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APPARATGEIST AND MOBILE COMMUNICATION:
CONSIDERING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Lisa Enright

May 2020

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Lisa Enright

2020

APPARATGEIST AND MOBILE COMMUNICATION:
CONSIDERING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

By

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Approved March 13, 2020

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ABSTRACT

APPARATGEIST AND MOBILE COMMUNICATION: CONSIDERING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

By

Lisa Enright

May 2020

Dissertation supervised by Pat Arneson

Mobile communication is embedded into our daily life increasing our connection to social networks. The development of mobile communication occurred during the second half of the twentieth century and has become domesticated into everyday life. One consequence of the widespread adoption of mobile communication device use is an increase in connectivity. This increase in connection has led to a shift in interpersonal relationships. People now must be aware of when to connect and disconnect to develop meaningful relationships in private, public, and social realms. This project seeks an understanding of how the consequence of increased connectivity and the development of the socio-logic of perpetual contact shapes interpersonal relationships. The project discusses concepts from relational dialectics theory, ideas from Hannah Arendt concerning technology relating to the human condition and private, public, and social realm, and dialogic ethics approach to using mobile communication. James E. Katz and

Mark A. Aakhus' theory of *Apparatgeist* provides a groundwork for understanding the consequences of mobile communication within the 'Spirit' of the historical moment. Mobile communication devices are a defining feature of contemporary life and should be used responsibly in a way that respects the importance of practicing dialogue and engaging in rhetorical listening and understanding.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends. Thank you for sticking with me over all these years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my husband Ryan, thank you for your support and willingness to assist me in achieving my goal. To my daughter Aria, thank you for bringing joy and silliness to my life. To my son Micah, thank you for waiting to arrive until I completed my dissertation. Thank you to my parents, Kathy and Jim, and my in-laws, Louise and Neil, for helping to care for Aria throughout this process. Dr. Arneson, thank you for helping me turn ‘World Peace’ into something tangible. I deeply appreciate all the feedback and support throughout this process. Dr. Fritz, thank you for believing in me since I began graduate school.

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Chapter 1: The Rise of Mobile Culture in the United States

Our current culture exists in an environment shaped by mobile communication devices. The study of mobile communication “today . . . is an interdisciplinary field, encompassing scholars in sociology, anthropology, American studies, urban studies and, of course, communication” (de Souza e Silva 28). When trying to define mobile communication, communication scholar Adriana de Souza e Silva states, “Instead of restricting the definition of mobile communication to a single technology (a mobile [tele]phone or smartphone), we should think of its characteristics: mobility, scalability, portability and connectivity” (35). The importance of understanding the characteristics of mobile communication, particularly connectivity, helps in understanding the change in interpersonal relationships caused by the introduction of new communication technologies.

The historical development of mobile communication technology varies by country, though there are similarities in factors that shaped its adoption, including the role of regulatory authorities and the commercialization of the technology (Ling and Donner 41; Abrahamson 52). The widespread adoption of mobile communication across the world created an increase in connectivity that shapes our interpersonal relationships. This chapter focuses on the historical development of mobile communication technology and its adoption in the United States of America.

The research question that guides this project is: How does the use of mobile communication devices shape interpersonal relationships in contemporary society? The purpose of this chapter is to first understand the historical development of mobile communication technology, and second, to understand the study of mobile communication technology in social environments. The first section discusses the history of mobile communication including social

factors that played a role in the acceptance of mobile communication technology in everyday life. The second section discusses the change in the social environment brought about by the use of mobile communication devices including the increase in connectivity and disembodiment. The third section reviews the media ecology field that focuses on understanding the role of media in shaping the social environment and includes brief overviews of several dominant perspectives in the study of communication technology. The final section provides an overview of the current role of mobile communication technology in everyday interactions.

The Development of Mobile Culture

Jon Agar discusses the historical development of the technology used to support mobile communication in his 2004 book, *Constant Touch: A Global History of the Mobile Phone*. According to Agar, D.H. Ring first theorized the foundation for mobile communication technology in 1947. Ring theorized the basis for how mobile communication allows telephone communication to travel. In the theory, telephones use the same network of frequencies used by radios, except Ring's design created a cell frequency pattern that allows multiple devices to transmit on the same cell within the spectrum. This concept allowed devices transmitting on the spectrum to be able to move and become mobile while still transmitting on the spectrum's frequency by being constantly connected to open cells on the spectrum. Multiple devices would be able to use the same frequency without interruption or overlap and allowed for the transfer between cells creating the ability to use the frequency while travelling.

Ring's concept of how mobile communication can be supported technologically was strictly theoretical, as there were still factors that prevented further development of the technology. Historical changes occurred in the first half of the twentieth century that aided in creating a social environment able to develop mobile communication technology that eventually

became part of everyday life. While it is impossible to cover all societal influences that brought about the rise of mobile culture and overwhelming acceptance of mobile communication devices, significant historical changes that aided in the shift to our mobile culture include both regulatory changes and the commercialization of the technology.

Regulatory Changes

A major influencer on the social acceptance of mobile communication in the United States is the creation of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) through *The Communication Act of 1934*. Two main functions of the FCC that shaped mobile communication development includes first “assign[ing] broadcast frequencies,” and second function includes “regulat[ing] charges and operating practices of common carriers” (Matchette et al. 173.1). Regulatory shifts occurred in the FCC concerning the assignment of broadcast frequencies and regulating the practice of common carriers both helped to aid in the advancement of mobile telephony.

The first regulatory change that took place in the 20th century to foster mobile communication growth in the 21st century was the ending of the FCC’s regulation on the separation of telephone signals from radio spectrum in 1946 (Agar 22). The FCC’s assignment of radio frequencies was limited in the first half of the 20th century due to the amount of space needed for frequencies to work uninterrupted. If too many people used the spectrum for radio telephones “calls would be interfered with, confused, or, worse, eavesdropped” (Agar 55). Because of the interruptions, the FCC reserved the right to assign radio lines to a handful of users “since there was no way to squeeze its demands into an overcrowded spectrum already dominated by the powerful commercial and military interests of the 20th century” (Agar 55). The mobile technology theorized by Ring needed to use radio frequencies to transmit mobile

communication. Until scientists were able to use radio frequencies to develop the technology, Ring's concept remained theoretical. The end of World War II and the decline in military interests allowed for more of the spectrum to be opened up for the development of mobile technology. The radio spectrum was, however, still used by "military, commercial broadcasters, private hobbyists and commercial interests of various types" (Ling and Donner 41). Regulating bodies across the world determined who could transmit. In the USA "there were extended interactions between industry and governmental authorities" that created delays in the development of mobile communication (Ling and Donner 42).

A second regulatory change that helped create an environment accepting of mobile communication was the government-mandated breakup of the Bell System. For most of the 20th century, the Bell System conglomerate controlled most telephone communication technology use. The *Communications Act of 1934* that created the FCC made the company a government-backed monopoly. The Bell System, which included AT&T, became the dominant carrier under the FCC's regulation. The development of mobile telephony required a system of radio towers to carry the frequencies to keep calls from dropping. The FCC "believed that only AT&T was capable of building such a sophisticated system and they saw cellular telephony as an extension of the Bell System's existing monopoly" (Abrahamson 57).

In response, AT&T competitor Motorola staged the first cellular telephone call by a company scientist, Martin Cooper, in 1973 as a publicity stunt to show the FCC there was a place for mobile communication in the competitive market of business (Abrahamson 59). The efforts by Motorola contributed to the "development of competitive markets for cellular in the United States" (59). Despite the government support, the Bell System conglomerate faced an anti-trust lawsuit in 1974 and was required to deregulate in 1982. The mandatory breakup of the

Bell System led to increased competition, which fueled technological advancements that led to the mobile telephone boom of the 1990s (Agar). The breakup of the Bell conglomerate is said to have benefited the consumer, who experienced “an increase in quality of service and falling service charges” (Tagare 6). As a result, more consumers began to be able to afford new telephone services.

Commercialization

During wartime in the first half of the 20th century the United States population was asked to ration goods to support the war efforts. In a 2003 article “World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American consumers,” Terrence H. Witkowski discusses the United States government campaign to curb consumerism during World War II to support war efforts. Americans increased their consumption after the war ended. The shift to increased consumption created an increase in general acceptance of consumerism.

Consumerism rose after World War II with expendable income that, as Daniel Horowitz states in *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*, created a shift “between a commitment to self-restraint and the achievement of satisfaction through commercial goods and experiences” (1). Horowitz also discusses how some social viewpoints at the end of World War II felt consumption was beneficial to the well-being of the United States society. Horowitz relies on the work of Ernest Dichter, who “help[ed] corporations understand the psyche of shoppers,” and George Katona, who “relied on his surveys of consumer expectations carried out at the University of Michigan from 1946-1972,” to make his point (48). Specifically, Horowitz notes the life works of Dichter and Katona as “shar[ing] a belief . . . that American consumers were critical to the promotion of economic growth, democracy, and social stability” (48-49). Consumption was seen as a positive driving force for post-war life in the

United States. The increase in consumption was aided by the shift in production of wartime goods to commercial goods.

The shift in production for companies from wartime goods to commercial products after World War II can be seen in numerous products and marketing campaigns in the years following. This shift can also be found in the ending of the separation of telephone and radio network in 1945 since “the war’s end meant that military production dropped off and new commercial projects could be given the green light” (Agar 23). This shift parallels Robert J. Samuelson’s observation in his book, *The Good Life and its Discontents: The American Dream in the Age of Entitlement 1945-1995*. Samuelson observed the growing sense of entitlement and expectation of prosperity; “we have come to believe that certain things are (or ought to be) guaranteed to us” (4). Everyday Americans began to feel social pressure from neighbors and friends that resulted in an increased desire to ‘keep up with the Jones.’ Companies thrived in the new consumer culture. People’s shift towards increased consumption did not stop with material goods but included the consumption of media from the rise of the television to the rise of mobile telephones.

The commercialization of mobile communication in the 1980s created an increase in mobile telephone usage beyond the business use for which it was originally intended (Abrahamson 52). In the early years of developing mobile telephones, the technology “was seen as essentially a business tool, used to coordinate fleets of moving vehicles like taxicabs, trucks or railroad cars” (53). This is in line with the development of information technology in general as a means of coordinating the shipment of commercial goods (Beniger). Companies began to use information technology to keep track of trains, shipments, and other means of transporting commodities to avoid losses. This is in line with the early use of mobile communication technology, where transportation workers who needed to be on-call used cellular telephones. I

remember my father, a former railroad engineer, telling me he was first provided a pager in the early 1980s, and then switching to a cellular telephone in the mid 1990s. The purpose was always to be able to be on-call, day or night, while allowing for employees to be away from a designated landline.

In his contribution, “History,” to the 2016 edited volume *Dialogues on Mobile Communication* Eric Abrahamson discusses the “paradigm change” that occurred leading to the increase in general mobile communication use for everyday interactions (53). He continues noting, “[E]arly debates about mobile telephony were focused on utilitarian values. The idea that your friends would call to chat, or that a husband might call his wife on his way home to ask if he needed to pick up milk or how the day went, those things had no value within the existing regulatory paradigm” (53). This paradigm change is noted in research during the shift to cellular telephone usage for everyday interactions. For example, Lana F. Rakow and Vija Navarro discuss the shift of cellular telephone use for women in their 1993 article “Remote Mothering and the Parallel Shift: Women Meet the Cellular Telephone.” The focus of their article is on the shift of cellular telephone use in the home in the 1990s through the role of the mobile telephone in women’s daily life. They talk about how the telephone allowed women to decrease loneliness in rural areas, helped manage home life, and made husbands feel that their family was safer with the ability to connect with people anywhere. The shift towards mobile telephone usage in everyday interactions led to a growth in mobile consumption.

Change in Social Environment

Understanding historical changes that helped to create a society accepting of mobile communication technology aids in situating the social shifts that occur as we use mobile communication devices every day in our mobile culture. There are also changes that occur due to

the introduction of mobile communication technology into our everyday life. Mobile communication technologies have created a new social environment changing our everyday interactions as we move about and communicate in the world with the ability to have perpetual contact (Katz and Aakhus). Major consequences of mobile communication technology that shape our interpersonal relationships include increased connectivity and disembodiment.

Increased Connectivity

Mobile communication devices increase the amount of connectivity among social groups. Connectivity increased due to the ability to constantly communicate with others through your mobile telephone regardless of time or space. Mobile communication scholar James E. Katz notes the assumption of connectivity in the mobile culture stating, “[i]t is simply assumed that one can and should be available and reachable—if not by anyone, at least by someone; one can no longer be ‘outside’ of mobile communication” (“Preface” vii). The mobile culture has permeated our social existence leading to increased connectivity.

Mobile communication scholars Rich Ling and Jonathan Donner note “the explosion in connectivity is the first major theme of the mobile boom” (15). The increase in connectivity occurred in part due to “The Maitland Report” that came out of a 1982 conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The report “serves as a baseline against which to measure the digital telecommunications revolution that has followed” (Ling and Donner 14).

In 1982 the ITU met and “decided to set up an Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development” (Independent Commission 1). The report of the commission’s work is officially titled “The Missing Link” but is commonly referred to as “The Maitland Report” after Donald Maitland, Chairman of the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development. The ITU conference “examined how

telecommunication facilitates coordination and makes transport systems more effective” (Ling and Donner 13). Ling and Donner note a major takeaway of the report “is its stark, sweeping statistics describing the discrepancies in telecommunication services between the developed and developing worlds” (13). The use of mobile communication devices across the world grew as “[i]nexpensive and used handsets have made it possible for more of the world to partake of these signals” (14). Connectivity between people increased with mobile communication device use across the world.

The inexpensive cost and global acceptance of mobile communication created an increase in connectivity as more people across the world began to use mobile communication devices. Ling and Donner discuss the impact of mobile communication devices as “provid[ing] basic connectivity: a way to gather information and to be in contact with the world” (22). James E. Katz notes mobile telephones give users “portable power and connectivity” that “enormously magnif[y] their social reach and power to alter distant physical circumstances” (*Magic* 10).

There are two main reactions of new communication media Nancy Baym identifies; “On the one hand, people express concern that our communication has become increasingly shallow . . . [o]n the other, new media offer the promise of more opportunity for connection with more people, leading to stronger and more diverse relationships” (1). The social shifts caused by new communication technologies “offer fresh opportunities to think about our technologies, our connections, and the relationships amongst them” (1). Mobile communication devices are embedded into everyday life, however, we must also consider the spirit of these devices and how they are placed into our lives in this particular moment historically. Another consequence of the use of mobile communication devices includes users dissociating themselves from their physical surroundings.

Disembodiment

Everyone has witnessed the disembodiment caused by using mobile communication devices, from someone speaking too loud on the telephone in a public area to being ignored in a conversation and feeling like you do not exist to another person. Communication scholars note the shift in social interaction in physical spaces caused by mobile communication devices. This shift in social interaction due to the use of mobile communication devices creates the need to examine how such devices are used in everyday life.

Disembodiment created by electronic communication technologies includes the feeling of separation of interactions in mediated and physical environments through electronic communication (Meyrowitz; Katz). The technological development and social acceptance of mobile communication devices have further shifted perceptions of public space (Meyrowitz; Gumpert and Drucker). The invisibility, dissociation, and shift in understanding public spaces all play a role in increasing the feeling of disembodiment when using electronic communication devices such as mobile communication.

Joshua Meyrowitz discusses the role of electronic communication and its impact on society in his 1985 text *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. Meyrowitz discusses media as “environments in and of themselves” relying on the work of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan (16). Electronic communication separates interactions to include physical situations as separate from the “invisible” media environments (20). Meyrowitz explains this by stating, “Material changes are concrete and imaginable; informational changes seem very abstract and mystical” (20). The way media environments are generally understood is separated from physical space leading to a feeling of disembodiment instead of connection to others.

In his 1994 book chapter “The Separation of Social Place from Physical Place,” Meyrowitz explains that the use of electronic media “lead[s] to a nearly total dissociation of physical place and social ‘place’” (144). He goes on to summarize the shift in communication “through telephone, radio, television or computer” stating “where we are physically no longer determines where and who we are socially” (144). This sense of disembodiment has grown with our mobile culture.

In 2007, Katz notes the disembodiment caused by the rise in the use of mobile media stating, “one effect may be a psychological ‘emptying out’ of public space—bodies remain, but personalities are engaged elsewhere” (“Mobile Media” 390). Katz discusses the role not only of mobile telephones but also “music, video, and game players” (389). Since the authoring of this article, the mobile telephone has evolved to become a single device capable of music, video, game playing, and increased communication abilities to include everything on the Internet.

Gary Gumpert and Susan J. Drucker, in their 2007 book chapter “Mobile Communication in the Twenty-First Century or ‘Everybody, Everywhere, at Any Time’,” discuss the transformation of “public interaction . . . into ‘disembodied private space’ by mobile technologies” (13). Gumpert and Drucker focus on the way mobile communication changes public space. “Portable public privacy meets the needs of people alienated and disconnected from and distrusting of public space” (13). The disembodiment of mobile communication allows users to remove themselves from public space to private space accessed through their mobile devices.

Baym discusses the concept of disembodied identities “that exist only in actions and words” in her 2015 book *Personal Connection in the Digital Age* (118). With the invention of the smartphone, people can talk to a person, check messages on a variety of digital platforms

from email to social media sites, read news articles, or play videogames, among other things, at any given time. Smartphone users are able to exist in physical space while still participating in digital communication. While some researchers view people dissociating themselves from the physical space in which they are located through the use of mobile communication devices, other researchers hold the viewpoint that mobile communication devices instead help users to further engage in physical surroundings.

Studies have shown that mobile communication devices, such as a smartphone, create a sense of disembodiment (Katz; Gumpert and Drucker; Baym). Jason Kalin and Jordan Frith argue that smartphones are creating “memory palaces” in their 2016 article “Wearing the City: Memory P(a)laces, Smartphones, and the Rhetorical Invention of Embodied Space” (222). A memory palace begins with the idea of memory places. A rhetorical foundation of memory places is found in the works of Cicero as one of the five canons of rhetoric in his work *De Inventione* (19). Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott, in their 2010 edited volume *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, focus on three concepts, “rhetoric, memory, and place” (1). The connection between memory places and rhetoric focuses on understanding rhetoric that “organizes itself around the relationship of discourses, events, objects, and practices to ideas about what it means to be ‘public’” (Blair et al. 2-3). Public memory is said to be understood “by most, if not all, contemporary scholars as activated by concerns, or anxieties of the present” (Blair et al. 7). The concerns of the general population include what is remembered as public memory that is held by the collective group of people. The rise of mobile communication device use has created digital public memories that are focused on rhetoric through mediated public spaces.

Kalin and Frith use the rhetorical understanding of memory and its connection to place to

understand mobile communication technology as creating “memory palaces” (224). Jason Farman states, “[E]mbodiment and embodied space are enacted through practices of inscription and of being inscribed, referring to how bodies both write and are written by spatial practices” (qtd. in Kalin and Frith 223). Kalin and Frith use Farman’s concept to ground their point that “by incorporating wearable technologies into their bodies, people build and move through, both digitally and physically, hybrid palaces of memory and wear the city as a rhetorical practice of everyday life” (224). They see the location-based applications found in smartphones as allowing users “to engage deeply with physical space” (223).

Smartphones allow for a physical presence in the space around the user, but they do not take into account that the public space is shared by all the people who are present physically in that space, regardless of access to smartphone technology. While smartphones are able to keep track of physical locations, they still allow the user to dissociate from the physical place while they are using the device. Mobile communication device users disembodiment themselves from their physical space, causing a danger to themselves and those around them. For example, distracted driving, which includes the use of mobile devices, caused 3,477 deaths in the United States in 2015 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Distractions caused by disembodiment resulting from mobile device use have led to social changes including new driving laws, a public service announcement dedicated to the importance of device-free time, and Internet providers, such as Xfinity, offering a way to regulate Internet connection. In 2009 the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, launched a campaign to raise awareness and stop distracted driving in the form of texting and general cellular telephone use (U.S. Dept. of Transportation). As of April 2018, all drivers in 47 states have a text message ban when driving a vehicle, 43 as a primary offense, and four as a

secondary offense. In addition, 16 states have a cellular telephone ban while driving as a primary offense (Governor's Highway Safety Association). In October 2017, a public service announcement starring Will Ferrell focused on the importance of a device-free family dinner (Nudd). Companies such as Xfinity that provide the wireless media service that people use to disembodiment themselves began adding technology in 2017 to pause the wireless connection to help parents regulate the amount of time their children use electronic devices (Shaefer). The development of our mobile culture has altered our human communication and the way in which we manage the use of mobile communication devices in social interactions. The self-regulation of mobile communication devices is slowly changing as laws are passed limiting mobile communication device use.

Disembodiment in our physical space has increased due to the beckoning of mobile communication devices, causing potential danger to ourselves and everyone around us. The disembodiment caused by mobile communication becomes dangerous when people remain connected through a mobile telephone and lose track of their physical surroundings. Doing so may cause physical harm to other people or to oneself. Examples include car accidents caused by distracted driving and personal harm experienced while trying to prevent possible damage to a mobile device. Scott W. Campbell, Joseph B. Bayer, and Rich Ling note studies about public safety concerns “focus on the *effects* of texting while driving . . . [l]ess research, however, has been done to *explain* this behavior” (28). They note that research needs to “look beyond conscious considerations and intentions and also account for the less conscious processes that fuel this behavior” (29). The focus of Campbell et al. on the behavior of mobile communication device users show how the embedding of the technology into their lives may cause users to not even think about the way in which they use devices in public spaces.

The change in social environment caused by mobile communication devices includes an increase in connectivity and sense of disembodiment. The academic field of Media Ecology offers an understanding of the impact of new communication technologies in a social environment. The next section will provide an overview of media ecology and several perspectives on the study of technology.

Media Ecology

Media ecology was first defined by Neil Postman in a 1970 essay “The Reformed English Curriculum” as part of an edited volume *High School 1980: The Shape of the Future in American Secondary Education*. Postman stated media ecology is “the study of media as environments,” though he makes the point that he did not invent media ecology (“Reformed” 161). Postman continued his discussion of media ecology in the 1970 essay: “Its intention is to study the interaction between people and their communications technology. More particularly, media ecology focuses on the matter of how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling, and value; and how our interaction with media facilitates or impedes our chances of survival” (161). The research methods in understanding media as environments are not clearly defined, leaving the possibilities for anthropology, art, science, psychoanalysis, and others to all play a role in understanding media environments (163). One important feature to keep in mind concerning media ecology is the need for understanding the world in which the media is adopted: “what is already known is changing so rapidly that even well-established subjects have lost their stability” (164).

The need for understanding the history in which communication technologies, such as mobile communication devices, are adopted into everyday life was explained by Lewis Mumford. In his 1934 work, *Technics and Civilization*, Mumford addressed the need for

understanding the environment in which new media is adopted in addition to the new media itself: “Not merely must one explain the existence of the new mechanical instruments: one must explain the existence of the culture that was ready to use them and profit by them so extensively” (4). Culture needs to be accepting of new technology, such as mobile communication, before they become part of everyday life.

Mumford was influential in Marshall McLuhan’s work that discussed the environment in which a medium of communication exists socially. In his 1964 book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McLuhan discussed the importance in understanding the media through which the message is delivered; “the medium is the message” (20). McLuhan is best known for his often-quoted statement, “the medium is the message” (20). McLuhan further explained the medium as a message “because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action” (20). There is a message behind the chosen medium to communicate. Face-to-face, telephone, and the written word all create different associations and call for different actions. This identification of communication technologies as shaping and controlling human association helps to understand the change in the social environment.

The idea of a medium as a message is interpreted a variety of ways. In a 2012 dialogue between Eric McLuhan and Peter Zhang, different emphases of the phrase ‘the medium is the message’ is presented. Zhang points out two different emphases of the phrase: the first is “[t]he MEDIUM is the message” and the second is “[t]he medium IS the message” (246). The first “is the MEA orientation” referring to the Media Ecology Association (246). The second emphasis “is the rhetorical orientation” (246). Eric McLuhan presents a third interpretation of the phrase as “the medium *is* the message” (246). Each interpretation of the phrase requires an understanding of what is meant by medium. Zhang points out “McLuhan reminds us at every turn that a

medium is a ground—a milieu, a surrounding, an environment” (248). Marshall McLuhan’s work situates media (or technology) as an environment. Our current mobile culture is seeing a new medium of mobile communication shaping human association and action. McLuhan focused on the relationship of humans to technologies in his work as pointed out by Lance Strate, in *Echoes and Reflection*, who notes important themes including:

“that media or technologies extend human beings, human capabilities, and the human body; that such extensions are also amputations, numbing us to the effects of technology; that some media require more sensory processing on the part of the audience than others . . .; that media function as metaphors, languages, and translators of experience” (23).

This view of technology shaping human action is considered a technological deterministic understanding of technology, where the technology is viewed as the agent of change in society. Though McLuhan is often seen as deterministic, a focus of the media ecology field is to understand technology as it exists socially within an environment. James Carey, in the 2009 edition of his text *Communication as Culture*, uses McLuhan’s work to ground the assertion that “communication, through language and other symbolic forms, comprises the ambience of human existence” (98). The act of communication fades into the background and becomes part of everyday life. The study of a medium used in the mundane process of everyday communication is important in understanding how culture and the environment is shaped through the medium’s use.

A social understanding of mobile communication use in interpersonal relationships within media ecology includes how environments are changed through the use of mobile communication devices. There are numerous perspectives in the study of the role technology plays in shaping the way we communicate. These perspectives shape research approaches in the

study of media as it exists socially. These approaches all take into account a different perspective of technology's role in society. The main differences in perspectives relate to the causal agent of change.

Perspectives in the Study of Technology

Mobile communication is one of the most recent communication technologies that shape the way we communicate. The perspectives in the study of communication technology take into account the role of the technology, society, and the user in different ways. One perspective views technology as the driving force of society. This perspective is most commonly approached by technological determinism. Another perspective views society as the driving force for how technology is used. A common approach in this perspective is social constructivism. The final perspective seeks to merge the views, understanding both technology and society as working together to shape the changes brought about by new technologies. The social shaping and domestication approaches follow this perspective. While there are other approaches to the study of communication technology including, media effects theory, posthumanism, and actor network theory (Ling and Donner 25; Mauthner and Kazmimierczak 25-28), common perspectives to the study of communication technologies are evident in four major approaches: deterministic, social constructivist, social shaping, and domestication. Each of these approaches presents a different perspective of technology's role in society. The following three sections will overview theoretical perceptions of technology as the causal agent of change, perceptions of society as the causal agent of change, and third, considerations of how society and technology work together to form our understanding of how technology is used within society.

Technology as Agent of Change

One dominant theoretical view understands people's use of technology as the driving force behind social change. A focus on the technology as an agent of change undergirds theories of technological determinism. In *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Neil Postman defined a technological deterministic framework by stating, "the uses made of any technology are largely determined by the structure of the technology itself—that is, that its functions follow from its form" (7). This statement reflects a perspective that views the primary factor in determining how technology is used as stemming from the technology and not from the user. The form of the technology determines the function it has in society.

Baym notes in *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* that McLuhan believed "technologies have characteristics that are transferred to those who use them" (28). This transfer of characteristics is representative of the view of technology as an agent of change. An example is the increase in media multitasking in the classroom discussed by Dan Hassoun in his 2015 article, "'All over the place': A Case Study of Classroom Multitasking and Attentional Performance." Hassoun discusses the shift in the classroom with media use as "publicized privacies, where the user (sort of) prefers that nobody else look, and the observer is unsure whether to look or not" (1689). Media technology changes the activity of students in classroom downtime. The smartphone is able to silently access social media sites, email, texting, and any other text-based communication for private communication. Before the mobile telephone allowed for silent private communication through text-based communication platforms, downtime in classrooms was spent other ways like napping or doodling (Hassoun 1689). Theorists who support technological determinism believe "in technology as a key governing

force in society” (Smith 2). They view technologies as “causal agents, entering societies as active forces of change that humans have little power to resist” (Baym 26).

Different interpretations of technological determinism exist. For example, Merritt Roe Smith identifies a “hard” and “soft” view of technological determinism that reflects a perceived amount of social pressure in changes caused by technologies. The hard view of technological determinism “perceives technological development as an autonomous force” (Smith 2). A soft view of technological determinism “holds that technological change drives social change but at the same time responds discriminately to social pressures” (Smith 2). The soft and hard view of technological determinism is one approach.

