



## LAYER ONE: “The Prologue ...”

*The story began at the beginning — Wagga Wagga.*

*Michael Roe<sup>1</sup>*

*By 1972 Wagga Wagga was the second largest  
supplier of fresh blood to the Sydney metropolitan  
area (only Canberra collected and supplied more).*

*Sherry Morris<sup>2</sup>*

### *A Tale of (at Least) Two Regions*

On the odd occasion in old Australia a living-room was sometimes known as a lounge-room, possibly because the people inhabiting both spaces lounged about in front of that de/centring force known as the television. Included in some recent architectural draftings is the *media-room*, a spatial entity that accommodates human co-existence with the television, the radio, a stereo, the computer and its peripherals, a satellite connection and/or a telephone line, the occasional musical instrument and a microphone, sometimes even an X-Box. Rosalind Williams goes so far as to suggest that the ‘media room of a private home’ is an example of ‘the fantasy of the enclosed artificial environment’, and a fantasy that is a particularly pertinent ‘contemporary example of a marketable paradise.’<sup>3</sup> During the 1960s, before the media room was invented though (and as an assortment of political and cultural revolutions carried on regardless), a boy born at the local base hospital, and going by the proper name of Terrence Shaun Maybury, was himself to become a lounge-room lizard in the now ‘heritage’ precinct of Peter Street in Wagga Wagga (pronounced ‘WOGGa WOGGa’, and a provincial town in the Riverina region of south-eastern Australia) and who, along with siblings and parents, were found lazing about in front of their own

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Roe, *Kenealy and the Tichborne Cause: A Study in Mid-Victorian Populism* (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 1974), p.51.

<sup>2</sup> Sherry Morris, *A Delicate Balance: A History of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital* (Wagga Wagga Base Hospital: Wagga Wagga, 1988), p.96.

<sup>3</sup> Rosalind Williams, *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination* (MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England, 1990), p.113.



newly acquired television.<sup>4</sup> A mixed-marriage parentage of Catholic/Protestant sensibilities ruled the psychic and political life of the household, something that meant both the puritanical and the risqué intertwined in selecting entertainment from the television menu. It was into this psychic, domestic, local and regional context that a particularly memorable British television program entered – Frankie Howerd’s *Up Pompeii* – subtly shifting both the individual and collective consciousness of that Riverina home, a domestic space completely devoid of any canonical works of the print variety. This domestically and regionally situated childhood presence of *Up Pompeii*, and its correlate, the home’s absence of books, is one possible mirror-imaged beginning for Maybury’s adult interest in Gregory Ulmer’s ideas connecting Plato’s chora to its use as the basis for a promising methodology in provisionally formatting an epistemological structure named *electracy*.

In *Up Pompeii*, Frankie Howerd orates and performs (with mock-pompous intonations) the work of a slave named Lurcio engulfed in sycophantic fealty to the elites of a fictional Pompeii, its ruling class of merchants, manufacturers and artisans. In an obscure and oblique way (and subsequently only becoming knowable years after the event), the virtual *Up Pompeii* connects this lounging child in the Riverina with the real Pompeii (before A.D. 79 an operational city in the Campania region of Italy, and the date after which the eruption of Mount Vesuvius transformed its existence in an archaeological virtuality, and yet another reminder that catastrophe is an ongoing feature of human engagement with the cosmos). However, this vague, day-dreamy and illogical connection between Wagga Wagga/Riverina/Australia and (*Up*) Pompeii was always introduced by Lurcio mock-intoning “The Prologue ...”, and as is the way of television that pompous slave is addressing a boy named Terrence Maybury and only him. “The Prologue ...” (a creation discourse before the main course) introduces its audience to what is [be-]±[com]±[ing]. In *Up Pompeii*’s case, Lurcio’s prologue introduces its audience to the largely erotic and political antics of these Pompeii elites and their slaves.

