

This is a pre-print version of the Beck, Crow, McKee, Reilly, deWinter, Vie, Gonzales, Devoss webtext "Writing in an Age of Surveillance, Privacy, & Net Neutrality" published in Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy, Vol(Issue), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/20.2/topoi/beck-et-al/index.html>

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jennifer_clip.mp3:

Jennifer deWinter: So I always come back to Barry Brummett, right?-- Rhetoric and Popular Culture--and the challenge that anytime we have, in critiquing systems that have moved firmly into ideological--we're at the level of conditional rhetoric. We subject ourselves to these systems all the time, we know they're bad--ask anyone if they think they're bad, and they'll say "yes." And then if you ask any of the developers if they think they're bad, they're like: "yeah, but people will give it up if we give them something small", right? So how many of you have a shopper's card for your local supermarket? That's data collection. And how do they get you to do it? By giving you a \$1.50 off, right? So, there are all these ways in which you are given small rewards in order to subject yourself to the system. And the system knows this: they know that you are uncomfortable and they know that you can be easily bought, right? And so, I think that the challenge that you're kind of facing and it's a pessimistic challenge is--I'm going to show my little Marxist roots--the same challenge that Marx faces: massive ideological systems that people subject themselves to, even though they know that they are wrong--so what is the sort of radical critique that you need? And the radical action that you need? Because it does require radical critique and action, and he saw it as involving and educating the proletariat, right? But now we have a situation in which the proletariat is very comfortable--we're rewarded for it. And so how, then, do you have radical action when, in fact, you can eat? In fact, I can eat cheaper because I've used my shopping card.

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