

# Queering the Cyberspace: Towards a Space/Identity Discussion

Rohit K Dasgupta  
University of the Arts London, UK

---

## Abstract

In this paper I attempt to engage with three points of entry into a discussion on the category of the Cyberqueer. I begin by looking at Space and the transformative politics of the queer cyberspace. I follow this up with a discussion on Cyberculture and more specifically Queer Cyberculture, finally tying up my argument within the domain of identity and the subversive potential of the Cyberqueer identity. The complexity of these interdisciplinary fields means that there is no fixed path while navigating them. My arguments thus freely turn and overturn these domains through a process of queering Digital Culture.

[**Keywords:** Cyberspace, Queer, cyberculture, Cyber-Queer, Identity]

## Space: From Physical to Online

Our identities are contextualised within the various scales within which we inhabit. These range from the home, nation, community to gender and sexual preferences. My discussions here in very broad brush strokes will turn and over turn these space terrains. Stuart Hall contends that there are 'people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language and inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home' (1995:206). Hall's insightful writing dislocates the notion of heterogeneity replacing it with homogenous identities in a new global world. Thus the idea of home is in constant flux. The idea of home is further unsettled by the space inhabited by the nation and the community. Benedict Anderson in his famous narrative analysis of nationhood, *Imagined Communities* (1983) contends that a nation exists because people believe in them. Membership to this community is governed through a collective common origin, characteristics and interests. Thus the space of home, community and nation has at its foundation a shared commonality. This commonality amongst other things is also based on the presupposition of a patriarchal heterosexual identity. Through the ambivalence and liminality of its membership emerges a minority discourse that attempts to create alternate spaces and community.

The emergence of the Internet has had profound impact on human life. By destabilising the boundaries between the private and the public it has opened up new spaces for social interaction and community formation. Cyberculture, also called new media and Internet studies has in the past few years become a distinct academic discipline (Silver, 2004). Swiss and Hermann (2000) examine the internet as a unique cultural technology where several complex processes come together.

The technology of the World Wide Web, perhaps *the* cultural technology of our time, is invested with plenty of utopian and dystopian mythic narratives, from those that project a future of a revitalised, Web based public sphere and civil society to those that imagine the catastrophic implosion of the social into the simulated virtuality of the Web (Swiss and Herman, 2000:2)

The idea of a utopian world being created through the internet envisages the cyberspace as a safe and accommodating sphere where communities can interact and grow. This vision of the cyberspace as utopian which would engulf the social sphere into virtuality has been criticised by several commentators. Snoddy (1997) remarked:

I believe the electronic revolution is simply one new form of communication that will find its place in the food chain of communications and will not displace or replace anything that already exists, just as the television did not replace the radio... (7)

Snoddy's comment despite its age remains a valid one, however one must not forget that this was being made in an Eurocentric context, an issue I will return to later. Social scientist Jody Berland states that '...cybertopianism is readily perceived as part of postmodern culture because of their collapsing boundaries between human/machine, human genders, global geographies; and past, future and present experience' (2000:236). This raises interesting questions about the online versus offline identities and communities and the virtual versus the real. This provides an initial context for this discussion.

The concept of an online community was first advocated by Howard Rheingold in 1993 when he coined the term 'Virtual Community.' Following Benedict Anderson's idea of an 'imagined community' which suggests that communities only exist because people believe in them he posits that since, nations must exist in the minds of citizens to exist at all, 'virtual communities require an act of imagination to use... and what must be imagined is the idea of the community itself' (2000:54). Others such as Enteen (2006) say while cyberspace is not a place, it is a locus around which modes of social interaction, commercial interests, and other discursive and imaginative practices coalesce (Gajjala, Rybas, Altman, 2008). The emergence of the internet in the context of community has resulted in several scholars arguing about the differences between real life and the virtual world. However writers such as Parmesh Sahani see them both integral to each other:

I do not find this virtual versus real debate useful or productive. People do not build silos around their online and offline experiences- these seep into each other seamlessly (2008: 64)

Woodland (2000) in his study of the relationship between sexual identity and space show how spaces shape identity and identities shape space. He writes 'the kinds of queer spaces that have evolved to present queer discourse can be taken as measure of what queer identity is in the 1990s' In his study of four distinct queer cyberspaces which include private bulletin boards, mainstream web spaces, bulletin board systems (BBS) and a text based virtual reality system show that all these spaces deploy a specific cartography to structure their queer content. However 'one factor that links these spaces with their historical and real life counterparts is the need to provide safe(r) spaces for queer folk to gather' (427). The need for safe space is probably the single most important factor that underlies the formation of digital queer spaces and this will lead towards understanding the queer cyberculture better. Mowlabocus (2010) points out that this relationship between the online world created by new media technologies and the offline world of an existing gay male sub culture complicates the questions concerning the character of online communities and identities. He says that 'the digital is not separate from other spheres of gay life, but in fact grows out of while remaining rooted in, local, national and international gay male subculture' (7).

