

**Mountains, Molehills and Mediation:
Exploring the Affordances, the Drawbacks and the Facilitation of Presence
Via Face-to-Face Communication and Texting**

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores how social and corporeal presence is facilitated via texting and face-to-face communication. Face-to-face communication is considered to be the preferred means of communication among many scholars due to its sensorial, co-present, human-based means of exchanging physical and social presence. While face-to-face communication is an undeniable form of live presence, it shares certain contextual drawbacks with other means of interaction. Texting is but another form of communication that facilitates social presence via the disembodied machine rather than the physical being itself. With the popularity of texting as a means of social interaction in the 21st century, it is important to acknowledge that despite its appeal, texting bears both negative and positive attributes. Drawing upon previous theoretical and statistical research from scholars within the fields of communication, psychology, philosophy, media studies, sociology and linguistics, the findings of this research suggest that from one angle talking face-to-face is a primordial and essential means of communicating for humans in order to acquire social skills and too much dependence on texting can lead to lower emotional receptiveness. Additionally, both young and old find using new media to communicate overwhelming. From an oppositional angle studies suggest that texting enables overseas workers to feel empowered. Texting is also deemed to be of particular benefit to those in the deaf community, for it is an inclusive, non-discriminatory means of interaction. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates how one is the ruler of one's own actions. It is the individual who is responsible for understanding the contextual strengths and weaknesses of each respective means of communication.

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Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to examine the theoretical discussions relating to how presence (social and physical) can be facilitated through texting and face-to-face communication. The overall scope of my research is to study how the human in communication is maintained through texting and face-to-face communication. In both instances, messages are external expressions of internal thoughts, which cannot be articulated perfectly. Ultimately, my intention is to discuss the nature of my research through a theoretical approach in which I use secondary sources. The reason for this approach is because it is broad and enables me to look at material through a theoretical lens and an empirical lens. Conducting my research through this methodological approach provided me with a number of contemporary and classic theories, studies and philosophies. These in-depth works granted me the opportunity to produce a body of work rich in theory and data ranging from sociology, psychology and media studies. Through the interconnected nature of my thesis, I was able to meet the objective of my research by virtue of exploring more than one approach to the facilitation of presence and how the human in communication is maintained.

The depth of this approach to collecting secondary sources of empirical and theoretical scholarship is reminiscent of the objective of the thesis itself, which is to take two opposing entities and study how they contrast and how they correlate. Similarly, even though theoretical literary analysis and empirical research are different forms of methodological approaches, they both work to identify answers to my research question. Through this method of analysis, I learned from a number of angles, all of which suggest

that a rift will always exist in human communication and the ultimate purpose of communication is to try and close this gap.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are means of collecting information and producing a thesis. I decided that a qualitative methodological approach would better suit the nature of my thesis, which is to address the theoretical issues. That being said, I analyse secondary sources, which include empirical research so as to make my qualitative approach stronger. Despite the fact that the majority of my thesis speaks to a methodological approach of literary theoretical analysis, I see the value in quantitative elements of research. As such, I make use of some statistics, interviews and surveys so as to elevate the quality of my research.

Additionally, it is important to note that while I did not personally conduct empirical research, it could certainly be used to perform studies relating to my research question. However, this was beyond the objectives of the study, which were achieved by means of the far-reaching, in-depth scope that theoretical literary analysis provides.

When considering future efforts to build upon my research, it is important to discuss how an alternative methodological approach to mine might provide more information on my topic. An empirical approach that elaborates on my research would allow for specific answers to specific questions to be resolved. For instance, perhaps an individual could interview a number of participants and ask them a number of questions about their views on how context, time and space shape communication. The interviewer could ask people to evaluate situations such as: breaking up, business meetings, academic thesis defences, casual conversation, pithy jokes, sharing of quotidian information and talks offering condolences to someone whose loved one died. The participants could then

decide which situation would be better suited to texting and which would be better suited to face-to-face communication. Furthermore, a case study that measures how effectively people work in groups to complete a project could be done (incidentally, this was my original idea before I switched from a quantitative to qualitative approach). For instance, one group could be asked to communicate and complete the project by talking to each other. The other group could be asked to communicate via texting only. After the experiment, the participants could write a reflection of their situation detailing whether or not they were able to meet the objectives of the project.

For those of us who grew up during the end of the 20th century, it is impossible to know what it must have been like for our parents, the “Baby Boomers” to become young adults in a computer-free, internet-free, cell phone-free, app-free environment. As John Carey and Martin Elton (2010) note in their work: *When Media are New: Understanding the Dynamics of New Media Adoption and Use*:

The generation of young people born between 1990 and 2000 may be characterized as the first mobile phone generation. They have grown up with mobile phones all around them, started using them at an early age, and feel that they cannot live without them. They are more likely than older people to personalise their phones (p. 331).

Based on Martin and Elton’s statements, those born in the late 20th century are so accustomed to technology that there is a tendency for them to depend upon it beyond its initial purposes. The mere thought of listening to the Beatles on the radio instead of on an Ipod, searching for word meanings in the dictionary instead of relying on a search engine on the internet and calling someone from a landline instead of texting them, are thus

romanticized qualities of simpler times. All these comparative instances emphasize just how complex communication is for those growing up in the 21st century given that options for alternative forms of communication are vast. Despite the gradual changes in modalities of communication—such as using a cell phone to text rather than to talk face-to-face—there are affordances to such new means of correspondence like texting. For example, the low cost of transmitting messages, especially over long distances, is a quality that benefits all. In addition, the unobtrusive characteristic of contacting people in privacy without having others overhear is yet another convenient aspect (Carey and Elton, 2010, p. 324). The final years of the 20th century is a time that marks revolutionary changes not only in media technologies, but so too in the dynamics of the social order of human communication.

The decision to focus specifically on how texting facilitates presence differently from face-to-face communication is based on my personal fascination with and fear of texting. I am particularly interested in the complex social expectations surrounding the practice of texting. Further, I am drawn to learning about how the social expectations concerning texting affect communication through social, psychological, cultural and socio-economic contexts. My interest regarding the subject of texting is not arbitrary. On the contrary, it is timely, for texting is a very popular means of communication in the 21st century. In addition to focusing on contemporary new media studies, the study of how texting facilitates presence differently from face-to-face communication provides practical significance by incorporating day-to-day examples of how cell phone use affects the ways in which people communicate. Furthermore, the examples and research that I draw upon are not based on hypothetical people or situations. It was my desire to

implement lived experiences and real interview dialogue from previous studies so as to show the depth and reality of this subject matter. Through exploring this subject matter, it is my attempt to understand how the human element of presence in communication is maintained when technology enters the picture. In addition to the practical significance of this research, the theoretical significance of this study pertains to how the manifestation of presence develops over time based on the use of communicative technologies. What is known about this area of study is that change in communicative technologies is a constant that affects how people choose to communicate. In addition, it is clear that modern day scenarios pertaining to methods of communication bear similarities to those of previous times. What is not as well known in this area of study is how changes in communicative technologies affect the ways in which presence is facilitated and whether or not presence (physical and social) can be fully manifested over technology.

The advancements in communicative technology, while progressive in some ways, also encourage social exclusion. With the advent of cell phone technology came a new trend in communication: texting. This form of mediation, albeit contemporary when compared to previous methods of communication, draws from early human civilization with the invention of papyrus and the reed stylus dating back to the year 2500 BC in Egypt (Carr, 2011, p. 59). Ultimately, written correspondence has enabled people over the centuries to keep in touch despite distance. Since the dawn of human interaction during the Stone Age and the eventual rise of great cities, many forms of media were developed so as to enable territorial expansion and the growth of civilization (Innis, 1994, p. 3). Furthermore, as Nicholas Carr (2011) writes:

Not until well after the collapse of the Roman Empire did the form of written language finally break from the oral tradition and begin to accommodate the unique needs of readers. As the Middle Ages progressed, the number of literate people—cenobites, students, merchants, aristocrats—grew steadily, and the availability of books expanded. [...] Reading was becoming less an act of performance and more a means of personal instruction and improvement (p. 82).

Ultimately, the more sophisticated the technology became, the more exclusive the means of communication. Over time, the use of gestural, visual and vocal expression shifted and people began to rely on more personal and comparatively introverted means of communication. Technology and communication work beautifully together and render tremendous outcomes. Our predecessors used the reed stylus and tablets, parchment and quills, typewriters, telegraphs, and so on to communicate with each other. Change, however, is an irreversible constant. The technologies of the past not only opened windows for new opportunities, but have also been improved upon so that a cell phone is no longer just a communicative device, but a device that can function as a camera and a source of information via internet access. Through the innovative elaborations on the design and purpose of previous communicative technologies, the adaptations to media do not follow a linear approach. That is to say that cell phones, for instance, are not designed for one method of communicating but multiple, which include voice calls, texting, and photo messaging.

Given the rich history of communication, it is important to discuss the framework and structure surrounding forms of new media, such as the cell phone, through the

trajectory of media theory. In particular, it is important to consider tenets concerning how media technology influences the ways in which humans interact with each other and how texting falls into the canon of media theory.

At the onset of many scholarly explorations is a question that invites one to perform research so as to learn more about the subject matter. In this particular exploration, the main research question reads as follows: How does talking face-to-face facilitate presence differently from texting? The purpose of this question is to identify clearly and concisely what aspects constitute preferred communication and how presence manifests itself through face-to-face communication and via texting. Some variables to consider in addition to the main research question include the concepts of presence, context in relation to time and space and preferred communication.

My methodological approach makes use of secondary sources as the prime means of research. These secondary resources enable me to explore through a broad lens of theoretical and philosophical research in addition to contemporary empirical case studies and interviews. Through critical literary analysis, my research builds upon the work of others so as to contribute to the existing body of literature on this subject matter.

Literature Review

This research takes shape through the process of literary analysis in which I discuss a range of aspects beginning with how face-to-face interaction, the preferred means of communication, facilitates presence. I want to clarify that there are other forms of literature specifically within the field of media studies that pertain to discussions of communication and how it is facilitated over distances; however, I am focusing on literature predominantly from the field of communication studies with additional theory

from the fields of sociology, philosophy and psychology. For the purposes of this exploration concerning the human in communication, the term “presence” refers to two defining concepts: physical presence as it relates to being alive and the existential nuances that the state of being physically present entails (Peters, 2000, p. 16) and social presence as it relates to standards of behaviour within social contexts (Lowenthal, 2009, p. 4-5). The aim of this research is to discuss the relationship between the human, the human condition (as it relates to metaphysical, ontological, existential motifs of philosophy), presence (physical and social) and communication through the critical analysis of the theories from such scholars as: Erving Goffman, Emmanuel Levinas, Roger Silverstone, Walter Ong, Joshua Meyrowitz and John Durham Peters.

One scholar whose work pertains to face-to-face communication, the preferred form of interaction, is Erving Goffman. Goffman notes that bodily interaction as expressed through gestures, facial expressions and vocal tone, affords clarity because the sensorial characteristics are markers of meaning among humans (Steiner-Adair, 2013, p. 72).

In addition to Goffman’s theory of how corporeal interaction affords humans with a preferred means of communication, Roger Silverstone’s (2007) work *Media and Morality*, is equally integral to the theoretical discussion of the human in communication. Silverstone illustrates the connection between the human conscience in communication and human presence. Through his discussion of morality, he integrates the notion of the media landscape, or the “mediaopolis” and how technology influences communication. Ultimately, Silverstone touches upon the preferred means of communication by stating that face-to-face communication provides humans with reassurance given that bodily

interaction suggests an expectation of familiarity and honesty, or morality (Silverstone, 2007, p. 114).

Emmanuel Levinas's theory regarding existence and how presence comes to fruition through live interaction is another source that combines philosophy with communication theory in order to highlight the positive attributes of face-to-face interaction.

In addition, Walter J. Ong's discussion of situational and abstract contexts within communication— in which the former relates to the idea of spontaneity in oral cultures, and the latter relates to the idea of calculation in text-based communication— provides a thorough analysis of ideal human interaction and how it changes when affected by the use of media.

Finally, a philosophical and theoretical construction of the ideal means of communication would be remiss without the inclusion of John Durham Peters' theoretical work regarding the transcendental in communication. Peters' theory is timely in how it discusses face-to-face communication as being simultaneously supreme when it comes to its sensorial affordances and troublesome when it comes to admitting that humans are incapable of attaining absolutely perfect communication.

From the ideal and preferred methods of communication the focus of how presence is positively manifested shifts to discuss the departure from the preferred means of presence. One way in which texting can be disadvantageous is through the blurring of etiquette expectations. In Rich Ling and Rhonda McEwen's (2010) work: "Mobile Communication and Ethics: Implications of Everyday Actions on Social Order" the authors focus on the notion of texting as a new means of communication in conjunction

with the concept of pre-existing norms of etiquette within the social order. Essentially, the authors note that texting can be problematic in certain social situations because it engenders contrasting patterns—old and contemporary—of social etiquette. The incompatibility of pre-existing and contemporary patterns blurs the lines between what is considered to be appropriate social protocol and what is not. One example the authors identify concerns texting while in the company of others and how it implicitly suggests disrespect and rude manners (p. 8).

Another source that illustrates the hairy nature of texting includes Ilana Gershon's (2010) work: *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*. Gershon discusses how texting disrupts corporeal patterns of social interaction and how this form of communication, innocent as it may seem, can breed poor, impractical habits. In addition to poor habits, texting can also foster miscommunication depending on the context in which it is practiced. One particular example she gives of how texting causes problematic situations concerns the act of breaking up with someone via texting and the implications that accompany the decision to deal with an emotional situation over media rather than in person.

In addition to the prior examples, Donna Reid and Fraser Reid's work: "Insights into the Social and Psychological Effects of SMS Text Messaging" and Louise Horstmanshof's (2005) work: "Mobile phones, SMS, and relationships" discuss the expectations of and problems associated with texting in professional situations. One example discussed is the prevalence of receiving job interview invitations through text messages rather than over the phone (p. 42).

A final shift is made in which the merits of texting as a contemporary means of communication is discussed. One way in which texting is advantageous is through the design of mobile phone technology. The device enables those who are disabled, like the deaf, for example, to communicate without the barriers of hearing and vocal speech (Bakken).

Another way in which texting is beneficial is through the factor of cost. In her work, “Overseas Filipino Workers and Text Messaging: Reinventing Transnational Mothering” Cecilia Uy-Tioco (2007) discusses how access to owning a cell phone and having access to texting enables communication. Being able to text provides overseas workers, who earn low wages, with the means to communicate over great distances, incurring fewer expenses than they would if they tried to make long distance calls to their families (p. 259). Access to texting is empowering because it does not deny a human from trying to reclaim his/her presence despite distance, finances, or other barriers. In regard to globalisation and socio-economic standards, the low cost of texting is an equalizer among many.

In addition to the positive factors of ability, access and empowerment, texting is also an important practice in certain cultures. According to Mizuko Ito’s (2005) articles: “Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life,” “Intimate Connections: Contextualizing Japanese Youth and Mobile Messaging” and “Mobile Phones, Japanese Youth, and the Re-Placement of Social Contact” texting helps women from countries like Japan to communicate comfortably. Specifically, through the act of texting, women can correspond with a member of the opposite sex without experiencing judgement or scorn from their elders. Furthermore, texting affords autonomy in regard to communication

through the ability of youth and young adults to control the privacy of their conversations (p. 3).

A final way in which texting bears positive outcomes when facilitating human presence concerns the psychological and behavioural characteristics of individuals. Donna Reid and Fraser Reid's (2010) "The Expressive and Conversational Affordances of Mobile Messaging" and Sherry Turkle's (2011) work *Alone Together* are instrumental in discussing the psychological rationale behind texting. In particular, these authors hone in on how those who suffer from varying forms of social anxiety benefit from the elimination of immediate face-to-face contact that texting affords.

An important concluding thought is to recall Marshall McLuhan's theory concerning media as extensions of the human body. It is important to note that humans use seeing and hearing to shape meaning in communication. The dependence humans have on these two senses is a primordial human trait (Wilcox, 2009, p. 405). Communication radiates outwards from these senses. That is to say that expression is facilitated by the sensorial relationship between humans and media. As McLuhan (1994) writes: "The personal and social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each" (p. 107). In essence, the media in which humans use to express themselves are alternative manifestations of direct face-to-face, sensorial communication. It is important to keep the key words "context" and "social circumstances" in mind when deciding to text because it may not always be the best representation of one's sensorial expression. When something is new, it is not necessarily negative or positive, but rather an aspect that must be integrated into a pre-existing pattern of socialization. In this way, face-to-face

communication is considered a preferred means of communication since it is a more robust method of displaying meaning through seeing and hearing in particular (Brown, 2013, p. 31). Ultimately, communication can be harmonious and it can also be disastrous in how humans choose to represent their thoughts. No form of communication is spared from inadequacy. In this way, there is something equally redeeming about both texting and face-to-face communication since both forms ultimately depend upon how the human orchestrates its use.

Central Terms

Presence: As I have touched upon in page 7, presence is divided into two sub-categories: physical presence and social presence. Physical presence pertains to gestural, tonal and bodily signifiers of communication and existence. Social presence, on the other hand, refers to “sociable, warm and personable” traits that can be facilitated over texting.

Context: For the purposes of this research, the term context relates to social situations and circumstances that are defined by social norms, space and time.

Pre-tend-sence: This term refers to the act of being simultaneously absent and present. In other words, an individual may be physically present when in the company of another; however, if he or she is texting, he or she may not be socially present. As a result, this individual’s body language may be absent (no sign of active involvement or participation in the social situation) so as to suggest that he or she is pretending to be socially present.

Thesis Outline

Chapter One: The relationship between humans, presence and communication is one that involves context, space and time. The dynamics of human communication are complicated, for the ways in which humans communicate are by no means flawless. It is

key to note that even face-to-face communication is susceptible to drawbacks given that humans may not always articulate themselves as well as they think. Even when talking in person, people practice deceit ranging from little white lies to absolute falsities. Despite the possibility for miscommunication in any situation that involves humans, face-to-face communication is considered to be the preferred form of interaction by scholars who specialize in communication theory (Baym, 2010, p. 52).

Chapter Two: This chapter relates to the first, for they both discuss the pursuit of presence. While the former chapter emphasizes how, despite the flaws in human interaction, face-to-face communication embraces the “here and now” this chapter emphasizes how the flawed human in communication struggles to facilitate both social and physical presence when depending too much on texting. Texting, albeit a convenient form of communication to some, is subject to misuse. That is to say that it is easy to overlook possible repercussions through the seemingly harmless act of texting. As a result of choosing to text in certain situations that may not be the most suitable for texting, poor communication habits are likely to transpire. The misuses affect the mediated embodiment of presence negatively.

Chapter Three: This chapter works to come full circle in the discussion of communication, presence and how people come to discover what methods of communication do not work and what methods are successful when one cannot be physically present. In this light, this chapter works to recognize the merits of texting. Texting may not be an ideal way to express presence when compared to face-to-face interaction; however, it is a realistic means of interaction that enables people from different cultural, socio-economic and ability backgrounds to have an alternative means

of access to communication. The merits of texting relate to autonomy, empowerment and globalisation. The affordances of texting exemplify the human ability to adapt to, and participate in, the recreation of presence.

Chapter One

The Might of the Mountain: The Ideal and the Preferred Forms of Presence in Communication

Introduction

The purpose of communication is to share—to connect with the other. Humans are social creatures that thrive on interaction. Face-to-face communication is one means of interaction that goes back to the roots of the human in communication, the oral tradition and the need to exchange thoughts, ideas and feelings in order to validate one's existence and presence (Peters, 2000, p. 16). The key components of this chapter concern how face-to-face communication facilitates physical presence and social presence as seen through the sharing of sense-based experiences (such as non-verbal communication), social psychological feelings (empathy) and patterns of socialisation such as behavioural etiquette.

Face-to-Face: The Preferred Means of Communication

Face-to-face communication is considered to be paramount in many communicative contexts because it is three-dimensional, sensorial, co-present and live (Baym, 2010, p. 52). While it is important to strive for ideal means of effective communication in quotidian experiences, it is necessary to remember that face-to-face communication is not always a convenient option and that there is a possibility for error when communicating through any mode. As John Durham Peters (2000) articulates in *Speaking into the Air*, there is a great necessity for dissemination-based means of

communication. This term refers to a form of communication that can be spread or distributed over great distances, like the written letter, for instance: “Dialogue still reigns supreme in the imagination of many as to what good communication might be, but dissemination presents a saner choice for our fundamental term” (p. 62). Essentially, dialogic means of communication may be associated with good communication; however, just like any form of communication, it is not an ideal or perfect means of interaction. Face-to-face communication is bound to its context. That is to say that the preference some may have toward communicating face-to-face is relative to or depends upon the social situation, settings and circumstances at the time and place of interaction (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. ix).

Context is crucial to consider when examining how people communicate and whether or not they prefer the ways in which they communicate. Some may use a type of medium because it is the popular means of staying within social circles, but that may not mean that they prefer that form of corresponding with others. For example, with the growing use of cell phones among millennial youth and the ever tempting cell phone packages complete with free texting nation-wide comes the stereotype that youth must prefer texting over talking face-to-face (Coxon). This assumption has been taken into serious consideration by researchers who conducted a study at the University of Cambridge in which 1, 269 people were surveyed and interviewed. Quantitative statistics suggest that the generalizations concerning youth and communicative technology preferences may not prove to be true:

[a total of] 38% of 10-18 year olds claim to feel overwhelmed [from exposure to communicative technology], an even higher percentage than the 34% of 25-34

year olds who felt the same way. Similarly, the stereotype suggesting that children today prefer technology to real life social interaction was snubbed by the study with 64% of children surveyed in the UK citing face-to-face conversation as their preferred method of communication, almost the same figure as for adults at 65% (Coxon, 2011).

