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The Internet, Aesthetic Experience, and Liminality

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Claremont McKenna College

The Internet, Aesthetic Experience, and Liminality

Submitted to
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by
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1 Introduction

In consideration of the rising technological and cultural phenomena of advancing Internet technologies in the early 21st century, characterizing the aesthetic and liminal experiences the Internet constructs for its users is significant for establishing metaphysical claims concerning emergences in new manifestations of being. While the World Wide Web has existed for twenty-eight years and is arguably at humble beginnings in respect to the future advancements to come, modern day technologies pose current day societal implications for how social and technological aesthetic experiences are constructed and normalized. While the Internet of Things is an ever-expanding network of digital experiences, this thesis is concerned only with accessing mobile and desktop web browser applications within the realm of push notifications, web searching, and web surfing.

As users opt for accessing web content in different environments and with varying motives, these technologies require users to transition between activities to access the Internet. Under investigation for this thesis then is to how the transitional activity that is characteristic of engagement with the internet affect the aesthetic character of internet experience. These analyses are motivated in large part by the intuitive assumption that some of these internet transitions are anti-aesthetic. John Dewey supports this anti-aesthetic intuition, but only to a certain degree, for his framework cannot encapsulate advancements in modern-day technologies that have given rise to novel social and experiential structures. However, there are alternative theories for characterizing the aesthetic character of transitional activity as demonstrated by Blanka Domagalska.

Domagalska suggests forms of transitional experience beyond Dewey's anti-aestheticism in what she terms liminal experiences of an integrated being. Liminality in this context, is the anthropological framework to be analyzed for its ability to describe the transformations of identity participants undergo through human rituals. Through such analyses, what is ultimately demonstrated is that the transitional activity on the Internet has a liminal threshold nature, and through this understanding, an aesthetic character can be revealed that would be missed from Dewey's point of view. Nevertheless, through such findings of characterizing internet activity for its significant liminal thresholds and aesthetic experiences, Domagalska's argument can be made for claiming these liminal experiences are negotiating new manifestations of being in a hyper-mediated, Internet pervasive world.

An approach for reaching such findings is first developed by establishing a technical background of the Internet's evolution. Chapters one and two demonstrate the significant changes such technologies have fostered in human activity and social structure. Through this historical and technical analysis, hybrid ontologies of push notification, web searching and web surfing can be understood and applied to the importance of what such technologies foster for user experience. Examination of each technology reveals transitional natures for how users first opt to access and reach the Internet and secondly, how they choose to navigate and transition between web content.

Moreover, while a historical analysis aids in understanding how technical agents construct aesthetic experiences and thresholds of liminality through internet access and web content, chapters four and five establish the relevant frameworks of liminality and aesthetic theory held by Victor Turner and John Dewey. Turner's developments reveal

the concept of liminality as “betwixt and between,” a condition that prevails during the inner phase in rites of passage to transfer a person from one state of life to another. Turner established the word *liminality* as the description for the mid-phase of the rites he studied from several different societies. In this way, such internet experiences and consequential transitions are to be analyzed for their phases that can be classified under such liminal terms. Dewey on the other hand, provides analysis into the sub-discipline of philosophical aesthetics in what has come to be known as everyday aesthetics. There is an insistence that “in order to understand the aesthetic in its ultimate and approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw,” that is, “in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of a man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens.”¹ Examples of such experiences that Dewey could classify as everyday phenomena are that of “the fire-engine rushing by; the machines excavating enormous holes in the earth; the human-fly climbing the steeple-side.”² Dewey locates the roots of such everyday aesthetics by establishing the interactional relationship between what he coins “the live creature” and its environment. In this way, Dewey’s analysis and claims of qualities that make up every day aesthetic experiences requires attention to the environment that construct such experiential flow of human life. While Turner’s developments in liminality are important for structuring and characterizing the transitional activity that internet experiences foster, Dewey’s take on aesthetic experience is required after such liminal structures have been established. Dewey’s arguments are what provide further insight in to how such liminal experiences of the Internet can be

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1. Dewey, John. *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee, 1934; reprinted 2005), 4.
 2. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 5.

classified as aesthetic. While foundations of Dewey are explained initially in chapter four, further Dewey analyses and critiques for what he is missing are demonstrated in chapter nine. This is due in part to Dewey's exclusion of liminal experiences in his framework of everyday aesthetics. Only after revealing how Internet activity constitutes liminal experiences in chapters six, seven and eight, can the discrepancies of Dewey be distinguished.

Establishing Turner and Dewey's relevant contributions to this analysis is important before revealing the findings of self-ethnographies in chapters six, seven, and eight. Such ethnographies describe the relevant experiences a user will feel and undergo through push notifications, web searching and web surfing. The resulting analysis within each chapter reveals there are significant liminality thresholds and thus resulting aesthetic experiences to be characterized for when users opt to access the Internet. Specifically found is that internet usage is aesthetically unique and significant due to its liminal nature.

After establishing such distinct experiences of the Internet and what they cause the self to undergo, frameworks of Dewey in chapter nine are to be analyzed for what is missing in his theoretical framework of experimental aesthetics. Dewey intuitively holds a view of anti-aesthetic internet experiences and thus, needs to be reevaluated for there are elements to such advanced technologies that create new experiential structures and thus everyday aesthetics. By reevaluating the traditionally established Dewian framework, significant aesthetic experience can be revealed through the self-ethnography analyses with consideration of Domagalska.

Consequently, chapter ten distinguishes how Domagalska's view captures an explanation of liminality thresholds for the characterization of internet experience that Dewey cannot not provide. This in turn supports an overall characteristic of the Internet and lends backing to Domagalska's claims of the self in claiming usage of hybrid ontologies, such as the Internet, begins negotiating "a space for our sense of self that goes beyond the physical world," in that through these experiences, "borders between the engineered and organic, human and technological are dissolving as the individual reaches for the integrated experience."³ While these ideas relate to the theories of aesthetics and liminality that have hitherto been mentioned, Domagalska does not demonstrate any evidential analyses for the characterization of experiences undergone when using the technologies. Thus, demonstrated through the ethnographic findings, as well as consideration of Dewian aesthetics and liminality of Turner, Domagalska's characterization of an integrated being through such technologies can be supported.

3. Domagalska, Blanka, "Liminality and the emergence of an integrated being," *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research* 12 (2014): 409,414, accessed October 12, 2016, doi: 10.1386/tear.12.2-3.409_1.

2 Evolution of Internet Technology

As for the technologies and forms of activity that these claims of liminal and aesthetics are being applied to, the specific technologies and uses are of mobile and stationary access. Among the various ways of browsing the Web, on-the-go internet surfing has become an increasingly popular outlet for those with smartphone devices as seen in the November 2016 report from StatCounter stating for the first time mobile and tablet devices exceeded desktops worldwide.⁴ A typical browsing experience for someone on the go, whether it be via walking, public transport, or a private vehicle, falls along the lines of a series of actions and decisions taken to explore the realm of information within the confines of a smartphone connected to the World Wide Web. Yet, what is particularly unique is the possibility and opportunity one has for obtaining such quick access for directed internet research, via the possession of a smartphone device. Under this possibility, one is at the possible disposal of their device for allowing them to reach such quickly obtainable information and online platforms. Along with the mobile environment previously mentioned, chatting openly with peers while referencing browseable content, or in the confines of a private browsing experience, there are different settings of engagement. Thus, there are such different ways of experiencing and sensing Web content, surrounding environments, and time.

For example, there is a large difference in internet experience when a user opts to check their phone briefly on the go, versus taking an extended length of time to engage with their phone while also socially interacting. Regarding private browsing, a user is

4. "Mobile and tablet internet usage exceeds desktop for first time worldwide," StatCounter Global Stats, accessed February 12, 2017.

browsing privately in the confines of a setting most likely conducive to solitary experience with the Internet. While there is no hierarchy of optimal experience between these mentioned settings, there are environmental differences that arrange different internet experiences. While how these settings affect aesthetic experience is not under investigation for the matter at hand, it is important to acknowledgement that these factors affect aesthetic experience.

Nevertheless, within the multitude of settings and social interactions that one may be engaged with alongside the Internet, there are three main use cases that are most applicable for analysis and encompass the varying degrees of users socializing or privately engaging alongside the Internet. Within both realms of mobile and private platforms, three cases that are limited in scope for representing all forms of internet engagement, but do encompass some of the most common forms nonetheless: notifications, intentional research, and surfing engagement. And while such technologies may be deemed modern, the histories and original intentions behind their creations have interesting implications for what they have evolved to effect social structure. Nevertheless, a historical analysis as for their origin and use throughout their development is important in applying their affect and motivation on current day user activity.

Historical Intentions of the Internet

Regarding the emergence of the Internet and in consideration of its aesthetic evolution, there have been many advances ever since it was first proposed by Joseph Licklider of MIT in 1962 when ideating for an information storage and retrieval system

between networked computers.⁵ As for how the original Internet founders describe the intended use of the Internet, they define it “at once a world-wide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location.”⁶ When considering the founders’ characterization of the Internet, they are accurate in describing the technological nature of the Internet’s role. What they do not attend to is the social, psychological and aesthetic purposes the Internet creates for its users.

And while the history of the Internet’s foundation includes the research nexus of government, industry and academia, the history concerning Web browsing technology and related advancing functionalities is just as complex. The World Wide Web (WWW) was first developed in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee out of CERN to meet the demand for automatic information-sharing between scientists in universities and institutes around the world. By 1990 the world’s first website and server went live at CERN in which Berners-Lee defined the Web’s basic concepts. It was here that the URL, http, and html were termed for the first browser and server software ever created.⁷

The Web then is defined as one of the many ways information can be disseminated over the Internet. While the Internet is the infrastructure that embodies a massive network of networks, the Web on the other hand is the model imposed upon the Internet for a way of accessing information. The Web must use the underlying HTTP protocol, which defines how linked resources are formatted, transmitted and retrieved.

5. Leiner et al., “Brief History of the Internet,” *Internet Society* (2012): 3.

6. Leiner et al., “Brief History of the Internet,” 1.

7. “World Wide Web,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed March 2, 2017.

These in turn dictate what actions web servers and browsers will undergo to respond to such commands, such as when entering a URL into a web browser address bar. Within the Web's model that is built upon the Internet's network, users can share information via web documents, also known as web pages, that are linked to each other via hyperlinks. The continuing technological improvements in graphics, sound, text, video of web browser and page technology has a large influence in terms of the immersive web experiences that continue to develop.

There are several avenues of significant technological progress for noting the complex evolution in web and browser technologies, including: HTML, Cookies, JavaScript, Flash, CSS3 Transformations, and Full Screen API, to name several.⁸ The visual and user experience of accessing the Internet changed in respect to each innovation. In relation to the evolution of visual and touch command features, HTML got its holding in the early 1990's creating the first markup language as basic building blocks for webpages.⁹ In 1994 the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) was established as an international community for developing open standards to ensure the long-term growth of the Web.¹⁰ By 1996 Flash and JavaScript could incorporate animation and special effects to web design, making the Internet a more interactive experience. Also by 1996, frames became popular for allowing browsers to display two or more web pages or elements side by side within the same web browser window. In 1998 PHP 3 released and paved the way in dynamic web pages.¹¹ In 2003, the first developments in Web 2.0 introduced the wave

8. "Evolution of the Web," Google Chrome, accessed March 22, 2017.

9. "A History of HTML," World Wide Web Consortium, accessed March 22, 2017.

10. "A Little History of the World Wide Web," World Wide Web Consortium, accessed March 22, 2017.

11. "History of PHP," PHP Net, accessed March 12, 2017.

of websites based on information such as social media, blogs and wikis.¹² And as of today, around 46.1% of the world population are internet users with around 3.6 billion users and a growing number of 1.1 billion websites as of March 2017.¹³

When it comes to the process that enables users to connect to the Internet using computers, mobile devices and other technologies, there has been influential advancements in performance and speed from various internet service providers (ISPs) offering various data signaling rates. While the crawling speeds of dial-up restricted phone usage at max speeds of 56kps, the broadband market was introduced in the early 2000's leading to faster connections and over time, cheaper access for users. As broadband technology continues to evolve, such as 4G mobile broadband and now fiber-optic broadband, which has boosted connection speeds in the UK to a maximum of 300Mbps, users will continue to have continued and ubiquitous access for downloading and streaming multimedia content on desktop or mobile devices.¹⁴

Evolution of the Web Browser

The experience of browsing the Internet came from the first developed tool created to do so, the web browser. While there are several key innovations that manifested in the creation of the web's first iterations, the most notable development relevant to characterizing the current Web's experiential aesthetic character is the creation of Mosaic in 1992, the first global web browser that made the Internet ubiquitous. The graphical interface under Mosaic advanced graphical user interfaces to a new level of navigational features and graphics. By the mid-1990s, web browser wars

12. "Web 2.0," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed March 12, 2017.

