



# Performing Identity on the Internet

# Impact of Computers

- “Windows” abstract the idea of a distributed, time-sharing computer.
- Windows create the illusion that a person is in multiple “places” at the same time.
- Now that people can be multiple “places” on the internet, they have distributed, time-sharing selves.

# Society of Mind

- Idea that identity is distributed and heterogeneous...
- Visual signs do not restrict experimentation
- Gender
- Race
- Sexuality
- Anything.

# Moratorium

- A time-out, a “heterotopia”
- Time period of adolescent growth
- Intense interaction with people and ideas
- A “place” where experimentation is the norm
- What happens here does not “count” the same as it does later “in reality” or “in adulthood”
- 1950s-1960s: College was considered a Moratorium
- Rise of the new Moratorium... the internet

# Other Terms

- *Rhizome* :: Net-patterned system that has an infinite number of possible connections
- *Flickering Signifiers* :: can be created by information technology – metamorphosis and dispersion
- Constantly changing identity
- Moving window-to-window, self to self, yet all embodied into one physical person.

# Performance of Race

- Race on the internet forces us to reexamine the idea that race is a personal and/or scientific phenomenon
- Personal disclosure is the only way to know anything about anyone ‘person’ on the internet.
- If someone lies about their race... why do they *desire* to?

# Subsumption of the Body

- Performance no longer needs a physical body... there is now a virtual body that subsumes the physical... via text.
- Private individual is becoming public.
- Before, we looked to history... now we must look to *space*. And we know that internet is a space.
- But, without the body, how can we perform our identities?

# Subsumption of the Body

- No visual/audio sign of the body – race, gender, and geographical heritage are now “invisible”.
- Everything depends on self-disclosure.
- But, even with self-disclosure... aren't there other ways to perform our identities online?
- *How?*



s

s-p-a-c-e

SPACE!

escaps

p

a

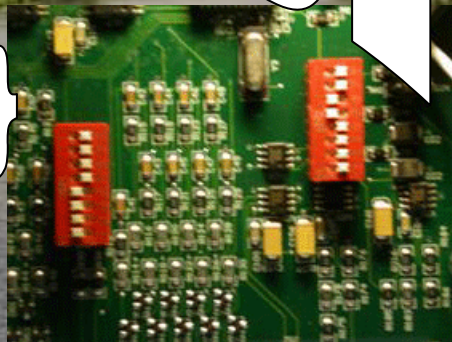
c

SPACE

SPACE

space?

$\{S\}P\{A\}C\{E\}$



space?

s . p . a . c . e .

the final frontier

A scenic landscape featuring a large body of water in the foreground, a dense forest of evergreen trees in the middle ground, and rolling mountains in the background under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "Any Questions?" is overlaid on the image in a large, white, outlined font, slanted upwards from left to right.

**Any Questions?**

A photograph of a large tree with prominent buttresses in a forest. The tree's trunk is thick and has several large, flat, horizontal buttresses that extend outwards. The leaves are green and dense. The background shows a forest with a rocky stream bed and a dirt path.

Stelarc – Performing the Cyborg

LonelyGirl15

Another Fact  
Not indeed my dear.  
Why should I say supper  
Not ever running thing my dear. I am sorry to leave another.  
Not then.

I have long bands.  
I couldn't do it behind it. I couldn't do it behind it.  
I would never see Lena. I would mean to hoard separately. I would surely  
sponge what. I would surely sponge what.

Intermission.  
What does that mean.  
There is no use in leaving out Friday. There is some sense in that.

Eighteen.  
Twenty three.<sup>26</sup>

-- Stein, *Not Slightly*