In *Chora-Logic*’s case this pre-logical creation myth is a discourse of a differing but not entirely unrelated order. The spacetime coordinates of, firstly, the comic audio-visualisation of pre-A.D. 79 Pompeii in the sitcom *Up Pompeii*, and secondly, the 1960s domestic/local/regional context of a down-under Peter St./Wagga Wagga/Riverina, still coexist for *Chora-Logic*’s creator, even today in the Northern Rivers region on the eastern seaboard of Australia, the actual place in and through which the production of this

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<sup>4</sup> The ‘heritage’ appellation arises in Barbara Stroud’s, *Study of Houses and the People Who Lived in Them, Peter St, Wagga Wagga, 2001* (Riverina Regional Committee of the National Trust: Wagga Wagga, 2001); the former family home at 67 Peter St is not covered in Stroud’s mainly photographic survey – it has been demolished to make way for a car park. The pronunciation is from Stephen Murray-Smith, *Right Words: A Guide to English Usage in Australia* (Penguin Books: Melbourne, 1990), p.309.



manuscript proceeded. Indeed, it is these two regions – the Riverina and the Northern Rivers – that are the means via which *Chora-Logic*'s speculations are embodied, grounded, made sedentary in contextualised 'case-studies' by virtue of being, respectively, a beginning point and an end point, ideas that are examined more thoroughly in both 'The Regional-Spatial Turn' and 'The Chora Meta-Physique', and somewhat differently in 'Rough Grid: Electrified Regionality'. These various times and spaces (real/virtual, here/there, global/local/regional/domestic/psychic, ancient/modern, presence/absence, beginning/middle/end etc.) are nested in and through one another. In Maybury's case they can't be objectively disentangled because, in an irrational sense, Frankie Howerd's characterisation of Lurcio is now the very archetype of a Greco-Roman orator who could be recast in the lead role of Timaeus in an updated electronic version of Plato's dialogue of the same name and in which the idea of 'chora' is first preserved for Western posterity and made available to us as an aid for reflecting on the question of space and place.

This prologue then could equally script another beginning for *Chora-Logic*, one where Frankie Howerd, this time performing in the dis/guise of Timaeus of Locri rather than Lurcio of Pompeii or even as Terrence of Wagga Wagga, is reciting for the first time a quite different creation myth. At this other beginning, Frankie Howerd performing in the role of Timaeus, embarks on a renewed bout of myth-making with the following oration (and just as occasionally happens in *Up Pompeii*, this lead character is speaking directly into the camera):

TIMAEUS  
(speaking philosophically)

We must *in my opinion* begin by distinguishing between that which always is and never becomes from that which is always becoming but never is. The one is apprehensible by intelligence with the aid of reasoning, being eternally the same, the other is the object of opinion and irrational sensation, coming to be and ceasing to be, but never fully real.<sup>5</sup>

These 'opinionated' and 'irrational', but imaginatively and globally proximate co-existences, provide an impetus for at least one theme *Chora-Logic* addresses: the foregrounding of a chora-logical method as a possible means via which to structure and understand knowledge in electronic texts and contexts, one aimed at bringing nameless knowledge out into the open, examined in terms of mere

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<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. and introduction Desmond Lee (Penguin Classics: London, 1973), [28], p.40. [Italics added]. Also, as M. R. Wright remarks, the number in the square brackets 'refer to the pages of the Stephanus edition (1578), the traditional method of reference for the works of Plato'; see Wright's 'Outline of Topics in Plato's *Timaeus*', in M. R. Wright (ed.), *Reason and Necessity: Essays on Plato's Timaeus* (Duckworth: London & The Classical Press of Wales: Swansea, 2000), p.xvi. [Italics in the original]. Henceforth, reference will be made to *Timaeus and Critias* in this traditional manner followed by the page number of the Desmond Lee translation for added clarity.



opinion, the illogical, the dream or the joke, or even the a-rational, either in the form of the sometimes dispossessed knowledge of others, the unconscious, or even of a knowledge-yet-to-come. Even spatial knowledge is included, partly as a means of disrupting a temporal or sequential ordering of logic, a development that brings a dose of definitional ambiguity to the historicising categories of past, present, and future. This electronic spatialisation of knowledge-making from a now mythicised childhood makes for a continually oscillating and productive±destructive membrane among a multitude of simultaneously present phenomena (real and/or virtual). Anybody's personal data-set, in Maybury's 'irrational opinion', is analogous to the infinity of electronic data that now percolates erratically through every psychic and collective skein, forging a process of remembering and forgetting crucial to the production and consumption of both the dumb and the wise-work. And it is this data-infinity (mainly implicit, but also tacit and codified) that is now crucial to the evolution of 'The Electrate Imagination', a closer examination of which follows this prologue.