13. "Internet Users," Internet Live Stats, accessed March 2, 2017.

14. "Broadband History," USwitch, accessed March 2, 2017.

began as Netscape Navigator became the first commercial web browser. From there arose the evolving battle between modern web browsers of today with Internet Explorer in 1995, Mozilla in 2002, Safari in 2003, and Chrome in 2008.¹⁵

In consideration for the foundation and development of Internet access and web browser implementations on mobile devices, Apple's 2007 iPhone release created the first product to introduce a widescreen iPod with touch controls, a revolutionary mobile phone, and a breakthrough internet device. It brought about a new way of interacting with computers, created the concept of phone applications, and made the Internet accessible 24/7.¹⁶ The creation of the iPhone and its influence on the proliferating market of other smartphone devices is important for considering the ways in which it changed the way humans interact with the Internet beyond utility, but for emotional, social, and daily operation. This expansion in utility changed not only how users access the Internet in new ways for carrying out tasks that did not exist before the iPhone was created, but changed also how users incorporate a 24/7 internet service into their daily lives.

In concern to how the iPhone created a new way of interacting with computers, from touch computing, to threaded text messages, to killing the phone call, to front-facing cameras that dawned selfie culture, these are just a portion of the changes that have influenced the ways in which users interact and access the Internet to carry out their daily tasks or communicate with other users. As Heffernan has made the comparison, to "just as it's impossible to write about Western poetics without close attention to the language of Dante, so it's impossible to consider the aesthetics of the Internet without close

15. "Evolution of the Web."

16. "iPhone," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed March 12, 2017.

attention to the soundscape of Jobs and Apple.”¹⁷ The conception of the word “app” barely existed a decade ago but has now transformed into a multi-billion-dollar industry spawning hundreds of major companies producing content that is accessed and used daily by iPhone users. The App Store market has surpassed 2.2 million apps as of January 2017. From its initial launch on the iPhone 3G in 2008, it continues to sell applications that are transform societal and business structures.¹⁸

Lastly, the iPhone was the first internet device to bring about a status of having the Internet all the time—if not on Wi-Fi, then through a cellular network provider. As Heather Kelly puts it, “for better or worse, it’s blurred the lines between work and home lives, made communication around-the-clock habit and led to a host of new rules about when and how it’s appropriate to use smartphones.”¹⁹ While some mobile devices before the iPhone could incorporate the Internet, albeit limitedly, iPhone’s Safari browser was an unprecedented improvement and similarity for navigating the Internet on a mobile device, much like the way it is done on a desktop computer.

17. Heffernan, Virginia, *Magic and Loss: The Internet as Art* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 178.

18. “App Store Shatters Records on New Year’s Day,” Apple, accessed March 12, 2017.

19. Heather Kelley, “5 ways the iPhone changed our lives,” CNN, last modified June 30, 2012.

3 Evolving Web Activity and Content

And within the development of technologies of the Internet and Web as just described, there have been several forms and types of web activity to result from such leaps in internet accessible functionality. The activity of searching and accessing the web has been coined into the everyday phrases “surfing and browsing,” as they arose in terms of describing the activity of perusing the Internet for content in different manners.

Regarding the form and type of web content that has developed alongside web browser technology, there is an entire spectrum of content that users may opt into accessing daily, if not hourly for some, to consume and even contribute. For example, within the realm of motives that a user would be intentionally accessing internet content, they could be utilizing many forms of entertainment, education, persuasion, or socialization. Among the realms of education, there could be anything from tutorials, webinars, lectures, and eBooks spanning all subjects imagined. And as for entertainment, it can span the plethora of streaming content of video, music and podcasts. In the realm of persuasion, there are product and service reviews, or online shopping. And for socialization content, it is deemed such social networks, blogs, forums, virtual video, audio, and textual communication.

Searching, Browsing, and Surfing

The active and term for navigating the web is “searching.” It implies that there is a goal and while the user will most likely be utilizing a browser to conduct a search, it is essentially a hunt with implicit strategy. Searching on the Internet is relatable to those practices of intentionally experiencing and accessing the Web under three basic approaches: subject directories, search engines, and the deep Web. All three approaches

require a user attempting to access content through means of either indexing web pages like Google's search engine or requiring direct access to certain web pages not indexed by search engines as such is the case for what is coined the deep Web. Through such approaches, a user has an implicit strategy for calling upon certain addresses for accessing certain web page functionalities and content. In this sense, users are actively participating in retrieving the appropriate web resources they need. This intentional participation is like the activity of browsing or surfing, albeit they have different agendas for what users are attempting to retrieve on the web.

Surfing, in this context applies to those users whose agenda in accessing the Web falls under a more serendipitous agenda as they pursue web activity with no goal in mind, but out of what some may call being open to finding something interesting worth their attention. They then in turn may reiterate their surfing behavior into more goal-directed form of searching if needed. As PC Magazine elaborates, it is "jumping from page to page on the Web. Just as in 'TV channel surfing,' where one clicks the remote to go to from channel to channel, the hyperlinks on Web pages make it easy to go from one page to another."²⁰ This ability to quickly access a variety of web pages has become more accessible due to the more accessible ways into which the Internet has become more mobile.

Push Notifications

Lastly, internet push notifications are a way in which users are notified at a specific time about particular web content. While push-style networking has been a part of the Internet ever since Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) was defined in 1982 by

20. "Definition of Web Surfing," PC Magazine Encyclopedia, accessed February 12, 2017.

the Internet Engineering Task Force and Internet Society, in 1982 for sending emails to and between email servers,²¹ push technologies went through several developmental fads before BlackBerry Limited created the first commercially successful application for push technology in 2003, as seen in the first BlackBerries.²² Apple in 2009 then took push-technology to a more ubiquitous level by launching the Apple Push Notification Service (APN), delivering notifications for any app, not as before limited to email or messaging apps. Deemed useful for sending information to app users in real time, a “push notification is a message sent from an app directly to someone’s mobile device. The message appears even if the device is locked or if the person is inside a different app.”²³ In a way, these notifications wake up the handset and alert the user. As a user unlocks their home screen to make use of device, the push notification moves ephemerally into the notification tray. The introduction of rich push notifications in 2013 by Apple enabled such notifications to contain images and action buttons that let users take immediate action from a notification without having to open the app separately. These were created so that

apps can display customizable content, alongside photos, videos, audio, and gifs, which users are able to download inside the push notification... They contain images and action buttons that let users take immediate action from a notification without having to go into the app. Even as seen on Android, messages ‘stick’ around longer in the lock screen. A user is required to interact with the notification in some form, whether opening or dismissing, for it to disappear.²⁴

These are just some of the ways in which current day practices in notification systems are evolving and forming new daily rituals for users accessing and commanding their phones

21. “Request for Comment 821,” Internet Engineering Task Force, accessed March 12, 2017.

22. Chris Ziegler, “Ten years of BlackBerry,” *Engadget*, accessed March 12, 2017.

23. “What are Push Notifications?,” Leanplum, accessed April 10, 2017.

24. “What are Push Notifications?,”

for content. As operating systems continue to improve in design and performance, user experience will evolve alongside evolving functionality and have impacts for forming resulting social structures.

Technological Agency of Web Activity

There is also technological agency to be noted in how such web content and digital devices under analysis contribute to user experiences. Technological agency in this way is defined in terms for how artifacts have politics, or agencies of influence. Such agents of influence are embedded in web technologies as such series of functions and choices have implications and ramifications that are beyond original intentions of design. And for even some cases of technical agency, the design is intentionally designed as an influencing agent. As Heffernan has described such examples in this type of agency:

Rather than leave you to kick back and surf in peace, like museum-goer or a flaneur or reader, the Web interface is baited at every turn to get you to bite. To touch the keyboard. To click. To give yourself up: *Papieren!* To stay on some sites and leave others. If the Web design make you nervous, it's doing what it's supposed to do. The graphics manipulate you, like a souk full of hustlers, into taking many small, anxious actions: answering questions, paging through slide shows, punching in your email address. That's the first reason the Web is a graphic mess: It's designed to weaken, confound, and pickpocket you.²⁵

Furthermore, there are examples in technological agency for which various technologies and applications have evolved to require the sort of handy finger work for commanding various features. Within every business model of such applications these days comes along the type of user interface knowledge and finger work that becomes habitual for some as they are accustomed to using applications throughout their daily life. It starts with every updated web site or application launching new layouts and features users

25. Heffernan, *Magic and Loss*, 37.

grapple with to utilize the application's full capability. For every update that is launched and downloaded, users in reaction are forced to grow accustomed to the updates of such functionalities. Overtime continuous use of applications, users develop the type of visual and kinesthetic memory needed for optimizing their functionality and layouts. Design researchers are continuously reiterating and developing functionalities, and in this way, advance the versatility of the web for presenting content.

These technological and transitional adaptations, while for the most part are demonstrated within the applications design features and touch commands, have also formed adaptations from users outside of the application's platform. For example, as seen in how the quick visual and touch command habits formed by texting deliver a much quicker form of communicating to someone than connecting via phone or video call, there have been resulting shifts in user's preference in opting for texts rather than phone calls. And while there are various consequences for the nature and substance of communication that is delivered by various forms of the Internet, one of the most notable consequences is the type of attention a user will give to their device while in the confines of various environments. As users have the potential to access internet communication 24/7, they have the potential to grow accustomed to receiving and sending notifications at any moment they want.

Constructing Liminality

What has been exposed behind the technical design and agency for such evolutions of internet technology, is the agency such technologies have for composing web activity and content. For example, new developments in push notifications have constructed new ways for users to transition using their phone when going about their

daily functions. Furthermore, broad band capabilities have enabled users to access their phone possibly 24/7. These new forms of technology have created significant ways for transitioning between activities and forms of web content, as demonstrated in the ethnography chapters. While what has hitherto been revealed as the resulting environments for users to interact within, further application of web activity and technology to the liminality literature is necessary for characterizing aesthetic experience of these interactions. There are features and qualities to the way users undergo various digital rituals for navigating such content that demonstrate liminal like experiences. As demonstrated in chapter five, explanation of Turner's concepts aids in demonstrating the thresholds of liminality in the internet experiences under analysis. For what Turner coins, as "betwixt and between," there are liminal thresholds constructed for when users are undergoing a ritual in opting to access the Internet or when navigating between web content.

4 Implications for Aesthetic Theory

As to how the transitional activity that is characteristic of engagement with the Internet affects the aesthetic character of internet experience, there is an intuitive assumption that some of these internet transitions are anti-aesthetic. John Dewey's *Art as Experience* demonstrates this anti-aesthetic view of such transitional activity under his analyses, to a certain degree. Yet, his framework cannot encapsulate advancements in modern-day technologies that have formed novel social and experiential structures, as those demonstrated in the accompanying ethnographies. Nevertheless, chapter nine will unearth how Dewey's view cannot encapsulate the significantly aesthetic experiences of such technologies. This is due in part by what will be demonstrated in chapters six, seven and eight, in that such internet experiences have components of liminality that form such unique aesthetic experiences. Yet, it is important to establish why Dewey's anti-aesthetic view is of concern to the following self-ethnographies and why it is important to acknowledge his claims of aesthetic experience before characterizing technological structure along liminality theory for the following four chapters of ethnography analysis.

Dewey is important because he has established arguments in the realm of everyday aesthetics that describe what makes some forms of ordinary experience significantly aesthetic. Some of Dewey's relevant arguments for deeming ordinary experiences aesthetic require there be an interactional relationship between creature and environment and secondly, there be experiential flow towards consummation and fulfillment. Dewey contrasts these roots of aesthetic experience to what he deems anti-aesthetic, "inchoate experience." Unlike aesthetic experience, the material of inchoate experience does not reach Dewey's criterion of fulfillment. Inchoate experience

characterizes qualities following each other, but the different themes of the experience in no way build on earlier phases of the experience or develop them. Aesthetic experience on the other hand overcomes this inchoate “because of continuous merging,” in that there are no “holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers.”²⁶ There are no rigid dichotomies or breaks in experience and nature. Nevertheless, Dewey aesthetics ultimately prove to have qualities that can characterize internet experience, albeit to a certain degree as is not the case with Dewey’s description of inchoate experience as will be discussed in chapter nine alongside analyses of liminality.