Bruce Bimber offers another approach in his essay “Three Faces of Technological Determinism.” Bimber approaches technological determinism through three views: “Normative, Nomological, and Unintended Consequences” (79). These views take a different approach to technological determinism, each grounded in different theoretical starting points. Bimber claims the normative account “is technological determinism’s most familiar face” (82). In the normative account “technology is autonomous and its influence deterministic” (83). The nomological account “might be thought of as the analytic philosopher’s version, because it adheres most closely to concepts in that discipline” (83). Finally, the unintended consequences account focuses on what the name implies, consequences of technology that were unforeseen by the users (85). In this account “even willful, ethical social actors are unable to anticipate the effects of technological development” (85). Regardless of the interpretation of a technological deterministic view of technology, the focus is on understanding technology as primary source in determining its use in society.

When mobile communication was a new and emerging technology, the focus of the research was on the way the technology would inevitably cause social change. Baym points out “[t]here is a strong tendency, especially when technologies are new, to view them as causal agents, entering societies as active forces of change that humans have little power to resist” (26). A technological deterministic perspective of communication technology is most common when the technology is new. The technology is seen as having the capability of determining how it is used for communication purposes, eliminating the user as a causal agent. Mobile communication technology is seen as the causal agent of change. Another perspective of technology in society places the causal agency away from the technology. This perspective is demonstrated in the social construction approach to the study of technology.

Society as Agent of Change

A second theoretical view understands society as the primary agent of change, not technology. A social constructivism approach understands society as the main actor in understanding the role of communication technology in everyday life. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann wrote a foundational text in the study of social constructivism titled *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Berger and Luckmann focus on theory of sociology rather than an epistemological/methodological concern (14). Their stated purpose is “a sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life, more precisely, of knowledge that guides conduct in everyday life” (19). Main ideas regarding their sociological analysis include society as objective and subjective reality: “Since society exists as both objective and subjective reality, any adequate theoretical understanding of it must comprehend both these aspects (129).

Berger and Luckman ground their approach to understanding society as an objective reality that includes both natural and human environments in which “the process of becoming

man [or woman] takes place in an interrelationship with an environment” (48). The interrelationship discussed includes the idea that “man constructs his own nature, or more simply, man produces himself” (49). Objective reality develops through both social relationships and an established institutional world (60). Social interactions develop into reality between people that form a foundation for understanding. Institutions serve as an objective reality that people live in with social constructs that are understood as part of living in society. Berger and Luckmann provide the following syllogism to explain the relationship between objective reality and man being a social product: “*Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man [or woman] is a social product*” (61). Berger and Luckmann’s claim of society as an objective reality serves as the argument for the premise that people both shape and are shaped by society through institutions. Part of institutionalism includes the use of language as “the depository of a large aggregate of collective sedimentations” (69). Language serves as a collective base for institutions and objective reality for society. Words and phrases lay the foundation for meaning and people’s understanding of objective reality that is agreed upon collectively within a society.

Berger and Luckman ground their approach to understanding society through subjective reality that is connected to objective reality. Subjective and objective reality are connected as “[o]bjective reality can readily be ‘translated’ into subjective reality, and vice versa” but the two realities “are not coextensive” (133). The subjective reality exists through the social process of internalization defined as, “the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another’s subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself” (129). Subjective reality is the process of internalizing processes outside of oneself creating meaning in relation to others through socialization. There is both primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization is the

construction of “the individual’s first world” (135). Secondary socialization is defined as “the internalization of institutional or institutional-based ‘subworlds’” (138). Secondary socialization occurs when people internalize their institutional surroundings creating a subjective reality of how to socialize. Berger and Luckmann analyze society through people’s construction of objective and subjective reality that shapes meaning in the world. A social construction approach grounded by the work of Berger and Luckmann therefore identifies society and people’s objective and subjective relation to technology as creating meaning and shaping how technology exists in the world. The focus is not on the technology itself, but on how people objectively and subjectively relate to the technology as it exists in institutions.

A social constructivist view of communication technology comes from an organizational context in which Karl Weick “argue[d] that technology emerges from relations among a heterogeneous set of elements” (Fulk 922). Technology’s role in society is constructed from a variety of factors through the use of the technology. In Ling’s book, *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society*, he states that social constructivism “focuses on how social processes shape technology” (19). The social construction view of technology moves the sense of agency away from the technology, as seen in technological determinism, and towards social processes as constructing technology’s role in society.

Social constructivism view of technology is in contrast to technological determinism as “[s]ocial constructivist approaches contest the key assumption underpinning technological determinism that technology is an independent, exogenous and autonomous entity or force that drives social change” (Mauthner and Kazimierczak 23). The social constructivism perspective is said to be the “mirror image” of technological determinism (Hamilton and Heflin 1052). The focus is not on the technology itself, but “on what happens during technological adoption,

arguing that a wide range of social, economic, governmental, and cultural factors influence how people take up and use media” (Baym 46). Janet Fulk points out that this view differs from technological determinism, as “symbolic features need not be fixed attributes of a medium” as is asserted by McLuhan’s technological deterministic statement, “the medium is the message” (Fulk 922; McLuhan 20). Social constructivist approaches see society as the key influencer in technologies’ role in social change.

There are numerous approaches within the social constructivist perspective, including structuration, social learning theory, and social information processing theory (Fulk 922-924). Fulk points out in her article “Social Construction of Communication Technology” the various theories used within the constructivist perspective “share the core proposition that social and symbolic processes produce patterns of shared cognitions and behavior that arise from forces well beyond the demands of the straightforward task of information processing in organizations” (924). Katherine Miller, in “Common Ground from the Post-Positivist Perspective: From ‘Straw Person’ Argument to Collaborative Coexistence,” states that a social constructionist views social reality “as an intersubjective construction that is created through communicative interaction” (58). While social constructivism is present in the study of organizational communication, this approach is also discussed within the study of technology. Theorists apply social constructivism in technology through the ‘social construction of technology’ (SCOT) approach.

Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijkar in their article, “The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other,” seek to build “a sociology of technology which treats technological knowledge in the same symmetrical, impartial manner that scientific facts are treated within the sociology of scientific knowledge” (406). The focus of the authors’ research is on analytic and empirical data

seeking to understand the sociology of technology (400). The approach is understood to be a “multi-direction” view of technological development as opposed to the more commonly seen linear approach (411). The SCOT approach sees technological development as dependent on social groups (414).

Ling points out the focus of social constructivism is on co-construction stating, “[T]here is also an understanding of technologies as heavily scripted by both the nature of the technology and the commercial interest or power structures that promote them” (*Taken for Grantedness* 19). Ling asserts the social construction of “social mediation technologies” stating “They evolve from socially contextualized technical systems into socially embedded structures” (19). The view of social construction is on the larger construction of technology through broad social uses. The way in which technologies are used constructs their place in society. Social constructivist perspective sees the adoption of technology in everyday life as constructing the role of technology in society without influence of the capabilities of the technology.

The social constructivism perspective in understanding communication technology differs from technological determinism in its focus on human agency as separate from technology. These two perspectives differ on how they view communication technology, but they share a theoretical starting point, “which is the isolation of technology from society” (Hamilton and Heflin 1052). Both technological determinism and social constructionism look to understand technology outside of the individual user. In technological determinism the technology is seen as the primary influencer of its social role, while social constructionism looks to broader social and symbolic interaction as the main driving force of technology.

Technology and Society as Joint Agents of Change

A third perspective to understanding communication technology is the social shaping perspective that seeks to connect technology and society. Baym asserts the social shaping of technology perspective “emphasizes a middle ground” between technological determinism and social constructivism (51). Other research points to social construction of technology as an approach under the broader perspective of social shaping of technology (Fulk; Williams and Edge). The argument for the separation of social shaping from social construction is through an understanding of social constructivism as locating “cause with people” (Baym 51). The separation between social constructivism and social shaping is grounded on how social constructivism is understood in relation to people and not technology. The social shaping perspective identifies both society and technology as working together as joint agents of change. This perspective takes the focus away from one particular agent and instead understands both technology and society as mutual factors in shaping how technology is used in everyday life.

If the basis of social constructivism is through the people who use the technology and ignores technology’s role, this approach is vastly different than social shaping of technology, which seeks to identify how people’s use of technology and the technology itself both work together. Rather than focusing separately on either the technology or the social construction of the technology, the social shaping perspective assumes “[p]eople, technologies, and institutions all have power to influence the development and subsequent use of technology” (Baym 52). The social shaping perspective identifies individual use of technology in everyday life combined with the capabilities of the technology itself as informing how we use technology. Peoples use of mobile communication devices is dependent on what the technology is capable of in addition to

how its users adopt the technology into everyday life. Mobile devices developed out of a desire to increase connectivity but does not mean they are constantly used to connect with people.

Ling and Donner, in their text *Mobile Communication*, point out the social shaping approach leaves the interpretation of mobile communication seemingly open to the user (26). Even though the purpose of the mobile telephone when created was to communicate with others, there is nothing stopping the user from using it in other ways. In Ling and Donner's interpretation of the social shaping perspective, they see the user as determining how technology is use and provide an example by stating the mobile telephone can be a flashlight or bookmark (26). Or, a person may use technology for other needs, such as a paperweight if there is heavy wind.

Theorists who support the social shaping view identify both society and technologies as shaping the role of technology in everyday life. The focus moves away from one particular causal agent, as seen in the technological determinism and social construction perspectives to consider both the technology and society working together to shape how new technologies are used. As Baym states, "The *social shaping* perspective sees technology and society as continually influencing one another" (26).

Robin Williams and David Edge discuss the social shaping of technology (SST) in their 1996 article, "The Social Shaping of Technology." According to Williams and Edge, the SST approach differs from other approaches in that it focuses on the "content of technology" rather than the outcomes of or "impacts" of technological change (865). Williams and Edge discuss the SST and the role of choices in determining the "trajectory" of technology systems (866). Rather than have a single direction determined by the technology, SST sees multiple directions with "different implications for society and for particular social groups" (866). The social shaping of

technology seeks to avoid the pitfalls of social construction of technology and the approaches' difficulty achieving closure by finding scientific data for the construction of technology in society (870). The social shaping of technology allows for multiple understandings of technology in various social groups, as no two social groups are shaped by technology in the same manner.

The use of the social shaping perspective of technology stems from sociological theory but is used in communication research. Chunil Park and Stephen D. McDowell use the social shaping perspective in their 2005 article "Direct Broadcast Satellites and the Social Shaping of Technology: Comparing South Korea and Canada." According to Park and McDowell, "[t]he approach focuses upon ways in which existing political, social, and economic institutions shaped the development, deployment, and use of new technologies" (114). The authors seek to understand how cultural differences between South Korea and Canada shape their use of satellite broadcast, showing there is not one understanding of the technology within society, but in fact the technology is shaped by different factors in differing social groups (112). The importance of how technology is used within particular societies is the focus of a social shaping approach.

Heidi Campbell relies on the social shaping of technology approach in her 2017 article, "Surveying Theoretical Approaches within Digital Religion Studies," to develop the religious social shaping of technology (RSST) to apply the basic principles of social shaping theory to the digital religion field (20). Social shaping of technology looks at "how societal circumstances give rise to technologies, what specific possibilities and constraints technologies offer, and actual practices of use as those possibilities and constraints are taken up, rejected, and reworked in everyday life" (Baym 52). RSST is used by Campbell "as a tool for studying religious communities' negotiation with media" (20) The social shaping of technology offers a way of understanding technology within particular social contexts such as those found in religious

groups (16). Researchers interested in the social shaping approach also study how technology and society are understood through what Ling calls “the domestication approach” (17).

Ling asserts that the social shaping force of technology is seen in the “mastering” phase of the domestication approach in his 2012 book *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society* (17). Domestication research seeks to understand how technology is embedded into everyday life. This perspective is used in conjunction with social shaping perspective. Ling and Donner note when “examining the social consequences of mobile communication . . . another approach is fruitful, namely the domestication approach” (26). Research in domestication is approached as “provid[ing] a social dimension to understanding the expectations of use” (27) and used in conjunction with the social shaping perspective in Baym’s book *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Baym combines social shaping and domestication as having a similar perspective towards technology and society as mutually influencing the role of technology in everyday life.

Leslie Haddon discusses the domestication approach to communication technology research in her 2011 article, “Domestication Analysis, Objects of Study, and the Centrality of Technologies in Everyday Life.” Haddon notes that the domestication “framework that emerged considered the process of shaping the adoption and use of [information communication technologies] ICTs, but in so doing also asked what the technologies and services mean to people, how they experience ICTs, and the roles that these technologies can come to play in their lives” (312). Haddon argues the benefit of the domestication approach stating, “[C]haracterizing domestication analysis as a ‘framework’ or ‘approach’ does more justice to the systematic attempt to think about the wider consumption rather than just the use, of ICTs” (313).

Domestication as an approach helps ground research concerning communication technologies as they are used.

The domestication approach identifies how ICTs are either adopted or rejected in everyday life (Haddon, “Domestication Analysis” 312). The process of domestication is where technologies “become taken-for-granted parts of everyday life, no longer seen as agents of change” (Baym 26-27). In Ling’s text *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society*, he states, the “Domestication theory describes how we work through the adoption, mastering and use of different technologies” (16). These three stages, adoption, mastering, and use are each part of understanding how technology becomes embedded, and eventually so commonplace it is seemingly “invisible” (Baym 52). Communication technologies are often domesticated into society, for example the alphabet. More recent domestication of technology includes the Internet. The use of the Internet has become so embedded into society; younger generations no longer remember a time without the technology. Baym notes in her text her “son once asked how we used the Internet before computers were invented” (52). The domestication is used in the study of communication technology through the development of three stages.

Communication scholar Ling discusses the three stages of domestication, stating, “After we have brought the artifact or service into our life, mastered it, and started to use it on a daily basis, our consumption becomes a part of the way in which others evaluate us” (*Taken for Grantedness* 17-18). Ling describes the process of domestication linking the social use of each stage. He further notes that in the process of domestication, “[t]he social reflexivity is the point here: Others construct their expectations of us, and we of them, in relation to our use of mediation artifacts” (18). The development of domestication approach stems from the study of

how people use ICTs and adopt those technologies into society. ICTs include a variety of communication technologies and include studies relating to mobile communication devices (Stafford and Hillyer; Arie and Mesch; Aslan).

Mobile communication devices in our mobile culture are an embedded part of everyday life. The prevalence of mobile communication calls for understanding how they have shaped interpersonal relationships. Technology is seen as the dominant agent of change in shaping communication in technological deterministic approaches, while society is seen as the dominant agent in approaches like social constructivism. The middle ground perspective that takes into consideration both technology and society playing a part in how technology shapes communication is found in the social shaping and domestication approaches.

Conclusion

This project seeks a philosophical hermeneutic understanding of mobile culture in the United States. Several historical changes that aided in the development of mobile communication technology include regulatory changes and the rise of consumerism following World War II. Consequences of the wide acceptance of mobile communication include increased connectivity and the need for managing the perpetual contact allowed by mobile communication devices.

The study of communication technology is approached through various perspectives in the role of society and the role of technology in understanding the social changes that occur with the introduction of new technologies. Some perspectives, like technological determinism, view technology as the active agent of change. Others, like social constructivism, view society as the active agent of change. The most common perspective in current research is the view of technology and society both shaping the role of technology in everyday life. This perspective is

approached by social shaping and domestication research in the study of communication technology.

Chapter 2: Relational Dialectics and Mobile Communication

Studies relating to mobile communication devices include how the increase in connectivity has shaped communication in interpersonal relationships. In particular, researchers have studied how human connectivity is individually managed through mobile devices and how the increase in connectivity has shaped interpersonal communication patterns. The use of mobile communication devices has evolved to include decisions about how to manage the perpetual contact with others through a mobile telephone and how to manage the way we generally interact in interpersonal relationships. This management of interpersonal relationships occurs in choosing whether to be or not to be available or connected to another person.

Paul A. Soukup, in a 2015 article “Smartphones,” discusses the study of smartphones in interpersonal communication noting, “The link between social media and smartphone apps makes these [tele]phones powerful tools for managing interpersonal relationships” (19). Soukup continues by stating mobile communication devices, such as the smartphone, “have not played a direct role in redefining interpersonal norms, they have indirectly influenced how people communicate, present themselves, and maintain friendships and family activities” (19). One influence of mobile telephones is the increase in connection to others.

We have the ability to be continuously connected through mobile communication devices. This connection has created a disconnection in and from social interactions. A dialogic understanding of interpersonal communication recognizes the importance of both connection and disconnection in forming authentic interpersonal relationships. Another key element in dialogue is the need for difference among communicators.

This chapter presents a relational dialectic framework for mobile communication in interpersonal relationships. The grounding for the chapter is the study of dialogue in the field of

communication. The chapter will first discuss dialogue in the study of human communication through the work of Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin. Second, an overview of relational dialectics is provided. The third section seeks to understand mobile communication's role in understanding connectivity and insularity in human relationships.

Dialogue: The Groundwork of Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin

Rob Anderson, Leslie A. Baxter, and Kenneth N. Cissna trace the study of dialogue in human communication in their 2004 book chapter, "Texts and Contexts of Dialogue." The authors state, "The discipline began to solidify its interest in dialogue through a series of exploratory studies in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s" (4). Richard L. Johannesen's 1971 article, "The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue," sought to "provide groundwork for further investigation of the concept of communication as dialogue" (373). Buber is presented as a central figure in the study of dialogue. Bakhtin is another influential thinker in the study of dialogue in communication studies and whose dialectic is the foundation of Leslie A. Baxter and Barbara M. Montgomery's relational dialectics theory. The following sections will first look at Buber's contribution to the study of dialogue in communication studies including the concepts of 'I-Thou' and the 'Between.' The second section will focus on Bakhtin's work including his concept of multivocality as it relates to studies of dialogue. The final section is an overview of the relational dialectics theory.

Martin Buber: I-Thou and the Between

Martin Buber (1878-1965) was a German philosopher born in Austria. His most widely known text, *I-Thou*, was first published in 1923 with the English translation published in 1937. Communication scholars look to Buber's *I-Thou* in the study of dialogue through his understanding of "the I-Thou or dialogic relationship between men" (Johannesen 375). Another

prominent text by Buber is *Between Man and Man* published in 1947. *Between Man and Man* offers an application to the ideas presented in *I-Thou* (Friedman xii). The main ideas of *I and Thou* and *Between Man and Man* found in communication studies concerning dialogue include both Buber's concept of 'I-Thou' and 'the Between' (Anderson et al. 5).

In Walter Kaufmann's 1970 translation of Buber's *I and Thou*, he translates the German *du* as "I-You" instead of the more commonly seen "I-Thou" translation. Kaufmann states his reasoning for this as, "I-You sounds unfamiliar. What we are accustomed to is I-Thou. But man's attitudes are manifold, and Thou and You are not the same. Nor is Thou very similar to the German *Du*" (Kaufmann 14). Buber's sense of dialogue is focused on the relationship between the self and an 'It' or a 'Thou.'

Buber discussed relationships of people in his text *I-Thou* as twofold: "The world is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude" (53). The twofold attitude consists of "I-You" and "I-It" (53). The I-It relationship is one that sees the 'I' in relation to an object. There is no relational connection in the I-It relation; the It is viewed as something that is separate from the self in a non-relational way. This is in contrast to the I-You connection. In this relationship, the 'You' is looked at in a relational way that aims to form a connection between the two communicators through dialogue. The I-You relationship seeks to create a new understanding of both the 'I' and the 'You' that only occurs through dialogue. "World as experience belongs to the basic word I-It. The basic word I-You establishes the world of relation" (Buber, *I-Thou* 56). The I-It interaction sees "something" compared to the I-You interaction (54). Buber stated, "Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation" (55).

Buber described dialogue occurring between people in his 1947 book *Between Man and Man*. Within this text he described dialogue as occurring "where unreserve has ruled, even

wordlessly, between man” (5). Dialogue is seen as an unreserved communication with no limitations, that creates something new. Buber pointed out it is not possible to describe the process of dialogue, but stated “I can really show what I have in mind only by events which open into a genuine change from communication to communion, that is, in an embodiment of the word of dialogue” (6). Buber identifies dialogue as the communion between people that creates something new rather than communication that objectively connects people.

The communion found in dialogue is stressed in Ronald C. Arnett’s 1986 text *Communication and Community*, where Buber’s understanding of communication is discussed as three terms: “monologue, technical dialogue, and dialogue” (6). Arnett clarifies these three terms: “In short, self-centered conversation is monologue. Information-centered conversation that assumes neutrality is technical dialogue. Relationship-centered communication that is sensitive to what happens to both self and other approaches dialogic communication” (7). Buber’s attitude towards monologue was negative “due to the separation that results from such a communicative style and its subsequent limitations on community” (63). Achieving dialogue was described by Buber in *Between Man and Man*: “Unreservedly communication streams from him, and the silence bears it to his neighbour. Indeed it was intended for him, and he receives it unreservedly as he receives all genuine destiny that meets him” (4). Buber noted the act of dialogue occurs in such a way that it is not possible to communicate the occurrence (4-5).

Buber’s work on dialogue is said to offer a prescriptive approach in which “all human meaning-making is inherently relational” (Stewart et al. 21). Buber is thought to be “the most prominent prescriptive theorist, and his description of *I-Thou* relating sets the standard for those who treat dialogue prescriptively” (Stewart et al. 21-22). The foundation of Buber’s

understanding of dialogue is the relationship between people he defined as I-Thou relationships. This is different from the descriptive dialogue of Bakhtin.

Mikhail Bakhtin: The Creation of Consciousness and the Polyphony of Voices

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a Russian scholar whose status as a major thinker in the United States did not occur until 1968 (Holquist, “Introduction” ix). Bakhtin’s interest was in “the nature of human consciousness under particular cultural and historical conditions” (Holquist, “Introduction” xiv). The creation of consciousness is said to occur through dialogue between a self and another person. The other is a person outside of a self; “[w]e understand the meaning of our own existence—incomplete in and of itself—only by its reflection back to us in the interpretation of others” (J. Taylor 131). The writings of Bakhtin are studied in connection to communication through his consideration of monologism and dialogism and include *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* and essays compiled in *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin and Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.

Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics was first published in 1963 with an English translation appearing in 1984. Within the text, Bakhtin used the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) to discuss the “polyphonic project” that is “incompatible with a mono-ideational framework of the ordinary sort” (78). The importance of Dostoevsky’s work is the connection of individual personality with worldview and experiences and its oppositeness to monologic worldviews that understand “someone else’s thought, someone else’s idea, as an object of representation” (79). Bakhtin viewed monologic communication as focusing on a “single consciousness” and “whatever does not submit to such a reduction is accidental and unessential” (82). Focusing on a single worldview not only alienates those who are not part of the collective social group, it also

prevents dialogue and the creation of consciousness from occurring through a self and another person. The self and other create consciousness through their differences.

Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin is a collection of four essays from 1975 relating to “the novel and its relation to language” (Holquist, “A Note on Translation” n.p.). Within this compilation, the essay “Discourse in the Novel” discussed heteroglossia and the use of language. Michael Holquist defines Bakhtin’s use of the term stating:

“Heteroglossia is Bakhtin’s way of referring, in any utterance of any kind, to the peculiar interaction between the two fundamentals of all communication. On the one hand, a mode of transcription must, in order to do its work of separating out texts, be a more or less fixed system. But these repeatable features, on the other hand, are in the power of the particular context in which the utterance is made” (“Introduction” xix-xx).

Communication is dependent on the experience and context of utterances. There is a need for “individual voices” to communicate with others for authenticity in novels (Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” 264). This authenticity comes from the multiple experiences of individuals who come together through a polyphony of utterances rather than from a single source. Language is not stable in social use, but only “linguistic symbols” remain the same (Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” 271).

Speech Genres and Other Late Essays is a compilation of Bakhtin’s later essays that “are all attempts to think various specific topics in light of the more comprehensive categories we usually associate with philosophy” (Holquist, “Introduction” x). The first publication of this compilation translated English was in 1986. The essays are the final works published by Bakhtin in Moscow, 1979. Within this compilation, there are two major essays related to language and dialogue: “The Problem of Speech Genres” and “Methodology for the Human Science.”

The first of these essays, “The Problem of Speech Genres,” discussed the use of language, and “utterances” called “speech genres” by Bakhtin (60). The understanding of an utterance is in the meaning through both speaker and listener (68). Context is an important element of utterance, as meaning is dependent on the situation. Each situation changes the response (Bakhtin, “Speech Genres” 83). This approach to meaning as dependent on context reflects the importance of identifying communication from multiple viewpoints rather than a single source. No situation is exactly the same and therefore requires unique responses.

Bakhtin wrote notations regarding his dislike of monologic thought present in the work of Hegel in his essay “Methodology for the Human Science.” Bakhtin notes infinite amount of interpretations can exist: “The interpretation of symbolic structures is forced into an infinity of symbolic contextual meanings and therefore it cannot be scientific in the way precise sciences are scientific” (160). After this assertion, Bakhtin wrote the simple statement “[t]he monologism of Hegel’s ‘Phenomenology of the Spirit’ bringing attention to Hegel’s work (162). The problem with monologism, according to Bakhtin, lies with the lack of dialogue; “I do not converse with them—I react to them mechanically, as a thing reacts to external stimuli” (164). Dialogue must take other worldviews into account in shaping consciousness since there is no singular way of interpreting symbols.

In his 2004 article, “Dialogue as the search for Sustainable Organizational Co-Orientation,” James Taylor discusses Bakhtin’s argument that “consciousness of experience . . . is an effect of our relations with others” (131). The self is only defined by relationships: “Without relationship, we are a figure without ground, for nothing is even minimally perceptible in the absence of a figure-ground contrast” (131). The only way for a self to be described is in relation to the existence of others. Without others, the self has nothing which to stand in relation.

Leslie A. Baxter discusses the dialogism of Bakhtin in her 2004 book chapter “Mikhail Bakhtin: The Philosophy of Dialogism” stating, “Dialogism is a theory predicated on the assumption of un-finalizability. Order (meaning) is an accomplishment to be achieved out of the ordinary messiness of everyday life; it is constituted in fleeting moments of consummation” (254). Dialogue has no ending, as there is never an end to the changes that occur in relationships. The world is continually in a state of flux. Moments when it seems there is order and meaning only bring about another dialogue of difference in worldviews that changes the relation between a self and another person.

In a 2004 article “Texts and Contexts of Dialogue” Rob Anderson, Leslie A. Baxter, and Kenneth N. Cissna state, “Communication scholars were impressed with Bakhtin’s appreciation for the multivocal constitution of human experience” (7). Multivocality in Bakhtin’s work acknowledges the fact multiple worldviews exist and must be in dialogue to describe and make sense of human experience. There is no singular worldview since no one experiences the world exactly the same as everyone else. Buber and Bakhtin presented a prescriptive and descriptive understanding of dialogue respectively (Stewart et al. 21). Buber understands dialogue in a prescriptive manner as something that must occur between people in the formation of a relationship. There is a creation of something new between an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’ in dialogue that is not found in relationships with an ‘It’. Dialogue is understood as occurring only when an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’ come together to create a new meaning understood by all participants in communication. Bakhtin’s descriptive understanding of dialogue heuristically focuses on interactions among different people, “a descriptive/sensitizing theory is evaluated by its capacity for heurism—its ability to be useful in assisting us in seeing things in ways different from what otherwise would be the case” (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 7). Bakhtin’s view of dialogue is

said “to label a pervasive and defining feature of humanity that, according to proponents, as too little been noticed and appreciated—namely, the irreducibly social, relational, or interactional character of all human meaning-making” (Stewart et al. 21). The differences in the understanding of dialogue between Buber and Bakhtin have implication for the study of interpersonal relationships. Bakhtin’s descriptive approach does not require the other to be present in communication, and according to Anderson “he showed through his analysis of fiction that the technology of writing is yet another avenue to dialogue” (103). Bakhtin’s descriptive approach to dialogue serves as the grounding for the development of the relational dialectics theory that helps understand relationship development.

Relational Dialectics Theory

Leslie A. Baxter and Barbara M. Montgomery present the study of relational development in interpersonal communication through a relational dialectics approach in their 1996 book, *Relating: Dialogues and Dialectics*. The authors’ discussion of relational dialectics identifies a “both/and” quality of communicatively relating with another person (5). Baxter and Montgomery stress the need to understand “the simultaneous needs for partner independence or autonomy, on the one hand, and partner interdependence or connectedness, on the other hand” (5). Within this approach, two main themes are evident. First, they discuss the need for communicating with others who are different. Second, they address the need to be both connected and disconnected socially with other people. Both of these themes are evident in Bakhtin’s discussion of dialectic.

