DEATH PROOF: ON THE BIOPOLITICS AND NOOPOLITICS OF MEMORIALIZING DEAD FACEBOOK USERS

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Rough statistical estimates based on annual mortality rates across the planet suggest that 19,000 Facebook users die each day (Death Reference Desk, 2012). While the actual number of deaths is evidently lower due to the age range of the Facebook user population, the number of dead Facebook users is significant at any rate. Now, for the sake of this article, consider you are one of them. A few hours after the rumors about your death have become public knowledge people seek to confirm the information from your social media profile. The more famous you are the faster the rumor spreads. You cannot update your status, evidently, since you are dead. Without the chance to intervene, your Facebook site begins to fill up with condolences from your friends and acquaintances. If you have been a perspicacious user you have prepared for the situation by installing the *If I Die* Facebook application.[1] It is a small application that helps the user to perform the task of dying publicly. It can be programmed to publish messages on behalf of the user after their death has been confirmed. In a most banal sense, the user does not need to do anything except log in to a site, provide content, and then die. The software will take it from there.

While losing control of your own Facebook profile might not be the worst thing about your death, it nevertheless introduces an interesting dilemma of life entangled within network culture which is about to become more topical at the very least due to the aging of social media users. The subject of media life, hence, will be approached in this article from what challenges and contradicts it: death and dying. By investigating Facebook's policies on the dead and its different practices surrounding the memorialisation of dead Facebook users I aim to outline an understanding how life and death are embedded within social media platforms. This approach draws

attention to the medium itself. With this shift I do not want to downplay the meaningfulness of Facebook for grievers, but rather to show in a more abstract manner how death and the dead find their place within media technologies that have become ubiquitous and permeate all aspects of our lives. As I will show in the following, life, as well as death, is built-in to these platforms in a very concrete sense.

Another premise for this article is that when life and death become entangled with media technology they also become subjects and objects of certain particular forms of politics. In this context I will outline two specific models of politics that operate behind the Facebook platform: biopolitics and noopolitics. These are politics that address the economic, biological and spiritual life of a population and politics that address ways of living, feeling, thinking and acting through mediated technologies (Terranova, 2007: 126). Moreover to specify these politics I follow Bruno Latour and Vincent Lépinay's argument that '*economics and politics deal with the same object*, follow the same fabric, feel their way around the same networks, depend on the same influences and the same contaminations' (2009: 8). Accordingly the policies and politics of the dead and death in Facebook are also connected to economics. They can be interpreted in the context of the business models of Web 2.0 and as new means to re-negotiate social media user participation.

Ground

The questions of life ending and the consecutive processes of grieving and mourning will 'increasingly become important aspects of our social experiences online' (Brubaker et al., 2011: 8). Indeed, as Nancy Baym argues, '[s]ince 2008, SNS [social network sites] have become mainstream sites of relational maintenance for those who already know one another' (2010: 134). The relations we have with other users, our Facebook Friends for example, are personally felt and experienced. Social media empowers users to build personal connections, generate content and participate in various social activities together. Similarly when one of your friends breathes their last breath, Facebook is the obvious place where these intimate and private relations are also shared and commemorated.

These novel experiences of death and dying are also increasingly being studied. Many studies focus on the particular rituals and

processes of online grieving. Jed Brubaker and Gillian Hayes have explained how personal and cultural practices of experiencing death are entwined with communicational practices of social media platforms (Brubaker & Hayes, 2011). Rebecca Kern, Abbe Forman and Gisela Gil-Equi have argued that Facebook enables new, public ways to process grieving (Kern et al., 2013: 3). Alice Marwick and Nicole B. Ellison have focussed on performative displays of grieving and argue that bereavement in Facebook can be discussed as the impression management of the deceased (Marwick & Ellison, 2012).