Mowlabocus's statement about the digital being rooted in the local gay male subculture is important in understanding the queer cyberspace. I shall argue whilst anti discrimination laws exist on a national level in the United Kingdom and some countries in Europe and parts of the United States of America, sodomy laws still exist in most parts of the world and until as recently as 2009, homosexuality was criminalised in India. It is within this hostile space that I situate

queer men using the internet. Research by Alexander (2002), documents that most of the queer internet sites are similar in layout, design and intent. Mowlabocus' study of Gaydar, a popular British gay cruising site also points out the similarity in multiple queer digital spaces. He says: 'Many of these websites may in fact be peddling the same types of bodies and the same ideological messages as each other' (2010:84). However, queer space does not just exist in primarily queer identified sites (like Gaydar, Guys4Men and PlanetRomeo) rather the prevalence of queer individuals coming into contact with each other via mainstream websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and Orkut have added another dimension to discussions on queer identity and its representations on the internet. Drushel (2010) says

Online social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook, in few short years since their introduction in 2003, have grown immensely popular among teens and young adults especially. They present the possibility of providing a virtual social support function in an environment which appears non geographically restricted (62)

The Foucauldian idea of space and its subversive potential can be harnessed in the context of the queer cyberspace which can be read as the Foucauldian heterotopia- a place of difference. Foucault described it as 'something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia, in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (1986: 24). The alternative queer cyberspace can be considered heterotopic, where the utopic place is not only reflected but reconfigured and revealed. Africa Taylor (1997) says that the 'other' spaces of the gays and lesbians destabilise their own territories and meaning just as much as they destabilise the territories of heterosexuality.

## On Cyberculture

Nina Wakeford (1997) in her landmark essay 'Cyberqueer' states that the LGBT community were amongst the earliest to embrace cyber resources. This is hardly surprising when comparing what the internet had to offer as a space to the physical social space being inhabited by the queer individual. The internet offers a myriad of opportunities for queer identified men and women including but not limited to – opportunities for coming out, pornography, queer activism through mobilisation of community support and dating. Cyberfeminists such as Booth and Flanagan (2002) see cyberculture as a revolutionary social experiment with the potential to create new identities, relationships and cultures. Rodney Jones (2008) identifies the efficacy of the internet within the queer community in establishing sexual contacts and exploring different forms of sexuality:

In technologically advanced societies, it has fundamentally changed the way people learn and communicate about sex, playing a major role in educating young people about the subject and in providing social support for sexual minorities and other marginalized groups. It has also changed the way people establish and maintain sexual and romantic relationships. (130)

It is interesting to note that Jones uses the term 'technologically advanced,' it places internet and queer digital culture within the realm of privilege. For queer men and women in India (unlike the West), the internet remained a distant space until very recently. However it has become very important within South Asia and especially India where it has played a vital role in the growth of queer communities and mobilising towards queer rights.

However it is not enough to just focus on the online aspect of queer digital culture. As I already stated it has to be understood in the context of the online-offline experience. The internet despite being ostensibly situated at a unique space reflects and symbolises the

anxieties of being queer in the 'real' world. Silver (2000) concurs with this view that 'cyberculture is best comprehended as a series of negotiations that take place both online and offline' (30). Shaw on the other hand, in his article 'Gay Men and Computer Communication,' makes a distinction between 'real world chatting' and computer mediated gay chatrooms. He points out that whilst heterosexual people have access to participate in conversation outside the chatroom- for example the bar, the store, to find a potential partner, not as many opportunities and options exist for queer people. The chatroom and by extension the internet provides the means for queer people to meet and socialise, which is almost instantaneous. He says,

In the gay world, a gay itch is satisfied by going out to a club or a party which requires a certain time commitment, while IRC is literally at my fingertips (at work and home) (138).