Given this particular study, face-to-face communication, among youth and adults alike, certainly reigns supreme among other forms of communication when concerning statistical and interview related research. While face-to-face interaction is the preferred method of interaction for young and old, that is not to say that personal technologies are poor tools. As the principal investigator of the study Professor John Clarkson, director of the Engineering Design Centre at the University of Cambridge notes:

There is much discussion about whether communications technology is affecting us for the better or worse. The research has shown that communications technology is seen by most as a positive tool but there are examples where people are not managing usage as well as they could be—it is not necessarily the amount but the way in which it is used (Coxon).

The choices people make to use communicative devices in certain social contexts affect the outcome of the situation. If one depends upon one's personal device in situations that do not lend themselves to the use of a communicative technology, it will not be beneficial, for it is the way in which the device is used that determines the fate of the situation.

The Conversational Ideal in Communication

The conversational ideal in communication, which is applicable to the study concerning youth and their preference for communicating in person relates to what Michael Schudson (1978) notes in his article “The Ideal of Conversation in the Study of Mass Media” as:

a widely shared ideal in contemporary American culture which social science has uncritically adopted. It is by no means an ideal of universal significance [...] But implicit in studies of the mass media in the social sciences is the old ideal of perfect communication in the face-to-face conversation (p. 323- 325).

In its most perfect form, ideal communication would transpire if both parties had complete transparency, honesty and lack of ego—attributes that belong to angels only (Peters, 2000, p. 64). The angel, however, is an entity with no proof of existence, but rather a concept belonging to belief systems. As such, the concept of a spirit in the form of an angel is one that requires one to be critical and cognizant of the potential contentious nature of such a claim. In essence, the pinnacle of ideal communication is unattainable by humans as John Durham Peters discusses. The “conversational ideal” of face-to-face interaction as discussed by Michael Schudson (1978) suggests that the “conversational ideal” is considered to be attainable through physical presence rather than mediated presence. In other words, the “conversational ideal” is an association held by the everyday person in which humans believe they can achieve ideal conversation through talking in person. As Schudson writes: “we have developed a notion that all communication *should be* like a certain model of conversation [ie. face-to-face], whether that model really exists or not” (p. 323). Even though face-to-face communication is not

equivalent to that of transparent communication among angels, there are aspects of face-to-face interaction that evoke notions of the “conversational ideal.” Schudson suggests that characteristics of face-to-face communication such as: continuous feedback in a face-to-face setting, spontaneity in conversation, egalitarian norms regarding the turn taking of conversation and sense-based communication that relies not only on verbal but non-verbal cues work to strengthen communication (p. 323). The multiplicity of approaches one can take to interact via face-to-face communication informs how this method of interaction is considered the second best, humanly achievable form of communication. It is key to note that Schudson (1978) articulates that this “ideal of conversation” is based on the general assumption that the multiplicities of approaches via face-to-face interaction are the best means of conversing. When face-to-face communication is compared to technologically mediated communication, the latter is considered inferior. The reality of the matter, as Schudson discusses, is that technologically mediated communication opens up new paths to ideal communication thereby contributing to new practices of interaction that are successful (p. 320). He emphasizes that the characteristics of face-to-face communication comprise an “ideal of conversation” that is not necessarily as effective as it is conceived to be. While the assumption that face-to-face communication as the “ideal” method of communication is a popular one, Schudson articulates firmly that conversation facilitated by media enable egalitarian means of conversation. Essentially, Schudson notes blatantly that media are often thought of negatively when compared to face-to-face interaction. Despite this important detail, it still stands to reason that people are inclined to label face-to-face communication as the preferred means of conversation over other means.

In addition to Schudson's work pertaining to the "conversational ideal", academic theories and studies conducted by, but not limited to, such scholars as Erving Goffman, Nancy Baym, Ilana Gershon, Catherine Steiner-Adair and Sherry Turkle, suggest the preferred means of accessing presence in communication is via face-to-face interaction. The respective theories of these scholars are more nuanced, but are broadly defined underneath the theoretical umbrella of face-to-face interaction and presence at this juncture. It is important to note that even when presence is facilitated by face-to-face interaction, there are contexts in which this method of communication may not always guarantee preferable outcomes, as scholars such as Mitzuko Ito, Donna Reid and Frasier Reid discuss in their works. In essence, the prime attribute of face-to-face communication is that it elicits humanistic qualities of presence through the centrality of the body (Marvin, 1988, p. 109). These qualities of bodily presence include sensorial affordances, familiarity of ritual behavioural patterns, and the human condition.

Sensorial Aspects of Non- Verbal Communication

In order to learn acceptable expectations regarding social behaviour, infants and children look instinctually to their parents' facial responses and gestural reactions: "For parent and baby alike, the nonverbal messages of eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, body posture, and the timing and intensity of response may reveal our internal processes more directly than our words" (Steiner-Adair, 2013, p. 72). As Steiner- Adair states, non-verbal communication is closely linked to both tactile and visual aspects of human development that arise well before vocal speech and reading skills. That is to say that as young children, humans developmentally interact through rudimentary sensory-based processing. For instance, humans make gestures that are visually understood to be

signs through the use of their bodies. Non-verbal communication as a primordial aspect of humanity is discussed in Sherman Wilcox's (2009) article, "William C. Stokoe and the Gestural Theory of Language Origins" in which he notes that: " Semantic phonology suggests that visible gestures, whether the common everyday gestures we make when we speak or the conventionalized gestures that are the signs of natural signed languages, are primordial examples of self-symbolization" (p. 402). Ultimately, humans are inherently equipped with the ability to use gestures as signs. Non-verbal communication should therefore be second nature with the exception of those who may possess developmental impairments.

In addition to non-verbal cues, it is important to note that as humans grow into adolescents and adults, the pre-frontal cortex develops so that humans learn to recognize consequences based on hearing the tone in the voices of others (Steiner-Adair, 2013, 80-81). As Wilcox (2009) suggests: "Sign and speech are intrinsically bound in our evolutionary history to embodied perceptual, motor, and cognitive systems" (p. 405). It is through this intrinsic bond that humans possess with their own means of communicating that makes the preservation of interpersonal face-to-face communication so important.

Communicating through the body helps people to engage in the creation of meaning. As Roger Silverstone (2007) notes in his work, *Media and Morality*:

The world of the everyday is above all a vivid world, and that vividness is grounded in bodily experience and sensibility. And it is through the vivid face-to-face socially meaningful and robust relations are sustained in places and across generations, reproduced through time. And in this process it is the body which is central (p. 113).

When people choose to interact in person, the bodily experience grants a vivid and meaningful process of establishing relationships. Face-to-face communication is one form of human communication that stands the test of time. It has existed since the beginning of oral cultures, acting as a precursor to the first Sumerian literary texts dating back to 3500-3000 BCE (Mark). To elaborate on the concept of the body and its influence on communication, it is fitting to include a passage from Carolyn Marvin's (1988) work: *When Old Technologies Were New*, which suggests that the body, like a machine, can be a vessel of communication and works as a medium:

There is no form of communication that does not require the body's engagement, though printed and written messages may involve a smaller direct range of its perceptual and motor capacities than oral-gestural messages do. [...] The body is a convenient touchstone by which to gauge, explore, and interpret the unfamiliar, an essential information-gathering probe we never quite give up, no matter how sophisticated the supplemental modes available to us (p. 109).

The human body is conventionally known as a centre of human experience. It is a familiar universal entity to which people can relate and associate. The comforting attributes of the body as a mortal entity suggest that the body is, as Marvin writes, "the touchstone by which to gauge, explore, and interpret the unfamiliar." The idea that the body is the primary means through which humans interpret messages and meaning does not suggest that technologically mediated communication is inferior to face-to-face communication. The machine, rather, is an entirely different entity from the human.

Ultimately, face-to-face communication enables the sensorial, corporeal being to engage in a live form of presence. By avoiding the temporal and spatial limitations of technological mediation, face-to-face interaction provides a sense of reassurance. This reassurance is derived from the fact that face-to-face communication is a method of human interaction to which people can revert when technology fails to facilitate meaning and presence (Silverstone, 2007, p. 114).

The Face in Communication and Interaction Ritual

Face-to-face communication is live interaction, which is likened to a rich form of presence (Peters, 2000, p. 16). There is a sensorial advantage to corporeal interaction, which enables one to see the other's body and to hear the other's voice. In his work, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman (1959) defines face-to-face communication as: "The reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence"(p. 15). When an individual interacts with another who is physically present, he or she formulates reactions and behaviour based on how the other communicates. In his work *Interaction Ritual* Goffman (1967) suggests that: "One's face then, is a sacred thing, and the expressive order to sustain it is therefore a ritual one" (p. 19). The incomparable aspect of face-to-face communication and body language concerns the expression of the face, for as Goffman writes, the face is a "sacred thing" that is integral to the maintenance of the ritual expressive order in physical communication. This notion of the expressive order in terms of physical presence bears great significance to the concept of the face as a naked, exposed, or non-hidden form of physical presence that is shared among humans. In his work *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Emmanuel Levinas (1987) writes: "The manifestation of a face is

the first discourse. The presence of a face thus signifies an irrecusable order [...]” (p. 96-97). The face exists as an objective emblematic entity of physical presence in regard to time and space. The face is a unifying ontological characteristic belonging to each human being and thus connects humans on a fundamental level regarding the physical manifestation of presence.

The idea of face-to-face communication as a routinized form of sensorial interaction correlates to the notion of what Goffman coins as: “interaction ritual.” As Goffman (1967) notes in his work: *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour*, the interaction ritual refers to the humanistic pattern of participatory actions that work to facilitate the exchange of meaning. Body language, for Goffman, shapes messages so that people comprehend each other during social interaction: “I use the term ‘ritual’ because this activity, however informal and secular, represents a way in which the individual must guard and design the symbolic implications of his acts while in the immediate presence of an object that has no special value to him” (p. 57). The importance of actively guarding and designing the symbolic implications of one’s acts while in the presence of another directly concerns corporeal presence. The reason as to why corporeal presence is connected to symbolic actions is because actions are representative of a live flow of information. Actions work as symbols that enable people to decipher what is being said. That is to say when someone articulates an idea through the use of a physical expression in addition to vocal diction, he or she anticipates that the other will be able to decode the words and actions that signify the thoughts expressed. The exchange of words and actions comprise the pattern or system of encoding and decoding, which is a communication ritual. Goffman (1967) writes that: “we need to identify the countless

patterns and natural sequences of behaviour occurring whenever persons come into one another's immediate presence" (p. 2). Entering into one another's immediate presence not only invites the practice of perception in order to be present, but also requires all involved to engage in what Goffman (1967) refers to as "a basic structural feature of interaction", which requires self-respect and the rule of considerateness toward the other. One must conduct one's self in such a way so as to maintain the role or face one has decided to perform. Mutual acceptance of everyone else's role in the conversation is a key feature of face-to-face interaction (p. 11). The willingness of the participants to listen, respect and be considerate are ideal aspects that each person is expected to practice while engaging in what the other is saying during face-to-face communication. While these aspects are considered to be socially appropriate protocol, they are not always practiced. The action of listening; however, is necessary for the flow of conversation. Each participant has a self-designated role in which he or she performs. Mutual acceptance is a crucial element of the interaction ritual of face-to-face communication.

Savoir-Faire and Non-Verbal Communication

When people communicate and indulge in the mutual acceptance of sharing meaning, they exchange words to represent their thoughts. Words alone, however, are not always the most satisfactory means of representing one's thoughts. The enactment of symbolic, bodily presence via face-to-face interaction works to contextualize meaning in hopes that the other will be able to read the ritual patterns of body language in addition to what is being said. For instance, a furrowed brow and a frown indicate frustration. Pouty lips and down cast eyes indicate sadness. A smile suggests happiness and raised eyebrows suggest a quizzical reaction. According to Goffman (1967) non-verbal

communication is a common practice among members from every social circle. People are expected to employ face-work, perceptiveness and one's knowledge in order to understand and participate in the exchange of non-verbal interpretations that are associated with non-verbal acts.

The appropriate mannerisms and behaviours associated with certain social settings are referred to as tact, *savoir-faire*, diplomacy or social skill (p. 13). By stressing the practice of perceptiveness when it comes to reading one's face, Goffman highlights a fundamental principle in communication: sharing in the experience. To elaborate, perceptiveness in communication requires attention to such nuanced qualities as emotional innuendo, implicit innuendo and sensorial characteristics, such as visual cues. Further, face-work requires social skill when participating in discussions. If one actively participates in a discussion, this suggests that one is both physically and socially present. That is to say that presence matters when participating in the ritual of face-to-face communication. In order to be present when interacting, one must consciously make use of his or her social and sensorial capacities so as to add to, or enhance the meaning exchanged between the parties at hand. It is important to note that tact, or social skill, depends heavily upon the use, and recognition of, facial cues, vocal tone and body gestures. These patterns associated with recognizing and using such cues have long been engrained within the foundation of the human social order. Goffman writes that rules and patterns within the social order provide a universal framework for face-to-face conversations. The social order of etiquette, or *savoir-faire*, enables people to recognize patterns and infer meaning from these patterns. In addition to the necessity of gestural cues to enhance presence and meaning, Goffman (1967) articulates the importance of

emotion in regard to facilitating physical presence via face-to-face communication. He suggests that emotions are symbols that help people to respond to sensitive situations. Being able to show emotion and to read it from how the other behaves is an important factor of ritual interaction. Without emotions ritual behaviour and social *savoir-faire* would be difficult to detect and understand. Spontaneous behaviour and expression of feelings tend to fall within the formal pattern of ritual interaction more smoothly than planned ones (p.23). Without emotion, the qualities of expression, nuance and tone would be lost. Deciphering messages would be very difficult. As Goffman notes, spontaneous, impromptu expression of feelings are integral to the nature of instinctual patterns within ritual interaction among humans, for they flow to the natural rhythm of ritual exchange better than “consciously designed” emotional responses.

Ritual Communication, Patterns and Performance

The practice of observing ritual patterns of expression in communication is reminiscent of James Carey’s theory pertaining to ritual communication. In conjunction with Goffman’s theory of interaction ritual, Carey’s theory of ritual communication shares the principle characteristic of participatory communication and a mutual willingness to accept the other. In his work: *Communication as Culture* Carey (2010) notes that:

In a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as “sharing,” “participation,” “association,” “fellowship,” and “the possession of a common faith.” This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms “commonness,” “communication,” “community,” and “communion.” A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space

but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs (p. 18).

The ritual view of communication relates to: “maintaining society in time rather than extending messages in space,” which alludes to the necessity of physical presence rather than depending on devices that extend messages in space, like cell phones, for example. Physical presence requires synchronous communication, which occurs when speaking face-to-face. Furthermore, when interacting in person, one’s idiosyncrasies, actions and mannerisms have the potential to unintentionally represent the individual’s thoughts, which provides sensorial dimension to interaction (Goffman, 1959, p. 2).

Whether intentional or not, humans perform constantly or act out versions of how they wish to portray their identities to others. As Shakespeare once wrote: “all the world’s a stage and the men and women are merely the players” (Baym, 2010, p. 106). This metaphor of people as players in a theatrical piece relates to Erving Goffman’s (1959) work: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, in which he writes that the self is an impression which one controls on behalf of others (p. 15). The impression of one’s self that one controls on behalf of others is informed by culturally normative patterns of socialisation and interaction.

The patterns that inform specific associations with ritual social behaviour concern ethnographic components of human interaction. In her work, *The Ethnography of Communication*, Muriel Saville-Troike (2003) notes that: “If we conceive culture as a pattern that gives meaning to social acts and entities [...] we can start to see precisely how social actors enact culture through patterned speaking and patterned action” (p. 11). Patterns are crucial to the formation of meaning and the messages shared among people.

Saville- Troike (2003) goes on to suggest that patterns are fundamental in anthropology, for they give meaning to interpretations of norms and generate behavioural patterns (p. 12). The normative patterns of interaction, like eye contact and body gestures, which Charles Darwin coined as universal markers of meaning, are not necessarily applicable in all contexts (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 232). In order for all involved in communication to share the same set of ritual associations, it is important to strive for what Saville- Troike (2003) coins as “communicative competence”:

Communicative competence involves knowing not only the language code but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. Further it involves the social and cultural knowledge speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms (p. 18).

Without exercising communicative competence properly during any form of communication, what is said in the message can be overshadowed by how one chooses to express ones’ self. Face-to-face communication is a desirable form of interaction (especially when practicing communicative competence) for it lends itself to sensorial forms of understanding that are exercised at the initial stages of human development (Steiner-Adair, 2013, p. 78). The more one can rely on one’s senses to assist in understanding meaning, the more likely one can reciprocate the language and behavioural codes of interaction. Having the ability to process non-verbal communicative cues helps people to transition into society smoothly, for it allows people to tap into the normative expectations and behaviours associated with body language, *savoir-faire* and social etiquette.

Standards and Expectations of Social Etiquette

Standards of social etiquette are easier to detect when conversing face-to-face in which behaviour is visibly observable. When it comes to taking social etiquette cues from how others behave, it is important to consider a real life example. In the deaf community, for instance, it is considered incredibly rude to turn one's back to another while he or she is signing. The key principle in sign language is to look at someone—to engage in an activity that requires eye contact in order to study the other's facial cues. Sign is not only about interpreting the conventional codes, or words, of what each hand gesture represents, but also, how these words are said through dramaturge gestures and expression (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 19). It is a grave sign of disrespect to look away from him a deaf person when he or she is signing. It is as though one takes his or her right to communicate away from him or her by casting one's eyes in another direction. The face-to-face etiquette among the deaf complements the human developmental process, which concerns the first stages of human life.

Plato's the Phaedrus in Relation to the Concept of Face-to-Face Interaction

In addition to the sensorial components of interaction, in order to truly grasp the details of any conversation, both parties must have equal opportunity to be acknowledged. The reception of one's body and how it facilitates meaning bears great relevance to face-to-face communication, for great philosophers like Plato consider face-to-face communication to be the pinnacle of interaction. Plato's work: the *Phaedrus* is a poignant text concerning the discussion of face-to face communication versus dissemination, or written communication. When considering what constitutes the preferred form of communication, John Durham Peters (2000) consults Plato's the

Phaedrus. Plato's ontological discourse of existence and communication through face-to-face interaction suggests that human interaction supersedes other means of exchanging messages:

communication is divine in contrast to its perversion (by manipulation, rhetoric, and writing). Communication is a homeopathic remedy: the disease and the cure are in cahoots. It is a compensatory ideal whose force depends on its contrast with failure and breakdown. Miscommunication is the scandal that motivates the very concept of communication in the first place (p. 6).

The favoured form of communication could not exist without its counterpart. In this way, preferred communication is relative. Peters' account of Plato's the *Phaedrus* suggests that oral communication through the bodily encounter with the other is "divine in contrast to its perversion" (which is dissemination via text). The rationale behind this reasoning is that face-to-face interaction elicits an observably existential form of presence, whereas writing disembodies thought and works as a detachment of meaning from the original living source (Peters, 2000, p. 36-37). To draw a parallel connection back to the concept of the living body, its relationship with communication and the *Phaedrus*, it is important to associate the content of the message with a living entity:

The *Phaedrus* lends itself to such a task for various reasons. Firstly, it deals with the theme of Eros, which for Plato always has to do with the body, no matter whether in a positive or negative fashion. Secondly, the notion of a living organism is essential for this dialogue (Staehler, 2010, p. 49).

The importance of life in regard to how a message presents itself is a key aspect to consider when grappling with the concept of presence via mediated communication. That

is to say that living beings communicate through non-living means. A paradox exists in which the subjectivity of a human is combined with the objectivity of written words when regarding written forms of communication that represent the ideas, words and beliefs of people who breathe and feel emotion. Ultimately, if presence is to be translated into words, it needs to be done in such a way that it represents the living, breathing individual.