*Up Pompeii*, along with a wide range of electronic artefacts available at that time and in subsequent periods, including the pioneering and deeply erotic Australian soap opera *No. 96*, cop-shows like *Division 4* and *Homicide*, American productions like *M.A.S.H.*, *Gilligan's Island*, *F-Troop*, *Get Smart*, *Lost in Space*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, and a crystal set configured to listen to an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio program of obscure music called *Room To Move*, as well as the telephone, and movies at the local cinema, all constitute (differentially and synaesthetically) Maybury's own electrate prologue to *Chora-Logic*. There is then not just one prologue but a multitude of prologues, all at once both physical and visceral, metaphysical and concrete, temporal and spatial, some repressed, some remaining tacit, while others are codified through a disparate variety of sounds, images and texts. Knowledge-in-place, and its pluralisation, knowledges-in-places, coexist in both particulate and conjoined ways. And in isolating this crucible of electronic knowledge, its companion others (oral, chirographic, chromatic, numerate and typographic modes, for instance) are also called into play. Epistemology is after all the study of *how* we know what we know, the means of which are now largely produced, delivered, marketed and consumed across a wide range of electronically configured communicational modalities, practices and technologies.

By invoking the question of place and space the author is also adding to this study questions of *when* and *where* to this epistemological conundrum. And while there might be some reservations about Edward Kynaston's comment that, 'Knowing *where* you are is almost as important as knowing *who* you are, but very much less difficult' (largely because the 'where' and the 'who' and even the 'how' are symbiotically entwined in the assumed ease, but usually in the much more common difficulty of their individual and collective enunciation), it is easy to agree with his comment that, 'Remember always, if you can't answer the question 'where am I', you shouldn't



be where you are.’<sup>6</sup> All of which leads to the obvious question: why are these various subjects (chora, electracy, epistemology and regionalism) corralled into this one locale of speculation, of practical theorisation? Also corralled into this circulation is the following adjunctive question: might it be necessary to ask if there is a certain obsessional neurosis, maybe even a theomaniacal fixation on the part of *Chora-Logic*’s creator in attempting to bring this juxtapositional complexity into ‘unitary’ coherence and order?

The advance of knowledge-making along objective trajectories (a development that has gone hand-in-hand with specific and progressive technological expansions in cuneiform, parchment, hieroglyphics, chirography, typography, telegraphy, mobile/telephony, cinema, radio, television and the WWW) has called into play an ever more minute focus on ever more highly specified objects of analysis. This sometimes means that our understanding of these objects has narrowed in a microscopically or a telescopically theoretical sense while at the same time the now usually literate sensibility used to type up the results of this analysis has assumed a more densely abstract and distancing quality. The deeper an investigation goes into a specific subject/object of study the more complex the language used to analyse, describe and cohere it. This puts abstraction in the service of a knowledge more isolated from its grounding, from the instincts which animate it, a development that has as much to do with power as it has to do with ‘true’ knowledge. In foregrounding and elucidating this connection between knowledge and power we can thank the work of Michel Foucault, among others.

*Chora-Logic* attempts to follow a differing trajectory; for to paraphrase Salman Rushdie, it is a work that swims in an ocean of multiple streams of enquiry.<sup>7</sup> It is a sometimes-risky meta- and inter-disciplinary experiment in a heuristically inclined poetics that explicitly claims that these objects of analysis (chora, electracy, regionalism and epistemology) are connected in some way and that the work of this manuscript will be used to illustrate and expand upon these connections while at the same time eschewing any urge for conclusive proof or articulating a universal truth. *Chora-Logic*, as a discourse itself, places the arts of speculation above those of absolutist, even coherent theorising. While any single element of any one of these domains might be a worthy object of analysis, *Chora-Logic* skates through the surfaces and depths of these always mobile objects as a way of once again kick-starting a discussion that conflates epistemological transformation with politico-structural reform. From the very beginning, from any alternative beginning, and both before and after any beginning-again, the objects of this analysis and its half-imagined, tentative conclusions remain motile entities.

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<sup>6</sup> Edward Kynaston, *The Penguin Book of the Bush* (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1977), p.177. [Italics in the original].

<sup>7</sup> ‘... the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held there in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories ...’ Salman Rushdie quoted in Edward R. Tufte, *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative* (Graphics Press: Cheshire, Connecticut, 1997), p.120. This idea can also be networked back through Jorge Luis Borges and on to the biblical story of the Tower of Babel with its multitude of languages reaching for the heavens but ultimately dispersing across the globe.