John Edward Campbell treads a similar theoretical path in his study of two gay male interactants on Internet relay chat making the following observation:

For these interactants, cyberspace may be seen as a domain of exploration, presenting the opportunity to assume new roles and engage in performances without risk to their real-world selves...As members of a sexual minority, experiences for these two interactants in the frame of Real Life may be governed by the need to conceal their sexuality in order to protect their jobs, possibly their familiar relations, and quite probably their physical well-being. The anonymity of cyberspace, however, allows both Youngmuscle and NY-Guy the opportunity to express their desires unburdened by such threats. (2003:online)

Thus, computer mediated communication functioned as what has been called a 'boundary practice' – an exercise that assists the administration of boundaries and identities between different social worlds inhabited at home, school, family and friend circles), enabling users to extend the territory upon which they could act into realms which could not be policed (Jones, 2010). This freedom to express oneself and explore one's identity is a key point in understanding the queer cyberspace. Wakeford (1997) agrees with this idea of the cyberspace being a contextual feature for the creation of new versions of the queer self.

Mowlabocus further explores the idea of the sociality of the online queer space, 'websites such as Gaydar have provided important resources to combat the isolation and marginalisation that growing up gay in a straight world often engenders' (2007:87). The queer space offered by the internet thus affirms gay life by emphasising and centralising the participant's sexuality. However Alexander (2002) is quick to point out that such affirmation comes with a cost:

Imposition of boundaries, including some unfortunate bigotries within the gay community itself... "No fats, femmes, fish or trolls please!" – a biting reminder that in- group membership status within the gay male community often comes at a certain price, extracted on the body of those seeking inclusion (90).

This makes us question, what sorts of masculinities are valorised as objects of desire formation and what remains trapped in a victimised femininity. The cyberspace despite disembodiment the physical body identifies the preoccupation of the queer individual with the 'real' body. Mowlabocus citing Campbell's work says, 'Gay men... are not only regulated by such systems, they are also rendered visible via such processes' (2010:78). Critics such as Wakeford (1997), Woodland (2000) and Mowlabocus (2010) point out that the impersonality and anonymity of the cyberspace is quite problematic. Whilst cyberqueer spaces perform the function of creating safe spaces for queer individuals to gather, the concern with confidentiality reflects the anxiety of being queer.

## Towards a Cyber-Queer Identity

What is an identity, a more convenient question to start off with is probably what constitutes an identity? It is first of all not merely a marker of nationality, ethnicity, religion or gender though of course they are implicit in their appellation. The primacy that these markers have gained at the cost of other identities, namely sexuality- focusing instead on the commonalities and obliterating the differences have fuelled jingoistic brands of identity formation. These markers demonstrate the essentialist notion of looking at the subject as fixed and thus the identity too as a fixed phenomenon thus consciously disregarding the temporal locatedness of identity and seeing it as a process rather than a fixed entity.

Postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1990) have been battling for years trying to articulate the ongoing procedures in decolonised nations around the world in structuring and creating their identities. The postcolonial approach suggests that subjects position themselves within the narratives of the past and seeing themselves in relation to it. Of course a postcolonial approach to identity might seem the most logical in this case, but the postcolonialist's anti Eurocentric beginnings and the colonial subject as its main concern means that this method needs to be treated with caution and a possible solution would be to graft it with Queer theory which can help us arrive at an understanding of both structures.

Whilst the queer identity is a point of entry into mainstream politics around restriction and discrimination, it is also makes distinctions between identities shaped by culture and geography (the West and the East), social conditions (class structures) and personal identities- ones that we construct on our own. The important point being that identity is constantly reshaping (Weeks, 1995; Woodland, 2000). Jeffrey Weeks calls identities 'necessary fictions' that need to be created 'especially in the gay world' (1995: 98) If we agree with Weeks, then identity can be seen as sites of multiplicity where they are performed and contested and constantly being reshaped.

Behind the quest for identity are different and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also trying to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire. The problem is that these desires are often patently in conflict, not only between communities but within individual themselves. (Weeks, 1995: 115)

Identity is at the core of cyber queer studies, which is asserted through the creation of multiple virtual communities. Wakeford (1997) says,

The construction of identity is the key thematic which unites almost all cyberqueer studies. The importance of a new space is viewed not as an end in itself, but rather as a contextual feature for the creation of new versions of the self (31).