Consciousness requires communication with those from whom you are different. Baxter and Montgomery state,

“From the perspective of relational dialectics, social life exists in and through people’s communicative practices, by which people give voice to multiple (perhaps even infinite) opposing tendencies. Social life is an unfinished, ongoing dialogue in which a polyphony of dialectical voices struggle against one another to be heard, and in that struggle they set the stage for future struggles” (4).

Relational dialectics understands the need for different worldviews to interact with each other. The differences between social groups helps interactants create a new consciousness, or understanding, that takes into consideration multiple worldviews. This is the opposite of a monologic view of communicating in which a person only considers one’s own views.

Baxter and Montgomery look to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s work in their understanding of “both/and” quality of relating as: “Hegel’s work is widely regarded as the classical treatise of the modern era in its systematic expression of the dialectical assumption of contradiction, change, and totality” (22). Hegel was a German philosopher born in 1770 most widely known for his work first published in 1807, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The process of “Becoming” relies on ‘Being’ and ‘Nothing’ found in a *Phenomenology of Spirit* chapter titled “Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage.” The discussion on creation of consciousness asserts: “Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged” (Hegel 111). Consciousness exists through the self’s relationship with another person, though the self is not expected to take other worldviews into account. Instead the self reasserts a monologic view in relation to another person that is present to support the self. While Hegel was discussing a philosophical understanding of consciousness relating to his concept of “Becoming,” his impact on dialectics was his discussion concerning the importance of the ‘both/and’ quality in relating

(Baxter and Montgomery 22). Hegel offered an understanding of relating to another person as creating contradiction but is criticized because of his monologic understanding of truth.

Baxter notes that Bakhtin “was highly critical of Hegelian dialectics because of its mechanistic progression towards synthesis” (“A Tale of Two Voices” 187). Bakhtin asserted the inability to have an ultimate monologic truth and in turn helped communication scholars identify the multivocality of understanding that occurs. Within his work on dialogism, Bakhtin noted the inability for monologic thought to produce a singular understanding of truth, as it requires polyphony of voices to create a unified consciousness. In *Problem of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin states,

“It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousness’s, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of event potential* and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses” (81).

Baxter notes Bakhtin’s argument asserted, “[T]hat consciousness is impossible without an other. We can never see ourselves as a whole; the other is necessary to give use—to author—our sense of self” (“Bakhtin” 252). The need for finding those with differences is important for finding a sense of self. If everyone with whom we communicate is similar to us, there is no growth or expansion of the self according to relational dialectic theory and Bakhtin’s understanding of how the self is created.

Another element of relational dialectics is the need for connection and disconnection within the “both/and” quality in relationships (Baxter and Montgomery 5). Baxter discusses the need for “integration-separation” or “centrifugal-centripetal” concept, found in Bakhtin’s essay “Discourse in the Novel,” in relation to dialogic studies (*Voicing Relationships* 122). Bakhtin

discussed centripetal and centrifugal forces of language as utterance; centripetal forces is the participation in “normative-centralizing system of a unitary language” while centrifugal forces is the “social and historical” time in which the utterance occurs (“Discourse in the Novel” 272). Baxter addresses this push/pull of connection as a centrifugal-centripetal tension in relational dialectics stating that relating is “a complex knot of contradictory interplays, including but not necessarily limited to integration-separation, certainty-uncertainty, and expression-nonexpression” (*Voicing Relationships* 115).

Baxter updated relational dialectics in her 2011 book, *Voicing Relationships: A Dialogic Perspective*, where she discusses several major changes in her understanding of relational dialectic theory (RDT 2.0). These differences include variations in terminology and key ideas including contradiction, utterance chains, interplay, a reworking of praxis, and the use of contrapuntal analysis in interpretive and qualitative work grounded in relational dialectics. According to Elizabeth A. Suter and Kristen M. Norwood, “Central then to RDT 2.0 is the claim that communication is a dialogic process wherein competing discourses interplay in various arrangements that reproduce, challenge, and/or create meaning(s)” (294).

Baxter and Montgomery’s use of the term “contradiction” in the 1996 iteration of the theory is replaced by Baxter in 2011 with “discursive struggle” and “competing discourses” (*Voicing Relationships* 18). This change makes clearer that the discourse rather than individual thoughts are what researchers should analyze when using the relational dialectic theory. The focus is on the variety of discourses in relationships.

A second difference in her revised theory is how Baxter defines an utterance. RDT 2.0 makes clear that the utterance is not a “psychological phenomenon” (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 18). Instead, an utterance is part of a larger discourse that builds on previous

discourse as a continuation termed an “utterance chain” (18). When a person tries to understand a new utterance in dialogue, he or she contemplates all previous utterances to make meaning. Like a chain, the utterances are all connected and build upon each other.

A third element in RDT 2.0 is the importance of “the *interplay* of competing discourses” in which meaning is made (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 18). The focus is concentrated on how multiple discourses are merged together to create meaning. Multiple voices create meaning through the context of utterances. To understand discourse, it is necessary to understand the “unsaid, taken-for-granted presuppositions” (159). The context of a dialogue is necessary in understanding the variety and multitude of discourses occurring.

The final shift is the method of “*contrapuntal analysis*” (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 18). Baxter adopts this idea from Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* in which Bakhtin refers to the polyphonic nature of Dostoevsky’s work (18). Contrapuntal “is a musical term that refers to the playing of contrasting or counterpoint melodies in conjunction with one another” (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 152). Her method of dialogical analysis allows researchers “to examine the interplay of competing discourses” in interpretive and qualitative work (152). The focus is on all communication, including those that are in contrast or ‘contrapuntal’ to one another.

Few researchers clarify the version of relational dialectics in which their work is grounded. Instead, applications of the theory refer to relational dialectics as a whole, whose goal “is to function as a heuristic device to render the communicative social world intelligible” (Baxter, *Voicing Relationships* 7). The hands-on approach helps in identifying the chain of dialogues that shape communication with those that have different worldviews. Dialogue with

those different than oneself help in creating consciousness that pulls one away from a monologic understanding of the world.

The need for disconnection and connection is discussed in both Baxter and Montgomery's first discussion of relational dialectics, Baxter's discussion of RDT 2.0, and throughout Bakhtin's work. Baxter and Montgomery's relational dialectics theory of interpersonal relationships states there are "simultaneous demands for both independence and interdependence" in relationships (*Dialogue and Dialectics* 5). The following section focuses on understanding how mobile communication shapes the connectivity and insularity in interpersonal relationships.

Mobile Communication Connection

Study of the role of mobile communication in interpersonal relationships has increased with the use mobile communication devices. Scholars have sought to understand the development of relationships including closeness and satisfaction, through entirely mediated communication, entirely face-to-face (FtF) communication, or a mixture of the two (Pusateri et al.; Caughlin and Sharabi; Sprecher and Hampton). Interpersonal communication research has noticed the increase in connectivity and insular nature among groups through mobile communication devices.

In a 2015 article studying the communication practices of college students Loyd S. Pettegrew and Carolyn Day suggest "that we can no longer rely on the bifurcated theories and methods from FtF interpersonal communication" (133). The changes in connectivity through mobile communication are changing relationship development as students use mobile technologies "predominantly and persistently despite recognizing its addictive tendencies and the constant connectedness it creates, even to the point of overload. They also realize its emotional

limitations, and that it can be disingenuous and open to misinterpretation” (Pettegrew and Day 133). There is a need to understand how the constant connectedness provided by mobile communication technology shapes relationship development and its increasingly insular nature.

Connectivity

Increased connectivity allows mobile communication device users to be constantly available to anyone who wants to reach them. In choosing to be available through mobile devices, it is important to understand how the increase in connectivity shapes interpersonal relationships. Constant availability through mobile communication devices eliminates the assumption that someone is unavailable when at work or other activities. Mobile communication device users have to define their availability through how they manage their connection to their mobile devices. “We choose to answer or not answer incoming [tele]phone calls based on our sense of propriety” (Ling and McEwen 17). Availability may mean different things to each mobile device user. Some who are at work are restricted by their employer from using their mobile devices due to the risk of injuries, for example public transportation drivers or railroad engineers. Other people, such as those who work in an office or are self-employed, may have a bit more freedom in their personal mobile device use.

Mobile telephone use in relationships is largely individually regulated, as some people ignore mobile communication devices in favor of maintaining face-to-face interactions, while others freely disembody into their mobile communication interrupting their interaction with others. Choosing face-to-face or mobile communication often depends on who is trying to reach you and what you are doing at the time. For example, a parent who is at work may answer their mobile communication device if it is their child’s call but not for an acquaintance. The ability to

be constantly connected creates the need to manage availability through mobile communication devices.

Managing availability between mobile communication devices and face-to-face interactions creates the need to manage mobile communication device connections, either through assigning ringtones or turning the telephone to vibrate (Licoppe 151), turning the notifications either on or off in applications such as Facebook (Schrock 1236), or even turning on mobile devices only during a particular time of the day (White and White 202). Users of mobile communication have the potential for perpetual contact (Katz and Aakhus), creating the need for the user to define availability and determine when to be connected to mobile communication devices to avoid straining relationships due to too much connection (Duran et al. 21). Managing availability helps to limit the accessibility provided through mobile communication devices. Mobile communication device users are always accessible unless they manage their availability through their devices.

James E. Katz and Mark A. Aakhus discuss the reachability provided by mobile telephones in their 2002 edited text *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance*:

“The mobile telephone is a means to regulate one’s social environment through integration of social contact rather than simply inviting socially dispersing media into one’s life. The logic of perpetual contact makes it possible to make sensible action in the conditions of the contemporary societies” (308-309).

Mobile communication is a tool able to be in constant contact with others, however that does not mean one has to be in constant contact. It is the responsibility of the user of a mobile communication device to figure out how to use the technology in their social life.

Scott Campbell in his 2008 chapter, “Mobile Technology and the Body: Apparatus, Fashion, and Function,” notes the ability to reach social networks and regulate one’s environment using mobile communication devices is perceived as creating an increased feeling of security (153). However, S. Campbell looked at the perceptions and use of mobile telephones and was able to empirically show the fashion element of mobile telephones was considered more important than the security function (158). Mobile telephone users see their devices more as fashion, wanting to keep up with current styles of technology, than a means of increased security. The feeling of security was shown to be less important than the desire to be fashionable in terms of mobile telephone ownership.

In their 2009 book, *Mobile Communication*, Rich Ling and Jonathan Donner found mobile telephones increase the feeling of safety among users as the increased reachability from the mobile telephone boom has “developed into a safety link for those who would otherwise be tied to physical locations” (20). Mobile telephones allow users to remain connected without needing to remain in one location. Users have the freedom to change location without interrupting their ability to connect.

The feeling of safety in being able to reach someone outside their physical location has also caused a sense of anxiety when people are unable to access their social group via their mobile communication device. With the increased connectivity through mobile communication devices, an increase in disembodiment in public spaces has occurred. The rise of the mobile telephone and the increase in connectivity it caused has shaped communication interactions. Mobile communication device use has shaped perceptions of loneliness and created the need to manage connectivity.

In his 2012 book, *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society*, Ling calls the expectation of connection to social groups the Katz principle: “If they are not available via the mobile [tele]phone, then it becomes our problem” (3). The assumption of availability of others on a mobile communication device becomes a problem for those trying to reach someone without a mobile telephone. Our society has grown accustomed to making plans through mobile devices. It is no longer necessary to set definitive times and places when you can communicate at any time. Those without a mobile telephone will be unable to be communicated with when making these plans, as they are not constantly connected. Mobile telephone use shapes relationship development through the ability to connect.

The research pointing to new communication media as leading to stronger and more diverse relationships includes work that looks at overall well-being. In his 2015 article “Multimodal Connectedness and Quality of Life: Examining the Influences of Technology Adoption and Interpersonal Communication on Well-Being Across the Life Span” Michael Chan points out that increased connectivity shapes our relationship development stating, “[I]ndividuals have perpetual connectivity with others, affording them the ability to develop and maintain meaningful relationships” (3). Chan notes more ways to connect with social ties can increase well-being but gives an alternative possibility “that always on and accessible connectivity may actually decrease well-being because of the cognitive and emotional demands to be constantly and immediately accessible by others” (5). The use of mobile communication devices allows freedom to contact others and develop and maintain relationships, though it is theorized this causes insular relationships.

Insular Relationships

Research reflecting the position that communication media creates insular relationships includes studies looking at strong and weak ties in relationship development. The increase in connectivity through mobile communication devices led researchers Tetsuro Kobayashi and Jeffrey Boase, in 2014, to hypothesize relationships are becoming insular in nature through the “tele-cocooning hypothesis” which “states that texting is associated with increasingly insular communication because it strengthens core ties at the expense of interactions with lesser-known weak ties” (681). Further study of the tele-cocooning hypothesis by Kobayashi et al. in 2015 shows the development of mobile communication technologies, including smartphones, “support not only the one-to-one communication that dominated the era of the feature phone; they also support the types of broadcast communication made possible by diverse social media applications” (340). Kobayashi et al. view advancements of mobile communication technology as allowing for more diverse communication through different social groups. Instead of only one way of communicating, smartphones allow multiple platforms to keep in touch with social ties. Smartphones support connection through typical mobile telephone usage including talking and texting, but also allow for the multitude of social media platforms, email, and video chatting. Even with the growing technology available to maintain relationships across multiple platforms, there is still a question if mobile communication in relationships increases or decreases loneliness.

One reaction to the increase in connectivity through mobile telephones is a perceived increase of loneliness in public settings. Brett Hutchins, in his 2016 article “We Don’t Need no Stinking Smartphone!’ Live Stadium Sports Events, Mediatization, and the Non-Use of Mobile Media,” discusses the way mobile connection has changed social interactions in stadiums.

Instead of focusing on the stadium event, people are connected to their mobile communication devices creating the “uneasy sense of being ‘alone together’ in social life” (Hutchins 420). With the use of mobile communication technology, people are no longer participating in public spaces with those around them; instead they are attending to their social connections through their mobile communication devices. Loneliness decreases only when the technology is present and connection is available to people who are part of your social group.

Research shows mobile telephone use decreases loneliness, but creates more insular networks. Keith N. Hampton, Lauren F. Sessions, and Eun Ja Her concluded in a 2010 paper; “although core networks are more insular than in the past, social isolation has not spiked over the last 20 years” (131). Hampton et al. were able to show loneliness and social isolation did not increase using the US General Social Surveys. The insular nature of core relationships has increased over time.

Cynthia A. Hoffner, Sangmi Lee and Se Jung Park found, in a 2016 study, that it was not the presence of mobile telephones that lead to increased loneliness but the separation from a mobile telephone: “The most frequently reported feeling was loneliness or disconnection, mainly due to lack of connection to others” (2463). Hoffner et al. also point out “consequences of mobile [tele]phone use undoubtedly depends on how the [tele]phone is used” (2463). Hoffner et al. looks to E.N. Aron and A. Aron who

“developed the self-expansion model as a way of understanding love and close relationships. A new relationship offers the opportunity to expand oneself through the perspectives, opportunities, and new identities offered by the other person. Resources gained through relationship with close others become part of an individual’s mental representation of self. In other words, there is a cognitive merging of the self with aspects

of the other. Aron and colleagues conceptualized this experience as the ‘inclusion of the other in the self’” (2454).

While this theory seems to understand mobile devices as a way to expand the self in a way that connects with another person, Leslie A. Baxter and Lee West point out “Aron and Aron (2000) have developed a self-expansion theory whose central premise is that people seek to expand their personal efficacy and accomplish this by entering into relationships with others who have resources that complement their own” (494). Baxter and West continue by stating “If two people are highly similar, neither has opportunity for self-expansion” (494). Without the connection to others that are different, there is no expansion beyond the self. The study completed by Hoffner et al. shows that “the more people used their [tele]phones in ways perceived as contributing to self-expansion (a psychologically healthy motivation), the more distressed they were to lose access to the functions provided by the [tele]phone” (2463). There was an increase in anxiety when disconnected from a social group and forced into an unfamiliar social world. Mobile telephones help to increase self-expansion with those most similar to you. When dealing with a situation without connection provided by mobile communication devices, Hoffner et al. were able to show an increased anxiety of disconnection.

The anxiety of disconnection is nothing new, as people experience it throughout their lives, from a new job, to moving to a new city. The difference is in the amount of disconnection due to the social consequence of increased connectivity. Mobile communication use decreases social separation through its ability to communicate without limitations to time and space.

In a 2007 book chapter “Mobile Communication in the Twenty-First Century or ‘Everybody, Everywhere, at Any Time’” communication scholars Susan Drucker and Gary Gumpert point out “[I]t was understood that temporary separation was inevitable, was part of

maturation and growth” (16). The mobile culture in which we live “extends the trauma into everyday experience, whether a matter of control or a matter of anxiety” (16). The feeling of panic when a mobile communication device is not preset is akin to losing social connectedness and no longer belonging to a particular community. In our mobile culture it has become “simply assumed that one can and should be available and reachable—if not by anyone, at least by someone” (Katz, “Preface” vii). This connectivity is embedded into our lives through mobile communication devices in a way that has become taken for granted (Ling). The relational dialectics approach in interpersonal communication studies asserts the need for disconnection and limited connectivity between a self and another person. The foundation for the relational dialectics theory is from the broader study of dialogue, and is apparent in mobile communication research.

Dialogue: Connection and Disconnection in Mobile Communication

The increase in connectivity is well documented in mobile communication research (Duran et al.; Hall and Baym; Katz and Aakhus; Ling; Ling and Donner; Nafus and Tracey). The need for independence from others presented by Bakhtin and applied to relational dialectics theory is present in communication research concerning mobile communication devices. Specifically, mobile communication research focuses on the difficulty of maintaining “dependence-independence dialectic” within the increased connectivity provided by mobile telephones (Hall and Baym 318). A Bakhtinian understanding of what constitutes dialogue offers a way to understand mobile communication devices as having the ability to create dialogue, since “[t]he immediate presence or absence of an author of a text does not mean that dialogue is therefore present or absent. Rather, dialogue is a persistent feature of texts, even ones from dead or unknown authors” (Anderson 104). The relational dialectics theory is grounded in the

dialectics of Bakhtin and offers a way to understand mobile communication device use as creating dialogue between a self and another that includes connection and disconnection.

Mobile communication devices have saturated everyday life, causing those who are against mobile telephones to feel social pressure to own and use mobile devices. In his 2008 book chapter, “Mainstreamed Mobiles in Daily Life: Perspectives and Prospects,” Katz states “many later adopters reported that they got one only because of immense pressure from family or friends” (435). Social pressure forces the mobile telephone into lives of those who initially did not want them.

Ling notes in his 2012 book *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society* that mobile telephones are seen as stressful but necessary: “The mobile [tele]phone allows others to call us when we would rather not be bothered. People often make this argument with an implied sigh, since they are already mobile [tele]phone users and see this as unwanted but unavoidable side effect of the mobile [tele]phone” (110-111). Constant connectivity prevents the ability to disconnect and maintain the dependent-independent relationship with other people in order to foster a relationship. Often, people assume everyone has a mobile telephone and is available to call. This ability to be available can be seen as stressful when the user does not want to be contacted.

Mobile communication research has sought to understand how increase in connectivity shapes interpersonal relationships’ ability to maintain a balance of connection and disconnection with another person. The terminology for describing the need for connection and disconnection varies, from a discussion of a “both/and” quality (Nafus and Tracey 216), a look at “autonomy and connection” (Duran et al. 21), and references to a “dependence-independence dialectic” (Hall and Baym 319). Studies include research relating to the use of mobile telephones in

friendships and romantic relationships to understand the tension of connection versus disconnection.

Dawn Nafus and Karina Tracey discuss individuality as it relates to a 'both/and' quality in their 2002 book chapter, "Mobile Phone Consumption and Concepts of Personhood," noting, "[I]ndividuality contains a notion of discreteness and separability, but also an element of relatedness" (216). The focus is on the increased connection through use of a mobile telephone and the need to find a balance between connection and disconnection. The role of mobile communication technology is identified as a reflection of "what personhood is" taking into account the need for connection and individuality in relationships (Nafus and Tracey 216). Mobile communication technology increases connection with others and individual users must determine how the technology fits in maintaining both a sense of relatedness and separateness with others.

Robert L. Duran, Lynne Kelly, and Teodora Rotaru, in their 2011 article "Mobile Phones in Romantic Relationships and the Dialectic of Autonomy Versus Connection," note that the use of mobile telephones increases connection, causing less autonomy: "Most relevant to mobile telephony is the relational dialectic of autonomy versus connection because the cell phone enables more opportunities for communication than previously afforded by landline telephones" (21). The balance of connection and disconnection is based on the expectations of those involved in relationships. Duran et al. studied romantic relationships in college students and discovered oftentimes there was a development of rules regarding availability, though at times the development was implicit as they "may not have recognized that they actually had rules because they had never labeled them as such or the rules were implicit" (34).

In a 2011 article “Calling and Texting (too much): Mobile Maintenance Expectations, (Over)dependence, Entrapment, and Friendship Satisfaction” Jeffrey A. Hall and Nancy K. Baym focus on the “dependence-independence dialectic” noting it “is particularly challenging in close friendships” (318). Hall and Baym found mobile maintenance is an important element of mobile telephone use in friendships (326). The danger of expected connection and availability caused by mobile media use is the feeling of overdependence and entrapment (327). Mobile telephones enable the possibility for constant connection and the user is required to navigate a balance between dependence and independence in their connection with friends.

Michael Chan relies on Hall and Baym’s work to point out “the inherent tensions between the desire for close relationships vis-à-vis the need for independence from obligations” in his 2018 article titled “Mobile-Mediated Multimodal Communications, Relationship Quality and Subjective Well-Being: An Analysis of Smartphone Use from a Life Course Perspective” (254). Chan identifies the need for social connectedness as a positive outcome from mobile communication use based on early research (254). Chan then points to the work of Sherry Turkle to present negative outcomes of mobile communication research stating, “Noted communication technology critic Turkle (2011) for example argues that individuals, particularly digital natives, are eschewing face-to-face for mediated interactions so as to maintain psychological distance with others” (255-256). Chan relies on the 2011 research by Hall and Baym as an entrance into dialectical approach noting their research “results showed that expectations of mobile communications can engender both dependence and overdependence on one's relationships” (256). The purpose of Chan’s research was to identify generational differences in the use of smartphones and the impact on subjective well-being (SWB). The article calls for the focus of future research “to acknowledge and examine the inherent tensions that arise from perpetual

connectivity and both their positive and negative implications for interpersonal relationships and SWB” (261). Chan found contradictory findings in the need to be close and the need for personal space. The dialectical approach used by Hall and Baym is noted as a possible solution to the contradiction between needing personal space and needing to be close (861). The use of a dialectical approach acknowledges the need for both connection and disconnection in relationships.

Conclusion

Dialogic studies in communication research began in the 1960s focusing on the work of Buber (Anderson et al. 4). Buber offers a prescriptive sense of dialogue in which dialogue occurs between an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’ creating a new sense of meaning with both communicators. A descriptive sense of dialogue is offered in the works of Bakhtin where dialogue is understood as the creation of consciousness in the communication of two people who seek to understand differences between multiple worldviews. Relational dialectic scholars rely on Bakhtin’s work to ground an understanding of dialogue in relationships.

Relational dialectic theory was first presented by Baxter and Montgomery in 1996 and was later updated by Baxter in 2011. Main points include the need for connection and disconnection between people in relationships and the need for difference in dialogue. Theoretical grounding for the theory is Bakhtin’s work on dialogue. Application of relational dialectics to understanding mobile communication is beneficial, as Bakhtin understands dialogue as occurring over distance (Anderson 104).

Mobile communication technology is used regularly in relationships even with the known risks of misinterpreting messages and dishonest communication. Relational dialectic theory, particularly evident in Baxter’s work, is commonly used to understand face-to-face

communication (“Bakhtin” 260). Despite relational dialectics theory typically used for face-to-face communication studies it is important to understand mobile devices in interpersonal relationships due to their presence in society. Prominent elements of Bakhtin’s dialectic found in mobile communication is the “both/and” need for connection and disconnection in relationship development discussed by relational dialectics. The need for separation and integration is largely dependent on individual desires of relationships. Mobile communication use is a personal technology that the user is responsible for determining how they will connect with others. The following chapter focuses on the role of mobile communication devices in private, public, and social spheres.

Chapter 3: Mobile Communication in Public, Private, and Social Realms

Mobile communication devices, especially smartphones, are embedded into United States culture. The mobile telephone is a constant presence in both public and private settings. Mobile communication devices allow those far away to participate in the organization of civic activities through video chats or telephone calls and connect people to social groups through social media applications such as Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram. An example of participation in civic activities on mobile devices is the organization of ‘pussyhat’ selfies and the #metoo feminist movement on mobile communication device platforms like Instagram and Twitter. Participants who contributed to the movement demonstrate how “private acts have shown to have a political effect” (Abeele et al. 10). Mobile communication allows users to disembodiment themselves away from the physical setting, drawing their attention to the communication and connection through their mobile devices, such as a smartphone (Drucker and Gumpert 12). People can avoid the appearance of wanting to communicate face-to-face by appearing deeply involved in their mobile devices, even if they are just playing a game. Mobile communication devices are also used as a way to ‘kill time’ when waiting for something else, like a doctor’s appointment, or a bus to arrive. The choices we make about how and where to use mobile telephones shape the environment in which we live publicly, privately, and socially. The mobile telephone allows people to have perpetual contact, creating the need to manage connections and uses of mobile communication technology in interpersonal relationships.

Mobile telephones are a condition of our existence, shaping our lives through the use and general embeddedness of the technology in society through access to participate in multiple public platforms, such as posting on social media sites or group messages. The Internet connection provided by the mobile telephone, or smartphone, is so prevalent that in a 2018

article, the Pew Research Center states that their organizational researchers consider owning a smartphone to mean Internet use: “Across the 39 countries, a median of 75% say they either use the internet occasionally or own a smartphone, our definition of internet use” (Poushter et al. 10). The importance of Internet use in our culture is perceived to be so vital to daily life that the United Nations passed a resolution in 2016 that made “disruption of internet access a violation of human rights” (Poushter et al. 10). The resolution was to prevent disruption of already available Internet access rather than pushing for universal access to the technology. The increase in mobile communication use and ownership shapes the ability of large populations to participate in digital public space. The use of mobile telephones varies by user and their intended purpose. The different roles of public, private, and social spheres in society help to understand how the embedding of mobile communication devices throughout society shapes people’s communicative participation in public, private, and social realms.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) is a prominent scholar in the discussion of society who understood technology as having a role in shaping the human condition (*The Human Condition; Between Past and Future*). The rise of mobile communication has increased connectivity among people altering the human condition as it relates to work, action, and labor. This chapter seeks to understand the role of mobile communication in shaping the human condition through the framework of Arendt’s philosophy concerning work, labor, and action in private, public, and social realms (*The Human Condition; On Revolution; Between Past and Future*). Arendt’s philosophy relied on a historical understanding of the human condition shaped by technological advancements (*Human Condition* 9). In this chapter, I first discuss the role of history in understanding the popular shift of communication technologies toward mobile communication.

Second, I address Arendt's understanding of the human condition in terms of private, public, and social realms as they are connected to the use of mobile communication devices.

Communication Technology and the Human Condition

Society and technology mutually influence each other in shaping the human experience (Baym; Ling). People's use of communication technology in society is shaped by both the technological capabilities and by the historical moment in which the technology exists and is developed. Mobile communication technologies allow people to constantly connect to social networks, shaping human existence and participation in society. A historical framework of the shifts in society's communication practices helps in understanding the development of mobile communication technology that allows for constant connectivity.

Arendt understood historical occurrences as shaping current society. She drew from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's understanding of history, which she explained was "to understand and grasp conceptually historical reality and the events that made the modern world what it is" (*Between Past and Future* 8). The human experience is grounded in the historical moment that shapes the human condition. Technological developments throughout history have allowed people to implement tools that have shaped our daily lives, from simple tools like a hammer, to more complex tools like public transportation systems. Each of these advancements alters the human condition and our understanding of daily life. The introduction of mobile communication devices is no different in the way it shapes our existence. Mobile communication increases connectivity creating the possibility for perpetual contact shaping the existing protocols and expectations of communication in relationships.