While death is an individual event, the processes of mourning online are collective and social. There are different audiences for the dead, different ways to engage with the dead and different relations that need not be personal. Marwick and Ellison, for example, note that

> the quasi-public nature of social media means that information about the death will also be shared with a larger public .… These audiences may include strangers who wish to take part in expressions of public mourning (sometimes dismissively called "grief tourists") or "trolls" (people who post deliberately inflammatory messages with a disruptive intent, usually under a pseudonym). (Marwick & Ellison, 2012: 379)

The dead online touch upon different users and become the basis for different modes of participation. In short, studies focusing on online grieving share a user-centric approach. The role of the deceased is, however, subordinate to the different modes of user participation and cultural expressions performed by bereaved, grief tourists and other agents instead.

The user-centric approach focusing on events and expressions taking place among the bereaved corresponds to the discourses of Web 2.0 and the emphasized role of the user as cultural producer. The emphasized role of the social media user, as we now know it, began in the midst of 2000 when Tim O'Reilly shifted the focus from the wide open Web to the semi-closed platforms of Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005). O'Reilly analyzed big web businesses that had survived the dot-com crash and found that common to the survivors was not only a large user base but also effective harnessing of these users into productive processes.

To put it bluntly, there are two different ways users contribute to these productive processes: the first way is intentional and explicit and the second is unintentional and implicit. To begin with, the former user participation is commonly paralleled with the concept of user-generated content. According to Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein user-generated content describes 'various forms of media content that is publicly available and created by end-users' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). Defining the concept further, they argue, that user-generated content needs to be publicly available, show an amount of creative effort and be made by amateurs. Mirko Tobias Schäfer describes this mode of user participation as explicit (2011: 51). It is based on users' own processes of creating, sharing and participation in various activities on the site. The latter describes participation in Web 2.0 platforms in another manner. It is a form of participation where users produce information for the site through their activities implicitly, and often without knowing (Schäfer, 2011: 51). As Mark Andrejevic maintains, the ideal of user-generated content as participatory amateur media production is contrasted and conjoined with user-generated content that 'includes the tremendous amounts of data that consumers generate about themselves when they interact with a new generation of networked digital devices' (Andrejevic, 2009). Social media companies profit from these implicit actions by transforming user data into clusters of information sold to the highest bidder or used by the company itself. Hence user participation, understood as activities producing user-generated content is double-sided; it consists of the content generated by the users themselves and the content generated from users by the platform.

The dead user, I argue, pushes us to reconsider the ideas of user participation and user-generated content as core features of social media from another angle; the dead are not active content producers or data generators by themselves. They neither produce content nor provide activities, consumption habits or other information for the platform to track and monitor. For the participatory Web and the corresponding Web 2.0 business models, the dead are nothing more than waste. They do not actively participate or couple with media technologies. They do not interact or give feedback. The dead cease to be with us as physical and corporeal beings but also as interactive actors in network environments. It would seem that they are futile for social media platforms. Consequently it seems legitimate to subordinate dead users to processes of online grieving and explain this as a social event and a particular mode of user participation evolving around the deceased.

Yet, I want to highlight the role of the dead for the platform. Arguably the dead are indeed futile, but only until the very moment they are incorporated by Facebook through different policies and technical implementations, such as memorial pages and memorial profiles. When the dead are materialized to the site through memorialization they are also utilized and given a specific role.

To better understand the role of the dead user for Facebook as well as processes of online grieving, one must take a step backwards from the user-centric approach. The role of the Facebook platform and its policies on the dead can be approached directly, instead of trying to find the answers from personal processes of online grieving. Consequently my focus in the remainder of this article is not on the communicational processes the grievers take part in, but on looking at what happens to the dead themselves and how they become a part of the platform. In a sense I am following Ganaele Langlois, who accentuates the role of the platform and maintains that

> The platform acts as a manager that enables, directs, and channels specific flows of communication as well as specific logics of transformation of data into culturally recognizable and valuable signs and symbols. Thus, it is useful to think about participatory media platforms as conduits for governance, that is, as the conduits that actualize technocultural assemblages, and therefore manage a field of communicational processes, practices, and expectations through specific articulations between hardware, software, and users. (Langlois, 2012: 100)

Also to be noted is that the user-centric approach, while focusing on users' reactions and experiences, touches upon the role of the platform in dealing with the online dead. For Marwick and Ellison the platform is a technological and social platform which guides user's behaviors and outlines the 'technical and social affordances' (2012: 380). Similarly Brubaker and Hayes analyze how technologically mediated communication practices guide the ways we interact with the dead and each other (2011). Indeed, these discussions also point out that there are platform specific ways to deal with death; they indicate that there are Facebook specific ways of processing and managing the dead online.