Technologically Mediated Communication as Disembodied Communication

Plato suggests that interpretation is skewed when the written, disembodied form of communication cannot clarify or defend the ideas of its creator, for written correspondence is passive. In Walter J. Ong's (2002) work *Literacy and Orality: The Technologizing of the World*. Ong's predilection for technology and how it has historically influenced communication helps to bolster Plato's sage writings by recognizing that the human is different from the machine and therefore possesses different traits—one of which is the trait of human presence. Ong notes that objections people have against personal technology today are similar to those voiced by Plato through the *Phaedrus* in which he has his character Socrates speak out against the act of writing. Plato suggests that writing is inhuman, feigns to be authentic in terms of communicating interior thoughts and is a manufactured product. He continues to criticize writing by having Socrates comment on how writing destroys memory thereby causing people who depend on it to become forgetful. Finally, Socrates says that once one's voice is communicated via the written word, it is passive and cannot defend itself as it could if it were from the spoken word. He says that writing is unnatural unlike speaking (p. 78-9). Through Plato's writing, the relationship between presence and written communication is explored. This relationship is applicable to the relationship that people have with

technology, like the cell phone. The cell phone enables communication but does not substitute for, or fulfil the void of, the absent human being. Unlike the human being, the cell phone is a manufactured product that can be fetishized. In other words, the cell phone is a commercial device that is external to the human body and thus acts as a gateway to pseudo-reality since it is not a natural entity like the human. As Walter J. Ong suggests, “real” (preferred) speech occurs when two real persons are able to communicate live in terms of a synchronous time and a real location in which both parties are physically present and participate in the give-and-take of dialogue. Ong (2002) writes that oral cultures are homeostatic, meaning that the ability to be present is possible since one’s fundamental settings do not change during interaction. He continues to note that in oral culture, bodily interaction facilitates empathetic and participatory communication whereas written communication is objectively distanced (p. 45-46). The fact that a form of communication is associated with empathetic characteristics speaks volumes about the preferred nature of the body as a medium and its connection to the human condition. It is key to note; however, that this is not to suggest an absolute view of texting in which it bears no merits. As I will discuss in chapter three, texting, albeit prone to complications when communicating in some situations, can be a very useful means of communicating.

The Human in Communication: The Human Condition, Presence, the Self and the Other

Because face-to-face interaction is considered to be the favoured form of presence in which the vulnerable self is exposed, it is associated with the idea of morality and trust. The sharing of information between the self and the other while communicating face-to-face in a mutual space and time are all components that require physical and social

presence. When talking face-to-face, the self shares responsibility or accountability for the other since both are equally fragile and vulnerable:

the body and the face are fragile because they are exposed and are the qualities of logos. [...] The other's vulnerability makes me responsible for him or her. Having a body means that one can kill and be killed; it also means that one can offer support and protection (Staeher, 2010, p. 54, 48).

The qualities of human existence relate to the idea of morality. The ways in which people treat each other affects how people behave. Through this process of reciprocity, people relate to each other. As the golden rule says: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Peters, 2000, p. 56).

The "human" in communication refers to the sensorial, emotional being who has both a bodily and mental or social presence. One comes to know one's self through differentiation from the other and this process validates one's own presence (Peters, 2000, p. 114). Communication is about sharing. In its entirety, sharing transpires when both the self and the other are physically and cognitively present. The physical senses are not hidden. Both parties are exposed. When technologically mediated forms of communication are used, the messages are fragmented elements of the originals. The face is the key to unlocking the commune in communication and the present in presence. As Jeffrey Murray (2003) quotes Emmanuel Levinas from his work *Totality and Infinity*:

The face opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation, which no 'interiority' permits avoiding (Levinas, Totality 201). The face "expresses its expression itself, it always remains master of the meaning which it delivers. [...]" The face announces itself prediscursively as the primordial first word (p. 58).

The physical presence of the face itself brings an immediate message of openness; however, given that humans are not angels that are transparent, there is always a possibility that the degree of “openness” that is performed may not be as genuine or honest as it appears. According to Levinas’s rationale, there is no interiority where the skin is exposed, and yet, in reality, even the most gifted face-to-face communicator may be practicing deceit. Bodily expression is nuanced and requires great attention to detail. As McLuhan (1994) once wrote: “the medium is the message” (p.7). From the perspective of McLuhan, the body being the core medium is the core message. The human mind and body beget presence—a provable, physically objective expression of existence. Whether the social content of the message derived from the present being is an honest expression or not is debatable. In other words, just because someone communicates face-to-face does not necessarily mean that what is said will be honest even though his or her physical presence or proof of existence cannot be feigned. It is important to note the distinction between physical and social presence in order to fully comprehend the notion of presence when one communicates. Both physical presence and social presence are key components of communication; however, they may not always be applicable in all contexts. In regard to the particular characteristics of social presence, it is important to take the theory of social presence into consideration:

Short, Williams and Christie (1976) originally developed the theory of social presence to explain the effect telecommunications media can have on communication. They defined social presence as the degree of salience (i.e., quality or state of being there) between two communicators using a communication medium (Lowenthal, 2009, p. 4-5).

These theorists suggest that one's degree of salience over technologically mediated forms of communication may not manifest physical or social presence in the same way as face-to-face communication. Social presence is different via texting for one's "voice" (narrative) is shared but it is difficult to evaluate the genuine intent of the narrative since the recipient cannot gauge the other's emotional investment and degree of undivided attention given that the other's physical presence is not observable. Physical presence can help to reinforce social presence because it can help people to see as to whether one is engaged in the conversation.

In addition to the concept of social presence and how people enact or display behavioural qualities of etiquette in addition to physical qualities of salience is the notion of politeness and how it affects human social interaction:

In 1978 Brown and Levinson proposed a theory of politeness, which created a model for conversational politeness. [...] Brown and Levinson believed that all interaction is characterized by concern over the other person's autonomy needs and his or her desire to be liked, which manifests into strategies that demonstrate those needs (i.e., politeness) (Maginnis, 2011, p. 3).

Conversational politeness, as Brown and Levinson note, is characterized by how the other interprets the physical and linguistic meaning of a message. Physical and social forms of presence are thus closely related to the overall characteristics of social interaction. The practice of engaging in communicative techniques that require social and physical presence is reminiscent of Goffman's theory of the self in every day life concerning reciprocal behaviour and the influence social and physical characteristics of others have on the performance of one's self. Even though physical and social presence are often

interchanged and associated as one and the same entity, it is important to keep in mind that physical presence is not applicable to communication that transpires over text. That is to say that one cannot express body language over text. For instance, even if one tries to convey body language by adding an emoticon with a smiley face or a visual symbol in attempt to explain one's physical presence over text, it does not equate to having someone be physically present. Social presence, on the other hand, can be translated through text since one's thoughts, which may not require body language, are sent to the other.

Corporeal Presence and Morality

The desirable physical presence of a being is tangible and live in nature. The idea that physical presence is a live and tangible form of communication relates to the notion of communication and morality. Roger Silverstone's work, *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediaopolis* is a necessary text to consider in order to analyse what it means to communicate as a human being—a human being whose presence, whether by intention or not, is an example of morality in and of itself given that the face is nothing more or less than what it is (even if the psyche of the individual is not as “real” or sincere). When the physical presence of the self is exposed to the other, there is a mutual sharing of both living beings' physical presence. The human element of communication comes out of hiding when morality is at play, as Silverstone (2007) suggests by writing:

I am taking the moral to apply to first principles; to the judgement and elucidation of thought and action that is oriented towards the other, that defines our relationship to her or him in sameness and in otherness, and through which relationship our own claims to be a mortal, human, being are defined (p. 5- 6).

Through the physical sharing of time and space that face-to-face interaction enables, humans communicate presence without having to frame it as they might when using technology. Silverstone notes that: “Distance and presence coincide in ways that challenge fundamentally the necessary proximal relations that are assumed to be a precondition for an ethical life” (Dayan, 2007, p. 1). Presence requires proximity, which is strengthened when relationships transpire within the same space. When proximity is challenged by distance in terms of space, the idea of a “precondition for an ethical life” loses precedence. Presence, in both physical and social manifestations, is an entity of eros that tends to thrive in spatially proximal relationships, and so, when distance arises, presence in its entirety becomes difficult to access.

Words and Symbols

Eros manifests itself through the bodily form of presence (Staehler, 2010, p. 49). The emotional connection between humans is one that correlates to metaphysical and existential theories of communication. In his work, *Speaking into the Air*, John Durham Peters (2000) discusses how human existence and consciousness speaks to the notion of physical and social presence in communication. Again, physical presence reinforces social presence. It is not solely the content one says that matters, but how one says it, for words, without additional markers of context like tone, gesture and nuance, may not articulate one’s thoughts well: “When you take a word in your mouth you must realize that you have not taken a tool that can be thrown aside if it will not do the job, but you are fixed in a direction of thought which comes from afar and stretches beyond you” (Hans-Georg Gadmer qtd. by Peters, 2000, p. 1).

Words are tools—objective in nature and harmless on their own, but fickle if used incorrectly. Words work to facilitate meaning and presence, but require a body to fully express their true intent. As Peters (2000) notes,

Language and signs are crude carriers for the inner life. Words are at best conventions; they refer to meanings inside people’s minds and to objects in the world. When we express ourselves, we trust private self-stuff to public symbol proxies. Other people catch only the proxies, not the original fullness we had when we uttered our innards. Every utterance is thus a fall or at least a transition into a crossroads of sign traffic that is subject to collisions and bottlenecks; all communication, whether face-to-face or distant, becomes a problem of mediation. If only the signifying vehicles would vanish so that we could see into each other’s hearts and minds, genuine communication would be possible. If only we were angels, with transparent bodies and transparent thoughts, goes the plaint (p. 64).

Whether communicating face-to-face, or through other forms of mediation, communication falls prey to “crossroads” when words exit the speaker’s body. Linguistic signs help represent meaning but in no way fully recreate the perfect translation of one’s inner thoughts. As Peter’s states, it is the normative “symbol proxies” that people recognize. If humans had the transparent minds and bodies of angels, communication in any form would be perfect since presence would be unmistakably apparent and there would be no blurring of boundaries. Further, communication would not be necessary because everyone would understand each other just by existing transparently. Peters (2000) writes that humans are hardwired to have communication problems, for it is part of the human condition (p. 4). With that being said, face-to-face interaction is certainly

advantageous when it comes to decoding meaning, for the very nature of bodily interaction is multi-dimensional and sensorial, thus affording multiple means of accessing meaning and presence.

Existentialism, Co-Presence and Sensory Feedback

The idea of the existential human condition in communication relates to Martin Heidegger's body of work: *Being and Time*. The self and the other communicate before words are exchanged simply through the presentation of physical presence:

Being with others is fundamental to our existence. To be human is to be linguistic and social. Speech can make our relations explicit, but there is no question for Heidegger of communication's failing between people any more than there is of people's ceasing to dwell in societies in language. We are bound together in existential and lived ways before we even open our mouths to speak. (Peters, 2000, p. 16).

Opening one's self up to the other so as to embrace the idea of communication before it transpires is a key attribute of face-to-face interaction. The mere physical presence of the other evokes a message without using any words. Body language affords people with the ability to sense (literally by using one's senses) how meaning will be exchanged.

The live sensorial signals of face-to-face interaction encourage people to participate in the preferred embodiment of presence. Peters (2000) notes that:

Touch, being the most archaic of all our senses and perhaps the hardest to fake, means that all things being equal, people who care for each other will seek each other's presence. The quest for presence might not give better access to the other's soul, per se, but it does to their body (p. 270).

There is a quality of verifiability to touch, for as Peter's notes it is the "hardest to fake." When one is physically in front of the other, presence is not as difficult to question as it is when distance and technologized mediation intervene. Touch may not be the absolute cure to flaws in communication, but it is "primal" and is a quality that naturally belongs to all humans: "Because we can share our mortal time and touch only with some and not all, presence becomes the closest thing there is to a guarantee of a bridge across the chasm" (Peters, 2000, p. 271).

Blurred Boundaries: Space, Temporality/ Immediacy and the Notion of Absence and Presence in Communication

The chasm of communication lies in the act of miscommunication. As Catherine Steiner-Adair (2013) writes in her work *The Big Disconnect*: "The likelihood of misunderstanding grows without the more nuanced sensory feedback that face-to-face conversation affords" (p. 21). Furthermore, miscommunication is often affected by the space in which the interaction transpires. In Joshua Meyrowitz's (1985) book, *No Sense of Place* he notes that space and social interaction are interconnected. When the space is disconnected from the communication, the ways in which people approach communicating through mediated forms of interaction change. Meyrowitz (1985) writes that: "Electronic media have altered the significance of time and space for social interaction. Certainly, physical presence and direct sensory contact remain primary forms of experience" (p. viii). Like Levinas and Silverstone, Meyrowitz suggests that "physical presence and direct sensory contact" are "primary forms of experience" given that human encounters require the use of the senses, which trigger physical responses from the body.

The difficulty with mediated communication when compared to face-to-face interaction is that the former blurs spatial and social boundaries concerning whether or not practices like texting, for instance, facilitate presence in its entirety (social and physical) while the latter is distinct, for a physical being in a physical place is proof of relative time and space. As Christian Licoppe (2004) suggests in his work: “ ‘Connected’ presence: the emergence of a new repertoire for managing social relationships in a changing communication technoscape”:

[there is] a gradual shift in which communication technologies, instead of being used (however unsuccessfully) to compensate for the absence of our close ones, are exploited to provide a continuous pattern of mediated interactions that combine into ‘connected relationships’, in which the boundaries between absence and presence eventually get blurred (p. 136).

The boundaries of social interaction that are comprised of physical absence and physical presence are indistinct when communication is technologically mediated. To articulate further, Meyrowitz (1985) writes that: “Electronic media merge formerly distinct public spheres, [and] blur the dividing line between physical place and social “place,” (p. 8).

When the distinction between real, physical space and space inhabited by mediated messages becomes difficult to distinguish, the distinction of physical and social presence, like space, meets a similar fate and becomes difficult to recognize. The corporality of face-to-face communication, on the other hand, facilitates boundaries that are not blurred when concerning time, place and people, for these components are synchronized—they share uniform markers. Ultimately, the blurring of how the physical world is interpreted through mediation bears characteristics of “hypermediation.” “Hypermediation” refers to

a believable likeness of one's self as projected through media. For example, one could send an individual a text message with a photo of one's self and the visual image of the photo would be a form of "hypermediation" since the digital photograph is a sophisticated, seemingly realistic representation of one's self. Ilana Gershon (2010) writes: "is engaging because of the ways in which it gives the impression of providing a surplus of information" (p. 99). Similarly, the idea of what I will coin as "pre-tend-sense" (pretend presence) does not facilitate presence in the idyllic sense, but rather represents a new manifestation of presence in an era which embraces mediated communication. The notion of "pre-tend-sense" complements that of Catherine Steiner-Adair's (2013) psychological discussion regarding developmental pseudointimacy:

Psychologically, texting often promotes a pseudointimacy that easily becomes a stand-in for the real thing. [...]The more children begin to use texting at an earlier age rather than speaking or reading, the more a printed word replaces listening to the human voice and absorbing and understanding nonverbal cues such as facial expression and body language. [...]The less practice they get at face-to-face interaction over everyday things, communicating ideas and feelings in person, the less ready they are for relationships of greater emotional complexity (p. 200-201).

Without practicing and participating in the ritual of face-to-face communication, humans confuse texting easily for direct, synchronous (ideal) communication. This can result in difficult transitions and adaptations to environments that require one to be physically present and emotionally engaged when communicating. Acquiring basic skills in reading body language is necessary to thrive in social situations and to make meaningful relationships. When the body, the central "touchstone" of human experience (Marvin,

1988, p. 109) is involved in communication, it elicits a vulnerable, humbling form of human presence. Face-to-face interaction may not be ideal in all life situations, but it is preferred when trying to engage in the sharing of presence for it is an attainable means of exuding sensorial and emotional indicators of meaning that other means of communication, like texting, do not afford.

The title of this chapter and its allusion to the might of the mountain as a figurative representation of face-to-face interaction encapsulates the notion that face-to-face communication is considered to be the hierarchal peak of facilitating presence. Presence is one of the utmost key terms within this chapter. Presence in the context of this research refers to two sub-categories: physical presence and social presence. The former is comprised of gestural, dramaturgical, tonal and bodily signifiers of communication and existence while the latter refers to the normative sociological traits of behaviour from social etiquette to social cues. While face-to-face communication is not ideal in the way that complete transparency among angels is, it still bears a number of characteristics that reign supreme over other means of corresponding since it transpires in real time and real space (synchronous and live).

Physical presence is measured through the presentation of the self, as Erving Goffman suggests. Gestures and body language help to elaborate the meanings of messages. There is a richness to face-to-face communication given that physical presence is necessary. The sensorial aspects of in person communication help humans to develop skills to process information as Catherine Steiner-Adair notes. The mere presence of the face, as Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Heidegger, Roger Silverstone and

Erving Goffman state, serves as a symbol of objective physical presence that opens or offers the being up to the other for communication.

Social presence requires observation, attention to detail and a willingness to participate in social patterns of communication. As M. Saville-Troike notes, patterns of socially constructed norms inform how people approach social situations involving communication. In order to partake in communication that satisfies specific social standards of politeness, etiquette and appropriateness one must possess what Saville-Troike refers to as “communicative competence.” Communicative competence requires astute attention to the behaviours of others.

The examination of theoretical work within this chapter reveals that, in addition to theories by Baym, Goffman, Gershon, Marvin, Peters, Plato and Schudson verify that face-to-face communication is more “media rich”, “asynchronous” and “sensorial” in nature compared to technologically mediated communication. Further, quantitative research conducted by scholars at the University of Cambridge suggests that both young and old prefer face-to-face interaction to technologically mediated communication. It should be noted that the purpose of this chapter is to consider how face-to-face communication facilitates a preferred form of presence that is different from texting. I want to clarify that texting is not a negative means of communication that should be disregarded from the study of how presence is facilitated in communication. The notion of how texting fits in to the positive light of communication will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three. Ultimately, neither texting nor face-to-face communication is an ideal means of communication. If humans were perfect like angels, they would not even

need to communicate because they would be able to access the thoughts of the other. Any form of human interaction, then, is undeniably prone to miscommunication.

Chapter Two:
From the Mountain to the Molehill—A Departure from the Ideal State of Presence
in Communication

Introduction

As with face-to-face interaction, texting is an attempt to channel human-to-human communication. Texting is used for a number of reasons, one of which concerns corresponding over distance. As a form of written communication, texting draws from the written tradition in which people used tools to craft a system of linguistic symbols to represent spoken word so as to compensate for one's physical absence. This chapter concerns how the human in communication struggles when using tools instead of the physical and social aspects of face-to-face interaction to bridge the chasm and connect with the other (Peters, 2000, p. 271). The main points of this chapter focus on the idea of texting as a departure from ideal communication and the misuses of texting. It is important to remember that the aim of this chapter is not to discount texting as a useful form of communication; but rather to consider the complications this form of new media bears.

In the previous chapter, the epitome of ideal presence in communication is associated with complete transparency among angels (Peters, 2000, p. 64). Given such a transcendental, mortally unattainable standard of ideal presence, it is important to contextualize how mortally attainable forms of communication, like face-to-face interaction and texting, two very different forms of correspondence, fall into the spectrum of communication. Further, it is key to discuss how different methods of communication

facilitate different criteria for presence. The previous chapter elaborates on how face-to-face communication is the runner up to ideal, angelic communication. In other words, face-to-face interaction is considered to be the preferred form of communication when it comes to trying to express one's thoughts on a holistic, sensorial level. As Nancy Baym (2010) articulates, face-to-face interaction elicits media richness because of its multi-dimensional attributes (p. 54). In addition to Baym's view of media richness, the theorists of social presence share a similar view in which people consider some media to have a higher degree of social presence than others, which have low degrees of social presence. Baym notes that the association held with media that have a high degree of social presence is that they are sociable, warm and personal. Examples of media that bear high degrees of social presence include video and telephone calls. The association held toward media that bear low degrees of social presence is that these devices are less personal means of communicating. Baym writes that researchers of computer mediated communication used the theory of media richness to explain that computer mediated communication was impersonal due to the absence of nonverbal and relational cues (Lowenthal, 2009, p. 4-5). In essence, scholars suggest that most consider face-to-face communication—a means of interaction, which bears three-dimensional, synchronous qualities of presence—to be a richer form of interaction that facilitates a higher degree of more personal social presence. Certain communication devices, such as cell phones, are associated, as Lowenthal (2009) notes, with being “inherently impersonal” due to the fact that they lack “nonverbal and relational cues” (p. 4-5).

A Departure from the Ideal

In this chapter, the discussion will shift focus from the ideal and preferred forms of communication honing in on the expectations and misuses of texting and how, when used in inappropriate contexts and circumstances, texting can represent a departure from the ideal and preferred methods of communication. According to Nancy Baym (2010) in her work: *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* she writes that:

Mediation [can be seen] as impoverishment—It is also in keeping with early research approaches that conceptualized face-to-face conversations as the norm against which other kinds of communication could be compared. From this point of view, mediated communication is seen as a diminished form of face-to-face conversation. Taking embodied co-present communication as the norm, early research often saw the telephone and internet as lesser versions of the real thing, inherently less intimate, and therefore, less suited to personal connectedness (p. 52).

Because texting disconnects the body from the message, it is associated with lesser attributes of quality when communicating. The lack of physical presence affects social presence when applied to Baym's view of media richness and how messages may be perceived as impersonal. Texting shares this quality of physical detachment with other means of interaction, which include email, telephone and letter correspondence. These means of communication are facilitated via different technologies that work to bridge the distance of space and time. Keeping in line with Baym's rationale, texting and face-to-face forms of interaction are inevitably compared to each other because one form is

considered to be an example of “embodied co-present communication as the norm” while the other is associated with an alternative means of correspondence that is useful but not always preferable. The degree to which face-to-face communication is preferred over texting can be measured qualitatively by studies concerning “media richness.” As Cecilia Brown (2013) notes in the article: “Are We Becoming More Socially Awkward? An Analysis of the Relationship Between Technological Communication Use and Social Skills in College Students” Ronald Rice coined the term media richness within the study of computer mediated communication: “Media richness refers to a medium’s ability to bridge different frames of reference and make communicated issues less ambiguous” (p. 30-31). Brown writes that if a medium has the capacity to enable immediate feedback, personalization of words, senses and cues, then it is likely to be media rich. She notes that Rice conducted a study in which he asked managers to evaluate the level of media richness in different media within the workplace and their preferences for these media. The findings of the study revealed that texts, handwritten documents and emails were considered low forms of media richness and face-to-face interaction, along with video, were associated with the highest forms of media richness (Rice, 1992) (p. 30-31). By drawing upon specific social and cultural contexts and contrasting the more “rich” means of interaction (face-to-face) with the less “rich” method (texting), the information in this chapter will provide information on the disadvantages and misuses of texting, giving insight into the complex nature of human interaction.