The profiles craft a story, which is a performance of the queer life (Butler, 1999). By collapsing the boundaries between the real and virtual, the everyday and performative, identity on the internet takes a variety of forms. Whilst I recognise that our social and cultural lives are determined by a fairly universal heteronormative code which validates heterosexual signifiers, the cyberqueer identity recognises multiple sites (on the cyberspace) and discourses which give rise to alternative readings of the identity and allows one to read the multiplicities and complexities within individual profiles.

This multiplicity is explored by Alexander (2002), who suggests that instead of offering a one dimensional view of the gay body, the internet offers us a multidimensional image to develop. Even though text is central to the profile being created, the use of visual images and other images are quite important in creating the entire profile of the user. Mowlabocus (2010) asserts that 'If gay male digital culture remediates the body and does so through a pornographic lens, then it also provides the means for watching that body, in multiple ways and with multiple

consequences' (81). Drushel borrowing on the work of Alexander states that most of the youth led sites a lack of queer signifiers. He found the 'tendency of users [was] to organise content around sex or political issues rather than through discrete identities' (2010: 66).

The profile picture unsurprisingly is a formal unit of this identificatory process. It identifies the user, evidences his desires and implicates his intentions. Daniel Farr (2010) says, 'the use of photos helped to assure one knew what they were getting into should they meet someone offline' (89). Thus the shifting crowd on the internet is given shape by the profile pictures. The pictures are relied upon to tell the presence or absence of 'fats, femmes, fish [and] trolls' (Alexander, 2002:90).

The internet does not just allow the browser to be a passive participant but an active one. The participation can be in variety of ways. There are websites which feature coming out stories, which invite the reader to add their own. There are websites such as planetromeo, guys4men and gaydar which are cruising/dating sites and finally there are websites which have a more political and health related output (Mclelland, 2002; Alexander, 2002; Gajjala and Mitra, 2008; Mowlabocus, 2010). Mclelland in his ethnographic study of the Japanese gay culture notes:

Japanese gay culture has spread on to the internet is remarkable—Japan's online gay culture obviously relates to offline life but also comprises its own independent world. Japanese gay culture now online is far more accessible than the traditional gay world of bars and beats ever was – particularly for international observers and participants. (391)

Mclelland's statement is certainly true in the contemporary queer context where public queer sexual cultures are the subjects of 'both online and offline systems of security and surveillance' (Mowlabocus, 2010: 119). The subject of online identity is a complex and shifting one. Like every other element of cyberculture, identity is centrally bound to the use of language, from the choice of a name to the representation of the physical self.

What we see here are certain unsettling gestures. Working from a marginalised position and beyond the bounds of that marginality, cyberspace challenges the existing boundaries within which identity is contained, yet presuppositions such as the individual wanting to be 'the centre of the social universe' is also hamessed. In this sense whilst it acts as an erasure of differences by putting all the profiles (and by extension the identities) on the same plane it also rearticulates the difference and otherness. Cooper says, 'Virtual communities offer the opportunity for identity testing, preparation for coming out, if one chooses to do so and a support system throughout the entire process' (2010: 76). The internet thus provides the queer youth with tools to create and refine their queer identities from dating and sexual bonding to politics and activism. Cooper further notes:

For many of them, the online community was extremely important in identity testing and working out issues before doing so in their families and community, where the consequences may be very high. Community members even assisted in aspects of negotiating identity in potentially unsafe areas. In this way the community was a sounding board, but one which remained engaged by providing support throughout the process (83).

Whilst scholars such as Mclelland (2002), Campbell (2003, 2004) and Cooper (2010) show how the cyberspace aids in the formation and expression of the queer identity, it also problematises the category of the cyberqueer. The internet is entering a phase remarkably linked to the concept of identification. With the proliferation of sites such as facebook and twitter, the garb of anonymity which dominated the internet in the last decade is slowly lifting, when users were translated as stock information which was hidden by a username and information

that is endorsed through their registration. Campbell and Carlson have called this 'exchanging privacy for participation' (2002:591). However this is not all bad as Cooper and Dzara point out:

The ability to join LGBT groups on Facebook creates access to information and resources. For many especially those in isolated rural areas, these groups may be the individual's first contact with others who share similar interests (2010: 106)

Cooper and Dzara's point echoes the earlier view of Woodland (2000) who says 'identity is formed and strengthened by membership in a self aware community... In the fluid geographies of cyberspace, community boundaries shift as the discourse changes' (428). Virtual communities thus form and reform themselves. In the discourse of the cyberqueer community- the virtual space, community, identity and voice of the individuals are all inextricably linked. Woodland goes on to say, 'community is the key link between spatial metaphors and issues of identity. By helping to determine appropriate tone and content... community identity also informs the voice and ethos appropriate to members of that community' (430).