Biopolitics or Hiding the Dead Bodies

'Each death is unique, of course, and therefore unusual, but what can one say about the unusual when … it multiplies … as in series', Jacques Derrida asks (2001: 193). In recent years social media has been faced with this question (C.f. Munster, 2011: 69). The answers have been outlined in various forms from blog posts, to official policies and guidelines. Here I will focus on material that explains the inauguration of Facebook's policies regarding dead users (Kelly, 2009; Facebook G), and Facebook guidelines for what users can do to dead user profiles (Facebook A; Facebook B; Facebook C; Facebook D; Facebook F).

In the Facebook blog Facebook's Chief Security Officer Max Kelly describes the personal event, the death of a co-worker, which led to the inauguration of Facebook's current policies regarding the dead:

> About six weeks after we both started [working for Facebook], my best friend was killed in a tragic bicycling accident. It was a big blow to me personally, but it also was difficult for everyone at Facebook. We were a small, tight-knit community, and any single tragedy had a great effect on all of us. I can recall a company-wide meeting a few days after his death, where I spoke about what my friend meant to me and what we had hoped to do together. As a company, we shared our grief, and for many people it was their first interaction with death. … The question soon came up: What do we do about his Facebook profile? We had never really thought about this before in such a personal way. Obviously, we wanted to be able to model people's relationships on Facebook, but how do you deal with an interaction with someone who is no longer able to log on? When someone leaves us, they don't leave our memories or our social network. (Kelly, 2009)

On the one hand the motivations for inauguration of Facebook's policies regarding dead users are personal and originate with a tragic emotional experience. On the other hand they are platform political responses to the growing number of dead users, and driven by a

motivation to implement life with its entirety within Facebook platform.

Indeed, for me, the discussions of death and the dead in social media are connected to the discussions that try to understand how life takes place and finds new forms in our current media landscape. In his aptly named book *Media Life,* Mark Deuze argues that media has become so inseparable from us that we do not live with media, but in media (Deuze, 2012). In an extended analysis he points out how media conditions the possibilities for our creativity and sociability without us even actively being aware of its intrusion. Media forms an environment for life in its many manifestations to take place.

Deuze's notion of life lived within media environments is not new as such. Friedrich Kittler argued a long time ago that our situation is determined by media (1999: xxxix). Media rewires our senses and it is through media technologies that we think, act and feel. Our daily lives are so connected to media technologies that it is difficult to distinguish between the human and the technological. Kittler challenges the idea of the human actor and the centrality of human life as lived experience in media environments as such. As Geoffrey Winthrop-Young puts it, for Kittler '[h]umans are at best along for the ride; more precisely, they are the nodes and operators necessary to keep the process going until the time arrives at which media are able to interact and evolve without any human go-between' (Winthrop-Young, 2011: 65). While Kittler's view may be extreme, the idea of media technologies being a part of the mundane activities of a user's daily life has recently become commonplace. This is broadly evident in the discourses of computers becoming ubiquitous, life shared and lived in social media, but also in ideals such as peer production. Life and media permeate each other in many ways.

The problematic role of 'media life'; of humans existing with or in media, is indicative of how the issue is also political. Michel Foucault's lectures of the 1970s long since inaugurated a revitalized discussion about the relationship between life and politics (Foucault, 2004). Biopolitics for Foucault, in essence, is a system of power where life becomes regulated and controlled through governmental actions. The right to take life is bound up with the power to make live and let die. The life of the individual is contrasted with a more general understanding of life of a population. Fertility and morbidity enter into the biopolitical after birth control and self-care are introduced. And I here wish to draw attention to

how these governmental actions are coupled with 'technologies of the social' (Lazzaratto, 2009: 112) that 'do not aim to suspend the 'interplay of reality' that supposedly belongs to the domain of nature, but are determined to act within it' (Terranova, 2009: 240). In effect, when life becomes politicized it also becomes embedded within a battery of different technologies. As conjoined with ubiquitous technologies biopolitics does not mean enslaving new media users nor does it introduce a conspiracy theory of an outside control. Instead it introduces a model of soft control in the lives of users. New media technologies for example provide a set of possible identities and offer a set of possible actions users can do (Cheney-Lippold, 2011).

