Some people have urged me to make a fuller response to Evgeny Morozov's "review" of Public Parts in The New Republic. I view it as more character assassination than discussion of ideas. But fine.

Overall, I see Morozov engaging in the anti-intellectual activity of trying to restrict intellectualism to those whose views and expression of them he deems appropriate -- that is, those who agree with him and the orthodoxy he promotes. An intellectual would discuss the ideas and argue with evidence. He tries to attack the ideas by attacking the person who espouses them -- a discreditable exercise and one I'd think he would think twice about using, given his extensive writing about the tactics of tyrants.

The irony is that Morozov and I agree about his obvious argument that technology can be used for bad as well as good; where we disagree and strongly is on the emphasis. In the book, I cite him -- favorably, you will note -- here in giving an example of how it can be used for evil ends.

He calls me and my fellow travelers "comrades in the Cyber-Utopian International." Irony there, too, given the source. I will not apologize for being an optimist. I'll even accept Utopian. I believe we must consider the edges of possibility to build a better future -- the bad so we guard against it and the good so we strive for it.

I argue in Public Parts that the worst-case analysis in privacy is well attended to. I fear that we are not heeding the opportunities of the best case in publicness, in the power our new tools give us to finally gain our own voice as publics. There is evidence of the possibilities everywhere: in Zuccotti Park and the #occupywallstreet hashtag revolution, in the Arab Spring, in Iceland's new collaborative constitution, even in Wikipedia. I celebrate these movements and their inherent optimism. I will not apologize for hope.

Those who read my book will see that I treat privacy with great respect. I argue strongly that it needs protection. I spend a good portion of the book striving to find a usable definition of privacy -- not easy. I look for effective ways to protect privacy, coming to the idea that privacy is an ethic. I explore that ethic and how to execute it. I argue from the start that privacy and publicness are not in opposition; one depends upon the other.

Then I turn to my real subject, publicness, examining the benefits, its history, the ethic surrounding sharing, whether one can share too much, how much we share, the sharing industry that is growing around us, imagining radically public companies, and imagining transparent and collaborative government. I look at the history of other tools of publicness, primarily the Gutenberg press, to get a sense of the scope of change and opportunity we face. At the end, I argue strenuously for the need to protect our tools of publicness from control by tyrants, censors, companies, governments, and over-regulation.

You will see none of that in Morozov's review. A review of value would at least present -- if disagree with and argue against -- the essence of a work. That is what I required of myself as a critic and of critics who worked for me. But that is not Morozov's intent. As I said earlier, he gleefully announced that he had me in his cross-hairs and would go after my book ... even while I was still writing it. He was clearly assigned for that purpose. He used me to attack the "cyber-Utopians" he so regularly despises. Since he published his piece, he has been gleefully goading in Twitter to throw barbs at me and get attention for himself -- he calls this "**Jarviscide**." That is not only sophomoric but also violent language and not much appreciated by a man with two cancers and a heart condition.

I would have preferred a mature discussion of ideas. I relish disagreement and argument and invite it in the book. I find no value in attack and personal invective. In using it, Morozov creates a self-fulfilling promise of his own warnings about the worst of the net.

I will respond here since some have asked me to do so. But I do not intend to continue. I tire of the school playground attitude we see on Twitter of yelling "fight! fight!" at any sign of argument, rewarding attacks over substance. I have more and better things to do and I sincerely hope he does as well.

Here are my annotations and answers in bold. So as to give them in context, I repeat the full, almost-7,000-word text of his piece **from The New Republic**. [LATER: **Here** is a link to Morozov's reply to my reply.]

—Jeff Jarvis

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In 1975, Malcolm Bradbury published *The History Man*, a piercing satire of the narcissistic pseudo-intellectualism of modern academia. The novel recounts a year in the life of the young radical sociologist Howard Kirk—"a theoretician of sociability"—who is working on a book called *The Defeat of Privacy*. Building on "a little Marx, a little Freud, and a little social history," Kirk posits that "there are no more private selves, no more private corners in society, no more private properties, no more private acts." (And, according to Kirk's sardonic wife, "no more private parts." She finds her husband's books "very empty" but "always on the right side.")

One cannot fault Kirk for thinking too small. He is trying to prove that "sociological and psychological understanding is now giving us a total view of man, and democratic society is giving us total access to everything. There's nothing that's not confrontable. There are no concealments any longer, no mysterious dark places of the soul. We're all right there in front of the entire audience of the universe, in a state of exposure. We're all nude and available."

Occasionally Kirk practices what he preaches—his sociology class is invited to see his wife give birth—but he hates it when his own privacy is violated. When a student (who is also his lover) reads his book manuscript, he protests that it is private. He is furious when another student, in a desperate attempt to document the professor's promiscuity, starts chasing him with a camera.

Public Parts—the second book by Jeff Jarvis, the Internet's loudest guru—reads like a glib, half-baked sequel to *The Defeat of Privacy*, produced by an older and more conservative Howard Kirk, who has swapped his tweed jacket for a tuxedo and his smoking pipe for an iPhone. Jarvis's intellectual heroes are different from Kirk's, and the latter's hippie lingo is replaced by business-friendly clichés, but the message is the same. With a little Habermas, a little Arendt, and a little media history, Jarvis argues that "if we become too obsessed with privacy, we could lose opportunities to make connections in this age of links." Privacy, he argues, has social costs: just think of patients guarding their health information instead of sharing it with scientists, who might use it to find new cures. For Jarvis, privacy is the preserve of the selfish; keep too much to yourself, and the "Privacy Police" may pay you a visit.

** This is a willful mischaracterization of my views of privacy. I envision no "privacy police." No one should be forced to reveal what they don't want to reveal, by trick or force; I make that abundantly clear in the ethic of privacy I present. I respect the need for privacy and that is why I go to much effort to find a workable definition of it and a set of principles to govern its protection.

I also speculate about a better world -- Utopian, if you wish -- when stigmas and regressive laws and company policies would no longer prevent us from sharing health information openly. In such a world, I believe, we could all benefit if we share and gain more information. In such a world, I say, it might even be seen as selfish not to share. For example, since I was at the World Trade Center on 9/11, I have contracted three serious health conditions. Now those probably have no correlation to the event. But what if they did? By our sharing this data and bringing it together with others', we might make connections that could help people. I'm wishing for a world when we can do that. No privacy police there.

Why are we so obsessed with privacy? Jarvis blames rapacious privacy advocates—"there is money to be made in privacy"—who are paid to mislead the "netizens," that amorphous elite of cosmopolitan Internet users whom Jarvis regularly volunteers to represent in Davos. On Jarvis's scale of evil, privacy advocates fall between Qaddafi's African mercenaries and greedy investment bankers. All they do is "howl, cry foul, sharpen arrows, get angry, get rankled, are incredulous, are concerned, watch, and fret." Reading Jarvis, you would think that Privacy International (full-time staff: three) is a terrifying behemoth next to Google (lobbying expenses in 2010: $5.2 million).

