

Bart Simon, Ph. D.

**ACADEMIC
DEGREES :**

Ph.D. (Sociology/Science Studies), University of California at San Diego (1998)

MSc. (Sociology of Scientific Knowledge), University of Edinburgh (1990)

B.A. (Cultural Studies), Trent University (1989)

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF
RESEARCH AREAS:**

1. Digital Sociality:

My interest in information and communication technologies focuses on an exploration of the forms of sociality mediated by these technologies in terms of the relationship between virtuality on the one hand (virtual worlds, online interaction) and materiality on the other (computing cultures and practices, interfaces, and cyborgs). I am especially interested in the forms of sociality produced through online digital gaming (video and computer games) and I am currently directing SSHRC and FQRSC funded projects to study collective fantasy, social imagination and socio-material relations in online computer games. I am also the director of the Montreal GameCODE project (<http://www.gamecode.ca>), an academic forum for digital games research involving students, faculty, artists and game developers in the Montreal area.

2. Surveillance Studies:

In connection with faculty in the Sociology department at Queen's University

(<http://qsilver.queensu.ca/sociology/Surveillance/intro.htm>)

and elsewhere I have collaborative interests in theories and practices of surveillance in modern information societies. My specific research interests are focused on the relation between surveillance and transparency, automated surveillance and biometrics, dissimulation, lying and deceit in the contexts of surveillance relations and the social history of confession as surveillance.

3. Postmodern and Posthumanist cultural theory:

I have a long standing interest in theoretical work that attempts to make sense of the changing relations between human beings and technologies. I am interested in conceptualizations of human and nonhuman hybridity, cyborg subjectivity, and posthuman sociality. Much of my current thinking in this area

is articulated in a recent issue of Cultural Critique (see below) which I co-edited with Jill Didur (English, Concordia) and Teresa Heffernan (English, St. Mary's).

4. Sociology of Scientific Knowledge:

Developing from my background and expertise in science and technology studies, I have specific research interests in scientific controversies and their resolution, marginal, pseudo and "undead" sciences as well as forms of the public and popular representation and consumption of scientific knowledge and culture. While previous research focused on the controversy over the existence of cold fusion from 1989-2000 (see my book *Undead Science* and related articles) my current research in this area develops a more cross-cultural and historical perspective; examining the social and epistemological differences over the status of "paranormal" phenomena between Psychical researchers and Theosophists in England and India in the late 1800s.

5. Technology and Material Culture:

I am interested in the material cultural aspects of technology (and more mundane objects) in the production and organization of contemporary social life. This research is guided by broad theoretical questions: How can we redefine the "social" to take better account of the "materiality" of everyday human interaction? What might be the dimensions of this new socio-material analysis? My current research in this area focuses on two distinct technological objects: the communications satellite is complex object implicated in social life on a national and trans-national scale (see for instance my article in *Culture, Theory and Critique*) while the toaster is a simpler object that tends to operate at a more mundane level of interaction.

SELECT PUBLICATIONS:

1. Books

Bart Simon, *Undead Science: Science Studies and the Afterlife of Cold Fusion*, Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

2. Articles

"From the Territorial to the Imagined Community: Materiality and Hyper-Reality in Indonesia"
(with Joshua Barker), *Culture, Theory and Critique*. Vol. 44 (2003).

"Toward a Critique of Posthuman Futures," *Cultural Critique*, Vol. 53, 1-10 (2003).

"Public Science: Scientific Practice and the Media Configuration of Cold Fusion," *Public Understanding Science*. Vol. 10, No. 4, 383-402 (2001).

"Undead Science: Making Sense of Cold Fusion after the (Arti)Fact," *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 61-85 (1999).

"Out of the Limelight: Discredited Communities and Informal Communication on the Internet"
(with Chandra Mukerji), *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 258-73 (1998).

3. Recent Papers Presented

"From Confession to Extraction: Foucault, Surveillance Studies and the Biopolitics of Truth," Annual meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science, Milwaukee, WI (Nov 6-9, 2002).

"The Significance of Computer Games: Materiality, Hyperreality and Fantasy in Mediated Environments," Annual meeting of the CSSA/CCA, Toronto (May 30, 2002).

"On Pathological Science: the Post-Closure Circulation of Cold Fusion," Invited talk at the Centre for Interuniversity Research on Science and Technology (CIRST), UQAM, Montreal (February 8, 2002).

"Satellite Nation: The Materiality of Communication in Indonesia and Canada," Invited speaker and consultant at the Workshop on Theories of Socio-technical Change: Lessons from Developing Countries, University of Twente, Netherlands (June 14-15, 2001).

KEYWORDS:

sociology of science and technology – sociology of culture –

cyberculture – material culture -- surveillance studies –
information society – postmodern social theory