

Chapter One

JET-LAG LUXURY

The Architecture of Time Maintenance

During my layover in Atlanta between Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, and Vancouver, a young man reading Plato's *Republic* strikes up a conversation. After a few minutes of small talk at gate B9, I find myself in a pretty heated discussion. My fellow traveler is a software developer for video games, with a particular interest in cell phone consoles. He is a Canadian citizen who moved to Buenos Aires when his company decided to "go global." He is perplexed that my area of research involves taking a *critical* approach to media and technology. Since I am a professor of media and cultural studies in a communication studies department, he first assumes that I will be a good networking opportunity. He hands me his business card almost as soon as I mention what I do. We start talking about what I teach. He soon realizes that what I profess is not akin to his unconditional blanket love for technology. I may even come off a little technologically unsavvy, in fact, probably quite a bit so, by comparison.

It comes as a surprise to me, though, when he asks if I am “like Zygmunt Bauman” — that is, someone who is angry and threatened by the inevitable future of technological progress. He goes on to tell me that multi-player video games on cell phones are a part of the future — a future that is fast approaching. In fact, “in many parts of the world this future has already arrived.” This future is intrinsically “good because it is diverse” and is “diverse because it is fast moving.” He then proceeds to paraphrase Bauman’s *Liquid Life* at length. For Bauman, “liquid” men and women are the fragmented subjects of liquid modernity. In liquid modernity, social forms do not have enough time to solidify. Long-term thinking becomes impossible and liquid moderns must find new ways to exist in the new temporality of liquid life. People such as me (and Bauman) are bogged down by our heavy thoughts. According to my fellow traveler, Bauman and I have made careers out of critiquing technology because we are too conservative and fear change. This leads to a denial of the social diversity that global capital and new technology promise.

At one point he boldly states, “I *am* Liquid Man.” Liquid Man then confesses that Bauman’s writing was therapeutic for him because it describes who he is. Although, he warns, Bauman’s take was much more negative than the way Liquid Man actually experiences liquid life. He exclaims, “I enjoy being Liquid Man.” By this he means he relishes all the accouterments of a mobile and fast-paced lifestyle: the plane hopping, social networking, contract employment, and technological gadgets that keep him plugged in. Being without bonds in this liquid world means he can “keep going with the flow.” Liquid Man tells me he feels free, not limited by the weight of the world.

While Liquid Man and I continue to have a conversation about how technological visions of the world are too often divided between dystopia and utopia, he gives me something else to ponder. Liquid Man says, “I love the airport.” “Look around,” he says, “look at all these people thrown here together. I just love airports, everything and everyone I need is probably right here, right now.” He is excited by the new possibilities inherent in airport sociality. Strangers sharing space and the constant emptying out and filling up of the airport present a business opportunity for him. He can network, conduct market research, tap into the crowd, and even promote his new software. For Liquid Man, fast times are for the free and unfettered spirits. The obvious gathering place for these fast and free spirits is the modern airport. Liquid Man and I part ways at the first boarding call:

“I would like to invite all Gold Status Star Alliance members to board at this time.” Liquid Man stands up, smiles, and shakes my hand. “That’s me,” he says, with all of the self-assurance of a card-holding member of the Gold Status Star Alliance.

Liquid Man’s appreciation of airport sociality is echoed in *Aerotropolis: The Way We’ll Live Next*, a book written for business leaders, urban planners, and other “global visionaries.” It makes the argument that the potential of the airport lies less in its spatial location than in how it is a site of connectivity, keeping everyone from “workers” to professionals connected to the global market.¹ If new leaders of the twenty-first century pay more attention to the airport, the book argues, they can remap the world. Airports are places where the dueling goals of capitalism—global homogenization and local diversification—can be realized together. While this excites capitalists, it horrifies the critical theorist of speed.

In speed theory, the airport is a (lamentable) structural transformation of the public sphere and material evidence of the fall of the public man. Spaces such as airports, speed theorists argue, signal the demise of political space and the rise of an apolitical time. In this literature, spaces of transit are denigrated for their homogeneous architecture, purified and pacified interiors, and lack of local referents to situate the individual traveler.² At the airport, the retreat of individuals into their own personal technospheres mimics a larger withdrawal of citizens from activating public space. In *Crepuscular Dawn*, Paul Virilio maintains that the new architecture of globalization is based on modular standardization and synchronization.³ In *Pure War* he argues that airports are the new capital city, no longer a spatial capital but a temporal capital where departing and arriving are more important than dwelling.⁴ He argues: “When we know that every day there are over one hundred thousand people in the air, we can consider it a foreshadowing of future society: no longer a society of sedentarization but one of passage; no longer a nomad society, in the sense of the great nomadic drifts but one concentrated in the vector of transportation.” He goes on to say: “People are no longer citizens, they are passengers in transit.”⁵ Similarly in Bauman’s case it is Liquid Man who replaces the political category of the citizen; the contemplative and deliberative subject gives way to one who is open, malleable, fragmented, unattached, and—of course—fast moving.