Historical Shifts of Communication Technology

Communication technology has transitioned through three stages in history. Walter Ong (1912-2003) discussed these stages in his 1967 book, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History*, including “(1) oral or oral-aural (2) script, . . . and (3) electronic” (17). The shifts between stages occurred with the invention of the alphabet and movable type, followed by the development of electronic means of communication. The current historical phase is the electronic phase that includes technological devices like computers, mobile telephones, tablets, and smartwatches. Different communication media shapes communication practices within various historical moments. Societies are understood through their communication practices, though this understanding only came to light with the development of electronic communication: “[O]nly as we have entered the electronic stage has man become aware of the profundity of differences” (17). Historical shifts of communication media shape the understanding of past cultures in relation to current communication practices (21). Knowing the history of communication media and the development of new communication technology helps provide a framework for current use of electronic communication and the differences in communication practices in relationships.

The ‘oral or oral-aural’ stage of communication technology occurred during the time when communication was predominantly heard first and then communicated through word of mouth. Communication from a strictly oral presentation relied on people’s “memory” of cultures that have no modern sense of history (Ong, *The Presence of the Word* 23). Communication that is written down can be read repeatedly and far away from the original source. Written communication exists as “an external thing” while oral culture relied on collective memory of cultures (23). The transition away from oral culture was not without critics. Socrates is well

known to have denounced writing in favor of spoken word due to writing's lack of interaction (Roochnik 295). Socrates criticized the lack of interaction in writing because content stays the same when meaning is discussed. This is expressed in Plato's *Phaedrus* when Socrates lamented people speaking from something that is written rather than engaging in dialogue and having a conversation about a topic; "you might think they spoke as though they made sense, but if you ask them anything about what they are saying, if you wish an explanation, they go on telling you the same thing, over and over forever" (69). Writing is static communication that does not support an ongoing dialogue to expand ideas like oral communication; you cannot have a conversation and ask for further explanations from an author you are reading rather than with whom you are speaking. Society adjusted to the inclusion of the written word and transitioned to a 'script' stage of communication through steps that included "stone monuments, totem designs, property marks, various primitive types of pictography, and so on" (Ong, *The Presence of the Word* 35).

In the 'script' stage people began to write in order to communicate clearly and develop points. Specifically, Ong defined script as "an organized system of writing, not an assortment of more or less isolated signs, and a system which in one way or another undertakes rather to represent concepts themselves directly than merely to picture sensible objects around which concepts may play" (*The Presence of the Word* 36). The development of script is said to have begun at the earliest with "cuneiform scripts among the Sumerians around 3500 [B.C.E.]" and at the latest the "Mayan script of the New World . . . around A.D 50 and the Aztec around A.D 1400" (36). Eventually alphabets were developed that created a "sense of order and control" (45). The logic and control of alphabets led Ong to note, "It appears no accident that formal logic was invented in an alphabetic culture" (45).

Our current society is best understood as a product of previous historical experiences. The electronic stage of communication presented by Ong is one that is based off earlier communication technologies. The development of technologies includes; “telegraph . . . , telephone . . . , radio . . . , sound pictures . . . , television . . . , and computers” (Ong, *The Presence of the Word* 87-88). Electronic communication has brought people closer together through a “sense of simultaneity” (91). Communication technology has improved the ability of users to instantly connect with one another. The development of a mobile telephone enhances the simultaneity of communication further, linking oral and written communication on one device that accesses the technological ability of all previous technologies developed prior to the electronic stage.

Arendt identified history as an integral part in shaping current society. The stages of communication presented by Ong help people understand the communicative differences that shape society. Historical experiences are dependent on the communication media, whether or not people share meaning in verbal or written means, and with or without the use of communication technologies. Our current electronic communication channels increase the connectivity and availability of communication with others through the use of a mobile device. The transition to the electronic stage includes the adoption of mobile communication devices as a contemporary condition of human existence.

The Human Condition

Arendt was a German philosopher who wrote *The Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961), and *On Revolution* (1963), among other works. A focus of Arendt’s thinking was her understanding of the roles of public, private, and social life within society and human communication, particularly within the modern world. People’s communication exists

within particular historical moments and relies on the means they use to communicate—verbal or written, along with the choice of whether to disseminate their message through a digital channel. The human experience is understood through the historical moment that shapes the human condition.

Arendt discussed the human condition in her 1958 text *The Human Condition*. This text was published one year after the 1957 launch of the first artificial satellite into space, Sputnik I. The launch of Sputnik I was an event “second in importance to no other, not even to the splitting of the atom,” signaling that humans were no longer imprisoned on Earth (Arendt, *Human Condition* 1). This technological advancement altered the human condition “because everything they [people] come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence” (9). Arendt clarified the ability of technological advancements to shape human existence stating, “In addition to the conditions under which life is given to man on earth, and partly out of them, men constantly create their own, self-made conditions, which, their human origin and their variability notwithstanding, possess the same conditioning power as natural things” (9).

For Arendt, the conditioned existence of a human is viewed not as human nature, which remains unchanged; “the sum total of human activities and capabilities which correspond to the human condition does not constitute anything like human nature” (9-10). The human condition changes through technology created by humans, while human nature is an unchanged part of what it means to be human. The perceived human limitation of remaining Earth-bound creatures was shattered by Sputnik I leading to the realization humans are not ‘prisoners’ of Earth but can in fact achieve what was thought impossible. Technological advancements, like the development of space exploration, play a role in the human condition shaping the belief we are able to use technology to overcome any limitation placed on us by Earth.

Arendt's understanding of the human condition is directly related to the social environment in which we live. The conditioning of humans to the environment in which we live is understood as behaviorism:

“in which a conditioned response is a learned reaction to external stimuli. It follows that any form of life that is capable of modifying its behavior in response to external stimuli is, to some extent, a conditioned being (this would be, arguably, a defining characteristic of all forms of life)” (Strate 244).

The human condition discussed by Arendt relates to the technology prominent in society. The use of mobile communication is a prominent means of communication technology in our contemporary culture that shapes our existence through its ability to provide perpetual contact (Katz and Aakhus 308). The expectation of contact with others via mobile communication devices has conditioned to expect the perpetual availability of others. Further, the condition of being human is shaped by activities in which people engage—including labor, work, and action.

Human activity has changed throughout history with different understandings of what is possible in each historical moment. Our current society no longer solely depends on individual families owning and caring for farm animals, but people do insist on reliable transportation for daily activities, including grocery shopping. People will always require a source of food, but the way the food is accessed has shifted from family farms to large grocery stores. Arendt divided human activities into three categories; labor, work, and action (*Human Condition*). Each of these activities plays a role in how humans participate in society. The interdependence of all three is discussed by Craig T. Maier who notes, “Labor invisibly and thanklessly sustains work and action, work eases labor’s pain and builds the world in which action takes place, and action renews and extends the tradition that gives purpose to the work and makes labor’s sacrifices

meaningful” (296). Labor, work, and action all contribute to the development of man in terms of the conditioning of existence.

Arendt defined labor as “the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by [physical] labor. The human condition of labor is life itself” (*Human Condition* 7). Labor is necessary for humans and provides the necessities of life. Arendt stated that labor is the way of life for the slave “who was coerced by the necessity to stay alive and by the rule of his master” (12). The term labor was used by Arendt “to describe all of the activities that persons must do to meet their most basic needs of food, shelter, and companionship” (Maier 296). The initial use and purpose of mobile communication devices were not for basic needs provided by labor, but instead developed out of mobile communication technology that was initially used in wartime communication (Agar 7). Overtime, mobile communication technology progressed and is currently able to connect to others for companionship in mediated environments, though limits face-to-face interactions (Hampton et al. 715). Labor is considered separate from work in terms of the creation of goods necessary for maintaining life. Arendt explained the separation of work and labor in addressing her opposition to Karl Marx and his definition of labor.

Arendt criticized Marx’s understanding of labor: “the distinction between labor and work would have completely disappeared; all work would have become labor because all things would be understood, not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process” (*Human Condition* 89). Marx (1818-1883) discussed labor in relation to commodities in his 1867 work *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume I* where he mentioned that labor has shifted to creating un-useful commodities, with “the

disappearance of the useful character of the products of labour, the useful character of the kinds of labour embodied in them also disappears; this in turn entails the disappearance of the different forms of concrete labour” (128). Arendt challenged Marx’s assumption that labor is meant to create consumable goods, including excess production that creates a surplus of consumption in which “the labor of some suffices for the life of all” (*Human Condition* 88). Arendt defines the surplus of labor production that creates things that are not needed for human life as work.

Arendt distinguished the difference between labor and work as whether or not goods that are produced are necessary for human existence. Humans work to provide themselves with surplus items allowing them to participate in the world, including mobile communication devices and adequate transportation. Arendt defined work as:

“the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species’ ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an ‘artificial’ world of things, distinctly different from all-natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness” (*Human Condition* 7).

Labor is a means for survival, such as the basic companionship with face-to-face communication, while work is the use of mobile telephones that surpasses the basic needs of humans for existence. Work is the use of mobile telephones for companionship even though there are people available to interact with through face-to-face conversations. The artificial world of things expanded with the development of machines and other modern technologies. The growing expectation of mobile communication ownership as a communication technology “is becoming a taken-for-granted part of daily life,” increasing the need to work beyond laboring to

acquire the technology to participate in the world (Ling, *Taken for Grantedness* 6). Mobile communication devices grant users access to social connections with the expectation of reachability. Work and labor activities are focused on the production of goods: either labor that produces necessities for life or work that produces surplus material that functions as a way for people to participate in the world.

The activity of action in relationship to work and labor is defined by its plurality; “action is story-laden, bringing labor and work into the essential characteristics of being together, ‘plurality’” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics in Dark Times* 65). The world exists with multiple people creating plurality with different worldviews and cultural understandings. The plurality of people is connected to action: “Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 8). Action is “the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on earth and inhabit the world” (7). Action does not require objects or material goods but requires speech and activity where “men [and women] show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world” (179). The relationship between action and plurality is the ‘being together’ of plurality. The plurality of existence shown through action is the participation of shared life. “Action functions through speech to discuss shared life” (Lollar 304). Action is the activity most connected to political life: “While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically *the* condition—not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam*—of all political life” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 7). Action is essential to political life and acts as the fulfillment of political life. Humans are all

different, creating plurality among people. Action is what connects humans together in society through civic activity.

Everyday use of mobile communication devices has conditioned work, labor, and action by allowing people to have the ability to constantly connect with other people across distances using a digital channel for communication. Labor is described as what people need to live in the world, while work is described as producing what people require to participate in the world that is in excess of necessities for sustaining life. Action is participating in the world in a way that acknowledges there are different people that make up society. Mobile communication device use creates an expectation of the availability and connectivity with others as a part of everyday life. The features on a mobile device, like a mobile telephone, increase the necessity and embeddedness of the technology in social interaction. For example, the ability to store telephone numbers in a digital device has led to users' decreased focus on remembering contact information for friends and family. There is no need to remember contact information since mobile telephones are able to store the information in a device that is assumed to be readily available for use.

Recognizing the role of mobile communication devices in relation to labor, work, and action helps explain the transition of human existence that has occurred with the adoption of mobile communication devices. The transition between the three historical stages of communication highlights the different forms of communication media that shape human connection. Our current electronic stage increases connectivity between people combining all previous forms of communication. Mobile communication shapes human activities including work, labor, and action.

Public, Private, and Social Realms

The human condition refers to how humans shape their experience through activities of labor, work, and action. These activities are completed in and contribute to public, private, and social spheres of human life: “The everyday lives of people within the public, social, and private spheres involve the functions of labor, work, and action” (Lollar 304). Arendt’s work focused on distinctions between the three realms of human existence and the modern changes that led to the increase in the social realm through the rise of private information becoming significant within the public realm (Arendt, *Human Condition* 35). Our contemporary society is now capable of participating in public, private, and social spheres through mobile communication media.

Mobile communication devices confuse people’s expectations about communication and social expectations. The user of a mobile communication device is in control of selecting among different roles as s/he participates in available social platforms. Some users are very connected, while others maintain limited availability. Public, private, and social realms exist differently in society and help people consider the level of connectedness they should maintain for meaningful life.

The Public Realm

Arendt presented a plural understanding of the public sphere to include participation by everyone: “everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity” (*Human Condition* 50). The public sphere requires participation from a variety of people guided by different viewpoints who come together to create a common understanding of the world that represents all different people: “Public space protects many, not just those with whom we concur” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics in Dark Times* 55). The participation of a variety of people with different worldviews contributes to the creation of a free

and open public sphere in which everyone is visible and able to “show who they really and inexchangeably” are (Arendt, *Human Condition* 41). Two phenomena that are foundational for public space include “appearance” and “common world” (50, 52).

Appearance

The first phenomenon “appearance” is defined as “something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves—constitutes reality” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 50). This concept of appearance as reality requires agreement from a variety of different people in order to fully comprehend the world and all its participants. Appearance in public space includes individuality amongst members, meaning participants must be different in terms of understanding the world (50). The world consists of various viewpoints and worldviews. Participants appearing in public and showing their differences achieve an understanding of the world that represents a greater variety of people. The role of appearance is developed through participation in civic activity, both political and non-political.

The human experience has shifted over time as society transitions through changes in historical periods. The modern age saw a transition towards people questioning their ability to change their social situation. The laboring life of those in poverty was considered just a fact of life until the modern age began to lead to questions of people’s ability to fight against a life of labor.

“The social question began to play a revolutionary role only when, in the modern age and not before, men began to doubt that poverty is inherent in the human condition, to doubt that the distinction between the few, who through circumstances or strength or fraud had succeeded in liberating themselves from the shackles of poverty, and the laboring poverty-stricken multitude was inevitable and eternal” (Arendt, *On Revolution* 15).

The shift in people's everyday experience occurred once people began to realize their human condition is changeable through civic action. War in the modern era became a way for public revolution to occur, such as the French Revolution. People no longer saw themselves as unable to shape their life, and instead grew to see war and uprisings as a way to revolutionize their lives through participation in political and civic action within the public realm. The recent development of mobile communication technology shapes the way people currently participate in civic activity.

People's use of mobile communication devices increases the amount of connections they have with others, allowing them to participate in civic action in public spaces from any location. Seyla Benhabib identifies Arendt's understanding of the "epistemic function of the public spaces" as "anticipated communication with others [that] transcends the boundaries of the face-to-face society" ("The Embattled Public Sphere" 6). This understanding of the function of public sphere to go beyond face-to-face communication in anticipated communication allows for Arendt's scholarship to help in understanding the role of mobile telephones in shaping the human condition through civic activity, both political and non-political, in the public realm. 'Appearance' within the public realm is one foundation for participation in public space (Lollar 303). Arendt's understanding of public space and the role of civic activity helps frame the impact of mobile communication and the ability to connect with a variety of audiences and publics to assist in changing society.

Mobile communication devices played a key role in the 'appearance' of participants and supporters of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Catherine Frost discusses the connection between the prevalence of mobile communication devices and people's political participation in the public realm in her 2016 article "The Revolution Might be Tweeted but the Founding Will Not

Be: Arendt and Innis on Time, Authority, and Appearance.” Civic activity requires more than just participation using digital technologies, as shown by the shutting down of Internet and cellular service during the Egyptian Revolution. When the government shut down the Internet and cellular service, the lack of access to communication technologies did not stall the revolution like the leaders of the shutdown thought. Instead, the shutdown “drove people into the streets throughout Cairo and Egypt” leading to the question: “Why is the resilience, indeed acceleration, of a movement in the absence of digital media interpreted as evidence of its centrality” (Frost 274)?

Digital media is one form of appearance that “accelerated the process of change,” but what occurred during the Egyptian Revolution reminds us that there are multiple outlets for public appearance (Frost 274). Digital communication “could not single-handedly determine the fate of the revolution” (284). Digital communication provided by a mobile communication device, like a smartphone, is one outlet for appearance in public space. Another form of appearance is the typical understanding of the physical presence of people participating in civic action in public space through rallies, marches, and demonstrations. Mobile communication technologies allow people to increase their participation in civic activities through increased connection to public spheres (Abeele et al. 10).

The #metoo movement provides an example of appearance in promoting public social change that grew traction through mobile communication device use combined with physical demonstrations at public locations. Mariek Vanden Abeele, Ralf De Wolf, and Rich Ling’s article titled “Mobile Media and Social Space: How Anytime, Anyplace Connectivity Structures Everyday Life” (2018) discusses the role of mobile telephones and social media platforms to spread awareness of political activity through the #metoo movement, demonstrating that “private

acts have shown to have a political effect. For example, the private sharing of pussyhat selfies and/or #MeToo testimonials on (semi-) public social media platforms led to the social construction of feminist protest” (10). Selfies are identified as a private act, however once shared on a public space, they become symbols of active participation in the civic action of the feminist movement promoting political and social change. The sharing of images on social media accounts accessed by mobile devices was taken at physical rallies of people joining together to enact change. Multiple appearances in various public spheres come together to create a common world.

Common World

Arendt defined the common world as an aspect of the public realm as what is “common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it” (*Human Condition* 52). The common world is the space in which everyone lives and interacts with one another in multiple publics. Common world is meant to include everyone, not just those people with whom people share their beliefs or identities—or with whom one chooses to communicate using a mobile communication device. The common world includes everyone living, even those who are different than you, as public space is defined by Arendt as the inclusion of all people. This means multiple religious beliefs, sexual identity, or political opinions around the globe. Participation in public space is what makes an individual visible and allows a person to create his or her identity.

Arendt recognized the common world as the physical space in which people interact and live with others. In contemporary society, mobile devices create platforms for appearance in both digital and real-world public space. Merging the digital world and the real world creates the opportunity for a person to appear in multiple public spheres simultaneously. This allows people who are unable to participate physically in a social movement to digitally make an appearance of

civic action within public space. Mobile devices increase connections among people allowing them to communicatively participate in various public spaces but do so in a way that limits physical participation in the common world.

Communication technology plays a role in the conditioning of human existence by providing the ability to revolutionize a society through public activities, such as the founding of a new political organization. Revolutions from any historical era “work through particular media dominant at the time” (Frost 271). For example, early American revolutionists relied on pamphlets to spread awareness and information across the colonies. The common world includes participation from those seeking to revolutionize governments, and to make social issues visible to the public by allowing multiple worldviews to appear in the common world. Voices and images are being transmitted through mobile communication devices that allow people to connect through platforms and become visible in the public sphere. Participation in the public sphere through mobile communication technology is dependent on the user and the user’s desire to access the public platforms that give voice and appearance to those who hold different worldviews.

Scott W. Campbell and Nojin Kwak noted that political discussions on mobile communication are dependent on whom the user chooses to connect. In a 2011 study, S. Campbell and Kwak question “whether mobile communication, as a resource for political discussion among strong network ties, helps to shrink and/or expand the broader sphere of public dialogue” (273). They were able to determine that discussions on mobile devices with like-minded others “may foster both open *and* active citizenship” (274). A person choosing to increase his or her communication with those who have like-minded opinions is thought to give a person the confidence to discuss topics in public where not everyone agrees (276). S. Campbell and Kwak

show that the use of mobile communication increased participation in civic discussions beyond strong network ties to include weak ties with those who have differing opinions. This leads to the question as to whether such participation in the common world is truly representative of all different worldviews due to the often-closed system of civic activity in mediated communication.

Eric Gordon notes the rise of civic engagement through communication technology in a 2016 book chapter “Civic Engagement.” In an introduction to the chapter, Chelsea K. Hampton notes Gordon’s work discusses “how multiple modes of engagement play into how people feel connected to or disconnected from their communities” (269). Gordon discusses two distinct communities: “communities of circumstance and communities of interest” (270). Communities of circumstance are defined as the “things which we have no control” such as “race, ethnicity, and nationality,” while communities of interest are “based on interest” (271). The Internet has increased people’s ability to participate in communities of interest, causing issues with government efficiency relating to civic engagement (272). Gordon discusses the role of technology and people’s desire to increase efficiency noting, “what happens when you design for efficiency is that you actually lose some of the deeper engagement that is happening in other realms” (272). For example, a system that allows for feedback in the form of fixed alternative questions does not allow for any communication outside the options given. Surveys may be used but the respondent only has several options. There is no room for comments and for conversations to occur that help explain and support multiple viewpoints. The system is closed to only several options. In response to this, Gordon looks to Arendt’s notion of action: “The fundamental notion of civic action, according to Arendt, is connected to a kind of openness or playfulness of that action which is in a state of becoming, not a finished state. We want to use that notion as a design value to create these systems that open up possibilities, that allow people

to explore, play and discover” (273). Rather than a closed system of efficiency, Gordon suggests designing an open system that is constantly changing and never in a final finished state. Mobile communication devices allow for participation in a common world, but the technological design shapes how people participate in civic affairs. Gordon calls for an open system of participation in political public spheres grounded in Arendt’s notion of action.

The ability of people using mobile communication devices to shape the common world depends on how people use the technology. Mobile telephone usage in the public realm is shaped by the essentially private nature of the technology. Users of mobile telephones maintain similarity of social networks because “mobile telephony is a characteristically private technology” (S. Campbell and Kwak 265). In a 2007 book chapter “Mobile Communication in the Twenty-First Century or ‘Everybody, Everywhere, at Any Time’,” Gary Gumpert and Susan Drucker comment on how mobile telephone users see their public presence as only a physical location; “mobile connection beckons, people can become immersed or absorbed in media connection, altering their awareness and interaction with the physical environment” (12). The focus of mobile communication device users is no longer only what is surrounding them but is about connection to social networks accessible through his or her devices, such as a mobile telephone. The use of mobile telephones therefore places them in particular realms. People’s participation in the public realm is defined by Arendt as appearance and common world in which participants’ appearances contribute to the plurality of the common world shared by everyone. The use of mobile telephones in everyday communication reflects participation in the public realm through their ability to create more opportunities for ‘appearance’ through an increase in connectivity. Civic participation is currently shaped by mobile communication use as evidenced by the political and social revolutions that are shaped by both the connectivity of mobile devices

and the lack of connectivity that allows for participation in public sphere through mediated communication and face-to-face physical participation in public action.

Arendt discussed a common world in a public realm but also pointed to a need for a private realm as well. Arendt warned of the loss of private realm, stating, “A life spent entirely in public, in the presences of others, becomes, as we would say, shallow” (*Human Condition* 71). Arendt stated privation is needed as “one’s private property offer the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, not only from everything that goes on in it but also from its very publicity, from being seen and being heard” (71). According to Arendt, there needs to be time when we are disconnected from a public realm.

The Private Realm

The private realm was viewed as one separate from public spheres until the rise of modern individualism. “We no longer think primarily of deprivation when we use the word “privacy,” and this is partly due to the enormous enrichments of the private sphere through modern individualism” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 38). Arendt clarified what she meant by the private realm through comparison to the public realm: “What the public realm considers irrelevant can have such an extraordinary and infectious charm that a whole people may adopt it as their way of life, without for that reason changing its essentially private character” (52). As the private realm becomes bigger, the expansion “does not make it public, does not constitute a public realm, but, on the contrary, means only that the public realm has almost completely receded” (52). Private realm exists when there is no difference between people. There is a lack of appearance in the private realm because in that space everyone is considered the same as all others in the realm.

Arendt stated the private realm overpowers the public realm when people “have been deprived of seeing and hearing others, of being seen and being heard by them” (*Human Condition* 58). This is distinct from Arendt’s view of the private realm as privation:

“The privation of privacy lies in the absence of others; as far as they are concerned, private man does not appear, and therefore it is as though he did not exist. Whatever he does remains without significance and consequence to others, and what matters to him is without interest to other people” (58).

Private sphere does not include a public sense of ‘appearance’ where someone makes himself or herself known. Private spheres rely on people having a sense of sameness that stems from belonging to the same groups and having the same opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. Participation in the private sphere is belonging to an organization where you do not question your role or who you are; you are your private sphere. You are not different, and therefore there is no need to make an appearance, or to enlarge the sphere to include others who are different as it is understood everyone is the same. Prior to the rise of the modern nation state, the private sphere was located in the family and the household, but, according to Arendt, could involve the workplace, religious worship, and other spaces where like-minded people gathered. “The distinctive trait of the household sphere was that in it men lived together because they were driven by their wants and needs. The driving force was life itself—the penates, the household gods” (30). The primary activity in the private sphere was labor to meet necessities for daily life.

Communication technologies have shifted the privacy of the home. Stuart Shapiro, in his 1998 article “Places and Spaces: The Historical Interaction of Technology, Home, and Privacy,” discusses the changing role of communication technology in the private sphere of the home stating: “Technology has interacted with the boundary the home represents, sometimes

enhancing and sometimes restricting family and/or individual privacy” (276). A key feature in Shapiro’s article is the understanding of how communication technologies shape boundaries in public and private spaces. The use of electronics and technologies help control privacy (284). Private life in the home has become linked with the public as life is increasingly shaped by the presence of electronic communication devices, particularly mobile communication devices.

Checking emails, taking calls, and communicating with co-workers now occur at home and in other private settings through mobile communication devices that eliminate the boundary between public and private spaces: “While permanent connectivity allows work to spill over into homes and friendship networks, it is also likely that personal communication will penetrate the formal boundaries of work” (Castells et al. 82). The need for privation is understood as separate from political action in the public realm where someone makes an ‘appearance.’

In her 1959 essay published in *Dissent* magazine, “Reflections on Little Rock,” Arendt discussed the importance of the private realm as a place where one is able to exist without influence from the public realm. She notes the increase in governmental control over private life through a highly debated position of questioning the role of the government in mandating desegregation in America. Arendt held a negative position on the outcome of the 1954 Supreme Court case ruling for desegregation of education in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Arendt saw the actions by leaders in government blurring the public and private realms due to government-mandated desegregation. Maier discusses Arendt’s view on education becoming increasingly social through “*normalization*, in which schools came to be seen as instruments charged with integrating immigrant children into a homogenous mass society” (291). The normalization leads to conformity found in the social realm that eliminates individuality (291). Arendt pushed for the

separation of public, private, and social life and viewed state intervention on education as intersecting private and public life.

Michael D. Burroughs discusses Arendt's essay in his 2015 article, "Hannah Arendt: 'Reflections on Little Rock'," where he provides three explanations for Arendt's "wrongheaded conclusions" due to her lack of understanding of race and racism in the West (52). The first explanation is Arendt's strict adherence to her abstract philosophical understanding of the separation of public, private, and social realms. The second explanation is her "racist conceptions of blacks" (54). The third explanation is her lack of understanding American South culture (54). Arendt's strict adherence to the separation of public, private, and social realms "blinds" her to the connection between political rights with social rights for African Americans (57). The separation of government activity in private spheres continues to shift, as there is currently a question of whether the government should be involved in regulating the private sphere.

People assumed their right to privacy (and privation) before the rise of the modern nation-states. The shift of the private sphere to include more public action shapes the necessity to redefine private communication, particularly in our mobile culture. Andre Vitalis in his 2016 book *The Uncertain Digital Revolution*, discusses privatization in democratic society. The issue he examines is the lack of legal defense for private information. The rise of the digital society and the use of mobile telephones, created a need of a defense for the right to be private: "It is the socialization of the human, and the violation of this private sphere by [governmental] processes that are increasingly indiscreet, which explain the intervention of a judge followed by the law in order to establish limits" (Vitalis 15). Mobile devices are able to collect data from users that are assumed to be private, such as telephone conversations, text messages, and images stored on the devices. This information can then be accessed through the mobile device with or without the

user's permission. The ability of other people to access private mobile telephone records has prompted a movement to protect private sphere communication.

A United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council report from August of 2018 titled "The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age" defines privacy: "Privacy can be considered as the presumption that individuals should have an area of autonomous development, interaction and liberty, a 'private sphere' with or without interaction with others, free from State intervention and from excessive unsolicited intervention by other uninvited individuals" (3). The UN determined that digital privacy is protected from State intervention. This report was written in response to the growing concern over public intervention in the private use of mobile telephones.

For example, in 2014 a former United States National Security Agency contractor, Edward Snowden, leaked to *The Guardian* that the United States government collected telephone call records and electronic communication (Privacy and Civil Liberties 1). The general American population was unaware of government surveillance on their assumed private conversations. According to a Pew Research Center article, in 2015 34% of Americans "had taken at least one step to hide or shield their information from the government, such as by changing their privacy settings on social media" (Geiger). The concern for privacy in mobile communication use has expanded to the marketing of mobile communication devices.