** More willful mischaracterization: I do not put privacy advocates on any scale of evil; those examples are most certainly his, not mine, though he would lead you to believe otherwise. I don't say "all they do" is cry foul, etc. I do quote many, many examples of them doing so. I say that I want to get past such overheated rhetoric.

Morozov's choice of Privacy International as the sole defender of privacy against mighty Google is at least disingenuous if not intellectually dishonest. I have gone to many quite crowded privacy conferences filled with self-appointed watchdog groups, legislators, regulators, consultants, companies, and chief privacy officers (an organization of the last, the only-decade-old International Association of Privacy Professionals already counts 8,800 members in 70 countries).

"Privacy should not be our only concern," Jarvis declares. "Privacy has its advocates. So must publicness." He compiles a long and somewhat tedious list of the many benefits of "publicness": "builds relationships," "disarms strangers," "enables collaboration," "unleashes the wisdom (and generosity) of the crowd," "defuses the myth of perfection,"

"neutralizes stigmas," "grants immortality … or at least credit," "organizes us," and even "protects us." Much of this is self-evident. Do we really need to peek inside the world of Internet commerce to grasp that anyone entering into the simplest of human relationships surrenders a modicum of privacy? But Jarvis has mastered the art of transforming the most trivial observations into empty business maxims.

In one respect—his unrivaled ability to attract attention to his diva-like self—Jarvis has outdone even the fictional Dr. Kirk. Jarvis's public parts are truly public: his recent battle with prostate cancer has become something of an online Super Bowl, with Jarvis tweeting from the operating table and blogging about the diaper problems that followed. And like the fictional Kirk, Jarvis likes his privacy when he likes it: the evangelist for publicness does not want his credit card numbers, his passwords, his e-mails, his calendar, his salary, his browsing habits, or his iTunes playlist made public. The digital disclosure of such things is off-limits for Jarvis—but not because of a scruple about privacy. He prefers to justify such immunities by appealing to other rights, fears, and concerns: he won't share his passwords out of a fear of crime; or his calendar, because he is a busy man and doesn't want any more commitments; or his salary, because of "cultural conventions"; or his iTunes playlist, because, well, it's too trivial.

** I never argue that everything in one's life should be public; I say, to the contrary, that it should not and later in the book give advice for managing the limits of one's publicness. I make it clear that I have my own private life and I use a section of the book to examine my personal boundaries.

Some of those are obvious and already protected by other laws: of course, no sane person would open up his passwords or bank accounts to theft, identity theft, and fraud. That's not a matter of privacy but of crime.

I discuss how I am uncomfortable talking about income and examine why that is. I think it is a matter of my culture. But then I do reveal my salary (as teacher in a public university, it is public anyway) and what I was paid for my last book, and more. So he is wrong about my not revealing that. I simply discuss my reaction to it.

As for iTunes: It's a *joke*. The problem is that I listen to too much Norah Jones.

HAD JARVIS WRITTEN his book as self-parody—as a cunning attack on the narrow-mindedness of new media academics who trade in pronouncements so pompous, ahistorical, and vacuous that even the nastiest of post-modernists appear

lucid and sensible in comparison—it would have been a remarkable accomplishment.

** Here we see Morozov's attempt to put a fence around his world of academics and exclude others. I despise closed worlds -- whether in the academe or media or government. I distrust priesthoods who would exclude others from entering their fields and attempt to keep them out with discrimination and exclusion and [obfuscating](#), encoded language. I'd say that right there in this paragraph, Morozov is his own academic parody.

I wrote my book not for his academic approval but for others. He doesn't approve.

But alas, he is serious. This is a book that should have stayed a tweet.

** And he makes fun of me for reduction to "business maxims." That is tweetbait if I've ever seen it. Well-played, sir.

Stripped of all the inspirational buzzwords, it offers a two-fold, and insipid, argument. First, a democratic society cannot afford to have privacy as its main—let alone its only—value. Second, the acts of information disclosure—by individuals, corporations, or public institutions—can be beneficial, under certain conditions, to some or all of the parties involved. Jarvis believes that these points are new and original and heroically subversive of the conventional wisdom.

** Never said they were new and original. If they were, I would not have explored the history of privacy and publicness.

Public Parts is meant to be a polemic, but Jarvis has a hard time finding anyone who disagrees with either of his premises.

** Have I not found one here?

Forced to introduce at least some contention into the book, he has to venture very far from his main themes, opining on the Arab Spring, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the future of the car industry.

** I fail to see the sin there.

A few such diversions are entertaining, but Jarvis cannot joke his way through the

banality of his book's central argument. Here is Jarvis at his most typical: "Memo to doctors, lawyers, and manicurists: You'd better be online and public." What an incredible insight, in 2011: an online presence can help your business!

** Fair enough. That's hardly new insight. But in context, this comes in the midst of many statistics from Pew about internet usage. To this point, Pew says that 44 percent of online adults consult the web seeking information about people who perform professional services for them. So that verifies what is indeed already known: the need to be online. Note also that 65 percent of American small businesses, I was just told, still do not have web sites. So apparently, some still need to learn.

Or consider this breakthrough in marketing theory: "If you are known as the company that collaborates with customers to give them the products they want, you may end up with more loyal customers." Better products boost customer loyalty! Such bland pronouncements make *Public Parts* sound less cutting edge than the 1996 edition of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Web*.

** Where are these many companies that follow this obvious dictum of openness and respect for customers leading to collaboration in the design, manufacture, marketing, sales, and support of products? A criticism of the book I have heard from a well-respected venture capitalist in the Valley is that I don't have enough examples and I agree with her as I wish I'd been able to find more. I wish there were more.

Jarvis's sloppy discussion of privacy is emblematic of his overall approach, and so it merits a closer look. There are certainly strong arguments to be made about privacy's often perverse impact on national security or economic growth or the richness of public life, and many of those arguments have already been made. Instead of familiarizing himself with the work of leading contemporary critics of the unthinking celebration of privacy—scholars such as Amitai Etzioni, Richard A. Posner, Richard Wasserstrom, and others—Jarvis prefers to arrive at many of their conclusions on his own, losing much intellectual sophistication along the way, not least by failing to address any of the counterarguments that have been raised in response to their work.

** That's a game that could go on forever: castigating me for whom I do not quote (having already attacked me for whom I do quote). Of course, there are always more resources one could use. I have no doubt I missed important ones; that is sadly inevitable. You can look at my [bibliography](#)

(which I just put online) to judge for yourself the sources I used.

I also chose seek out some new and less-obvious sources (for example, the Making Publics project of McGill University and the Gutenberg Parenthesis project out of the University of Southern Denmark) to illustrate and examine some points. Keep in mind that this is not a book about privacy but publicness; privacy is a relatively small part of the narrative and I dealt with it as I saw best.