Whilst early work by scholars such as Rheingold (1993), Swiss and Hermann (1996) and the cyberfeminist, Haraway (1991) see the utopic possibilities of the internet in offering new spaces for political and ideological formations through debates about power, identity and autonomy and heralding the beginning of a new democracy which isn't impinged by race, colour and socio economic status, later scholars such as Tsang (2000) dismisses such utopic declarations. He says 'given the mainstream definition of beauty in this society, Asians, gay or straight are constantly reminded that we cannot hope to meet such standards' (436). As an example he states the case a college student from Taiwan who after changing his ethnicity to white 'received many more queries and invitations to chat' (435). Gajjala, Rybas and Altman (2008) writing about race and online identities say,

Race, gender, sexuality, and other indicators of difference are made up of ongoing processes of meaning-making, performance, and enactment. For instance, racialization in a technologically mediated global context is nuanced by how class, gender, geography, caste, colonization, and globalization intersect. (1111)

Thus the internet despite disembodiment of the user, still retains the ethnic and cultural identity and does not actually confer complete freedom. Campbell concurs with Tsang's views about the queer cyberspace retaining its disenfranchisement of the 'other'. He says

Far from being a means of escaping the body, online interaction constitutes a mode of rearticulating our relationship to the physical body and, at least for these interactants, resisting dominant models of beauty and the erotic (2004:191)

Whilst the primary reason for setting up virtual queer communities was to create a 'safe' space (Woodland, 2000; Campbell, 2003; Drushel, 2010) where people could freely express their identity, 'over time such spaces also became sites where identities are shaped, tested, and transformed' (Woodland, 2000:430).

**[Acknowledgement:** This paper is based on my doctoral research funded by the University of the Arts London International Graduate Studentship. A version of this paper was also presented at the RNUAL Symposium at University of the Arts London on 29 June, 2012.]

## Bibliography

- Alexander, J (2002), 'Homo Pages and Queer Sites: Studying the Construction and Representation of Queer Identities on the World Wide Web,' *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 7 (2-3), pp. 85-106
- Anderson, B (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso
- Berland, J (2000), 'Cultural Technologies and the Evolution of Technological Cultures,' In T Swiss and A Hermann (ed) *The World Wide Web and Contemporary Cultural Theory*, London: Routledge, pp. 235- 258
- Bhabha, H (1990), *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge
- Booth, A and Flanagan, M (2002), 'Introduction' In A Booth and M Glanagan (ed) *Reload: Rethinking Women and Cyberculture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 1-24
- Campbell, J E (2003), 'Always Use a Modem: Frames of Erotic Play and Performance in Cyberspace,' *The Electronic Journal of Communication*, 13(1), <<http://www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/013/1/01315.html>> Accessed 11/02/2012
- Campbell, J E (2004), *Getting it On Online: Cyberspace, Gay Male Sexuality and Embodied Identity*, New York: Harrington Park Press
- Cooper, M (2010), 'Lesbians who are married to men: Identity, collective Stories and the internet online community,' In C Pullen and M Cooper (ed) *LGBT identity and Online New Media*, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 75-86
- Cooper, M and Dzara, K (2010), 'The Facebook Revolution: LGBT Identity and Activism,' In C Pullen and M Cooper (ed) *LGBT identity and Online New Media*, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 100-112
- Dalsgaard, S (2008), 'Facework on Facebook: The presentation of self in virtual life and its role in the US elections,' *Anthropology Today*, 24 (6), 8-12
- Dave, N (2011), 'Activism as Ethical Practice: Queer Politics in Contemporary India,' *Cultural Dynamics*, 23 (3), pp. 3-20
- Drushel, B (2010), 'Virtually Supportive: Self disclosure of minority sexualities through online social networking sites', In C Pullen and M Cooper (ed) *LGBT identity and Online New Media*, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 62-74
- Enteen, J (2006), 'Spatial conceptions of URLs: Tamil Eelam networks on the world wide web,' *New Media and Society*, (8), pp. 229-249
- Farr, D (2010), 'A Very Personal World: Advertisement and Identity of Tran spersons on Craigslist,' In C Pullen and M Cooper (ed) *LGBT identity and Online New Media*, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 87-99
- Foucault, M (1986) 'Of Other Spaces,' *Diacritics*, (16), pp. 22-27
- Gajjala, R and Gajjala, V (2008), 'Introduction: South Asian Digital Networks and Global Technospaces,' In R Gajjala and V Gajjala (Ed) *South Asian Technospaces*, New York: Peter Lang, pp. 1-6
- Gajjala R, Rybas, N and Altman, M (2008), 'Racing and Queering the Interface: Producing Global/Local Cyberselves,' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14 (7), pp. 1110-1133
- Gajjala, R and Mitra, R (2008), 'Queer Blogging in Indian Digital Diasporas: A Dialogic Encounter,' *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 32 (4), pp. 400-423
- Hall, S (1995), 'New Cultures for Old,' In D. Massey and P. Jess (Eds) *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalisation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 175-213
- Haraway, D (1991), *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Free Association Books
- Jones, R (2008), 'Internet,' In J.T. Sears (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Love, Courtship and Sexuality Through History*, Vol. 6. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 130-133
- Jones, R (2010), 'Cyberspace and Physical Space: Attention Structures in Computer Mediated Communication,' In A Jaworski and C Thurlow (ed) *Semiotic Landscapes*, London: Continuum, pp. 151-167
- Leung, L (2008), 'From "Victims of the Digital Divide" to "Techno-Elites": Gender, Class and Contested "Asianness" in Online and Offline Geographies,' In R Gajjala and V Gajjala (ed) *South Asian Technospaces*, New York: Peter Lang, pp. 7-24
- Mclelland, M (2002), 'Virtual Ethnography: Using the Internet to Study Gay Culture in Japan,' *Sexualities*, 5 (4), pp. 387-406
- Mills, R (1998), 'Cyber: Sexual Chat on the Internet,' *Journal of Popular Culture*, 32 (3), pp. 31-46