Mobile communication device users' desire for mobile privacy is evident in Apple's March 2019 launch of an advertising campaign promoting data privacy. In this campaign, Apple states, "If privacy matters in your life, it should matter to the telephone your life is on. Privacy. That's iPhone" (Apple). In a 2019 Reuter's article about the campaign Stephen Nellis notes Apple's goal was to "differentiate itself from tech industry rivals such as Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Facebook Inc. that have become the target of regulatory scrutiny over the issue" of privacy.

The importance of maintaining a private life that does not make an appearance remains an important element of daily life that has carried over to mobile telephone usage. People's communication in a private realm relies on the lack of interference from public information gathering. Mobile communication devices are able to hold private conversations and store information intended for private sphere communication (Ling et al., "Small Circles" 283). Common private use of mobile communication is often "to coordinate interactions and exchange phatic communication" (283). Device information including text messages and call logs are often stored on cloud-based servers maintained by service providers who can access private communication information. The cloud-based storage allows information to transfer from one mobile device to another so when you upgrade to a new device no information is lost. This means the government has the ability to access private telephone information through the company that provides mobile communication service. The United States government's right to access telephone information was most recently enhanced through the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act passed in March 2018 (U.S. Dept. of Justice). The CLOUD act includes clarification of U.S. law and serves to make "explicit in U.S. law the long-established U.S. and international principle that a company subject to a country's jurisdiction can be required to produce data the company controls, regardless of where it is stored at any point in time" (3). Private use of mobile communication devices is becoming more prominent in debates concerning one's right to privacy from the public realm; this includes the government's ability to access information.

Arendt identified the private and public spheres as separate realms with distinct roles in society. The public realm is meant for 'appearance' of those that are different to enhance the understanding of a 'common world' in a way that allows different worldviews to be heard.

Mobile devices have increased the ability for public appearance through participation in political and non-political movements. The private realm is meant to engage in private conversations where one does not have to appear or make oneself known to someone who does not share the same worldview. Arendt viewed private sphere communication as separate from public sphere communication. In our current historical moment the private sphere, accessible through mobile communication devices, requires action in the public sphere to keep information away from government officials. Private and public realms are blurred through a single device that allows one to simultaneously participate in both private individual communication and make a public appearance in a common world. Arendt defined the blurring of private and social life as the social realm.

The Social Realm

A major shift in the modern understanding of public and private realms occurred with the rise of the social realm. “The decisive historical fact is that modern privacy in its most relevant function, to shelter the intimate, was discovered as the opposite not of the political sphere but of the social, to which it is therefore more closely and authentically related” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 38). The social sphere developed with the rise of the modern nation-state when private and public realms began to blur together. Arendt defines the social realm in terms of private and public spheres stating:

“The distinction between a private and a public sphere of life corresponds to the household and the political realms, which have existed as distinct, separate entities at least since the rise of the ancient city-state; but the emergence of the social realm which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose

origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state” (28).

The development of the modern city-state occurred with the blurring of public life to include private life of the home; “it is very likely that the rise of the city-state and the public realm occurred at the expense of the private realm of family and household” (29). The modern era shifted the private and public realms to one domain or “hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance that we call ‘society’” (35). Participation in social spheres has increased with the modern shift to a society leading to our contemporary society that now includes public interest in private life activities that were previously in the home or with like-minded individuals.

The modern shift occurred during the end of traditional political thought of Plato and with the beginning of political thought of Marx. The tradition of politics was traced by Arendt to the writings of Plato who “described the sphere of human affairs—all that belongs to the living together of men in a common world” in his work *The Republic (Between Past and Future 17)*. Political activity was reserved for public sphere communication in the traditional idea of politics. Arendt described the beginning of modern society and the end of traditional political thought in the work of Karl Marx who viewed society as the sphere of living together and not just in public spaces (*Between Past and Future 17*). The transition to modern society is marked when Marx declared “the sphere of living together, which he called ‘society’,” where “philosophy and its truth are located not outside the affairs of men and their common world but precisely in them” (17). Arendt viewed Marx’s work regarding society negatively due to the shift away from a separation of public and private life and towards the creation of a social sphere where common world and the everyday affairs of men come together. The social sphere blurs private life with

public activities rather than separating private activities from appearance in the common world of public spheres. The transition that occurred with the blurring of private and public spheres during the shift to the modern city-state informs our contemporary society, which readily blurs private and public life.

The view of the social realm connected to public and private life is termed a “continuum” by Sarah Michele Ford (560). This continuum is related to Arendt’s understanding of the private/public and social connection in the modern age as necessary for each realm to exist. The use of new information technology, including mobile communication devices, creates the ability to participate in public and private realms that are “facilitated by social media software itself” (561). The understanding of how mobile communication devices shape participation in public, social, and private realms is complicated and unsettled. Mobile technology and our ability to be constantly connected with other people shift our understanding of private and public acts and participation in the social realm.

The rise of the social realm created a change in the private realm and increased public exposure. Private matters “can survive only in the realm of the private. For instance, love, in distinction from friendship, is killed, or rather extinguished, the moment it is displayed in public” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 51). The rise of the social sphere risks the diminishment of private sphere functions like love. People’s ability to be constantly connected through mobile communication devices places them in constant connection to social spaces. Mobile devices connect to multiple platforms, shifting the understanding of the publicity of relationships and uniformity of behavior. Private matters like love and friendship become exposed in the public through social realms. For example, a public display of affection towards a partner is very common on social media platforms for all followers and ‘friends’ to witness. Relationships are at

times expected to conform to an expectation of becoming ‘Facebook official,’ where it is not assumed a relationship is viable until they accept one another as in a relationship on social media accounts. The private relationship is then exposed on social platforms visible to the public.

Arendt discussed the social realm as promoting “uniform behavior” (*Human Condition* 43). The shift towards a larger social realm diminishes public and private distinctions, shaping the human condition through the use of communication technology. During the first decade of the 21st century people saw the creation and embedding of social networks into everyday life. Social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, among other more recently developed platforms, offer social spaces for communication with a network of people chosen by the user that can either hold similar worldviews, or offers opposing viewpoints (Heatherly et al. 1271). The social spaces accessible through a mobile communication device depend on the user’s choice of whether and how to participate and follow, which varies by platform, group membership, and personal selection.

Communication within the social realm develops conformism: “This modern equality, based on the conformism inherent in society and possibly only because behavior has replaced action as the foremost mode of human relationship” (Arendt, *Human Condition* 41). The messages on social media sites, accessed through mobile communication devices like smartphones, are carefully constructed messages aiming to communicate a particular appearance conforming to acceptable social realm expectations and meanings. This is evident in the finely curated images found on social media sites such as Instagram or Snapchat. These social media sites are accessible anywhere with a smartphone. Communications to the public found on social media sites are particular public appearances users wish to convey to their followers. This leaves out the unwelcomed images of unflattering angles, or background images. The public message is

very carefully determined. A common example is that of reality stars like the Kardashian family. The appearance the public sees is what becomes reality. The public platform accessed by mobile communication device use can also be in public areas, purposefully projecting conversations for all to hear and to keep up with the appearance of being social. For example, someone who wants to look important and needed may increase the volume of their ringtone or message alert, speak loudly for others to hear their conversation, or simply use a mobile telephone for benign purposes to appear socially engaged. The use of mobile communication devices creates an ‘appearance’ in the public realm of electronic mediated communication and the physical world based on how the user decides to use the technology.

Mobile telephones are considered private technology (S. Campbell and Kwak 265). However, they enable the user to be connected to a variety of groups and organizations and are present in public spaces, both digital and physical. Sometimes mobile devices even communicate without the knowledge of the user. For example, Google has a feature that keeps track of where the device is located and where it travels called Google Location. The Google Account Help webpage details information concerning this feature including that the user must turn on or off this feature, though if the account has another administrator, the administrator must make access available to the individual user of the device (Google). If the user is unaware of this feature, they do not know to turn off the tracking device. Companies seeking to gather consumer information are able to monitor private use of a mobile telephone to target specific markets, products, and services.

Communication scholar Lance Strate discusses Arendt’s framing of the human condition as a way to help understand the shifts in society caused by new communication technology in a 2017 article titled, “The Human Condition as the Subject of Media Investigation.” People’s use

of technology develops as a condition of existence that eventually fades into the background of everyday life. Mobile communication devices became another part of existence within our society; “as we become conditioned to our new conditions, they fade from view, being routinized they melt into the background and become essentially invisible to us” (245). The invisibility of the human condition causes a change in the general social environment that eventually becomes an expected part of everyday life. Mobile communication devices, such as smartphones, are now a part of routine behaviors, as most people make sure they have their mobile telephone in their possession at all times. Mobile telephones have become a perceived necessity for many people, but still have shortcomings, as does all technology.

Ronald C. Arnett writes about Arendt’s views on the shortcomings of modern technology creating false optimism in his 2013 book *Communication Ethics in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt’s Rhetoric of Warning and Hope*. False optimism is defined as “undue confidence” that creates a feeling of “standing above a historical moment” rather than existing in the current moment (3; 4). False optimism creates “expectations of unrealistic hope” that go unmet. Technology viewed as being able to continually progress creates an unrealistic “artificial” hope regarding what can be accomplished that avoids reflection (242). False optimism and unrealistic hope are different from genuine hope. Genuine hope is distinct from false optimism because it focuses on reflective thinking within the historical moment. Genuine hope relies on reflecting on the historical moment to find “genuine light” rather than unreflectively focusing on progress and false optimism (3).

Arnett continues, noting that Arendt revealed “the shortcomings of a modern world propelled by too much unearned confidence and optimism” (3). Arendt was critical of constant progress:

“Arendt offers us a rhetorical warning about modernity and a rhetorical call to existential hope, framing a story about communicative ethics resistant to modernity’s undue confidence in progress, its excessive hope in the unlimited potential of the communicative agent/individual, and the amalgamation effort that collapses public and private life into a common social sphere” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics in Dark Times* 2).

Arendt warned of modern life’s rise of the social sphere diminishing public and private life due to constant progress through technological development. New technologies, like mobile communication devices, are currently part of people’s everyday life and are conditioning our social existence to allow perpetual contact “which is rooted in an innate human desire for social connection” (S. Campbell, “Cross-Cultural Comparison” 345). Arendt warns of too much false optimism that will lead to the collapse of public and private life for favor of the social.

Arendt’s work on understanding labor, work, and action in public, private, and social spheres of society provides an understanding of the different realms in which people communicate. The public sphere is understood through the act of appearing in the common world made up of different worldviews and cultural understandings, while private sphere is understood as a place where people do not have to appear since there is no difference. The social sphere is the blurring of the public and private sphere. People’s use of mobile communication devices in each sphere depends on the goals of the communicator.

Conclusion

Communication technology has shifted through three stages, “(1) oral or oral-aural (2) script, . . . and (3) electronic” (Ong, *The Presence of the Word* 17). Each of these stages altered communication practices including the current electronic stage. Within our current stage of

communication technology, communication has increased connectivity to others and shapes our ability for perpetual contact. The development of the most recent communication technology, mobile communication devices, has altered an understanding of the human condition.

Arendt's work offers a framework for understanding how mobile communication is shaping the human condition. Labor, work, and action are activities included in the human condition and have shifted overtime. Labor includes the necessities of everyday life, while work provides "things" that are needed to participate in a common world with others (Arendt, *Human Condition* 94). Action is understood as political activity that engages difference in public spaces through "appearance" of "speech and action" (199). Arendt also discusses a separation of public, private, and social realms to demonstrate the variety of interactions people have in their lives including participating in political activities, remaining unseen by the public eye, and incorporating public activities into private life. Mobile communication shapes the communication in each of these spheres through providing a platform for public participation in political activities. Mobile communication also allows for private conversations with those who are similar that require no appearance. Mobile communication devices allow the user to alternate between making an appearance in public participation and having private conversations with others not mean for public appearance. Mobile communication devices blend public and private communication through one device potentially causing the user to unknowingly post private communication on public platforms.

The importance of freedom and anonymity in public and private life is a major concept in the work of Hannah Arendt in understanding the public, private, and social realms. Arendt offers an understanding of public, private, and social realms that considers the role of the human condition. Communication studies seek to understand the connection between communication

technologies and the way in which society is shaped; “[t]he perennial question is whether these technologies will fundamentally alter the practice of freedom and the level of anonymity that is the bedrock of contemporary sociopolitical life in democratic nations” (Katz, “Mobile Media and Communication” 391-92). Mobile communication devices have allowed for constant connection, causing private realms of anonymity to shrink. The social realm has grown with the ability of mobile communication devices to connect with people in public with the assumption their communication was private and only meant for people of their choosing.

The introduction of mobile communication devices and the ability to constantly connect to others has created a culture where it is almost expected there are people/companies/governments listening. Our mobile culture has shifted society and the spirit in which communication devices are used. Information has allowed for a social shift in expectations in communication and the existence of public, private, and social realms. The mobile telephone, in particular the smartphone, is a new machine that is still in the process of being shaped by society, transforming the human condition through ongoing conversations of what is considered public, private, and social communication.

The human condition has become more connected and accessible with the adoption of mobile communication technology in everyday life. There is an increased concern over state interference of mobile communication privacy. Concerns of the government accessing private conversations have increased and brought about more public conversations of the importance of privacy. The blurring of public and private realms in the social sphere began with the modern era. This blurring increased with mobile communication use and the ability to participate in both public and private activities through one device. The following chapter discusses dialogic ethics in relation to mobile communication device use.

Chapter 4: Dialogic Ethics in Mobile Communication Use

Mobile communication increases connectivity of a self to other people within a social network. How we understand the role of a self and another person shapes our use of mobile communication devices to communicate and connect with people. We live in a culture that is shaped by the embedding of mobile communication devices in our daily lives. Mobile communication technologies include mobile telephones that have expanded beyond “voice and text messages” and are now “about internet access, location awareness, and sensors” (de Sousa e Silva 32). Most mobile communication research focuses on smartphones, which have become the primary means of mobile telephone use (de Sousa e Silva 32). Mobile communication devices, like smartphones, are now a part of everyday relationships. The study of communication ethics considers what we “ought” to do in relationships; “how we *ought* to relate to ourselves, *ought* to relate to others, and as of late, of how we *ought* to relate to the earth” (Marino xiii). The choices one makes in the use of mobile communication devices in relationships reflect one’s communication ethic, or how we understand how we ‘ought’ to communicate.

Communication ethics concerns “goodness involving all manifestations of communicative interaction” (Lipari, “Communication Ethics” 2). Aristotle discussed ethical practices in *Nicomachean Ethics* that relied on defining a common good and practical wisdom to understand what is considered an ethical action. One approach to communication ethics is a dialogic approach that focuses on engaging in dialogue to identify and engage in differences in a common good.

A dialogic ethic approach to people’s use of communication media identifies a common good that exists between a self and another person that is grounded in philosophical wisdom. The focus of dialogic communication is not on personal preference or a reflection of others, but on a

moral action that emphasizes a common good (Arnett and Arneson, *Dialogic Civility* 73). Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas present philosophic understandings of dialogue in which “the ethical relation with another person, rather than the ontology of the self, is understood to be foundational to human experience” (Lipari, “Communication Ethics” 16).

A dialogic ethics approach to communication occurs in private communication between people and in public rhetoric that engages an entire community. Private dialogue between a self and another person is understood as occurring through face-to-face interactions (Arnett, “A Dialogic Ethic” 84). A public dialogue engages a speaker and an audience in which “[o]pinions expressed within communities include both shared and differing values” (Arneson, “A Dialogic Ethic in the Public” 143). Mobile communication devices limit face-to-face interactions but offer a platform for engaging in public rhetoric. Pat Arneson identifies three aspects of an interpretive understanding of a dialogic ethic in public rhetoric in “A Dialogic Ethic in the Public Rhetoric of Angelina Grimke.” Hans-Georg Gadamer and Krista Ratcliffe offer a theoretical framework for an interpretive understanding that relies on an “ontology of understanding” and “rhetorical listening” to find “right” action (Arneson, “A Dialogic Ethic in the Public” 150). Mobile communication has the ability to access both private and public communication by connecting individuals together and by providing a platform for public rhetoric. A person with a dialogic understanding of how one ‘ought’ to communicate in public through mobile communication devices engages in rhetorical listening to understand differences among audiences.

The question that guides this chapter is: How can a dialogic ethics approach to communication help in understanding people’s mobile communication use? To answer this question, I will first discuss communication ethics through Aristotle’s definitions of the common good and practical wisdom. In the second section, I address dialogue and dialogic ethics through

the work of Buber and Levinas. In the third section I focus on Arneson's three aspects of an interpretive understanding of dialogic ethics in public rhetoric, and then apply each aspect to the use of mobile communication technology.

Communication Ethics: Aristotle's Common Good and Practical Wisdom

Communication ethics is a practical philosophy that considers a common good derived through communication practices (Arnett, "Practical Philosophy" 211; Aberdeen and Porlezza 329). In the article "The Practical Philosophy of Communication Ethics and Free Speech as the Foundation for Speech Communication" (1990) Ronald C. Arnett connects practical philosophy to speech communication, stating, "Our discipline has historically addressed . . . the practical felt needs of the culture; such sensitivity to what a culture or society needs spawned the discipline of speech communication" (211). A communication ethics approach to understanding the everyday needs of a community relies on knowledge of how people communicate different worldviews (216). The study of ethical communication practices engages in different worldviews to help define what constitutes a common good. Once a common good is defined, the practical approach to communication ethics helps determine 'right' action through practical wisdom.

"The Good" in the study of communication ethics is defined by Arnett, Janie M. Harden Fritz, and LeeAnne M. Bell as "the valued center of a given communication ethic—what is most important and held in highest regard finds protection and promotion in our communicative practices" (2). Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* serves as a framework for discussions of the common good and practical wisdom within the study of communication ethics (Arnett, "Practical Philosophy" 211). The *Nicomachean Ethics* reflects Aristotle's when he was head of the ancient Greek school, the Lyceum. The following sections discuss Aristotle's understanding of the common good and practical wisdom as they relate to communication ethics.

Common Good

Aristotle (384 B.C.E.-322 B.C.E.) discussed a ‘good’ in *Nicomachean Ethics* as something everything aims to reach, but the good varies: “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim. But a certain difference is found among ends” (1). Aristotle noted the multiplicity of goods rather than a single good that is universal for all; “clearly it cannot be something universally present in all cases and single; for then it could not have been predicated in all the categories, but in one only” (8). While every ethical action is aimed at a good, the way the good is reached is not always the same. Aristotle discussed a final good that takes others into consideration. “[T]he final good is . . . self-sufficient. Now by self-sufficient we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man by himself, for one who lives a solitary life, but also for parents, children, wife, and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is born for citizenship” (12). A person’s participation within a society includes ethical action that aims for a good.

Communication ethics calls for an understanding of difference among various cultures and worldviews in order to find a common good. In the introduction of the 2014 edited volume *Philosophy of Communication Ethics: Alterity and the Other*, Arnett and Arneson discuss differences between people in what is considered a ‘good’ within communication ethics stating, “When we find ourselves shocked over what another [person] considers important, we are face-to-face with differences in what matters, witnessing contrasting communication ethics” (3). Communication ethics is linked to the philosophy of communication in identifying opposing viewpoints and the different philosophical basis of what others define as ‘good’ (3).

The ‘good’ that is to be protected includes multiple philosophical viewpoints by “attending to what is before us” to connect people with those that are around them (Arnett et al., *Communication Ethics Literacy* 4). Participation in society includes interactions and communication with people who do not have similar conceptions of what is ‘good’ and what matters. Rather than seek out a universal definition of what action is good, communication ethics guides a person to where the good is located in action, which is understood through practical wisdom.

Practical Wisdom

Communication ethics concerns the practical wisdom that guides the ethical reason for action, rather than merely doing something because everyone else acts in the same manner. Any decision of what action to take relies on knowing the choices that exist rather than “blind allegiance to particular social institutions” (Arnett, “Status of Communication Ethics” 45). Aristotle’s concept of practical wisdom helps in understanding the importance of making choices in communication ethics (45).

Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* or ‘practical wisdom’ is discussed in *Nicomachean Ethics* as action that leads to a ‘good’ that is known through philosophical wisdom:

“Practical wisdom is the quality of mind concerned with things just and noble and good for man, but these are the things which it is the mark of a *good* man to do, and we are none the more able to act for *knowing* them if the virtues are states of *character*, just as we are none the better able to act for knowing the things that are healthy and sound, in the sense not of producing but of issuing from the state of health” (154).

Practical wisdom is the act of doing what is good after employing philosophical wisdom to determine what is good. Philosophical wisdom is linked to virtue in relation to practical wisdom;

“virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means” (Aristotle, *Nicomachean* 155). The practice of how virtue is carried out, or practical wisdom, reflects philosophical wisdom that defines what is good. Completing an action that is good without having the philosophical grounding for why something is communally virtuous is not considered a virtuous act. Actions are considered good when they are based on philosophical wisdom. Different cultures and worldviews have different views of ‘good’ actions based on philosophical wisdom. Practical wisdom of different cultures and worldviews helps to define virtuous acts.

Aristotle’s concept of practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, grounds the philosophical approach to speech communication studies. Arnett connects practical philosophy to speech communication stating, “Our discipline has historically addressed or answered the practical felt needs of the culture; such sensitivity to what a culture or society needs spawned the discipline of speech communication” (“Practical Philosophy of Communication Ethics” 211). Communication scholars study the everyday needs of people in a culture through better knowledge of how to communicate. Communication ethics is grounded in practical philosophy that seeks to encourage conversations:

“Free speech and communication ethics encourage hearing and questioning, giving us a reason to *permit* dissent and to listen to unpopular opinions. The discipline of speech communication cannot with confidence offer *the* right answers, but we can encourage the asking of questions accompanied by the courage to listen, speak, and challenge in the complex pursuit of social truths” (216).

Aristotle’s concept of practical wisdom helps us understand ethical communication in everyday life.

Communication Ethics

In a 2016 entry titled “Communication Ethics” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, Lizbeth Lipari discusses communication ethics as a search for understanding what is “good” (3). The distinction between ethics and law is discussed: “Ethics govern and yet are distinct from law. That is, while laws encode values and customs that will be enforced by the power of the state, more generally ethics concern those values and beliefs (whether enforced by law or not) that a society or group or individual believe will most likely create goodness” (Lipari 1). The importance of understanding what is good is foundational in communication ethics research.

A history of communication ethics is connected to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, with formal study in the field of communication traced to 1983 National Communication Association’s conference theme “Communication Ethics and Values” (Arnett et al., *Communication Ethics Literacy* 12). A thorough history of communication ethics does not exist but instead can be understood through its grounding in the study of ethics as it relates to human communication (Arneson, “Introduction” xi). The philosophical connection to the study of communication ethics is evident as ethics “is one of the four main branches of philosophy—along with logic, metaphysics, and epistemology” (Arneson, “Introduction” xii).

Communication ethics identifies ideas relating to philosophies of communication including, “[o]therness, alterity, and concern for the neighbor” (7). The focus of communication ethics on understanding “otherness” that exists in our contemporary world relies on different philosophical understandings of communication practices (Arnett and Arneson, “Introduction” 7). The study of communication ethics focuses on communication practices that respect and give a voice to different cultures and worldviews. The importance of a philosophical approach to

communication is found by informing “one’s approach to interaction and works as a fulcrum that gives energy, direction, clarity, and strength to one’s communication” (Arnett and Arneson, “Introduction” 8). Communication ethics is concerned with understanding a “sense of ‘why’ for engaging particular communicative practices” (7). The sense of why is identified through conversations with people who hold different worldviews.

Aristotle discusses ethical actions in relation to defining the common good and practical wisdom. The common good is understood within communication practices through conversations of different worldviews. Practical wisdom considers what an ethical act is through a knowledge of philosophical wisdom that determines what is ethical. Ethical interpersonal relationships are understood through dialogue and ethical interactions between a self and another person. Theoretical grounding for understanding dialogue includes the works of Buber and Levinas.

Dialogic Ethics: Concerning a Self and an Other

The definition of dialogue depends on what topic is discussed, “ranging from the social-psychological processes of developing a sense of self in the interpersonal setting to the political processes of achieving consensus in civic and cultural forms” (Anderson et al. 1). Dialogue is broadly defined in communication studies as “*inter-action* which not only includes listening, but reacting by taking one’s own position on what the speaker initiatively has said” (Weigand 65). A central part of dialogue “is the idea that any utterance or act is always responding to and anticipating other utterances and acts” (Wood, “Foreword” xvi). Buber offers theoretical grounding for dialogue in relationships through his understanding of “I-It” as a part of conversation, and “I-Thou” as authentic communication (Holba 497).

Dialogic communication ethics is grounded in the “dialogic process of negotiating contending social goods in a postmodern society, engaging an era of narrative and virtue contention” (Arnett et al., “Communication Ethics” 63). Society consists of different narratives and value structures that define achieving a ‘good’ differently. Dialogic ethics is presented as a way for communicating the multiplicity of ‘the good’ in relationships between a self and another person. Central to dialogic ethics is the importance of knowing various ‘goods’ that exist in communication between diverse groups of people (Arnett et al. “Communication Ethics”; Lipari “Communication Ethics”). Mobile communication allows for the possibility of interpersonal communication in relationships across multiple platforms with constant connectivity. A dialogic ethics approach to using mobile communication devices concerns ‘the good’ in relation to a self and another person.

In the introduction to a 2018 edited volume *Dialogic Ethics* Arnett and François Cooren focus on the concept of an Other within dialogic communication ethics and the search for what is “good” (ix). Dialogic ethics addresses different worldviews of what an Other identifies as ‘the good.’ Dialogic ethics is offered as “the beginning of human hope” occurring when a self and an Other engage in communication that seeks to find a common good between people (xiv).

Dialogue occurs when a self is seeking to understand one’s role in society through understanding the self in relation to others (Lipari, “Communication Ethics” 14). Buber and Levinas both discuss an “ethical I” that exists as someone who “attends to a responsive construction that moves from individualism to responsible attentiveness to the Other and to the historical situation” (Arnett, “A Dialogic Ethic” 76). Individualism or collectivism needs to be avoided in order to “enter into the relational event of dialogue and become self-accepting” (Poulakos 204).

This section discusses major philosophical contributions of Buber and Levinas to the study of dialogue. Dialogue between a self and an Other creates a relationship Buber refers to as “I-Thou” opposed to dialogue Buber describes as “I-It” (*I-Thou*). Levinas discusses a philosophical definition of a moral Other through face-to-face interactions (“Time and the Other” 45). In this section, I first discuss the work of Buber and the avoidance of individualism and collectivism when an Other is addressed in dialogue that “walks the narrow ridge” (Arnett, *Communication and Community* 30). Second is an overview of the work of Levinas who discussed the responsibility to the other that extends beyond the self and stresses the importance of seeing “the face of the Other” (Arnett, “A Dialogic Ethic” 85).

Martin Buber: Conversations and Authentic Dialogue

In a 1974 article discussing early iterations of dialogic ethics titled “Components of Dialogue” John Poulakos draws from Buber to identify and discuss components of dialogue including the “Self,” the “Other,” and the “Between” (199). Buber identified dialogue as communication between a self and another person on a ‘narrow ridge.’ This meeting between people occurs when another person is viewed not as an object, but in relation to a self (*Between Man and Man* 11). Philosophical grounding for ‘the other’ in dialogic ethics is through Buber’s discussion of the other in terms of the ‘narrow ridge’ and perceptions of the other including the process of becoming aware.

Buber explained dialogue as occurring when a self meets another person in what he referred to as a “narrow ridge” in a collection of works titled *The Way of Response: Martin Buber* (110). Dialogue that meets between two extreme positions exists on the ‘narrow ridge.’ Buber wanted the ‘narrow ridge’ metaphor “to express that [he] did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky

bridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting with the One who remains undisclosed” (Buber, “The Way of Response” 111). Buber’s ‘narrow ridge’ metaphor is utilized by Arnett in *Communication and Community: Implications of Martin Buber’s Dialogue* to describe the meeting of people to create a meaningful exchange by “walking the narrow ridge between extreme positions” (30). Meeting on the ‘narrow ridge’ is nonjudgmental in that it opens conversations that allow for the possibility of persuasion leading to the possibility of changing a position on a topic (Arnett, *Communication and Community* 31).