Separately, I'll discuss on my blog Posner's frightening attack on publicness and his distortion of the notion of privacy in, for example, the Illinois eavesdropping law now before his court. Posner seems to presume that police have a right to privacy in public while performing their public duties. I find that a terrible notion.

It would be hard to exaggerate the intellectual laziness of this book. When he is not re-phrasing the obvious, Jarvis churns out ideas that he believes to be fresh and brilliant but turn out to be stale and boring and old.

** I leave it for you to judge whether that is an intellectually of substance or simply a personal attack. Such attacks are, sadly, a price of publicness, as we have all learned in blog comments and tweets.

Entries for "privacy" and "public sphere" in any decent encyclopedia will note that there are no good definitions for the former and that the English translation of the latter is problematic, but for Jarvis such "insights" pass for original thinking. His vision of a world where "the people formerly known as consumers can move up the design, sales, and service chains to say what they want in a product before it is made" looks pale and dated compared with the original idea of "user innovation" theorized by Eric von Hippel in the mid-1980s.

Whenever Jarvis assumes the role of a cultural anthropologist, *Public Parts* turns from a really bad book into a really embarrassing one. Take his perverse fixation on Germany. Jarvis is puzzled by what he calls "The German Paradox"—the fact that Germans are at ease inside mixed-sex saunas but vigorously protective of their privacy outside.

** Note that I say the German attitude toward the body is more mature than Americans' and I use this as an illustration to lead to the question: Why is the private private and the public public in various cultures?

The Germans' opposition to Google's Street View service rattles Jarvis; he takes it to mean that "their heritage is coming into fundamental conflict with internet culture—with the future." But does it?

** In the fuller context, I quoted at length a German commenter to my blog who posed this question, about whether the more closed nature of German culture -- an unwillingness, specifically, to fail in public -- could put the nation behind competing with a Silicon-Valley culture where failure is a badge of experience.

And what's so bad about Germans defending their heritage from an anonymous technofuture, in which the likes of Jeff Jarvis hold lucrative stock options?

** I wish. You can see my holdings and business relationships [here](#).

To claim that Germans' resistance to Google is primarily about privacy, and is the result of their tragic memories of Hitler and the Stasi, one needs to show that other possible explanations are invalid. What if Germans simply do not want to be tyrannized by an American company?

** Tyrannized? That's quite a revealing comment about Morozov's and perhaps some Germans' attitudes toward America and companies and perhaps capitalism. I cannot see how taking pictures of buildings from public streets is tyranny. I'm rather shocked that Morozov, who writes so much about tyranny, would so devalue the word.

What if they do not want a company—any company—to make money by turning their dwellings into commodities?

** As I make clear in the book, I do hear this argument. But note well that newspapers, for example, make money from customers by turning them into commodities to sell to advertisers. And just what is wrong with that? What is the harm? Companies make money. Would you prefer government to build its own Google (as has been proposed in France)? Or is this an ideological point about economics and capitalism?

What if they fear cyber-crime, and worry that Google may accidentally record and release their WiFi passwords, as its cars cruise their neighborhoods?

** I've discussed that at length elsewhere. It was Google's fuck-up. Even so, it is impossible to imagine how random bits of data on random days on random streets had any useful commercial purpose. I repeat: a fuck-up.

Jarvis, who was so keen to explain his own need for privacy by reducing it to other goods and values, doesn't want anyone else to enjoy the same privilege.
A similar confusion mars his treatment of Finland. He mentions it twice: first, to tell us that Finnish employers are banned from Googling their potential employees and, second, to muse over the fact that in Finland everyone's salary figures are available online. The latter practice puzzles him, and he attributes it to local norms and culture, emphasizing that the culture he lives in does not approve of such norms. ("When it comes to money, I live by cultural conventions.... I'm not 100 percent public.") The idea that privacy may be culturally dependent is not new. Back in 1928, Margaret Mead posited that Samoans lacked a sense of privacy—a finding that was heavily criticized by later scholars, who faulted Mead for not being able to understand the ways in which Samoans honor the concept. The case of Finland simply shows that a nation's respect for both privacy and publicness may depend on the perceived levels of equality, the feelings of solidarity, class distinctions, and many other factors.

** I am not puzzled by others' customs; I'm simply pointing out how mine and ours in America vary. I'm not sure what he would have me do but I will point out that I'm not the one who brought up the hackneyed example of Margaret Mead and Samoans. Note here how I use my own income as an example of examining such cultural conventions; it is not, as Morozov said above here, that I am hypocritical about privacy.

You do not have to be a privacy reductionist or a cultural relativist to note that what people are prepared to share is a function of their social and political arrangements, and of the ideologies that those arrangements generate. The existence of such differences does not mean that there are cultures where respect for privacy does not exist. It means only that one needs extensive background knowledge to recognize its precise manifestation in a culture. But Jarvis the cultural anthropologist prefers to act like some naughty American freshman on his first trip abroad. *Everything is so weird! These people are naked in the sauna! They don't want their houses online!* The ultimate point of all this playfulness remains unclear, as even Jarvis acknowledges the cultural dependency of both privacy and publicness. In the end all Jarvis can produce is a bizarre concern that Berlin looks too blurry on Google Maps. Well, cultural apocalypse it isn't. And as long as Jeff Jarvis can get away with not disclosing his income, it seems sensible to embrace pluralism and let Germans and Finns do as they please.

** Once more, I do disclose my income.

And the point on Germany and Street View, which I examine at length but Morozov chooses to ignore, is that by forcing Google to blur public images taken from public streets (through public pressure rather than law), the government sets what I think is a dangerous precedent that could limit the free-speech rights of others: if Google can be told not to take pictures in public places, can journalists or citizens also be told not to? When the public square is diminished it is the public who loses. Morozov chooses to ignore that context and point of the German discussion.

THINGS GET WORSE when Jarvis enters the conceptual minefield that is the theory of the public sphere. Why he feels the urge to opine on these matters remains a puzzle, for this detour out of his depth does nothing to help him champion publicness or defeat privacy. Perhaps Jarvis wanted to assure the critic Ron Rosenbaum—who once challenged him to prove that he had read Hannah Arendt—of his intellectual credentials. Or more likely, Jarvis simply wanted to ride yet again the never-ending "future of media" debate that he has done so much to trivialize.
Whatever his motivation, Jarvis ends up making yet another grand pronouncement: a world that respects and cultivates "publicness" will beget many more publics, giving us a public life that is much richer than what the tyranny of a single monolithic public sphere has produced so far. It is a big thesis, but Jarvis is too impatient to treat it with the intellectual care that it deserves. As with his treatment of privacy, he is mostly indifferent to the existing literature, scholarly and philosophical, on the subject. The Dewey-Lippmann debate, which broached many of these issues almost a century ago, goes completely unmentioned. Bruno Latour's more recent attempts to produce a political theory that could account for the emergence of issue-oriented and object-oriented publics is nowhere to be seen.