Live Creature and Environment

Dewey’s descriptions of experience require a live creature in interaction with an environment, and as such, similar characteristics are revealed in the experience of interacting with the Internet. In this regard, Dewey can characterize the experience to a certain degree, but ultimately proves to have anti-aesthetic interpretation of internet experiences. Dewey’s case for aesthetic experience first establishes an understanding in the experiences of everyday life in “the raw.” Ecstatic absorption in activity demonstrates the integration a creature has actively with their environment. In this way, experience incorporates life that goes on not only in an environment but in interaction with the environment. Internet experiences, then, in everyday activity represents Dewey’s descriptions of a creature interacting with their devices. Whether in isolation on a stationary device or connected passively through internet equipped mobile devices and wearables, there is raw engagement users have with their respective interfaces and resulting web content of interaction. As Dewey proposes that the meaning derived from

26. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 38.

activities cannot be separated from action, will or thought, in the same way the activities of interacting with the web cannot be separated from action, will or thought. When he draws similarities to the evolution of organs allowing humans to use their senses and interact with their body, he claims “that life goes on in an environment; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it... The career and destiny of a living being are bound up with its interchanges with its environment, not externally but in the most intimate way.”²⁷ Dewey implies any possible dualism of mind and body comes from not partaking in life fully as the meaning derived from activities cannot be separated from action, will or thought. This in turn is important for how meaning is derived for users interacting with such internet content.

Experiential Consummation and Fulfillment

Furthermore, Dewey relates the type of curiosity and absorption one has in captivating experiences and in the journey one undergoes to constitute aesthetic experience. These qualities of Deweyan absorption aid in characterizing some internet experiences as aesthetic, but only to a certain degree. When Dewey acknowledges inchoate as distorting experience and disrupting the absorption one has in captivating experiences, it cannot explain the continued absorption one has when one disrupts their previous experiences to access the Internet, as seen in push notifications. There is still absorption occurring in one’s environment when they are undergoing a flow of experience and have inchoate characteristic experience from not completely the course of action so they could transition focus to access their internet accessible device. The experience of accessing the Internet is not an inchoate disruption creating an anti-

27. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 12.

aesthetic experience, but part of the very absorption that users carry on in flow with environment to make the everyday experience of life aesthetic. Dewey references “what Coleridge said of the reader of poetry is true in its way of all who are happily absorbed in their activities of mind and body: ‘The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, not by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution, but by the pleasurable activity of the journey itself’.”²⁸ Aesthetic experience then involves a drama in which action, feeling, and meaning are one and come into harmony within the changing environment. As an individual adjusts and searches for an underlying harmony, the rhythm phases of adjustment and resolution within the journey constitutes what art does in these moments. So too a user will find adjustment to their internet navigation and the rhythm of phases and adjustments in the resolution of accessing the Internet. As demonstrated in chapter nine, the notifications and web search ethnographies will demonstrate this in how the user adjusts to internet disruptions of a table discussion experience. Yet, this is not seen to a certain degree with web surfing or searching as there are too many disruptions to experience and thus are not being completed to merge in final consummation. In these last two exceptions, the user could be surfing and not have any sense of flow in anyone experience, only to disrupt their experience continuously and never find consummation of fulfillment. As with web searching, there is technological agency for a user to be intentionally using their computer, only to be disrupted through the agency some of the web’s characteristics create through information overload, distracting web design or other disruptions a user crosses on the web.

28. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 3-4.

Dewey and Liminality

This application of Dewey alongside Domagalska's foundations for presenting claims of differences in liminality created from different technological agencies presents grounded claims for describing the aesthetic environments and interactions users undergo within the transitions of technology use. Yet as Dewey's framework is reputable to the aesthetic investigation at hand, it is also limiting for its lack of relevancy the thresholds of liminality. In this way, the importance of the anthropological concept liminality is important to consider and establish. What Dewey will prove to be missing in chapter nine is the quality of liminality that is important for charactering such internet experiences. The features described through their liminal terms is what creates such significant aesthetic experience. For the user is undergoing significant transformations of focus and attention for producing different experiences of self. The relevant liminality concepts of the next chapter will thus lend claim to such transformations of experience that prove to be liminal as demonstrated in the ethnography chapters.

5 Liminality in Human Rituals

When considering the aesthetic character of internet transitions, its uniqueness stems from the nature in that much of the features that constitute aesthetic experiences of the Internet are due to its cases of liminal experience. The concept was added to the social and human sciences ever since it was first proposed by the French social scientist Arnold Van Gennep in his *Rites of Passage* of 1909. Even though Van Gennep's framework for liminality was neglected for most the first half of the 20th century, its later re-discoveries, the most notable originating from anthropologist Victor Turner, developed Van Gennep's research further by expanding in the depth to which rituals can socially, psychologically and philosophically be significant. In doing so, Turner distinguished and classified parts of socio-psychological phenomena that are inherent to community rituals. Furthermore, there have been modern developments proposed for contemporary social and political sciences. Bjorn Thomassen in *Breaking Boundaries* demonstrates that "at its broadest, liminality refers to any 'betwixt and between' situation or object, any in-between place or moment, a state of suspense, a moment of freedom between two structured world-views or institutional arrangements."²⁹ In this way, liminality is given applicability to an array of fields, objects, and social structure investigations.

From liminality's origins, Van Gennep was known to have to originally detected a pattern and sequence behind the transitions of rituals that constitute liminal experiences. Ritual patterns were universal in that Van Gennep claimed "all societies use rites to demonstrate transitions, and the forms taken by such rites of transitions are comparable.

29. Bjørn Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 7.

And liminal spaces and moments are key to personal and social development, anywhere in the world.”³⁰ Structuring such ritual patterns he observed in his fieldwork, he provided an overlying framework claiming the overall “rite of passage” had sub-categories distinguished by the rites of separation, transition, and incorporation, although each stage is not “equally important or equally elaborated in specific rituals.”³¹ Van Gennep also described these in liminal terms with his threefold structure of pre-liminal rites, liminal rites, and lastly post-liminal rites.

Turner’s Insightful Applications

Along with Turner’s re-discovery of Van Gennep’s concepts in 1963 and his subsequent publication of *Betwixt and Between the Liminal Period in Rites of Passage*. Turner was able to add that liminality “served not only to identify the importance of in-between period, but also to understand the human reactions to liminal experiences: the way liminality shaped personality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes-dramatic tying together of thought and experience.”³² Because of Turner’s expanded applications, liminality has come to encapsulate three different types of subject hood: single individuals, social groups, whole societies; as well as three types of temporal dimensions: moments, periods, and epochs. While the subject hoods and temporal dimensions can combine in any variety of ways, their relation to the middle stage—the transitional or liminal period, is what Turner noted as “structurally, if not physically, ‘invisible.’”³³

30. Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern*, 38.

31. *Ibid.*, 37.

32. Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern*, 14.

33. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1977), 95.

Turner lived among the Ndembu tribe of northwestern Zambia, from 1950 to 1954 to study their society and their religious practices. He found the installation rites of a chief elect named Kanongesha, of the Ndembu people, to be revealing towards the liminal component that he had developed further from Van Gennep. In the first phase (of separation), one undergoes preparation for separating from the former status, place, and self to move to another. As Turner developed from Van Gennep, the first phase “comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group... from an earlier fixed point in the social structure.”³⁴ As for the installation rites of the new chief, the phase of separation was found by Turner to begin “with the construction of a small shelter of leaves about a mile away from the capital village” in a hut named after the term *ku-fwa*, or “to die,” since the village believed it is in the hut that the chief-elect dies from his commoner state.³⁵

As for the second phase, the liminal transition period, in which the transition rite is undergone, Van Gennep claimed the middle stage “implies an actual passing through the threshold that marks the boundary between two phases.”³⁶ Turner holds the liminal phase to begin with the construction of the hut, and there on out, the chief-elect proceeds through a transitional phase before officially becoming the chief. The chief-elect and a ritual wife so accompanies him, are clad in nothing but a ragged waist-cloth as they sit crouched in a posture of shame or modesty, while they are washed with medicines. The

34. Ibid., 80.

35. Ibid., 100.

36. Arpad Szokolczai, “Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events,” *International Political Anthropology* 2 (2009): 141.

next rite of *Kumukindyila*, in which the chief-elect and his ritual wife are abased and reprimanded during a night's seclusion in a small hut by many of their future subjects.³⁷

In the third phase, the rite of incorporation requires the participant to be reincorporated into society with a new identity, as a new being. Turner documented how after the chief-elect was reprimanded publicly for half an hour, they took him to the house of the old king where he was seated to hear the people speak, "Now we choose you for our king; we engage to listen to you and to obey you."³⁸ The chief was given a silk hat in emblem of royalty and from that point on was highly respected from all who had just abused him. Nonetheless, Turner demonstrates a ritual of four parts that stems from the transformation of a chief-elect into the culmination of a new identity as chief.

While Turner's work of the 1960's presents an original framework for the concept of liminality, Thomassen's literature review extends the original frameworks into other domains of social science studies. There is an encompassing clarification for applying the concept to many fields of study in that "liminality is. It happens. It takes place. And human beings react to liminal experience in different ways. Those ways cannot be easily predicted. But they can be analyzed and compared, and at the formal level they share important properties."³⁹ In this way, liminality is depicted as an occurrence, albeit there are implications for the not easily predicted reactions and properties from were such reactions of the liminality originate. Nevertheless, when applying the anthropological concept of liminality to individual moments of transition in modern day internet activity,

37. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 100.

38. *Ibid.*, 171.

39. Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern*, 7.

it is imperative to relate to what past scholars like Turner have characterized liminality for its structure and potential influence on personality and resulting reactions.

For Turner's liminal experiences, people are dressed differently and act differently when undergoing rituals in route to a new result of self that is different. In this setting, people are taking on new types of roles through these world and self-changing transitions. It is through these orchestrated and performed ways that make the people going through these transitions have dramatic, psychological changes. Yet, it is not like the switch is flipped in that you're brought psychologically to a state that is somehow in between. And so as demonstrated, all these types of societies studied have found a way to put individuals into a type of transitional, psychological state in which they are no longer understanding themselves in the old way, and yet they have not slipped into the new one quite yet. In relation to the moments undergone by users browsing the Internet, liminal phases are evident in multiple cases of internet browsing and experience that are to be accounted for in understanding the aesthetic experience one undergoes when browsing the Web on varying devices.

Transitions of Internet Activity as Liminal Experiences

The transitions undergone when browsing the Internet are cases of liminal experience for the type of suspension in content that is constructed when transitioning between webpages or applications, as well as transitioning from offline to online activity, or vice versa. In consideration of the various styles in which users may navigate and access their internet browsing experience, be it via mobile or stationary. The two cases include when a user is switching faculties of attention from offline to online activity and when a user is transitioning within a web browser between web page content. While these

two differing environments harbor different forms of liminal suspension through their different forms of internet transitioning, there are three cases demonstrating the liminal suspension as described. These are the transitions of notification, intentional, and serendipitous web browsing. There are different transitions to be analyzed and characterized for each of these internet experience as they constitute different prior states, liminal states and resulting states from the specific types of internet transition undergone.

6 Experiences in Push Notifications

Along the lines of an impulse for some in response to the notification settings they allow on their devices, others using smartphones apply more directive thinking towards opening web browsers and opting to search and browse for desired information from a notification just received. When it comes to the multitude of push notifications one may receive on their phone, their choice to engage with the prompts are an indication of their commitment to transitioning from the presence of their current activity and into the experience of accessing internet content. As for the examples that constitute the varying range of push notifications, and thus varying array of transitions and resulting experiences that a user could undergo, some examples include a user attending to notifications regarding: news subscriptions, social media messages, software updates, emails, achievements, and reminders, only to name several.

In the confines of being preoccupied with a previous task at hand, the activity of being notified by an internet notification can be for some users distracting in relation to the activity previously at hand. In some instances, they thus choose to not engage with their device pinging with internet content. Yet, for some users, spontaneous notifications from internet applications prompt the type of user online participation that users who opt for push notification settings are open to experiencing. Through this open acceptance for allowing notifications to prompt one's attention and deliver information, a user is in open acceptance for transitioning their attention or activity from what they were previously experiencing. Even if they choose not to engage after hearing the ping, they still hear it and must shift attention to the choice for a bit, even if they don't transition to internet activity because they choose not to. And through acceptance of transitioning their

attention, it means that users should make a choice because of this open setting. While perhaps some users decide to divert their attention to notifications more often than others, the choice to divert attention or perhaps multitask between two competing faculties of attention—the notification informing and possibly prompting you to open and read more information about the related topic, or the activity you were engaged in before one’s phone lit up with an update, seems to derive from differing motives of users.

