INTRODUCTION:

SEXUALITY IN THE AGE OF FIBER OPTICS

> *Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling.*
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> --*Walter Benjamin (236).*

When Benjamin undertook his critique of reproducibility, this mode was still in its infancy. Benjamin directed his efforts in such a way as to give them revolutionary and anti-fascist value. He went back to the basic conditions underlying mechanical reproduction and through his presentation showed that the fundamental nature of the work of art had been transformed, since mechanically reproduced art lack presence in time and space. The result was that concepts such as creativity and genius, authenticity and eternal value were being swept aside.

It has been over half a century since Benjamin's analysis, and reproducibility has now affected more than the work of art: it has affected subjectivity and sexuality. With the advent of electronic reproducibility, more people are exercising their "legitimate claim to be reproduced" (Benjamin 232). And yet, Benjamin's words could easily be updated to account for the effect of high-speed telecommunications networks on the current world. Instead of the dynamite of the tenth of the second, lasers burst our

locations asunder at the speed of light. Instead of the close-up and slow motion opening spaces that never before existed, computer networks are creating new spaces—cyberspaces—within the old. In these debris and ruins, we click to new virtual locations as we take a second look at the world around us. Fiber optic networks have transformed media events, banking, markets, academic research, teaching, learning, corresponding, gaming, and travelling (for all those people who, as in Benjamin's case, have access to this new technology). In the face of our proliferating representations and reproductions, we also take a second look at ourselves. The "complete" human being now seems to have technological accoutrements: it faxes, emails, and browses.

Although the digital revolution is not yet complete, theories about subjectivity and sexuality to come are less useful than theses about the developmental tendencies of subjectivity and sexuality under present conditions. These theses differ from more familiar analyses in that they shatter a number of outmoded concepts such as the self, the rational public citizen, and the separation of public and private spheres. Sexuality in the age of fiber optics also serves as a weapon against both disciplinary and regulatory power. This, however, does not mean that it is completely useless to panopticism. Rather, these transformations take place within a network of total visibility. These

art. I also contend that transformations to subjectivity—the shattering of the self in an overwhelming flood of light—can best be approached through a study of sexuality for theoretical and empirical reasons. From biology to psychoanalysis through philosophy, sex and sexuality have been privileged as "keys" to understanding the individual. From ubiquitous male-to-female connectors to online sex through debates about censorship and data-privacy, sex and sexuality have emerged as the master tropes for contact, identity, and communication in cyberspace. The study of deployments of sexuality, rather than subjectivity per se, also engages the ways in which these transformations exceed self-perception, since, in intercourse, the self is at best half the story.

This dissertation thus breaks with theories that tie transformations in the age of fiber optics to new formulations of the subject, from Donna Haraway's cyborg to Mark Poster's postmodern subject of the second media age, from Jean Baudrillard's metastatic body to Paul Virilio's hyperactive man.[1] These analyses, while similarly arguing that high-speed telecommunications brush aside the rational subject, emphasize individual

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[1] See Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*; Mark Poster's *The Second Media Age*; Jean Baudrillard's *The Ecstasy of Communication*; Paul Virilio's *Open Sky* and *The Art of the Motor*. For more on cyborgs, see Sadie Plants' "Coming Across the Future"; *The Cyborg Handbook*; David Hakken's. *Cyborgs@Cyberspace*; *Women and Performance* (17); *Cyberspace,/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk*; and *Cyborg Babies*. For analyses of the re-wired subject as multi-personality disordered, see Allucquere Roseanne Stone's *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age* and Sherry Turkle's *Life on the Screen*. For formulations and critiques of the "post-human," see Hans Moravec's *Mind Children*; N. Katherine Hayles' "Boundary Disputes"; Stelarc's "From Psycho-Body to Cyber-Systems"; *Virtual Futures*; Arthur and Marilouse Kroker's *Hacking the Future*; and *Digital Delirium*; *Being Online*; Resisting *the Virtual Life*; *Virtual Politics*; *Cultures of Internet*.