** Again, we can play the whom-you-don't-quote game forever. I chose not to include the Dewey-Lippmann debate precisely because it is has been so well-covered elsewhere and I chose to use other sources, as I said above, to examine these questions. One may certainly quibble with my choices. But I find this form of criticism to be frustrating: Pauline Kael describing the movie she would have made instead of the one that was made. (Oh, no, criticizing Kael will no doubt get me in as much trouble as my treatment of Habermas. That's next…)

All we get are some glimpses of Habermas. Less than glimpses, actually: Jarvis seems to believe that multiple publics appeared only with the emergence of the Habermasian public sphere of the coffeehouses and salons of the eighteenth century, even though Habermas was making exactly the opposite point—that the emergence of the public sphere allowed numerous publics to come together, leave their particular interests behind, and debate on common terms about their shared interests. Misunderstanding this important point derails much of Jarvis's subsequent analysis of Habermas.

** I do address this and say that leaving behind publics to become one public -- indeed, a mass -- is where I differ with Habermas' own sense of what one could say is a utopian vision of a public sphere. In short: I question the notion of a single public sphere. I also note the work of others who complain that Habermas' public sphere was quite exclusionary, including only landed, male gentry.

Can people participate in the Habermasian public sphere and still preserve their privacy?

** I don't put them in opposition. Straw man.

Of course they can—as long as they transcend their social or group particularities when they are in it. The reason Habermas emphasizes the "rational-critical" nature of the discourse in the public sphere is not because he looks down on other forms of expression, as Jarvis believes him to do, but because rational argument—rather than, say, dance—was the medium that helped individuals to abstract from their social and political interests and engage with the larger fate of humanity.

** But I quote Habermas in his one pronouncement on the internet at the time, in a footnote to a talk, complaining about a million chatrooms online; he ironically favored discussion mediated by "quality" media over discussion of the public online. I do not.

Jarvis seems unfamiliar with Habermas's work on communicative rationality and thus prefers to read him through the extremely tedious contemporary debate about "experts" (journalists) and "amateurs" (bloggers). Comically, he ends up accusing the great German thinker of being a smug elitist.

** Here is my greatest sin, you see: not treating Habermas with the worship academics require. I predicted this would be the case before the book was

published and it's become comically so. I make it clear in the book that I am no Habermas scholar; I started reading him for this project. Since then, whenever I speak to groups, I ask who has read or studied Habermas; even among a large, well-schooled group at Google last week, only two hands were raised. So I'm hardly alone. In this book, I take you through my own education and discovery on many topics.

I dare to disagree with the great man (Habermas, that is), but then I come to agree with him as well. I do acknowledge, as I agree one must, that Habermas sets the terms of the debate. I disagree about his vision of the ideal society -- I favor remaining in many publics (which is what I believe our tools of publicness enable) and am suspicious of the single public sphere (that is, a mass). But in the end, I argue that the tools of publicness may indeed lead us to a vision of publics closer to Habermas' ideal, which means that I accept his framing of it.

This is how Sarah Palin would read Habermas if she could read Habermas.

** Tweetbait.

But even if we grant Jarvis his ridiculous oversimplification of Habermas's argument, so that a blog becomes the equivalent of a coffeehouse, why stop there?

** Therein Morozov also dismisses the conversation we have here on the net and all of us who hold it.

Why not also apply the rest of Habermas's argument and examine how corporate control of the media could undermine its civic spirit? The Habermasian public sphere had an entire century to develop outside of the market's logic; but in the case of the Internet, that period of freedom was limited to just a few years in the early 1990s. Neither Jarvis nor Clay Shirky—that other promoter of "Habermas for Dummies: The Web-Only Edition"—wants to grapple with the cultural consequences of the political economy of today's Web. Instead they make an implicit assumption that today's Internet companies will somehow prove more benign than all the corporate-controlled media that preceded them.

** Well, though the wires may be owned by companies, our words there are not and I argue in the book that the net provides us the means to talk with the world around mediation. This page is an example. Is it hosted by

Google? Indeed, Google allows me the space to do this. The New Republic gave Morozov his space.

At the end, in my discussion of principles that make up the point of the book -- and which Morozov entirely ignores -- I argue for protection of the neutrality and architecture of the net against both governments and companies.

(In a recent essay about Google's exit from China, Jarvis went as far as to christen Google the "new world's ambassador to the old world … [that] represented the rights, security, and principles of the Net to Chinese bureaucrats and hackers.")

** I have gone on at great length online as well as in the book criticizing Google for its initial China stance, then praising it for changing its stance and finally following its own principles. But then I criticize Google for entering what I call a devil's deal with Verizon splitting up the internet into a neutral wired net and a controlled wireless net: the internet and the schminnternet. I use both cases to demonstrate that we can trust no company -- not Google, not any company -- to protect the net for us. That is precisely why I end up asking us, the citizens of the net, to do so. Morozov says nothing of this so I can see it only as a purposeful omission and mispresentation.

But why assume that Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Page will be different from Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black? Because they are geeks? Anyone who believes this is under the spell of geek religion.

Most of the narrative tension in Jarvis's book originates from linguistic confusion over the numerous meanings of "publicness" and "privacy." How else could one mobilize Arendt to celebrate "public man" and demonize the "private sphere," when elsewhere in her work Arendt clearly recognizes the importance of privacy—the ability to be "shielded from the public eye," as she put it—as a buffer against the encroachment of totalitarianism? And to turn Richard Sennett into an apologist for a privacy-less world is to give a very shallow reading to *The Fall of Public Man*, as well as to disregard his earlier work *The Uses of Disorder*, which celebrates the anonymity and chaos of city life—a spirit that is antithetical to the highly efficient and transparent Internet that Jarvis recruits Sennett into celebrating. Both Arendt and Sennett were lamenting the blurring of the lines between the public and the private, but Jarvis wants to blur the lines even further.

** I can be criticized for not dealing with Arendt more; one always can. I quote her in relation to the history of the notion of privacy and, as I say, I tried not to write an entire book about privacy. I do not believe I turn Sennett into "an apologist for a privacy-less world." I quote him, too, in the context of the history of privacy.

JARVIS'S STYLE IS itself a measure of what passes for Internet intellectualism. Habermas appears next to German sausages and Oprah and botox and hair extensions.

** There's the most revealing snippet from Morozov. *He* decrees what intellectualism is and isn't. And it isn't being allowed to mention Habermas and Winfrey *in the same book*. As we cyber-folk say, LOL.

Even Thomas Friedman would be aghast at some of Jarvis's cheesy sound-bites.

** Ooh, now that hurts.

"The new American dream is to go viral." Mark Zuckerberg is "an enigma wrapped in a nerd becoming a mogul." "Each time you don't share, a relationship loses its wings."