A specific self-ethnography for how this form of engagement is carried about is as follows. While this is one example, similar analogous analyses can be applied along the lines of someone who is partaking in any type of activity deriving their attention such as reading a book, walking, or socializing, only to have their attention distracted by an impending push notification. Listed are only a few examples of possibilities, yet a user nonetheless who opts into internet notifications is pinged at the random occasion of someone or some automation sending content for that user to read or engage with further. As notifications can range from a variety of news, social, or productivity applications downloaded on one’s phone, users are thus at the disposal of their settings and phone behavior when allowing their life activities to be interrupted and have an almost imposing nudge to transition online and engage with an entire network of web pages and information. As follows, is a personal recorded account in the experience of receiving and browsing through push notifications.

Self-Ethnography in Receiving Push Notifications

I was sitting with friends at a table in a public space with my smartphone easily in view of where my current attention is harbored. Because my phone had been just used to call someone, it was not put away with my other belongings. And so, while I am not

incredibly attached to what those at the table are discussing, I abruptly feel and hear a vibration of the table and my phone. As I have grown accustomed to the random vibrational nature my phone has when I receive a notification, I am not incredibly caught off guard. Yet, I acknowledge the certain type of natural excitement my body feels when being caught off guard by my phone's vibration. Beyond feelings of mild surprise to be receiving a notification I was not expecting, those around me appear to be going through their own acknowledgement of the new noise in the immediate environment. A common occurrence that most seem to acknowledge, they continue talking over such awareness while I glance down to view my screen to decipher the type of notification. While it turns out to be a text message preview notification, I divert my attention from the table and decide to read the text message more in depth. I swipe in accordance with the graphic user interfaces I am have grown accustomed to over the 6 years of using various versions of Apple's iPhone. After instinctively swiping right on the notification to directly open the messaging application, I contextualize my visual bearings to adapt to the presentation of information that I have just decided to enter. Switching from a view of friends talking in bright daylight amongst a table and into one focused on brightly backlit LCD screen, the information organized by the design of Apple's iMessage is habitual adjustment for me in how information within milliseconds suddenly appears on what used to be a dark and idle screen.

My focus is left to the habitual patterns I have developed over the years of using my iPhone and upon swiping right to open the notification, my focus instinctively drops to the lowest part of the screen as I have grown so accustomed to following the user experience design dictate all new messages appear at the bottom of chat exchanges.

Focused on the newest message I have received; I sense a conversation that may be happening in real time as my friend is asking me an open-ended question. I cannot help but feel as if my friend who sent the message is waiting for a prompt response. Mild feelings of anxiety surface and I feel influenced to reply promptly to their question.

After sending the reply, a feeling of some relief is sensed as I have accomplished the task of replying and I feel as if I have had enough activity on my phone that I return to focusing on my friend's conversation. A few minutes later, my texting counterpart replies with another open-ended question and I repeat the process of diverting my attention and focusing on the bottom half of the screen to read my friend's message. In this way, there is a sense of sincere multi-tasking as I jump from screen to table discussion to accommodate both tasks. When diverting my attention to my iPhone screen, my eyes strain in adaptation to the LCD screen. And the same eye strain is done in response to returning my focus back to the naturally lit table discussion with accompanying human facial cues.

The multitasking of opening each notification my friend sends me produces a chronologically choppy recollection of discussion. My friends will be focusing on one topic only to have the friend I am texting bring up a different topic. As I aim to accommodate both conversations, I feel my frame of mind change as I adapt to each setting and conversation parameters. The conversation bounds for texting my friend through iMessage is largely based upon how I choose to interpret their word choice. I cannot help but project the tone and attitude of their expression through their texts. Given possible images they send; I am left at the disposal of text and multimedia for comprehending their overall status during such conversation. On the other hand, the

conversation parameters for participating at the table with companions is largely based off the usual socio-behavioral norms I am accustomed to, as well as the behavioral cues and habits I have come to associate with such counterparts. Like other conversations in person, the body language, eye contact and tone are inherently important to my experience.

The Aesthetic Experience of Receiving Push Notifications

The experience undergone when receiving notifications through an internet connected device is unlike other comparable notifications one would receive in daily life. While notifications are given through various mediums as ways of notifying others about certain information, for example by way of verbal, physical, or other multimedia communication, push notifications on the other hand constitute unique experiences of their own type. This unique experience stems from the quick and ubiquitous nature the Internet has evolved to create among Internet connected devices, in that, when receiving a push notification, there is an understanding that the information was scheduled to send at that moment in time, be it by a programmed application or another user. Nevertheless, there three main stages derived from this resulting ethnography demonstrate the experience of receiving a notification, which would not normally have arisen without the accessibility of a mobile device. Such stages of process within the ritual include: the act of partaking in a table discussion, the sense of withdrawing from the table after deciding to attend to a notification, the stage of paying attention to the notification, and lastly the return in attending back to the table discussion in a different way. These stages and resulting experiences within each stage characterize experiences that are unique in comparison to daily course experiences that occur without an internet accessible device.

What is distinct about this overall process is that it involves certain kinds of shifts in self-awareness and visual attention as one shifts from one faculty of attention of being at the table, and into one of being on one's screen. Furthermore, this characterization of experience leads to the larger claim that experience of the self transforms upon facilitating these unique shifts in self-awareness and aesthetic experience. It is not a different sense of self, but a different experience of self in that through different visual content that is presented on screen, the resulting experience is produced by all the faculties of one's self that is fostered from such presentation of content. When such content differentiates upon navigation or curation, different experiences of self will dissolve or arise in accordance with what such content fosters and develops through user interaction. It is in this claim that the anthropological literature of liminality can show that there is this phenomenon that users go through, and through these phenomena that have key features, a characterization of engagement with the Internet can be demonstrated to affect the aesthetic character of internet experience. The liminality is applicable in this instance of push notifications as the user undergoes a process of multiple stages in much similarity to what Turner classified for the societal rituals he studied. In terms of the separate stages that comprise this ritual, they are divided into four stages as follows:

Pre-Liminal

The first stage is the act of partaking in a table discussion. Turner describes detachment in that it “comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual...from an earlier fixed point in the social structure.”⁴⁰ While involvement in the

40. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94.

table discussion does not signify detachment, it serves as ‘the earlier social structure’ from which I was from detaching from to access the web via push notification.

This table experience is distinctively different than the feelings of peering down at my phone to carry out a conversation via notification exchange. There are pauses and gaps between modes of human discussion and reactions to human emotion and facial expression from participants. For example, one individual reacted in response to another individual as he objected to his opinion. There are feelings of anticipation as to who proceeds to carry on the next point in conversation. In this way, having a discussion at a table produces a distinctive feeling that is a unique reflection of self-produced from such experiential feelings of having a discussion with other people.

This stage begins as my phone spontaneously vibrates, and the table along with it. To my awareness and my friends’, there is a pause in conversation as all eyes subconsciously show awareness to the change in lightening as my phone’s screen lights up in response to receiving a notification. This breakage in eye contact as almost everyone instinctively looks down, as well as my transition in attention, constitutes a self-aware acknowledgement from everyone that my device has made a notification and there is a possibility that I will be withdrawing from the discussion to attend to such content.

Liminal Threshold

After the first stage of detachment in which the push notification is delivered and I am called to possibly remove myself to attend to an online presence, comes the stage in which I am in transition. This transitionally suspended phase is what implies “an actual passing through the threshold that marks the boundary between two phases”⁴¹ and is also

41. Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 21.

“structurally, if not physically, ‘invisible.’”⁴² This experience is distinguished from the previous stage I was just in of attending to the table discussion and interpreting the facial, emotional and verbal expressions of those surrounding me. This in turn constitutes a liminal phase, as I am in suspension of transitioning to a new awareness of self and object, my phone’s display.

While there is the possibility of being interrupted to switch our attention all the time with other forms of objects and media, the Internet in this role produces possibilities of content that span distance and time constraints for communicating and creating a form of immediate communication with someone. It produces a form of liminal phase for a user in that through the process of attending to the notification, they are undergoing a common ritual of removing themselves from where their current attention was harbored to attend to the process of reading and possibly responding to someone or content that is happening within the same instance of time. This transition produces the sort of liminal phase of being suspended into knowing that the conversation or notification you are attending to is happening in the moment and thus deserves the type of presence of attention that is currently being harbored when already present at the table. In this way, the liminal suspension for the user consists of an interruption and transition to a presence that is being transmitted instantly via the Internet to my counterpart’s device.

This liminal phase inhabits the time that the user undergoes a self-aware decision to remove their faculty of attention from focusing on the interpretation of the conversation and transition into the faculties of self that is needed to undergo the process of attending to their device's display. This transition is a suspension in role as the user is

42. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 95.

no longer an active participant in the discussion, but is in a role to be an internet user accessing content irrelevant to the discussion at hand. In comparison to the type of liminal framework Turner employed, he claimed this would constitute the type of passing through a threshold between two phases and into the new identity as user online and arguably at least a user online who is also still present at the table. This new identity as a user online, which arose from the withdrawal and redirecting of attention from one type of presence to another, results due to their new activity and participation online. Albeit, in this case the user is engaging with another person via text message, they are attending to such conversation online via their identity through an online connection that consists of an interface of chat bubbles limited to a range of multi-media content. The user in this way does not have the capacity to attend to the text message conversation in the faculty of identity that they had with their focus at the table, but is now limited to the words and functionality they employ through the interaction of their device. Thus, the transition underwent resulted in a redirection of presence and technological functionality as the user becomes limited to expressing their identity through the online means of communication with their texting counterpart. Their counterpart, in that instance, perceives that user for the online identity they represent and express through their digital functionality of words, symbols, or images.

Post Liminal

The next stage after the transition includes the deep integration stage in which I am fully engrossed into the internet content I have chosen to engage with on my device. The feelings of transitioning to internet notifications does not harbor the greatest aesthetic

feelings. It is a distinctive feeling, much unlike how it feels to be normally going through a conversation with others in person.

From the beginning, there is a felt disruption of the feeling I had previously when experiencing the table discussion. There is a felt burden from having my attention pulled from someone via text needing my prompt response. The experience is not indicative of an entirely wholesome experience in that I know I will miss parts of the table discussion just from checking my phone, and even more if I choose to attend to notification content. Furthermore, after deciding to opt into the disruption of experience and transition my faculty of focus, the attention given to my phone produces aesthetic feelings of limited 2D design and the realization of the all too familiar “blinding backlit screens that turned everyone’s field of vision into a personal Times Square or Shibuya.”⁴³

Transitioning from previously reading others facial expressions and mode of conversation, and into my focus on internet content, there is a felt type of cognitive dissonance for contextualizing my expectations of communication with someone. The expectation and feeling of needing to read people’s facial expressions has changed into that of reading people’s words, images and multimedia through internet content. For as Heffernan lends to the differences in communicating via instant messaging versus a table discussion, it produces a “shift, from symbol to image. From word to picture. From verbal language to visual language, including emoticons, emoji, and photographs.”⁴⁴ As in the ethnographic experience of attending to the notification from a friend, it us up to how I can quickly adjust to interpreting my texting counterpart’s communicative styles as

43. Heffernan, *Magic and Loss*, 88.

44. *Ibid.*, 117.

I have shifted my focus from looking at others facial expression and into deciphering the picture and note my friend sent me. Yet, while this is an ending of the post liminal stage, of transitioning from offline to online, there is still the accompanying secondary liminal transformations that occurs when changing facilities of attention through one's participation in content on various web pages or deciding to opt to inhabit content not on the web.

Secondary Liminal Threshold

Lastly, the stage in which I opt to return in attending back to the table discussion in a different way produces a new form of presence of self that has returned to the table. As Turner characterizes the ending of such stage, it is having a reincorporation into society with a new identity and being, just as the chief-elect during the rites to kingdom came out of the last stage with everyone respecting him from there on out. In this way, there similar features with a user transitioning to return to the previous activity of table discussion.