agency and technology as a means for self-reinvention, self-transformation or self-destruction. By focusing on changes to the self, rather than on connectivity and deployments of sexuality, they also resonate with legal and commercial attempts to re-theorize the consuming subject. Through this self-absorption, the future is often reduced to AT&T's mantra "you will."[2] You will be online; you will participate in a global village; you and your records will be accessible. There is no space between question and imperative, offer and acceptance, submission and desire. As *Star Trek*'s hive-like enemy the Borg say, "Resistance is futile; you will be assimilated." This motto, aptly used by many to describe the World Wide Web (WWW) and Microsoft, describes the obverse to AT&T's sunny future, for the Borg represent connectivity gone too far: their assimilated minds and bodies, supplemented with technological implants, represent the power and terror of networked human beings.[3] Thus, according to the future as "you will," there is good contact (AT&T's vision of a mother wishing her child goodnight via a video phone)

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[2] The "You Will" series of commercials produced by David Fincher began airing in 1993. These commercials pair a series of three questions ("have you ever borrowed a book form thousands of miles away?") with imaginary visualizations of these technologies (a student reading and turning pages of a book on a huge computer monitor). The answer to these questions is: "You will. It's coming to you from AT&T."

[3] The Borg consist of networked hominid-based cyborgs who have been genetically and biologically altered so that they no longer exist as separate beings. They communicate "mind-to-mind" and power their cube-like ship through their collective energies.

and there is bad contact (cyborg assimilation).[4] There are ways of connecting with others that preserve individuality and other ways that obliterate the individual.

These moves to reduce high speed communications technologies to "you" and "will" obfuscate the ways in which these technologies exceed both the individual and the individual's will. Resistance is not futile and rigorous resistance stems from contact and connectivity, rather than from separating good from bad contact in order to preserve individuality and agency. Rigorous resistance stems from engaging the loss of self-control endemic to all communication, since, rather than sealing the future, high speed technologies serve as an opening by which we seek to connect to others, and by which others seek to connect to us. They are a means of communication that, like all means, are fraught with mis-communication, noise, hostility and danger.

This dissertation also breaks with theories that posit sexuality in the fiber optic networks as a postmodern phenomenon. These formulations tend to re-inscribe postmodern or post-structuralist theories, rather than assessing challenges to these theories. Sherry Turkle and Mark Poster, for instance, argue that the Internet concretizes notions of the fragmented and de-centered self, and literalizes the ways in which

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[4] In *First Contact*, Federation (American) ingenuity and individuality foil the Borg in order to keep alive the promise of space and computer networks as last frontiers. This resistance, however, does not belie the logic of "you will." Agents and will still seal the future. In fact, the Federation heroes follow the Borg into the past in order to foil the Borg's plan to prevent "First Contact" (the first human warp journey that initiates contact between the Romulans and humans, and thus begins the Federation). They travel back in time in order to ensure that the future still happens.

language constitutes subjectivity.[5] Daniel C. Tseng and Theresa M. Senft similarly argue that online identities prove that sexualities are performative, or that the Internet itself is performative.[6] Such translations of poststructuralism and performativity miss the point: the fact that online subjects or sexualities resonate with poststructuralist theories is analogous to saying that "in principle a work of art has always been reproducible" (Benjamin 218). The point is that fiber optic networks—electronic reproducibility and dissemination—have affected the very tenets of representation and language, just as mechanical reproducibility has affected the work of art. Instead of simply performing fragmented identities online, we place our "selves" at risk. This is not to say that this risk is new, or that poststructuralist theories of the subject are irrelevant. It is to say that, in order to understand sexuality in the age of fiber optics, we must

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[5] Sherry Turkle writes: "Thus, more than twenty years after meeting the ideas of Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, I am meeting them again in my new life on the screen. But this time, the Gallic abstractions are more concrete. In my computer-mediated worlds, the self is multiple, fluid, and constituted in interaction with machine connections; it is made and transformed by language; sexual congress is an exchange of signifiers" (15). Mark Poster writes: "Electronic culture promotes theories (such as poststructuralism) that focus on the role of language in the process of the constitution of subjects and that undermine views of the reader and author as stable points of criticism and authority respectively" (*Second* 59).

[6] Daniel C. Tseng writes, "In the Foucauldian sense, we re-invent our sexualities. Over time we can have more than one. And there are more than just gay or straight. And despite the protestations of the latest adherents to gay ideology that they were born gay, the online environment reminds us that our sexualities are ephemeral, to be changed with a stroke of a key. These are social constructs, not biological essentialisms" (155). Theresa M. Senft argues that "like the Internet, for certain feminists, gender is not a thing, but rather the performative effect of multiple calculations" (n.p.)

analyze the ways in which it both resonates with and contests former understandings. The key is to think through theory after fiber optics. The key is to think through the ways in which fiber optics transform sexuality, the subject and philosophies of light.