- Mowlabocus, S (2008), 'Revisiting old haunts through new technologies : Public (homo)sexual cultures in cyberspace,' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11 (4), pp. 419-439
- Mowlabocus, S (2010), *Gaydar Culture: Gay Men, Technology and Embodiment in the Digital Age*, Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate
- Sahani, P (2008), *GayBombay: Globalisation, Love and Belonging in Contemporary India*, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage
- Shaw, D (1997) 'Gay Men and Computer Communication,' In S Jones (ed) *Virtual Culture: Identity and Communication in Cybersociety*, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage, pp. 133-145
- Silver, D (2000), 'Looking Backwards, Looking Forward, Cyberculture Studies 1990-2000,' In D Gauntlett (ed) *Web Studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age*, London: Arnold, pp. 19-30
- Silver, D (2004), 'Internet/Cyberculture/Digital Culture/New Media/Fill-In-The-Blank Studies,' *New Media and Society*, 6 (1)
- Snoddy, R (1997), 'Chronicle of a Death Foretold,' *Financial Times*, August 18, p. 7
- Sontag, S (1971), *On Photography*, London: Penguin
- Spivak, G (1988), 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana, IL: Illinois University Press, pp. 271-313
- Swiss, T and Hermann, A (2000), 'The World Wide Web as Magic, Metaphor and Power,' In T Swiss and A Hermann (ed) *The World Wide Web and Contemporary Cultural Theory*, London: Routledge, pp. 1-4
- Taylor, A (1997), 'A Queer Geography,' In A Medhurst and S Munt (ed) *Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Critical Introduction*, London: Cassel, pp. 3-19
- Tsang, D (2000), 'Notes on Queer "n" Asian Virtual Sex,' In D Bell and B Kennedy (ed) *The Cybercultures Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 432- 438
- Wakeford, N (1997), 'Cyberqueer,' In S Munt and A Medhurst (ed) *Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Critical Introduction*, London: Cassell, pp. 20-38
- Weeks, J (1995), *Invented Moralities*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Woodland R (2000), 'Queer Spaces, Modem Boys and Pagan Statues: Gay/Lesbian Identity and the Construction of Cyberspace,' In D Bell and B Kennedy (ed) *The Cybercultures Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 417-431

---

*Rohit K Dasgupta is Associate Lecturer and Doctoral Student at University of the Arts London. He also teaches film studies at University of West London where he is a Visiting Lecturer. Email: rhit\_svu@hotmail.com*

---