The experience of removing myself from the experience of having a conversation and into the experience of peering down at my phone, only to return back to the previous experience of the table discussion creates the secondary liminal phase of suspension. The transformation outcome is a more informed person who just spent a portion of experience attending to web content, only to return back to the physical presence of reading people's facial expressions. This change in focus of experience is distinctively unique for the user and requires them to undergo readjustments in faculties of awareness. Whereas they just underwent a liminal experience of transitioning to access the web, they have decided to not navigate to new web content, but transition back to the table discussion as newly

informed person. While it is arguable that such content attended to during the disruption of notification experience was not significant enough to bring a transformation in status to a user, there are possibilities that information was significant enough to even change the mood and presence the user has when returning back to the table. The user comes out of such liminal experience having experienced content online and has the readjustment of incorporating the content just received back into their identity and status at the table.

7 Experiences in Web Searching

Regarding the browsing experiences that are motivated by intentions of direct searching and research of specific content on the Internet, in this capacity users are also in open acceptance of changing their faculties of focus from their previous mode of activity to reach desired content on another web page. This type of intentional activity is to be distinguished as ‘searching’ the web and not ‘surfing’ the web, although it is possible one’s searching can foster further motives for transitioning into surfing. For instance, a user can be originally motivated to complete a specific search or function on the Internet, only to find themselves engrossed in surfing through other possible relevant or irrelevant websites in comparison to what their initial intentions for accessing the Internet were in the first place.

This type of intentional activity can take place in two broadly defined instances. First, when a user is undergoing a stationary mode of web research through a web browser, or secondly when a user who is currently partaking in offline activity opts to access online content via internet accessible device. For example, it is not too often that users engaged in daily activity will reach for their devices to browse the web for answers to their curiosities and interests while not having been previously on the Internet. The other transition as mentioned is under the impression that when a user is seated in web browsing session, be it mobile or on a desktop, they are opting for intentional transitions when utilizing command functions for transitioning web page content.

Changes of focus on content in this way seem analogous to the same desire of finding answers through other informational print mediums, yet are different in nature for the Web can produce a faster, more intentional transitory nature not capable in other

informational domains. As follows is a specific self-ethnography for exemplifying a personal recorded account of the experience in intentionally accessing and searching the Web to obtain answers to my research questions about the Internet. It is important to note a user's ability to reach both these forms of intentional internet access through mobile or stationary means. Although exemplified is a stationary means of intentionally accessing the Internet through an institutionally owned desktop, it is just as applicable to note such possible intentional browsing if a user were to attempt the same intentional access through a mobile device.

Self-Ethnography in Web Searching

When in the confines of an institutional computer lab, I am granted access to the computer upon entering appropriate credentials. To use the double screen monitors to access the Internet through many windows, I click to access the Chrome browser in the left-hand corner almost instinctively to pull up the internet applications always accessed for organizing my search agendas, projects and research.

Upon opening the Web browser, my saved bookmarks stir up a familiarity of navigation as I instinctively click on a few to access some of the websites that allow me to do my tasks most productively. As research is my greatest to do, I access private and academic search engines to access the most desired and specific information. Using the web browser to navigate my way to information online, I start with Google.com and use it to get a preliminary sense of the type of topics and information I am hoping to obtain. I decide to type "internet" into the search bar. I click "search" in anticipation for something significant to be found relating to my line of research into the Internet. Almost feeling as if on a hunt, I skim through the search results in anticipation of clicking on a web page

that will lead to more specific answers and analysis. Google has loaded a glimpse of just 10 of the 697 million pages at hand to possibly consider for relevant research content.

After skimming the first top three results that are associated to be the most visited and assessed, I double click on all three to load each one individually in separate tabs. As all three webpages are loading, I continue to scroll down the results page in search of finding more web pages relevant to my line of research. After sifting more through results further down the search results, more webpage previews catch my eye and lead me to right click on them and pull them up on separate tabs.

After finding enough material to review and read, I decide to start with the first tab in line, that is now fully loaded, and proceed to skim the webpage in order validate if it has any relevant material to validate my research questions. After giving the webpage a rapid scroll and noticing the site's familiar name, I assess that it does seem to contain good information towards my research cause and I decide to keep the tab open while I move on the next tab in line that needs my review. After going through the top three search results webpages, which seem to have legitimate information regarding my research, I move to the more skeptical of webpages that I clicked on to validate if I should read them in more depth and study. After quickly scrolling and assessing these skeptical webpages, I find that their information is not extensive to the degree in which I need and that their credentials do not seem legitimate. Removing their tabs from the web browser window, I can clarify the material in which I wish to sift through and study more extensively. It becomes a tiresome process of working hard to find the most valuable information towards my cause. It is a hunt to judge which web page will harbor the best

information and in this way, there is a fire hose of information to be evaluated for the potential researchable content.

Upon clicking on the browser tab of one of the sites I deemed most deserving of extensive study and review, I browse over the top header pages introducing the web page as those have become very recognizable names, such as Wikipedia. I directly visit the beginning paragraphs briefly to skim where the relevant material I am searching for is harbored within the extensive twenty to thirty pages that the web page provides. Within this pass over the site's headers and brief introduction, I cannot help but sense the amount of visual text that has filled up the screen after a few milliseconds of loading.

I cannot help but notice the features that bring up "Related Topics" to the right sidebar of my screen, conjuring up a plethora of themes and topics somewhat related to the topic I have chosen to research. In this case, after searching "internet" within Britannica.com, the site's designers and accompanying backend cache settings have decided to suggest the related topics of Niklas Zennstrom, Bill Gates, NEC Corporation, computer and Larry Ellison, all seemingly related people, objects and organizations related to the Internet, but not necessarily relevant to specific interests I had in mind when choosing to search for "internet" in Google and Britannica.

I also notice the number of ads that reside on the page and produce either animation or contrasting colors to those making up the home page. From knowing through experience their ability to transfer me to a separate webpage, be it with more textual information or multimedia advertising, I grow an overwhelming sense of something or someone attempting to grab my attention and influence me to click on the ad to open an additional webpage and experience what they should offer from their site.

From accustomed habit, I resist the visual pull the moving images have on my peripheral vision and I remain focused on the body of textual information that the webpage was primarily designed to deliver to the user.

From my initial undertaking of reading the Britannica entry on the Web, I notice the sidebar to the left outlining and hyperlinking the total encapsulation of relevant information concerning the Internet. While the main body of text does present with more than single-spaced lines, allowing a way for me to intake the text in a less straining way than would-be single spaced text, I still notice how extensively long the webpage is as I attempt to scroll down all the way to the bottom. After the initial intake of all the visual organization that makes up the site, I realize my feelings that are those of an overwhelming nature as I realize all the information that is available to read and still my confusion into finding what it is I am exactly looking for within the body of text that has been presented to me. I ease into the dense body of textual information as I begin my study into the subject matter at hand in hope of learning something relevant to my intentional research.

After I sifted through the chosen tabs I deemed appropriate to read and assess, I return back to the the web page for the remaining 697 million Google search results. I opt to transition my informational search goals in hopes of reaching new specific content I have the goal of accessing. Under this expectation I opt to choose a new web address from the Google search results in hopes and expectation that they will have content that peaks my interest to the topic at hand. Within this transition comes a suspended animation phase as I am navigating my way to the expectation of the new content. I must again experience several loading experiences, harboring the same expectation and

suspension of reaching the specific content I know to be available there based on the Google search result preview.

The Aesthetic Experience of Informational Web Searching

The transition undergone when intentionally researching the web produces a different experience than as described previously in notification browsing and responding. Whereas the notification browsing produced disruptive transitions for the user still undergoing the overall previous experience of attending to the table discussion, intentionally accessing the web produces a different experience of transition within the overarching experience that leads to a more harmonious ending and consummation. These consummations of intentional browsing can be seen in how one's intention to utilize the web is more of functionality in completing tasks and that one's web experience will most likely conclude after such activities. Yet, there is still a transitional and thus liminal nature to the process of undergoing such intentional navigation.

These stages are encapsulated by the pre-liminal stage, in which motivation for intentionally accessing the web is harbored; the liminal stage, in which transitioning and navigating for desired content is undergone; and lastly the post liminal stage, in which culmination of one's intentional destination is reached on webpage.

Pre-liminal

In route to an institutional computer lab, my motive is in accessing high functioning computer hardware, processing systems and internet bandwidth to intentionally search the Internet for answers to my research questions concerning the Internet. The experience is much more intentional and much less having to do with unplanned interruptions as seen with notification browsing. Experiencing the motivation

to intentionally access specific internet content is more of a longing for obtainable content and a forcing of concentration for achieving an unknowable fulfillment.

In this way, as demonstrated in the self-ethnography, there is a persistent and active engagement with web browser tools to process and scan through a plethora of web page content to find the most satisfactory content. Nonetheless, this experience is much more anticipatory about the motivations users are preemptively employing to satisfy their curiosities of relevant web content.

Liminal Threshold

With the pre-liminal intention of accessing specific, informational web content, the transitional nature of accessing a web browser to access such content produces a liminal phase that has become oriented much more around an achievable search result, in comparison to the unplanned notification interruptions as noted previously. In the pre-liminal phase, the liminal phase was premeditated in that the user developed specific intentions for accessing specific content. As demonstrated in the self-ethnography, the experience of intentionally reaching specific content consists of commanding my default website in route to search for web content. I undergo command functions to search for the related search topic at hand, the “internet.” While commanding a search through Google, which loads a new web page and has the user undergo a transition, the liminal experience is one of suspension as I transition from the previous pre-liminal phase of planning to access my web browser to undergo internet searches. There is an expectation I am undergoing for the in between process of reaching a new status of fully loaded web page and user experiencing after the web page fully loads. I am expecting the suspended animation of loading as I wait and plan to assess the search results. But most of all, I am

put in an in between phase of previously not having had the desired informational content, to transitioning to the outcome phase of having fully loaded content for the curation of my experience.

The resulting liminal experience that is produced in this light is the missing link that constitutes what makes the experience of intentional searching so satisfying. The ability to be suspended in anticipation for what one is intentionally searching for and directly loading on a webpage produces feelings that are preconceived and wait for what they are expecting to interact with on a web page. While these intentional searches may be directed towards a familiar site visited habitually or a new site that they are expecting will be relevant to their preconceived notions, they are in transition for the content and experience they are intentionally seeking. A user in this way is undergoing a directed suspension for accepting the type of experience and presentation of self and self-awareness that is harbored from features of the new site content. This transformation in the reflection of self that is directly intentioned through transitioning web page content is what derives such aesthetic uniqueness. The aesthetic experience in this way is intentionally seeking and in direct effort for deriving a reflection of self in new web page content.

Post Liminal

With reaching web page content that was intentionally sought out for, a user becomes fully engaged within this content and experiences a self-absorption. One is fully engaged with the content they are engrossed in and thus comes to experience all that is conjured within oneself. Filled with many forms of media and visual design, a user remains engaged with content at hand.

The experience is direct for the user in which they have assumptions that they will soon be reaching a felt harmony of conclusion where the desired information I was researching for. As my self-ethnography conjures up emotions of an overwhelming nature from the dense load of textual information, as when stating, “I ease into the dense body of textual information as I begin my study into the subject matter at hand in hope of learning something relevant to my intentional research,” what can be described is intentional judgment and analysis for what I am hoping to obtain. While the self-ethnography exemplifies the act of intentionally deriving content webpages to attend to academic research about the Internet, this enriched state can resemble other relevant forms of web content that a user intentionally derives.

Secondary Liminal Threshold

Within the need of switching between and to new web page content, a user thus undergoes the decision of commanding a web page based on various motives. While it is possible one’s webpage transition is within the same website, it is possible one’s transition can leap to alternative websites relating to the topic at hand. Regardless, there is a transition in web page content that was intentioned and thus constitutes a unique experience of a secondary intentional liminal suspension between web pages. In contrast to the liminal phase of notification browsing that consisted of the unique experience of self-awareness in retracting oneself from previous activities at hand to transition to alternative activities, the liminal phase of intentional browsing conjures expectation from the previous premeditated pre-liminal phase of intention.

The secondary liminal transition occurs upon a user transitioning to new web page content. While the first liminal stage described the first initial transition taken by the user

to gain access to the Internet for their first initial intentional browsing activity, the secondary transition describes what the intentional transitions are like from there on out, up until the user decides an ending to their browsing session. In the self-ethnography, after Google had revealed the commanded search results, Google displayed the 10 out of 697 million web pages claimed to be available for more relevant content to the research question at hand. Limited to just the first page of search results, I intentionally planned to access and transition over to the most desired web pages individually. Furthermore, the self-ethnography demonstrated the a

After a user's initial intention is sought by accessing certain web page content, they will most often, although not always, opt for intentionally transitioning to new web content, relevant or not to the previous web page just accessed. If not, this in turn concludes their browsing session. Yet, when under this secondary liminal stage, they are under the transition for reaching a new web site, a site consisting of whatever content they are so compelled to intentionally access and view. In this way, this liminal stage is like the previous liminal stage previously discussed about the anticipation and expectation derived from the intentional motives of commanding specific content. The self in this way is put through another intentional process of reaching desired content and upon reaching desired content, experiencing all that web site experience fosters for that self in time.