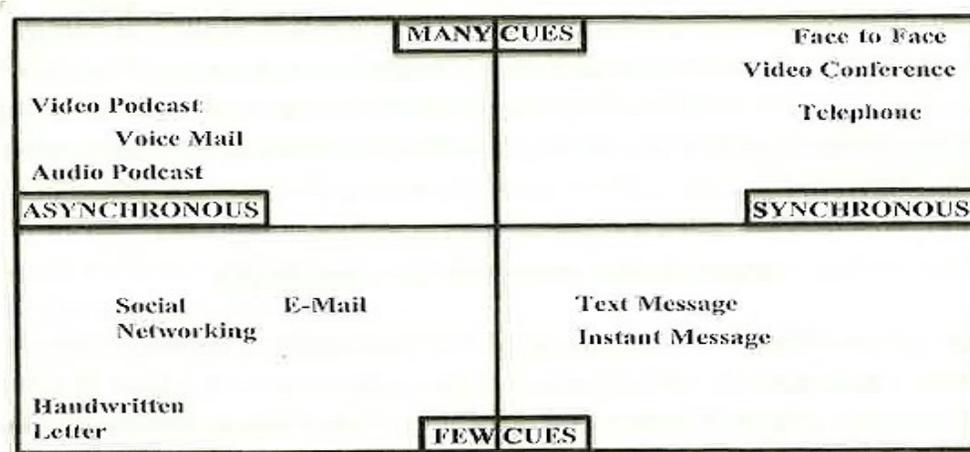


Figure 1: Rosen's Two-Dimensional Model of Communication Modalities

(Rosen, p. 126, 2012)—Brown

The Beginnings of Texting

Texting was not originally designed for social reasons, but rather for purposes pertaining to business interaction. In their work “Swarm: Text messaging designed to enhance social coordination,” Pedram Keyani and Shelly Farnham (2005) discuss the advent of the cell phone and texting, noting that the phenomenon behind the practice of texting developed beyond its original intention:

Martin Cooper’s invention, the cell phone, has gone from a large, expensive gadget of the business elite to a small, stylish device that people from all walks of life can afford. Cell phones, also known as mobile phones, allow people to communicate with others while being just that, mobile. This newfound ease of mobile communication is creating new opportunities for meaningful social interaction, such as keeping in touch with and coordinating with friends and family (p. 287).

Despite the fact that the cell phone was once exclusively designed for the elite who could afford it, this medium has succeeded in reaching a larger demographic for the purposes of connecting people who may be geographically distanced from their friends or family. The unprecedented opportunities for social interaction that the cell phone affords are admirable, and yet, these opportunities have the capacity to complicate existing communication dynamics. To elaborate, it is fitting to discuss how the original intention for such a device and the associations with it impacts the ways in which people perceive of texting as a means of interaction. In their work, *When Media Are New*, John Carey and Martin Elton (2010) write:

Texting began in the early 1990s in Europe. It was included in the GSM standard for Europe but was considered a minor component of mobile phone service—a way for carriers to communicate brief messages to business subscribers. No one expected it to become a significant service. As in the case of many new media, however, serendipity entered into the process (in the form of teenagers), and texting eventually surpassed the volume of voice calls in many countries (p. 323).

From humble beginnings, the practice, or “art” of texting became a popular means of communication. The key aspect to note from Carey and Elton’s work is that texting was never intended for such success. When the far from business elite, teenager demographic “serendipitously” became involved with the practice of texting, the expectations around the device altered and people adapted to the idea of texting as an inclusive rather than exclusive, mundane form of communication. This is an important aspect to consider when exploring the ways in which texting facilitates social presence in particular in communication.

Texting as a Disembodied form of Mediation and Empathy

Texting is an incredibly individualized means of communication; however, that does not necessarily mean that is always the optimal method of interaction (Ling, 2010, p. 3). It is key to note that because texting, like email, telephone, fax, and writing, transpires through the use of a device, it is not unique in its disembodied nature. When humans use inanimate devices to communicate, there is a possibility for miscommunication. Furthermore, the asynchronous nature of texting affects the temporal connectedness among humans. Ultimately, in order for people to recognize new patterns and etiquette, texting, like any other media form, requires time to develop. As Baym (2010) notes: “People communicating in different locations, relying on textual and digital nonverbal cues, are more likely to form relationships that blur the social boundaries between groups and hence challenge social norms of appropriateness” (p. 104).

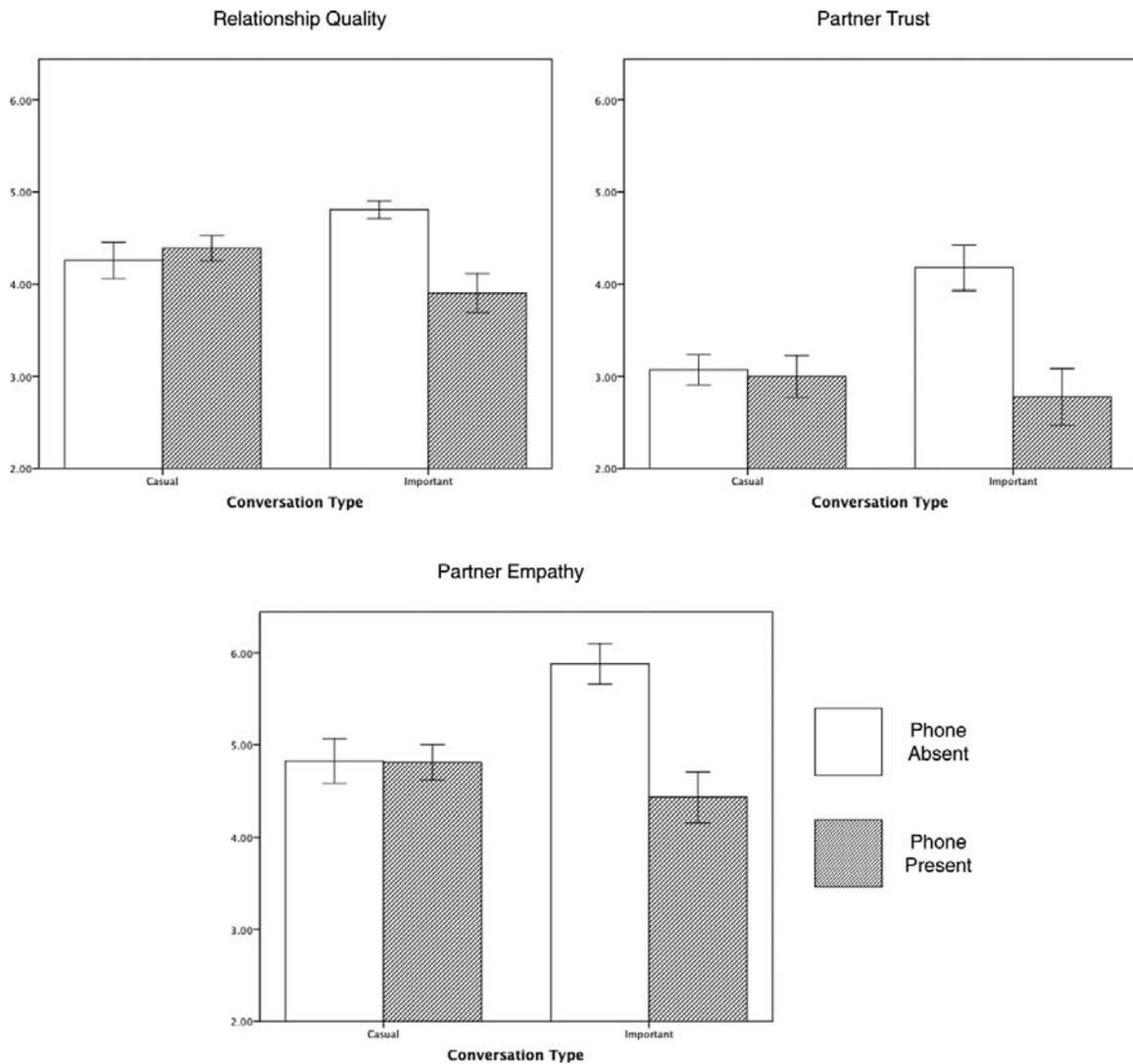
Empathy is a quality that humans bear, which plays a fundamental role in communication (Decety, 2006, p. 1146). According to Jean Decety and Claus Lamm (2006) in their article: “Human Empathy Through the Lens of Social Neuroscience”: “Empathy denotes, at a phenomenological level of description, a sense of similarity between the feelings one experiences and those expressed by others. [...] numerous studies have documented that empathy plays a central role in moral reasoning, motivates prosocial behaviours, and inhibits aggression toward others (Decety, 2006, p. 1146). The neurological responses to emotions, feelings and sentiments that humans possess are biological characteristics that make the human in communication a sentient being. Humans are unique from devices in that they are capable of responding to information via their senses:

The initial component that precedes empathy draws on the somatic mimicry also known as emotion contagion, i.e., the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person, and consequently to converge emotionally [13]. Research demonstrates that viewing facial expressions triggers expressions on one's own face, even in the absence of conscious recognition of stimulus (Decety, 2006,p.1149).

Face-to-face communication, as Decety suggests, elicits empathy due to the neurological responses in the human brain. Machines, on the other hand, may be programmed to process emotions, but this is an artificial form of intelligence and not a live form. As Cecilia Brown (2013) writes in her work: “ Are we becoming more socially awkward? An analysis of the relationship between technological communication use and social skills in college students”:

Over the last 30 years, researchers at the University of Michigan have surveyed 14, 000 college students to assess their levels of empathy. [...] College students today are 40% less empathetic than were those in 1980s, which is the greatest drop in empathy occurring in the year 2000 (Konrath, 2010). [...] Sarah Konrath, writer for *Psychology Today* and head researcher on the University of Michigan project, speculates that one likely contributor to declining empathy is the “rising prominence of personal technology and media use in everyday life... with so much time spent interacting online rather than in reality, interpersonal dynamics such as empathy might be altered” (Rosen, 2012, p. 126) (p. 36-37).

Konrath's speculation that personal technology may contribute to declining empathy may not be far from the truth. A study conducted by Andrew Przybylski and Netta Weinstein (2012) in their article: "Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality," indicates that when personal technologies, like cell phones, are present, individuals are less prone to responding to situations or information with empathy. That is to say that the presence of a cell phone acts as a distraction thereby compromising one's sense of compassion toward the other. In a study results showed that the presence of a mobile phone had the possibility to interfere with relationship formation. Cell phones act as distractions and inhibit the development of closeness, trust and empathy. The reason for the possible interferences of conversations relates to how the mere presence of the mobile phone affects people unconsciously by operating as an "implicit representation of a wider social network" that interrupts the interaction, which takes place in the present (p. 8). The "here-and-now" implicit distractions of the cell phone and the immediate, hyperconnected, addictive relationship some have with texting poses problems when it comes to having a meaningful, empathetic conversation. Cell phones, while useful in some circumstances, proved to be culprits of interruption in the experiment conducted above in which the presence of a cell phone, "interfere[d] in conditions that were otherwise conducive to intimacy" (Przybylski, Weinstein, 2012, p. 8).



This figure demonstrates that the presence of a mobile phone in the laboratory room leads to lower levels of relationship quality, trust, and empathy.

Being able to have empathy when communicating is an important aspect of human development, for it enables a deeper, more nuanced level of understanding beyond the literal meaning of what is being said (Steiner-Adair, 2013, 204). This emotional, psychological quality of being is important because it is fundamental when it comes to communicating or expressing one's self. Furthermore, having the ability to empathize

with others helps people relate to each other, which is the goal of the shared or commune prerogative of communication. As Catherine Steiner-Adair (2013) notes:

Texting is the worst possible training ground for anyone aspiring to have a mature, loving, sensitive relationship. Developing that ability requires learning how to assert yourself and be vulnerable, to say what you feel and think, to be curious about the other person's experience, to deepen connection through understanding without being so afraid of what the response will be. The net effect of texting culture is that teens silence themselves in the very relationships that offer the potential for the most critical social emotional learning of the age (p. 204).

With empathizing being one of the key aspects at the heart of communication, texting makes it difficult for people to recognize when a message requires empathy or if a message sounds empathetic. Because the practice of texting is one that does not require one to physically be present, it seems as though some misinterpret the need to be physically present with the need to be socially (emotionally) present when corresponding over a disembodied form of communication.

Appropriateness, Text-Etiquette and Rules

The practice of texting invites some problems in regard to mutual and universally understood social etiquette. Further, the idea of breaking up over texting is one aspect that falls into an indistinct zone that is not black or white but grey. In her work, *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*, Ilana Gershon (2010) discusses how texting can cause complications when breaking up with someone. She notes that:

The kind of informality people agree to attribute to a particular medium, such as texting, will shape when it is appropriate to use that medium. While text messages might be too informal for a breakup, they often had the right level of informality for starting to flirt with someone (p. 23).

Despite the fact that texting may not be appropriate in all contexts, once people agree to share a common interpretation of how and when the medium should be used, Gershon suggests that the practice of texting can be beneficial. When first meeting someone texting can be a useful, non-invasive, informal way of smoothly and subtly transitioning from casual encounters to more personal relationships. The key to the practice of texting begins with approaching the ritual as a concept that carries with it certain patterns, implications and associations.

Expectations regarding etiquette and rules may be blurred easily when it comes to texting; however, there are some expectations associated with texting that loosely resemble rules. One such expectation is that of reciprocal turn taking when texting. That is to say that when one person sends a message, the other is responsible for returning the gesture. This is not a written rule, but rather an implicit one that comes with the territory of texting and other forms of media, which rely on “idioms of practice”, which refers to: “how people have implicit and explicit intuitions about using different technologies that they have developed with their friends, family members and co-workers” (Gershon, 2010, p. 5-6). The collective agreement of a group to use technology in specific ways helps to establish some sort of foundation, or common ground, upon which those involved can infer certain standards. These implicit norms are not only found within the practice of texting. The context of texting shares its implicit rules of etiquette with face-to-face

communication and other means of communication. The ideologies behind texting are informed by the contexts of other media such as e-mail:

[...] People understand a particular medium only in the context of other media.

People's media ideologies about e-mail, for example, change if they begin to text others regularly. When people start using a new technology, they change their understandings of all the other technologies they use as well (Gershon, 2010, p. 49).

E-mail is but one example of how one form of communication can influence how people perceive another form of communication, like texting. There may not be a rulebook dictating the expectations of encoding and decoding information on an e-mail or a text message; however, the reciprocal nature of conversation is one unifying aspect upon which said forms of communication depend. That is to say that there is an expectation with email, as is with texting and face-to-face communication, that if one party initiates a conversation, the other will respond (Hall, 1973, p. 128-138). Despite the fact that there are not clear guidelines established with texting, there are still some aspects or elements of etiquette, which, if not adhered to, can cause problems regarding miscommunication. The flexibility in the approach to returning messages, while convenient and casual to some, invites possibilities for differing mentalities toward texting protocol. The implicit rules behind texting are subjective, and so, even if they are generally accepted as norms, not everyone is bound to them since they are not universal and objective. In the article: "Please reply! The replying norm in adolescent SMS communication" Ditte Laursen (2005) writes that:

among adolescent mobile users, there is a dominating norm that dictates that an SMS receives a response. This reply norm is a practice that has been suggested in previous studies. Taylor and Harper (2003) have identified an “obligation to reciprocate” in adolescents’ SMS usage. Also, Kaesniemi and Rautiainen (2002) state that “Leaving an SMS message unanswered is almost without exception interpreted as rudeness” (p. 186) (p. 53).

The sense of reciprocal obligation works to instill a system based on “dominating” normative actions among those who converse via texting. The issue with this norm is that while it is considered to be the “dominating” facet within texting protocol, it is not the official one to which everybody abides. In some instances, the give and take nature of texting is not respected and one party does not respond in a timely fashion. This affects the implicit sense of obligation. Some feel as though one person’s decision to disregard a text is unfair, for it controls the rhythm and flow of the back and forth implicit rule of thumb. In Kopomaa’s study, one third of interviewees noted that text messages resemble a form of control and oppression from a romantic partner, friend or parent. Additionally, the cell phone itself can be seen as a symbol of control (Kopomaa, 2005, p. 154). Some technological determinists might argue the cell phone manipulates the ways in which people contact each other. In other words, if one person does not respond to a text, it may determine how the other person chooses to react. The cell phone therefore could be seen as an oppressive tool that dictates the ways in which people correspond when following the patterns associated with texting. It is important to note that texting is not the only means of communicative technology that could be seen as an oppressive tool. Email is another means in which individuals are bound to a disembodied form of communication.

Once an email is sent, there is no guarantee that a response will arrive in a timely manner. In addition to the “dominating” norms of text etiquette, there is a general consensus held among those who text that there are certain inappropriate contexts and types of subject matter. According to youth interviewed in Kopomaa’s study, text messages are not considered appropriate when it concerns subject matter that requires detailed discussion. The concise nature of texting influences how people exchange information and sometimes brevity is not conducive to elaborate discussion, for it can fail to communicate the gravity of a message clearly and miscommunication can arise (Kopomaa, 2005, p. 155). The limitations of texting in terms of word limit and asynchronous lapses in time garners a reputation as a form of mediation that ought to be used with caution when dealing with certain subject matter that require in depth discussion. Misunderstanding can ensue from the limitations of the device and this can affect the overall association held with the rules of texting. Ultimately, there are certain subjects, which, while not officially forbidden, are considered problematic when texting. This unspoken rule contributes to the protocol of texting as a contemporary ritual form of communication.

Hypercoordination

One complication with the practice of texting as a ritual concerns the overuse of communicating by text, which Baym and Hall (2011) refer to as: *hypercoordination*:

As a portable always-on device, the mobile phone encourages relational partners to be in perpetual contact (Katz and Aakhus, 2002). This may lead to *hypercoordination* (Ling, 2004; Ling and Yttri, 2002), which is the experience of enhanced, anxiety-provoking relational dependence and engagement through the use of mobile technologies (Baym, 2010) (p. 317).

Maintaining strong correspondence with another can be a positive, enjoyable aspect. When contact becomes perpetual, without any sign of stopping or having periodic rests, it has the potential to become less enjoyable and is viewed as being incessant and irritating. One can be made to feel trapped and thus anxious when texting, for it becomes an obsessive habit of dependence. In addition to the anxiety-inducing aspect of texting and attachment, there is the possibility for texting to become lacklustre and disappointing when used in excess. That is to say that upholding the expectations of texting continuously can grow tiring. Baym and Hall (2011) note that if too much expectation on maintaining contact is associated with texting, it can be unrealistic to expect everyone to fulfil those expectations. The dependence of relationship satisfaction upon the reception and sending of text messages can result in dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction related with the means of communication can cause an imbalance in which people either become overly dependent or independent upon the device for the maintenance of consistent relational interaction (p. 318). Unlike face-to-face communication that requires the use of visual cues to indicate when someone may be tired or uninterested in continuing a conversation, there is a connotation that texting is a form of correspondence that is always on. Baym and Hall (2011) make an excellent point in regard to this notion of endless availability writing that: “this [concept of availability facilitated through texting] suggests that mobile phones have a logic such that when they are used in closed friendships, people are steered toward increased expectations of connectedness and availability” (p. 326). The physical design of the cell phone and the technological nature of text messages—mechanical characteristics that do not change and thus represent

consistency—support the logic behind the notion that the device will insure the connectedness of the other. The flaw with this association is that while the device may be turned on and may operate perfectly, the individual behind the device may not be able to, or may not want to converse. Expectations of bodily connectedness concerning human interaction through the cell phone, however, still exist. In conjunction with the fact that texting is a disembodied form of communication, this misleading connotation of constant live availability opens doors for situations in which people feel anxiety and frustration causing tension to rise among people. Finding a balance between dependence and independence is very difficult when the expectations are unclear to those who participate in the act of texting. While texting has disadvantages, it also has many affordances. As Baym and Hall (2011) articulate: “ mobile phones enhance autonomy yet also enhance family cohesion [...] They are ‘used to overcome barriers separating self from other and to transcend space and strive for *pure communication* [...], yet people remain bound to the material realities of the physical world [...]” (p. 319). It is important to understand that while there may be consequences to texting, the underlying truth to texting is that it is ironic. It can empower through autonomy and simultaneously facilitate strong connections. Texting can subvert time and space so as to enable people to share a different manifestation of social presence through virtual means, and yet, cannot facilitate corporeal presence. This quality is not unique to texting alone. Writing letters, emails, talking on the telephone and using instant messaging online are other forms of alternative communication and presence. Because texting is such an ironic entity, it is a conundrum and needs to be acknowledged as such by those who rely on it as a form of interaction.