Traditionally, "the philosophical history of the subject or the human is that of a light and a look, of the privilege of seeing and the light that makes it possible" (Keenan 110).[7] Behind the window, the viewer is framed as a knowing subject; before the window, the subject "assumes public rights and responsibilities, appears, acts, intervenes in the sphere it shares with other subjects" (Keenan 132). All windows, however, are not equal and television (the family's window onto the world) has been portrayed as an immobilizing one. Rather than allowing people to move freely in and out, it seems to have imprisoned common folk inside and celebrities outside. Most of us will never appear on television—unless we own a video camera—and most celebrities will never be free from public scrutiny.[8]

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[7] Keenan writes:

> Behind it [the window], in the privacy of home or office, the subject observes that public framed for it by the window's rectangle, looks out and understands prior to passing across the line it marks—the window is this possibility of permeability—into the public. Behind it, the individual is a knowing—that is, seeing, theorizing—subject. In front of it, on the street for instance, the subject assumes public rights and responsibilities, appears, acts, intervenes in the sphere it shares with other subjects. The window defines the place and the possibilities of the subject and contains a theory of politics within a theory of this subject (132).

[8] This immobility, of course, has not meant that television ignores its viewers, or that viewers do not interact with the figures they see in public. Rather, as many television critics have pointed out, those on the screen and those watching the screen attempt to reach each other through representation, identification, information, interpellation and voyeurism. Televisual contact, however, is rife with uncertainty, with blatant mediation, with addresses that can only hope to their mark. For more on this, see *Logics of Television*, *Living Color*, Richard Dienst's *Still Life in Real Time*, and Samuel Weber's *Mass Mediaurus*.

According to those who celebrate the fiber optic networks as liberatory, the computer screen has burst open the prison-world of the television. If the television has locked people on either side of the screen, the jacked-in computer allows for direct two-way communication and allows citizens to emerge in public. If mass media has reduced individual citizens to listeners instead of speakers, to couch potatoes instead of Martin Luthers, the Internet allows individual citizens once more to publish their ideas as scholars before the literate world.[9] In short, the Internet renews the process of enlightening a la Kant and enables a return to pre-industrial modes of communication on a global scale. Whereas the television induces zoning out and passivity, the Internet demands active participation. Whereas television supposedly produces a post-literate society, the Internet re-introduces reading and writing, since it is a cross between a library and a shopping mall (*Supreme Court Decision* n.p.). Whereas television limits choice and offers everyone the same schedule, the internet offers its content twenty-four hours a day seven days a week and one searches for sites rather than reads a guide. Whereas television offers information that disappears upon contact, the Internet erases the difference between viewing and storing information. The Internet turns information from something ephemeral to something concrete, saveable and exchanageable. If television has focused around the conceit of live-ness yet at the same time covering death, the

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[9] According to Judge Stuart Dalzell:

> It is no exaggeration to conclude that the Internet has achieved, and continues to achieve, the most participatory marketplace of mass speech that this country--and indeed the world has yet seen. …. individual citizens of limited means can speak to a worldwide audience on issues of concern to them. Federalists and Anti-Federalists may debate the structure of their government nightly, but these debates occur in newsgroups or chat rooms rather than in pamphlets. Modern-day Luthers still post their theses, but to electronic bulletin boards rather than the door of the Wittenburg Schlosskirche. (*Preliminary* n.p.)

Internet focuses around second-comings, around resusitating and keeping alive the expendable, partly in hopes of covering over its own expendibility. Whereas television is organized around time, the Internet is organized around memory. [10]

Fiber optic networks, however, cannot be reduced to a benign antidote or supplement to television. If the computer screen opens the television, it also opens the home; it threatens to leave you with no interiority, no privacy, no space. Although all windows both separate and breach the public and private spheres, the breach introduced by the computer seems irreparable and unpluggable. Not only can everyone now speak in public, but now everyone can also be consumed in public, the public can now consume you. If the television animated the living room or family room and thus protected the family unit, the Internet potentially destroys communal private space by animating the bedroom or the study. It offers global community at the cost of the family. If television—especially broadcast—came with the promise that the state would regulate content, the Internet comes with no such guarantees.