8 Experiences in Web Surfing

There is the possibility that one directs their attention online to serendipitously find information or platforms that they assume may be of interest. This form of activity has also been coined ‘surfing,’ in that users will navigate page to page on the web to fulfill their agendas of self-entertainment. Stumbling upon web content that peaks their interest and results in possible self-absorption, this type of engagement is not limited to stationary browsing experiences. Mobile device engagement is seemingly a popular route of surfing the web when such users are faced with down time. While there are other forms of passing one’s time, a user may find themselves in the position of reaching for their phone and opting to surf the web. This has become an increasingly popular due to the improvements in broadband and mobile devices as previously discussed. The results of a survey by the Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project showed that 81% of young adults aged 18-29 responded yes to the question, “Do you ever go online for no particular reason, just for fun or pass the time?” Followed by 66% of adults aged 30-49 answering yes, these results indicate the use of the Internet as a common diversion and destination for those in leisure.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Heffernan’s prose captures the extent and environment to which users find themselves consuming vast amounts of internet related content:

The signature pastime of the American consumer is now the mental act of processing digital, symbolic data: watching videos, graphics, maps, and images; listening to music and sound cues; and above all reading. With media, books, texts, and emails on mobile devices people are never not reading. We read while we’re socializing, working, shopping, relaxing, walking, commuting, urinating.... As day follows night, our current form of over consuming might be over reading.

45. Rainie, Lee. “The internet as a diversion and destination,” *Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project* (2011): 2. Accessed February 12, 2017. http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2011/12/PIP_Logging-on-for-fun.pdf.

Hyperlexia. Reading texts while driving. Reading Facebook instead of sleeping...Over the past two decades, screens have proliferated, filling our purses, and bedside tables.⁴⁶

There is an impression that the activity undergone by modern day users is what she coins “hyperlexia,” in which there is an overconsumption in the type of activity undergone to read content on the web. This type of excessive behavior is paramount to analyses attempting to explain the type of experiences users undergo when opting to consume vast amount of material in the confines of other activities as mentioned, such as socializing, working, relaxing and walking. Given the fact that users opt to attend to consuming such content, there are interesting claims to be made for what type of aesthetic and transitional experiences are undergone when users opt for viewing such content at the expense of not attending to other activities at hand.

While it is entirely possible users opt for obtaining other forms of information like a book or be led by their own thoughts, observations and imagination, the fact that some users will engage with the Internet in hopes of deriving stimulation is significant to the questions of aesthetic transition and expression of self. As for the how transitioning through web pages produces differing faculties of experience and content, there are several examples to note in how surfing the web can curate common day experiences in text, audio and mental stimulation that users opt to undergo. As Heffernan demonstrates, the amount of various information in which users will access their devices to consume content during the day is that “shifting mental seas define scheme in digital life, in which the best UX doesn’t dictate mental space; it maps it. These apps caress the

46. Heffernan, *Magic and Loss*, 108.

subconscious...The path through is intuition.”⁴⁷ The quickness in mobile phone surfing produces the type of pictorial language that makes the experience more fluid and engrossing in how “icons are more than just pretty decorative graphics for sites and applications, they are little miracle workers. They summarize and explain actions, provide direction, offer feedback and even break through language barriers.”⁴⁸ Under these noted attributes for what characterizes the Internet as so visually oriented and functional, the self-ethnography demonstrates the technological agency that is to be acknowledged.

It creates a dynamic of agents, in which the user, as an agent, does not have an explicit purpose besides self-entertainment. It is not guided by a specific purpose or goals guiding distinct choices about their journey in clicking various links. Making spontaneous decisions to click hyperlinks of interest and visit miscellaneous content they stumble upon, these actions are not entirely deliberate in that they are not actions grounded from reasoning within the window of time in which these decisions are made. Furthermore, in some instances even, it is as if website content serves as the technological agent in imposing the user’s guidance. Nevertheless, there is some technological agency demonstrated through the self-ethnography for how a user, along with not being grounded in conscious reasons for deliberately visiting website content, will be influenced by the technological design in pursuing surfing activity on the Internet. In this way, demonstrated is the unique sensation of experience produced for the experience of self when going through such web design technological agency. For these

47. Heffernan, *Magic as Loss*, 28.

48. *Ibid.*, 42.

agencies have the influence on users for enabling them accessing web content they did have entire previous intentions of accessing before logging online.

Self-Ethnography in Web Surfing

Finding myself in a car ride, I find myself gazing out in window to the city streets in view. Observing anything catching my eye or imagination, after half an hour has passed and my mind wanders to the possibility of catching up on any number of news sources or podcasts on my phone, I opt to grab my phone and pull up my preferable applications. Such favorable applications grant numerous options for self-entertainment. Even while I carry books and notebooks around, most often when I don't feel like there's enough time to get invested in a book chapter, I prefer browsing an application knowing that with the limited time available in my wait, I can have the short opportunity to read a short article or browse multiple news feeds on news or social media apps to feel fully informed and possibly entertained.

It starts from reaching for my phone and instinctively swiping right to reach the iPhone home screen. Perusing my favorite applications, I opt to access my email in hopes of productively catching up on any task that may be pressing at work. Accessing my email in this way allows me to access possible entertaining content while also being more productive with my time by organizing and responding to email requests. I follow the user interface prompts that dictate I drag my finger downward to refresh my email feed. A multitude of emails loads and from there I am overcome with a queue of requests and updates needing to be prioritized as to-dos. There is a load of information to sift through, but I appropriately act to immediately delete or read through appropriate emails.

A specific email from the website Medium catches my eye, as the subject title “Dear Millennials—A Letter to The Lost Generation” peaks my interest. I opt to open the email and explore its relevant content. I recognize what Medium labels, “Your daily three,” suggesting that at least three of the twelve articles were curated particularly based on my interests and warrant further consideration. As these top three articles are from the bloggers I visit most frequently, I click their respective hyperlinks and view relevant content. My interest in the newsletter peaks as I continue to read the entirety of the email newsletter. I have found myself engrossed in the respective hyperlinks that have been curated with appealing banners and icons. I am now in an activity of surfing and opting for web pages I did not have intentions of viewing and experiencing when I had first opted to check my email.

After completing my investigations into Medium’s newsletter, I return to my email inbox to have a specific email from the New York Times Daily Briefing catch my eye, as it does every morning. Opening the email to assess its content, my eye catches the headliner photo the editors have chosen. As I slowly scroll through headline and various subpages, a multitude of images and media surface. While some images catch my eye, and influence me to give more attention to some article summaries more than others, I choose to navigate and read the stories of most interest to me. While in some cases, I click on an article to skim and judge its premise, only to find that there are other articles of greater interest and more deserving of my time. After enough time surfing such news, I find that I have exhausted my interest in NYT content and decide to exit the application to seek a new form of entertainment.

After exiting the application and in view of the home screen, I am inspired by noticing my podcast application and decide to access and peruse the various feeds in curiosity for finding content that peaks my interest. I look through the newsfeed listing all my various subscriptions until the title of an update from *This American Life* catches my attention. I navigate to read the podcast description and become intrigued enough to give it a listen. As the podcast finishes downloading and I begin listening to the opening theme song and the following host commentary, I feel a familiarity for the type of story and theme *This American Life* encapsulates. It is the type of non-fiction, essay, memoir and field recording journalism that brings about my attentive listening and analysis in concern to the primarily American culture they report on for a national audience. After the story concludes, I feel a sense of fulfillment and consummation for having followed a story arch. From here I contemplate where I will next dedicate my attention and need for self-entertainment while still in the car ride.

I return to my phone's home screen and decide to access my music podcast application, Spotify, and in doing so gain access to its 30 million song collection streamable over the Internet. While my individual library stores some of my favorite music, I feel compelled to search for public playlists that have a curated sense of content. As I feel a preference for being updated on critically acclaimed music, I decide to access "Pitchfork's Best New Tracks," a playlist curated by what the online music magazine deems the best of newly released tracks. Song after song I sense the differing experiences derived from the array of mixtures in sound, harmony and melody each song produces. As a playlist on shuffle mode is backed by algorithms presenting songs in the order programmed, I feel called to skip any song not appealing to my taste. Yet, through each

change in song, I am overcome with the anticipation for what a new song will bring to my music listening experience, as well as self. As each song has the potential to foster different moods, perspectives and representations of what will arise from my sense of self. For example, listening to a song recognizable from my teenage years will invoke a memorable sense of self much different than a newer song just released that I have come to appreciate and form more recent memories around. For as Daniel Levitin, the author of *This is Your Brain on Music*, has demonstrated, the music experienced from our teenage years is fundamentally connected with our social and emotional lives.⁴⁹ While there is justified consideration for the way music fosters nostalgic or memorable feelings for one's experience of self, what is most important is that different songs will produce different possible moods, memories for the self to process in an experience. After enough time spent attending to musical content, my mind again wanders to other possibilities for making the most of the entertaining content available on my phone.

Returning to my home screen only to find my social media applications in view, I choose one social media application in curiosity for what other users have opted to share, Snapchat. Opening the application's home screen, I instinctively navigate to the newsfeed allowing me to optionally load my fellow follower's multi-mediated content in what has been coined user "stories." Choosing to download and view specific friends' content, I am overcome with the multitude of images and videos my friends have chosen to share with their followers. I feel a time and interest constraint for giving my attention to content I do not deem worthy. While some material viewed is received in high esteem, there

49. Daniel Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 12.

other instances in which viewing large loads of updates from friends does not warrant much of any pleasure, but becomes a chore to be sifted through and left once I have had enough viewing of such content. Yet, there is a pleasure felt from receiving differing levels of entertaining material from friends. As some updates and individual messages from users request my response and continued engagement through the app, I opt for incorporating a multi-mediated response. In this way, I feel I have entered a role of self that is opting into the social engagement requested online.

After feeling as if I have spent a significant amount of time surfing my phone's internet applications, I feel as if I have exhausted enough outlets of informational updates from reading the latest news, email, and friend shares. At this point I feel as if I should either dedicate the rest of my free time to reading something in depth and more meaningful on my phone. After peering at my phone's brightly backlit screen for an extended period, along with having processed enough of a load in multi-mediated content to exhaust me, I decide to put my phone away for the time being and return to what I had been doing before I had initially picked up my phone to check email. I return to observing the city streets out the car window while waiting to reach my next destination.

The Aesthetic Experience of Web Surfing

The experience undergone when opting to decide to surf the Internet stems from a realization of access to such technology and the free time to partake in such activity, if so desired. While often a habitual thought pattern users undergo, realizing that one's mobile or desktop internet accessible device is readily available can foster the type of connection many make for using the Internet in leisure.

What is distinct about the overall experience of surfing, from beginning to end, is its aimless direction of experience in that there is no clear explanation as for how the surfing trajectory of visited websites and related applications began with a certain website and concluded with another. While previous discussions in spontaneous notification browsing revealed a disruptive, retracting experience of self for internet access, and along with intentional searching revealing a motivation and expectation for accessing specific premeditated content, surfing on the other hand is characterized quite differently than modes previously discussed.

What is most unique in the experience of surfing is the feeling in that there are less choices of intention than choices made without reason. The feeling of making a choice without reason has a different sensation when you feel like you're making a choice for reasons because there is a big sense of 'I' when you are reason guided. It is a matter of understanding that 'I' know I want this and I'm choosing this based on a plethora of rationalized arguments versus the sense of randomly clicking based on the technological agency of application and site design. In this way of experience, the sense of the 'I' being there drops back a bit, as there is a state of experience in which the user as a person is not sensing themselves as a person entirely much. In comparison to intentional or notification internet access in which content has been intentionally accessed or presented for a premeditated reason.