Now if life is the focus of these new technologies, what should we think about death? The relation of biopolitics and death has always been a problematic one. With an emphasis on making life live, biopolitics pushes death into the shadows. According to Foucault, death and dying lose their roles as rituals and spectacles and become a problem for society since they decrease growth and work efficiency. When the life of a population becomes the focus, death as an individual event essentially becomes private and hidden away (Foucault, 2004: 247-248).

To understand why the dead are problematic for Facebook and why they are a matter of biopolitics, one must begin from the fact that dying does not erase the user's account automatically. Quite the contrary: the user's account remains on the site. The user accounts of the dead are a constant reminder of the deceased and the fragility of life lived outside social media, but they are also a technical problem. To substantiate this point let me refer to Kelly's blog post regarding the inauguration of Facebook's policies of the dead (2009). Interestingly Kelly points out that Facebook's policies of the dead appeared only a week after a new feature was introduced that suggested users reconnect with friends they had not been in contact with lately. These suggestions were presumably controlled with algorithms that could not tell the difference between the dead and the living user. As Whitney Phillips notes, this feature was quickly proven problematic because, 'the dead person's profile would occasionally show up in friends' suggestion boxes ("Reconnect with Bill by posting something on his wall!"), prompting a number of users to complain' (Phillips, 2011). While this new feature was a constant reminder of the deceased and caused resentment, it also revealed that Facebook was developing new ways to manage its users.

As a response to this problem Facebook created two possible solutions: *removing the account* and *memorializing the account*. To begin with the former, when the user is no longer able to log on due to their death, the power to control the user account is given to friends and the family:

> Verified immediate family members may request the removal of a loved one's account from the site. We will process certain special requests for verified immediate family members, including requests to remove a loved one's account. This will completely remove the profile (timeline) and all associated content from Facebook, so no one can view it. (Facebook B)

After removal of the account the user disappears from Facebook. Their profile page cannot be found or accessed. Removing the deceased user account seems to corroborate the biopolitical understanding of social media. When life lived on Facebook is semi-public at the very least, since your friends see what you do and how you participate, death will be pushed into the shadows and made a private event. The deceased becomes hidden from the platform.

Now, removing the Facebook user account of a deceased member is possible, but not particularly easy. According to the Facebook Help Desk, friends and family of the deceased can remove the Facebook account of the dead if the requester has relevant certificates of a relationship with the user and proof of their death. Quoting these instructions at length is necessary here to explicate the process:

For all special requests, we require verification that you are an immediate family member or executor. Requests will not be processed if we are unable to verify your relationship to the deceased.

> Examples of documentation that we will accept include:
> The deceased's birth certificate
> The deceased's death certificate
> Proof of authority under local law that you are the lawful representative of the deceased or his/her estate. (Facebook B)

If the dead are what Facebook hides, why is deleting the account so difficult? Is the demand to provide official documents and certificates merely a question of privacy and an attempt to secure

that no accounts can be removed accidentally or maliciously? The difficulty of deleting Facebook user accounts needs to take into account another consideration. In fact, the difficulty of deleting dead user profiles may well imply that Facebook does not want the dead user accounts to be removed at all. Thus as a second response to the problem of dead users, Facebook suggests a process of memorialization. It is a response that does not only hide the dead but also gives them a new role. Specifically, the dead as well as the processes of mourning become governed through platform applications known as memorialized user accounts.