Fiber optic networks usher in a democratization that threatens to verge out of control. If Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, once commended Americans for rendering the dangers of freedom less formidable through the enjoyment of those dangerous freedoms, the Internet forces Americans to re-think the art of freedom. In the face of this new medium, telecommunications monopolies, rules and regulations are not only revised, but many regulatory techniques are rendered ineffectual. The sheer number of websites, the multiple fiber optic paths, and the rapidity with which

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[10] For more on television as organized around time, see Mary Ann Doane's "Information, Crisis and Catastrophe."

sites are altered, built, destroyed and mirrored, makes censorship practically impossible: one cannot "bring down" a website or adequately survey and categorize digital information. At the same time, however, digital trails and local memory caching make prosecution easier: one can easily track visits to a certain website or the sending location of emails. This affront to regulatory power makes many turn towards visibility as a more effective means to discipline the Internet. But the incredible visibility of the Internet is also accompanied by new privacies, such as encryption. As well, the illusion of privacy—the illusion that what one does in front of one's computer in the privacy of one's own home—also troubles the effectiveness of public standards. Indeed, the fiber optic networks inaugurate an unprecedented re-mapping of public and private spaces.

Fiber optic networks re-map public and private through uncontrollable representation. They accelerate the process by which subjects are forced to be images. According to Dienst,

> caught in the act of representing themselves to themselves, "modern subjects place themselves in the "open circle of the representable," in a "shared and public representation." Thus a subject is defined as "what can or believes it can offer itself representations," that is, as something formed by the imperative to be an image, in order to receive images. (Dienst, 140)

What fiber optics threaten, then, is an infinite open circle of the representable—they threaten to break the glass so that nothing screens the subject from the circulation and proliferation of images. Moreover, they transform the very notion of a "window." They transform it so that it is no longer transparent, so that one can no longer see through the glass that both connects and separates self from other.[11] Although medical uses of fiber

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[11] For more on fiber optics, see Jeff Hecht's *City of Light: The Story of Fiber Optics* and Joseph C. Palais' *Fiber Optic Communications, Fourth Edition.*

optics still retain fiber optics as a looking glass, fiber optic networks use glass to relay light pulses that must be translated into digital ones and zeroes: rather than magnifying images they relay data that has no physical referent. Theoretically, fiber optic networks take advantage of the fundamental paradox of light—light as both wave and particle—in their operation. Rather than trying to resolve the difference, it puts both theories side to side for different uses: lasers emit particle-like light, whereas the glass transports wave-like light.[12] Fiber optic networks thus represent the theoretical necessity of working with, rather than resolving, paradoxes.

Fiber optic networks also work the paradox of physical and virtual locations. They literally span the globe, buried deep within the ocean or spanning the ceilings of office buildings, while at the same time carrying the light that creates these other spaces. Unlike "information," fiber optics brings together the physical necessity of location and the explosion of location via URLs and other virtual addresses. Moreover, as Neal Stephenson argues in his "hacker tourist" quest to track the laying of the longest fiber optic cable in 1997, fiber optic cables re-configure our understanding of the "real" world. Stephenson argues that cable-laying represents an attempt to turn Mother Earth into a huge motherboard ("Mother Earth Mother Board" n.p.). Fiber optic networks also carry with them the infamous last-mile problem. Since fiber does not usually extend to the home, many of the benefits of fiber optic connections are lost in the end. There is no direct relationship between local and global, but rather a relationship contingent on traffic, noise and previous wiring.

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[12] For more on fiber optics, see Joseph C. Palais' *Fiber Optic Communications*.

Lastly, the age of fiber optics delineates a specific time range and corporate phenomenon. Put into experimental use in the seventies, fiber optics transformed the long distance telecommunications industry. MCI was able to enter the long distance market by investing in single-mode fiber optic cables while AT&T was still experimenting with multi-mode cable.[13] As well, the necessity of fiber optics is directly linked to the Internet. At first, AT&T and others developed broadband communications in anticipation of the video phone. The video phone failed, but the WWW and real-time communications have produced the necessary need and desire for more fiber optic cables. For all these reasons, the age of fiber optics best captures the transformations I am tracking, from enlightenment to exposure, from connectivity to disruption, from location to virtuality. Thus, through the double philosophical lenses of histories of light and sexuality, I make the case for sexuality and fiber optic networks, in which sexuality becomes a means by which publicity is experienced.