** This from a master of tweetbait phraseology.

Jarvis's habit of restating his banalities at least three times is extremely annoying: we are repeatedly told that "what's public is public and should remain so," and "what's public is owned by us, the public," and "what's public is a public good."

** Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

And beyond all his vulgarities, Jarvis aspires also to the abstract and the highfalutin'. People do not just co-found companies in his universe; they "co-create" them.

** Well, that's what the people holding the conference on the topic call it. And anyway, this isn't about co-founding. It is about collaboration with customers. Very different things.

The retweet button in Twitter is "a substantiation of the sharing society." Publicness is "a progression to greater freedom," an "emblem of epochal change," "a sign of our empowerment," "a window on a society's attitudes towards change and risk, progress and innovation, success and failure."

** Yes, I believe that. I wrote it.

It gets still worse. Jarvis contradicts himself every ten pages or so. He acknowledges that the notion of "digital natives"—teenagers who are inherently good with technology—might be a fiction, and then proceeds to quote his 19-year-old son as the ultimate authority on all things Internet.

** Now that's as inexcusable as it is illogical. First, leave my family out of your attack, Mr. Morozov. Second, there is absolutely nothing incompatible with arguing -- as danah boyd does -- that youth are not digital natives (young people must learn how to navigate online just as we all must) and that there are smart people among our youth (we'd damned well better hope so).

The same Jarvis who likes to boast that he wrote his first book on Google without having much interaction with the company blames Aaron Sorkin for not doing proper research at Facebook for *The Social Network*.

**I made it clear that it was written from a distance as it was not a book about Google but instead a book about change in our age and I used Google as a model to examine how one company has succeeded in that change. Some don't like that method. Many apparently do. The book is now out in paperback (with a new afterword).

He cites a line from a French politician—that the Internet is an "international space"—to bolster his case that the Internet belongs to the netizens, even though the minister was arguing that, like any such space, it should be subject to international laws and appropriate governance structures.

** No, I was merely discussing metaphors people use for the net to try to understand it. This came in a discussion about whether we should view the net as a medium (I say no) or as a place (that's closer but I have reservations there as well).

He chides privacy advocates for focusing on edge cases, such as teenagers who are ostracized because their private videos appear online—"this debate tends to be held around the extremes.... edge cases are good at feeding debates but not at informing norms"—but then he proceeds to build the case for "publicness" entirely with edge cases.

How normal are Howard Stern, the "New York gadabout" Julia Allison, Oprah Winfrey, and Josh Harris of *We Live in Public* fame?

** I have hardly built the case "entirely" on those examples. The book is filled with other examples, some of which Morozov complains about here.

Are any of them "informing norms" that would apply to an unemployed and uninsured single mother from Iowa?

** Straw man. I write the chapter on living the public life about anyone. I also acknowledge very early in the book that I stand in a privileged position as a well-off white male in America who has been public and I make clear that what holds for me does not hold, for example, for a gay man in a repressive religious nation in Africa. Or a single mother in Iowa, if you prefer.

As if to live up to the old joke about an expert being someone who knows more and more about less and less until eventually he knows everything about nothing, Jarvis casts his eye over a gazillion different industries—from cars to airlines and from retail stores to public institutions—but rarely ventures beyond the most obvious analysis anywhere he looks.

** That's a matter of opinion. As I said earlier, I wish I'd had more examples of transparent companies but sadly I don't think there are enough.

There are only two pages on WikiLeaks—an oddity in a book on the virtues of publicness—and even those pages are filled with generalities (the WikiLeaks scandal "demonstrated the banality of secrecy" and showed that "government keeps too much secret"). According to Jarvis, Julian Assange is driven by a law that posits that "those who held secrets once held power. Now those who create transparency gain power." What does that actually mean? Journalists, NGOs, even Google: all of them create transparency in one way or another. But is it true that they now hold more power? What does the WikiLeaks disclosure of all those diplomatic cables imply about the powers lost or gained by the likes of Human Rights Watch, which needs secrecy to work in difficult countries but also needs publicness to make the world aware of those countries' dire human rights record? Jarvis doesn't say. If, as a result of legislative changes triggered by WikiLeaks, whistle-blowers end up getting much weaker legal protection, would it mean that they, too, gain power?

** A fine discussion to have. I think Wikileaks and Assange continue to become less emblematic as time goes on. They gave us revealing lessons about secrecy but I believe they may not continue to be critical entities in this discussion. We shall see.

THERE IS NOT much consistency in Jarvis's thought about technology. Whenever he needs to explain something positive, his instinct is always to credit the Internet: it is the one factor responsible for more publicness, more democracy, more freedom. And every time he turns to darker and more difficult subjects—like discrimination, or shame—he announces that they have nothing to do with the Internet and are simply the product of outdated social mores or ineffective politics. In Jarvis's universe, all the good things are technologically determined and all the bad things are socially determined.

** Therein lies the essence of Morozov's and my disagreement and it would have been better if he'd discussed this more than in one paragraph. I do, like him, point to the ways the internet can be used by bad players. I argue especially at the end that we have the responsibility to decide how to use the internet. It is another mischaracterization to say that I make such a black-and-white distinction that technology is good and people bad. Absurd nonsense, but it's his nonsense, not mine.

This perverse analytical framework is most pronounced when he criticizes privacy advocates for not wanting to tackle more fundamental problems—such as social stigmas—that are made less severe by invoking one's privacy rights. Jarvis writes that "a larger fear of sharing health information is the stigma associated with illness. That stigma is most certainly society's problem. Why should anyone be ashamed of being sick?"

** Yes, as I said above, I hope for a society where health and sickness do not become objects of discrimination and shame.

He applies the same logic to discrimination based on sexual orientation: "That anyone would still feel shame about being revealed as gay … is also our failing. If we think that technology is the problem, we risk ignoring the deeper faults and more important lessons."

** This is part of a larger argument. I believe that publicness was the key weapon gays and lesbians had to fight back the bigots who forced them into their closets. I want to make clear that I do not think anyone should be

forced out of those closets. But those who had the courage to dare the bigots used publicness to fight the stigma. They are winning. This particular quote comes in the context of discussing the violation of the privacy of the young man at Rutgers who killed himself after his roommate allegedly shared pictures of him with another man. I lament that he should have felt such shame that he then killed himself. Who could not lament that? But I do not blame him. I blame society.

Yet Jarvis seems blind to ways in which the rhetoric of publicness could be mobilized to distract from finding equally "deeper faults and more important lessons" about the sprawling national security state. "Knowing that no security at all is not an option, what's your choice: body scans, physical searches, facial recognition via surveillance cameras, more personal data attached to travel records?" he asks—and quickly informs us that he objects to none of the above. He includes this tirade in a section called "publicness protects us"—but he presents no evidence that it does protect us.

** I do indeed examine our choices between privacy and security and make it clear that it is not an easy decision. Morozov drops the context and nuance.

