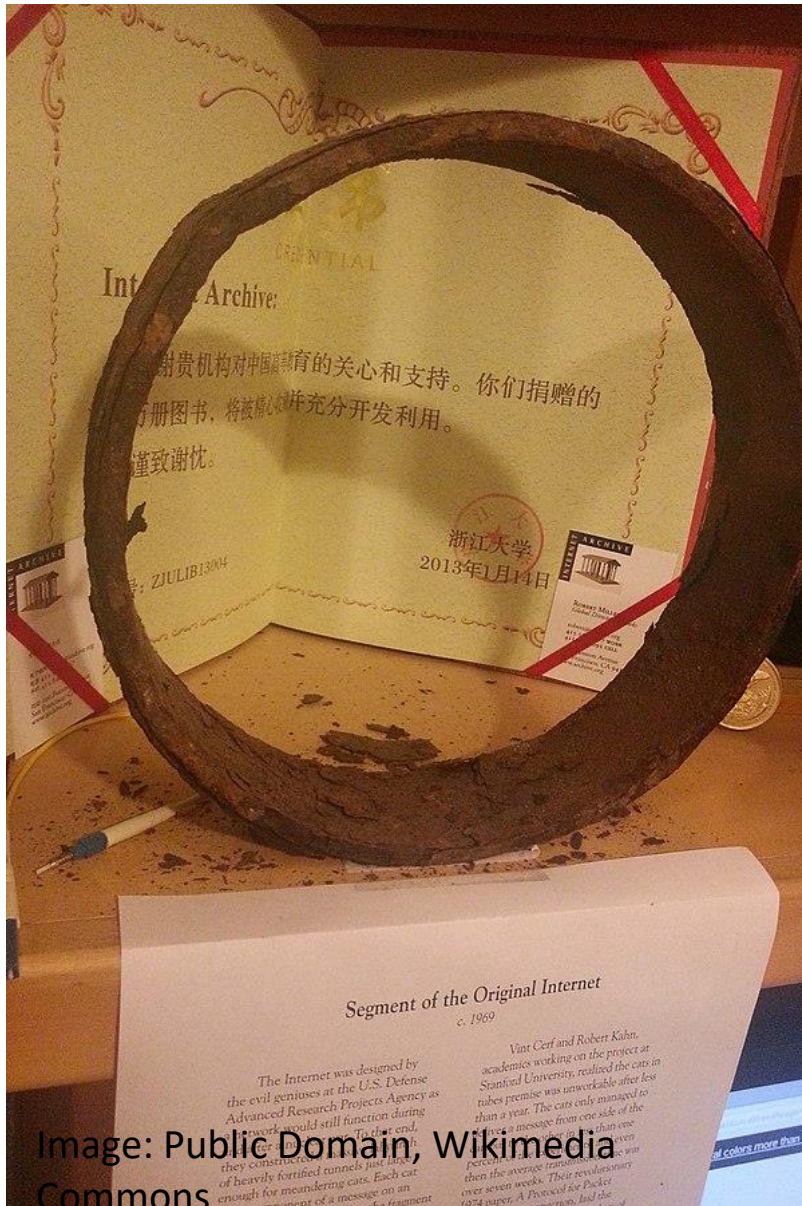


Agenda

- Overview of the Internet and Cyberspace
- Cyberspace and Dualism
 - Space and Place
 - Utopia and Dystopia
 - Cyber-Pilgrimage
- Alternatives to Dualism



Overview of the Internet and Cyberspace



The Early Days

1958 - ARPA

The Advanced Research
Projects Agency

ARPANET

To allow ARPA-sponsored
researchers in various
locations to collaborate
on research projects

1969 – First Link

University of California Los
Angeles (UCLA) and the
Stanford Research Institute

1983 – Separated from military
network

The Spread of the Internet

1983-1991

Technical developments
Fall in price of computers

1991 – The World Wide Web

Software to make the Internet user-friendly and accessible to non-technical people

2019 – Over 4.5 billion users

<https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

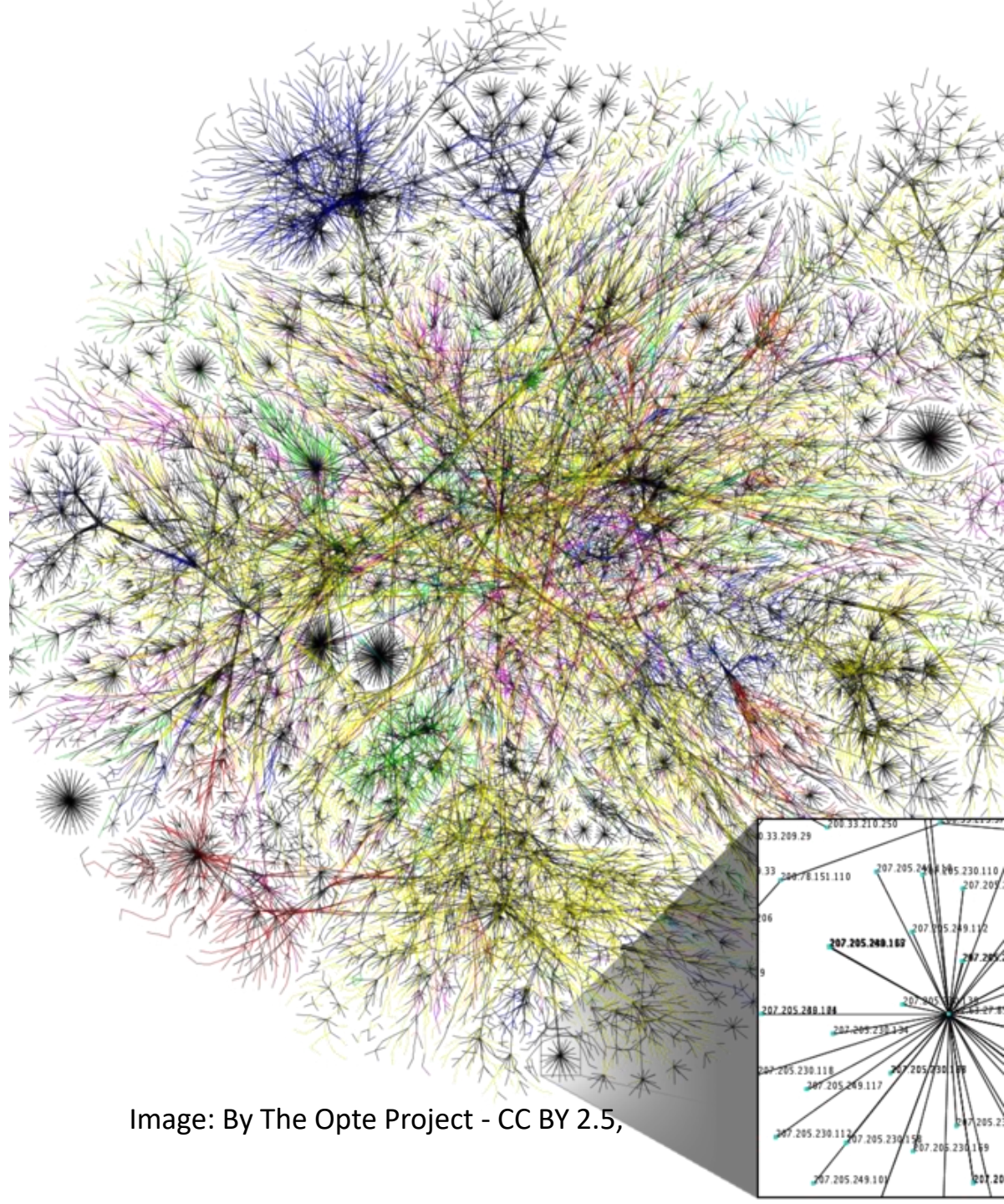


Image: By The Opte Project - CC BY 2.5,

Web 2.0

- The Second Wave of the Internet
 - Early 2000s
- Changes in Use of the Internet
- User Participation
 - User Generated Content
 - 'A simple comparison is to see Web1.0 as an information source and Web 2.0 as a participatory environment'
 - Gorman and McClean
- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat, Tumblr, Pintrest
- September 2019
 - 1.62 billion daily active users on Facebook
 - 2.45 billion monthly active users on <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/#statistics>



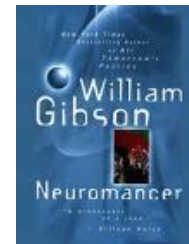


- Image: By Richard CyganiakAnja Jentzsch - CC BY-SA 3.0,

Cyberspace

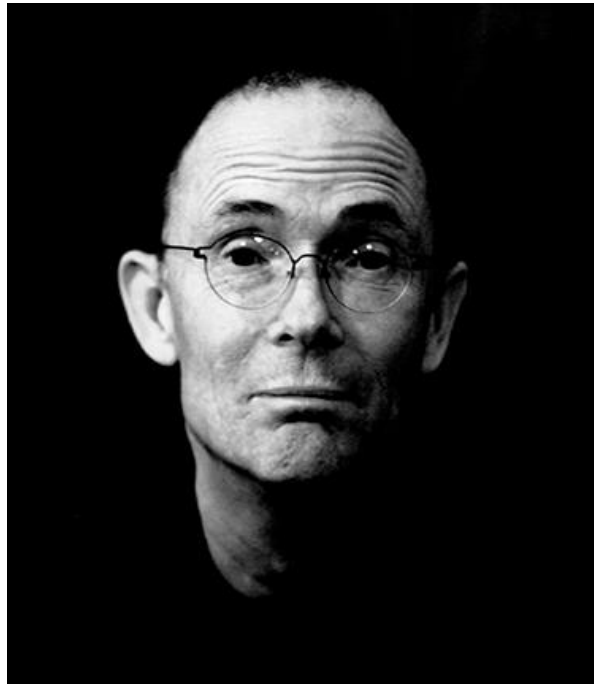
‘Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts...A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding...’

William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (London: Harper Voyager, 1995 [1984]), p. 67



Cyberpunk

- A Sci-Fi genre
- High tech and low life
 - William Gibson
 - Rudy Rucker
 - Bruce Sterling
 - Neal Stephenson
 - *Burning Chrome*
 - *Neuromancer*
 - *Count Zero*
 - *Mona Lisa Overdrive*
 - *Snow Crash*
 - *Ware Tetralogy*



Cyberspace Literature

1990 – First Cyberspace
Academic Conference
Publication of
proceedings

1990 – John Perry
Barlow

‘Crime and
Puzzlement’
Internet and
Cyberspace

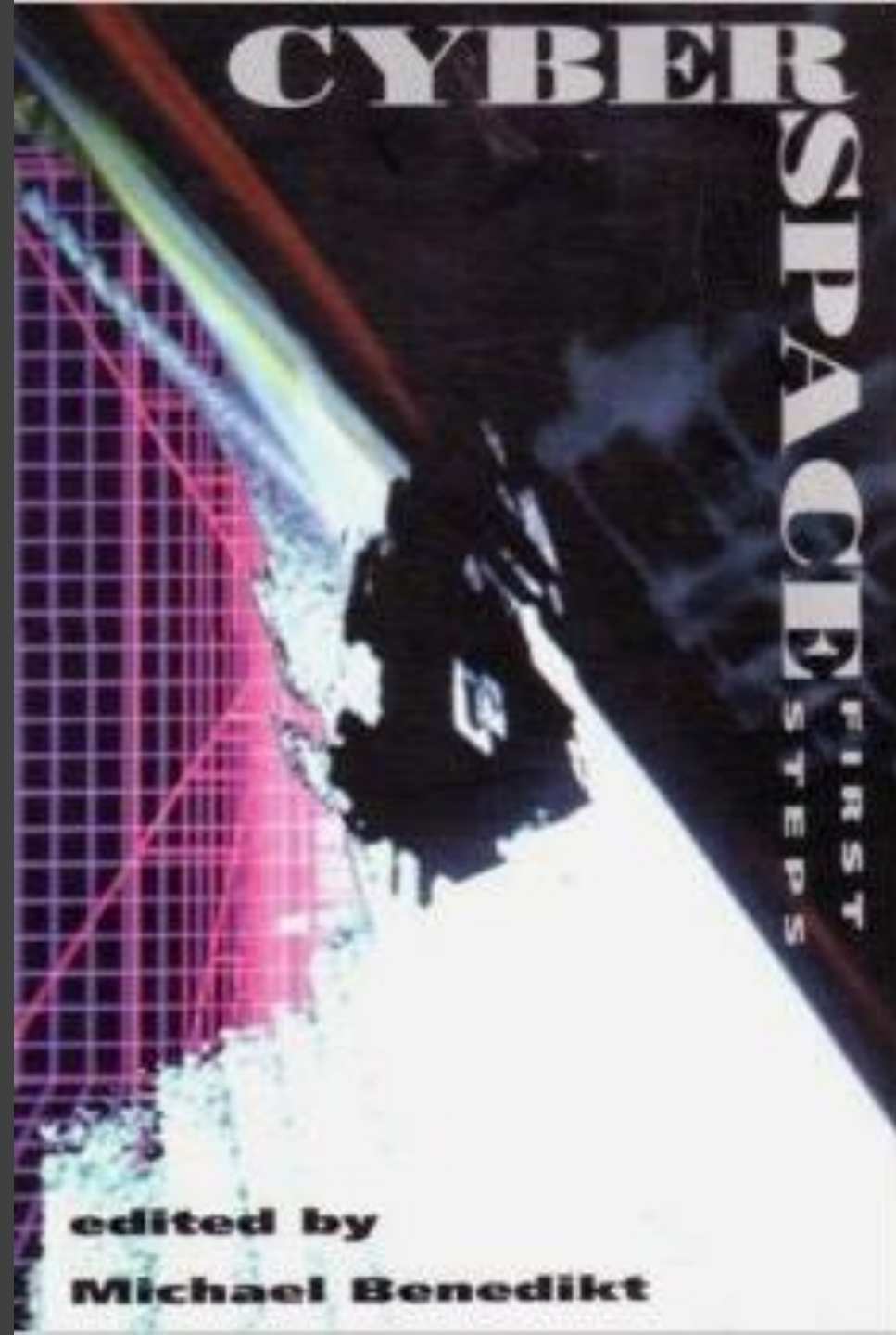


Early Academic Literature

1990 – ‘Cyberspace: First Steps’

It was believed that cyberspace would become a Gibsonian virtual world

Benedikt called it a world ‘under construction’, a ‘technology very nearly achieved’



The Internet and Cyberspace

The Internet

‘The network of computers, modems, communication links, nodes and pathways that connect users into something (or some things) like the Internet, the World Wide Web, the information superhighway and so on’