Specifically, I focus on discourses that couple together sexuality and high-speed telecommunications networks. That is, I study the rhetoric about sexuality and the Internet, and indeed the Internet as a rhetorical phenomenon. I do so because the Internet's popularity and impact on the public cannot be limited to actual interactions on cyberspace, just as the impact of sexuality cannot be limited to our own sexual practices. Regardless of whether or not we are on the net, most of us—in the United States—are talking about it, or have heard about it. From commercials to news reports on technology, from virtual media events to explanations of current catastrophes, narratives

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[13] For more on the role of fiber optics in the deregulation of the telecommunications industry, see Jeff Hecht's fourteenth chapter entitled "Three Generations in Five Years (1975-1983).

about the Internet bombard us. For instance, the Internet played a key role in explaining the spate of mass-murder/suicides that have taken place in 1999/8: mass popular violence has become linked to the Internet. In news reports about the Columbine school shootings, we were told that the Internet is littered with "how to make your own bomb" pages. In news reports covering the Atlanta Day-Trader shootings, the Internet was blamed for the proliferation of amateur day traders. Analyses of the Heaven's Gate mass suicides featured the cult's webpage. And, in all these reports, we were referred to these news organizations own webpages for more information.

In each chapter, I analyze a model for high-speed telecommunications networks and its coupling with certain deployments or understandings of sexuality. "Chapter One: First Contact" looks at the ways in which sexuality configures and classifies contact via fiber optic networks, from hardware descriptions of male-to-female connectors to magazine articles describing the dangers of cyberpornography through paranoid warnings about cybersurveillance. Rather than simply constructing the Internet as a purveyor of pornography, they construe the Internet itself as pornographic—except when it is properly dimmed so that it enlightens, rather than exposes its users. However, fiber optic networks cannot be so limited since they engage all modes of lighting, from the soft light of rationality to the harsh glare of publicity. By literalizing enlightenment, fiber optic networks challenge understandings of enlightenment that seek to limit it to dim self-reflection.

"Chapter Two: Pornocracy" focuses on the confluence of the public sphere with pornography, specifically in terms of child sexuality. In it, I reveal the ways in which the narrative of "good" contact via the net—the legal and popular construction of the Internet

as a public sphere—also relies on a rhetoric of pornotroping and pornography. In effect, the Internet forms a pornocracy in which differences are rendered both "accidental" and pornographic. I also argue that the Internet marks a public space that cannot be contained by the marketplace of ideas. Pornographic intrusion is constitutive of, rather than accidental to this medium. That is, the Internet is a public sphere to the extent that online subjects are compromised by their interactions.

In chapter three, "High Tech Orientalism," I analyze the ways in which cyberspace as frontier of the mind relies on a logic of Orientalist sexual exploration. I investigate how Orientalism, as a specific manifestation of the accident of difference, anchors the bodiless online mind. I argue that the bodiless mind can be produced only by constantly deflecting representation and mediatization onto others. Through this deflection, the self emerges as a disembodied mind and others as disembodied representations; through this deflection, sexual exposure becomes sexual opportunity. I also argue that cyberspace is a frontier only to the extent that it compromises the border between self and other, rather than establishes a space for self-exploration.

In the last chapter, I look at cybersex in terms of masochistic *jouissance,* or the desire to merge completely with the other. I argue that cybersex—like S/M—creates unproductive sexualities that challenge disciplinarity while also immersing them within a disciplinary system. Cybersex disengages knowledge of the *self* and sexuality, but only by shattering the self and dispensing its shards in a system that is entirely findable and visible. Cybersex, as a new technology of sex, re-configures sex. It also challenges us to think again about the relationship between power and resistance, publicity and privacy, self and other. It re-routes, intensifies, digitizes and obscures the panoptical gaze: it

takes light—that which once secured the gaze—and uses it to transport data and makes glass something impossible to see through. In this chapter, I also argue that, in order to best understand transformations to the self, we must hold on to the term human. To do so is not to insist on an ahistorical understanding of human. Rather, it is to acknowledge the history of humanity—to acknowledge the fact that the human has always been in transition, has always been re-configured to account for changes in reproducibility.