The animating backdrops to *Chora-Logic* are the triple anxieties atomised in the terms *literacy*, *globalisation* and *environmental destruction*. All these entities are under serious question and debate and have, in the feverish discussion surrounding them, caused a questioning of their fundamentalist, monolithic embeddedness in society, culture, politics and the imagination. This more fluid, speculative thinking about literacy, globalisation, and environmental destruction on *Chora-Logic*'s part comes about partially in response to William Connolly's comment that, 'Nothing is fundamental. A saying that presents itself as a contestable affirmation of the fundamental mobility of things.'<sup>8</sup> Fundamentally mutable then, *Chora-Logic* starts out from the marking-time assumption that all of its categories of analysis are not simply static knowledge forms but that their actual motility courses through geography and history, politics and culture, economy and society, indeed through all disciplinary practices and categories in a hyperactive state. No idea can be electronically isolated (not even a 'coherently' orchestrated chora-logical method) but many can be momentarily grounded, but possibly only for a split second. Necessarily then the question is this: how do you structure in the fact that what you are analysing and theorising about is itself ill-defined and in a state of constant motion? There is no fundamental answer to this question within a literate epistemology.

This interconnected condition, characterised from a *placial* point of view by Rowan Wilken as a move from '*stabilitas loci*' to '*mobilitas loci*,'<sup>9</sup> has been partly constituted in and by the *electrate* sensibility itself, a condition that we all increasingly inhabit as 'literacy morphs into electracy.'<sup>10</sup> The assumed immobilisation of an object of analysis in a micro-analytically frozen conception of time and space is a continuing but fading feature of a small-minded scientism; one ruled by the perceived invincibility of a disembodied objectivity, rather than seeing that this scientific sensibility as just another method in the kit-bag of knowledge-making. Tangentially, Jonathan Boyarin also asks the pertinent question: 'Why is it that our physics are now those of Einsteinian relativity and quantum mechanics, whereas our politics and our rhetorics still assume a world as described by Newton and Descartes?''<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly, electracy (considered as a still-emerging epistemological form starting with photography and telegraphy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and reaching a critical mass with the advent of the Internet and other digital technologies and practices in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries), moves

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<sup>8</sup> William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis & London, 1995), p.39.

<sup>9</sup> Rowan Wilken, 'From *Stabilitas Loci* to *Mobilitas Loci*: Networked Mobility and the Transformation of Place', in *Fibreculture Journal*, Issue #6 – 'Mobility, New Social Intensities and the Coordinates of Digital Networks' (2005), available at <[http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue6/issue2\\_wilken.html](http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue6/issue2_wilken.html)>. [Accessed 12/12/2005].

<sup>10</sup> This morphing is pedagogically addressed most directly in Gregory Ulmer's experimental text-book, *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy* (Longman: Boston, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Boyarin, 'Space, Time and the Politics of Memory', in Jonathan Boyarin (ed.), *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1994), p.4.



knowledge-making in the direction of mobility, relativity and the quantum world, while simultaneously reinvigorating an intense cosmological curiosity: how did the world and its implaced mortals come into existence? Relativity in arts, humanities and scientific contexts might then be simply the notion that *all* ideas are potentially connectible in place, or virtually connectible in space or across spaces, making rigorous theoretical, methodological and practical demarcation almost impossible, maybe not even desirable. In any event, 'The fact of the matter is that the humanities need the sciences ... a lot more than the sciences need the humanities.'<sup>12</sup> All of which makes the demarcation of this discourse as much a pragmatic problem as a conceptual one. A significant element among all of these cross-currents of thinking (indeed across the whole length, breadth, depth and temporal sequence of Western knowledge) is this tension between a more abstractly and objectively defined universalism/oneness, and the 'partial perspective' inherent in the localism/regionalism/diversity triangulation. And while Donna Haraway makes no mention of Plato's 'chora' in 'Situated Knowledges', it's clear that the 'partial perspective' is an updated version of this ancient philosophical idea.<sup>13</sup>