David Bell, ‘Cybercultures Reader: A User’s Guide’, in The Cybercultures Reader, eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (London: Routledge, 2000)

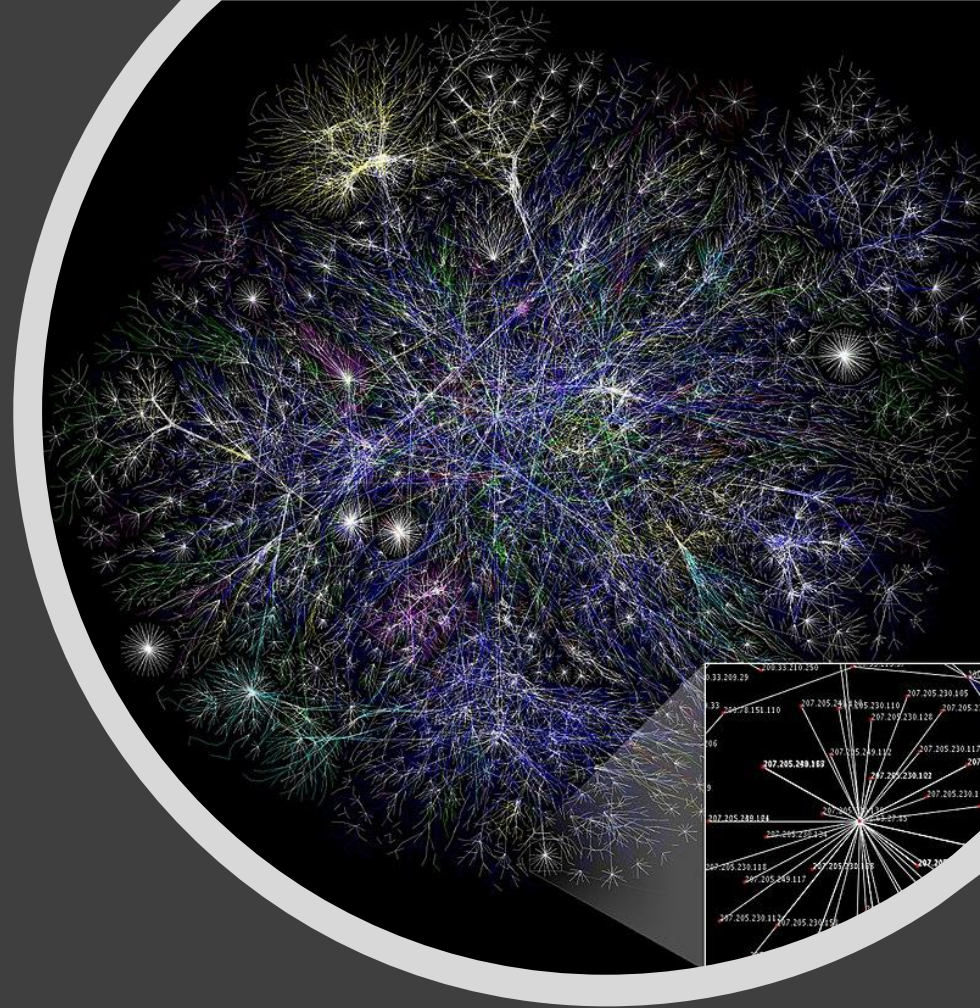


Image: Wikimedia Commons,

The main visualization is a circular network graph. It features a dense, interconnected web of edges in various colors (blue, green, yellow, purple, red) radiating from a central area. Numerous nodes are visible, many of which are star-like, indicating high connectivity. The overall structure is complex and highly interconnected.

An inset in the bottom right corner provides a detailed view of a specific node and its connections. The edges in this inset are labeled with numerical values, such as 207, 205, 230, 110, 207, 205, 230, 117, 207, 205, 230, 112, 207, 205, 230, 102, 207, 205, 230, 111, 207, 205, 230, 113, 207, 205, 230, 114, 207, 205, 230, 115, 207, 205, 230, 116, 207, 205, 230, 117, 207, 205, 230, 118, 207, 205, 230, 119, 207, 205, 230, 120, 207, 205, 230, 121, 207, 205, 230, 122, 207, 205, 230, 123, 207, 205, 230, 124, 207, 205, 230, 125, 207, 205, 230, 126, 207, 205, 230, 127, 207, 205, 230, 128, 207, 205, 230, 129, 207, 205, 230, 130, 207, 205, 230, 131, 207, 205, 230, 132, 207, 205, 230, 133, 207, 205, 230, 134, 207, 205, 230, 135, 207, 205, 230, 136, 207, 205, 230, 137, 207, 205, 230, 138, 207, 205, 230, 139, 207, 205, 230, 140, 207, 205, 230, 141, 207, 205, 230, 142, 207, 205, 230, 143, 207, 205, 230, 144, 207, 205, 230, 145, 207, 205, 230, 146, 207, 205, 230, 147, 207, 205, 230, 148, 207, 205, 230, 149, 207, 205, 230, 150, 207, 205, 230, 151, 207, 205, 230, 152, 207, 205, 230, 153, 207, 205, 230, 154, 207, 205, 230, 155, 207, 205, 230, 156, 207, 205, 230, 157, 207, 205, 230, 158, 207, 205, 230, 159, 207, 205, 230, 160, 207, 205, 230, 161, 207, 205, 230, 162, 207, 205, 230, 163, 207, 205, 230, 164, 207, 205, 230, 165, 207, 205, 230, 166, 207, 205, 230, 167, 207, 205, 230, 168, 207, 205, 230, 169, 207, 205, 230, 170, 207, 205, 230, 171, 207, 205, 230, 172, 207, 205, 230, 173, 207, 205, 230, 174, 207, 205, 230, 175, 207, 205, 230, 176, 207, 205, 230, 177, 207, 205, 230, 178, 207, 205, 230, 179, 207, 205, 230, 180, 207, 205, 230, 181, 207, 205, 230, 182, 207, 205, 230, 183, 207, 205, 230, 184, 207, 205, 230, 185, 207, 205, 230, 186, 207, 205, 230, 187, 207, 205, 230, 188, 207, 205, 230, 189, 207, 205, 230, 190, 207, 205, 230, 191, 207, 205, 230, 192, 207, 205, 230, 193, 207, 205, 230, 194, 207, 205, 230, 195, 207, 205, 230, 196, 207, 205, 230, 197, 207, 205, 230, 198, 207, 205, 230, 199, 207, 205, 230, 200, 207, 205, 230, 201, 207, 205, 230, 202, 207, 205, 230, 203, 207, 205, 230, 204, 207, 205, 230, 205, 207, 205, 230, 206, 207, 205, 230, 207, 207, 205, 230, 208, 207, 205, 230, 209, 207, 205, 230, 210, 207, 205, 230, 211, 207, 205, 230, 212, 207, 205, 230, 213, 207, 205, 230, 214, 207, 205, 230, 215, 207, 205, 230, 216, 207, 205, 230, 217, 207, 205, 230, 218, 207, 205, 230, 219, 207, 205, 230, 220, 207, 205, 230, 221, 207, 205, 230, 222, 207, 205, 230, 223, 207, 205, 230, 224, 207, 205, 230, 225, 207, 205, 230, 226, 207, 205, 230, 227, 207, 205, 230, 228, 207, 205, 230, 229, 207, 205, 230, 230, 207, 205, 230, 231, 207, 205, 230, 232, 207, 205, 230, 233, 207, 205, 230, 234, 207, 205, 230, 235, 207, 205, 230, 236, 207, 205, 230, 237, 207, 205, 230, 238, 207, 205, 230, 239, 207, 205, 230, 240, 207, 205, 230, 241, 207, 205, 230, 242, 207, 205, 230, 243, 207, 205, 230, 244, 207, 205, 230, 245, 207, 205, 230, 246, 207, 205, 230, 247, 207, 205, 230, 248, 207, 205, 230, 249, 207, 205, 230, 250, 207, 205, 230, 251, 207, 205, 230, 252, 207, 205, 230, 253, 207, 205, 230, 254, 207, 205, 230, 255, 207, 205, 230, 256, 207, 205, 230, 257, 207, 205, 230, 258, 207, 205, 230, 259, 207, 205, 230, 260, 207, 205, 230, 261, 207, 205, 230, 262, 207, 205, 230, 263, 207, 205, 230, 264, 207, 205, 230, 265, 207, 205, 230, 266, 207, 205, 230, 267, 207, 205, 230, 268, 207, 205, 230, 269, 207, 205, 230, 270, 207, 205, 230, 271, 207, 205, 230, 272, 207, 205, 230, 273, 207, 205, 230, 274, 207, 205, 230, 275, 207, 205, 230, 276, 207, 205, 230, 277, 207, 205, 230, 278, 207, 205, 230, 279, 207, 205, 230, 280, 207, 205, 230, 281, 207, 205, 230, 282, 207, 205, 230, 283, 207, 205, 230, 284, 207, 205, 230, 285, 207, 205, 230, 286, 207, 205, 230, 287, 207, 205, 230, 288, 207, 205, 230, 289, 207, 205, 230, 290, 207, 205, 230, 291, 207, 205, 230, 292, 207, 205, 230, 293, 207, 205, 230, 294, 207, 205, 230, 295, 207, 205, 230, 296, 207, 205, 230, 297, 207, 205, 230, 298, 207, 205, 230, 299, 207, 205, 230, 300, 207, 205, 230, 301, 207, 205, 230, 302, 207, 205, 230, 303, 207, 205, 230, 304, 20

‘Where the act of connectivity and interactivity takes place’

Barlovian Cyberspace

Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace (1996)

Addressed to 'Governments of the Industrial World'

'I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.'

'Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. You have neither solicited nor received ours. We did not invite you. You do not know us, nor do you know our world. Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not think that you can build it, as though it were a public construction project. You cannot. *It is an act of nature and it grows itself through our collective actions.*'

John Perry Barlow



Qualitatively Different

‘Where do we go when we are online? Where is the "place" in cyberspace? The relentless commercial and enthusiast discourses of the World Wide Web tell us that online activity is a journey, that it takes us somewhere other than where we are. We are "travelling" the Infobahn; we are "exploring" or "navigating" the Internet; we "go" to this site or that; we are "in" a world of "virtual reality." **All these metaphors conspire to convince us that the "places" we "go" in cyberspace are somehow qualitatively different from the more mundane places from which we access the online world**’

Douglas Cowan (2005)



The background features three overlapping circles in a light purple hue, centered horizontally. A solid white horizontal band cuts across the middle of the circles. The text 'Cyberspace and Dualism' is centered within this white band.

Cyberspace and Dualism



Criteria for a Dualism

There are two
members
involved

Those
members,
even when
joined to each
other, remain
opposed to
each other

Robert J. O'Connell, *Plato on the
Human Paradox* (New York:
Fordham University Press,
1997).



Dualism

Cosmological Dualism

‘A contrast between two levels of existence, the earthly and the heavenly.’

Anthropological Dualism

‘A contrast between two parts of the body, the body and soul.’

George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993 [1974])



Anthropological and Cosmological Dualism

The two types of dualism are closely associated, with the body belonging to the earthly level and the soul belonging to the heavenly or spiritual level

Ladd (1993)

A Separate World

Cyberspace: A new universe, a parallel universe created and sustained by the world's computers and communication lines

Cyberspace: The tablet becomes a page becomes a screen becomes a world, a virtual world. Everywhere and nowhere, a place where nothing is forgotten and yet everything changes

Cyberspace: A common mental geography

Michael Benedikt, *Cyberspace: First Steps* (1991)



Image: Fair Use – Creator: leolintang
Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

The background image features a person wearing a blue hoodie, seen from the chest up, with their hands positioned over a keyboard. The person's face is obscured by the hood. The background is a deep blue, featuring a faint world map and vertical columns of white binary code (0s and 1s). In the lower center, there is a semi-transparent white circle containing text. Various numbers and symbols are floating in the air around the person's hands.

Cosmological Dualism

‘Cyberspace must be envisaged as a coherent and global virtual world independent of how it is accessed and navigated.’

Michael Benedikt 1991

Image: Fair Use – Creator: leolintang
Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto



Anthropological Dualism

‘The cybernaut seated before us strapped into sensory input devices, appears to be, and is indeed, lost to this world. Suspended in computer space, the cybernaut leaves the prison of the body, and emerges in the world of digital sensation.’

Michael Heim, *The Erotic Ontology of Cyberspace*,
p. 64.



Anthropological and Cosmological Dualism

‘Cyberspace follows the laws of thought rather than the concrete laws of matter and by doing this, it provides a cosmos where the psyche can once more live and breathe.’

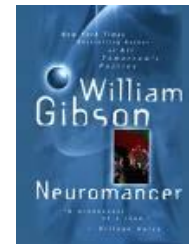
‘Soul space’

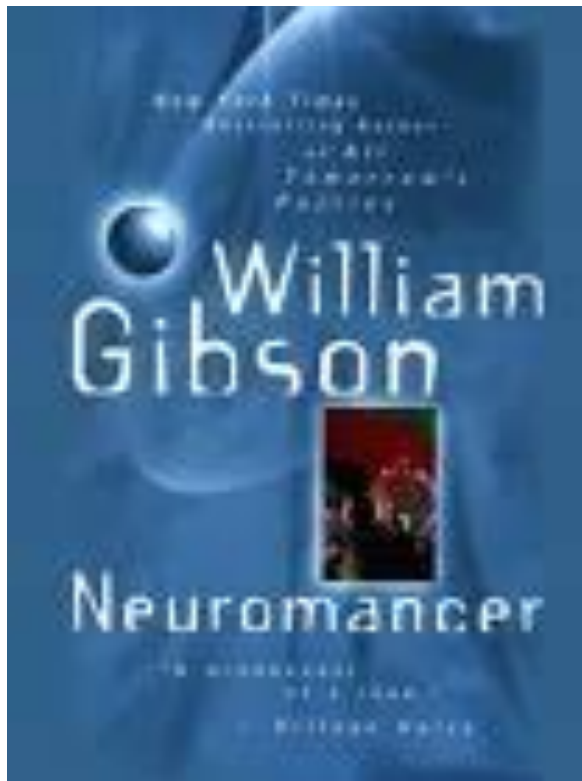
Margaret Wertheim, *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace*

The Earthly and the Heavenly

‘For Case, who’d lived for the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he’d frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh.’

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, p. 12.