Pre-liminal

As a passenger in a car ride, the experience of moving in a vehicle is filled with spatial recognition and other possible visual or auditory stimuli. While the self-ethnography describes a quiet ride nonetheless, I am simply viewing the city streets and

observing anything catching my eye or imagination. After half an hour has passed my mind wanders to the possibility of catching up on any number of news sources or podcasts on my phone, I opt to grab my phone as I decide to scroll through my podcast feed. While at this stage the decision to grab, and access my phone is a definitive choice in that I feel very compelled to stop looking out the window and seek self-entertainment through my phone. Yet, while my initial decision is guided by the opportunity that my phone content will allow me to reach desired content, I have not entirely sought out planned decisions for the exact web content I will access after choosing web surfing as potential self-entertainment in this instance.

Liminal Threshold

While opting to pull up my phone's home screen, I opt for the more favorable of applications I use on the go for self-entertainment, my email. While other applications may be a first transition for some when opting to surf on their phone or desktop browser, email in the self-ethnography is the most favorable option as it delivers the most relevant of newsletters, correspondences and new updates that I find self-entertaining when on the go. While this the first choice of transition I made when opting to seek my phone for self-entertainment, I cannot help but feel the suspension in feelings as I transition over to the experience of self that is processing and analyzing my email inbox. While I had previous feelings associated with idling around in a car ride, which were largely mild ruminations of my imagination this transition in accessing my email has fostered a transformation. The new feelings are those of the mildly anxious, yet preparatory variety as I am expecting a load of information to be processed, organized and later attend to as responsibilities and tasks. This transition is not like the intentional searching in that there

is no near predictable and intentional expectation for knowing what web page content I will interact with or where myself-entertainment needs will take me along the course analyzing my email.

Post Liminal

My email application loads completely and there is an array of different emails employing me to read or respond to certain content or requests. I cannot help but feel an overwhelming sense of responsibilities and tasks that have been queued for myself, and all from one simple tap of opening an application. Receiving an entire load of information for myself to adjust and analyze appropriately, I can feel the change in experience of self-shifting to the self-role of responding and attending to such emails. When having previously been simply looking out the car window idly as car passenger, there is a transition into an email user that is reading, judging and rationalizing information, arguably in the self-role as a professional or student, for example. My experience of self has transitioned in this capacity into an experience of self that is attempting to organize requests, newsletters, and a plethora of other multimedia material in order represent the self that these email correspondents know of me. This liminal stage is slightly like that of intentional searching in that there is some form of expectation for loaded email application with relevant content, yet what is different is that intentional searching and accessing has a feeling of reasoned choice for the specific content the user is accessing. In this way, although the email application was intentioned to be opened, there was no specific intention for reaching specific email content or planning where one's attention and access to other web content would take their curiosity for self-entertainment.

Secondary Liminal Threshold

While the experience of responding, deleting, flagging and organizing emails is undergone, I cannot help but have my interest peaked by my Medium subscription I have grown accustomed to receiving daily. Opening the content was a deliberate and simple choice to access the newsletter. This marks the secondary liminal stage as I have chosen to transition from an overview of email content into web content of the Medium newsletter displaying the day's headlines. While this decision is intentional for the appeal the article title link had to me, there is something to be said for the technological agency that has played a role in my decision for feeling called to click and choose the web content. As a user, and an agent, I have the capacity to intentionally carry out actions, yet the technological design behind the demonstrated email newsletter and resulting websites have an agency of their own for guiding me to partake and interact alongside content.

As demonstrated in the self-ethnography, opening the Medium newsletter email I receive daily, I notice the email subject titles produced tend to be the catchiest of the all 12 articles and topics listed within the newsletter email daily. The subject title "Dear Millennials—A Letter to The Lost Generation" catches my eye and I opt for opening the email and exploring relevant content. Baited for clicks and further viewing within this email is what Medium calls, "Your daily three," suggesting that at least three of the twelve articles were curated particularly for me and should warrant consideration. As these top three articles are from the bloggers I visit most frequently, I cannot help but click their respective hyperlinks and view relevant content. As the self-ethnography demonstrates, the further interest I take to the entirety of the email newsletter and the respective hyperlinks it has curated alongside appealing image banners and icons, I have

found myself in an engrossed activity of surfing and opting for web pages I did not have intentions of viewing and experiencing when I had first opted to check my email.

As I have spent enough time analyzing the Medium articles, I notice another email I receive daily in my email inbox, the NYT Daily Briefing. Choosing to this email and click on the first headliner, my phone transitions to the NYT phone application to present the article related to the day's headliner. In the presentation of such web content related to breaking news regarding protests, I am compelled to demonstrate appropriate historical recollection and facts concerning the matter. I feel a sense of empathy for what the event brings in concern to safety and peace of all relevant citizens. In this capacity, I am embodying what a concerned citizen may be experiencing within themselves, that is, attempting to interpret the breaking international news report and assess the state of the world.

From this point on, while accessing my email embodied a liminal transition of reaching an experience dedicated to analyzing and interpreting my email requests, I also underwent secondary liminal transitions for me accessing the Medium and NYT newsletters to experience the sense of self required for processing and understanding the relevant content. As the rest of the surfing ethnography demonstrates, there is potential for undergoing this same form of secondary liminal transitions through access of other web content. As seen when I was finished reading the NYT article, I noticed the suggested articles listed at the bottom of the current page. Compelled by the hyperlinked title and the ease of access presented by the application, I tapped on the hyperlink to access, yet again, another form of web page content. After I had completed reading and processing that article and all the web content it had to offer, I come to acknowledge

feelings of wanting to seek other forms of self-entertainment not offered by the NYT site. With this, I undergo the urge to check more website content and continue the road to greater self-entertainment and informant. Opting for new content at this point is striving for more of what I have determined in the moment to be the greatest alternative experience of self in comparison to what I was previously experiencing with the NYT content, albeit I have not intentionally yet determined what will be the specific content to access and experience after finishing the second article.

All resulting transitions made from this point onward, for accessing possible self-entertaining web content, all arose from the first choice I made to undergo the surfing behavior of checking email. And while the NYT provided self-entertainment regarding news updates, I have developed further motives for needing other entertaining content that the NYT can no longer provide. Through the influence of browsing other phone applications, I think may be entertaining, along with the influence of technological and content agency influences on my visual and cognitive focus and preferences, I opt to keep pursuing other forms of possible entertaining content on my phone.

For example, from here the self-ethnography depicts me going to check other phone applications that grant easy accessibility and entertainment. As if a choice that was determined in the moment, I choose to access another easily accessible application on my home screen, a podcast newsfeed. As it is another application that I have purposefully placed on the home screen, its easy accessibility can be said to have technological agency for heightening my curiosity and intention to explore the app and surf for possible entertaining content. Like the organization and analysis that email sifting consists of, the ability to choose an appropriate podcast of choice is influenced by self-entertainment, as

well as technological agency through its design of how the experience of podcast choosing is designed. As I opt to download and stream the podcast *This American Life*, I cannot but help sense my presence of self-transition into a dedicated listener and empathizer for a story being told to a national audience. This experience of podcast web content is different in comparison to the high dense of textual information that was previously experienced on the NYT. In this experience, I have adjusted my bearings of past experiences and knowledge for comprehending the podcast at hand. And while for the duration of the podcast I have experienced all the emotions and feelings that was conjured for me as a listener, the podcast ends and with it my role as a listener at that time.

This experience, of listening to streamable content with the ability to feel a different experience of a self that is actively listening, is to be said for the similar experience that is produced when opting to listen to music. As in the self-ethnography, the ability to access the multitude of streamable music collections gives another opportunity for a user to experience content as a listener and all the feelings and emotions of self that are derived from such content. Both in audio and video streamable content, the opportunities for accessing different forms of content can reach an estimated 30 million streamable tracks available through Spotify's collection⁵⁰ and a YouTube library of videos that is estimated to add 300 hours every minute.⁵¹ And as the self-ethnography demonstrates, after delving into the experiences of surfing the audio content streaming through my podcasts and music applications, there is another instinctual transition that

50. "About," Spotify, accessed February 12, 2017.

51. "Statistics," YouTube, accessed February 12, 2017.

arises through my consideration for more self-entertainment, the curiosity for opening my social media applications.

Through opening such social media outlets, I am opting to surf for possibilities in being entertained or moved by seeing and interacting with the miscellaneous, links, photos, memes, and commentary other users post within the network. As the self-ethnography mentions one application, Snapchat, the experience of logging on and opting to open all multi-mediated messages filled with photos, videos, and text produces the experience of shifting to the role as social self. From here users may expect me to respond and participate in their online social engagement. In this way, I have surfed my way to an experience of self that is responding to social expectation and interaction. I can feel a sense of nostalgia, entertainment and connection from receiving such photos and commentary friends have chosen to share, as well as expectation in the continuation of online discourse that some may expect of me. From here, I can say a sense of my social self has been experienced online through such web content.

9 What Dewey is Missing

While these different forms of accessing the Internet result in different feelings of self as previously demonstrated through their liminal experiential transitions, Dewey's aesthetic theory is important for characterizing internet experience alongside the liminal dimension previously discussed. Nevertheless, the qualities of internet experience that are not addressed under the Dewian framework are what constitute the social event and transitional experience as distinctively unique. The final classification of this distinct uniqueness is what will be demonstrated in chapter ten for lending support to Domagalska's claims of liminal experiences and their production in the integrated nature of selves. To reach such a classification, what will need to be examined then is what Dewey classifies as aesthetic experience and then further examine as to why such an established aesthetic theoretical framework cannot encapsulate internet experiences. Furthermore, there is no possible liminal aesthetic account in Dewey's framework. Nevertheless, following the previous claims confirming the liminality threshold that constitutes internet experience as distinctively unique, a clarifying distinction can be made between the aesthetic conclusions found in the self-ethnographies and the qualities of a Dewian framework. This in turn will lend support to considerations of Domagalska's claims that such new experience of selves emerging from these internet experiences.

Inchoate and an Experience

Dewey distinguishes what an anti-aesthetic experience is by what he describes as inchoate experience, when we are distracted and do not complete our course of action. In For while things are experienced, they are not composed into *an* experience as there are too many distractions and dispersions, for "what we observe and what we think, what we

desire and what we get, are at odds with each other.”⁵² Dewey claims the experience in this way reaches its end through the extraneous interruptions of inner lethargy, rather than the natural sake of ending from the flow started at the initiation. This is general experience and does not give rise to significance of *an* experience. Yet, there is a clarification to be made for how what Dewey terms as inchoate experience can instead be validated to be contributing to the complex creature interacting with their live environment in final consummation of experience. Dewey’s classification of complex creature is important to characterizing such experience as it he claims “man excels in complexity and minuteness of differentiations. This very fact constitutes the necessity for many more compressive and exact relationships among the constituents of his being.”⁵³ Complexity then serves to enhance the feeling and depth for man in his environment and allows further growth and fulfillment for what can possibly be deemed aesthetic.

On the other hand, the structure of *an* experience requires a final consummation of meaning in which the subject undergoes something or some properties that determine his or her doing something, and the process continues until the self and the object are mutually adapted, ending with felt harmony. Dewey exemplifies this in a thinker interacting with his or her ideas for when the doing and undergoing are joined in perception, they gain meaning. Furthermore, another characterization for *an* experience is that it occurs continuously for “every successive part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks, into what ensues. At the same time, there is no sacrifice of the self-identity of the parts. A river, as distinct from a pond, flows.”⁵⁴ Along these lines,

52. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 36.

53. *Ibid.*, 23.

54. *Ibid.*, 37,

what is important is that the overcoming of factors of conflict transform into a more significant, higher powered self. In this way, *an* experience embodies a distinctive structure of completeness and unity that ends in fulfillment of a more significant self.

What Dewey Can Account for in Internet Experiences

Dewey appropriately describes some aesthetic reactions to internet experiences such as Dewian fulfillment, consummation, and complexity of creature in an environment. These are important points to make for how Dewey aids in the classification of internet aesthetic experience, albeit to a certain degree. In how Dewey classifies fulfillment and consummation of *an* experience, there is much to lend in the argument that undergoing notification interruptions, transitioning, and final attainment in content delivery or communication is indicative of a process in which the self and the object have become mutually adapted, ending with felt harmony. The same could be said for intentional searching as one is the continuous process of adapting and reiterating searches and content delivery in the final attainment of desired content. The obstacle undergone of receiving a notification to attended to, has finally been dealt with and allows the undergoing interruption to acquire a merging of the doing, which is becoming more informed or progressing a conversation, to gain the resulting meaning of having attended to such information. Yet, the same cannot be said for surfing as there are not similar feelings of harmony as described. A user will manage to have the self so absorbed in navigating to miscellaneous, nonspecific content that there is no evidence of what Dewey would verify as meaningful and consecutive convergence in fulfillment.