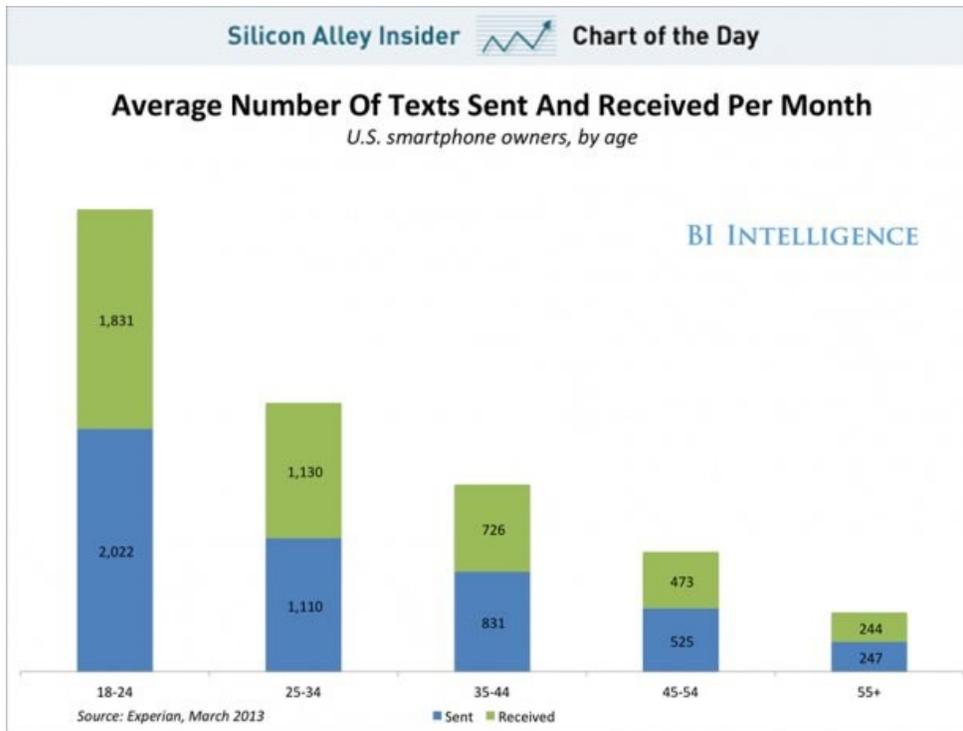
It is through the *act* of texting and not solely the *content* of the messages that elicit implicit messages. As Nancy Baym and Jeffery Hall (2011) write in their work: “Calling and texting (too much): Mobile maintenance expectations, (over) dependence, entrapment, and friendship satisfaction” relying on texting can become problematic when used in excess or when used less than expected (p. 316). It is difficult to pin what Baym and Hall (2011) constitute as “too much texting”, however, a Pew study conducted in 2012 suggests the number of texts youth send per day when compared to adults are daunting:

Young Americans send almost ten times as many texts as Americans over 55.

According to Experian, U.S. smartphone owners aged 18 to 24 send 2,022 texts per month on average—67 texts on a daily basis—and receive another 1,831.

That’s nearly double their slightly older peers, smartphone users aged 25-34. That corroborates a Pew study from last year, which found that the *median* number of texts sent by teens was 60 *per day* (Cocotas, 2013, p. 1).

According to Cocotas’ article, while there is technically not a standard number within the social frame of texting that constitutes how much is too much in regard to sending texts, it is clear that the number of texts sent among youths is growing each year, which suggests that young people are texting more often.



Because the rules or “idioms of practice” of texting are so vague, knowing when to stop texting someone or when to continue texting becomes a guessing game, since “[...] texting [is a relatively new way] to communicate with each other, people haven’t developed a widespread consensus on how to use the different media. People are still in the process of figuring out social rules that might govern how to use these technologies” (Gershon, 2010, p. 10). Some tend to text frequently causing others to feel overwhelmed and annoyed. Others do not text enough, making others feel ignored and unimportant (Steiner-Adair, 2013, p. 23). Whether one texts too much or not enough, his or her actions generate an implicit message that becomes the subject of speculation for the other. That is to say, for example, that if one is texting someone a lot, it could mean they are interested in chatting and they like the person, or they are harassing the recipient of the messages. Conversely, if someone does not reply to a text, it is often taken to mean he or she is disinterested, annoyed or avoidant (Baym and Hall, 2011, p. 316).

Implications and Perceived Understandings of Messages

While the expectations behind the practice of texting can be problematic, they are not the sole factors that cause misunderstanding. Another crucial aspect of how texting may interfere with communication concerns the perceived understanding of the content of messages. As Jin Bora (2010) notes in “Hurtful Texting”:

Previous studies showed that perceived intent is a key factor to understanding hurtful communication (Leary et al., 1998; Vangelisti & Young, 2000). If people think their partner said or did something offensive intentionally, they tend to experience more pain and withdraw from the relationship with him or her [...] (p. 149).

When one reads a disembodied message, like a text message, which is sent from someone who is not physically present, the message is the only means of accessing the other’s alternative form of presence at that time. As such, one might mistake the written content of the message (which may not at all express what the individual intends to express) and think that it matches the feelings of the person who wrote the message. The blurred boundary of virtual presence and physical presence in which the words are all one has to go by when trying to paint a picture of what the other is saying elicits speculation.

According to the results of Jin’s research, the ways in which people perceive the intent of messages impact how friendships are maintained. Most participants reported times in which a friend sent what were perceived to be hurtful texts. The more people perceive or speculate about what the other wrote, the more likely they are to get upset, distance themselves from their friend and grow to dislike the friendship as a result (p. 154).

Texting is a tricky form of mediated communication when it comes to facilitating

presence and expressing one's self as well as one would like. In one sense, texting is similar to the practice of writing, for one expresses one's thoughts through words. In another sense, texting embodies a varied form of face-to-face interaction. Unlike the process of writing, texting has an element of immediacy. In other words, texting facilitates temporal proximity and thus enables one to feel as though the person texting were physically present.

Texting “Ideologies”

The particular associations that people hold toward texting manifest themselves as “ideologies”. In other words, these “ideologies” are thoughts that people have toward the act of texting that shape the implicit protocol, or the expectations of texting etiquette. In regard to media ideologies of texting, one example of particular interest is how people approach the act of breaking up via texting, Gershon (2010) writes: “The medium people use to end relationships matters. Breakups turn out to be productive sites for pointing out that people don't share the same ideas about media—ideas that shape how people use and interpret these different media”(p. 15). As Gershon notes, the medium people decide to use in emotional situations such as breaking up from a romantic partner, matters. The decision to break up by texting reveals a lot about how different people prefer to communicate. While it may not be an ideal or preferred means of breaking up, especially when it comes to what may be perceived as an impolite act, it is important to focus on texting as a means of facilitating presence when one, for whatever reason, cannot communicate in person. In particular regard to why texting may not be the best means of breaking up with someone, Gershon (2010) writes:

Media ideologies are not true or false. An e-mail conversation is not, in its essence, more formal than an instant-message conversation—or less honest or spontaneous, or more calculated. But some people *believe* that e-mail is more formal, more dishonest, and more calculated, and this affects the ways they send and interpret e-mail messages (p. 21).

It is the beliefs that some people hold regarding media ideologies that affect how they respond to the messages. Texting is associated with informal, casual and calculated ways of communicating and thus is not associated with sincerity. The casual nature of texting makes it a problematic method of communication in situations like breaking up. While texting may be harmless when connecting with someone initially so as to ease into a relationship without sharing too much emotional depth at the onset, it is not the best means to end a relationship: “What is caution in one’s choice of media in the initial contact becomes cowardice at the end” (Gershon, 2010, p. 24). Texting does not facilitate depth of character. Because one cannot garner closure from extenuating cues of the other’s voice and body language, texting becomes a very heady, speculative means of communicating. That is to say that when one only has words to rely on for the representation of someone’s presence and being, one must try to interpret meaning, which may not be a satisfying or comforting way of taking in upsetting information. In terms of temporality, texting is also abrupt and adds to the numbing sensation that accompanies break ups. Ultimately, individuals hold specific associations with the medium of communication that one decides to use. When one chooses to use a cell phone to convey complicated emotional content, it sends a suggestive message in addition to the literal content of the message. According to Gershon (2010) breaking up over a specific form of

media: “matters because people are social analysts of their own lives, because people have developed complex interpretations of how a medium affects a message” (p. 201). The medium is certainly a determining factor in how the message is interpreted or perceived.

“Pre-tend-sence” and The Uncanny

The elements of ritual behaviour and presence in human interaction share a relationship with theories concerning the transcendental and the metaphysical. To elaborate, humans are paradoxes: they are objective representations of the living that have subjective, personalized characteristics. John Durham Peter’s theories on the subject of the corporeal and the metaphysical in relation to communication articulate the ontological relationship between living beings and communication. In “Speaking into the Iphone: An Interview with John Durham Peters, or, Ghostly Cessation for the Digital Age” Peters notes that:

If the success of communication was once the art of reaching across the intervening bodies to touch another’s spirit, in the age of electronic media it has become the art of reaching across the intervening spirits to touch another’s body. Not the ghost in the machine, but the body in the medium is the central dilemma of modern communications (Kane, 2009, p. 224-225).

It is the body and the dilemma of modern communications that compromises presence. Texting shifts the variables of the self and the other so as to include the cell phone. While texting is a player in the dilemma, it is not the only one. The being who relies on his or her cell phone to text participates in the exchange of presence for “pre-tend-sence”— the succumbing of the familiar body for the uncanny ghost in the machine. As David Sarnoff

once said: “We are too prone to make technological instruments the scapegoats for the sins of those who wield them. The products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value” (Sarnoff qtd. by McLuhan, 1994, p. 11). Humans are responsible for how they choose to communicate. One could send a text message at a certain period in time and the other could look at the message months later. The message would still be sent to the same person from the same person. The sense of time is not affected because the message appears in the exact same way—it exists in the same form but the sender does not. In this respect, it appears as though no physical time has passed since the message remains exactly the same. The person who sent the message, however, changes with time and the person’s presence is measured by his or her existence. When mediated messages are questioned it may be because the whole of human presence simply cannot exist through media. Peters (2000) writes that:

Despite the many compensations to make up for the loss of face-to-face communication, including a tonal shift toward snigger modes of address and the simulation of personal interaction, the relationship of body to body could not be restored fully over the ether (p. 217).

The uncanny quality of mediated communication to which Peters refers relates to the fact that the presence of the other cannot be proven. There is always a possibility that the person on the other end of the line may not be who he or she is thought to be. This uncertainty concerning mediated communication over the telephone is problematic in other forms of correspondence, like texting. When one sends a text message, the messages are exchanged through words instead of a voice, and so, there is no detection of

the person's physical presence since text messages are not media rich. In other words, anyone could be writing the text, but a voice is harder to impersonate. That being said, speaking through the telephone is a mediated form of communication just as the cell phone is a mediated form of communication via texting. The difference between talking to someone face-to-face and talking to someone through texting suggests that physical space plays a huge factor in the uncanny nature of technologically mediated communication. Nancy Baym (2010) writes an excellent analogy concerning the relationship between texting and how people may be both present and absent when engaging in texting in her work *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*:

Consider, for instance, the dinner partner who is immersed in his mobile phone conversation. Since he is physically present, yet simultaneously absent, the very nature of self becomes problematic. Where is "he?" The borders between human and machine [...] and between the self and body, are thrown into flux (p. 3).

The simultaneous absence and presence of an individual who participates in texting while among the company of others presents a situational dilemma. Physical existence may be evident, but the individual may be "in another world" figuratively speaking. Using a machine to facilitate presence may assist in transcending distance but it also distances people who share each other's company in an immediate physical space.

Linguistic Drawbacks and Texting

Given the rich history and tradition of the craft of writing as an art form, it is difficult to conceive of texting as a relative within the same family. The 160-character limit on mobile phones inhibits people from writing in detail and encourages people to adhere to standards of brevity (Reid, 2008, p. 8). The use of abbreviations is a common

practice when texting, for it simplifies and expedites the delivery of a message.

Additionally, grammatical errors are common occurrences when texting due to the associations attached to it as being a casual and informal means of communication. In essence, texting is considered to be a parody of the craft of writing. In other words, texting is not considered to be on the same level as other forms of writing in terms of eloquence, grammatical correctness and diction. In her article: “ Desire and Loathing in the Cyber Philippines” Bella Elwood-Clayton (2005) writes:

Debates about whether texting, rife with incorrect grammar and misspelling, will result in the bastardization of language are a strong presence in the local media. Texter’s range of expression (unlike those engaged in Internet dialogue) is restricted by length, and debatably because of this, is considered limited in emotional substance (p. 198).

Texting has limitations when it comes to providing semantically appropriate options for written messages. Of course, people have agency when it comes to how they choose to write their messages via text; however, the design of the mobile encourages people to invest less time and effort into the details of the wording of messages. The haphazard approach to writing text messages suggests that texting may not provide the most linguistically stable means of communication.

Misuses of Texting

Underage Sexting

One key misuse of texting concerns the subject of texting and the maintenance of romantic relationships. In particular, the concept of “sexting” takes texting to a level of complicated physical and social presence. The word “sexting” refers to: a term blended

from the words “sex” and “text,” that describes sending sexually explicit text messages and images” (Srinivas, 2011, p. 328). Through the act of “sexting” couples try to perform virtual versions of intimacy and presence. The main problem with “sexting” is that it does not discriminate. That is to say that anyone with the possession of a cell phone has access to performing “sexting.” Given that teenagers and minors are a dominant group that embraces the practice of texting, it poses potential problems when it comes to participating in the sharing of sexual content, which is illegal for anyone under age 18. In their article: “Teens Texting and Consequences: A Brief Review,” Archana Srinivas, Megan White and Hatim Omar (2011) note that: “The most troublesome dilemma to this new phenomenon is that it involves including minors in sexually explicit material” (p. 328). In addition to this complication with texting, it is important to consider that “sexting” not only includes sexually explicit written content, but instant photographs as well. While there is an expectation that “sexed” information will be kept privately between two people, there is always a possibility that the information may be shared:

In Florida, one case labelled an 18-year old male as a registered sexual offender for 25 years after he distributed nude images of his 16-year old girlfriend following a quarrel between them (5). This case demonstrates the grave and lasting consequences teenagers may unknowingly face when engaging in the increasingly trendy activity of texting (Srinivas et al., 2011, p. 328).

Given the elusive, invincible, pseudo reality nature of texting, people do not always feel obliged to consider the consequences of texting. The body is disconnected from the message and thus creates an opportunity for avoiding direct accountability for one’s

actions. The trend of texting can facilitate passive aggressive behaviour that causes complications in relationships.

Passive Aggressive Texts

Passive aggressive behaviour in romantic relationships can be a recipe for disaster when texting is used as the means of interaction between two people who have an emotionally strained relationship. In her article: “ Desire and Loathing in the Cyber Philippines” Bella Elwood-Clayton (2005) notes in regard to the “double-edged nature of texting” that texting:

is utilized both as a romantic tool and a vindictive weapon. [...] Research findings indicate that texting in the Filipino context is often a form of artillery in personal combats and can, in fact, propel and increase peril among social actors, at times manifesting in different forms of trouble and/or (symbolic) violence (p. 196-7). Because texting is a corporeally detached, potentially convenient means of contacting someone, it is overlooked and associated with being a seemingly harmless means of communication. In reality, however, texting can become a toxic means of vindictively corresponding with someone without having to face the immediate physical presence or physically expressive consequences of the other. In this way, texting enables people to circumnavigate troublesome issues, thus providing possibility for negative words and thoughts to be shared before one has rationally considered the possible consequences of reverting to such a means of interaction. Further, the casual, informal media ideologies associated with texting have the capacity to add tension to already tenuous situations. In other words, by virtue of being associated as a superficial form of corresponding with others, the act of texting, in addition to the content itself, can worsen situations.

Drinking while Texting

One specific example of how texting can increase tensions between parties involves the extenuating circumstances occurring whilst people text. Drinking while texting, for example, can be a dangerous blend of activities. Drinking while trying to communicate in any capacity, whether by text or by telephone can be problematic for without the bodily cues to indicate that one is inebriated, a disembodied message may not provide context to the receiver of the message. Drinking lowers inhibitions and texting has a similar affect in that it does not require one to be physically present and thus enables one to feel invincible. The spontaneity that accompanies the practice of texting is amplified during drinking. This carefree behaviour presents possible issues, for repressed feelings of attraction, anger or resentment can be articulated with ease through the practice of “text stalking”:

This term denotes the receiving of drunken and/or angry and/or love filled texts or phone calls from admirers, ex-boyfriends, or anonymous texters. Occasionally these exchanges turn hostile [...]. This also relates to the dangers of spontaneous text—watch out for drinking, tantrums and text declarations (Elwood-Clayton, 2005, p. 213).

The intentions behind text stalking may appear to be innocent, but in reality the incentive behind text stalking may present itself as borderline harassment. Because the mobile phone can be on one’s person at all times, it presents a dilemma in which one can overuse the device beyond its fundamental purposes:

Misinterpretation, fighting, jealousy, the monitoring of romantic couples (leading to interpersonal surveillance), texting as a device to ascertain whether a lover is

up to no good, gossiping and slander, repetitive inappropriate text communication (leading to possible harassment), increased access to the commercial sex industry, and adultery are all increased through widespread mobile use [...] (Elwood-Clayton, 2005, p. 217).

The negative realities concerning the misuses of texting and the normative protocol behind texting are aspects that are important to consider when deciding how to approach certain situations. Humans are flawed and do not always consider the consequences of their actions, especially when actions and presence are facilitated through technology in lieu of corporeal interaction.

Anonymous Crime Organization

Texting is a form of communication that is associated with disembodiment and anonymity. While there are some occasions in which these qualities of communicating can aid in the delivery of messages for those who may have social anxiety, this surreptitious means of sending messages can facilitate negative, violent means of communicating. One example of aggressive behaviour and its relationship to texting concerned organized crime among groups:

Mobile phones and text messages enable people to share experiences, even when both parties 'are separated in time and space. However, they have dangers, too: there are reports of mobile phones being used to gather groups to 'crash' parties (Carreau, 2002) and even one of youths being summoned to a gang-rape scene (Sentencing of Bilal Skaf', 2002) (Srinivas, 2011, p. 46).

The summoning effect that texting affords can become drastically threatening when it involves the organization of illegal activity. When large groups of people swarm in on a

smaller group or one individual, the group with more members prevails. Texting, when used for purposes other than those initially intended by the makers of cell phones, becomes a dangerous activity.

Texting While Driving

Given that texting is a disembodied medium, it frees people from having to be physically present. In other words, despite the fact that one may be corresponding with another, he or she may be actively engaging in one or multiple other activities while texting. This invites the possibility for multi-tasking and opens up many occasions for consequences that arise from trying to do multiple activities at once (Hall and Baym, 2011, p. 319).

One timely example of how multi-tasking while texting can prove to be harmful is when one chooses to text while driving. Texting is a very distracting practice as it is, but when one texts while driving it becomes dangerous not only in terms of the possibility for miscommunicating, but also in terms of physical safety for one's self and for other drivers on the road. In their article: "Teens Texting and Consequences: A Brief Review," Archana Srinivas, Megan White and Hatim Omar (2011) write that: "According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) 18% of fatalities in distraction related cases were related to cellular phone use (9)" (p. 328). The repercussions of texting while driving may not always be immediately obvious, but they are devastatingly real and lethal. Texting has affordances, but when misused it presents a drastic departure from ideal presence in communication.

The Effects of Misuses: Addiction

Hyper-coordination, multi-tasking and the elusive nature of texting can be tempting. In some instances, texting is an incredibly addictive practice. Those who depend on it for the maintenance of friendships and relationships may experience withdrawal or distress if they suddenly stop receiving messages. When one has free time or is bored he or she may revert to texting to kill time or to fill a void when feeling lonely. Some may not realize that they text as frequently as they do and they may not notice that they subconsciously rely on texting for self-esteem. In his work: “Leisure, Boredom, Sensation Seeking, Self-esteem, Addiction Symptoms and Patterns of Mobile Phone Use” Louis Leung and S. Zhou articulate that texting is a type of communication that is so easy to take advantage of that it can be to one’s detriment, for it can facilitate addiction tendencies. According to Zhou and Leung’s (2013) study results indicated that the higher one scored on sensation seeking, the greater one was likely to be addicted to one’s phone. In addition, those who scored high on self-esteem also demonstrated a far greater likelihood of not being addicted to one’s phone (p. 1). In addition to the vices of sensation seeking and lethargy, texting addiction directly correlates to low self-esteem. This information suggests that texting is a versatile form of communication that manipulates one’s sense of self and presence. If one has low-self esteem, he or she may depend on texting as a way of compensating for feelings of inadequacy. While finding techniques to cope with low-self esteem are admirable, addiction of any kind is not a healthy means of combatting anxiety, sadness, loneliness, self-esteem or boredom. In regard to specific tendencies that people exhibited when texting and using a cell phone, Leung and Zhou (2013) write that:

Addiction symptoms were found to be the most powerful predictors for *features use* of the mobile phone. Heavy feature users of the mobile phone, for sending/receiving SMS, for entertainment, and for information, tended to be those who often felt anxious and even lost without their mobile phones, experienced a higher sense of losing control, and often received complaints from family and friends (p. 2).