Jacques Derrida's italicised point in *Archive Fever* that, '*There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside*', is also a reminder that every form of knowledge has a spatially acquired character.<sup>14</sup> This spatiality is a sometimes organic quality that, at times, informs *Chora-Logic's* own prehistory, its patterns of thought, its cultural, political and social influences, as well as its genealogy, and crucially, the fears and desires that arise simultaneously out of its own '*place of consignation*' in the Northern Rivers region. "The Prologue ..." then is also the pre-introductory place where a précis of the inside and the outside of its discourse might be outlined, as well as sketching an inkling of where it might sit in relation to other discourses extant in the past, the present, even the future. However, Derrida also asks what is possibly a more pertinent question, 'But *where* does the outside commence?' (p.8, italics added). And in addressing this riddle there is not just *Chora-Logic's* textual factuality (and its variety of influences) but also its contextual authenticity (the actual place/s in which it arose and continues to fragment and cohere; in other words, *Chora-Logic's* own spatial embryogenesis in this Northern Rivers region, aka the Rainbow Region).<sup>15</sup> That these spatial entities of the body, the domestic, the local, the regional, the national, the global, even the cosmological and

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<sup>12</sup> Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Duke University Press: Durham & London, 2002), p.21.

<sup>13</sup> Donna J. Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge: New York, 1991), pp.183-201.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1996), p.11. [Italics in the original].

<sup>15</sup> Media and humanities researchers at Southern Cross University on the Northern Rivers in Lismore have compiled a cultural map of the region at <<http://rainbowregion.scu.edu.au/>>. [Accessed 3/3/2007].



the universal, have a continually nested presence is without question; however, the insertion of 'regional' in *Chora-Logic's* title is a clear indication of its spatial bias. Spatial concerns, sometimes more so than temporal ones, are critical to understanding our place in the world because as Robert Pogue Harrison suggests, "The surest way to take possession of a place and secure it as one's own is to bury one's dead in it."<sup>16</sup> But taking possession of a place by burying and mourning one's dead gives no guarantee that a border is set in concrete around the locality or region in which the subsequent grief takes root, a point that becomes especially apparent after the voyages of discovery and colonisation that emerge out of Enlightenment Europe. Unlike national space, or even global space, the inside and outside of regional space is more uncertain, its boundary-making capacities much harder to discern. From the P- and N-type regions of a transistor, to the various regions of the brain and body, and tropical/temperate/artic regions, through regions of a nation state, to regions of the cosmos, the spatial definition of a region is nearly always conceived of as both a separate entity while simultaneously being a component of both larger and smaller scales. In all things regional, boundary making and our very conception of what is inside and outside of this space are themselves motile qualities and quantities. The detail of this debate is looked at more closely in 'The Regional Spatial Turn'.

These 'places of consignment' are personally both real and areal (Wagga Wagga, West Wyalong, Weja, Saigon, the Channel Country, Ubud, Fremantle, the wheat-belt and Kimberley regions of Western Australia, Aceh, Byron Bay, the Northern Rivers, the Burnett, among others) and virtual (Hollywood, Timbuktu, the redwood forests of California, New York, Dublin and Ballinacorney in Ireland, the Mississippi delta, Africa, and depictions of nano-scale worlds, among others). Unlike its textual references, collectively these contextualising places and spaces might not provide a fixed reference point for *Chora-Logic's* inventor but they most certainly trouble any easily defined beginning and end points, any inside and outside of its discourse.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, various literate forms of knowledge have always been among the most nomadic of commodities (think of the Bible), but curiously this is a form of knowledge that is also open to a metamorphosis, one brought about by the new locality that that knowledge form happens to travel into. This is not to say that the ideologically rigid quality of knowledge, and its dissemination, has been excised from the exercise of power in foreign places. What it does serve to indicate is that contextual influences may sometimes be more important than textual influences in that the vast quantity of tacit knowledges contextuality produces (in bodies, in institutions, and in cultural, social and political life more generally) cannot entirely be codified, a phenomenon that partly fuels the intense yearning yoking the known to the unknown. In the short term, context is

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 2003), p.24. [I'm indebted to Anna Haebich for this reading].