In fact Facebook wants all user accounts of the deceased on the site to be memorialized instead of being removed (Facebook A). To memorialize a user account one does not have to provide legal documents such as birth and death certificates of the user. To memorialize an account one must only fill a Memorializing Request form where the user needs to explain their relation to the deceased and to present a proof of the death, which can be an obituary or news article for example (Facebook D).

Memorialized accounts are Facebook's unique manifestation of the dead within the platform. According to Kelly, Facebook 'created the idea of "memorialized" profiles as a place where people can save and share their memories of those who've passed' (Kelly, 2009). Phillips calls these memorialized accounts a snapshot of the user's life just before their death (2011). In brief, a memorialized account is the person's own user account converted to a memorial state. As explained by Facebook this memorial state means, for example, that some of the functions associated with normal user accounts are limited:

> When someone passes away, Facebook will memorialize their account in order to protect their privacy. Memorialization changes the account's privacy settings so that only confirmed friends can see that person's profile or find them by typing their name into the search bar. A memorialized account will also be removed from the Suggestions section of the Home Page, and no birthday reminders will be sent out on their behalf. To further protect the account, no one is allowed to log in or receive login information about it. One important change Facebook has recently made to this process is that when we

memorialize an account, we now preserve past
Wall posts, so that friends and family can look
back on memories of the loved one they lost. We
also now allow confirmed Facebook friends to
continue posting on the memorialized account's
Wall. They can record memories, leave
condolences, and provide information about
funeral services. (Facebook G)

Memorializing a user account hides the dead, quite literally, from the
public Facebook search and from people they are not connected to.
It does not however erase this person or their memory. The dead
remain on the platform. Thus memorialized accounts are a way to
organize, classify and define bodies into particular categories.
Memorialized accounts do not pop-up in searches or mix the
operations of different algorithms. Memorialized accounts are
Facebook's way to differentiate the dead and the alive.

If death is, as Foucault maintains, the moment 'when the individual
escapes all power, falls back on himself and retreats, so to speak, into
his own privacy' (2004: 248), Facebook does not only protect this
privacy through memorialized accounts but turns it into new modes
of interaction. 'While there is no cure for the pain of grief,
Facebook's hope is that by allowing people to mourn together, the
grieving process will be alleviated just a little bit' (Facebook G).
Memorialized accounts enable new modes of collaboration,
participation and production with the dead. After memorializing the
user account, the privacy into which the deceased retreats becomes
controlled by the platform. The escaping of all power is temporary
since after the death this power is not handed to the user or their
friends and family, but to the social media platform, which now
preserves the account.

Noopolitics or the Memory of the Deceased

While the discussions around online grieving circulate around how
people use social media platforms for purposes of processing a
personal loss (Brubaker & Hayes, 2011; Brubaker et al., 2011),
Facebook's policies on dead users require us to consider how the
dead users are themselves used by the platform. To elaborate further
on the meaning of memorial accounts I shall follow Maurizio
Lazzarato's suggestion that biopolitics needs to be supplemented
with noopolitics (Lazzarato, 2006). This means moving from the

technologies governing the body towards technologies that gather publics together and control their actions.

Before moving on to the theme of noopolitics, one should note that Facebook practices two different forms of memorializing deceased users. A memorialized user account, as discussed above, is a user's personal account converted to a memorial state. A memorial page, on the other hand, is a page established by other people, loved ones or friends for example (Kern et al., 2013: 3). From a biopolitical perspective memorialized accounts differ from memorial pages because they are Facebook's way of distinguishing between the user accounts of the dead and those of the living. However, both of these page types evolve around the deceased; gathering users and working as platform for grieving. This practice of convening a group of people to share memories and thoughts connects memorial pages and memorialized user accounts to noopolitics. In noopolitics the question is no longer so much about regulating individuals and manipulating individual bodies, but rather controlling mass behaviour and building collective intelligence.[2] Noopolitics denotes ways of steering heterogeneous groups and publics from a distance through, for example, media technologies that affect mind, memory and attention (Lazzarato, 2006; see also Gehl, 2013). Commenting on noopolitics, Tiziana Terranova notes that

> A public … is always the result of a certain kind of affective capture (a public can be generated by a film, a TV serial, a book, a speaker, a news event, an artwork, a cultural initiative, a blog), which can be one-directional but also reciprocal (it is not just that publics are the provisional result of a capture, but they can also capture and take control of novels, TV serials, radio programmes, blogs, speakers, etc.). (Terranova, 2007: 140)

Noopolitics does not describe novel mechanisms of power nor does it propose that users or media audiences are brainwashed as such. Instead it tries to explicate how these publics are formed and how they operate under the noopolitical regime.