Instead of seeking positive activities outside of one's phone, the likelihood for one who texts frequently to become addicted to one's phone is a realistic possibility. That is to say that one limits one's world to the features of one's cell phone. The fact that people have the capacity to feel anxious, vulnerable and lost, in terms of one's sense of control, strongly suggests that texting is a practice that needs to be approached with discretion. The physical design of the phone, the applications and functions it has and its hand held personal feel further strengthens its appeal. As Catherine Steiner-Adair (2013) writes in her work *The Big Disconnect*: "Research shows we are in fact enjoying neurochemical hits and fixes—the neurotransmitter dopamine most notably—in the brain's pleasure centres when we're "on" our devices. [addiction] is a clinical reality in some user's lives today" (p. 5). The pleasure that texting provides directly involves neurochemical releases in the brain. Addiction to one's mobile phone and to the act of texting causes people to fall into a paradoxical realm in which they feel safe and anxious, accompanied and lonely, high self-worth and low self-esteem. The mobile phone can be helpful in some situations and terribly problematic in others. As Sherry Turkle (2011) articulates in her timely work: *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other*:

The [cell phone] has become like a phantom limb, it is so much a part of [teenagers]. These young people are among the first to grow up with an expectation of continuous connection: always on, and always on them. And they are among the first to grow up not necessarily thinking of simulation as second best. [...]They come to accept lower expectations for connection [...] (p. 17).

The dependence on texting when it may not be appropriate engenders addictive tendencies in which people feel as though they must be with their mobile phones constantly. These obsessive tendencies cause people to feel vulnerable, anxious and insecure about their relationships with others who may not share the same tendencies and patterns of etiquette when texting. Lines of companionship become blurry and people speculate and grow confused about where they stand. Sometimes the self-reflective, calculative convenience of texting is powerful and beneficial and other times it is a burden that feels lacking in some human capacity. It leaves people feeling hollow and craving for face-to-face intimacy. While texting may be very natural and comfortable for one person, it may not be for their partner or friend. Some people may lower their expectations in order to accommodate the other's preference for communicating, but this may not be the ideal way of communicating.

Encountering addiction and other misuses or bad habits as a result of texting is a realistic aspect to consider. In his work: *The Shallows—What the Internet is doing to our Brain* Nicholas Carr (2011) writes about the necessity of being critical when it comes to using technology to communicate. In response to the quotation “the medium is the message” he writes that in addition to the initial metaphor of his work regarding how one chooses to communicate:

[McLuhan] was also sounding a warning about the threat the power poses—and the risk of being oblivious to that threat. “The electric technology is within the gates,” he wrote, “and we are numb, deaf, blind and mute about its encounter with the Gutenberg technology, on and through which the American way of life was formed” (p. 2).

The medium becomes more than the mediator. The cell phone affects the ways in which people conduct conversations. Firstly, the messages are limited to a word count.

Secondly, the text lacks tone or intonation. Thirdly, despite the fact that emoticons exist so as to reinforce expressions of emotion, it is evident that they by no means succeed to express one’s feelings. Breaking up with someone in person sends a different, implicit message than breaking up with someone over a text (Gershon, 2010, p. 65). A simple (or so it may be intended) conversation over a text may become an argument that, had it been discussed in person, may have never even occurred (Jin, 2013, p. 148). Misunderstanding and ensuing resentment, hostility, bitterness and anxiety are components of interaction that can be resolved through communication, but it is the ways in which one chooses to communicate given the context that dictates how the messages are to be interpreted. This is not to suggest that texting is inferior to face-to-face communication; however, it depends upon the social context in which the message is sent and received.

Space, Situation and Context

The situation or context in which a message is communicated is the key component in regard to assessing the clarity and effectiveness of a text message. One reason as to why situational aspects are crucial when sending a text message is because these aspects contextualize the sender’s message providing background information for

the receiver. Because texting is a relatively new form of communication, the situational patterns of text etiquette are not as well defined as those of face-to-face communication. Social situations that arise in face-to-face encounters are different from those that concern mediated communication. In his work *No Sense of Place*, Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) writes that: “The mechanism through which electronic media affect social behaviour is not a mystical sensory balance, but a very discernible rearrangement of social stages on which we play our roles and a resulting change in our sense of “appropriate behaviour”” (p. 4). The allusion to acting out roles upon “social stages” is reminiscent of Goffman’s theory concerning the development of the self in relation to how one chooses to manage his or her impression upon others. Further, the use of the word “rearrangement” infers adaptation to change. That is to say that for different methods of communication and performance that entail said methods, there are separate sets of expectations. Because of the unique aspects concerning “social stages,” different roles are adopted so as to accommodate the nature of the situation. If texting expectations are made clear from the onset of correspondence, texting can be advantageous.

This chapter has focused on the contexts in which texting is conducted. There are certain social situations in which texting in the presence of others is considered to be impolite (Ling, 2010, p. 13). When concerning highly emotional subject matter, for instance, Steiner-Adair states that texting or email (technologically mediated communication) is inappropriate because it does not facilitate nuance or empathy. Furthermore, due to the disembodied nature of the cell phone, physical presence is difficult to convey. Body language, gestures, tone and intonation of voice are absent

when texting, which causes miscommunication regarding perceived intent of messages (Jin, 2010, p. 149).

One of the main disadvantages associated with the practice of texting concerns the misuses. Drinking while texting compromises the content of the message. Sexting offers a host of negative repercussions including the possible sexual exposure of minors to the public. Driving while texting leads to severe accidents. People form habits of frequent dependency on corresponding via text, which can lead to addictive tendencies of checking messages obsessively.

The exploration within this chapter suggests that texting, a practice that was originally designed for business purposes, is a means of correspondence that depends heavily upon social context. That is to say that the disembodied form of communication separates one's physical presence from one's social presence. As Joshua Meyrowitz notes, the emergence of technological communication blurs peoples' interpretations of physical and social space. That is to say that one's presence is divided in two places when texting—the physical being is in one space while the message of that being is disseminated to another space through the space of the medium itself. Through characteristics of texting like hypermediation and hypercoordination individuals perceive that the messages in which they receive via text bear an uncanny likeness to the physical being who sent them. This uncanny likeness, however, is not a replacement for the physical being, for there are certain situations that require one's full physical and social presence in order to convey emotion both through body language and social cues. Empathy is one human trait that depends heavily on emotional physical and social

responses. Studies show that the use of personal technological communicative devices decreases peoples' abilities to exercise empathy for others (Brown, 2013, p. 37).

While there are numerous situations in which texting may not be a useful means of sharing ideas, feelings and expressions, it is key to note that like face-to-face communication, which is considered to best represent the "conversational ideal", texting has its flaws and merits. In the next chapter the very notion of how texting can resolve certain hurdles in communication is discussed so as to provide a holistic view of texting.

Chapter Three:
**The Merits of Mediation: The Affordances of Texting—Relativizing and
Contextualizing the Reality of Texting**

Introduction

With the invention of many communicative devices, such as the cell phone for calling and texting people, it is evident that humans go to great lengths to contact each other. The human in communication overcomes obstacles by adapting to changing social standards of interaction. The main focus of this chapter is on the contexts in which texting can be beneficial. When it comes to aspects such as social anxiety, immigration, relationships, cultural norms and disabilities, texting can work to transcend barriers that face-to-face communication cannot. Ultimately, this chapter culminates both aspects of the first and second chapter by connecting mediated communication with the notion of the primordial need for human interaction.

As discussed in the previous chapters, corporeal presence via face-to-face interaction is the favoured means of expressing one's thoughts and feelings. No form of communication, however, is good or bad. Each instance of communication is at its core an objective means of bridging the spatial or physical, temporal and cognitive gaps that exist between the self and the other. While there may be a number of negative uses associated with texting, it is imperative to recognize the merits and affordances of texting in certain contexts. Just as there are a number of contexts suitable for means of communication via email, courier mail, telephone, talking in person and video conferencing, so too are there specific times and situations in which texting can be of

great benefit. Regardless of which form of communication one depends upon, it is important to take into consideration the circumstances that shape one's decision to choose to communicate. Ultimately, bridging the gap between the self and the other does not solely depend on one method of communication. Situational and contextual aspects affect how and when one chooses to text. For instance, contexts concerning observable discrimination toward: those who suffer from social anxiety, those of certain age groups, those who may be considered a minority sex or ethnicity in certain cultures, those whose socio-economic status stand out from the mainstream and those who are disabled, are judged based on their diverse characteristics and as such, are not always able to express themselves face-to-face without being scrutinized. In these cases, corporeal presence may not be the most positive means of communication. These examples do not suggest that face-to-face presence diminishes the favourable status of face-to-face communication, but rather require one to re-evaluate the contexts in which face-to-face interaction may not always be preferable. Some situations may lend themselves better to a virtual form of presence that equalizes minority groups who might otherwise feel objectified when conversing in person. Contextual affordances of texting help to positively restore the negative reputation of technologically mediated communication as a fragmentary means of interaction:

To say that mobile phones univocally cross boundaries, heighten accessibility, and fragment social life is to see only one side of the dynamic social reconfigurations heralded by mobile communications. Mobile phones create new kinds of bounded places that merge the infrastructures of geography and

technology, as well as technosocial practices that merge technical standards and social norms (Ito and Okabe, 2005, p. 127).

As Ito and Okabe suggest, though texting may bear aspects that require one to reconfigure social interactions, it is not a negative means of communication. On the contrary, when it concerns shielding people from the judgement of others and empowering those who may not be able to express themselves well face-to-face, texting can be a very useful means of interacting. The merging of technosocial practices and technical standards, as Ito and Okabe note, can help to create new social norms that might assist those who are shunned by pre-existing ones. Of course, since texting is a technologically mediated approach to communication, it is understandable that some aspects associated with it may not always be initially accepted as the preferred means of communication. A form of communication in which one cannot see the other can certainly feel uncanny at times. Asynchronous messaging with its lapses in time can be frustrating. Written dialogue can be misinterpreted easily; however, even though this form of communication offers an alternative means of presence, and has its faults like any other form, it is not a negative or inferior means of communication. Texting certainly has its merits when it comes to its contextual affordances.

Material Context

Cost

One contextual situation in which texting is advantageous relates to the cost behind sending messages. Social status is an area of discomfort for those who do not have high socio-economic standings. Texting is an inexpensive way in which people can partake in the popular trend of owning a cell phone and sending text messages without

worrying about spending too much money. This form of communication is especially ideal for youth who do not have an income, but who wish to be included in the social trends of their peers. According to the article “The City in your Pocket. Birth of the mobile information society”, T. Kopomaa (2005) writes: “Young people clearly appreciate the low cost of the service [...] As owners of mobile phones, young people keep a close eye on their phone bill” (p. 149). Financial matters are highly personal and having a low socio-economic status can be socially crippling. The unifying effect of inexpensive texting bodes well concerning socioeconomic factors.

Brevity and Asynchrony

The low cost of texting is not its only appeal. Another asset to texting in addition to its low-cost equalizing effect is that of its function and design. People admire the restrictions that texting entails. That is to say that texting has a word count limit of 160 characters and therefore requires that those who correspond via text adhere to codes of exchanging brief messages. Text messages are concise telegraphic messages that are often abbreviated. Because these messages are written, they are easy to save and read at later times. Similar to email, text messages “are a kind of conversational medium” (Kopomaa, 2005, p. 148-150). As Kopomaa suggests, when one is not interested in having an in-depth discussion, the concept of brevity in relation to texting is attractive. The asynchronous nature of communication is sometimes linked with the concept of brevity and concise discussion. That is to say that those who do not wish to reply immediately to messages sometimes avoid replying because texting is a casual form of interaction that does not demand an individual reply right away unlike talking on the phone in which when one person says “hi how are you?” the other is expected to reply so

as to avoid silence and fragmented conversation. For those who do not like to answer quickly, this may be convenient; however, it may be inconvenient for those who are anticipating a reply. Ultimately, the overall appeal of texting is that it is a relatively private means of sharing one's thoughts, feelings and ideas. The privacy, connectivity and immediacy of this form of communication enables people to let others know that their social presence is real despite the fact that it may not be corporeally available.

Social Psychological: Individual Space—Social Anxiety

Texting facilitates presence positively when it concerns its use by those who suffer from social anxiety. In their article: “The Expressive and Conversational Affordances of Mobile Messaging” Fraser and Donna Reid (2010) define social anxiety as: “the combination of fear, apprehension and worry that people experience when they anticipate being unable to make a positive impression on others, particularly in encounters with strangers in public settings” (Schlenker and Leary 1982) (p. 6). Those who are predisposed to worrying about making impressions and the ways in which people will respond to their behaviour tend to be visibly uncomfortable when talking face-to-face. Because they are so conscientiously nervous about making a good impression, they do not always project the most favourable or accurate image of themselves. Those who have social anxiety prefer to distance themselves as a means of self-preservation. As Sherry Turkle's (2011) anonymous interviewee articulates in her work *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other*: “Texting Offers protection. You have time to think and prepare what you're going to say, to make you appear like that's just the way you are. There's planning involved, so you can control how you're portrayed [...]” (p. 190). The “protection” that people feel when texting may help ease

them into situations that they would otherwise avoid. This sense of protection may not depict the reality of the situation accurately—in other words, one may have a false sense of security concerning a matter that is more complex than it seems when addressed over a text-message. Not everyone who texts may feel that it offers protection despite the fact that one can edit, self-censor and calculate what one says. Some may feel as though texting threatens their sense of security given that it is a disembodied form of communication that may render communication uncanny rather than familiar and comfortable. Since texting may elicit self-reflective thinking processes for some due to the appeal of editing one's words or changing one's thoughts before the message is sent, it offers people the chance to feel prepared rather than forced to come up with a conversation on the spot. The planned nature of sending text messages may be considered too calculated, but on the other hand, it allows those who might barely be able to speak their mind in person to have the chance to compose their thoughts and words without tripping over them. Texting is associated with having less pressure put upon the interlocutors, for they can plan what to say, how to say it and how much they want to say. Since texting is asynchronous, if those who are socially anxious feel intimidated by a text, they can wait and take their time to reply to it without feeling abashed while the other waits for their response. Texting can be a handy means of communication in some contexts. Reid and Reid (2010) articulate how the convenience of being in the comfort of one's own space, in addition to taking one's time to think of words to express one's self, alleviates pressure for those who struggle with social anxiety: "In short, many social encounters threaten cognitively to overwhelm anxious individuals. [Texting can] eliminate social feedback that might be read as disapproval or rejection, and release

cognitive resources for composing more thoughtful and effective responses” (p. 6).

Whereas face-to-face interaction may threaten the genuine nature of one’s character to shine through, texting allows socially anxious people to worry less about anticipating how others will receive their corporeal presence. As such, texting enables those who have social anxiety to compose messages that articulate what they are trying to say without compromising their sense of comfort. The self-reflective nature of texting is a notable affordance, for it gives people time to slow down their thoughts in order to share their thoughts and feelings effectively. Texting does not hide one’s identity—people are not anonymous when texting, they are simply able to be without feeling rushed, embarrassed or superficial. As (2010) Reid notes, there is a greater sense of control by being able to plan what one writes that allows people to feel secure. Anxiety may affect how someone speaks or acts, but it may not necessarily dominate how someone expresses him or herself over text. Ironically, despite the fact that texting is a form of controlled expression, it enables people to be as Reid (2010) suggests: “ more candid, informal and authentic” (p.5). The ‘brave SMS self’ may not be a comparable representation of someone when it comes to his or her ability to communicate face-to-face, but it does free individuals from being associated with their corporeal presence (p.5). In other words, for those who have social anxiety, texting provides them with the power to feel equal to others instead of being labelled as the “odd one” who is judged for his or her awkward behaviour in person. Instead of feeling left out, socially anxious people can experience social redemption via texting:

The broad conclusion we draw from the present study is that young, single, and socially anxious mobile phone users are predisposed to discover and take

advantage of the social functionality of SMS, enabling them to enrich their personal relationships in way that might otherwise be denied to them (Reid, 2010, p. 18).

According to Fraser and Donna Reid's research young, socially anxious individuals are most likely to prosper from the benefits that texting affords. The overwhelming and intimidating aspects of face-to-face social interaction are possible for this demographic to overcome when using cell phones as tools to help facilitate social presence. This is not to suggest that texting should become a crutch for those who depend on it constantly. Moderation is key in any facet of life. In essence, texting can be an advantageous stepping stone when it comes to saving face and protecting one's self from social embarrassment.

Cultural Relationships

Whether relationships are romantic, platonic, religious, parental or professional, different cultures exercise different approaches to texting. In their article "From Voice to Text: continuity and change in the use of mobile phones in France and Japan" Carole Anne Riviere and Christian Licoppe discuss the cultural significance of texting with respect to the cultivation of personal, intimate relationships in Japan and France.

Communicating with respect and humility is very important in Japanese culture. The norms within society lead people to practice and refine social etiquette concerning politeness in order to avoid situations in which one might embarrass one's self or others. Instead of being loud or outspoken, the Japanese strive to conceal overt opinions and emotions when speaking face-to-face in public. This behaviour is rather formal and conservative in nature:

Since the Japanese culture is oriented towards a strict control over the public expression of emotions, the users of mobile messaging services immediately benefit from the discretion and diminished risk of embarrassment that characterizes written communication with respect to dialogic interaction (Riviere and Licoppe, 2005, p. 116).

Texting allows the Japanese to express themselves causally without having to feel the pressure of abiding by socio-cultural rules of etiquette. Instead of worrying about following specific norms and codes of interaction, people in Japan can take comfort in exchanging text messages because the messages are private and are not scrutinized by the public.

Whereas the Japanese concern themselves with being polite to those who surround them and seek texting as a way of exchanging casual conversation, the French tend to reserve texting for intimate, private matters:

French SMS users on the other hand are more sensitive to the proper patterns of behaviour in public and private spheres. The SMS technology provides opportunities to communicate with intimate correspondents from public spaces while keeping a proper distance and sense of privacy with respect to bystanders (Riviere and Licoppe, 2005, p. 104).

The French maintain emotional, intimate relationships through texting in public. Texting affords them the ability to express themselves emotionally and or romantically without being judged publicly. They do not necessarily text solely for the purposes of casual, quotidian conversation. The ways in which the Japanese and the French choose to text informs their respective cultural identities. The French do not alter their patterns for the

sake of public approval in terms of abiding by social etiquette. Rather, they resort to texting when in public so as to maintain the privacy of their conversations and in so doing, successfully remain neutral when travelling in public. The Japanese mould their texting behaviour around the societal expectations in Japan (Riviere and Licoppe, 2005, p. 119). These different cultural rationales for texting suggest that this form of communication gives the impression that people are being considerate to those who surround them when in public by keeping their conversations private. In addition, texting simultaneously liberates people from having to discuss private content in public.

Saving face can make the difference between thriving and failing in some cultures. Cultural circumstances concerning normative expectations dictate how people must behave. In Japan, for instance, the physical space, in addition to cultural norms, influence decisions to communicate via text:

The crowded conditions of Japanese urban life, ongoing intergenerational tensions, and a pervasive sense of social surveillance in schools, workplaces, and homes, have no doubt contributed to this attachment to a communication device that is personal and personalized, an oasis of privacy and individual identity (Ito, 2005, p. 3).

The huge population, in addition to generational demographics affects how people interact in Japan. One's gender, in addition to one's age in Japan can cause great embarrassment when it comes to interacting with someone of the opposite sex. For instance, people watch how women behave. Young women are expected to be demure, polite and respectful. Their elders judge them depending on how they interact with young men within their peer group. If young women are verbose with young men, their elders

consider them to be flirtatious. Texting in Japan affords young people, especially young women, the ability to have private conversations with their friends and partners without being judged by their parents and the elders in the community. In her article “Mobile Phones, Japanese Youth, and the Re-Placement of Social Contact” Mizuko Ito (2005) interviews a young lady who discusses the dynamics of texting in detail:

If it is a boy, I will call their mobile. If they have one, I will call their mobile. If it is a girl, I will call their home. If it is a girl, well, I’m a girl right? So if I call they think I am just a regular friend. But if it is a boy, his family might tease him, and I’ve made a friend very uncomfortable in the past because of this. I’ve also been told some nasty things by a parent. I was totally pissed off when a parent of a boy told me off like I wasn’t a proper girl. So since then, I don’t use the home phone (p. 12).

Based on formative experiences, this young lady comments on how she was reprimanded by the parents of her male friend for calling him on the home phone. To mitigate this issue, she learned that for future correspondence, she would have to text the young man in order to spare him and herself from scorn and embarrassment. Due to the circumstance-oriented social expectations of normative behaviour for females in Japan, young women avoid calling home phones in order to protect their reputations. Texting works as a comforting means of interacting with people by avoiding the occurrence of making a socio-cultural *faux pas*. The freedom of expression that women enjoy via texting is a positive aspect. As L. Srivastava (2009) notes in the article “ Mobile Phones and the Evolution of Social Behaviour”: “mobile phones can result in the flattening of traditional hierarchical structures. In this context, they have the potential to equalize the

capacity of social integration of men and women (Geser 2002)” (p. 119). The equalizing power of texting in regard to gender dynamics in culture is a progressive and notable positive trait to texting. Having access to a cell phone and the right to text provides women with equal opportunities to express themselves as men would without fearing social scorn. In terms of the emancipation of women, texting may not eliminate the issues of global gender inequality completely, but it does provide a window of opportunity that might not otherwise exist for women in certain cultures.