I am not the first to wager that studying the production and deployment of sexuality enables us to understand the subject: indeed, this dissertation could be viewed as an extension of Foucault's project in his *History of Sexuality Volume I*. Rejecting notions of sexuality as ahistorical, natural and/or outside of power, Foucault traced the

open secret seems to have no end. Indeed, Foucault argues that we privilege sex and a deciphering tool:

> We tell its [sex's] truth by deciphering what it tells us about that truth; it tells us our own by delivering up that part of it that escaped us. From this interplay there has evolved, over several centuries, a knowledge of the subject; a knowledge not so much of his form, but of that which divides him, determines perhaps, but above all causes him to be ignorant of himself. …. Causality in the subject, the unconscious of the subject, the truth of the subject in the other who knows, the knowledge he holds unbeknown to him, all this found an opportunity to deploy itself in the discourse of sex. (69-70)

Cyberspace produces new discourses of sexuality, such as debates over pornography, that seek to delineate the online subject, that focus on regulating or disciplining the Internet and the viewer. As well, cyberspace as a supposed space of the mind figures online contact as sexual intercourse.

To call my project an extension of Foucault's, however, is not to imply that I simply follow Foucault's analyses. Rather, extending Foucault also implies stretching and contorting his work, pulling it in directions that seem anti-thetical, and resisting his pulls as well.[14] Whereas Foucault argues that "pleasure spread to the power that harried

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[14] Foucault and I part company over the turn that his project would take in the next two volumes of his unfinished history. Foucault begins volume two of *The History of Sexuality* by justifying his turn away from writing "a history of the experience of sexuality, where experience is understood as the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture" (*History vol. 2* 4). He contends that, "in order to understand how the modern individual could experience himself as a subject of a 'sexuality,' it was essential to determine how, for centuries, Western man had been brought to recognize himself as a subject of desire" (6). He thus reorganizes his study around "the slow formation, in antiquity, of a hermeneutics of the self" (6). His new project can be seen as "one of the first chapters—of that general history of the 'techniques of the self,'" where "techniques of the self," or "arts of existence" are "those actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to

it; power anchored the pleasure it uncovered" (45), I examine the ways in which pleasure and sexuality—most particularly non-productive sexualities such as cybersex—escape from disciplinary power. That is, the technology of cybersex signals a re-configuration of power and sexuality because it defies the panoptical gaze paradoxically by immersing itself within it. It signals a moment in which the separation of self from other begins to tear down, so that sexuality cannot ensure knowledge of the self, but rather an un-doing of the self. In other words, sexuality—as a dense transfer point—is also a point of failure or noise. Every contact is also an opportunity for miscarriage.[15]

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transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (10-1). As David Halperin notes, making the self-recognizing and -deciphering subject into a historical problem opens up possibilities for an ethical self-fashioning, for an aesthetics of existence which stylizes freedom (68). By examining Greek and Roman self-cultivation techniques, Foucault examines the ways in which caring for oneself can be a social practice (rather than a personal preoccupation) that allows one to "master oneself [and others] and to *style* one's entire existence in conformity with one's own vision of the most beautiful way to live" (Halperin 71). Foucault's shift "from politics to ethics, from an analytics of power to an interest in the relation between the self and itself" makes "the self [a] . . . new strategic possibility" (Halperin 68; Paul Veyne as quoted by David Halperin 73). Thus, as Foucault argues, sex becomes "a possibility for creative life" (73). But, a concentration on the "techniques of the self" or the "arts of existence" frames ethics as a question of mastery or of the relation between the self and itself, rather than between self and other. Such a focus produces the auto-recognizing *subject* as the center for sexuality and desire.

[15] This is not to say that Foucault himself did not see the possibilities for unproductive sexualities. The work that Foucault pursued on S/M communities delves into the ways in which sex can produce "the possibility for creative life" (Halperin 70). However, whereas Foucault sees unproductive sex as liberatory,

Thus, in this dissertation, I situate power and resistance, publicity and power, self and other within the context of fiber optic networks. I call it the Age of Fiber Optics as opposed to the Information Age to shift analysis away from free-floating content and data, and instead towards understanding communications via high-speed telecommunications networks as participating and transforming "photocentrism." That is, through fiber optic networks—through light emitted through glass tubes—I engage the rich philosophical tradition of light as a figure for knowledge, clarification and surveillance, and study its intersections with the rich philosophical tradition of sexuality.

I argue that it immerses the subject into another dynamic of power. For more on Foucault's analysis of S/M see David Halperin's *Saint=Foucault* and Leo Bersani's *Homos*.