

## **EPILOGUE**

### **RAISING THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND RESTORING ORDER IN THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY**

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There are many spaces which are created by imagination or by science. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction'. Mathematicians and Physicists look space from a different dimension, and similarly Geographers, Lawyers and Psychologists. According to the geographical and legal perspectives, spaces are owned by humans and are defined. International law segregates spaces to Physical space, Water space, Airspace and Outer space and provides law for governance of each. While there are abstract and physical spaces available, my concern is on the spaces where humans inhabit and where a society prevails with some norms and values.

Traditionally, spaces are physically and culturally well defined in the physical (Geographical) space, but not in other spaces. Even in the popular culture, spaces are culturally defined according to the imagination of the creators. One can see in the science fiction movie, "Avatar", a planet called "Pandora", where, indigenous people called *Naavis*, inhabit with a set of norms and values, invaded by humans, with another sets of norms and values. However, certain spaces are not culturally defined and their scope is unknown. Notably, cyberspace is one of the spaces which has social (virtual) inhabitation, but without norms and values of any distinct society. Though, founding of cyberspace is credited to William Gibson (1984), it is John Perry Barlow (1990) who saw cyberspace as a space of inhabitants. However, Barlow was clear that cyberspace is a space where people don't live. He asserts that cyberspace "is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live"

(para. 4). Despite the fact that the inhabitation component of cyberspace is loosely defined, the element of presence of societal component in cyberspace cannot be ruled out. Although cyberspace largely depends on its technological orientation, it is the social interactions that determine the basis of cyberspace (Morningstar & Farmer, 1991, 2003). ‘The computational medium in cyberspace is an augmentation of the communication channel between real people; the core characteristic of cyberspace is that it offers an environment that consists of many participants with the ability to affect and influence each other’ (Morningstar & Farmer, 1991, p. 275; 2003, p. 667).

Internet augments for the virtual space and cyberspace is commonly considered synonymous with the Internet or the Information Super Highway. However, critiques like Graham (2011), feel that this understanding is erroneous. He argues that the ‘Internet is not a space, but rather a network that enables selective connections between people and information’. He agrees the presence of the element of sociality of cyberspace, but, disagrees on its geography (Graham, 2011). In a way, Graham (2011) feels that there no such space and it is the physical space that people act and the Internet is only an unreal space. I feel that the social component of the Internet makes it a space to be considered. As there is no inhabitation, this space cannot be defined like physical space, as Graham (2011) feels, but, the activities of physical space spill over in this space from a different angle, as I feel that humans behave in a different manner in this space compared to their behavior in physical space (Jaishankar, 2008). The Cyberspace / Internet is a space where humans get a feeling of dwelling, in spite of the fact that it is ‘*virtual*’. I believe that geography alone cannot determine or define space, as it can be abstract too, and cyberspace is an abstract space.

Internet is a global space and people from various countries conglomerate with different cultural norms and values. People do exhibit their own physical space norms and values in the cyberspace and provide a culture shock to the global audience. This conglomeration also creates new norms and values and creates a conflict between the people who interact in the

cyberspace. The Internet or the Information Super Highway (attributed to former US President, Al Gore) is a space where millions of people visit and travel in time and space. Creating an order in a regular road with a set of traffic rules itself is a difficult process and we see many accidents that occur on a day to day basis. So, is it possible to create order in a space where millions travel with their own traffic rules (norms and values)? The answer would be a big 'No' and we should accept the fact that the Internet is not a utopia. As it is seen in the physical space that both good and bad elements thrive, the same is the case of cyberspace. However, I would not try to demonize the cyberspace. Cyber crime is normal and functional as how Durkheim (1895) feels that physical crime is normal and functional (Catlin, 1964; Jones, 1986; Vito, Maahs, & Holmes 2007).

A peculiar differential element emerges while comparing physical and cyberspaces. In the physical space, the regulation of anti-social elements with norms, values, laws and criminal justice system is feasible for its 'local' aspect. Whereas, cyberspace is a global space, where, people conglomerate with their own physical laws, norms and values. My mentor, Professor Wall (2007) argues that 'the Internet and the criminal behaviour it transforms (cybercrime) pose considerable challenges for order maintenance and law enforcement because Internet-related offending takes place within a global context while crime tends to be nationally defined' (p.183).

Notably, normal law abiding citizens, enter the cyberspace without an understanding of the laws of the United States, which predominantly governs the cyberspace, and get victimized without a place to report their victimization. This 'American colonization of cyberspace' (attributed to Legal Scholar Debarati Halder; from a personal communication, 2011) creates disorder in the internet, as people come into conflict with a different set of laws, norms and values. Also, I have specified in my '*Space Transition Theory*', that even people who are law abiding in the physical space have a propensity to break the law in the cyberspace (Jaishankar, 2008). So, regulating three types of individuals, one; physical law abiding citizen who comes into

conflict with cyber laws, two; physical law abiding citizen who breaks the cyber laws, and the third; who breaks both the physical space laws and cyber laws, is not an easy task.

Policing the above said individuals need to be viewed from a different perspective. Wall (2007) points that ‘the future of the public police role in policing the Internet is more than simply acquiring new knowledge and capacity, but it is about forging new relationships with the other nodes within the networks of Internet security’ (p. 183). Hence, the creation of an International cyber police in the lines of ‘*Interpol*’ called ‘*Intercyberpol*’, is the need of the hour to effectively deal with high-tech criminals.

Countries such as China and Pakistan try to regulate their cyberspace with restrictions to certain websites and certain keywords (Halder, 2011). This dictatorial control of the cyberspace will not assist in the growth of the human spirit. Also, the colonization of cyberspace by America will only create cultural superiority and will curtail democracy of the cyberspace. Both colonization and control are equally dangerous and countries should try to view cyberspace as an alternative space for the development of individuals.

Though, restoring a fullest order in the cyberspace is difficult at this juncture, we can raise the human spirit by teaching cyber etiquette (Halder & Jaishankar, 2011), providing a clear understanding of laws, norms and values of cyberspace, creating awareness on the misuse of the internet to law abiding citizens and thereby we can protect potential victims.

The chapters presented in this book give a brief understanding of cybercrimes issues, primarily from an Indian perspective, and I believe that it will be an eye-opener for the Indian as well as global Netizens, who will enter the cyberspace with more confidence, and it will raise their spirit too, to a certain extent.

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