Social Aspects of Diaspora

Texting empowers women on an international level. For mothers who work abroad in efforts to earn money for their families back home, texting can be an incredibly useful means of communicating with their children and partners. In her article “Overseas Filipino Workers and Text Messaging: Reinventing Transnational Mothering” Cecilia Uy-Tioco (2007) notes that: “Cell phone technology has empowered these women, creating new ways to ‘mother’ their children across time and space. [...] these mothers are [...] reinventing transnational motherhood” (p. 253). The “reinvention” of mothering overseas gives women the power to stay in contact with their children despite geographical distance and the cost of correspondence. Texting enables mothers to uphold their roles in terms of making sure that their children do as they are told:

Through text messaging, mothers in far-away countries are still able to ‘mother’ their kids by asking them how their day was and whether school went okay, reminding them to eat dinner and do their homework, and bidding them goodnight almost as if they were there [...] Those apart are able to maintain presence and build associations despite physical distance (Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259).

Mothering is just as important as being a breadwinner. Children need to know that they have a parent who supports them, encourages them, reminds them to do chores and homework and most importantly, who loves them. These mothers not only reinvent ways to parent their children, they also reinvent ways to let their children know of their social presence. Texting may not be the first choice of contact for these mothers, but it is an affordable means of trying to maintain a familial bond.

Although texting can be seen as a symbol of equality for women, it can be seen simultaneously as a disempowering entity: “Furthermore, this use of cell phone technology can be read as both a form of resistance against and repression from the political economic reality that has led these women to leave their families in the first place” (Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 253). Having access to a cell phone and being able to text is advantageous on a practical level and also on a social level. That is to say that despite minority statuses, immigrant women workers have the opportunity to challenge the system in which they operate by using a device that facilitates independence. To elaborate, the women do not necessarily escape from the lifestyle to which they are bound by migrant labour, but they subvert it temporarily via texting:

It is undeniable that each woman’s individual experiences of text messaging her children multiple times a day gives her a sense of empowerment, but it also simultaneously disempowers her by ensuring that she is a productive link in the chain of migrant labour (2003, p. 34) (Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 263-4).

Texting may not lead to complete freedom from the repressive confines of migrant labour. As is argued by Uy-Tioco, texting can be seen as a perpetuation of the oppressive global labour system. Women may still feel trapped and powerless in the positions they find themselves when working away from their families. Having the opportunity to own a cell phone and use it to text others, however, may provide these women with a temporary sense of freedom from the oppressive lifestyle of migrant labour. Of course, if these women were given equal opportunities to begin with, they would not need to resort to reinventing ways of parenting and adapting to a lifestyle in which they live apart from

their children. Distance may be difficult when it comes to the maintenance of relationships, but texting facilitates social presence in such a way that even if one cannot be physically present, he or she can still make an effort to let someone know they are on the other end of the line.

Religious Community

In some cultures religious obligations must be upheld unconditionally regardless of distance or other barriers. One such commitment concerns the belief among most Muslims to make a pilgrimage to Mecca during *Hajj* at least once in their lives if they are able to do so. This tradition is sacred and special to many of those who practice Islam. In order to balance the traditional role of making a pilgrimage while staying in contact with those who are geographically distant, people text so as to stay in touch, whether for business or for personal reasons. In the article “Mobile Phones and the Evolution of Social Behaviour” L. Srivastava (2009) writes:

In Morocco, Meditel offers a discounted mobile phone roaming service in Saudi Arabia, during ‘Hajj’, the pilgrimage to Mecca. During this period, the receipt of SMS messages is free and incoming calls and outgoing texts are offered at discount rates (p. 114).

The fact that cell phone companies design plans that can accommodate religious obligations suggests that texting is a valuable commodity. The act of texting enables one to practice one’s faith while holding on to one’s social and professional commitments too. Of course, it is important to remember that texting is part of a business and that these rates and discounts may not be completely altruistic from the perspective of companies, but it is still impressive that the companies behind cell phones acknowledge that people

lead complex lives and that the cell phone plans must reflect and accommodate those lifestyles. Another noteworthy example of how texting works to make religion more contemporary concerns the Pope and his methods of reaching out to the public:

Even the Pope has turned to texting to get his message across. The messages are sent from the press office of the Holy See, the central authority of the Catholic Church within the Vatican. Signed-up users receive SMS ‘thoughts for the day’ derived from the Pope’s speeches and homilies. Services are available in Italy, Ireland and the United Kingdom (Scotsman 2003) (Srivastava, 2009, p. 114).

Distance does not stop people from having the desire to communicate. There is an important sense of duty, especially with those who are devoted to certain religious faiths, to try and transcend distance. The unique blend of tradition and modernity within communication suggests that texting is a useful path to interaction. The handheld design of the cell phone, in addition to its trendy appeal, makes texting an intimate, personable and meaningful way of communicating.

Physical/ Corporeal Communication for the Deaf, Changing the Perception of the Disabled

Texting can be a liberating form of correspondence for those in the deaf community, for its typographical nature establishes a realm of equality between the deaf and the hearing. In the article “SMS Use Among Deaf Teens and Young Adults in Norway” Froydis Bakken (2005) writes: “One of the most interesting points with regard to the use of SMS by the deaf is that it is exactly the same service as that used by hearing people. [...] Using SMS like everyone else can impart feelings of independence and belonging” (p. 165). Texting is an asset because it enhances the self-esteem of the deaf

who tend to feel as though they are outsiders among the hearing. Through the commonality of the modality of communication among hearing people, the deaf tap into the normative social interaction rituals of the majority population. Since the deaf are a minority group, they can experience loneliness, judgement and exclusion when in the presence of the hearing, whose form of face-to-face communication dominates in most social settings. According to Bakken (2005):

Hearing status has inherent social implications, and many deaf people feel isolated because they lack a common form of communication. The deaf must participate in both the deaf and the hearing cultures, whether they like it or not. [...] Within the deaf community, where all communication takes place in sign language, the interaction works adequately. It is only when society fails to meet the special needs of the deaf that deafness becomes and is perceived as a disability (p. 161).

Sign language is a beautiful and important means of face-to-face communication for the deaf. Despite its uniqueness, when sign language is used in public among the hearing, there are implications that the deaf are not communicating normatively. In other words, the deaf are seen as deviants when compared to the hearing. Sign language is useful, but it does not enable the deaf to communicate well with the hearing. Ultimately, the obvious differences between sign language and oral communication distinguishes one group as “disabled” and the other as “abled”:

Deafness also has social implications when the deaf are unable to communicate with hearing people who do not understand sign language. This problem is often

perceived as a problem for the deaf person only, because the hearing person is considered to be normal, and the deaf deviant (Ohna 2000) (Bakken, 2005, p. 163).

The deaf are sensitive to how people respond to their abilities and do not necessarily appreciate the label “disabled”, since sign language in their view is just as much of a language as English or Norwegian. Ultimately, deaf people do not feel comfortable when hearing people consider oral communication to be superior to sign language.

Texting is an excellent way in which deaf people can subvert the societal associations held toward those who are disabled by proving their independence. For instance, when a deaf person wishes to correspond with someone who may be in a different location, instead of having to rely on a phone operator to interpret on his or her behalf, he or she can text someone independently. Bakken suggests that using a form of mediation to interpret on behalf of the deaf is impersonal and dehumanizing.

Understandably, the deaf do not enjoy using the “149 telephone”¹ because it feels as though a middleman invades their privacy. Further, relying on this particular device disappoints many deaf people because operators do not always translate their messages as adequately as they would like. Texting is beneficial because it does not distinguish a deaf person from a hearing person. The deaf can be in direct contact with their hearing friends

¹ The “149 telephone” or “TTY” is a telephone typewriting device that is connected to a telephone operating line. One types his or her message and has the interpreter read it or write it on behalf of him or her. The interpreter then listens or reads what the person on the other line has to say or write and then types the response back to the individual (National Association of the Deaf).

or family. In this way, the deaf can participate in hearing and deaf communities, which, as Bakken notes “blurs borders” (Bakken, 2005, p. 167).

There is an argument that texting influences the quality of written language negatively; however, it could also be argued that texting—complete with typos and abbreviations—enables some deaf people a smooth transition when corresponding with hearing people. That is not to suggest that the deaf are poor writers, but sometimes despite the fact that their sign language may be impeccable, their written language may be harder to master since they cannot hear how words are supposed to be pronounced. Texting offers deaf people (and others who may find themselves struggling with written language) a judgement-free space in which they can express themselves just as hearing people do without having to worry whether their grammar or spelling is perfect. This draws attention away from the fact that they cannot hear:

The so-called SMS-language consists of abbreviations, acronyms and incomplete sentences, so the deaf who previously were ill-at-ease with writing [the language from the country to which they belong] now face a lower threshold for sending written messages (the deaf are often strongly attached to their first language, sign language, and are therefore less comfortable with written [language]) (Bakken, 2005, p. 169).

Through texting, the deaf feel included in a society that is predominantly comprised of hearing people. This form of communication affords the deaf equality, comfort, convenience and independence—aspects that they may not otherwise experience through alternative means of trying to communicate with others.

Texting is not only advantageous for the deaf to communicate with the hearing, but it also provides people within the deaf community with a means to share information more quickly than they could if texting did not exist: “Hearing people can always get the news when they are on crowded buses or on the streets, but this is rarely an option for the deaf. The channels of diffusion that SMS provides are therefore more crucial for the deaf in this context” (Bakken, 2005, p. 169). The fact that texting affords the deaf to access and disseminate information is, from a communication studies perspective, a shining example of how technology can facilitate acceptance. That is to say that communicative devices like cell phones and specific functions of mediation like texting enable people in different demographics to communicate on the same level and to feel included despite diversity. The equalizing effect of texting instills a sense of camaraderie, inclusivity and acceptance among those who have access to cell phones.

Physical and Temporal Isolation

Inclusivity is an important aspect in regard to existentialism, the other and humanity. Isolating situations can inhibit people from communicating. When individuals are confined within hospitals, they often feel disconnected from the world. In addition to physical pain, hospital patients must deal with emotional aspects regarding the social transition from interacting with others independently to having limited visitations. In their article “The use of short message services (SMS) among hospitalized coronary patients” Svein Bergvik and Rolf Wynn (2012) articulate that patients have a difficult time trying to keep in contact with their friends and family when hospitalized. Personal technology devices that enable texting enable those who are hospitalized to correspond with their loved ones (p. 390). From a social perspective, texting can help make the transition from

staying home to staying in the hospital feel less jarring. Due to its portable, informal nature, using a cell phone for texting is incredibly convenient and useful for situational circumstances like hospital occupancy. Texting is advantageous for multiple reasons beyond the purposes of social interaction. According to Svein Bergvik and Rolf Wynn (2012) texting is inexpensive and widely available. In addition, feeling a sense of independence when in the hospital is empowering and helps patients to overcome the distractions of staying in a hospital. Further, the discrete nature of texting is not only comforting for patients who are often surrounded by others who can overhear them, but it is also a considerate way of communicating without disturbing those in the shared space. The asynchronous factor of texting, while problematic in some situations, proves to be useful when in the hospital because it gives patients time to fulfil the nature of their hospital stay while keeping in touch with others (p. 391). For instance, someone may text a friend just before going in for an operation or examination. He or she can take comfort in the fact that the friend knows that he or she may not be able to respond immediately, but can still correspond intermittently. Texting also enables patients to feel comfortable and not to feel pressured concerning their image. Often when patients are hospitalized, they do not wish to be seen in a weak, unhealthy state. Corresponding over SMS allows people to feel accepted without fearing judgement of appearance. Texting in these circumstances places less emphasis on one's appearance and voice and more emphasis on the facilitation of an alternative form of social presence. Ultimately, the positive psychological effects that texting has on patients who communicate with others helps their overall peace of mind and wellbeing:

The main finding in the present study was that SMS usage among coronary inpatients was high, as 63% reported having texting with friends and family while in the hospital. Although support is typically provided in a face-to-face setting or by means of traditional phone calls, this study suggests that SMS offers an alternative or supplementary means of providing and receiving social support for patients while in hospital. The potential is further strengthened by the fact that 99% of the patients reported using cell phones, and 80% to some degree or very much (Bergvik, 2012, p. 394).

The necessity for social support is equally as important as medical care for hospital patients. Hospitals can feel impersonal, sterile and lonely. Enduring physical pain is difficult enough, but the emotional and psychological stress that accompanies hospitalization is upsetting for many. Having different forms of communication at one's disposal is comforting, for it helps remind patients that they have connections to people in the outside world. The high percentage of patients who rely on texting as a supplementary form of emotional support suggests that texting has the power to transform upsetting, limiting situations into bearable ones.

Communication among humans is a complex area of discussion. That is to say that human interaction is loaded with many aspects including culture, sociology, gender, economy, globalisation and politics. Texting is but one type of correspondence that bridges the gap between the self and the other within communication. In particular conjunction with the process of socialization, the adoption of texting among humans informs the process of constructing contemporary norms and social expectations. Having the option to text is incredibly freeing, for it enables those who may otherwise feel

discriminated against when talking face-to-face to communicate comfortably without the same pressures. In addition, texting is beneficial for many in regard to corresponding over geographic distances. The merits of texting as a form of communication are plentiful. Indeed, texting certainly represents a contemporary means of transcending barriers, which may not have been as easy a feat to overcome in the past.

As with the disadvantages of texting, the advantages of texting depend namely upon the contextual affordances. In this chapter the primary focus was on the equalizing power of texting when used in certain circumstances regarding racial minority groups, socio-economic status and the disabled.

One of the two core elements concerning the merits of texting relates to social psychological aspects of communication. For instance, overseas workers face ethnic and socio-economic discrimination when meeting individuals in person. Texting, however, enables workers to transcend geographic distance by corresponding in their native language with their loved ones back home. The opportunity to text others provides those who face racial or cultural discrimination with a sense of empowerment (Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 253). Furthermore, those who suffer from social anxiety thrive when communicating via text because it is a platform that allows them to self-correct and respond slowly to messages without compromising their sense of comfort (Reid, 2010, p. 6). Texting can also be beneficial when it comes to gender and age in certain cultures like that of Japan in which young women are judged for talking to young men. Texting allows young Japanese women to communicate with whom they please without having their elders shun them (Ito, 2005, 127).

The second core element regarding the merits of texting relates to how the practice of texting provides a space of equality for those with physical disabilities. For the deaf community in particular, texting is an inclusive practice in which both the deaf and the hearing alike can participate (Bakken, 2005, p. 167). Furthermore, texting enables hospital patients to connect with their friends and family outside of the hospital so as to feel social despite being unable to be physically present (Bergvik, 2012, p. 390).

While there are physical restrictions to texting that may not facilitate all means of correspondence in a smooth manner, there are a number of circumstances in which the absence of physical presence ameliorates social situations. That is to say that, as discussed in this chapter, when it comes to racial minorities, gender, age, socio-economic status, or disability, findings suggest that physical qualifiers sometimes work against people, for others may judge their appearances before giving them a chance to introduce themselves. Social presence, then, is greatly advantageous and can be facilitated through texting. Despite the fact that texting has physical limitations, it can be beneficial and used to help people achieve social mobility, inclusivity and respect from others.

Conclusion

Research Contribution

One day I made a conscious decision to put my cell phone in my purse and go for a walk. While I was walking, I was disturbed to notice how many people resembled zombies—their heads hung lifelessly over their phones as they texted away oblivious to their surroundings. Growing up in an environment in which I conversed with my deaf father by using sign language, I took face-to-face communication very seriously. The more I observed people standing in line for coffee, waiting in elevators and sitting at communal lunch tables, the more I was startled to see how people around me were not picking up on body language because they were too prone to looking down at their phones and texting. While I first thought texting was not a positive means of communication, I began to notice certain situations in which texting can be noteworthy. Having worked with individuals who have physical disabilities, I re-evaluated my prior disdain for the act of texting, for I learned that texting gave these individuals a means of independence. These day-to-day experiences have provided me with a breadth of knowledge into the highs and lows of communication and how humans are complicated beings who require context in order to understand certain social settings. While I can appreciate the merits of texting in certain situations, the use of texting can push an individual in a certain direction. In other words, the use of texting can impact the user given that technology is not neutral—it is programmed in a certain way that can dictate the ways in which people interact. It was important to me that my personal experiences and interests in this subject matter would add new insights into this line of study. My research contributes to the contemporary study of new media and its affects on

communication by focusing on how human presence in communication is maintained not only through face-to-face communication, but also when technology comes into play.

Results

Looking back to my research question: “how does talking face-to-face facilitate presence differently from communicating via texting?” I can now explore possible answers with more confidence by noting that the first key difference relates to the variable of presence and its two subcategories. The difference between the two forms of communication is that the face-to-face communication makes use of social and physical forms of presence while texting namely involves the practice of social presence. This especially pertains to the first chapter when discussing what constitutes the “conversational ideal.”

When considering the main focus of the second chapter, it is key to consider the variable of context and how it is shaped by the discussion of space, time and media “ideologies.” Social space can be virtual or live, but time is a physical factor that is not flexible. Further, media “ideologies” that people hold toward texting differ automatically from face-to-face communication, for texting is a form of mediation that is dependent on a machine (a space that facilitates social presence), which is not always viewed as an ideal means of authentic communication. On the other hand, communicating in person elicits an association of an authentic human-to-human relationship (both physical space and time are live and synchronous).

Texting, however, is not a lost cause and this is a fundamental idea that drives the third chapter. Texting salvages certain interactions. For instance, texting can come to the

rescue by bridging the gap that occurs when physical distance makes it difficult to achieve face-to-face conversation. A pivotal revelation to conclude the step-by-step analysis of this question and the variables it entails when regarding each chapter of this thesis is that the culmination of traits found in texting and face-to-face communication are paradoxical. That is to say that while the two forms bear obvious differences pertaining to the physical/spatial and social characteristics of the body and the phone, they are alike, for at the heart of both forms is a human attempt to reach the other. Since these forms of communication are outward expressions of internal human thoughts and feelings, both means of interaction are not fool proof when it comes to smooth, flawless translations of the psyche. In this way, all three chapters come full circle to suggest that while at first glance face-to-face communication may seem a polar opposite entity to texting, it does, in fact, bear certain likenesses. These similarities invite reconsideration when it comes to making dismissive comparisons relating to the ways in which presence is facilitated.

In summary, ideal communication, as Peters articulates, is only attainable among angels. Ideal communication refers to pure transparency among minds and souls when interacting. Humans attempt to achieve the best possible means of communication given that the ideal is not attainable. Talking face-to-face facilitates presence because it is a corporeal and social expression of the being and how he or she performs context-related roles informed by etiquette, body language and social cues. Face-to-face communication is the preferred means of interaction because it requires human-to-human communication without a middleman. Texting, on the other hand, involves human to cell phone to cell phone to human interaction and therefore fragments one's presence by separating the

physical self from the social self. The physical limitations of texting can be both detrimental and beneficial to those who choose to text depending on the contextual circumstances of the social situation. Ultimately, context influences the communicative performances of people when conversing face-to-face and via texting.

Summary of Discovery and Analysis

Within all three chapters, there are, broadly speaking, two key answers to my main question. The first key result reveals that context is a defining factor of communication and how presence is performed. Context informs the decisions that people make concerning how they present themselves when interacting. Social, physical and psychological aspects play roles in how communication unfolds. Given that each human is unique, there are varying interpretations of how to engage in social and physical presence. Communication would not be necessary if humans were all of like mind. Communication is, however, integral to mankind, society and civilization. Because diversity is simply a part of the human race, it is important to note that different modes of communication suit different personalities.

There is much discrepancy when it comes to whether or not there is a hierarchy in communication. Based upon the research conducted in this thesis, it is valid to note that the second key result of my research reveals that a hierarchy exists, for if it did not, scholars like Nancy Baym, Carolyn Marvin, Catherine Steiner-Adair and Joshua Meyrowitz would have avoided the subject altogether. As discussed in chapter one, based on the findings in scholars' works and in a number of studies performed, face-to-face communication is considered to be the preferred means of communication because it is live, sensorial and both social and physical presence is required. Face-to-face

communication transpires in one space rather than in two like that of texting and thus does not fragment the bodily nature of communication. Despite its depth, face-to-face communication still bears limitations.

Similarly, texting bears limitations primarily in that it is a disembodied form of communication. Furthermore, the means of communication is so easy to manipulate that it becomes a gravely misused tool, as discussed in chapter two. That is to say that certain circumstances yield sexting, driving while texting, drinking while texting, gang organization and addiction when texting is used in extreme.

While texting has limitations from its 160-character word count to its lack of vocal tone and physical gestures, texting can be advantageous, as seen in chapter three. Contextual circumstances in which people are judged on their race, ability or economic class are easier to avoid when texting. Texting therefore offers a unifying sense of social presence.