Memorialized accounts are a perfect example of the affective capture Terranova describes. By memorializing dead users accounts Facebook aims to offer a platform where 'people who use [our] service [have] a chance to mourn together and remember someone who passed away, people can find comfort in sharing happy and

heartwarming stories about their departed friend or family member' (Facebook G). The deceased is the uniting cause that brings the public together. The memorialized account or the memorial page is the place where 'the 'friends' collectively remember the deceased, engaging in ritualistic behaviors akin to behaviors performed at wakes, burials, and cemetery visits' (Kern et al., 2013: 3). They are built through '*sharing memories* of the deceased, *posting updates* from their own lives, and leaving comments that evidence a desire for *maintaining connections* with the deceased' (Brubaker & Hayes, 2011: 129).

However we should not take memorial accounts or memorial pages as merely places for users to gather and mourn together. Instead I propose that they should be interpreted as agencies that have the capability to affect on how users act, think and behave. Online grieving is not only a social and personal experience but also an experience guided and controlled by platform specific functions. This kind of approach to memorial sites corresponds to Robert W. Gehl's (2013) recent argument that, when interpreted through noopolitics, Facebook's core functions such as the like-button and recommendation features can be seen structuring the way we think in and with social media.[3] For the remainder of this article I shall turn to how memorial pages and memorialized accounts gather people together and in doing so structure the way the deceased is perceived, understood and remembered.

To begin with, consider a Facebook remembrance project organized by the Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War, called 'Live and Remember'.[4] The idea for the 'Live and Remember' project is simple; people are asked to choose to tell a story of an allied soldier of the Second World War with a memorial page on Facebook. First the user is asked to pick a soldier from the 25,360 allied soldiers buried in Belgium. Then the user starts mining relevant data regarding the selected soldier. The story of the soldier is elaborated on the memorial page through pictures, maps and videos; by the means common to Facebook activity. Through the data on this individual soldier, a memory is activated and their life story is brought to attention.

What is important for the argument I am developing here, is that the Facebook memorial account, the dead user profile need not be interpreted according to the similarities between the offline and online user or the life they lived. The user profile, the Timeline and its memories, as well as different relations among users can be also

fabricated. This concerns both the memorialized user account and the memorial page. As Marwick and Ellison point out, these page types do not solely represent the life of the user (2012). They are not only storages of the life lived (past events, meaningful moments) but also places where new impressions of the deceased are created and shared. Since the deceased is not present to censor or monitor what is said about him or her, impression management is in the hands of other users (Marwick & Ellison, 2012: 395). Thus, what is essential for these pages is the capability not to guide the viewer of them in remembering the deceased, but, rather, a more abstract modulation of memory that is built through what is clicked and which recommendations are followed.

This modulation of memory and the harnessing of it into creation of new things is one of the most important functions of noopolitics (Lazzarato, 2006: 186).[5] Lazzarato, referring to Henri Bergson's reversed cone in *Matter and Memory*, explains how remembering is not a reproduction of the past but its creation and individuation (2006: 184-185). In order for something new to emerge there always needs to be a memory. Paraphrasing Lazzarato, if there were no memory, no force of duration that preserves the past in the present, the world would start endlessly. 'Any sensation developing itself over time, requires a force which conserves that which is no more within that which is; a duration which conserves the dead in the alive' (2006: 184). Memorial pages and memorialized accounts conserve the dead in the living in a very literal sense. A posted picture of the deceased, a comment on the wall, and other acts of mourning, create new connections, new ideas, in other words they actualize the virtual.