As in the self-ethnography, there are times in which there is a disruption from the previous activity of talking at table to attend to an internet notification, yet to the benefit

of becoming mutually adapted to the object of notification information and thus an ending of felt harmony. It is possible it may not be harmonious for the disturbance or annoyance it may cause; yet overall it is a task that has been completed. There is similarity to the Dewian claim of a significant experience undergone as the undergoing of obstacle, the notification, is adapted with to reach the harmonious point of having attended to all notifications on phone. It lays claim to how distinctively aesthetic the experience can be of overcoming the notification disruption to attend to and access information for a felt harmony in one's informational life. Their life continues in a more informational manner after experiencing an obstacle of notification to attend to, so in that, they have adapted to the information load and can carry on in felt harmony with their lives. These forms of internet experience thus have factors of what Dewey classifies as aesthetically complete in their ability to find consummation and fulfillment, yet their inchoate classifications are to be reevaluated for incorporating an added complexity to the overarching experience. This reevaluation of the inchoate is valuable in that it provides insight to how the Dewian experience is to be contextualized under how these technologies imbed new structures of experience for the self.

Dewian Inchoate as Complexity of Self Experience

There are significant discrepancies to such Dewian framework. These include the inability to consider distortions of experience, also known as inchoate experiences, in accord for forming a larger overarching aesthetic experience. Dewey distinguishes between how experience is in general terms throughout daily life and what it means to have *an* experience. Yet, the characteristics for how Dewey differentiates these two differing contexts of experience creates limitations for describing the unique nature of *an*

internet experience. In respect to the complexity internet technologies and activities have evolved to create for experiential and social structure throughout daily life, Dewey's differentiation between general experience and *an* experience is to be modified for its limitation in characterizing some internet experiences as inchoate for they demonstrate factors of what Dewey would claim is anti-aesthetic. Falling under what Dewey would claim is anti-aesthetic, these inchoate attributes, when considered alongside the overall experience of someone accessing the internet, can be characterized to be contributing to an overall aesthetic experience. Both notification and intentional internet access create a structure of experience of having to deal with what Dewey would call inchoate, or anti-aesthetic factors. Yet, these instances of what Dewey claims would be inchoate, are what make the overarching experience of one's internet access process distinctively, and aesthetically unique. The inchoate under this claim is reclassified into describing dispersions or distractions of the experience into a framework of seeing the dispersions as added complexities to the organism going through an overarching experience of being at table discussion or researching a topic through intentional web searches.

In consideration of the notification browsing experience, under this framework, there are not successive parts flowing freely in accordance. There are apparent breakages in activity when retracting oneself from the table. As described in the first stage before entering the liminal phase, there are feelings of retraction, breakage in discussion, and removal of self to attend to a new faculty of attention, one's mobile device. This contrasts with how Dewey claims "because of continuous merging, there are not holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers when we have an experience."⁵⁵ While the same can be

55. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 38.

argued for the disruptions in web navigational transitions that are evident under intentional searching, these distortions of experience are what should be reclassified as significantly liminal and contributing to a complex organism in an environment as Dewey claims is significant. In this way, the complex organism resembles the liminal self that has been argued, as it creates complex experiences of self in each distortion, encapsulating a significant overarching experience with the complexity of mini experiences of selves rising. For example, Dewey demonstrates organisms are to increase in complexity as the rhythm of environment is “varied and prolonged, and they come to include within themselves and endless variety of sub-rhythms. The designs of living are widened and enriched. Fulfillment is more massive and more subtly shaded.”⁵⁶ There is a sense that through more complex functionality an organism, an ability for variation in experiential rhythms is abled and delivers more fulfillment. As in the increased functionality that results from increased internet access, one’s ability to experience more rhythms and nuances of experience create more possibilities for different experiences of the self. The disruption in conversation for the ability to create a more complex experience by accessing internet notifications, which resembles Deweyan inchoate, creates a multitude of complex functionalities and web pages for the user. The creature can find increased functionality of a complex organism through rising to find consummation and fulfillment by accessing such content growing in into a more fully informed life. In this way, factors that Dewey shows make experience aesthetic occur as well in our response to internet notifications.

56. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 23.

On the other hand, there is an alternative pattern of movement happening within the transitional activity of accessing a phone during a conversation. While it may be argued that inchoate breakages of receiving notifications under the overarching experience of sitting at the table disrupt rhythm and timing of experience, Dewey demonstrates “time ceases to be either the endless and uniform flow or succession of instantaneous points which some philosophers have asserted it to be. It, too, is the organized and organizing medium of the rhythmic ebb and flow of expectant impulse, forward and retracted movement, resistance and suspense, with fulfillment and consummation.”⁵⁷ What is inherent to this experience, for what Dewey constitutes, is the ability to have resistance and retracted movement to consummate into what the entire table discussion experience is like, albeit different than what most people would characterize a table experience. In following Dewey’s views on there being an ebb and flow of expectant impulse, the table discussion is accepted in its aesthetic right to be filled with retractions and suspenseful behavior through internet use and discussion. The discussion is no longer under the expectation that interruptions due to internet access do not constitute a typical table experience. The new experience is distinctively unique as it characterized with the internet interruption as acceptably part of the experience with ebbs and flow, albeit they are random and improbable. The experience of notification internet access produces an experience of its own unique quality as demonstrated. Nevertheless, contextualizing the importance of the inchoate to the evaluation of a created complex organism, it can still reveal what Dewey says forms an experience. When we sit down together, we are not even expecting to have a continuous arch of how the experience

57. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 26.

unfolds. The inchoate then, after its revaluation alongside this new structure of experience, provides insight to how the revaluated Dewian framework imbeds new structures of experience for the self.

Dewian Liminal Discrepancies

It is important to note that the technological rituals that have been mentioned, are characterized to have distinctive feelings and experience that is unique to this developing internet technology and evolving social structure. These rituals include the demonstrated liminal stage undergone when one is transitioning from offline activity into online accessibility and secondly, the secondary liminal stage when one is transitioning between web content while once online.

Along with revaluating Dewian principles for revealing the complex formation of internet experience from inchoate qualities, what has also been demonstrated previously is that these experiences, of a unique nature, are encapsulated by Turner's structures of liminal experience. The aesthetic experience, through revaluating Dewey, can be characterized as existing because of the liminal experience. In that, through such stages of liminal ritual as described, the overarching experience of activity, in this case of table discussion, warrants the allowance of disruption from notification surfing to allow a complex organism to interact in an accessible environment. Having revealed the liminal experiences that constitute each of the transitional natures involved in web browsing, it provides the missing link that has demonstrated what constitutes the experience of transitioning between internet accessible content so aesthetically distinctive.

In these key features as described, there are larger philosophical claims to be made in that one's sense of self can be rapidly, dramatically altered by being put through

these liminal rituals. It involves transitioning, and the transition happens because you are treated within a set of certain circumstances before, only to go through the ritual itself which is also a very distinguished, crafted set of circumstances. Nevertheless, it brings you to an awareness of experiencing a different type of content, only to navigate and transition to a new experience of content. It is a liminal transformation of experience in that the user is not really that kind of person experiencing that form of content anymore, but what emerges from a new form of content is a new experience of self.

10 Integration of Aesthetic Experience and Liminality

Domagalska makes a bear assertion claiming liminal experiences through such technologies are forming new ways of experiencing multiple, integrated selves. In that, she does not provide any descriptions of experience or liminal frameworks for making such claims of transformations in the experience of the self. Nevertheless, what has been demonstrated through previous chapters of analysis is description and characterization of the actual transformations of self-undergone. There is a distinctive transition happening in which there is a threshold liminality where the user is going through one focus of content and activity, only to transition to another. The ethnographic work then, to some extent supports the consideration for new developments of hybrid ontologies forming new manifestations of being.

When it comes to a new claim about the self, there is not enough findings to claim any larger changes in metaphysics of the self. Yet, what is important is the distinctive experiences of selves that have been demonstrated. Under these premises, it is important to grant Domagalska's assumption of the postmodern ideas of the self in that the self is not unitary, for it is not a thing that persists through time. And under the transitions that have been exposed, there do seem to be new experiences of selves emerging. While there is not a framework for classifying Domagalska's metaphysical self as non-unitary, what has been distinguished is the liminality threshold that has resulted in distinctive aesthetic experiences having significant transitions for the self.

Domagalska reveals the liminality in human experience by the space between human and technology that is occupied by what she claims are new hybrid ontologies. Hybrid ontologies in this context relates to the incorporated internet technologies that are

pervasively located alongside our desks and mobile persons. Domagalska then is suggesting the hybridity, or two natures of being alongside the technologies mentioned. In the same way, the multidimensional nature and ways of browsing the web hitherto mentioned reach beyond everyday life and thus Domagalska claims “the types of agency that we gain follow a different trajectory than our capabilities in the ‘real world’... Electronic platforms provide plenty of space for our senses, imagination, thoughts and intentions to play out.”⁵⁸ In consideration of the Internet, it serves to construct such agency that enables a spectrum of liminal experiences that go beyond a normal human experience without web browsing technology. The Internet then is a type of agency for trajectory into different platforms of content and serves to grant users an expansion of possibilities in expressing the self. Transitions in this way, are the same transitions as mentioned when transitioning between web pages or switching between differing application content.

Moreover, Domagalska reflects there has become a change in technological agency that gives human subjects the ability to “interact with techne, a concept derived from the Greek word for ‘craft’ or ‘art.’”⁵⁹ In this way, the human body steps into technology as the human ability to sense produces aesthetics and the drive to sense more. Domagalska even goes as far as to explore a change in aesthetics as a change in language when writing, “With aesthetics understood as the function and the tool of bare life, I believe we can arrive at a possibility for a new language. Experientially, such a conceived world will feel very different from what we have known for the past century.”⁶⁰ Given

58. Domagalska, “Liminality and the emergence of integrated being,” 412.

59. Ibid., 412.

60. Ibid., 413.

Domagalska's argument for hybrid ontologies, she presents a limited argument for distinguishing the way in which humans have a presence infused into other technologies. Her claims regarding the ways in which the self goes through transformations of transcendence from the technology used is lacking clear description without the accomplished analysis of experience from the previous chapters. When she states:

By reaching out towards those experiences we start negotiating a space for our sense of self that goes beyond the physical world. In doing so we are creating clouds of presence infused with our sense of self. There is no difference whether we negotiate this understanding between ourselves and the objects in the physical world or abstract phenomena made possible by electronic devices and consoles.⁶¹

What Domagalska in turn can accomplish for the thesis question at hand is a succinct characterization of the implications such phenomena of transitions have on shaping experience of self through various trajectories of technology. These are thus important considerations raised when considering analyses for differentiating the aesthetic differences undergone for the Internet and other technologies that warrant different types of experience for the user. While Domagalska claims the threshold liminality behind such aesthetic experiences is what is forming a new being with multiple selves, the conclusions found in the previous chapters demonstrate the Dewian analysis of experience and liminality framework in order to lend Domagalskan claims support and consideration.

61. Domagalska, "Liminality and the emergence of integrated being," 412.

11 Conclusion

While the main question under investigation was to how the transitional activity that is characteristic of engagement with the internet affects the aesthetic character of internet experience, the resulting analysis in liminality theory has produced the missing link for what makes the experience of the Internet so aesthetically distinctive. This could not have been conceived in comparison to previous frameworks established in aesthetics. In this way, by clarifying a Dewian framework alongside the Internet's characteristic thresholds of liminality, there has been provided support for Domagalska's consideration of how such new liminal experiences create potentials for integrated beings. What results is a significant description for the aesthetic nature of the transitions users undergo when stepping into the technological agency of experiencing the Internet. This missing link in describing the transitional experience of the self, along with reevaluating Dewian aesthetics for its discrepancies in characterizing internet experiences, provides consideration for Domagalska's claims of an integrated being. Through this analysis, the Internet's liminal agency thus produces a new aesthetic experiences of selves in a "cultural, hyper mediated world... We switch from a driver to a user, from a citizen to a tourist, from an engineer to a client. Thus, we dis-organize ourselves in a delusion sense only to individuate into different crystallizations of the self, depending on the used technology."⁶² Demonstrating the Internet's experiential features that give rise to liminal and aesthetic experiences, what emerges is consideration into new manifestations of being. Further inquiry for how these manifestations create changes in metaphysical

62. Domagalska, "Liminality and the emergence of integrated being," 411.

conceptions of the self is to be implicated amidst a hyper-mediated, Internet accessible world.

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