Dialogue occurs on the ‘narrow ridge’ when a self meets another person and develops an ‘I-Thou’ relationship through communication. Buber defined two modes of being; “the intersubjective, ethical, dialogical relation of the I-Thou and the instrumental, goal-oriented, monological relation of the I-It” (Lipari, “Listening for the Other” 125). Buber defined an ‘I-It,’ or “I-She,” or ‘I-He,’ relationship as one that exists in the “past” and not the present (*I and Thou* 63). I-It relationships view the ‘It’ as an object that exists in the past that stands in relation to the ‘I,’ while an ‘I-Thou’ relationships views the ‘Thou’ as a subject that stands with an ‘I’ in order to live in the present (64). In other words, a dialogue on a narrow ridge can only exist when a person views a relationship in the present with another person and not as an object in the past. For dialogue to occur people must meet as they exist in the moment. Dialogue between an ‘I’ and a ‘Thou’ engages people in the present to communicate beyond an objective ‘I-It’ relationship that does not expand beyond what is known in the past.

Everyday conversations exist in what Buber defines as ‘I-It’ relationships. Buber describes the ‘I-It’ relationships as necessary; “without It a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human” (*I and Thou* 85). Buber’s ‘I-It’ relationships are a necessary part of everyday life’s “functional communication” (Holba 497). ‘I-It’ relationships

are different than the meaningful exchanges that occur in 'I-Thou' relationships where we find "deeply genuine and connective communication encounters" (Holba 497). People relate in both "the It-world" and "the You-world" but do so differently:

"The It-world hangs together in space and time.

The You-world does not hang together in space and time.

The individual You *must* become an It when the event of relation has run its course.

The individual It *can* become a You by entering into the event of relation" (Buber, *I-Thou* 84).

The act of conversations and not relating in a meaningful connection is part of an 'I-It' relationship.

An 'I-Thou' relationship is not one that is planned or expected. Lipari states, "One cannot plan or predict an I-Thou relation, which occurs suddenly without warning, as if by grace. Instead, one can make oneself available only for a time when such an encounter occurs. The I-Thou relation is thus utterly without telos, aim, or intention. Speaking emerges fully from the present moment, not from prior intentions or future aims" (Lipari, "Listening for the Other" 125-126). Dialogue in an 'I-Thou' relationship does not have a planned purpose or reason for communicating but achieves dialogue when the communicators meet each other in the present moment accepting the other as they exist.

Buber discusses three different perceptions of another person. The perception we have of other people shapes the possibility for dialogue. The first two perceptions include "the observer" and "the onlooker" who both view other people as objects that exist in relation to the self: "The onlooker and the observer are similarly oriented, in that they have a position, namely, the very desire to perceive the man who is living before our eyes. Moreover, this man is for them an

object separated from themselves and their personal life” (Buber, *Between Man and Man* 11).

The ‘observer’ perceives another person by ‘noting’ their existence. The observer is “wholly intent on fixing the observed man in his mind, on ‘noting’ him” (10). The “*onlooker*” has no intent on the other and just notes someone as an object, like noting someone in a grocery store so you know to go around them to avoid physical contact (10). The third perception of a person is “*becoming aware*” by relating to another person not as an object but as a subject within their existence (11). Dialogue occurs when a self no longer perceives another person as an object in life but relates in a way that becomes aware of other people’s existence.

Buber explains the perception of ‘becoming aware’ that creates the ability for dialogue to occur beyond people:

“It by no means needs to be a man of whom I become aware. It can be an animal, a plant, a stone. No kind of appearance or event is fundamentally excluded from the series of the things through which from time to time something is said to me. Nothing can refuse to be the vessel for the Word. The limits of the possibility of dialogue are the limits of awareness” (*Between Man and Man* 11).

Through this explanation, dialogue can occur beyond humans to include machines. Buber does not eliminate technical dialogue in interactions that achieve dialogue that occurs where there is an act of ‘becoming aware’ (Arnett, “A Dialogic Ethic ‘Between’ Buber and Levinas” 79).

Understanding the other in dialogic ethics includes Buber’s discussion on the recognition of an Other on the ‘narrow ridge’ that seeks to engage in dialogue with the possibility for a change of position. Dialogue between a self and another person is achieved when the communicators seek to ‘become aware’ of each other not as an object but as an individual person

with thoughts and opinions. Dialogic ethics engages the responsibility to a moral Other as explained through the work of Levinas.

Emmanuel Levinas: The Moral Other

Levinas' (1906-1995) teachers, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, shaped his phenomenological approach and early scholarship including "The Phenomenological Theory of Being" (1930). Seán Hand explains that Levinas is said to criticize Husserl's reduction of consciousness in his later work as "absoluteness of consciousness itself, one that exists prior to reflection" (Hand 11). Levinas' mature philosophy moves away from the purely theoretical work of Husserl, and towards a more practical approach to ethics as communicated in everyday life. Levinas' moral philosophy presented a self as having a responsibility for an Other (Hand 6). The work of Buber influenced the scholarship of Levinas, though "Levinas's focus was not on dialogue between persons but rather on what is 'otherwise than being.' His aim was not to negate being, but rather to come to grips with it in a way that departs from the ego-centered focus of Cartesian concepts of being" (Lipari, "Listening for the Other" 126). Buber identified relationships that created a space for dialogue while Levinas was interested in dialogue as a way to explain who we are as beings. Levinas' concern with how we relate to others is noted by Lipari who states, "In writing about the relation to the other, Levinas reminds us that our interlocutor, our other, is always more than appears to us, always more than we can ever comprehend" ("Listening for the Other" 128). Main ideas of Levinas within dialogic ethics include his understanding of our responsibility for a moral Other that relies on face-to-face interactions and rhetorical listening.

Responsibility for a moral Other in the work of Levinas is dependent upon face-to-face interactions. In his essay "Time and the Other" Levinas defined the 'Other' in terms of face-to-

face interactions: “The relationship with the Other, the face-to-face with the other, the encounter with a face that at once gives and conceals the Other, is the situation in which an event happens to a subject who does not assume it, who is utterly unable in its regard, but where none the less in a certain way it is in front of the subject. The other ‘assumed’ is the Other” (45). A self engages in face-to-face dialogue that exposes and conceals various aspects of an Other. A self cannot know all about a moral Other, as a moral Other is composed of more than what is made known. Use of capitalized ‘Other’ signals an encounter with a moral ‘Other’ that requires the self to meet and be responsible for engaging all aspects of the person, known and unknown. A lower-case ‘other’ signals another person not in dialogue and therefore it is unnecessary to meet ‘face-to-face.’

The concept of a moral Other is identified by face-to-face encounters described as seeing “face of the other” (Arnett, “Buber and Levinas” 85). The importance of the ‘face of the other’ in communication is in the phenomenological existence of the I and the Other historically. Levinas identifies the self in relation to the other, depending on interactions with a moral Other in order to define oneself. “The situation of the face-to-face would be the very accomplishment of time; the encroachment of the present on the future is not the feat of the subject alone, but the intersubjective relationship” (Levinas, “Time and the Other” 79). A self and an Other are defined through each other in face-to-face encounters that exist at the present moment. Levinas’ definition of a moral Other relies on the meeting between a self and an Other through physical, face-to-face encounters. The moral Other represents someone who must be physically present.

A second dimension of a moral Other in a dialogic ethic is the importance of rhetorical listening. Lisbeth Lipari notes, Levinas “presupposes yet underestimates the importance of listening” (“Rhetoric’s Other” 229). Listening is not specifically noted by Levinas as playing a

role in dialogue but is implied by his definition of a self and Other. Levinas asserted that a self exists in relation to an Other (“Time and the Other” 79). Listening is required by both an Other and a self in order for a Being to be made known. The need for listening and speaking is noted in Levinas’ discussion of Platonic understanding of “reason in a living being” (*Totality and Infinity* 73). Being is made known through language that includes both speaking and listening to reveal the Other through language. Lipari calls attention to Levinas’ work in understanding ethical encounters to include the act of listening, noting, “For Levinas, the revelation of the face is speech, and the self’s responsibility to respond to the face of the other is infinite, unlimited. And yet quietly embedded in this assertion of responsibility—the ability to respond—lies the prior action of listening” (“Rhetoric’s Other” 229). Levinas’ view of the self as existing in relation to an other presupposes the need to listen, as it is not possible to know an Other without listening to someone communicate their being.

Dialogic ethics in communication is dependent on recognizing ‘the face of the other’ to provide meaningful connection in private dialogue. Arnett notes an application of dialogic ethics in a private setting includes social practices, stating, “[A] communicative ethic involves social practices that are derivative of a larger narrative or worldview” (Arnett, “Situating a Dialogic Ethics” 48). Our current cultural practice includes the daily use of mobile communication devices in social spheres that blur public and private realms. A dialogic ethics in private communication relies on a person encountering an Other on a ‘narrow ridge’ by seeing ‘the face of the other.’ Mobile communication devices create a mediated communication that is better understood as public dialogue due to the social nature of the technology and its ability to connect and communicate with anyone, anywhere. Public dialogue includes rhetoric in the public sphere “generally associated with discussions about democracy” (Arneson, “Dialogic Ethics in the

Public” 143). Public dialogic ethics scholarship includes the importance of an historical context found in different cultural practices (145).

Dialogic Ethics in Public Rhetoric and Mobile Communication Use

A dialogic ethic for public rhetoric within the public sphere is important, as “the public sphere is a resource for promoting discussions of civil society and public life” (Arneson 143). Mobile devices increase users’ ability to connect with others in public spheres (Abeelee et al.; Frost). Dialogic ethics helps identify ethical public mobile communication practices that help manage the constant connection to others. In a 2008 book chapter “A Dialogic Ethic in the Public Rhetoric of Angelina Grimke,” Pat Arneson suggests that “ongoing contact between people in the public sphere could be present as sustained societal discourse about a given topic, rather than limiting humane rhetoric to individuals in conversation. This would expand a dialogic orientation to rhetoric to include an ongoing societal conversation about a topic of concern to citizens” (144). Mobile communication devices allow for expanding the reach of conversations and increased participation through open systems that allow for dialogue with those who are different (Gordon 273). A dialogic orientation to public rhetoric on platforms accessed by mobile communication devices presents a way to engage in dialogue that seeks to find common good from multiple worldviews.

Arneson discusses a dialogic ethic in public rhetoric through three interpretive understandings. The three aspects of interpretive understanding each focus on communication in a historical context grounded in “Hans-Georg Gadamer’s ontology of understanding and Krista Ratcliffe’s rhetorical listening” (Arneson 150). Understanding and rhetorical listening “create a space for interactants to consider their interpretations of a social situation in light of ‘right’ action” (150).

Gadamer (1900-2002) was a German philosopher widely known for his work in continental philosophy concerning hermeneutics. His 1960s book, *Truth and Method*, focused on historicity to make sense of a text as it exists in the world: “Both the human and the natural sciences are to be understood as achievements of the intentionality of universal life—i.e., of absolute historicity. Only this kind of understanding satisfies the self-reflection of philosophy” (249-250). Gadamer’s work in hermeneutics provides a framework in communication studies concerning historicity. “Historicity attends to the way a question is understood differently in various historical moments—and involves the recognition that different questions are foregrounded in current historical moments” (Arnett et al., “*Bridges Not Walls*” 219). The historicity of communication practices shapes our interpretive understanding of viewpoints through dialogic communication ethics.

Rhetorical listening in the work of Ratcliffe focuses on “*interpretive invention*” (141). In a 1999 article, “Rhetorical Listening: A Trope for Interpretive Invention and a ‘code of Cross-Cultural Conduct’,” Radcliffe discusses the role of listening in rhetorical practices and the importance of listening in general. Radcliffe’s purpose is “to suggest that rhetorical listening may be imagined, generally, as a trope for interpretive invention, one on equal footing with the tropes of reading and writing and speaking” (196). Listening needs to use “undivided logos” which presumes “an ethical responsibility to argue for what we deem fair and just while simultaneously questioning that which we deem fair and just” (203). Rhetorical listening acts as a way for bringing together people from different cultures and background and is part of dialogic ethics.

Understanding and rhetorical listening provide a framework for Arneson’s three aspects of interpretive understanding. The three aspects are applied to the work of female abolitionist Angelina Grimke (1805-1879). Arneson explains Grimké’s ability “to compel change

(particularly in her female listener-speakers) by expressing a counter-narrative in a way that could open possibilities for a new understanding of democracy” (146). Grimké’s public rhetoric practiced a dialogic ethic that is identified through Arneson’s three aspects of interpretive understanding.

First Aspect of Interpretive Understanding

The first aspect of Arneson’s interpretive understanding in a dialogic approach to public rhetoric is titled “*Understanding a Tradition of Politics and Ethics*” that “includes an awareness of the significance of historical context, which requires engaging a living tradition promoting an understanding of self and other to inform culture’s politics and ethics” (Arneson 146; 145).

Arneson continues stating, “This embraces rhetorical listening as it is related to a responsibility logic that recognizes all people have a stake in the quality of one another’s life” (145). The first aspect of interpretive understanding is recognizing a responsibility for each other regardless of differences that inform historical moments. Grimké’s abolitionist rhetoric was shaped by the historical context of violence. Her public discourse demonstrated dialogic ethics by addressing the opposing positions on slavery (147). Rather than ignore those who disagreed with her, Grimké made an effort to understand their position in relation to her own. The need for understanding historical context and the difference of opinions in public dialogue shapes a dialogic ethic. Our contemporary historical context is one where public rhetoric is accessed on mobile devices, like mobile telephones.

Mobile telephones are a new technology that is able to engage in public rhetoric on digital platforms. Social networking sites accessible through mobile telephones are able to reach a variety of people with different political and ethical beliefs. Researchers are unable to determine if the actual use of digital social media is used for “cross-cutting views” or “like-

minded discussions” (Heatherly et al. 1272). Cross-cutting discussions are defined as “exchanges of ideas among people who hold different political and ideological beliefs” (1271). Social networking sites that are accessible through mobile communication devices have the capability for “promoting democratic ideals,” yet research has not conclusively proved cross-cutting discussions occur on the communication medias, as it is dependent on the user of the media (1272). Each media user is responsible for how they choose to communicate with other people since the device used to access the platforms do not determine how each platform is utilized. Mobile communication devices are seen as having the ability for cross-cutting discussions. A dialogic ethic approach to political discussion on mobile communication device platforms would include users participating in cross-cutting discussions that engage in rhetorical listening to identify a self and an other’s positions and lived-experience.

A dialogic ethic approach to understanding mobile communication depends on rhetorical listening. Simply increasing contacts and communicating with people who have similar backgrounds is not engaging in rhetorical listening. Dialogic ethics in public rhetoric expands social circles to include the rhetorical listening of those who do not have similar worldviews. Mobile telephone use engages dialogically with others through the practice of rhetorical listening when the self is not the focus but reflects a responsibility to others. A focus of a dialogic approach to ethical communication in public is engaging in communication with people who are similar and different without prejudging and assuming one worldview is better than another. This can be through using mobile communication device platforms that offer the ability for multiple views to be heard. For example, people engaging in social media platforms with the purpose of listening to opposing viewpoints to better understand other people allows for different opinions to be expressed without prejudging people with whom you do not agree.

Second Aspect of Interpretive Understanding

The second aspect of interpretive understanding, under the heading “*Critical Questioning and Dialogue about the Subject Matter*,” focuses on “an awareness of the significance of lived-experience, hermeneutic reflection, critical questioning, and dialogue between different horizons and world views” (Arneson 147; 145). This understanding of rhetoric calls attention to the “content by revealing thinking about the subject manner, not arguing a person into submission” (147). Grimke addressed different “cultural logics” to “reshape an understanding of community and help people imagine a new way of uniting as a society” (148). Grimke shared different lived experiences for those who do not share the traditional male narrative (148). A dialogic ethic addresses differences in worldviews by calling attention to the content rather than focus on changing one part of an audience’s opinion. There is a common world we all live in but experience differently. Dialogic ethics in public rhetoric addresses those differences to find unity in society.

The need to understand different worldview includes understanding one’s own bias, as experiences differ. A dialogic ethic in public rhetoric helps to communicate a common good located between the self and other people. Mobile communication devices allow users to connect with multiple social networks including those that align with their worldviews and with those that do not through “cross-cutting” (Heatherly et al. 1271). Social networking through mobile communication provides the ability to connect with those who share worldviews and with those who do not on one device. A dialogic ethic approach to public communication on mobile devices requires the user to focus on the content of a discussion rather than communicating for the purpose of persuading one part of the audience.

Users on social media sites are able to follow accounts that interest them, often choosing communities that share worldviews. Engagement in social networking sites depends on the user and their desire for connection and dialogue with differing opinions and worldviews to engage in a dialogic ethic approach to communication in the public sphere. Mobile communication devices offer users various platforms for communication but do not dictate to whom people communicate and for what purpose.

Third Aspect of Interpretive Understanding

The final aspect of interpretive understanding, “*Phronesis in the Relationship of Ethics and Rhetoric*,” addresses “an awareness of language is necessary, establishing a relationship between ethics and rhetoric, and advocating phronesis—‘right’ action in a particular situation” (Arneson 147; 145). Dialogic ethics stems from the practical philosophy of communication that is aware of language as it is used historically. Grimke advocated ‘right’ action by calling attention to the audience for her speeches and why they were assembled; for either curiosity or sympathy for the slave (149). The reason for assembling and listening to a message plays an important role in determining ‘right’ action. Arneson discusses the *phronesis* in Grimké’s rhetoric by calling attention to unreflective meaning as to why the audience assembled: “This pattern of disrupting unreflective meanings imposed a disjunction of taken-for-granted assumptions and presented listeners with a choice. Grimke guided rhetorical listeners toward *phronesis* in her rhetoric” (149). Arneson continues noting, “The speaker-listener poses a question with a rhetorical disposition that invites discussion about the content under examination to advocate ‘right’ action” (149). A speaker-listener relationship in mobile communication would advocate discussion of content.

Mobile communication allows for public discussion of topics located on mediated platforms. These platforms offer a space for political discussion among members through communication technology shaping rhetorical practices. Communication technology platforms constrain possibilities for communication based on their functionality (Katz and Aakhus 307). A current constraint of mobile devices in public rhetoric is the limitation on message lengths such as Twitter's well-known original 140-character limit for tweets, though this became more flexible overtime and is currently based on an algorithm that determines acceptable length of a tweet that can be supported on the platform (Twitter). Another constraint is the feedback generated through social media. Often, engaged responses are measured by 'reactions' rather than adding to the discussion. Facebook increased the ability for reactions in their 2016 release of "reactions" that allow users a range of images representing "Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad or Angry" (Facebook). The ability for discussions that engages in developing phronesis between a speaker and a listener is dependent on dialogue on content. Mobile communication devices constrain communication to shortened messages or simply with 'reactions' that tell the speaker or audience very little regarding the content and do nothing to add to a conversation.

Mobile communication through social platforms engages in public rhetoric that is limited by the capabilities of the technology. Electronic media accessed through mobile devices offer exposure to public rhetoric but civic engagement is often outside of social media sites. The Egyptian revolution is one example of this engagement, where the lack of Internet connection helped to expand the revolution and increase direct political activity within the physical location rather than in the mediated environment (Frost). A dialogic ethic for public rhetoric requires communication that adds to conversation to determine what 'right' action to take. Mobile

communication brings awareness to issues but serves as a starting point with dialogue more often occurring outside of social media platforms.

An interpretive understanding of dialogic ethics in public rhetoric relies on understanding and rhetorical listening. Communication in public rhetoric is dependent on an interpretive understanding of historical context, different worldviews, and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). These three aspects help in understanding application of dialogic ethics in public rhetoric through the use of mobile communication devices. Mobile communication devices offer an entry to becoming aware of public rhetoric, but the constraints of the technology including limitations in messages and types of engagements and limits to the ability for dialogue that engages both a speaker and a listener. Mobile communication device users are responsible for engaging in dialogue with others in a way that expands the self to be in dialogue with people who have different viewpoints.

Conclusion

The study of communication ethics includes a dialogic approach grounded in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that discusses the common good and practical wisdom (Arnett, "Practical Philosophy" 211). Dialogic ethics is an approach to communication "which locate[s] *the good* in the relations between persons" (Lipari, "Communication Ethics" 14). Dialogic ethics focuses on the role of the self and the other person in identifying a common good between people.

Two prominent scholars in dialogic ethics include Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas who both discussed defining a self and another person who engages in dialogue. Buber's focus was on the 'narrow ridge' and perceptions of another person, while Levinas focused on defining dialogue between a self and moral Other relying on the face-to-face interactions and rhetorical listening. Defining dialogic ethics relies on dialogue between people and communities that are

part of authentic communication. Private dialogue is between people, while public dialogue includes public rhetoric. Mobile communication limits face-to-face interactions and the ability for what Buber refers to as an 'I-Thou' relationship. Mobile communication technologies, like smartphones, offer a platform for dialogic ethics in public rhetoric. Dialogic ethics in public rhetoric on mobile communication's multiple platforms is shaped by its ability to connect with a variety of people in a public sphere and the constraints placed on communication through the technology.

Public rhetoric engages an audience that includes people with "both shared and differing values" (Arneson 143). The study of dialogic ethics in a public sphere is through an interpretive understanding relying on "ontology of understanding" and "rhetorical listening" (150).

Community members' use of mobile communication platforms in public rhetoric is evidenced by the existence of government social media pages, politicians' social media accounts, and the everyday citizen who engages with these accounts. An interpretive understanding of dialogic ethics in public rhetoric shapes mobile communication platforms' role in public dialogue.

Mobile communication helps to connect people together and bring awareness of topics and movements that concern community members. People are more connected than ever before through mobile devices ability to be in constant contact. The connection can be used to engage in dialogue when the concern is for understanding another person who is different from you. Public dialogue requires conversation that adds to content in a way that presents different viewpoints. Mobile communication is one form of communication technology that engages in public rhetoric. A dialogic approach to using mobile communication devices concerns other people and engages in rhetorical listening through a cross-cutting approach. Relationships do not require constant dialogue that engages in authentic interactions, as pointed out by Buber's discussion of

the functional necessity of engaging in ‘I-It’ conversations. Living an entire life without meaningful conversations, however, creates a sense of “nothingness” that diminishes meaningful life that is created between a self and Other (Levinas, “There is” 33). Mobile communication devices, like mobile telephones, allow for perpetual contact but require the user to be mindful of how they are communicating to others and whether or not they are attempting to form meaningful relationships with others or engaging in necessary day-to-day conversations. The following chapter focuses on perpetual contact as it relates to how people use mobile communication devices in our contemporary society.

Chapter 5: The Perpetual Contact of Mobile Communication

A major consequence of mobile communication is the increase of connectivity. James E. Katz and Mark A. Aakhus identify the increase in connectivity as creating a socio-logic of perpetual contact in their theory of *Apparatgeist*. The theory of *Apparatgeist* is often used in social science research that answer questions pertaining to the role of mobile telephones in relation to fashion (Katz and Sugiyama; S. Campbell, “Mobile Technology and the Body”), perceptions of appropriate use based on culture and gender (Axelsson; Lever-Mazzuto; Samuel-Azran), or of value-added services through a mobile device (Tojib et al.). While studies are often approached from a social science framework, the framework for *Apparatgeist* includes a philosophical approach to mobile communication. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophical concept of *Geist* is central to the theory and part of the neologism. Martin Heidegger’s concept of ‘becoming’ is part of understanding perpetual contact as a socio-logic within our contemporary mobile culture. Time has accelerated through the use of mobile communication devices due to the technologies’ capabilities to increase connection.

The goal of this final chapter is to apply the *Apparatgeist* theory to answer the project’s question posed in chapter one: How does the use of mobile communication devices shape interpersonal relationships in contemporary society? The previous four chapters ground an understanding of the current use of mobile communication devices in interpersonal relationships. Chapter one grounds the project in mobile communication through a historical overview of the development and eventual acceptance of the technology in the United States. Chapter two applies a dialogic understanding of the need for connection and disconnection in relationships to the use of mobile communication devices. Chapter three presents an overview of public, private, and social realms grounded in the philosophical thought of Hannah Arendt and the shifts that occur

due to the embedding of mobile communication devices within society. Chapter four identifies a dialogic ethic approach to mobile communication practices that is grounded in understanding and rhetorical listening. Each chapter addresses the increased connectivity through mobile communication device use.

In this final chapter I first discuss James E. Katz and Mark A. Aakhus' theory of *Apparatgeist*. Major takeaways from the theory include the authors' conclusion that mobile communication device use is creating a socio-logic of perpetual contact from the increased connectivity provided by the technology. Second, I will discuss a rhetorical approach to people's mobile communication device use that helps provide a framework for current communication practices that blur mediated and unmediated communication. Third, I will discuss the philosophical foundation of *Apparatgeist* through the theory's use of the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Martin Heidegger and their respective concepts of *Geist* and 'becoming.' Finally, I discuss the shift in communication practices that lead to an increase in connection with others through the capabilities of electronic communication that creates a sense of instant time that shapes the development of a socio-logic of perpetual contact. The final section also offers ideas for further research relating to the development of relationships through mobile communication use as it increases our connectivity to each other.

Mobile communication devices have become domesticated into our society, creating a mobile culture. People now expect to be able to connect with people in their social networks at any time and from any location. Each of the previous four chapters has a common theme of increased connectivity through mobile communication device use that shapes peoples' interactions with various social networks. The theory of *Apparatgeist* provides grounding for understanding perpetual contact of mobile communication use through its historical setting,

dialogic practice, communication practices that occur in public, private, and social realms, and finally an ethical understanding of communication practices in interpersonal relationships.

The Theory of *Apparatgeist* and the Socio-Logic of Perpetual Contact

The theory of *Apparatgeist* was first presented by Katz and Aakhus in their 2002 edited text *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance* as a way to approach the study of communication technology. *Apparatgeist* relies on a socio-logic of perpetual contact to explain consequences of the adoption of mobile communication in everyday society. Communication scholars, Paul D. Goodwin and Joseph W. Wenzel defined socio-logic in a 1979 article as “a socially developed sense of practical reasoning” (289). Katz and Aakhus apply this definition to explain the social consequence of increased connectivity to others.

Overview of *Apparatgeist*

In their discussion on technology Katz and Aakhus “suggest the spirit of the machine ... influences both the designs of the technology as well as the initial and subsequent significance accorded them by users, non-users and anti-users” (305). Katz and Aakhus’ theory seeks to understand communication technology as it is used within society with specific focus on mobile communication devices. The theory helps to merge technology and social influences in understanding mobile communication device use. Given the ‘taken-for-grantedness’ of mobile communication through its domestication in our culture, it is ideal for this project to use a theory grounded in a perspective that “sees technology and society as continually influencing one another” (Baym 26).

The theory of *Apparatgeist* offers a philosophical grounding to the study of mobile communication. This theory was created to “emphasize the context-sensitive nature of knowledge and behavior concerning communicative practices” (Katz, *Magic* 8). Katz and

Aakhus' theoretical orientation in their neologism *Apparatgeist* uses a combination of 'apparat,' stemming from apparatus meaning a machine or gadgetry, and the German word *Geist* "which denotes spirit or mind" (306). In the second part of the neologism, *Geist*, they "adopt Hegel's sense" of the term *Geist* "to denote a directive principle within historical entities, and guiding their existence" (306). This interpretation of *Geist* by Hegel "defies empirical analysis, instead signifies a fundamental theme that animates the lives of human cultures" (306). Experience needing to be understood as it is situated historically is seen in Katz and Aakhus' theory of *Apparatgeist* where they assert the need to go beyond empirical studies, grounding their work in Hegel's concept of *Geist* (306). The concept of *Geist* is used by Katz and Aakhus to help in situating media technology in its historical moment, one that is currently defined as consisting of "perpetual contact" through mobile communication device use (Haddon, "Domestication and Mobile Telephone" 49). The importance of the historical spirit of machines within theory of *Apparatgeist* helps to ground a philosophical hermeneutic approach to understanding mobile communication device use in interpersonal relationships.

Rich Ling and Jonathan Donner mention the theory of *Apparatgeist* in their 2009 text, *Mobile Communication*, noting the theory "describes a consistent, observable interplay between people and personal communication technologies, observable across contexts, cultures and life states" (33). One element of mobile communication is the ability for perpetual contact. Mobile devices allow for communication at any time and place. The theory *Apparatgeist* focuses on the way perpetual contact through mobile communication technology creates a sense of predictability of how the technology is used including balancing connection and disconnection (Ling and Donner 33).