<sup>17</sup> Gaston Bachelard also makes this distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' as a component in understanding spatial relations in *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Beacon Press: Boston, 1969), see especially 'The Dialectics of Inside and Outside', pp.211-231.





usually a more fixed and largely unnoticed structural influence in the production of knowledge, but over the *longue-duree* it moves into a more malleable arena as comparative and differential protocols kick-in to consciousness and subsequently get codified in specific knowledge commodities.<sup>18</sup>

Somewhat like Niall Lucy's entry for **chora** in his dictionary of Derridean terms, the very mention of context leads elsewhere; in this case a back-track to yet another beginning, one that might once again connect both already-mentioned regions of the Riverina and the Northern Rivers to an ancient context.<sup>19</sup> In times of trouble or ennui in Western metaphysics and politics there is often a return to the hearth of its ideas in the agorae of the ancient Greco-Roman world. Arising out of this ancient context, chora is usually attributed to Plato, specifically to the dialogue of Timaeus and his companions as set out in *Timaeus and Critias*. While there is a long history of speculation about the *Timaeus*, chora, for the most part, is an idea amorphously thought of as *the space of being and becoming*, the spatial reality along with the mental and physical co-ordinates that a body in particular, and more generally, a society, a globe, or a cosmos actually inhabits as it is imbricated in the process of change and transformation, of being and becoming. Chora, in short, elucidates place-making from a more motile perspective as much as a fixed one while not eradicating the latter component, indeed fixity and motility always begin and continue to arise together, nearly always sacrificing each other's autonomy. The being/space/becoming triad then is the matrix in and through which change and stasis are entwined in the course of a lifetime, possibly even an eternity if timespace is considered from a cosmological perspective. In the terms of this Platonic dialogue, chora is both a *middling* concept and a spatial actuality that intermediates 'Reason' and 'Necessity', two of the three conceptual pillars of the *Timaeus* (the third being 'Reason and Necessity Working Together').<sup>20</sup> Each and every body, culture and polis is prone to such a triangulating set of circumstances, a state of affairs already alluded to above as contextuality, the actual place where knowledge and know-how mingle as a place-based praxis. The actual methodologies engaged by this difficult idea are scrutinized in painstaking detail in 'The Chora Meta-Physique'.

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<sup>18</sup> Arjun Appadurai says of this relationship between 'texts' and 'contexts' that, "The structure of contexts cannot and should not be derived entirely from the logic and morphology of texts. Text production and context production have different logics and metapragmatic features. Contexts are produced in the complex imbrication of discursive and nondiscursive practices, and so the sense in which contexts imply other contexts, so that each context implies a global network of contexts, is different from the sense in which texts imply other texts, and eventually all texts. Intertextual relations, about which we now know a fair amount, are not likely to work in the same way as *intercontextual* relations." See, "The Production of Locality", in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (University of Minneapolis Press: Minneapolis & London, 1996), p.187. [Italics in the original].

<sup>19</sup> When looking up '**chora**', Lucy directs us to 'See **khora**'. Niall Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary* (Blackwell: London, 2004), p.10. [Bold and italics in the original].

<sup>20</sup> Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*. The dialogue is made up of an 'Introductory Conversation', among Socrates, Timaeus, Critias and Hermocrates [17-29], (pp.29-42); which leads into the ongoing Timaeian monologue of, firstly, the 'Work of Reason' [30-46], (pp.42-65); and secondly, 'The Work of Necessity' [46-68], (pp.66-95); and lastly, 'Reason and Necessity Working Together' [69-92], (pp.96-124).



One ongoing use of the word *chora* is in the geographical term *chorography*: ‘the systematic description and analysis of regions or of a region’ (*Macquarie Dictionary*; etymologically speaking *chora* arises out of the Greek word *choros*, sometimes translated as place). Hyphenating *chora* and *logic* then is an attempt to enmesh *place-making* with *knowledge-making* which, from one polarity inversion, are re-workings of the *Timaeus*’s conceptual pillars: *reason* and *necessity*. In particular, it is the region as an actual place and space that is the specific focus of this excursion-to-come. *Chora-Logic: Electracy as Regional Epistemology* then is a journey into present and future possibilities as much as it is an incorporation, a reworking of ideas coming down to us from antiquity, all of which suggests the following hypothesis: If indigenous societies are primarily oral in their epistemological orientation, and national forms of timespace rely principally on literacy for their cognitive and political cogency, might it be possible that a regionally amorphous *glocal* polis is an electrated edifice? Everywhere about us are spatial obsessions where once the more temporal concerns of history held sway.<sup>21</sup> And in matters spatial our attention and knowledge unravel out of a unilateral fixation (one usually dominant in an historical, nationalist, as well as a visual-word turn of events), towards a more serrated sort of fragmentation, all the while embodied in an additive dream-like logic of association rather than a subtractive and/or a disembodied logical sequence. For *Chora-Logic*’s all-too-human creator, electronically codified knowledge (electracy) produced in and through such local/regional contexts is increasingly the unofficial, but highly variegated and sometimes disintegrative patois of the various globalisations that haunt us. It is in ‘Rough Grid: Electracy Regionality’ where this almost instinctive hypothesis is experimentally tested, where the method enunciated in ‘The Chora Meta-Physique’ is ‘applied’ so to speak.