Concluding Thoughts

Miscommunication has the potential to engender grave mishaps and tragedies that could otherwise be prevented. If the friar in Shakespeare's beloved tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* had given Romeo Juliet's letter explaining her feigned death before Romeo witnessed her limp, lifeless body, Romeo would not have succumbed to drinking the vial of poison in efforts to join her in the afterlife. Consequently, Juliet would not have awoken to the morbid display of her loved one deceased by her side and would not have taken a dagger to her heart. Though this anecdote is based on a fictional story, it sheds light on the truths of miscommunication and how the flaws in human interaction can render problematic situations. In spite of the fact that humans are inherently flawed, it is

key to note that communication is essential for the maintenance of civilization (Innis, 1991, p. 3). Face-to-face interaction complete with non-verbal gestural cues and vocal intonations—the form of communication regarded by scholars such as Nancy Baym, Ilana Gershon and Sherry Turkle and their respective interviewees as the preferred method of communication—has noteworthy merits. Non-verbal face-to-face aspects of communication are considered to be very useful, especially when words may not always convey the intended expression of one's thoughts (Goffman, 1967, p. 2). That is to say that non-verbal communication, or body language, supplements meaning (Wilcox, 2009, p. 402). In addition, technological mediation for the purposes of communication is important. Texting in particular can be beneficial in terms of transmitting messages over great distances. Further, texting can be advantageous for those whose contextual circumstances require a mediated form of communication in lieu of corresponding face-to-face. The devices that enable mediation, however, are not replacements for certain emotional qualities of communication that can only transpire through human interaction.

When it comes to expressing emotional subject matter, texting does not necessarily encapsulate the entirety of intended meaning. That is to say that what one writes may not represent what one intends to say. The inability of one to use body language or vocal intonation to express one's intended meaning over text, in addition to what is linguistically encoded is a limitation of texting, for it disembodies human interaction. The fact that the body is detached from the message is somewhat uncanny for individuals given that the message is indeed from a living source and yet it is received via a mechanical apparatus. Of course, humans have been using other forms of media, like letters, for many millennia and so in this respect, written correspondence is not unsettling

because it is not a new phenomenon. There are many merits to technological forms of communication that face-to-face interaction cannot always afford, and yet, Peters suggests that the absence of the body renders a sense of disconnection (Kane, 2009, p. 224-225). Perhaps the scepticism behind texting is due to the fact that messages can be intercepted and thus, individuals are leery of privacy infringements. This sense of disconnection may be more inherent and suggests that human interaction, when facilitated by a machine, simply does not provide the same neural stimulus as it would if it transpired face-to-face (Culham). The concept of the uncanny via mediated communication establishes a perspective in which face-to-face interaction is implicitly superior to that of technologically mediated communication (Peters, 2000, p. 217). Of course, the element of superstition certainly lends itself to this conundrum. When humans do not have complete control over the messages they intend to share and they must rely on a machine to facilitate communication, it is understandable as to why speculation and superstition ensue (Peters, 2000, p. 198). The motif of unease, ambiguity, loss of control and the vaguely familiar in regard to telephone conversations, for instance, in which one can hear a voice but is unable to see the body suggests that humans have difficulty adapting to technology when their senses are confused. That is to say that whereas McLuhan indicates that media are extensions of human senses, Peters indicates that, at least when new media arrive onto the scene, humans have trouble equating or relating their senses to the characteristics of the new media.

Deciding when it is appropriate to rely on a machine to perform actions that humans can perform on their own is important to consider. There are times when depending on technology not only disconnects the individual from the task, but also

facilitates the formation of poor habits. Sometimes relying on machines can be advantageous and instrumental in changing one's life for the better; however, it is important to keep the use of relying on technology for communicative matters in moderation, if, that is, it can be helped. That is to say that for those who have disabilities, dependence on technology may be necessary in order to conduct day-to-day activities.

Due to its original design for formal business purposes, the unintentional social popularity and mass use of texting has encountered many criticisms in addition to praises.

I want to stress that technological devices such as cell phones are non-human entities and although they seem it, they are not neutral, for they were designed and programmed to provide certain features. In this way, from the onset of its creation, the cell phone bears program-related limitations that, if not acknowledged by the users, can determine or dictate the flow of one's correspondence by virtue of features such as word or character limits, for example. Those in charge of designing models of cell phone technologies are players in establishing new forms of etiquette associated with new media communication (Gershon, 2010, p. 65). Texting etiquette, as Carey and Elton (2010) note, is an aspect that has not been easy to adopt: "In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the unwritten rules of social interactions and etiquette for mobile phone use were still being worked out" (p. 316). Just as it takes time when transitioning from a child to a young adult to learn how to behave one's self in a situation in which company is present at the supper table, so too does it take time to recognize which situational contexts are appropriate for one to engage in texting. Similarly, the messages one chooses to send via text message are yet another aspect of texting in which the social protocol requires one to develop, or learn, the appropriateness of the action depending on the context of the

specific situation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the individual who chooses to use the device to act accordingly when texting. It is not the cell phone's responsibility to ensure that the content of the message or the moment when the message is sent is appropriate, but rather the user's.

Despite the fact that the use of cell phones alter the ways in which people process information and go about sharing information, the devices are not intended to be replacements for humans and are not by any means to be made the scapegoats for an individual's decisions.

Technology is here to stay and will only advance rather than regress. New media are neither good nor bad but certainly influence the adaptation of new forms of communication. As Nicholas Carr (2011) notes: "Writing and print and the computer," writes Walter Ong, "are all ways of technologizing the world" and once technologized, the word cannot be de-technologized" (p. 77). Because humans decide to use technology, the neural connections and transmitters in human brains are constantly redirecting themselves (Carr, 2011, p. 31). There is no end to the multiplicity of possibilities concerning the development of new forms of communication, for as Ong notes: "the word cannot be de-technologized." Humans cannot go back in time and they cannot function in society without adapting to new forms of technology. It is important, then, for humans to take responsibility for communication no matter in what form it takes.

The notion of change in communication over time relates to John Durham Peters' theory concerning the comparative dynamic in which one entity (written communication) is distinguished from another (dialogic). The oral tradition and dramaturgic language of the body are hinted to be at the top of the hierarchy, while written communication—

beginning with the advent of the reed stylus and papyrus, to the invention of the printing press and ending with cell phones and the use of texting—is situated at the bottom of the hierarchy (Plato qtd. by Peters, 2000 p. 49). This hierarchy challenges the notion of development concerning inventions that are supposed to ameliorate social communication and thus situates itself within the trajectory of socialization, media and communication. It is key to note, however, that Peters (2000) himself does not directly comment as to which, dialogue or dissemination, is a superior mode of communication for he writes: “The marriage of true minds via dialogue is not the only option; in fact, lofty expectations about communication may blind us to the more subtle splendours of dissemination or suspended dialogue”(p. 62). In its entirety, human communication is prone to mishaps because humans are flawed. Both dialogue and dissemination have merits and shortcomings all depending on how, and in which contexts, they are used. As Peters suggests, in theory, dialogue may be a superior method, but in reality it may not always be convenient. In essence, new methods of communication are neither positive nor negative—they simply are what they are. As Nancy Baym (2010) writes:

The norms for appropriate use of communication media are in a continuous state of development. By being conscientious and aware of what media offer, what choices we make with them, and what consequences those choices have for us, we can intervene in and influence the process of norm development [...](p. 154-155).

It is the responsibility of all who decide to text to recognize its merits and its downfalls. Most importantly, it is key for people to recall that texting is a form of personal communication that is still very much in its beginning stages of development.

Change requires flexibility and a willingness of those subjected to it to grapple with the unknown. Since communication is a social practice, it is important for those involved to pay attention to new patterns of encoding and decoding. Ultimately, the ways in which people choose to work with change impacts their ability to communicate effectively.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the outcome of my research, it is natural that some areas are unresolved in their entirety. While I touch upon the notion of varying age groups and their responses to technologically mediated communication on pages 16 and 95, it would be worthwhile to explore this area in more detail. One possible recommendation for future research on this subject matter would be to focus exclusively on how age difference plays a role in the ways in which presence is facilitated via texting. It would be interesting to see how people from significantly different generations respond to the content of text messages.

A final suggestion for further research deals with the possibility of opening up new questions that focus on a vein of related subject matter. Toward the end of chapter three I discuss briefly the ways in which texting is beneficial for hospital patients. One way to elaborate on the nature of this particular sub-topic would be to study the ethical concerns behind doctors corresponding with patients via texting. It would be fascinating to explore whether or not a doctor might fall prey to the casual rather than professional facilitation of social presence via texting and the possible consequences of said interaction.

When looking at how to further my research by way of additional studies, I have a few specific areas in which, given the circumstances, I would consider modifying or tailoring to suit the objective of my study: to learn how presence is facilitated differently

via texting and face-to-face communication and how the human connection is maintained through communication.

The first modulation I would make would be to alter the scope of Ronald Rice's survey on media richness. Instead of asking managers to evaluate the level of media richness in workplace performances, I would instead reverse the roles by asking employees and students, those who are in comparatively subordinate positions to authority figures, to evaluate the media richness of the methods of communication that employers and professors tend to use. I would make sure to write a question asking how the methods of communication those in authoritative positions take affect the mental health and well being of employees and students. In specific, I would create a question asking whether the participants consider email or texting to be the most appropriate means of communicating in situations requiring clarification or an empathetic response. I would also ask what particular modes of communication are media rich in terms of trying to clarify ambiguity and communicate reassurance or empathy. This approach would be pertinent to the objective of my study because it would help to identify how the facilitation of presence in work and academic environments shapes the sense of human connectivity as seen from the perspective of those in subordinate positions. Furthermore, the alterations to this study would elaborate on my discussion of morality, empathy and how studies show that when technology is involved it can sometimes compromise the nature of an empathic response due to the fact that perceived interpretation of the tone of a message can affect how people feel. Empathy, as I discuss in my thesis, is a human characteristic that helps the self to identify with the other since it requires that an individual recognize emotions in the other that he or she may have experienced in the

past thereby connecting two people by virtue of shared or relatable experiences. By modifying the previous study, I could take a closer look at how empathy in particular is facilitated through different media, which would relate to the objective of my research: to learn about the communicative pursuit of closing the gap that exists between humans through the facilitation of presence.

In addition to the modifications to the Rice's study, I would alter Przybylski and Weinstein's study by incorporating a minor change to the context of the situation explored. Instead of examining how people interact when a cell phone is present on a table, I would examine how people interact when one party, who is expected to be listening, looking and paying attention to the speaker, is texting. I would ask questions such as: Do you consider it appropriate to text while someone is talking to you in person? Do you think the person who is texting is participating in the discussion? Is the individual contributing to the quality of the conversation by texting? Do you consider it frustrating when someone is texting while you are talking to him or her face-to-face?

Looking to Sarah Konrath's study at the University of Michigan, I would alter the self-survey so that the final result would not be as general and would not invite speculation. I would write a question stating specifically: Does the practice of texting, or email, affect your empathetic responsiveness? Why or Why not?

Finally, in the University of Cambridge study I would write a question in the survey asking specifically: What reasons do you have for preferring face-to-face communication in lieu of other means of interaction? Are there certain situations in which you do not prefer to talk face-to-face and if so, why?

While the future steps that could be taken additionally to my research to enhance it would be interesting to explore, it is important to note that the studies I used in my research met the needs of my objective. I was able to accomplish exactly what I set out to do: explore how presence can be facilitated in different ways and how the effort to close the gap that exists among all humans by exercising different means of communication is achieved based on the use of differing methods for specific contexts.

Appendix: A Note on the Use of Secondary Sources

There are two sections in this appendix. The first category regards the major qualitative sources I drew upon to help me meet my objective of exploring how presence is facilitated differently via texting and face-to-face communication and how the human in communication is maintained. In specific, I look at the works of: Erving Goffman, Emanuel Levinas, Roger Silverstone, Michael Schudson, Plato, James Carey, Joshua Meyrowtiz, Marshall McLuhan, Nicholas Carr, Walter J. Ong, Ilana Gershon and John Durham Peters.

The second category regards the major quantitative sources I used to support my theoretical objective. I look at case studies, statistical data and interviews belonging to: John Clarkson of the University of Cambridge, Sarah Konrath of the University of Michigan, Andrew Przybylski and Netta Weinstein, Jeffrey Hall and Nancy Baym, S.. Zhou and L. Leung, Ronald Rice, Mizuko Ito and Svein Bergvik

Section One: Qualitative Philosophical and Theoretical Sources

Philosophical literature and theory-based literature are important to my research question because they allow for a diversified approach. To elaborate, the multiplicity of interpretations that arise from literature of a theoretical and philosophical scope provide me with many critical perspectives from which I take in to account so as to establish a wide-ranging analysis that promises more than one possible viewpoint. In essence, these sources allow me to escape the possibility of having too narrow of a research scope.

I analyse key themes in theoretical and philosophical literature and apply them to hypothetical situations in which I discuss the number of contextual possibilities that may

apply. I seek out concepts that can apply to my theoretical musings and my discussion of realistic situations. I meticulously critique how these theories and concepts relate to human communication and the facilitation of social and physical presence.

When embarking on an interdisciplinary theoretical exploration of face-to-face communication and how it facilitates presence differently from texting, it is integral to analyse Erving Goffman's theoretical works: *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday life* and *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face to Face Behaviour*. By unpacking the discourse of sociological, humanistic patterns of *savoir-faire*, I discovered that the common social practice of talking face to face elicits a three-dimensional approach to communication. Through analysing these works, I was able to provide a foundation for the discussion of how face-to-face communication is considered the preferred means of communication.

Emanuel Levinas and Roger Silverstone's theories of morality relate to Goffman's discussion of face-to-face as the preferred means of communication. Both scholars suggest that face-to-face communication is ideal because the face is a precursor to human connections before any words are spoken. Messages carry a lot of weight, but so too do the ways in which the messages are received. Marshall McLuhan's expression: "the medium is the message" summarizes the moral sense of responsibility and accountability humans feel when physically communicating with the other. The exploration of the self and the other and the unifying marker of a moral obligation to communicate with the other as one would want to be communicated with works to elaborate on Goffman's discussion of *savoir-faire* and how the ways in which one enacts or performs his or her presence is based off of how the other reacts.

Through analysing Michael Schudson's theory of the "conversational ideal", I was able to draw a parallel between Schudson's discussion of how there are conceptual associations of how best to communicate—which may not lend themselves to successful communication when executed in practice—and Erving Goffman's discussion of face-to-face conversation as a pivotal social means of inclusivity and interaction. Both theories suggest that human social patterns yield tendencies of conceptual associations in which face-to-face interaction *seems* to be the ideal means of communication. In other words, both discussions compliment each other in that they acknowledge that face work is a major staple in communication values.

In order to emphasize how important face-to-face communication is in the discussion of communication, I decided to include Plato's theory pertaining to how dialogue is considered to be more effective than dissemination-based means of communication. Through analysing Plato's theory, I was able to establish an analytical element of tradition in regard to the perspectives in which famous philosophers held and how these perspectives are, to an extent, still maintained, or at least recognized as sage theories to this day.

In addition to Plato's philosophy, I thought it would be fitting to include James Carey's theory or view pertaining to the interaction ritual in my analysis. The key aspect to take away from Carey's discussion is that ritual communication serves to emphasize how society can be "maintained in time rather than extending messages in space." To elaborate, Carey's articulation and differentiation of interaction ritual and new media suggests that in order for social relationships to last over time, they require synchronous, co-sensory feedback that distance-based communication simply cannot supply.

With this discussion of space and time, I thought it would be appropriate to analyse Joshua Meyrowitz's theory regarding social and physical space. Meyrowitz's theoretical approach to interaction and how it is affected by time and space works to contextualize frameworks of differing approaches to interaction. In essence, by suggesting that space can be social—a somewhat figurative statement—Meyrowitz implies that communication that transpires over devices inhabits a space in which only social presence can be facilitated. For example, a text message that is written on and sent from one cell phone to another occupies a liminal social space. On the contrary, a message that is uttered from one person to the other occupies a physical space in addition to a social space.

Marshall McLuhan's theories speak to Meyrowitz's and Carey's in that the figurative extensions of our bodies are comprised of the media in which we use to compensate for our inability as humans to be in two places at once. McLuhan's figurative language and interpretations of media are essential to my analysis, for they reiterate the theoretical, conceptual and philosophical approach to my research and how taking a mechanical entity such as a cell phone and dawning it with the ability to facilitate a means of social presence suggests that while not literally human, the cell phone and text messages bear some traces of humanness.

By discussing Nicholas Carr and Walter J. Ong's theories concerning adaptation to technological mediation and the ways in which people choose to communicate depending on the context of the situation, my analysis grows to not only discuss how social patterns, space and time affect communication, but how change in regard to the

development of social patterns of interaction is another factor that affects the ways in which people interpret different means of communication.

I decided to analyse Ilana Gershon's discussion of media ideologies so as to elaborate on the idea of how people come to associate certain forms of communication with implicit or nuanced emotions. This contemporary theoretical perspective suggests that human interaction is context specific and apt to numerous interpretations.

Finally, John Durham Peters's discussion of bridging the chasm related to flaws inherent in human communication, communication that transpires over long distances and communication that is facilitated via technology is imperative to my analytical discussion. Peter's theory suggests that both face-to-face communication and texting are privy to possible setbacks. This enabled me to realize that both means of communication work to ultimately facilitate presence, whether social, physical or both. In this way, despite the obvious differences between the two means of communication, the theoretical discussion comes full circle in recognizing the merits and flaws of human interaction.

Section Two: Quantitative Data and Empirical Sources

Empirical literature is important to take into account because it offers a perspective that differs from qualitative research. That is to say that the inclusion of empirical research in a theoretically based thesis is useful, for it enables the researcher to expand his or her research horizons. Data can be beneficial when it comes to emphasizing a critical point in one's research. Furthermore, data is evidence that is based on numbers and experiment results rather than on theory and philosophy and thus provides another means of accessing information.

I analysed quantitative data by evaluating its relevance to my research question. Additionally, I searched for reasons as to why the study was conducted to begin with so that I could place my research within the framework of what others' have studied. I incorporated the findings of empirical research within my work by discussing how studies conducted in real life can apply to theoretical research. In this way I connect applied research evidence to theoretical research in order to produce a holistic exploration of my research, which is an ethical approach given that integrity is used when discerning what material is contextually appropriate to the research at hand. In other words, I do not force or twist empirical studies in order to suit the nature of my research.

The first major secondary source of empirical research that I analyse pertains to the study by the University of Cambridge in which a survey and interview were conducted. The findings suggest that both youth and adults prefer to communicate in person rather than via technology. By studying the quantitative values of this study, I could apply the results to my discussion by noting that while new methods of communication may be useful, they may not be the preferred means of interaction.

The second piece of empirical research I use to strengthen my analysis pertains to the University of Michigan survey by Sarah Konrath determining whether levels of empathy are affected by technology, or if the increased use in technology correlates to the decreased expression of empathy. This research applies directly to my discussion concerning how texting is associated with a casual, non-personable means of interaction that can be interpreted as an non-empathetic means of communication. Further, if someone is texting, he or she may be distracted and not fully practice empathy, thus

emphasizing how receiving a text or texting can suggest an emotional detachment from empathy.

In addition to Konrath's data, Andrew Przybylski and Netta Weinstein's study of empathy and how the mere presence of a cell phone can invite lower levels of empathetic listening works to support my analytical discussion. My discussion of the misuses of texting in which one may choose to text at a time that may not be appropriate is elevated by said empirical evidence, for it provides my theoretical rationale with a hint of applied research.

By analysing the Pew study in Nancy Baym and Jeffrey Hall's article, I was able to discuss, with empirical support that the use of cell phones among youth is growing at a fast pace. This data enabled me to discuss and display a visual aid regarding how the frequency of texting affects the ways in which people change their habits of socialization to suit the more frequent method of communication. This study relates to Zhou and Leung's study regarding sensation seeking and how youth revert to texting when bored or when feeling insecure. Again, the tendencies of relying on texting too much indicates that one's sense of self worth may depreciate. This study applies to my analysis in chapter two, for it enables me to take my theoretical approach and reasoning, which may be subjective, and apply it to an objective study in which quantitative data suggests that a correlation between poor habits and texting frequency exist.

Furthermore, through analysing Cecelia Brown's theory pertaining to different means of communication and how it affects social skills in college students, the discussion of Ronald Rice's study of media richness is important to my analysis. Both the theory of media richness and the subsequent study performed on employees in an office

suggests that certain methods of communicating are more useful than others depending on the context at hand. This relates precisely to my main research answer in that associations held with different forms of communication, in addition to how these means of communication transpire, affect the outcome of communication. Rice uses the labels: “asynchronous”, “synchronous”, “many cues” and “few cues” to denote that depending on the time and space and sensorial factors of communication, certain messages may not be as well received as others. This relates to my discussion in chapter one regarding how the co-present, sensorial affordances of face-to-face interaction work to facilitate a holistic form of social and physical presence.

Another major secondary source of empirical data that provides a rich depth to my work is Mizuko Ito’s interview with a Japanese teenage girl. The content of the interview works to support my analytical discussion in that there are some cultural and gender based instances in which texting can help eradicate social judgement.

A final secondary source of data that I use comes from Berguik’s statistical evidence that notes how 99% of hospital patients report to use a cell phone. This suggests that this means of communication enables patients to thrive (in terms of socialization) when they are able to correspond via text with people in the outside world. Alternative forms of communication help to come close to restoring the “chasm” of which John Durham Peters speaks, which relates directly to my analysis regarding the affordances of texting in certain situations.

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