The theory of *Apparatgeist* in mobile communication focuses on the concept of pure communication through perpetual contact that connects people together completely with no interference. According to Katz and Aakhus: “The compelling image of perpetual contact is the image of pure communication” (307). Katz and Aakhus define pure communication as “sharing one’s mind with another” (307). The basis for the concept of pure communication, as cited by Katz and Aakhus, is presented in John Durham Peters’ book *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. Peters discusses dialogue as “marriage of true minds” (62). Peters continues, stating, “We are still prone to think of true communication as personal, free, live, and interactive” (50). Communication occurs in its purest form when there are no barriers. The difficulty of pure communication is noted by Peters who states, “Dissemination is far friendlier to the weirdly diverse practices we signifying animals engage in and to our bumbling attempts to meet others with some fairness and kindness” (62). The idea of pure communication, as presented by Katz and Aakhus in their theory, is altered by Scott Campbell in his 2008 chapter “Mobile Technology and the Body: Apparatgeist, Fashion, and Function.”

S. Campbell points out that the pure communication found within perpetual contact “can be regarded as the merging of self and other in an attempt to establish a perfect social connection” (“Mobile Technology and the Body” 156). Through Campbell’s social scientific study regarding technology as fashion, he points out that “pure communication may not be an all-encompassing driving force behind the adoption, conceptualization, and the use of the mobile phone” (159). Instead, Campbell asserts reframing the core assumption of *Apparatgeist* to “possible communication” which “refers to the ability to connect and not the connection itself. Possible communication suggests all forms of potential connection—expressive, instrumental,

safety/security, or otherwise” (160). The potential for connection to others through mobile communication devices defines our historical moment.

Katz and Aakhus’ theory of *Apparatgeist* relies on the historical moment to understand technology. The theory combines the technology and the spirit of the technology within society and has undergone transformation in its scholarly application, as demonstrated by the work of S. Campbell. The Hegelian notion of *Geist* grounds *Apparatgeist*’s understanding of the historical rise of our mobile culture and aids in situating the ‘spirit’ of mobile communication as it exists socially. Katz and Aakhus identify a social consequence of mobile communication device use in society as having led to the development of a socio-logic of perpetual contact.

Socio-Logic of Perpetual Contact

The use of ‘socio-logic’ in communication research includes the work of communication scholars Goodwin and Wenzel who use the term as a way to frame logic developed not from scientific method, but instead relying on rhetorical arguments presented by Aristotle (289). The authors discuss logical principles in rhetorical arguments presented by a 1978 debate textbook *Decision by Debate* by Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede who provide seven categories of “substantive arguments” including; sign, cause, parallel case, analogy, generalization, classification, and statistics (293). Goodwin and Wenzel discuss proverbs as a socio-logic form of reasoning based on Aristotle’s understanding of argumentation in which “all rhetorical argument[s]” are “based on probabilities and signs” (293).

Aristotle discussed probabilities and signs in *Rhetoric* as part of “rhetorical syllogisms” (28). Aristotle defined probability broadly as “a thing that usually happens” (*Rhetoric* 28). For example, if you call someone at the same time every week it is probable that they will answer. There are unexpected situations that could prevent the expected communication to occur, such as

an accident or unexpected activity, but it is not probable. The expectation of a probable occurrence is identified through signs. Signs are broken into two definitions, “the infallible kind of Sign” where there is complete proof of a statement’s truth, and a “fallible” sign that can be refuted (29). Infallible signs are irrefutable and exist as truth. Examples of infallible signs often occur in faith doctrines whose truth is not to be questioned. The sign of a socio-logic is a fallible sign that can be refuted, though offers an argument for a point that “supports the relation of universal to particular” (29). Fallible signs look to universal occurrences to help understand particular situations. Not every situation will be the same, but fallible signs offer a probability of what will occur in particular instances based on a sense of what usually occurs. Fallible signs are dependent on social settings to identify meaning in particular situations. Proverbs offer an example of signs relating to meaning in particular situations.

The rhetorical “function” of proverbs may be understood as a socio-logic within particular social settings (Goodwin and Wenzel 290). The use of proverbs as a rhetorical practice presents a sense of “practical conduct” and is argued by the logic that exists within social situations. Proverbs become meaningful based on their use in social contexts. The concept of practical reasoning within a socio-logic is prevalent in communication research relating to connection of vernacular settings of spiritual texts (Howard 177). Rhetorical practices shape the socio-logic within social settings. Mobile communication devices have created a socio-logic of perpetual contact through people’s use of the technology in social contexts.

Apparatgeist’s application of the term socio-logic within a communication context understands apparatuses, like mobile communication devices, as developing meaning through the construction of signs used in society. The socio-logic of perpetual contact occurs through sign reasoning that is “legitimate when based on some understanding of the nature of things or the

necessary connections among species” (Goodwin and Wenzel 294). Mobile devices increase possible connections among people leading to the belief there is a possibility of pure communication in which there is constant contact and lack of communication barriers (Katz and Aakhus 307). *Apparatgeist* views mobile communication as a sign of increased connectivity among users that signals the development of a socio-logic of perpetual contact. The rhetorical framework of socio-logic is grounded in an understanding of rhetoric and the function of messages. The definition of rhetoric has changed overtime and is currently reflected in electronic media as a blurring of mediated and non-mediated communication.

A Rhetorical Approach to Mobile Communication

The study of rhetoric in relation to mobile communication identifies how messages function in different media. Major transitions in rhetorical scholarship occurred throughout history. The definition of rhetoric is adapted to each historical moment: “Each age, of course, defines its terms for itself, even those which it inherits from previous traditions, and each has the right and duty to do so” (McNally 72). Our current moment includes the presence of mediated communication that is approached theoretically through a digital rhetoric framework. Research concerning digital rhetoric extends traditional rhetorical scholarship to go beyond persuasion to include research on how meaning is transmitted through mediated communication devices. This section first provides a brief overview of rhetorical scholarship followed by a discussion on the development of digital rhetoric and the blurring of mediated and unmediated communication.

Rhetoric

The study of rhetoric has a complicated history with several shifts in definitions over time. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg divide historical development of rhetoric into four chronological periods in their anthology of rhetorical readings, *The Rhetorical Tradition*:

Readings from Classical Times to the Present. The four periods are: “Classical (from birth of rhetoric in ancient Greece to about 400 C.E.), the Medieval (to about 1400), the Renaissance (to about 1700), the Enlightenment (from late seventeenth through the eighteenth century, the Nineteenth Century, and the Modern and Post-modern (the twentieth century)” (1). James Richard McNally traced six prominent shifts in defining rhetoric within these time periods in his 1970 article “Toward a Definition of Rhetoric.”

Rhetoric’s first definition was provided by the sophists in the 5th century B.C.E. and “taken over into” Plato’s definition of rhetoric (McNally 71). The Sophists sought to understand all opposing views and “call attention to the function of language in inducing belief, rather than encouraging audiences to give themselves up uncritically to its power to move and persuade” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Introduction” 23). Plato (428 B.C.E.–347 B.C.E.) opposed the Sophistic Movement and how it sought “to induce belief without regard for whether the belief is inherently true” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Plato” 81). Plato sought to ennoble a communication practice that “persuades others to true knowledge” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Aristotle” 170). Plato defined rhetoric in *Gorgias*: “[R]hetoric seems not to be an artistic pursuit at all, but that of a shrewd, courageous spirit which is naturally clever at dealing with men” (23). Plato viewed the sophistic definition of rhetoric negatively, as evidenced through the dialogue between Gorgias and Socrates in which Socrates likened rhetoric to “flattery” with no purpose (23). Plato sought communication that aimed at true knowledge and not mere ‘flattery.’

Aristotle (384 B.C.E.–322 B.C.E.) defined rhetoric in his work *Rhetoric and Poetics* stating, “Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (24). This definition differs from Plato’s in that Aristotle sought to identify practical functions of rhetoric. Rather than focusing on true knowledge like Plato, Aristotle

“attempts to dignify its use in making decisions about matters on which true knowledge is not available” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Aristotle” 170). Aristotle discusses persuasion in relation to arguments concerning what is true through statements that are “self-evident or because it appears to be proved from other statements that are so” (*Rhetoric* 27). Plato sought to find truth that was known before birth, while Aristotle viewed rhetoric as a way to make decisions on topics that had no truth and were part of everyday life (Bizzell and Herzberg “Plato” 81).

Marcus Fabius Quintilian (33 C.E.–96 C.E.) in his work *Institutes of Oratory* (71). Quintilian was a teacher of rhetoric who promoted ethical communication and understood “that the good speaker be a good man” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “Quintilian” 359). Quintilian noted the difficulty in defining rhetoric in one way: “It is, indeed, defined in various ways,” yet provided a common definition “that oratory is the power of persuading” (“*Institutes of Oratory*” 385). Quintilian’s definition of rhetoric is concerned with ethical people using ethical forms of persuasion.

The final definition of rhetoric presented by McNally is from theologian and rhetorical teacher George Campbell (1719 C.E.–1796 C.E.) who wrote *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Two main parts of rhetoric discussed by Campbell include “the sense” linked to logic, and “the expression” linked to grammar (“*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*” 905). Campbell’s approach to rhetoric and his discussion on language use and style is considered “the first modern rhetoric, and even as the first real advance in rhetorical theory since Aristotle” (Bizzell and Herzberg, “George Campbell” 901). Persuasion for Campbell is dependent on use of language in rhetorical messages. There are various definitions of rhetoric yet the foundational functions of rhetoric remain, including persuasion and making ones’ meaning known.

Persuasion is part of rhetoric through the constructs of language: “The core assumptions of rhetoric as founded in human communication and expression, through body, word, and media, have been maintained throughout time” (Hess, “Introduction” 7). Another function of rhetoric is in making meaning known, as expressed by Michael J. Hyde who defines rhetoric’s “primordial function” as “to ‘make-known’ meaning both *to oneself and to others. Meaning is derived by a human being in and through the interpretive understanding of reality. Rhetoric is the process of making-known that meaning*” (“Hermeneutics and Rhetoric” 348). Rhetoric has the function of communicating meaning to others. Meaning making in rhetorical practices is shaped by new communication technology, with the most recent development being electronic communication. Digital rhetoric helps provide a rhetorical foundation for how meaning is made known through electronic communication outlets, such as a mobile telephone.

Digital Rhetoric

In the introduction to *Theorizing Digital Rhetoric*, Aaron Hess defines digital rhetoric as “*the study of meaning-making, persuasion, or identification as expressed through language, bodies, machines, and texts that are created, circulated, or experienced through or regarding digital technologies*” (6). The focus of digital rhetoric is on the “meaning-making” function of people’s communication through digital outlets (6). The prevalence of digital outlets is increasing and “it is likely that digital technology already looks less like a technology and more like a common feature of modern existence, much in the same way that writing does not surface in the public mind as technology” (6). Our current use of digital technologies occurs as part of our physical world and not in only “non-embodied or mediated” communication as it has in previous theories concerning digital communication (6). Previous theories relating to digital rhetoric saw a separation of mediated and non-mediated communication. People were either

communicating through digital devices, or through face-to-face interactions. Now there is a blurring of mediated and non-mediated communication. In digital rhetoric the technology is viewed as shaping messages: “The creation of messages is often structured by the constraints and abilities inherent within digital technologies” (7). The definition of “digital rhetoric” has changed since the term was first used in the early 1990s to reflect the acceptance and adoption of mediated communication devices like the mobile telephone into everyday life. Knowing development of the term digital rhetoric is important as “[e]ach of these definitional moments recognizes that digital rhetoric evolves as technology does and as technological tools become increasingly widespread” (5).

The origin of the term “digital rhetoric” was traced by Hess to a 1992 essay by Richard Lanham titled “Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Practice, and Property” (“Introduction” 4). The term ‘digital rhetoric’ originated in the early 1990s, but the study of how technology influences speech is dated to the time of Plato (“Introduction” 2-3). The foundation of digital rhetoric is related to previous works on “traditional or ‘old’ media” as each technological advancement is studied as “coming to a definition or understanding of digital technology [as] an iterative process dependent on changes in technology, usage, history and theory” (3). All prior communication technology plays a role in current studies of rhetoric through communication technology. Almost three decades have passed since the first use of the term ‘digital rhetoric.’ Since then, the impact of increased electronic communication through the development and embedding of smartphones into society has shaped our digital rhetorical practices in mediated interpersonal communication to include mediated and non-mediated forms of communication.

Lanham connects rhetoric to the use of computers, arguing, “That in *practice* the computer often turns out to be a *rhetorical* device” (“Digital Rhetoric” 221). Communication

through computers shifts towards playfulness allowing less static communication than found in print, as “text moving from a print to digital electronic display becomes unfixed and interactive” (222). The study of digital rhetoric expanded with the growth of electronic communication through technological developments, like smartphones.

Technological advancements altered the amount of connection people had available, ultimately increasing the ability to communicate with others. The definition of rhetoric historically focused on persuasion, while the “persistent definitional focus of digital rhetoric has been about the reconfiguration of rhetorical theory within digitality” (Hess, “Introduction” 5). The study of digital rhetoric expanded beyond the study of persuasion in communication through electronic media during the early 2000s. James P. Zappen discusses the role of digital rhetoric in a 2005 article reviewing relevant literature: “Studies of digital rhetoric help to explain how traditional rhetorical strategies of persuasion function and how they are being reconfigured in digital space” (“Digital Rhetoric” 319). Rhetoric is commonly associated with persuasion but Zappen points out digital rhetoric scholarship is “challenging the view that associates rhetoric exclusively with persuasion, a view that has persisted for more than two millennia” (321). The transition to digital media “presents new possibilities for dialogue—interactivity and intersubjectivity, participation and collaboration, conflict and contestation—in the context of the new digital media” (Zappen, *The Rebirth of Dialogue* 141). Digital communication through devices including mobile telephones enables increased connection with a large variety of people who can interact and communicate on various platforms at the same time. The ability to interact with others increased with the development and adoption of mobile communication devices that were able to access the Internet, like smartphones.

The company Research in Motion's release of the Blackberry made the development of mobile telephones that are able to connect to the Internet popular in 2003 by creating a single device that connects to email in addition to functioning as a telephone (Agar 117). Mobile communication devices were further revolutionized by Apple's release of the iPhone in 2007 that offered consumers a simplistic smartphone without the tiny keyboards and stylus pens found on the Blackberry (124). Smartphones increased digital connection changing everyday rhetorical practices to include mediated communication and non-mediated communication. The ability to communicate almost anywhere through portable digital media alters how people interact with digital and non-digital communication.

Current research in digital rhetoric focuses on mediated communication interactions with non-mediated communication. In 2018 book chapter "Digital Rhetoric and the Internet of Things," Zappen discusses digital rhetoric and the increase of the "Internet of Things (IoT)." The increase in Internet-connected things leads to a digital rhetoric approach to communication through technology "for the present and future . . . [to] encompass not only traditional modes of persuasion but an array of technical, managerial, and communication skills, including the ability to negotiate the complex interrelationships between humans and a digitized physical world" (55). Kevin Ashton is said to have coined the phrase 'Internet of Things' during a presentation to Proctor & Gamble in 1999 to describe the use of the Internet in everyday objects (Ashton; Aspis 369). We currently see an abundance of objects able to connect to the Internet including computers and laptops, telephones, household appliances, wristwatches, and toys. The increase in people using objects with Internet connection alters communication by merging digital communication with face-to-face interactions that blur mediated and unmediated communication.

Everyday interactions are able to occur in a mix of digital and physical forms of communication. It is not uncommon for face-to-face conversations to include references to digital communication and even incorporating mediated communication with others. For example, someone who might not be able to physically attend an event may be able to virtually participate through mobile devices that allow the user to speak and interact with those that are physically present. While this might not be ideal, it does offer a way for mediated and non-mediated communication to coexist and interact in the same social situation. This is just one example of how mediated and non-mediated communication are blurred. The development of more technologies able to support mediated interactions will only continue to blur mediated and non-mediate communication. The ability for mediated communication to enhance user's interaction and connection with others will increase with a standardization of electronic communication technology, much like the standardization of print brought about by the development of the printing press.

In a 2016 article “The Importance of Internet of Things Governance: A Public-Private Partnerships for Technical Cooperation” communication scholar Analía Aspis calls for a standardization of IoT to avoid “a proliferation of architectures, identification schemes, protocols and frequencies dedicated to particular uses” (375). The current unstandardized nature of IoT can “hamper its popularity and become a major obstacle in its roll out” (375). The call for standardization of IoT objects allows people the ability to more readily use the technology. This will further embed the technology into everyday actions creating the increased domestication of the electronic communication technology, paralleling the standardization of print and writing that occurred with the introduction of Gutenberg's invention in the late fifteenth century (Eisenstein 3).

The standardization of electronic devices has begun with the formation of a Working Group, “Project Connected Home over IP,” announced December 18, 2019. The group, which includes Amazon, Apple, Google, and the Zigbee Alliance, has a goal “to simplify development for manufacturers and increase compatibility for consumers” (Zigbee Alliance n.p.). No timeline for completion is offered, but this is a first step towards a standardization of electronic communication technology that will enhance the ability for people to use the technology in everyday life, regardless of the brand. The standardization of electronic communication technology will further shape the historical moment, shifting the ‘Spirit’ of society.

Apparatgeist brings attention to the digital rhetoric within our current society. Hess highlights several key issues about technology and human expression: “The concept of digital rhetoric requires sustained attention to the ways that rhetoric changes in a technological era and how technology is shaped by human expression both about and through the technology itself” (“Introduction” 2). The construct of *Apparatgeist* philosophically grounds the way we use communication technology combined with the capabilities of the technology. People’s use and the technology itself both play a role in shaping the historical moment in which we live and can be understood through Hegel’s concept of *Geist* and Heidegger’s concept of ‘becoming.’ The concept of *Geist* helps situate technology as it is used historically within a society. The concept of ‘becoming’ aides in how we see technology constantly transforming overtime through its use in everyday life.

A Philosophical Framework for Mobile Communication

The theory of *Apparatgeist* presents a philosophical grounding for a digital rhetorical approach to mobile communication use in society through the works of Hegel and Heidegger. *Apparatgeist* relies heavily on Hegel’s concept of *Geist* as part of the neologism to understand

the historical context of technology in a society. The theory also briefly mentions Heidegger's concept of "becoming," providing an opportunity to apply Heidegger's ontological questioning to mobile communication grounded within the theory of *Apparatgeist* (Katz and Aakhus 306). Both Hegel and Heidegger present philosophical approaches to *Apparatgeist*'s claim of the consequence of mobile communication's increase in connectivity as creating perpetual contact.

Hegel's Concept of *Geist* or 'Spirit'

Hegel (1770-1831) discussed the term *Geist*, or 'Spirit,' in *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a substance he described as "self-supporting, absolute, real being" (264). *Apparatgeist* applies the concept *Geist* to machines, like mobile communication devices, that shape the existence of domesticated technologies within society. The term *Geist* offers a foundation for understanding the historical changes in society through the use and adoption of apparatuses that shape social interactions including the development of the socio-logic of perpetual contact.

Katz and Aakhus note *Geist* is interpreted in *Apparatgeist* as a theme in shaping historical cultures: "[W]e find that Hegel's interpretation of terminology as stemming from the intellectual or rational, which defies empirical analysis instead signifies a fundamental theme that animates the lives of human cultures" (306). *Apparatgeist* reflects the Hegelian idea of *Geist* as a spirit directing history and "guiding" existence, though does not follow Hegel's concept of *Zeitgeist* said to be "a spiritual and intellectual force that truly existed" because of *Zeitgeist* being an "intangible concept" (306). This understanding is not intended as a deterministic approach to technology as *Apparatgeist* is "not a term that requires technological determinism" (307). The study of mobile communication grounded in the theory of *Apparatgeist* takes the spirit of the historical period into consideration in understanding the role and function of technology within the current society (Katz and Aakhus 308). The term *Apparatgeist* "captures the range of

possible behaviors vis-à-vis a particular technology,” yet does not imply technological determinism (Axelsson 51). Instead the term is applied to the idea that technology and society mutually shape the domestication of technology as it becomes embedded into society.

Apparatgeist theory is a social shaping approach to communication technology. The study of communication technology through the theory of *Apparatgeist* relies on Hegel’s scientific interpretation of philosophy.

Scientific inquiry is a method to discover truth, and Hegel called for philosophy to be “raised to the status of a Science” (*Phenomenology of Spirit* 4). A philosophical understanding of knowledge is closer to a science when the goal is for “*actual knowing*” rather than for only “*love of knowing*” (3). Hegel defended a scientific inquiry to determine truth: “The true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of truth” (3). The scientific system of truth Hegel discussed knows “the true shape of truth” (4). Knowledge about truth is through feeling and intuition: “[T]he Absolute is not supposed to be comprehended, it is to be felt and intuited; not the Notion of the Absolute, but the feeling and intuition of it, must govern what is said, and must be expressed by it” (4). This feeling and intuition in regard to knowledge about an Absolute, or truth, is understood as ‘Spirit.’ “[I]t is clear that Spirit has now got beyond the substantial life it formerly led in the element of thought, that it is beyond the immediacy of faith, beyond the satisfaction and security of the certainty that consciousness then had, of its reconciliation” (4). Hegel’s understanding of philosophy as a science that seeks knowing a truth through feeling and intuition of ‘Spirit’ helps to ground *Apparatgeist* in understanding the true nature of technologies with the spirit of society. The concept of *Geist*, or ‘Spirit,’ grounds Hegel’s understanding of the process of communication.

Hegel approaches communication as a way to connect with others and collectively build the world (Peters 110). Hegel's understanding of communication shaped his philosophical concept of *Geist* as it relates to communication technology. In *Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*, Peters provides an overview of Hegel's system of communication: "To put words in [Hegel's] mouth, the aim of his entire system is communication: not in the sense of shared information, but in the richer sense as the process whereby a free human world is built collectively" (110). Communication is not just sharing information, but building a community through collective communication. *Geist* is understood as an embodied part of the collective world (Peters 109). Peters goes on to discuss Hegel's understanding of communication as embodied, stating,

"Hence 'communication' will always be more than the shuttling of mind-stuff. It is the founding of a world. For Hegel communication is not a psychological task of putting two minds *en rapport* but a political and historical problem of establishing conditions under which the mutual recognition of self-conscious individuals is possible. The issue is to reconcile subjects with their embodied relation to the world, with themselves, and with each other" (Peters 112).

Communication is dependent on the historical culture and understanding of the world. Hegel's work that is referenced by Peters includes his essay "Fragment of a System" written in 1800, and *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The embodiment of communication through the use of technology, such as mobile telephones, shapes the social consequences of new communication technology. In "Fragment of a System," Hegel discussed what is understood as the necessity of union and nonunion stating, "Life is the union of union and nonunion. In other words, every expression whatsoever is a product of reflection, and therefore it is possible to demonstrate in the case of

every expression that, when reflection propounds it, another expression, not propounded, is excluded” (312). The necessity of individuals to exist through a “union and nonunion” is through the embodiment of life through reflection (312). Communication is part of everyday life that is reflected through expressions. People communicate a reflection of their internalized thoughts since it is not possible for someone to know exactly what someone is thinking and why. The union and nonunion of existence discussed by Hegel includes what is expressed and what is not expressed through reflection.

The understanding of communication as a sense of embodiment within Hegel’s concept of *Geist* helps identify mobile communication devices as having a sense of embodiment that blurs mediated and non-mediated interactions. Donner describes the theme of *Apparatgeist* as “a universal spirit embodied in mobile technologies that, by reducing the costs of communication and by increasing individual control over the time, location, and content of communication, tends to encourage individualism and self-expression” (“Shrinking Fourth World?” 32). Communication is not embodied only in mediated channels but embodied within people and their existence in the world consisting of mediated and non-mediated interactions.

The use of *Geist* within *Apparatgeist* defines the role of historical context in understanding communication media and the role in social life. *Apparatgeist* applies Hegel’s meaning of *Geist* to the social consequence of increased connectivity provided by new communication technologies through a philosophical grounding of historical factors that shape society. Another element of *Apparatgeist* grounded in philosophy is its use of Heidegger’s understanding of technology as ‘becoming’ (Katz and Aakhus 306). Heidegger views technology in terms of its ‘essence’ rather than individual devices. Technology is not static within society as its existence is constantly being shaped through its use in the world. Heidegger’s concept of

‘becoming’ provides a grounding to understand technology as constantly being shaped by society.

Heidegger’s Concept of Becoming

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a German philosopher widely known for his contributions to continental philosophy. Major ideas within his work that are utilized in communication studies include ‘becoming’ in relation to the concept of Dasein found in *Being and Time* (1962) and his approach to the philosophy of technology in an essay titled “The Question Concerning Technology” first published in English in 1979. Heidegger defined Dasein in terms of the possibility of Being: “This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘Dasein’. If we are to formulate our question explicitly and transparently, we must first give proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regard to its Being” (Heidegger 27).

Heidegger sought an understanding of Dasein as it exists ontologically. David J. Gunkel and Paul A. Taylor discuss Heidegger’s contributions to our understanding of media in their 2014 book *Heidegger and the Media*. The use of Heidegger in communication technology studies is minimal given his fascist sentiments and concern not with solutions and answers to questions but in understanding questions that are asked (Gunkel and Taylor vi-vii). The basis of inquiry for Heidegger is questioning the ontology of questions beginning with the question of Being. Heidegger was concerned with the ontology rather than the ontic as “ontological refers to the being of beings, or how the existence of those things is supported or structured” while ontic is understood as “that which exists” (4). Heidegger sought to understand Dasein through everyday existence or being. Gunkel and Taylor explain Dasein in relation to Heidegger’s work: “In standard German, the word Dasein means ‘existence’. Heidegger, however, uses the word in

its more literal sense of ‘there being’ as an expression of the kind of being that is characteristic of human existence” (3). Part of Dasein is the notion of “being-in-the-world” as Dasein exists through understanding what supports or structures existence (4). The connection of Dasein within the study of technology and media is through the ability of technology to shape existence (4). Heidegger’s philosophy helps to inform the understanding of the essence of technology, such as mobile telephones, as having a quality of ‘becoming’ within Dasein’s existence.

Heidegger’s understanding of technology was not the technology itself, but with the essence of technology and its ability to shape what it means to be in the world. Heidegger discussed his understanding of the essence of technology in his essay “The Question Concerning Technology” stating, “We shall be questioning concerning *technology*, and in so doing we should like to prepare a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology. When we can respond to this essence we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds” (3-4). People use technology within the bounds of the technology’s capabilities as it “serves as a constraint upon possibilities” (Katz and Aakhus 307). Michael J. Hyde notes Heidegger understood temporality in Dasein’s process of becoming stating, “For Heidegger, the ‘essence’ of human being (Dasein) lies in its existence, in its constant ‘projective’ involvement with the temporal process of becoming and understanding that which it is: its possibilities” (376). Gunkel and Taylor apply Heidegger’s philosophy of technology and the importance of technology’s essence in understanding mediated communication to

“focus on the essential aspects of media that, somewhat paradoxically, are better understood when one moves away from specific media examples and instead concentrates upon the broader implications for a society pervaded by mediated objects

and techniques of objectification. In this way, Heidegger's thought provides access to a core aspect of mediated life that more overtly media-focused approaches are actually ill-equipped to consider" (5).

The use of Heidegger to understand media's implications in a society relates to the theory of *Apparatgeist* that seeks to understand the consequences of 'apparatuses' as they exist in society. *Apparatgeist* views perpetual contact as an implication of technological development in the second half of the 20th century. Heidegger's concept of 'becoming' helps further our understanding of the implication of new technology within the everyday existence of people.

Katz and Aakhus explain their understanding of technology as it relates to a sense of becoming within the term *Apparatgeist*:

"The term *Geist* implies a sense of movement, a direction and a motive. This sense we encompass in our framework as well. The notion of goals connected to movement, though is not included in our meaning. It does not have a sense of rational pursuit of ends, or *Zweckrationalität*. Rather, it has only the rationality of means, the algorithms of rules that guide decisions on a moment-to-moment basis. It has then a sense of becoming rather than a sense of being, if we invoke the terms of the fascist philosopher Martin Heidegger" (306).

Apparatgeist views technology as never static in its purpose or meaning. Communication technology is dependent on how it is used within society and by individuals. The sense of becoming in Heidegger understands communication as a way to relate to others, rather than informational exchanges (Peters 17). The meaning of communication is never static, and messages are constantly being exchanged and developed through relationships. The theory of *Apparatgeist* is presented by Katz and Aakhus as a way for technology to be viewed as

‘becoming’ rather than a sense of ‘being’ (306). Becoming is connected in Heidegger’s work with Dasein and the possibility of Being. This sense of ‘becoming’ helps to understand the role of mobile communication in the development of relationships and informational exchanges as ongoing processes of relating to others.