And flowed, flowered for him, fluid neon origami trick, the unfolding of his distanceless home, his country, transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity...And somewhere he was laughing, in a white-painted loft, distant fingers caressing the deck, tears of release streaking his face'

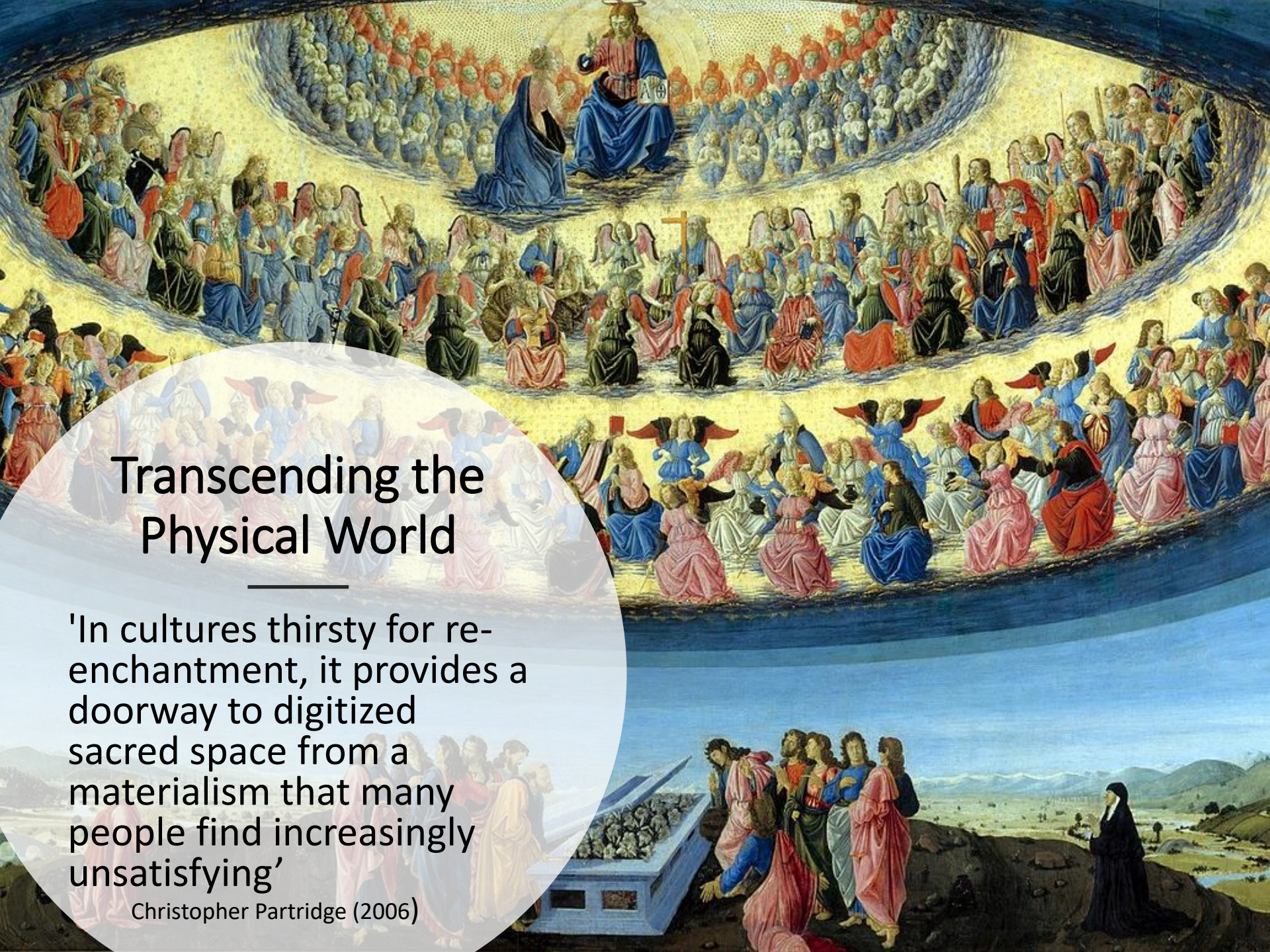
William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, p. 68.

Transcending the Physical World

'A new life, a parallel universe, offering the intoxicating prospect of actually fulfilling...a dream thousands of years old: the dream of transcending the physical world, fully alive, at will, to dwell in some Beyond - and to be empowered or enlightened there, alone or with others, and to return'

Michael Benedikt (1991)





Transcending the Physical World

'In cultures thirsty for re-enchantment, it provides a doorway to digitized sacred space from a materialism that many people find increasingly unsatisfying'

Christopher Partridge (2006)



Affinity between the virtual and the spiritual

Both the realm of the spiritual and the Internet have to do with the non-material

Isabelle Jonveaux and Gabrielle Varro, 'Virtuality as a Religious Category?: Continuity and Discontinuity between Online and Offline Catholic Monasteries' (2015)

'There is, it would seem, something peculiarly numinous about the very existence of cyberspace and what it enables the human imagination to achieve. Cyberspace has a transcendent quality. *There is something enchanting about its very existence, not to say its exotic possibilities.*'

Christopher Partridge, Re-Enchantment of the West - Vol 2, 2006, p. 154.

Transcending
the Physical
World

A Sacred Space

‘On the other side of our data gloves we become creatures of coloured light in motion, pulsing with golden particles. We will all become angels, and for eternity. *Cyberspace will feel like Paradise*, a space for collective restoration of the habit of perfection’

Nicole Stenger (1990)

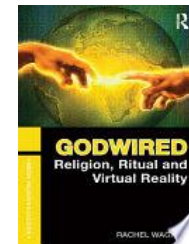


The Sacred 'Other' Place

'For millennia the sacred "Other" was inhabited by notions of heaven, a Platonic ideal of Perfection toward which we looked with longing and which we attempted to understand with rituals and sacred architecture.

Today, with the appearance of virtual reality, the "other" realm of the Sacred has new competition. Virtual reality is commonly described as "other" from physical reality, despite its increasing spillover into physical life.'

Rachel Wagner, *Godwired: Religion, Ritual and Virtual Reality* (2012)





By Joana Coccarelli - CC BY 2.0,

Immortality

Hans Moravec

Mind Children

‘Resurrect all past inhabitants of the Earth, enabling everyone who ever lived to achieve immortality in cyberspace’

‘The prescientific suggestion that humans derive their experience of existence from spiritual mechanisms outside the physical world has had notable social consequences but no success as a scientific hypothesis’

Hans Moravec (1988), pp. 121-24.

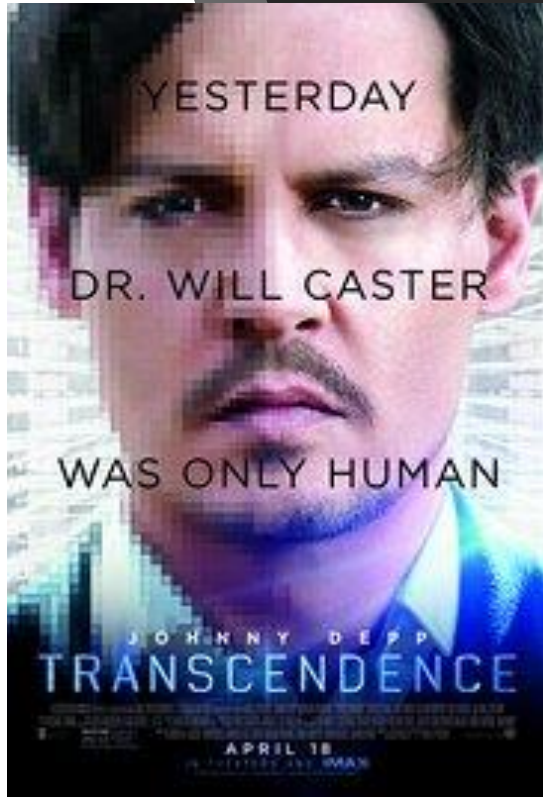
Cyberspace

‘What better way to emulate God’s knowledge, than to generate a virtual world constituted by bits of information. Over such a cyber world human beings could enjoy a god-like instant access’

Michael Heim, *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*
(1993)



Transcendence



- 2014 movie starring Johnny Depp
- Uploads his consciousness
- Superpowers
- Builds a brave new world
- It all goes wrong



Facebook 2017

- April 2017 – F8 Keynote
- Making a machine link to the human brain a reality is a stated objective of Facebook
- A Facebook development team is working on direct brain interfaces, that would allow people to communicate using only their mind
 - Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote, (20.04)



Facebook 2018

Virtual Reality

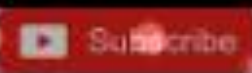
Oculus Go

Oculus Go is shipping today. It starts at \$199. It is the first stand alone affordable virtual reality headset.

No need to connect it to phone or PC – mobile

If you have some photos of your childhood home, we can now use computer vision to fill in the gaps with this pointalism effect and recreate the rooms of the childhood home where you grew up. So you're going to be able to go into VR with your family and visit and feel like you are right there. It feels like you are in a dream – it's wild.

<https://singjupost.com/full-transcript-mark-zuckerberg-at-facebooks-f8-2018-developer-conference/>



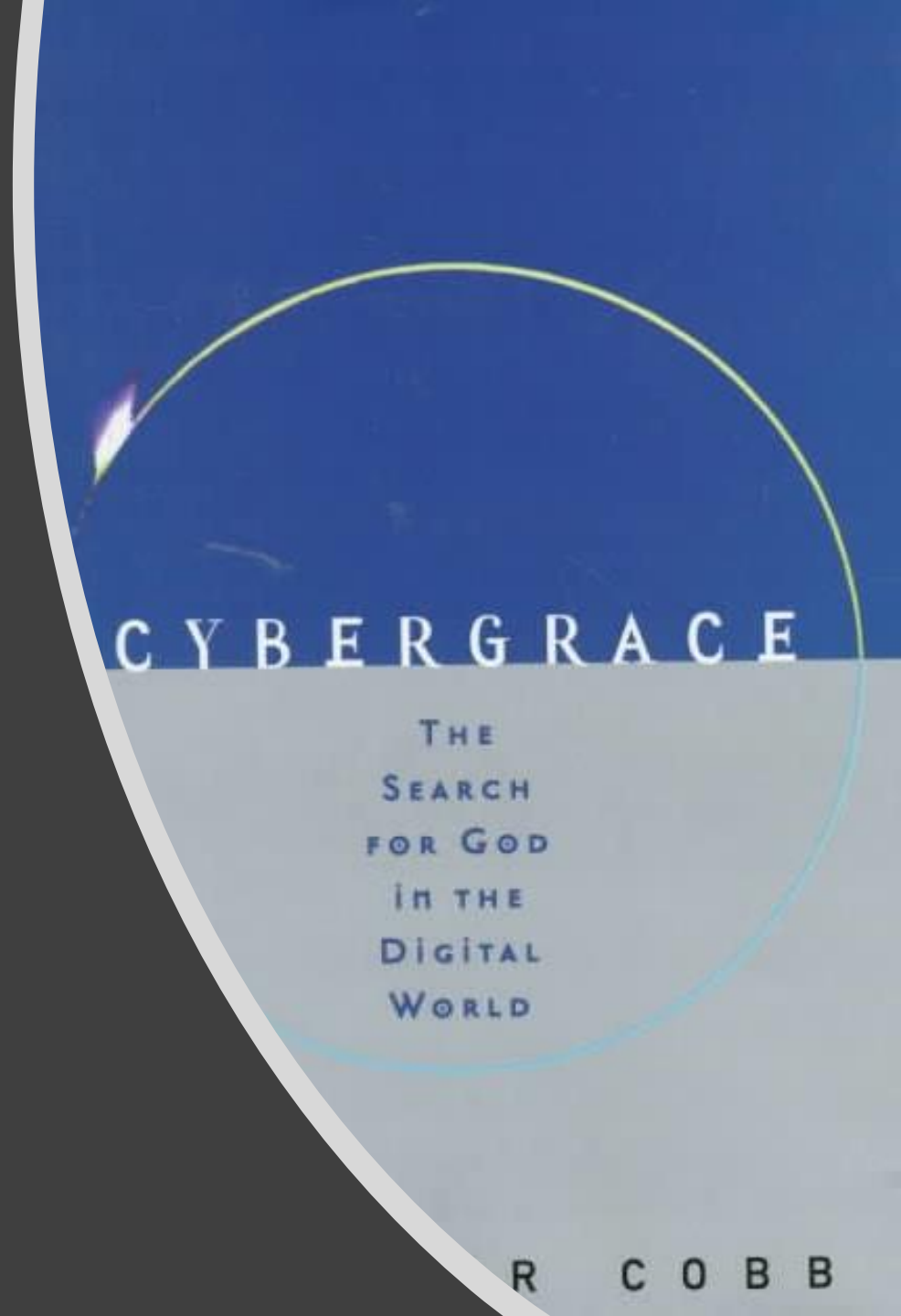
Dualism

The dualism of cyberspace
reflects a cultural issue

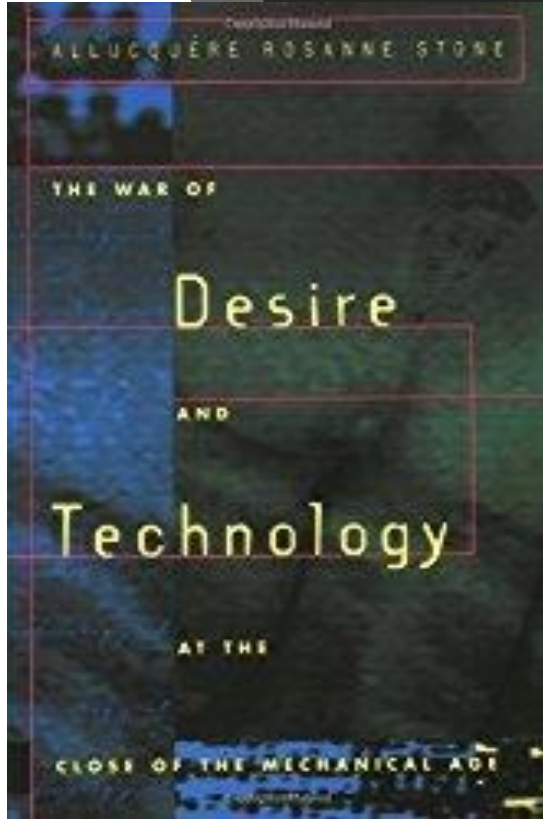
‘A culturally entrenched habit of
splitting the mind from the
body’

‘This scenario reflects our own
reality, not the reality of
cyberspace itself. If we approach
cyberspace from the perspective
of a splintered self, we will re-
create this dualism in
cyberspace. If however we see
cyberspace as part of a larger,
integrated, sacred experience of
the world, the picture begins to
change dramatically.’