And why, one might ask, is the choice so stark? Why not entertain the option of extirpating the roots of terrorism rather than investing more money in surveillance technology and embracing "publicness"? It seems that Jarvis wants to fight root causes only of problems such as shame and discrimination; for everything else, there are quick technological fixes.

** Oh, jeesh, he would have us solve the entire problem of terrorism and centuries of religious hatred and national struggles and poverty before we can get on the next plane? This is a corollary to the argument that we should not give African children computers until we have solved every other problem there.

Jarvis's understanding of the law is as careless as his understanding of technology. Discussing the proposed "Do Not Track" legislation that would allow users to opt out of online tracking, he complains that "there's no real need [for it], since users already have tools to stop tracking." How far can such logic take us? Should we acquiesce to the NSA's wiretapping of our phones because we can already speak in code? Should we allow dubious food products to be sold in supermarkets because we already have the tools to disinfect them? There may be strong reasons to oppose the legislation, but Jarvis is not

interested in exploring libertarian arguments against paternalism or consumer protection. "The problem with regulating … new technology around the bad things that could happen is that it also cuts off the possible good," he writes. This is an oft-repeated criticism of the Precautionary Principle, the idea that technologies should be regulated if there is any probable cause to believe that they may be harmful; but Jarvis refuses to discuss it in any more detail, just as he refuses to discuss anything that reeks of public policy, philosophy, or law. It's hard to say whether he is incapable of discussing such matters or simply worries that they are not the kind of eyeball-grabbing material that he wants for his blog (where many of the ideas in *Public Parts* were originally published).

** This, too, is a valid debate. We disagree and can do so without hurling insults. I explore what I argue could be the unintended consequences of Do Not Track and other perhaps well-meaning but overextended regulation. I do argue that we most need to guard against government surveillance; so there we agree. The food argument is a non sequitur. The argument in the end is that regulating the technology is often unproductive: the blunderbuss of filtering all content in Australia to get to child porn, for example, when there are serious unintended consequences for free speech -- especially in the tyrannies Morozov writes about (don't they use such filtering to justify their censorship?) -- and there is no proof that it will even solve the problem. I discuss it in the detail I think is appropriate. Morozov disagrees. Fine. I leave it to you to judge.

The more of Jarvis one reads, the harder it is to avoid the impression that all he wants is to wow the reader and move on to extolling the next cool technology. Consider his celebration of the nascent "open government" movement, a coalition of geeks and policy wonks who seek to make government information more accessible online.

** What's not to like about citizens collaborating in governance?

After declaring how wonderful it is, Jarvis makes a passing reference to Lawrence Lessig's much-discussed argument in these pages that the blind pursuit of government transparency may lead voters to disgust—and then drops the issue almost as abruptly as he mentions it.

** So we've now each said as much about that.

This aversion to philosophical considerations is deeply irresponsible. Is hypocrisy an inalienable part of the political life in democracies, as Judith Shklar and, more recently,

David Runciman have argued? Will efforts to make governments and politicians more open and transparent undermine government and politics? Jarvis never broaches such subtleties. His is a simple world: "outside of war, crime, and protecting the individual, there is no reason for public officials to hide what they know and do from their publics." What about debates about monetary policy by central banks? Or court deliberations? Should they be streamed online in real time? Jarvis doesn't say.

** As in other areas of society, we will negotiate new norms. I am arguing to start from a default of openness whereas now we have a default of secrecy. I say we do need secrets as they relate to security, crime, diplomacy, and privacy. I say that using transparency only as a gotcha cudgel over government will lead to government fighting transparency. That is why I devote an entire section to using transparency and openness to lead to collaboration -- the section that Morozov ridicules directly above.

Still, he is sufficiently convinced of his opinions to demand the appointment of "publicness czars" who will "represent the interest of the people in openness." After all, he is the people's advocate: he knows what the people want, and the people cannot be wrong.

** Yes, I argue that we need to protect to publicness as well as privacy. That's what the entire book is about.

In his first book, Jarvis announced that "we no longer need companies, institutions, or government to organize us." (An exception must have been granted to his publisher, his university employer, and his consulting clients.)

** In both books, I confess the hypocrisy of publishing books rather than doing this all digitally, but the system still works well enough. I also talk about trying to do things in new ways with my next project. And, yes, I work for a university. But I also write about the disruption universities are sure to go through.

Now he is just as forthcoming about his populism. In fact, he would fit right in with the Tea Party:

** Over-the-top tweetbait.

"Publicness is a sign of our empowerment at [the incumbents'] expense. Dictators and

politicians, media moguls and marketers try to tell us what to think and say. But now, in a truly public society, they must listen to what we say, whether we're using Twitter to complain about a product or Facebook to organize a protest."

** So is he saying that #occupywallstreet with its distrust of institutions is an outlet of the Tea Party? Ridiculous.

This stuff must elicit a lot of applause from basement-bound geeks. But why not consider the possibility that the incumbents may be using the same tools, Jarvis's revered technologies, to tell us what to think, and far more effectively than before? Internet shelf space may be infinite, but human attention is not. Cheap self-publishing marginally improves one's chances of being heard, but nothing about this new decentralized public sphere suggests that old power structures—provided they are smart and willing to survive—will not be able to use it to their benefit.

** We certainly disagree. Show me the legacy media institutions that are doing brilliantly online. Mostly, I get accused of predicting their deaths.

What George Carlin said of the American dream is also true of the Internet dream peddled by cyber-utopians like Jarvis: you have to be asleep to believe it.

** And there is Morozov distilled to his essence. He is as one-dimensional on the topic of technology as he accuses me of being, only from the pessimistic side.

I won't apologize for having dreams. Again, I won't apologize for hope. But I say loudly that my hope for a better future is most certainly not assured and that is why I argue that we, citizens of the net, have a responsibility to decide how best to use these tools to build a better society. Again, that is the point of the book -- the final chapter -- the point that Morozov chooses to ignore.

FOR A MAN PREACHING digital publicness, Jarvis seems unaware of one of its inevitable consequences: one's blunders are much easier to find and document. In Jarvis's case, he cannot help repeating what he has already said in his first book. Jarvis 1.0 writes that "my life is an open blog," and Jarvis 2.0 that "my life is this open book." Jarvis 1.0 proclaims that "the link changes everything," and Jarvis 2.0 that "the link is a profound invention." Jarvis 1.0 quotes lines from David Weinberger ("An age of transparency must be an age of forgiveness") and Raymond Williams ("There are in fact

no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses"), and so does Jarvis 2.0, and exactly the same lines. (Jarvis 1.0 thinks that Williams's *Culture and Society* appeared in 1938.) Jarvis 1.0 builds his arguments around ideas such as the Coase Theory of the Firm and the Dunbar Number—that staple of positive Internet thinking—and so does Jarvis 2.0.

** I do not presume that any reader of my second book read my first. Yes, I bring up some of the same ideas. I've heard Morozov speak and read him more than once. So does he.