It is with the neologism *electracy* that the future is most clearly evoked. Its definition is unlikely to be found in any of the current dictionaries, certainly not in Australia’s *Macquarie Dictionary*. If it was to be inserted into some kind of lexical order almost certainly it would reside close to *Electra*, or the *Electra* complex, and just before ‘electret’, the latter defined by the *Macquarie Dictionary* as ‘a dielectric possessing a permanent electric dipole moment.’ All of which might suggest an effervescent mix of sex, death and electricity. More accurately, it leads to a certain kind of epistemological energy: electracy is the structuring and integration of a variety of knowledge modalities under conditions energised by an electronic \_\_\_\_\_ [insert your own qualifying paradigm]. As a neologism it looks to have an obvious genealogy: oracy,<sup>22</sup> literacy, electracy; but equally importantly, its provenance can be attributed to

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<sup>21</sup> Cf.: ‘The “spatial turn” has been increasingly evident in a variety of disciplines, political positions, and analytical frameworks during the last twenty years.’ See Christopher L. Connery, ‘The Oceanic Feeling and the Regional Imaginary’, in Rob Wilson & Wimal Dissanayake (eds.), *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Duke University Press: Durham & London, 1996), p.284.

<sup>22</sup> This term ‘oracy’ is taken from Basil Harvey, *The Scope of Oracy: Teaching Spoken English* (Pergamon Press: Oxford, 1968).



the work of Gregory Ulmer who, since the 1980s, has developed an initial understanding of the term across a range of works: *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video*, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*, and most recently *Electronic Monuments*, along with an assortment of related essays, consultations, pedagogical activities and e-list jottings. Recently (2006), and under the influence of this oeuvre, a collective articulation of electracy's definition has appeared on *Wikipedia*: 'The term is a portmanteau word, combining "electricity" with "trace", to allude to one of the fundamental terms used by French philosopher Jacques Derrida to name the relational spacing that enables and delimits any signification in any medium (which is to say that it operates in orality and literacy as much as in electracy). Usage parallels "literacy": a person may be literate or illiterate, electrate or anelectrate.'<sup>23</sup> At this stage it appears unlikely, possibly even undesirable, that there will be a fixed subject called *electracy* coming into existence in the immediate future, but what can clearly be taken from Ulmer's oeuvre is the obvious but contentious idea that literacy is morphing into electracy while there is also room for questioning the notion that electracy is limited to merely codifying electronically amenable oral or literate forms of communication, or that it is principally a consequence of the growth of the Internet.

To repeat: the conditions for the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge are now increasingly electronic in their orientation (with the term *electronic* considered here as an infrastructural extension of electricity) at the same time as the debates, and sometimes the anxiety among the powerful and the powerless over falling rates of literacy dwarfs the discussion and the deliberate development of this possible epistemological transformation. Electracy then is a quasi-object of analysis (much like chora), one not clearly definable, especially in exclusively oral or literate terms. Indeed, it is this continuing amorphous definition of the term that might indicate its exclusion from the more deeply literate and critico-analytical study constituted by the PhD structure. On the contrary, it is equally possible, even more likely, that this very fluid understanding of both chora (conceived as either place or space, locality or region) and electracy (conceived as an emerging and always morphing epistemological structure centred on electronic communication) is an ongoing feature of both entities. With this pluralising motility uppermost in mind it is now time to give over this place to a discussion of 'The Electrate Imagination' where there is another set of beginnings, a multifunctional site designed to *think* electracy as an extension to feeling and/or practicing it.

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<sup>23</sup> See <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/electracy>>. [Accessed 27/11/2006]. In early January 2007 debate surged on the INVENT-LIST (to which Ulmer is a major contributor) in response to *Wikipedia* dropping the electracy definition from its listings because it is a neologism.