Jennifer Cobb(1999), p. 394.



Rejection of Anthropological Dualism



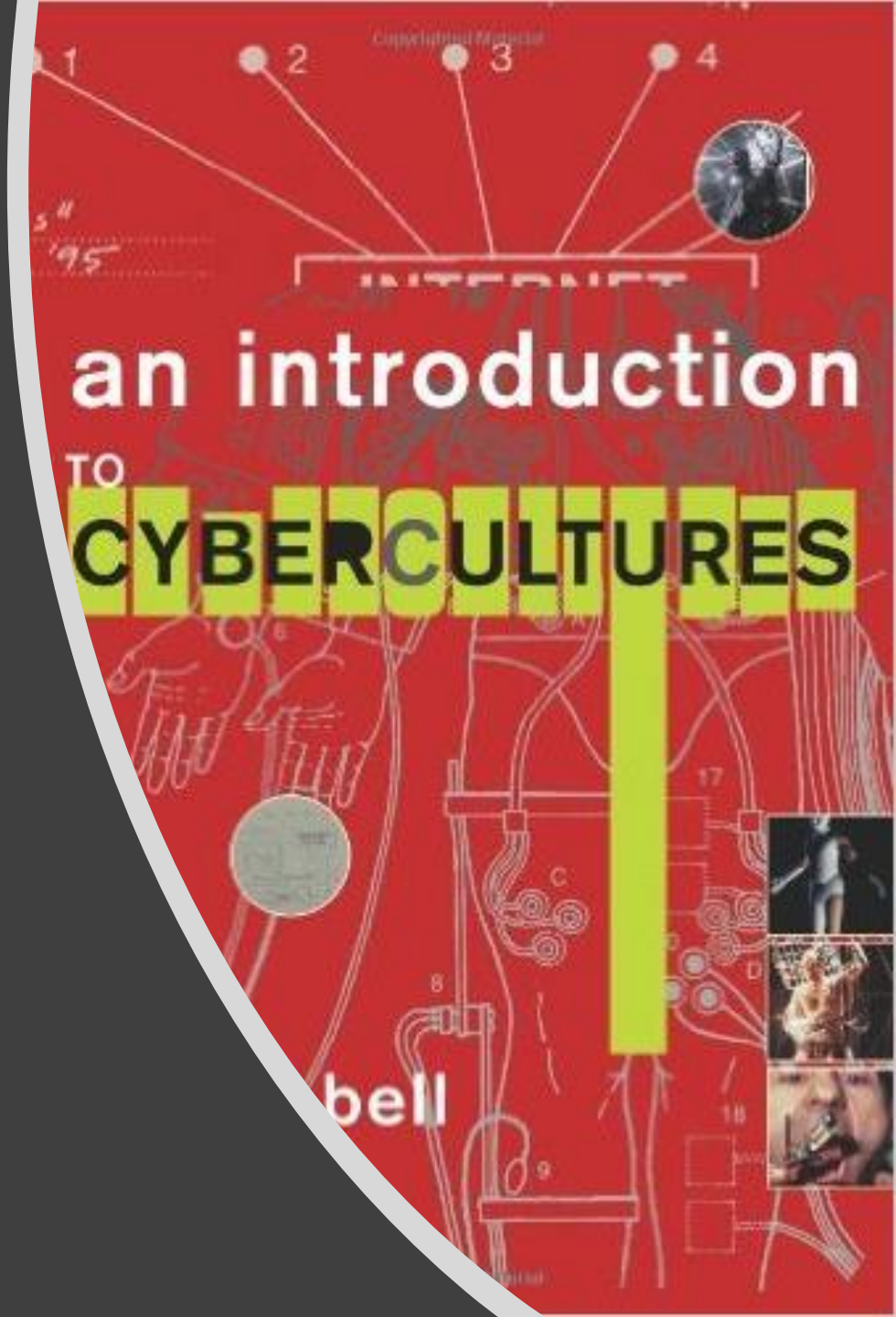
- ‘No matter how virtual the subject may become, there is always a body attached. It may be off somewhere else – and that ‘somewhere else’ may be a privileged point of view – but consciousness remains firmly rooted in the physical.’

- Allucquere Rosanne Stone, *Will the Real Body Please Stand Up?*, p. 111.

Rejection of Anthropological Dualism

- 'The meat is not that readily discarded; it's the meat that sits at the screen, typing and reading.'

- David Bell, *An Introduction to Cybercultures*, p. 141.

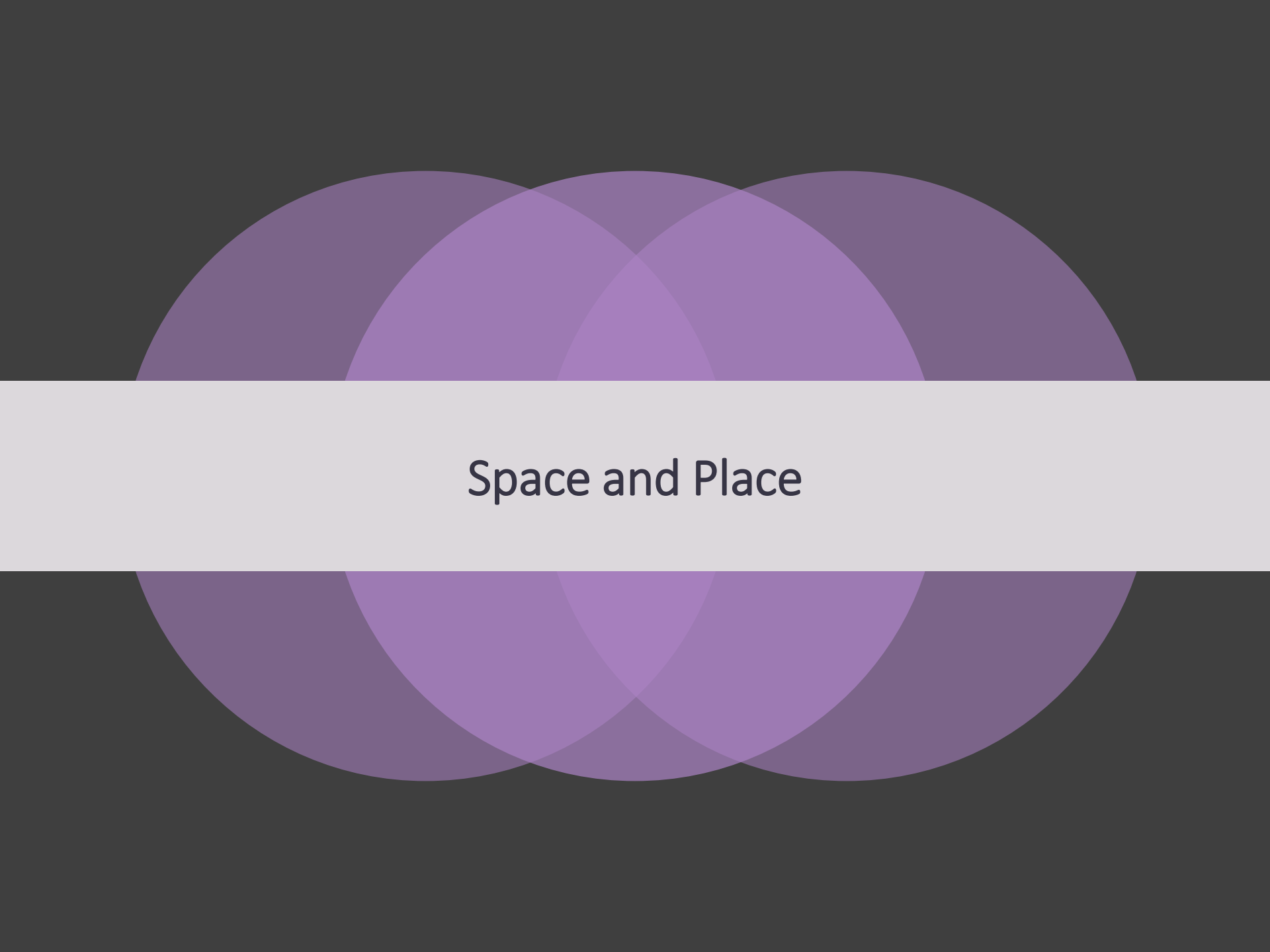


Rejection of Cosmological Dualism

‘Cyberspace is not, and never could be, the kingdom of mind; minds are attached to bodies, and bodies exist in the space of the world. And cyberspace as such does not preexist its users. Rather, it is produced by users, and not (in most cases) as a deliberate political project, but in the course of going about their lives’



Julie Cohen (2007), p. 218

The image features three overlapping circles in a light purple color, arranged horizontally. They are set against a dark gray background. A solid white horizontal band cuts across the middle of the circles. The text "Space and Place" is centered within this white band.

Space and Place

Space

Abstract

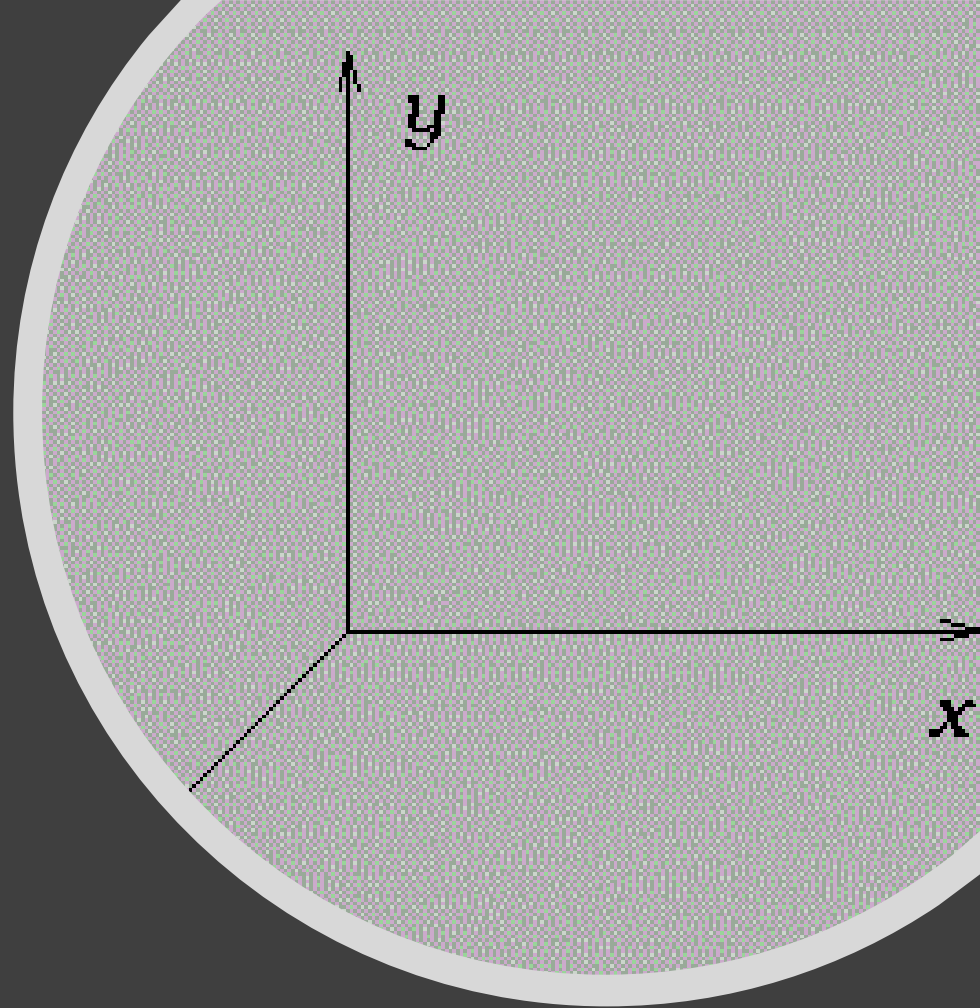
A conceptual and
sometimes empty space

The homogenous space of
Euclidean geometry

Empty, neutral, value-free

Trubshaw (2005)

‘An abstract analytical concept’





Place

A physical location where human activity takes place and which holds meaning for people

Identified by the activity and human experiences that take place there

A social construction

Tilly (1994)

A medium, a container for human action that cannot be divorced from the activities that take place in it

Trubshaw (2005)

Somewhere specific and tangible



Place

Massey (1994)

It is the set of social relations that interact at a particular location that makes it a place, and give it its singularity and identity

Trubshaw (2005)

‘We relate to physical places in a way that we cannot to abstract notions of space. Whereas “space” is more about what is conceived and thought about, “place” is what is perceived and lived in.’



Space and Place in Cyberspace

'Modern communication technologies have altered our perceptual fields by extending them beyond the realm of direct fact-to-face interaction. ***In turn, the perceived relationship between physical place and our social environment has been expanded into the seemingly nebulous virtual realm, allowing for the emergence of new pathways and horizons of experience.***'

Ryan (2012), p. 74

'At the beginning of the new millennium, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are reconfiguring space-time relations, radically restructuring the materiality and spatiality of space and the relationship between people and place.'

'Many websites seek to provide a reconnection and reinvigoration of place-based communities by fostering interaction among local residents'

[Dodge and Kitchin \(2001\), p. ix.](#)

danah boyd on Facebook

Together, profiles, Friends lists and various public communication channels set the stage for the ways in which SNS are publics because of the ways in which they connect people en masse and because of the space they provide for interactions and information.

They are networked publics because of the ways in which networked technologies shape and configure them.

boyd (2012), p. 45





Virtual Community

Howard Rheingold
1993

'Social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace'.

He refers to his interaction with a virtual community as 'living contact with old and new friends, strangers and colleagues'.

Social Networks in Society

- Connections between people
- **Sense of Community**
- Identity Presentation
- Spreading News
- 'As individuals bring their social relations online, the focal point of the Internet is evolving from being a network of documents to being a network of people'.
 - Brian Karrer Johan Ugander, Lars Backstrom, Cameron Marlow (2011)





Facebook 2018

April 2018 – F8 Keynote

People often tell us that *groups are the most meaningful part of Facebook and you can feel like you belong in a community.* You can meet new people who share your values. For some people this might be a support group for new parents; for others it might be about a disease you have; for others it might be about finding people to come together and volunteer with. People want to be a part of meaningful community.

Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote,
<https://singjupost.com/full-transcript-mark-zuckerberg-at-facebooks-f8-2018-developer-conference/4/>



Facebook 2018

April 2018 – F8 Keynote

So today we're launching a *new groups tab* to make groups *more central to the overall Facebook experience*. So for me I'm going to have all my groups in one place: my family group; my running group; my game group; my sheep dog appreciation groups all in one place.

Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote,
<https://singjupost.com/full-transcript-mark-zuckerberg-at-facebooks-f8-2018-developer-conference/4/>

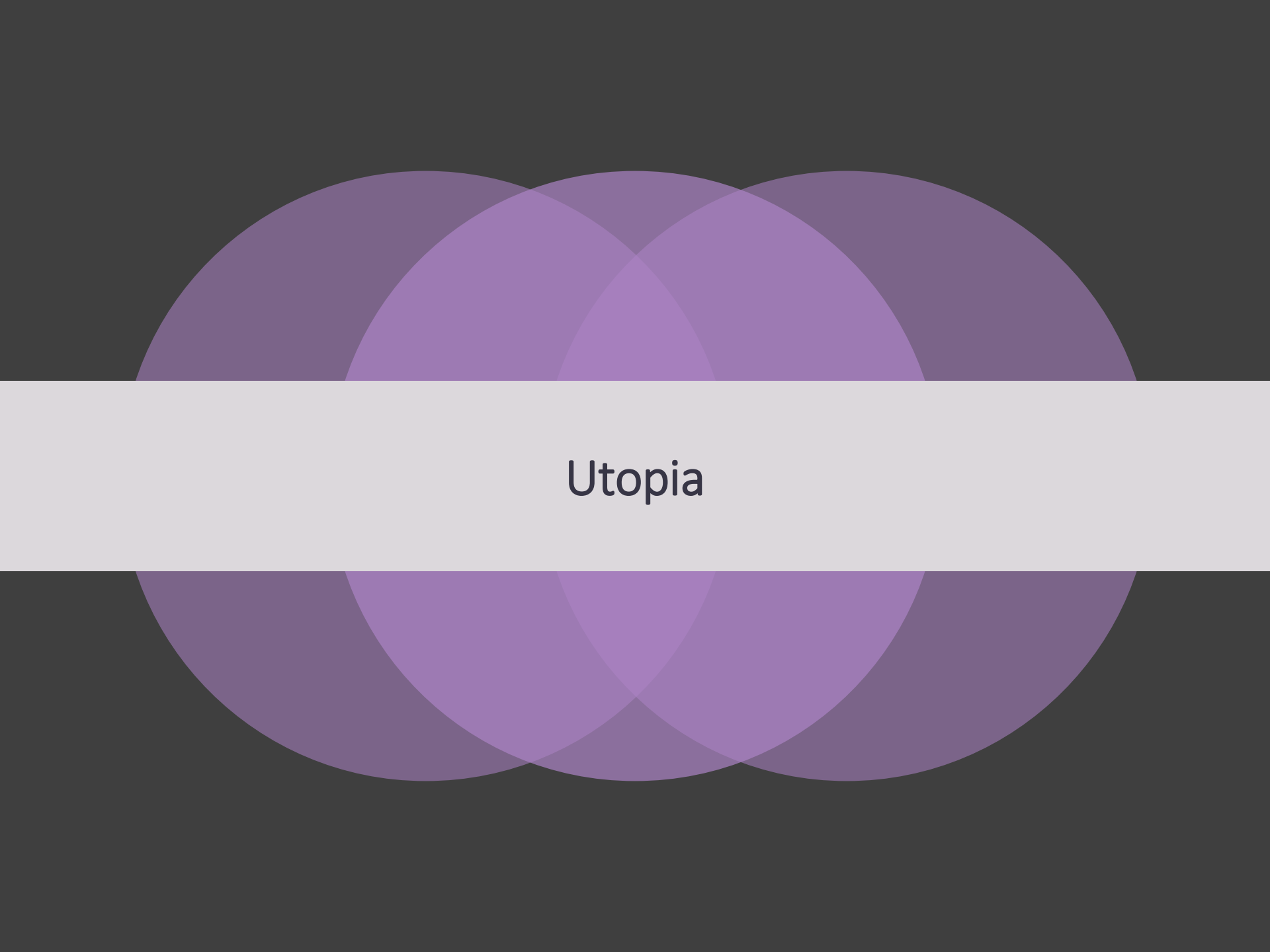


Instagram 2018

April 2018 – F8 Keynote

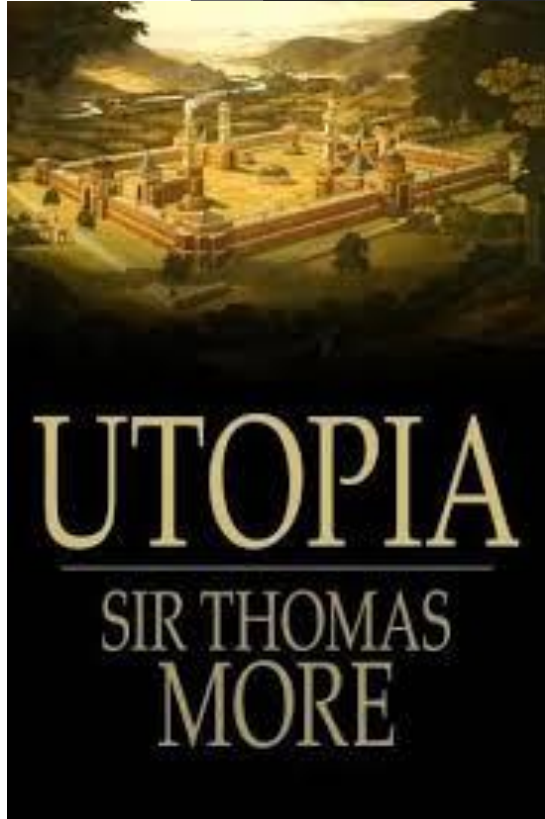
Some of the best stories that we hear are around adhoc communities that spring up on Instagram and more than 200 million people use explore on Instagram every day. Since we launched *hashtag following* in just last December, more than 100 million people now follow hashtags; so we want to make it even easier to find the communities for the things that you're interested in. .

Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote,
<https://singjupost.com/full-transcript-mark-zuckerberg-at-facebooks-f8-2018-developer-conference/4/>



Utopia

Utopia



Term coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516 in his book *Utopia*

From Greek

οὐ ("not") and *τόπος* ("place")

Meaning 'no place'

Creating a Better World

'Seeing the internet as a common mental geography supplies those who create computer technology, as well as users, with a common system of communication and a new meta-narrative to be used to make sense of the world. **Internet users see the online environment as a place to build utopia or pursue a "better" reality**'.

Campbell (2005), p. 21



Utopia



John Perry Barlow (1996)

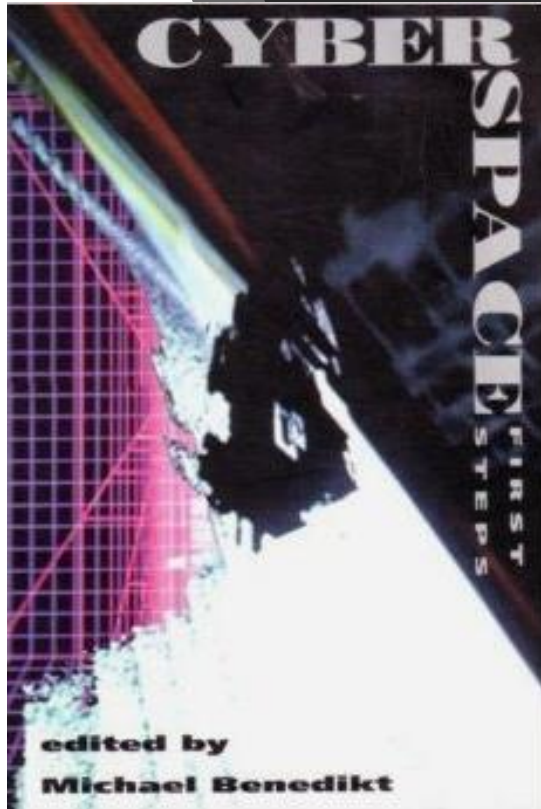
‘We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth’

‘We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity’

‘We will create a civilization of the Mind in Cyberspace. May it be more humane and fair than the world your governments have made before’

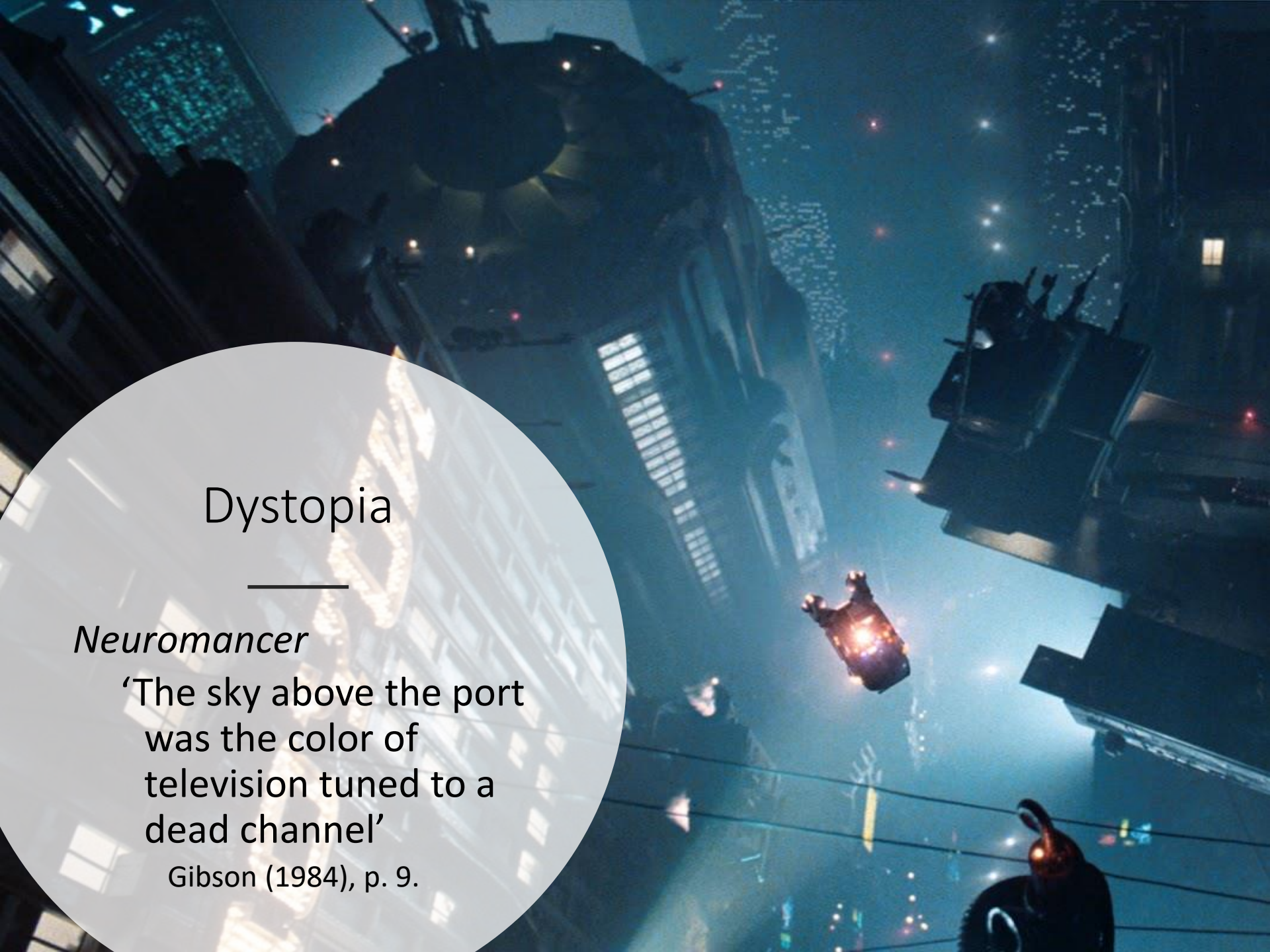
A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace

Utopia



‘Cyberspace: Through its myriad unblinking video eyes, distant places and faces, real or unreal, actual or long gone, can be summoned to presence. From vast databases that constitute the culture’s deposited wealth, every document is available, every recording is playable, and every picture is visible.’

Michael Benedict (1991)



Dystopia

Neuromancer

‘The sky above the port
was the color of
television tuned to a
dead channel’

Gibson (1984), p. 9.

Dystopia

‘My quarrel is with a relatively small but disproportionately influential group of self-described “Net religionist” and “wannabe gods” who believe that the physical world can (and should) be “downloaded” into a computer, who believe that the future of mankind is not in RL (real life) but in some form of VR (virtual reality)’

Mark Slouka, *The War of the Worlds* (1996)

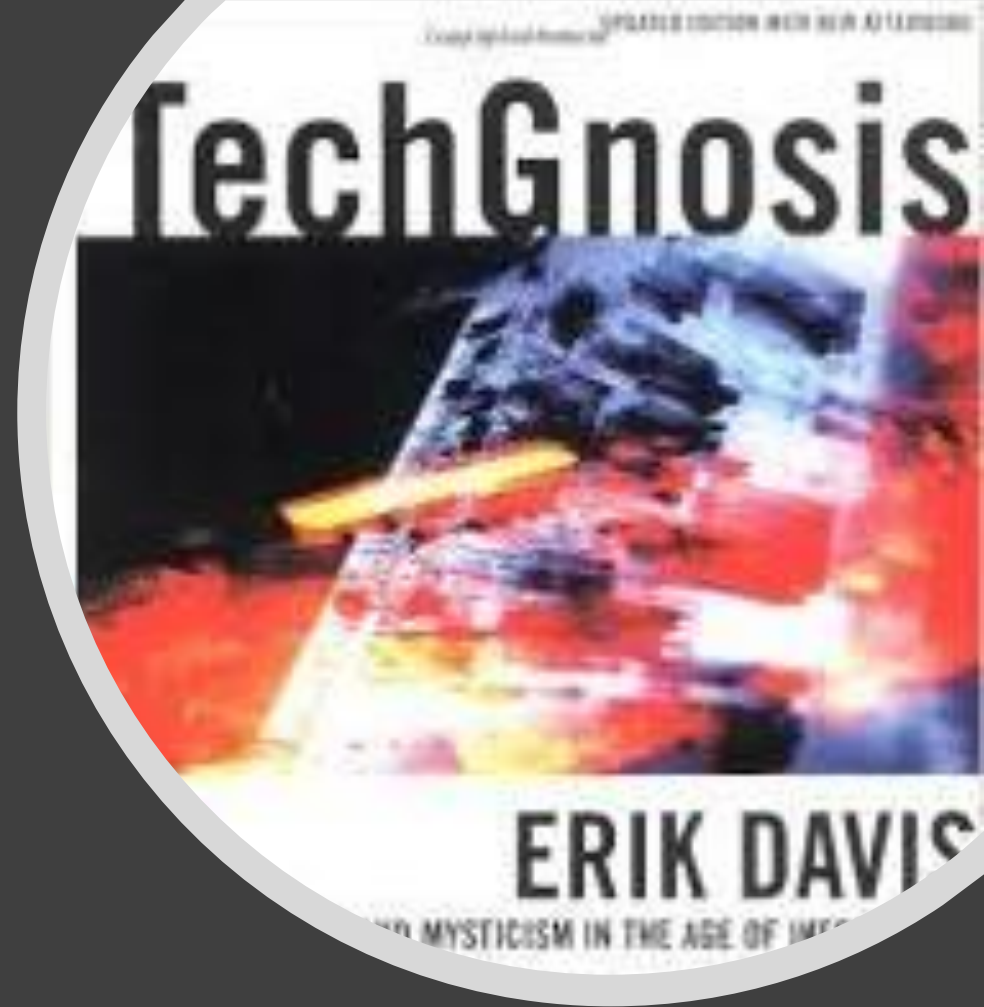
‘Internet-centrism is a highly disorienting drug; it ignores context and entraps policymakers into believing that they have a useful and powerful ally on their side. Pushed to its extreme, it leads to hubris, arrogance, and a false sense of confidence, all bolstered by the dangerous illusion of having established effective command of the Internet.’