This view helps us to understand the political implications behind Facebook's policy of memorializing all user accounts instead of deleting them. When converted to memorial accounts and memorial pages, the dead are given a certain agency. They become points where memories are activated and in some cases fabricated. As platforms for online grieving the dead become nodes that open up towards other nodes and other agencies. Memorial pages and memorialized user accounts specifically corroborate a notion of Latour et al. that since the introduction of user profiles, individuals have become temporary passing points defined not by themselves but by networks of connections they are associated with (2012: 2). Such profiles can be called monads. A 'monad is not a part of a whole, but a point of view on all the other entities taken severally and not as a totality' (Latour et al., 2012: 7). Latour's practical

example of a monad is a person searched from a web. At first the person is nothing but a name or a clickable entity. Then through search results we slowly begin to fill in more and more items to its profile. The list of elements the person is associated with will eventually specify him or her. According to Latour, the 'point of this navigation is that it does not start with substitutable individuals [--] but individualizes an entity by deploying its attributes' (2012: 7).

Thus the politics of memorial pages and memorialized user accounts are not merely the politics of representing individuals. On the contrary, an individual is only a small part of this assemblage of data and activation of memory through which Facebook and social media platforms remain operational. Consider again the 'Live and Remember' project. While the soldier, whose memorial page is created, becomes individualized through the network of relations, the event of World War II is simultaneously folded within that same network. World War II is seen through this individual. The individual is a navigational spot with a potentiality to open a perspective on the world from a certain political perspective. In the case of 'Live and Remember' this is the Allied perspective and a Western perspective. But it is also a Facebook specific perspective operating through the functions enabled and allowed by the platform. 'It begins as a dot, a spot, and it ends (provisionally) as a monad with an interior encapsulated into an envelope. Were the inquiry to continue, the 'whole world', as Leibniz said, would be "grasped" or "reflected" through this idiosyncratic point of view' (Latour et al., 2012). Consequently memorial pages and online grieving are never only personal experiences or related to the deceased. Quite the contrary, they are enfolded within the surrounding world.

If we follow Latour and Lepinay's suggestion that politics and economics weave the same networks (Latour & Lepinay, 2009, 8), it is possible to show that memorialized user accounts and memorial pages are Facebook's way of utilizing the dead and of granting them agency. This conversion of dead user profiles into memorial accounts 'thingifies' them; and when user profiles become things they do not only have personal or cultural value but also use-value and exchange-value (Cf. Lash & Lury, 2007: 8). The dead become a new ground for user participation. Memorialized accounts and memorial pages are able to generate affective relationships from beyond the grave by grouping people together, giving things to be shared and thought of together. While the dead themselves do not participate in actions, share things or contribute in the accumulation

of user information directly, they yet become navigational points for other users' participation. When user accounts become memorialized, paraphrasing Scott Lash and Celia Lury, 'we enter a world of operationality a world not of interpretation but of navigation' (2007: 8). Then the interest, for the platform, is no longer how we remember the deceased but what we do to them or do with them online; what kind of data can be accumulated through these actions and what kind of preferences they reveal. Memorializing a Facebook user is not an action that is done for the sake of an individual but also for the sake of the networks and connections they potentially hold.

Endnotes

[1] *If I die* is a Facebook application that allows users to create a message that will be published after the user dies. For more information about the application see their website http://ifidie.net.

[2] Noopolitics is connected to the branch of sociology developed by Gabriel Tarde in circa 1900. Tarde aimed at modeling social behavior as a group phenomenon that spreads in publics through processes of imitation and innovation. Recently Tarde's ideas have been adapted to new media theory by for example Tony Sampson (2012).

[3] With this assertion Gehl wants to address that social media sites like Facebook want to control what is on our mind and the capability to do this is based on technologies that effectively mediate the message and are capable of spreading it.

[4] For more information about the project see
http://www.warveterans.be/generalites/about-us/id-menu-443

[5] Lazzarato is referring to a very particular understanding of memory emerging in the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson and Gabriel Tarde. He argues that memory needs to be considered as active operation where the virtual is actualized (Lazzarato, 2006: 184-185).

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