The theory of *Apparatgeist* focuses on how communication technology shapes connections with others rather than on how information is exchanged. The focus is on relationships and the process of technology becoming part of everyday life and the promotion of a deterministic approach to technology. Heidegger understood the essence of technology in a social shaping perspective as “Heidegger’s pronouncement that the essence of technology lies beyond the particular characteristics of any specific technological contrivance encapsulates the manner in which his work encourages us to consider the determining qualities of technological environments rather than individual artefacts” (Gunkel and Taylor 2). Heidegger viewed the technology not as having the ability to determine environments but as playing a role in shaping environments. The essence of technology in general plays a role in Dasein ‘becoming’ within a society rather than particular technologies determining social existence.

Communication through technology shapes communicative practices. Heidegger’s understanding of communication helps to understand the connection between people that extends beyond informational exchanges. Peters discusses Heidegger’s understanding of communication stating, “Communication here does not involve transmitting information about one’s intentionality; rather, it entails bearing oneself in such a way that one is open to hearing the other’s otherness” (16). The interpretation of communication and language shapes the view of communication media and its role in relating to others rather than purely a channel for informational exchanges. *Apparatgeist* also views communication not as an exchange of

information but as a way to connect with others. Katz and Aakhus state, “We do not see mobile [tele]phones as a narrow way to achieve a specific purpose” (315). Mobile telephones’ role in society is shaped through use in everyday life. They are constantly ‘becoming’ through their use and adoption in everyday life shaping what it means to be in the world.

Both Hegel and Heidegger aid in our philosophical understanding of mobile communication as a technology that plays a role in shaping existence through its impact and adoption in society. Apparatuses like mobile communication devices alter the state of existence, creating a historical ‘Spirit’ that reflects both the communication technology and the society in which they are used. The communication technology is constantly in a state of ‘becoming,’ as communication develops over time, rather than acting as a static process of exchanging information. Heidegger’s sense of becoming supports the need to learn how to exist with others: “For Heidegger, existing with others is an inescapable condition of one’s existence” (Hyde 380). Heidegger’s concept of becoming helps determine existence within our current mobile society that coexists with mediated communication and face-to-face interactions.

Electronic Communication and Shifts in Time and Space

The concept of “space-time” plays a role in the understanding of mobile communication within the theory of *Apparatgeist* (Katz and Aakhus 304). From a perspective of *Apparatgeist*, “[w]e see space-time as a pivotal but too often neglected dimension in understanding human behavior” (304). The shift of ‘space-time’ in mobile communication is one that creates the possibility for people to have the ability for constant contact to others through the use of mobile devices that access the Internet. The Internet accelerates the perception of time with a transition from linear to instant time (Gálik10-11). The transition of linear to instant time is part of the socio-logic of perpetual contact that shapes human behavior in our mobile culture. The shift of

temporal and spatial communication did not develop solely through the use of mobile communication devices like the smartphone, but rather slowly progressed through developing communication technology.

A major transition in understanding time and space occurred with the development of accessible communication, like books, that allow for the ability to use information from any time in any location. James W. Carey discusses the technological development of the United States saying it is “the product of literacy, cheap paper, rapid and inexpensive transportation, and the mechanical reproduction of words—the capacity, in short, to transport not only people but a complex culture and civilization from one place to another” (62). Constraints of time and space were lessened with the development of written culture followed by the printing press that created the “uniformity and synchronization” of books (Eisenstein 16).

The alphabet and the printing press standardized print, which allowed information to be used in any time or space. The written technologies of “speech, written language and printing posed a great influence on understanding and perceiving time” (Gálik 7). There are no limitations to the amount of information that can be taken from one time or location and used in another. Gutenberg’s printing press shaped society by aiding in the domestication of the alphabet and written word in everyday life. Mediated communication is currently playing a large role in shaping society and our perception of time. The development of the alphabet led to the standardization of written words that then allowed for an increase of communication across time and space. Electronic communication further increased our ability to communicate while taking less time to do so. For example, information mailed on physical paper is often referred to as ‘snail mail’ due to the amount of time it takes to reach its destination compared to information sent through electronic devices.

Electronic mediated communication through Internet connection increases the possibility of being taken out of past or future time and space and instead exists in “current time,” meaning “everything that lies between the past and future (counting of movement)” (Gálik 12). Mobile communication allows for constant connection, maintaining a sense of current time while communicating to others. Technology exists to help prepare users for constant communication and real-time activity. For example, Apple’s iPhone users are able to tell when someone has entered a response in the iMessage application with the appearance of an ellipsis as a typing indicator, while Google Chat or Facebook Messenger show the message ‘is typing’ to whomever you are talking (Bennett). The increase of mobile communication technology allows information to be accessed instantaneously regardless of time or space. The existence of ‘current time’ communication shapes a socio-logic of perpetual contact within our mobile society. Taking information out of the social setting and applying it to current time and/or space instantly shapes the way we understand the information communicated.

The social setting of mobile communication is one of ‘current time’ that expects constant communication availability regardless of time and space. This creates the expectation of everyone having the status as currently available and able to connect with others. When sending messages on platforms accessible on mobile devices, there is never a need to wait for another person to be available. You can always send a message whenever you feel the need or desire; there is no waiting for another person to be available. This can lead to confusion when messages are not received until long after they are sent. For example, social media application Snapchat sends text and video messages that are automatically deleted once the message is opened. This creates confusion if you respond to a message and then receive another message having forgotten what you responded to in the first time. There is an expectation of remembering all prior

communication without having the ability to go back in time to see what the other person is talking about. Interaction is expected to be in a state of current communication with others through constant availability on mediated devices.

The use of mediated forms of communication creates a digital rhetoric that exists in both mediated and non-mediated interactions. Mobile communication has become embedded and “taken for granted” within our society through the process of domestication that enables the technology to disappear into the everyday functions of life, much like the alphabet (Ling, *Taken for Grantedness* 15). The philosophy of Heidegger helps understand the ontological questioning of the essence of technology within a culture through his understanding of language.

Heidegger understands language as a central part in existing with others. The central role of language in relation to others helps to understand the role of media in the temporal act of becoming. Mobile telephones act as a tool used to communicate and exist with others, developing into a sense of people being expected to own and use the technology. “Because of the mobile [tele]phone, we are increasingly obliged by our social network to be available to one another” (Ling, *Taken for Grantedness* 2). Heidegger views language through “shared intimacy and proximity that is otherwise than the closing of physical distance” (Gunkel and Taylor 17). The mobile telephone is the latest communication tool to become part of society that closes the physical distance between people.

Heidegger discusses tools in relation to being through the concepts of “present-at-hand” and “readiness-to-hand” (*Being and Time* 67; 99). ‘Present-at-hand’ is defined as “*existentia*” and is described by Heidegger as things not associated with Being in relation to Dasein (68). Present-at-hand refers to “what” an entity is rather than “who” (71). ‘Readiness-to-hand’ is used to describe people’s relation to tools: “That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell

is not the tools themselves [die Werkzeuge selbst]. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work—that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered” (99). In a 1990 article “The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the Early Heidegger,” Joseph P. Fell defines readiness-to-hand and present-at-hand in a footnote; “1. the being of those entities within the world which we first of all . . . encounter—readiness to hand. 2. the being of those entities which we can come across and whose nature we can determine if we discover them in their own right . . . by going through the entities first encountered—presence at hand” (23-24). Readiness-to-hand is used to describe a tool as it exists within society rather than the technology itself. The study of mobile communication as it exists within society is then viewing the technology as having the quality of ‘readiness-to-hand.’

David J. Gunkel and Paul A. Taylor discuss Heidegger’s understanding of tools to help understand how the usage of technology becomes adopted into everyday life:

“[Heidegger] explores how the specific properties of individual artefacts are subsumed by the overarching context from which they derive their full usage. For example, at the simplest level, a carpenter’s chisel is used as part of a broader workshop and panoply of well-worn tools whereby the ready-to-hand is a literal description of the almost subconscious ease with which the carpenter reaches out for the necessary tool at a particular moment” (16).

Tools develop into ready-to-hand technology when they are used and become embedded within everyday society. The adoption of tools into the context of daily life parallels the theory of *Apparatgeist*’s view of apparatuses becoming part of the social context in which they are used. An apparatus like a mobile telephone becomes a ready-to-hand part of social interaction (16).

Gunkel and Taylor apply Heidegger's concept of readiness-to-hand to mobile communication devices' ability to be utilized at any moment due to its ability for connection.

The amount of connection provided by mobile devices creates the socio-logic of today's society to be the ability for perpetual contact, maintaining a sense of current communication void of a sense of past or future. The possibility for perpetual contact leads Katz and Aakhus to assert mobile telephones as having the potential for pure communication, a view S. Campbell reworked to the idea "possible communication" where mobile devices allow for the potential of connections at all times ("Mobile Communication and the Body" 160). Mobile communication devices provide users with the potential for pure communication to connect and communicate instantly and without barriers. The theory of *Apparatgeist* was developed to understand the consequences of adopting communication technology into society. The theory presents mobile communication technology as creating a socio-logic of perpetual contact to explain "rhetoric and meaning-making that occur via social interaction among users (and non-users)" (Katz and Aakhus 315).

Socio-logic is an application of practical reasoning to find meaning within social settings that can be applied to other forms of rhetorical practices, such as those in mediated communication. *Apparatgeist* understands communication technology as contributing to the 'Spirit' of society, applying technology's use through its adoption into everyday life and social interactions. The theory asserts technology as having a sense of 'becoming,' using the term provided by Heidegger. The sense of becoming and existing within a particular historical moment relies on understanding temporal acts and how time exists in relation to people and their communication practices in both mediated and non-mediated channels.

Conclusion

In an answer to the question of the project: The use of mobile communication shapes interpersonal relationships by creating a socio-logic of perpetual contact. Mediated and non-mediated communication is blurred in contemporary society. Our choice in how we use mobile communication devices in our daily lives is shaping relationships to exist in “current time” (Gálik 12). Technology plays a role in shaping society, but society also plays a role in how people choose to adopt the technology. The technology does not require perpetual contact but enables the user to have the potential for perpetual contact. The use of mobile communication in interpersonal relationships is ultimately dependent on how the user defines their connection and disconnection to their social network. The development of the socio-logic of perpetual contact creates a social expectation of connectivity rather than disconnection. People need to be aware of how mobile communication technology enables or prevents meaningful dialogue and participation in public, private, or social spheres through connection and disconnection to social networks. Ultimately, the mobile telephone is a tool that is used for communication. The user is still the source of what is communicated and the message that is sent.

The Need for Connection and Disconnection

In our current historical moment, digital platforms on mobile communication devices are used on a daily basis. A 2019 PEW research study showed “28% of American adults now report that they go online ‘almost constantly,’ up from 21% in 2015” (Perrin and Kumar). Further, “86% of Americans who use the internet at least occasionally using a smartphone, tablet or other mobile device—92% go online daily and 32% go online almost constantly” (Perrin and Kumar). These statistics demonstrate the prevalence of people who use mobile media daily. Media use includes interactions that occur on mobile communication devices such as, video chat platforms,

text-based communication through text messaging, emailing, or posting text on social media, and image-based communication through the various platforms that share pictures like Snapchat or Instagram. The dominant form of mediated communication is through a smartphone. The adoption of mobile devices is still dependent on the user to determine connection and disconnection. “The mobile telephone is a means to regulate one’s social environment through integration of social contact rather than simply inviting socially dispersing media into one’s life” (Katz and Aakhus 308-309). Healthy relationships require connection and disconnection to and from each other.

The role of mobile communication in relationships is shown to increase the potential for contact, limiting the disconnection between people in relationships (Chan, “Multimodal Connectedness” 5; Hampton et al. 131). The development of a socio-logic of perpetual contact through mobile communication devices creates a need for users to define how to use the technology within relationships that balance connection and disconnection. People who use mobile communication devices to be constantly connected to others no longer maintain their autonomy (Baxter and Montgomery, *Dialogue and Dialectics* 5). Autonomy is a necessary component in relationships that prevents the feeling of becoming ‘smothered’ by another person due to too much connection.

In a 2010 article titled “Mobile Communication and Ethics: Implications of Everyday Actions on Social Order,” Rich Ling and Rhonda McEwen discuss the both/and quality of relationships and the role of mobile telephones: “More fundamentally, however, the mobile [tele]phone and our sense of its proper use expose our sense of that which is correct and our sense of our responsibility to others” . . . “[i]ts pervasive presence in our day-to-day life means that mobile [tele]phones are increasingly entangled with our ethical and moral decisions in social

interactions” (Ling and McEwen 23). The socio-logic of perpetual contact has created a sense of needing to remain connected to one’s mobile telephone and available to their social networks at all times maintaining “current-time” communication (Gálik 12). The responsibility of maintaining the dialectic need of connection and separation in relationships through mobile telephone falls to the user of mobile telephone. Mobile telephones are not capable of determining how the user manages the ability to be in perpetual contact but have created a social shift in our understanding of the amount of connection that is expected for us to maintain to others.

Mobile communication studies researching the tension between the need to be connected and the need to be disconnected in relationships include references to the theory of *Apparatgeist* and perpetual contact. Jeffrey A. Hall and Nancy K. Baym state their 2011 study falls in line with *Apparatgeist* by suggesting, “mobile [tele]phones have a logic such that when they are used in closed friendships, people are steered toward increased expectations of connectedness and availability” (326). This expectation of being available and connected is evident in mobile communication studies, and in everyday activities. It is not uncommon to be annoyed when someone does not answer their telephone or return a message immediately. Instances include a child reaching out to a parent, or a friend reaching out to another friend. People’s use of mobile communication devices developed a social expectation for immediate responses to communication on various mediated platforms. For example, students expect a response from professors shortly after sending a message while social media posts are expected to generate reactions from friends or followers. The increase in connectivity through mobile communication devices creates a necessity to define how and when someone will be available for receiving or responding to communication.

The contemporary social understanding that people can be perpetually connected due to the availability of mobile communication devices requires the development of either explicit or implicit rules defined by people within a relationship, as noted by Robert L. Duran, Lynne Kelly, and Teodora Rotaru. Duran et al. reference *Apparatgeist* theory and the role of perpetual contact in understanding communication technology: “In their *Apparatgeist* theory of communication technology development, Katz and Aakhus described perpetual contact as a sociologic in which reasoning about communication technology is developed collectively within society” (21). Katz and Aakhus’ theory of *Apparatgeist* offers an understanding of perpetual contact as a way of becoming closer to an ideal of pure communication (Katz and Aakhus 309). The difficulty in achieving pure communication is due to the relational need for “autonomy versus connection dialectic” (Duran et al. 21). The need for autonomy versus connection is satisfied through implicit or explicit relational rules that are developed among relationships.

The perpetual contact of mobile communication shapes relationship development (Nafus and Tracey; Hall and Baym; Duran et al.). The tension between maintaining independence and dependence in relationships through the use of mobile telephones is difficult due to the increased social expectation of connectivity. The expectation of connection stems from the development of the socio-logic of perpetual contact brought about by people’s use of mobile communication devices. The sense of needing to be available to others is tied the potential for perpetual contact to others through mobile communication devices that shape participation in public, private, and social spheres.

Public, Private, and Social Use of Mobile Communication Devices

Major themes within the theory of *Apparatgeist* that provide a framework for understanding mobile communication include the technology’s use within public, private, and

social spheres. An historical approach to the study of technology aids our understanding of how the human condition is shaped through their capabilities and adoption into everyday life. The historical grounding of the theory of *Apparatgeist* parallels Hannah Arendt's historical framework in her work related to public, private, and social spheres in that both rely on Hegel's understanding of history. The theory of *Apparatgeist* includes Hegel's concept of *Geist* in its historical sense. "For our part, we use the term to imply spirit in the way of incremental change followed by occasional, unpredictable bursts of drastic change in history" (307). Arendt notes a Hegelian influence in her understanding of history and events that prompted change (*Between Past and Future* 8). Arendt understood society's ability for change through historical analysis.

"The purpose of the historical analysis . . . is to trace back modern world alienation, its twofold flight from the earth into the inverse and from the world into the self, to its origins, in order to arrive at an understanding of the nature of society as it had developed and presented itself at the very moment when it was overcome by the advent of a new and yet unknown age" (Arendt, *Human Condition* 6).

The human condition changes with human development and with each new technological innovation. The theory of *Apparatgeist* understands historical change as occurring slowly overtime until there is a drastic change, including technological development like mobile communication devices.

Historical changes associated with mobile communication that are reflected through *Apparatgeist* include trends that have "emerged in many social contexts, including participation in social networks, changes in traditional communication habits to accommodate mobile communication, competent mobile communication and unanticipated behaviors resulting from mobile communication" (S. Campbell, "Cross-Cultural Comparison" 344-345). *Apparatgeist* is

used “to explain what [Katz and Aakhus] saw as the strong, cross-cultural impact of the mobile [tele]phone on its users due to technological design” (Samuel-Azran 157). The ability for perpetual contact is linked to the “perpetual motion” of modern technological development that extends to a variety of cultures (Katz and Aakhus 307). The theory of *Apparatgeist* links mobile technologies as social communication tools that can perpetually communicate in social realms, changing communication practices within our current historical moment.

Arendt’s work on public, private, and social realms relies on separating public and private life, while the theory of *Apparatgeist* views mobile devices as having the ability to connect public and private life through blurring individual and collective behaviors. The blurring of public and private life increases participation in the social realm. The theory of *Apparatgeist* views technology as a social technology that “ties together both the individual and the collective aspects of societal behavior” (Katz and Aakhus 307). There are growing social concerns for the blurring of private and public life within the social realm among mobile communication device users, as evidenced by the growing desire for more private communication away from government surveillance. The plurality of use for mobile communication devices shapes an understanding of its ability for users to blur their public and private life. Mobile telephones allow a multitude of participation in a variety of spheres, public, private, and social, from a single device. This is evident in mobile communication devices connection to private communication, public participation in political activity, and sharing and participating in social media platforms. The multitude of uses through mobile communication devices creates the need for the users to take responsibility for mobile communication use within public, private, and social spheres.

The theory of *Apparatgeist* understands mobile communication technology as having the ability for perpetual contact, enhancing the blurring of individual and collective behavior.

Ultimately, the spirit of mobile communication devices in a culture is dependent on how the user wishes to incorporate the technology into their everyday life and whether or not they see value in separating public and private life or seek to live in the social realm. Mobile technology users must be aware of the “shallow” nature of life lived in public, perpetually connected to others (Arendt, *Human Condition* 71).

Dialogic Ethics and Mobile Communication in Private and Public Discourse

Understanding the use of mobile communication devices, like mobile telephones, through the theory of *Apparatgeist* “refers to the common set of strategies or principles of reasoning about technology evident in the identifiable, consistent and generalized patterns of technological advancement throughout history” (Katz and Aakhus 307). Mobile communication is a newer technology that is still in a process of “becoming” in terms of its role and how it is used in society (306). A dialogic ethic approach to public communication through mobile communication devices seeks to find a common good between a self and another person that respects the various worldviews and different cultural practices through “rhetorical listening” and “understanding” (Arneson 150). The increased connection provided by mobile communication devices has consequences to the way in which people choose to relate to one another, shaping meaningful dialogue.

Mobile communication is seen as a private technology (S. Campbell and Kwak 265) but has the ability to be used in public rhetoric (Frost; Heatherly et al.). When new technology shifts communication practices, it is common for people to lament the changing communication practices even if the foundation of communicated has not changed: “If media are used to convey human thoughts, desires, and emotions then a thousand new platforms will never bring us fundamentally new content, as the human thoughts, desires, and emotions that any platform may

convey have remained the same for millennia” (Katz and Robinson 103). The way in which humans communicate has changed but not what humans are communicating. The interaction with others through different communication media has altered the way messages are perceived but not the message.

The connectivity of mobile communication devices shapes society to view of the purpose of mobile telephones to increase connection not with reaching others for the purpose of relating, but with the sole purpose of the self to be connected to someone, anyone, so they are not alone. Mobile communication has led to the possibility of a selfish approach to the purpose of mobile communication with the primary concern being connection with someone, rather than engaging in meaningful dialogue. People need to have meaningful connection in their lives, but also need disconnection from constant dialogue in the form of everyday conversations.

Mobile communication allows for constant connectivity with a social network, causing an anxiety of disconnection (Drucker and Gumpert 16). The horror of connecting to no one after the feeling of security through the use and ownership of mobile telephones occurs in our mobile culture. This is observable in some reactions when a mobile telephone is lost or forgotten and the user displays panic and erratic behavior until the mobile device is recovered or they figure out a solution. For example, I was in a class when a student (who was not a part of the class) barged into the classroom announcing she lost her telephone and proceeded to start emphatically looking for the device until she gave up and left. This experience demonstrated her level of panic due to a loss of a mobile telephone. The lost social connections caused by not possessing the mobile telephone created anxiety due to the perceived loss of connection to strong ties. The student’s display of anxiety and panic caused by the loss of a telephone can be understood through Levinas’ discussion of “nothing” as a form of horror (“There is” 33).

Levinas relates horror to the possibility of nothing: “Horror is the event of being which returns in the heart of this negation, as though nothing has happened” (“There is” 33). Anxiety and fear stem from the negation of being. Being is understood as consciousness within a subject that includes seeing an Other (32). Seeing an Other occurs through dialogue and recognition of a moral Other, as consciousness depends on the act of listening to others to develop a sense of Being (Lipari, “Rhetoric’s Other”). People who use mobile communication devices to connect with others with whom they have a relationship with outside of mediated communication helps in communicating with a moral Other. Mobile communication devices allow users to remain connected to established relationships with others they communicate with beyond electronic communication. Loss of this connection then causes a loss of connection to core social networks, causing users to need to establish relationships with unknown people. Using mobile communication devices for the purpose of connecting with no meaning develops a sense of negation of being due to lack of dialogue with an Other. A dialogic approach to mobile communication use in public dialogue prioritizes the historical context, rhetorical listening, and applying practical knowledge. A dialogic approach to public rhetoric accessed by mobile communication devices can help shape the spirit of our society to counteract the negation of being caused by lack of connection with a moral Other.

A dialogic ethic approach to communication practices includes connecting in a meaningful way through “I-Thou” relationships with a moral other, but life also requires “I-It” relationships (Buber *I and Thou*). Buber notes the necessity of life outside of an ‘I-Thou’ relationship that is in constant state of presence with a ‘You.’ “One cannot live in the pure present: it would consume us if care were not taken that it is overcome quickly and thoroughly. But in pure past one can live; in fact, only there can a life be arranged” (85). Mobile

communication devices allow for perpetual contact in the form of technical dialogue that occurs in 'I-It' dialogue. For meaningful connections to occur, there needs to be authentic communication by relating on a 'narrow ridge' creating an 'I-Thou' relationship. Mobile communication devices do not support an 'I-Thou' relationship that meets an Other, but do allow for public discourse in the form of public rhetoric if users engage in rhetorical listening and understanding to acknowledge various viewpoints expressed on public digital platforms. Current research is unable to determine if people engage in communication with people who hold different viewpoints on mobile communication device platforms like digital social media (Heatherly et al. 1272). People can use mobile communication devices to better understand and listen to others with different worldviews, rather than connect with like-minded individuals that prevent public rhetoric from engaging in dialogic ethics.

Further Research

The consequences of increased connectivity to others shape relationships and can be applied further to social changes in relationships and actions taken by society. Future direction of research relating to mobile communication studies can focus on mobile communication devices' role in the practice of social distancing during large scale social disasters like the 2019 outbreak of COVID-19. Gender roles in our connected society are also shaped by the ability for connection, including the expansion of economic opportunities for women. Research can also focus on the role of mobile communication devices on maintaining or increasing a level of social capital. The question of how public, private, and social realms are understood with the use of mobile devices relates to the use of social media platforms in contemporary parenting strategies and the recent increase of 'sharenting.'

The findings of this project determined we are not able to rely solely on mobile communication devices for meaningful relationships, but they do provide a valuable tool for daily conversations with others. In the 2019 outbreak of COVID-19 the use of mobile communication devices is being relied upon to minimize feelings of isolation in areas asked to practice social distancing. The World Health Organization (WHO) however shifted from the term ‘social distancing’ to ‘physical’ distancing to stress the importance of remaining physically separate while still socially engaged through technology on March 20, 2020 (World Health Organization). The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends electronic communication as a means for remaining connected to the community, while also notes disconnecting from the constant news concerning the pandemic including social media and platforms accessed by mobile communication devices (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). This project can be applied to an understanding of the role of using mobile communication devices during the COVID-19 pandemic in its ability to help prevent feeling of social isolation as well as understanding the importance of face-to-face reactions.

The consequences of increased connection through mobile communication devices can be used to understand shifts in gender roles concerning economic activities. New communication technologies available to women increase economic activities to which they can be connected, while still maintaining traditional gender roles of raising children and taking care of the home. With the increased connectivity through mobile communication devices, mothers are seen as having the ‘luxury’ of being able to work while a child sleeps, or the ability to check and respond to emails remotely whenever there is a spare moment away from the typical female role in hetero-normative families. The use of mobile communication technology helps in connecting women to economic opportunities without helping to address the inequality of gender

expectations in society (Rakow and Navarro 145). Economic growth provided by the ability to increase social capital from mobile communication connections leads to an increase in the expectation of female success outside the home while still maintaining stereotypical female roles in the home. Connectivity through mobile devices has not changed social thoughts regarding the role of women but has instead changed the social expectation of being connected and available.

Another application of the consequences of mobile communication device use would be to look at various understanding of social capital as it relates to the development of relationships. Mobile communication devices increase the connectivity to social capital through their ability to be constantly connected to public social networks. Communication studies relating to the use of mobile communication for social capital understands the economic benefits of media use in relationships (Geber et al.; Srivastava). A 2016 article “Social Capital in Media Societies: The Impact of Media Use and Media Structures on Social Capital,” communication scholars Sarah Geber, Helmut Scherer, and Dorothee Hefner present a study of how individual use of media influences social capital. They determined it is difficult to interpret the impact of media use in individual social capital due to the many uses available through media like the Internet (507). Social capital gained by the use of media include purposes that helps “strengthen informal networks” that lead to more civic engagements and not to social isolation (506). Mobile communication devices increase civic engagement connection and reduce isolation when used to connect with other people. Social capital is viewed as a positive feature of mobile communication devices based on the capitalist idea of consumption and the accruing of goods as a symbol of prosperity in a ‘keeping up with the Jones’ approach to defining success.

There is an ethical issue in regard to privacy of children with the growing number of parents as social media influencers. Catherine Archer seeks to understand ethical components of

mothers who are social media influencers in a 2019 article, “How Influencer ‘Mumpreneur’ Bloggers and ‘Everyday’ Mums Frame Presenting Their Children Online” (47). Archer focuses on mothers’ use of digital outlets ranging from social media influencers that bring in sponsorship revenue for their posts concerning parenting their children and the use of particular products, compared to everyday mothers who use social media to connect with others and share information about their children for the purpose of community and family connections without the influence of sponsorships. Archer discovered that some influencer parents are focused on their brand and not on the rights of the children whose images and life they share: “For the influencer mums, while there was some hesitation related to the privacy of their children, a few seemed less concerned with the rights of their children, given that the children were young and unable to speak for themselves” (50). Sharing images of children to the digital public has become normalized through influencers’ use of social media, though the concern for the privacy of children whose image is shared varies by user in Archer’s study (52). The ethical choice of sharing images and information about children is shown to vary by user, however the social expectation of ‘sharenting’ shapes the choices parents make in regard to sharing information on social media platforms (Siibak and Traks 117).

Mobile communication devices are shaping our communication practices. There are many applications of the increase in connection that shapes our society and is changing everyday life. Understanding the consequence of our society moving to an assumption of connectivity helps us understand how to maintain meaningful relationships that include connecting and disconnecting with others.

The theory of *Apparatgeist* grounds mobile communication use in society as having the consequence of increased connectivity that shapes social usage of a technology. People are still

adapting to mobile telephones becoming embedded into everyday life. Mobile communication use can help provide meaningful public conversations by connecting communities in dialogue that present various views on a subject. Responsible mobile communication device use understands the need for connection and disconnection. People must realize the shallow nature of a life lived devoid of a private realm found in disconnection from the public and social realms. Finally, people must use appropriate channels for intended communication. Face-to-face communication allows for private dialogue between two people, while mobile communication allows for everyday conversations and platforms for public rhetoric that has the potential for rhetorical listening and understanding of various viewpoints.

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