Morozov (2011)

Disillusionment

‘In fact many of the worlds we'll have the opportunity to jack into will more than likely resemble some unholy combination of theme park, bookstore, and mall. The banal fate of our culture may be to simulate the astral realms inside our machines, and then blanket them with Planet Hollywood, Donkey Kong miniature-golf courses, and Lexis-Nexis fast-food data franchises.’

Erik Davis, *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (1998)



Disillusionment

‘Cyberspace - that wonderful, phantasmagoric three-dimensional alternative reality imagined by William Gibson - was not actually shaping itself on-line as I and many others thought it surely would’.

Michael Benedikt, "Towards a General Theory of Value:
An Interview with Michael Benedikt," *Gain*(2003)



A Separate Place or Space

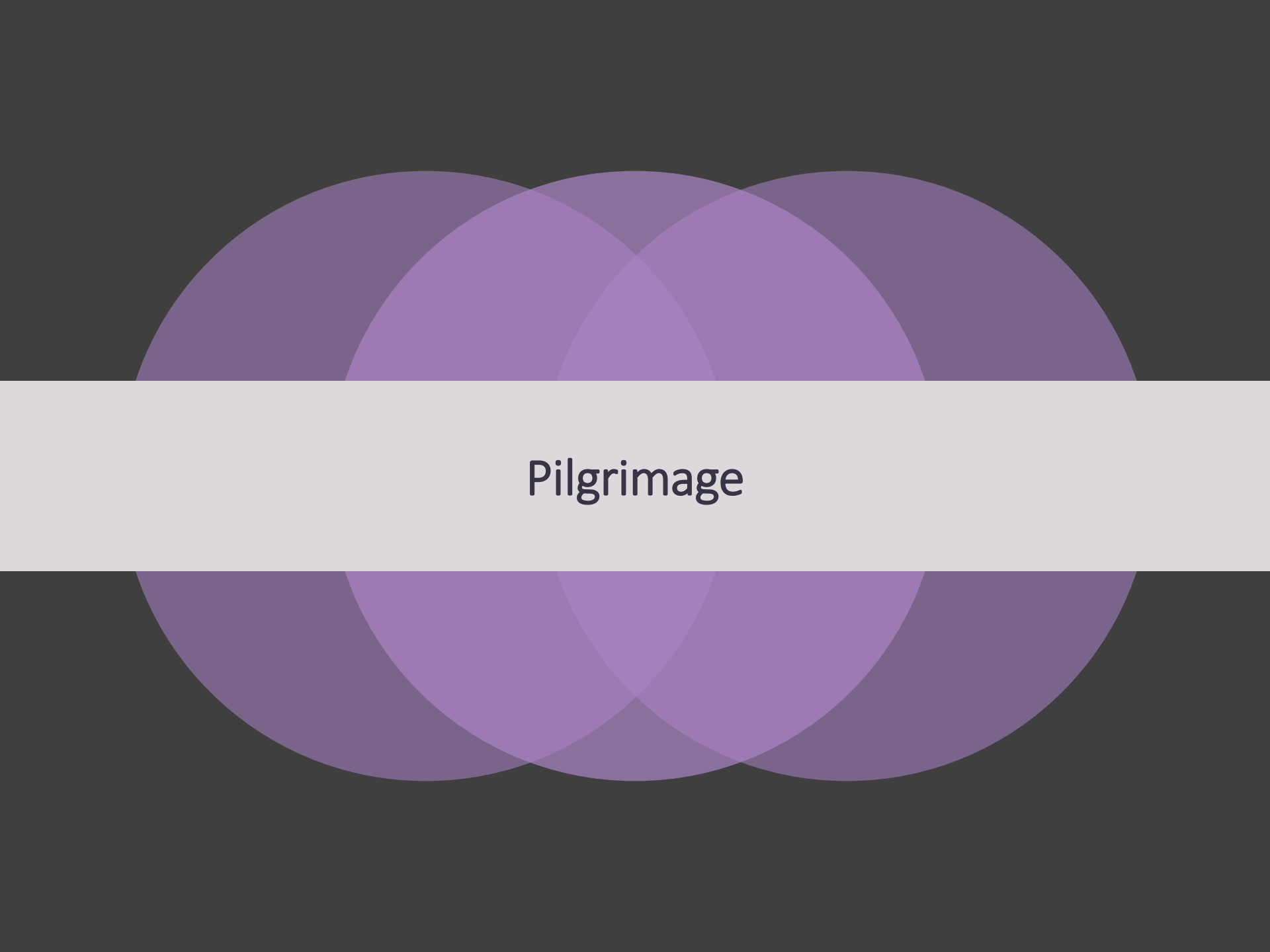


Cohen argues that the early utopian or dystopian theories were all dependent on seeing cyberspace as a separate place

She believes that it is seen that way because we cannot see it any other way

‘How can an assemblage of cables, routers, and servers be “a space”?’

Julie Cohen (2007)

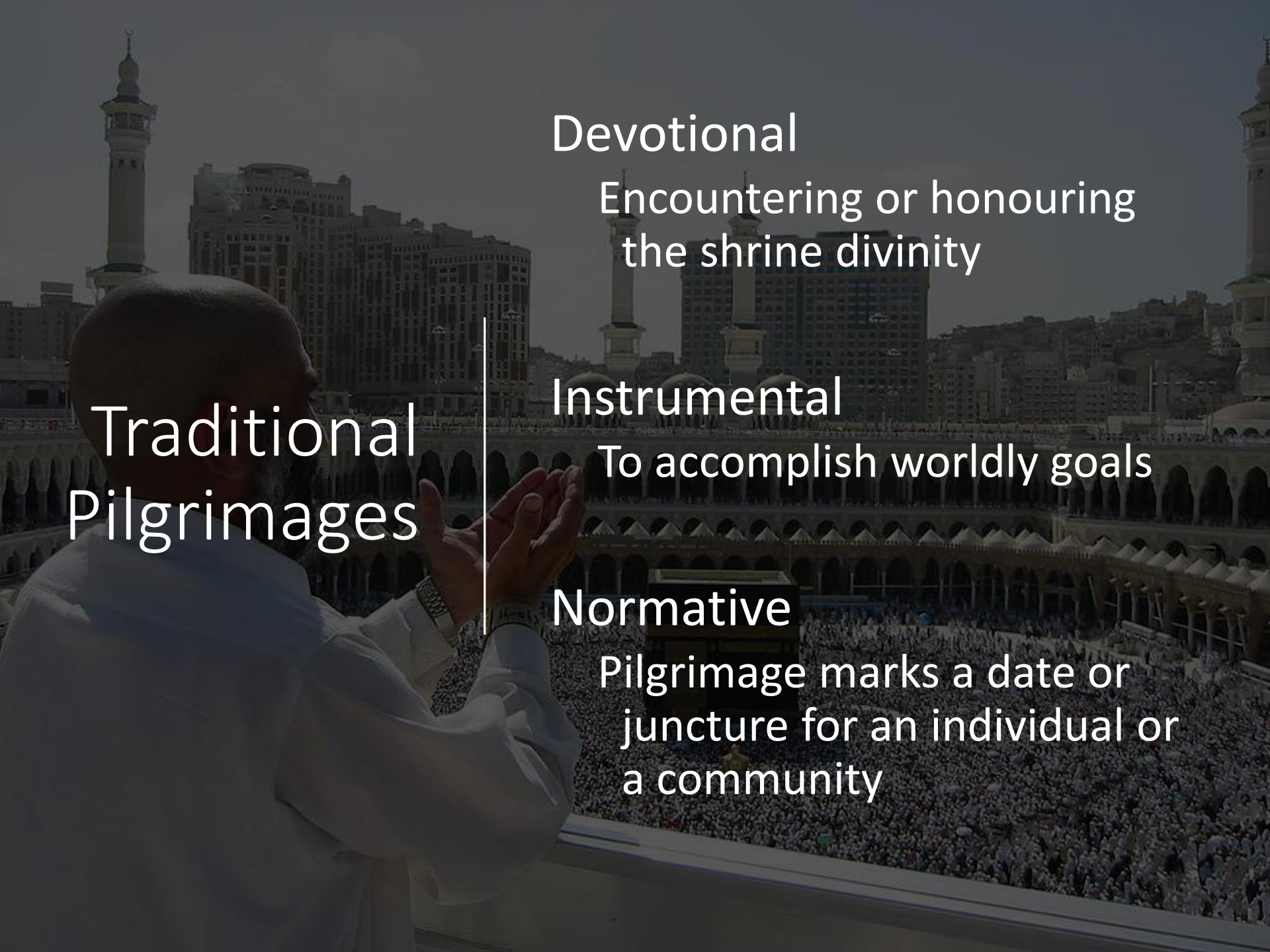
The image features a dark gray background with three overlapping circles of varying shades of purple. A horizontal white band runs across the middle of the image, containing the word "Pilgrimage" in a dark gray, sans-serif font. The circles are positioned such that they overlap the white band and each other, creating a symmetrical, mandala-like design.

Pilgrimage



Traditional Pilgrimages

- Journey to a sacred place
- Hardship
- Reason
 - Atonement
 - Special intention
 - Cure
 - Indulgence
- Often in areas of conflict
- Multiple interpretations
- Ritualised motion at the site
- Individual Experience
 - Personal context
- Profound Experience
- Encountering the transcendent
- Democratic
- Shared Experience
 - Coleman and Elsner (1995)

A man in a white thobe is seen from the back, performing Tawaf in Mecca. He is standing on a balcony or walkway, with his hands raised in a gesture of devotion. The background shows the Kaaba and the surrounding city of Mecca, with many pilgrims visible in the distance.

Devotional

Encountering or honouring
the shrine divinity

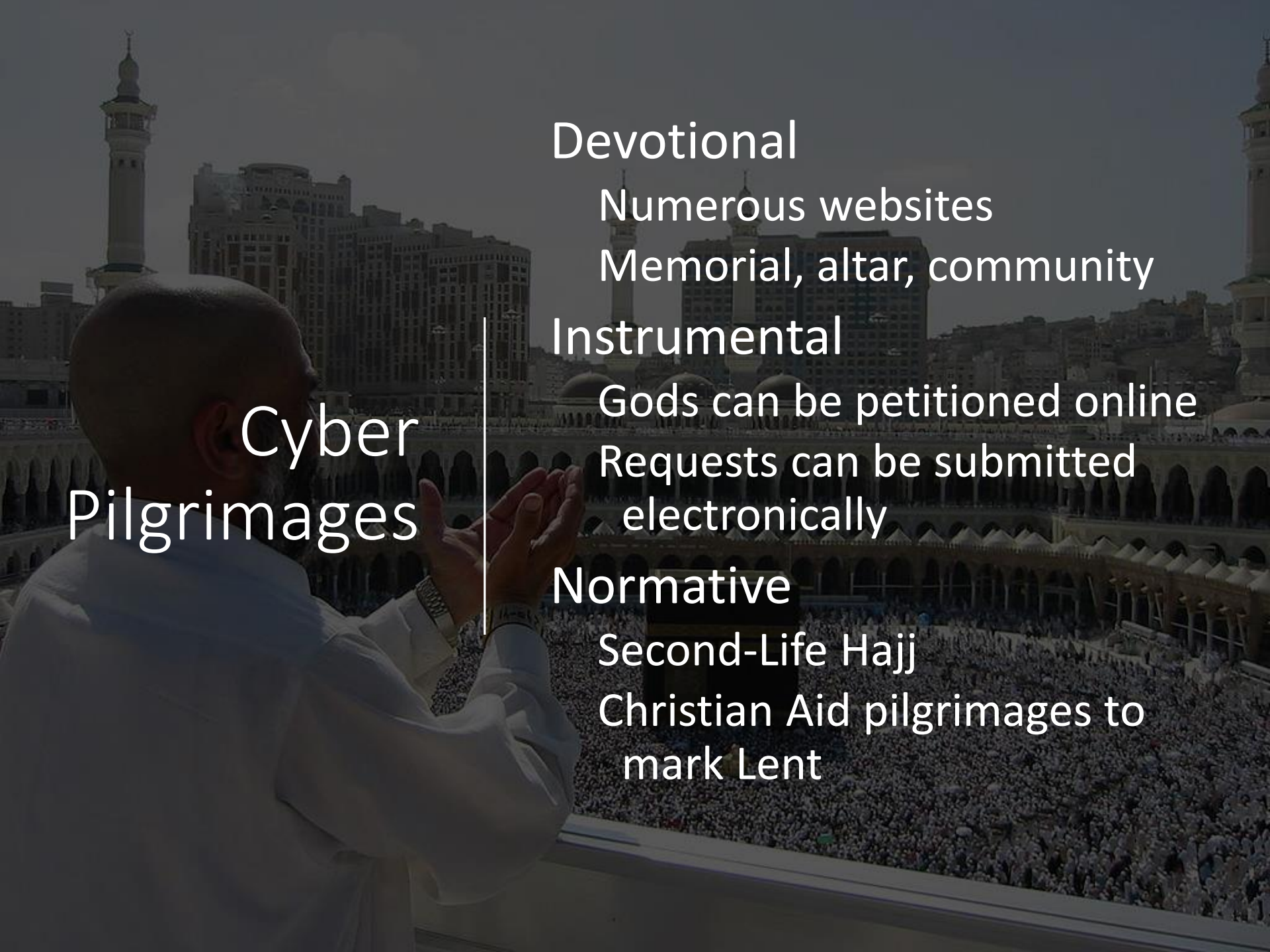
Instrumental

To accomplish worldly goals

Normative

Pilgrimage marks a date or
juncture for an individual or
a community

Traditional
Pilgrimages



Cyber Pilgrimages

Devotional

Numerous websites

Memorial, altar, community

Instrumental

Gods can be petitioned online

Requests can be submitted
electronically

Normative

Second-Life Hajj

Christian Aid pilgrimages to
mark Lent



The National Shrine of
Saint Jude

Receive Weekly Email Devotions

Enter Your Email Address...