It is not surprising that the two books feature almost identical casts. The list of fellow Internet gurus and believers who make appearances in both books, repeating what they say in every other Internet book, is too long to give in full, but here are Clay Shirky, Chris Anderson, Don Tapscott, Jay Rosen, Robert Scoble, Seth Godin, Nick Denton, Umair Haque, Arianna Huffington, Doc Searls, John Perry Barlow, Steven Johnson.

** Aha. There is Morozov's devil's list of optimists and utopians, many of whom he has [attacked](#) [more](#) [than](#) once. As I said earlier, I am most honored to be included in this company.

Alas, Jarvis 2.0 says nothing about Digg.com's Kevin Rose—whom Jarvis 1.0 proclaimed to be "the new Turner, Murdoch, Hearst—or Oprah," which is understandable, given that Digg.com tanked right after it received Jarvis's blessing. *Public Parts* has its own Digg.com moment, when Jarvis breathlessly celebrates Blippy, an Internet start-up built on the ridiculous premise that consumers want to share details of their credit card purchases. According to Jarvis, "this start-up will blow your mind"—but the only thing that Blippy has blown so far is its investors' cash. It shut down its flagship service back in May, but you won't learn this from Jarvis.

** True, Rose did not take over the world. My prediction was wrong. But Digg is still alive and it led to Reddit and a new way for the public to aggregate. Gutenberg -- if I dare bring him up again -- lost his business to his funder but still changed the world. I remain a fan of Rose's and I eagerly await his next creations. Blippy, I said in the book, did pivot to be more of a review service but the lessons from it stand and I am glad I interviewed Philip Kaplan of Blippy for the book; he brought many lessons.

An Internet guru would not be an Internet guru if he didn't make claims that contradict what he has said or written before. Take the subject of Google and its algorithms. Jarvis

1.0 was all about celebrating Google, but Jarvis 2.0 has new friends in Facebook and Twitter. (An Internet intellectual always keeps up.) Jarvis 1.0 wrote that "Google's moral of universal empowerment is the sometimes-forgotten ideal of democracy," and argued that the company "provides the infrastructure for a culture of choice," while its "algorithms and its business model work because Google trusts us." Jarvis 2.0 claims that "by sharing publicly, we people challenge Google's machines and reclaim our authority on the internet from algorithms."

** I am not against algorithms suddenly. I am saying that they are now challenged by sharing. And we are better off for having both.

What happened to the dream of Google's algorithmic democracy that Jarvis 1.0 was so busy celebrating? How did Jarvis 2.0 arrive at the conclusion that "the clearest lesson of the social web is that people want relationships with people, not with brands, spokesmen, rules, robots, voice mails, machines, or algorithms"? (Did we really have to wait until the invention of Twitter to learn that people prefer other people to machines?) To be sure, people change and ideas evolve, and there is nothing wrong with revising one's views—as long as one is, well, public about it. Jarvis gives a much less respectable impression. He makes it look as if he fell out of love with Google when the venture capitalists he meets and greets at technology conferences fell in love with Facebook and Twitter.

** Oh, and because I'm out of love with Google, I interviewed Eric Schmidt and still said many favorable things about it? This comes straight from Morozov's wishful imagination. Am I still a Google fan? Yes, I am.

But in one crucial respect Jarvis's second book is true to the spirit of his first one. The only way to make sense of *Public Parts* is to read it as a wordy marketing brochure for Jeff Jarvis, the thought leader, the consultant, the international man of mystery. The brochure—a sophisticated signaling exercise—is full of potentially useful information. We learn of Jarvis's speaking fees (up to $45,000 for faraway corporate gigs) and the e-mail address we should use to propose consulting work to him.

** Remember when Morozov said I wouldn't say how much I earn? As this demonstrates, I did. Sadly, I've made that much or anything near it only once but I reveal the range of my payments; that was at the extreme high-end. The email address is in the book in the context of rethinking conferences and books, not consulting. More on that soon.

We learn that he gets face time with Mark Zuckerberg and that he rubs shoulders with corporate bigwigs at exclusive events (Davos, Rupert Murdoch's corporate retreat in California, the DLD conference in Munich). We know that he is unlikely to lose a lot of sleep consulting for clients in dubious industries—he is down with the surveillance industry and, at one bizarre point in his book, he even defends Big Pharma.

** Morozov accused me of consulting for dubious industries but lists none. Apparently he thinks that newspapers are dubious. Go to the [about-me](#) page linked above on my blog and you will see the companies for whom I have consulted; I am quite public about that. I am not sure whom he includes in the "surveillance industry," but I have not worked with anyone in that field, unless one includes media companies that use cookies. My "defense" of Big Pharma (his caps) comes when I lament that current practices have drug companies not listen to their customers and patients for fear of liability and I see that as a lost opportunity for them to learn more and serve better. So I criticize the pharma companies and their attorneys and regulators as well for their system of willful ignorance.

Also he's got a kid in college. Should we thank Jarvis for being so public? To the extent that his quest for publicness helps to bolster his own clown credentials, perhaps.

** If anyone questions this as a personal attack....

To the extent that such openness leads us to question his ideas and the ideas of his comrades in the Cyber-Utopian International, certainly. As Jarvis himself writes, "say it once, and you've said it forever."

WERE IT JUST an isolated case of hyperventilating cyber-punditry, there would be few reasons to fret too much about *Private Parts*. But the oracular Jarvis plays a consequential role in shaping how we see, design, and regulate the Internet. (Anyone doubting his influence should watch a YouTube clip of him hectoring Nicolas Sarkozy about Internet policy at a recent VIP gathering in Paris.) He is in some ways the personification of the Internet intellectual.

** Well, Morozov promotes me. Just a moment ago, I have "clown credentials" and now I'm changing the world. I hardly have such a role. But he wants to promote me to being "the personification of the internet intellectual" so he can attack me and the list of others on his list above. I am his straw man and this is his match.

I am puzzled by his description of my discussion with Sarkozy. Given the chance to talk to a head of state, should I simply bow? That is how people are forced to behave in dictatorships. No, I had the opportunity to ask him a question at his e-G8 and I asked him to take a Hippocratic Oath for the net: First do no harm. The exchange is [here](#).

Like most Internet intellectuals, Jarvis is the Technology Man—the successor to the History Man of Bradbury's novel. While the fictional Howard Kirk turned to Hegelianism and Marxism (of the most vulgar variety) to explain everything in terms of the grand and inexorable march of history, Jarvis has another reference point, another sacred telos: the equally grand and equally inexorable march of the Internet, which in his view is a technology that generates its own norms, its own laws, its own people. (He likes to speak of "us, people of the Net.") For the Technology Man, the Internet is the glue that holds our globalized world together and the divine numen that fills it with meaning. If you thought that ethnocentrism was bad, brace yourself for Internet-centrism.

** If you would like to believe that the internet will not change society, be my guest. But I believe we are undergoing inevitable change with no inevitable outcomes. I fail to see arguments and evidence against that here.

