

The Net; Adorno, LSD & the Internet

2003

German director Lutz Dammbeck's documentary, *The Net*, is a penetrating look at technological mediation that finds unexpected connections between philosophy, technology, drugs, and government experimentation.

While this sounds like the recipe for conspiracy theory, Dammbeck delivers something of a higher order. He uses a simple, cinema-verite style to examine his own relationship with digital technology ...

Between 1946 and 1953, the leading cybernetics researchers participated in a series of government-sponsored think-tank sessions known as the Macy Conferences, which drew participants from the top ranks not only of the "hard" sciences, but also social scientists such as Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, with the goal of applying cybernetics to "biological and social systems."

According to Dammbeck, the ultimate goal of these conferences was nothing less than an attempt to engineer a global utopia, one that could avert further world wars by routing out the cultural underpinnings of totalitarianism, and by weakening ethnic and national allegiances. The idea was to break down all traditional modes of life, rendering culture fluid so that it could be reorganized on a global scale.

During the rise of the counterculture of the 1960s, many Macy conference participants were busy disseminating a philosophy based on cybernetic principles. These ideas were expounded by such countercultural luminaries as Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller and John Cage, and began to reach the trend-setting world of the avant-garde arts (Fluxus, "happenings," the emerging multimedia scene). These cybernetic artists were among the early adopters of LSD, a drug that many thought would usher in the kind of global utopia envisioned by the Macy Conferences.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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