SIGN UP »

[En Español](#) | [Already signed up? Log In](#)

[Home](#)

[St. Jude](#)

[The Shrine](#)

[Make a Gift](#)

[Blog](#)

[Learn](#)

[Pray](#)



St. Jude, Pray for Us

Send Your Prayer or Petition to the Shrine

Thank you for praying with St. Jude. May the hope of St. Jude remain alive in your heart in all you do. Please fill in your special intention below. We will deliver your prayer to the altar of St. Jude at the National Shrine of St. Jude in Chicago.

First Name: *

Last Name: *

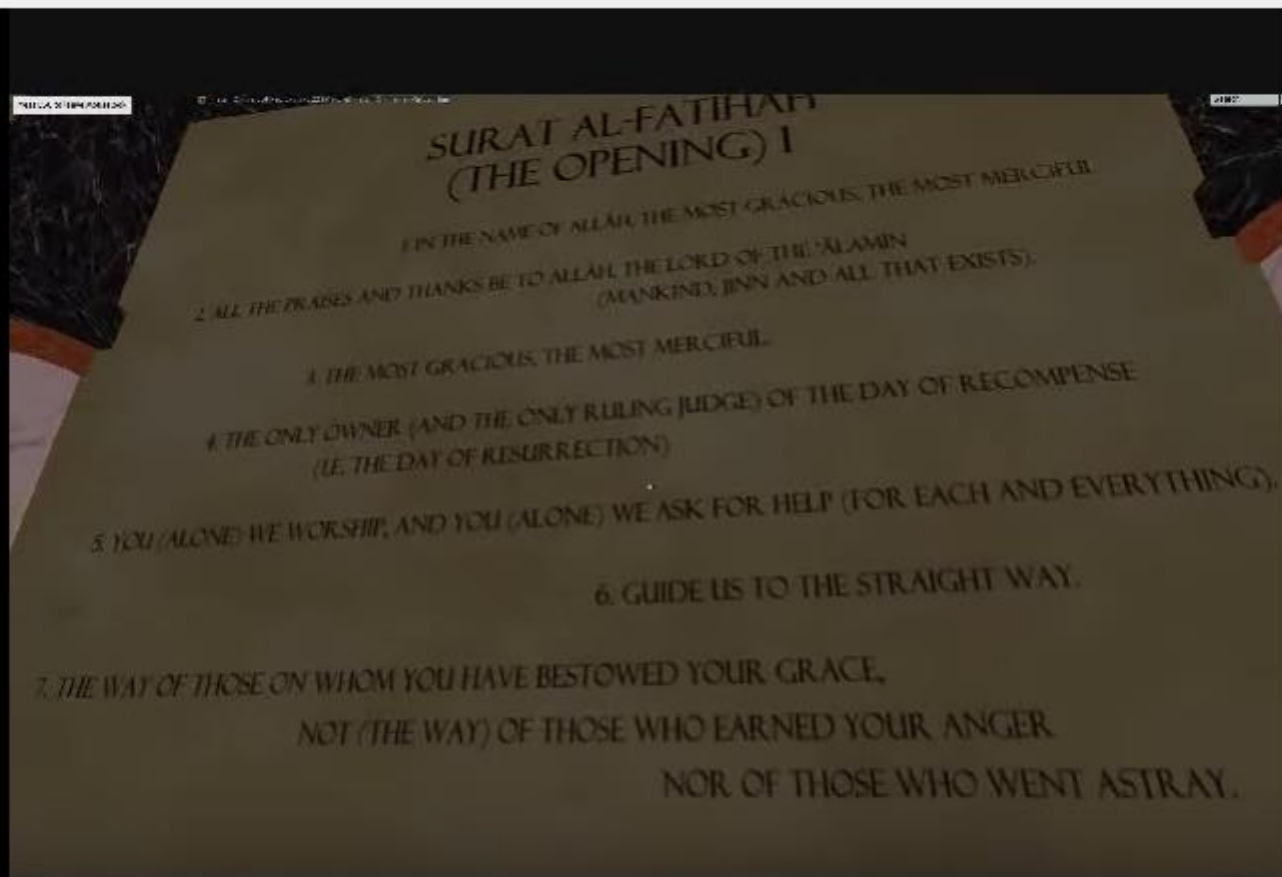
Email: *

Special intention:

☒ Yes, I would like to receive email from the National Shrine of St. Jude

Send Your Prayer »





An Initiatory Journey

A seeker undertakes to
work a transformation
of the self

Obligatory

Such as Muslim Hajj

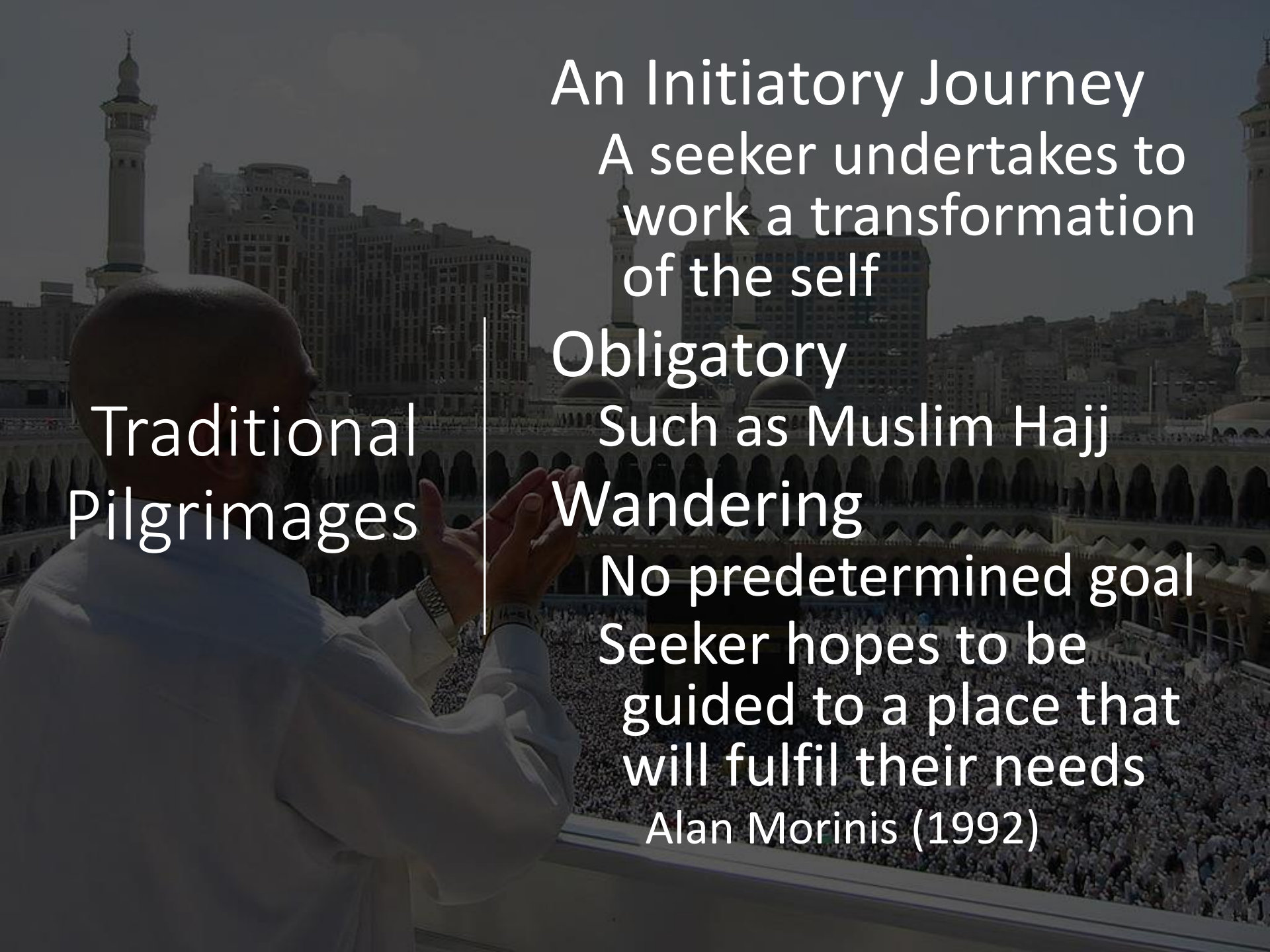
Wandering

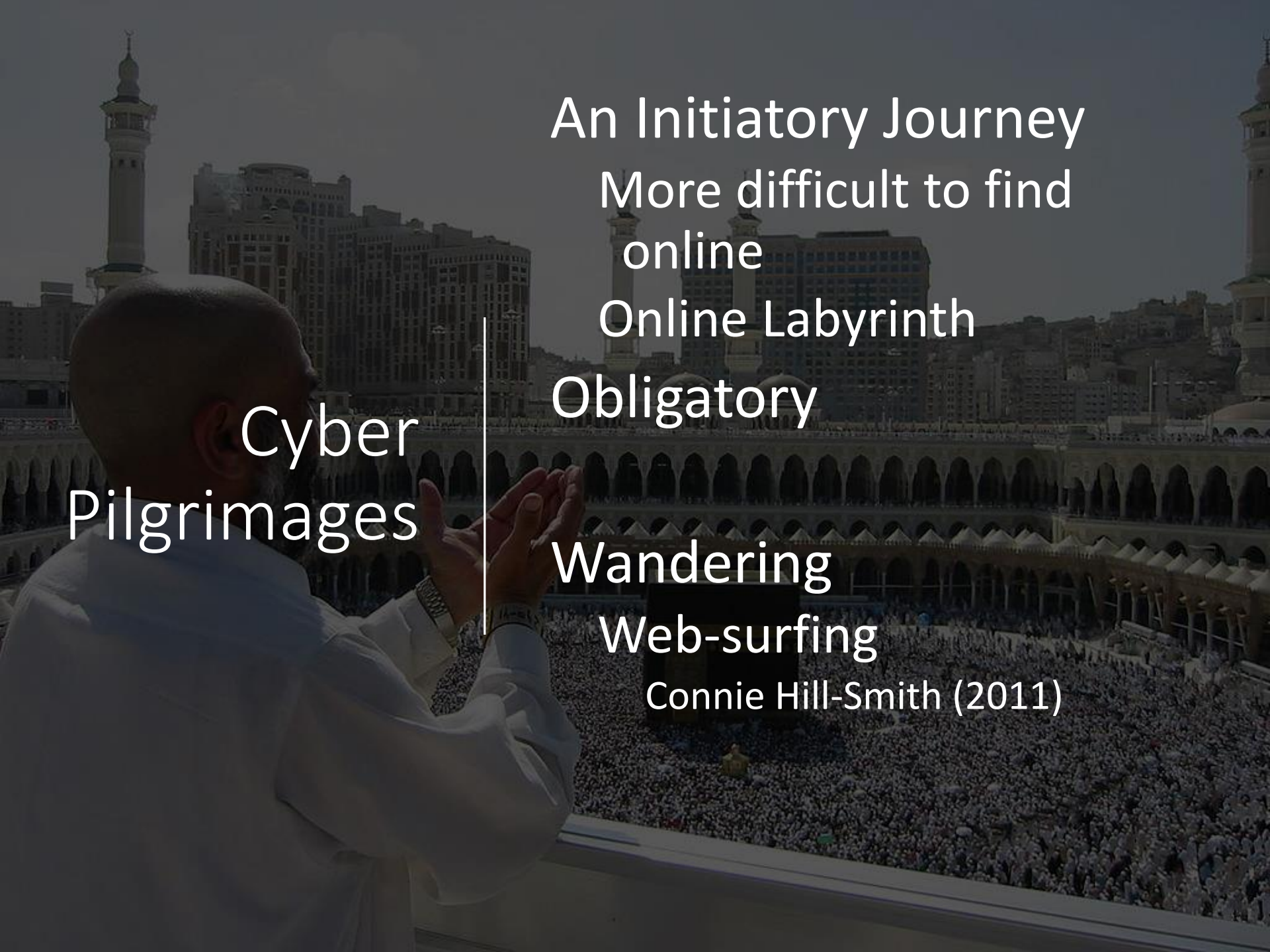
No predetermined goal

Seeker hopes to be
guided to a place that
will fulfil their needs

Alan Morinis (1992)