Does this mean that we should banish the Internet—and technology—from our account of how the world works? Of course not.

** Well, thank God for that. Speaking of obvious statements.

Material artifacts—and especially the products of their interplay with humans, ideas, and other artifacts—are rarely given the thoughtful attention that they deserve. But the mere presence of such technological artifacts in a given setting does not make that setting reducible to purely technological explanations. "Seeing" the Internet's invisible hand everywhere is a sure way to lose one's intellectual bearings. So is opting for unsophisticated Internet-centric explanations simply because they are lucrative, or likely to be celebrated by the technophilic crowd. The global reach of the Internet is no excuse to adopt its standpoint as a universal explanation: this globalism is crassly provincial, and lazy thinking.

** That's misleading to call it a universal explanation. I do not do that. I do examine the impact of the internet and well we all should. Morozov jumps

to the conclusion that this is a uniform theory of the world. I never said it was. Of course, there are other forces at work. I set out to examine this force -- as, say, the book 1493 examines mosquitoes as a force of change in the world of that time without arguing that it caused all change then.

Why worry about the growing dominance of such digitalism? The reason should be obvious. As Internet-driven explanations crowd out everything else, our entire vocabulary is being re-defined. Collaboration is re-interpreted through the prism of Wikipedia; communication, through the prism of social networking; democratic participation, through the prism of crowd-sourcing; cosmopolitanism, through the prism of reading the blogs of exotic "others"; political upheaval, through the prism of the so-called Twitter revolutions.

** There is Morozov's anti-cyber orthodoxy, neatly summarized.

Even the persecution of dissidents is now seen as an extension of online censorship (rather than the other way around). A recent headline on the blog of the Harvard-based *Herdict*project—it tracks Internet censorship worldwide—announces that, in Mexico and Morocco, "Online Censorship Goes Offline." Were activists and dissidents never harassed before Twitter and Facebook?
Of course, there is no denying that the Internet alters our ideational and cognitive landscapes. A civilization that prides itself on building a Wikipedia is likely to have certain ideas about democratic participation, cooperation, research, expertise, and human nature. (The title of a 2009 talk by Yochai Benkler, the smartest Internet utopian and in many ways the anti-Jarvis, captures the stakes quite well: "After Selfishness: Wikipedia 1, Hobbes 0 at Half Time.") The ideas that the Internet begets matter every bit as much as the Internet itself. This is another reason to keep a close eye on Internet intellectuals such as Jarvis: left unchallenged, they may succeed in convincing us that we do indeed inhabit the digital wonderland of their imagination.

** I am challenged all the time on my blog and in talks where I invite challenge. I certainly have not been left unchallenged, as this very document demonstrates. I wouldn't worry about that, Morozov.

But such vigilance is not easy. Our Internet intellectuals lack the intellectual ambition, and the basic erudition, to connect their thinking with earlier traditions of social and technological criticism. They desperately need to believe that their every thought is unprecedented. Sometimes it seems as if intellectual life doesn't really thrill them at all. They never stoop to the lowly task of producing expansive and expository essays, where

they could develop their ideas at length, by means of argument and learning, and fully engage with their critics. Instead they blog, and tweet, and consult, and give conference talks—modes of discourse that are mostly impervious to serious critique. They do write books, of course; but as the example of Jeff Jarvis demonstrates, the books tend to contain almost only the slogans that they have peddled in more lucrative and less rigorous formats. They reject "the best that has been thought and said" for the best that has been blogged and tweeted.

** That paragraph is filled with sweeping condemnation of people who disagree with Morozov. There, as I said above, he is dismissing the people to dismiss the ideas, a dubious and anti-intellectual practice itself. He sets himself up as the cop of intellectual ambition, erudition, intellectual life, and more. He complains that we don't write long enough and then complains that I write a book.

As Chuck Klosterman has observed, "the degree to which anyone values the Internet is proportional to how valuable the Internet makes that person." Internet intellectuals like to tell companies and governments what they like to hear-including the kind of bad news that is really good news in disguise (*you are in terrible shape, but if you only embrace the Internet, all your problems will be gone forever!*). Occasionally their gigs are embarrassing—Clay Shirky's name turned up on the despicable roster of consultants to Qaddafi's government—but they will take that risk. And the technology companies return the favor: the opening pages of *Macrowikinomics*—another recent best-seller in the sprawling library of techno-punditry—is peppered with laudatory quotes from the CEOs of Dell, Best Buy, Accenture, Dupont, Nike, Google, and a dozen other companies.

WHY SUCH NARRATIVES are in demand by the general public is more mysterious. It could be that ordinary people find the surreal perplexity of the Internet—the stuff of WikiLeaks, Anonymous, Stuxnet, "Twitter revolutions"—so maddeningly complex and labyrinthine that they are ready to settle for whatever theory or pseudo-theory or theoretical uplift seems to make sense of the puzzling new situation. And what better way to make sense of it all than to claim that the source of their perplexity is in fact a part of some inexorable historical process that has been unfolding for centuries?

** Ah, there comes Morozov's terribly snobbery, dismissing the public as a whole. Therein lies our key disagreement. I start by trusting the people. Not to do so is to put myself above my neighbors and to reject the value of democracy, free markets, education, journalism, even reform religion (for

why trust the people to rule themselves, set markets in action, be educated or informed, or talk with God if they are all a bunch of fools?).

Most Internet intellectuals simply choose a random point in the distant past—the honor almost invariably goes to the invention of the printing press—and proceed to draw a straight line from Gutenberg to Zuckerberg, as if the Counter-Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, the Reign of Terror, two world wars—and everything else—never happened. The ubiquitous references to Gutenberg are designed to lend some historical gravitas to wildly ahistorical notions. The failure of Internet intellectuals actually to grapple with the intervening centuries of momentous technological, social, and cultural development is glaring.

** I believe that Gutenberg is the clearest historical analog for what we are experiencing now. Disagree if you wish. As Morozov points out above, I also do discuss intervening events, such as the growth of publics and the public sphere and mass media.

For all their grandiosity about technology as the key to all of life's riddles, they cannot see further than their iPads. And even their iPad is of interest to them only as a "platform"—another buzzword of the incurious—and not as an artifact that is assembled in dubious conditions somewhere in East Asian workshops so as to produce cultic devotion in its more fortunate owners.

** After I attack the root causes of terrorism, I will address labor exploitation in the world.

This lack of elementary intellectual curiosity is the defining feature of the Internet intellectual. History, after all, is about details, but no Internet intellectual wants to be accused of thinking small. And so they think big—sloppily, ignorantly, pretentiously, and without the slightest appreciation of the difference between critical thought and market propaganda.

** Well, we disagree.

Evgeny Morozov is a visiting scholar at Stanford University and the author of The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom (PublicAffairs). *This article originally ran in the November 3, 2011, issue of the magazine.*