Traditional
Pilgrimages





An Initiatory Journey

More difficult to find
online

Online Labyrinth

Obligatory

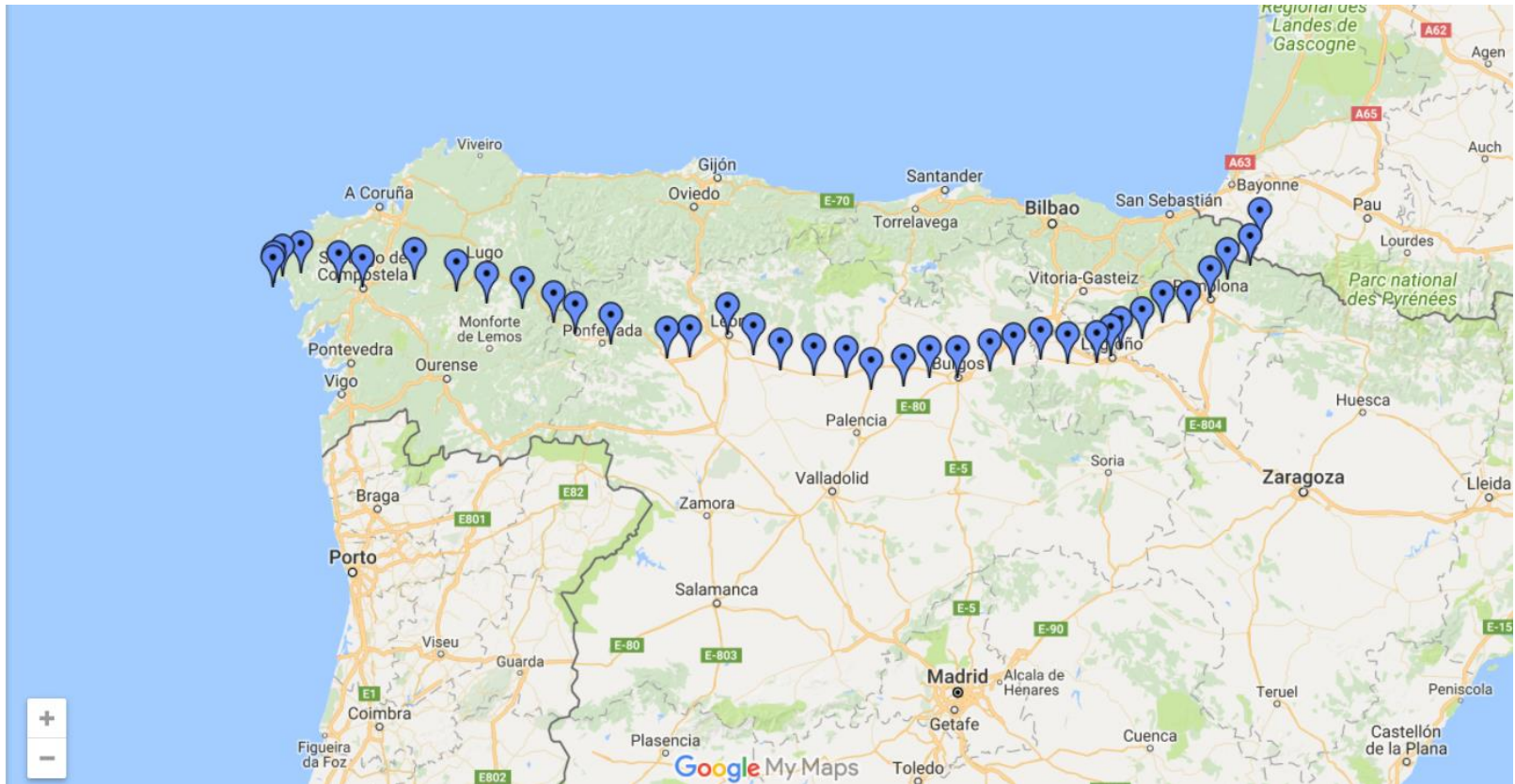
Cyber
Pilgrimages

Wandering

Web-surfing

Connie Hill-Smith (2011)

The Camino via Google Street View





[Home](#) | [About labyrinths](#) | [This labyrinth](#) | [Photos](#) | [Online labyrinth](#) | [Explore Dimensions](#) | [Theory](#) | [Resources](#) | [Connections](#)

[info\[at\]labyrinth\[dot\]org\[dot\]uk](mailto:info[at]labyrinth[dot]org[dot]uk)

Online labyrinth

This is an online translation of the Labyrinth. The original is described as 'an interactive installation for spiritual journeys'. It consists of a pathway mapped out on the floor for visitors to follow. During this journey participants pause and listen to a piece of music and a meditation. They also undertake some symbolic action or ritual.

With this online version the pieces of music are the same but the actions and activities have been translated to suit the medium.

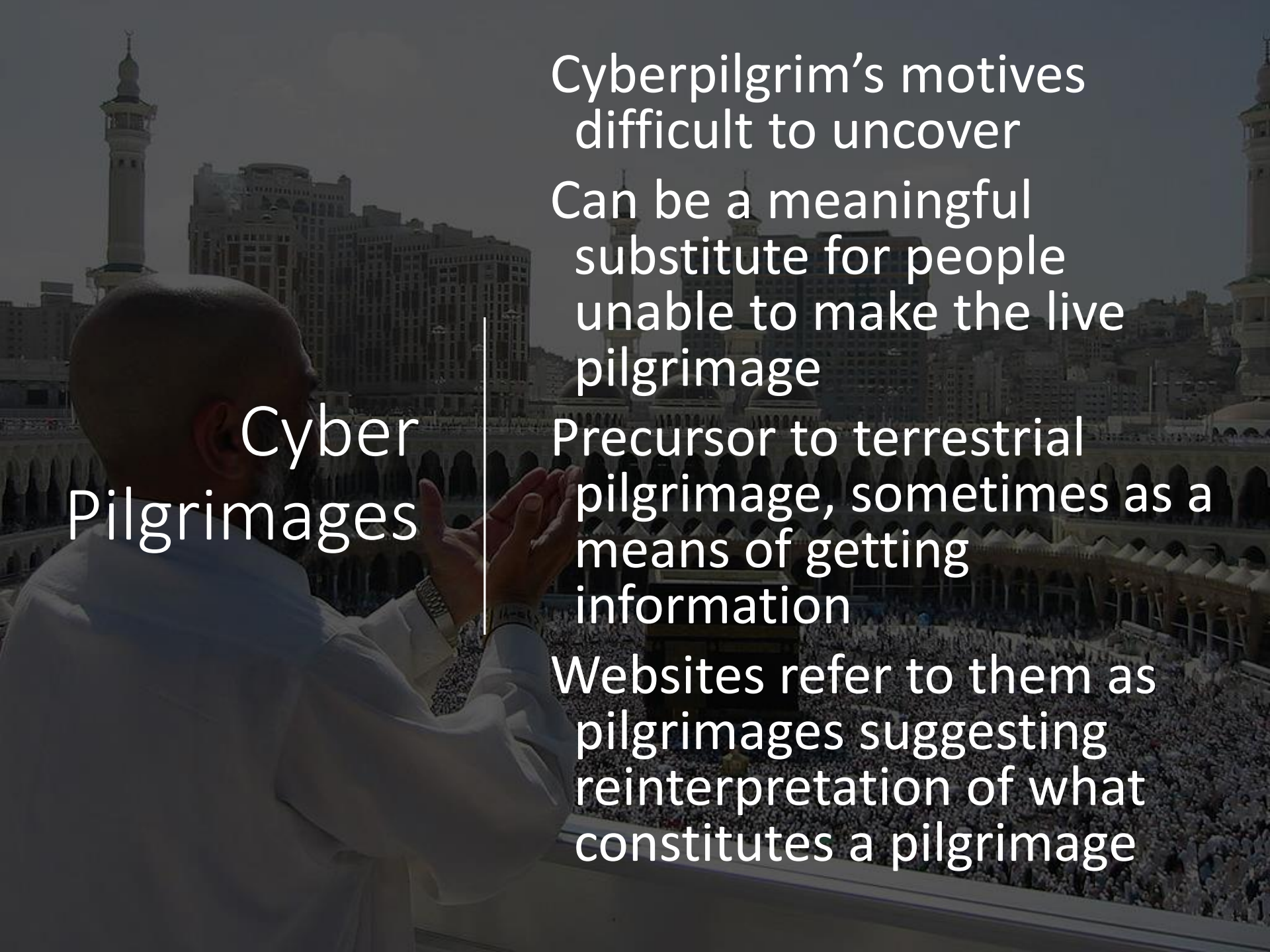
Before proceeding please read the following safety instructions.

The Online Labyrinth has been created in 11 separate pieces just like the original. You are advised to proceed in order as each piece relates to the next, and if time allows complete the labyrinth in one go. This could take 40 minutes.

Download times have been kept to a minimum. All the pieces stream into your computer and to keep waiting down to a minimum you will be able to begin before the whole piece has loaded. If you experience a pause in sound or animation please wait as more media loads.

Please remove your shoes and click [here](#) to begin the Labyrinth >>





Cyberpilgrim's motives
difficult to uncover

Can be a meaningful
substitute for people
unable to make the live
pilgrimage

Precursor to terrestrial
pilgrimage, sometimes as a
means of getting
information

Websites refer to them as
pilgrimages suggesting
reinterpretation of what
constitutes a pilgrimage

Cyber
Pilgrimages

What is a Virtual Pilgrimage?

A Virtual Pilgrimage brings the actual experience of Lourdes virtually to you!

A Virtual Pilgrimage is a 90 minute prayerful experience of drawing nearer to God in the company of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Bernadette, made possible by the technology of today to bring Lourdes to the parish "pilgrims" in every way possible with:

- projected images of what pilgrims would see in Lourdes
- music similar to what pilgrims hear in Lourdes
- a piece of the Grotto rock from Lourdes
- precious water from the Grotto spring
- Eucharistic blessing as in Lourdes
- Candlelight Rosary Procession

Virtual Pilgrimages are offered in parishes, schools, prisons and to groups across America and beyond.

Like an actual Pilgrimage to Lourdes, Virtual Pilgrimage is a holy encounter with God under the watchful care of Our Lady of Lourdes. Lourdes Volunteers takes great care to preserve the reverence and sanctity of the Pilgrimage experience as we bring it to those who cannot actually go to Lourdes.



For the first time in the History of the Catholic Church, a Plenary Indulgence was granted for a virtual experience as equal to an actual experience.

Join us at a Virtual Pilgrimage near you: [Virtual Pilgrimage Schedule](#)

<http://lourdesvolunteers.org/virtual-pilgrimage/#>

IRAN INTRODUCES A VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE SOFTWARE FOR THE HOLY ISLAMIC SITES

Posted on April 19, 2012 by Jafria News

★★★★★ 2 Votes



JNN 19 April 2012 Tehran : New simulation software unveiled by Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance helps users visit holy Islamic sites from their personal computer at home.

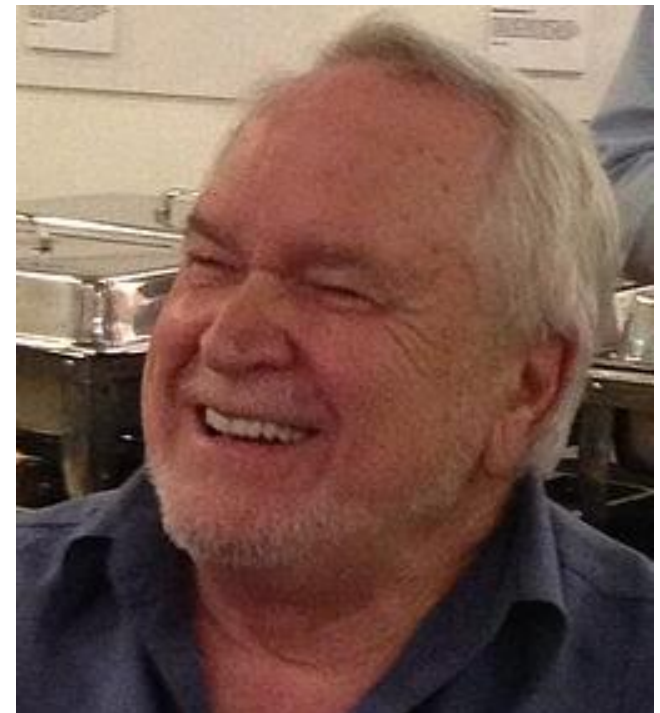
The software provides users with simulations of Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Masjid Al-Nabawi in Medina and the Askariya Shrine in Iraq.

The background features three overlapping circles in a light purple hue, centered horizontally. A solid white horizontal band cuts across the middle of the circles. The text 'Alternatives to Dualism' is centered within this white band.

Alternatives to Dualism

Rejection of Dualism

- 'A dualistic view of space and place as part of the 'radical polarization into two genders which is typically hegemonic in western societies today'.
 - Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 6.
- Dualistic view of space is part of the modern Western world view
- The modern mindset has become accustomed to viewing space in that way
 - Edward Soja, *Thirdspace*, pp. 10-11



Edward Soja (1940-)



Thirdspace

A composite of all spaces

First and second spaces

Physical and mental spaces

Designed to break down a 'rigid dichotomy'

'They are not just "other spaces" to be added on to the geographical imagination, they are also "other than" the established ways of thinking spatially.'

Edward Soja, *Thirdspace* (1996), p. 11

Cyberthirdspace



‘And some have a bias to see the digital and the physical as separate; what I am calling **digital dualism**. Digital dualists believe that the digital world is “virtual” and the physical world “real.” This bias motivates many of the critiques of sites like Facebook and the rest of the social web and ***I fundamentally think this digital dualism is a fallacy***. Instead, I want to argue that the digital and physical are increasingly meshed, and want to call this opposite perspective that implodes atoms and bits rather than holding them conceptually separate, ***augmented reality***.’

Nathan Jurgenson (2011)



Augmented Reality

- Computer generated information overlaid on a real world environment
- Responds to user's input – gestures, verbal commands
- User sees real world with virtual objects imposed on it
- Differs from VR
- Not just a way of thinking
- It is an attempt to actually create a new type of space, as was Benedikt's 1990 cyberspace.



Facebook and Augmented Reality

In April 2017, F8 Keynote

Act 1

A layer of AR between the user and potentially every aspect of the physical world, using a Facebook camera app on a smartphone.

Act 2 is tied to AR.

'So think about going to Rome on vacation and having information about the Colosseum overlaid on the actual building or directions overlaid on the actual street'.

'We want glasses or eventually contact lenses that look and feel normal but that let us overlay all kinds of information and digital objects on top of the real world'. Wearing the glasses or contact lenses, each time a person looks at an object or place, they will have information about the object or place overlaid on it'

Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote, (1.28)



F8 Keynote April
2018

Augmented reality
camera now available
on Instagram

Mark Zuckerberg, F8 Keynote,
(0.29)



Merging of the Worlds

'I am proposing an alternative view that states that our reality is both technological and organic, both digital and physical, all at once. We are not crossing in and out of separate digital and physical realities, ala *The Matrix*, but instead live in one reality, one that is augmented by atoms and bits. And our selves are not separated across these two spheres as some dualistic "first" and "second" self, but is instead an augmented self'

Nathan Jurgenson (2011)



Merging of the Worlds

In 2009 I discussed geo-tagging, street view, face recognition, the Wii controller and the fact that sites like Facebook both impact and are impacted by the physical world to argue that “digital and material realities dialectically co-construct each other.”

This is opposed to the notion that the Internet is like the Matrix, where there is a “real” that you leave when you enter the virtual space - an outdated perspective as Facebook is increasingly real and our physical world increasingly digital.

I have used this perspective of augmentation to critique dualism when I see it.

But the dualism keeps rolling in

Nathan Jurgenson (2011)

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