As it turns out, Liquid Man, Virilio, and I have something in common. The airport transfixes us all. The meeting between an international business traveler so affirming of speed and me, both well versed in cultural theories

of speedup, indicates that perhaps speedup is a narrow and uncomplicated worldview characteristic of a privileged relationship to time. Far from the airport bar, distinct temporalities—in the air-traffic-control tower, at the baggage claim, and on the tarmac, for example—unselfconsciously carry out their machinations to make our conversation possible. As the concretized infrastructure for the maintenance of global capital's accelerated flows of goods, money, people, and information, the political and economic importance of the airport cannot be understated. But the importance of the airport has less to do with how it fails as a public space or how it is speed space and more to do with the way it operates as a routing mechanism for different temporalities within the larger biopolitical economy of time.

In airports people wait, serve, sleep, rush, and work within a highly uneven relationship to time. At any given moment there are new visitors, residents, citizens, laborers, and denizens who are spilling out of various flights and enduring different plights. Many travelers breeze through security. Immigrants and visa holders move through passport control at speeds determined by some combination of socioeconomic status and geopolitical context. The range of service workers in the airport includes baggage handlers, taxi drivers, janitors, shoe shiners, retail clerks, servers, bus drivers, parking attendants, and beauticians. In this list we must now include nutritionists schooled in the science of jet-lag dietary requirements and acupuncturists who prick and poke bodies to help them overcome sleep deprivation.

In a time-obsessed culture, the airport is a particularly vital node for the reproduction and maintenance global capital's most valuable subject: the frequent business traveler.⁶ Upon arrival at the modern international airport, the frequent business traveler is met by a multimediated infrastructure—one that consists of technologies, commodities, programs, and laborers, all oriented toward the enhancement and protection of their time. “Keeping up to speed” is a discourse that reverberates in the corporate speak of the companies the travelers work for, the ads for their mobile technological devices, and the business literature they read. Speedup is a perception of time constantly confirmed by the elaborate system of temporal support that greets travelers in airport lounges, hotels, their offices, and the air. This ideological belief in speed operates as a scaffold: one that holds up while it hides the temporal infrastructure that keeps travelers on pace and along the paths that are commensurate with the aims of global capital.

The temporal value of the frequent business traveler is largely unparal-

leled by any other tired population that labors under the auspices of global capitalism. Frequent business travelers experience the world as accelerated and fast paced. They describe their lives and their labor as largely lived outside normal time. My careful consideration of three representative case studies draws attention to the relationship between frequent business travelers' position within the biopolitical economy of time and their subsequent perceptions of speedup. Frequent business travelers' unwavering belief in the speed of life indicates less about the new realities of a speed-up world than it does about their position within the biopolitical economy of time. It is no wonder that the fellow traveler I met in Atlanta loves being Liquid Man; he enjoys the maintenance of his privilege now found in liquid form at the modern airport. In his uncritical affirmation of a world of speed, what Liquid Man doesn't see is that he is being quickly carried along and ushered through, liquefied by a temporal architecture designed especially for him.

Three Itineraries: The Frequent Flyers

CLAIRE

Claire is an independent consultant in her mid-fifties with adult-aged children. I meet Claire at her home office in Toronto, which is where she spends her workdays when she is not on the road. She typically travels for work once a month, this after a decade of traveling every week. On the day we meet, she is taking an afternoon break from writing an article for one of the city's major newspapers. Her article is on the subject of "time management and balancing acts in the time-crunched workplace."

Claire has a degree in psychology. She is a consultant who specializes in business psychology, specifically "helping people to maintain balance, including diet, health, and domestic issues related to work—spousal issues, life planning, and time management." She describes her profession as an "on-site psychologist who teaches certain echelons of a host-company 'emotional intelligence.'" Claire "helps people to feel comfortable in their own skin in order to eradicate the dysfunctional behavior that takes up too much time." She works with people's emotions in order to keep up the increasing demands that come with "tighter cycles of production." Given speedup, "there is less time nowadays for posturing and positioning." According to Claire, "emotional intelligence" is about the efficient use of time for certain types of working environments and specific types of workers:

[When you focus on unproductive emotions,] you lose a phenomenal amount of time. You lose thirty to forty percent of your day. There is only so much time and you lose. When you have to produce you don't have time to lose, so I try and help [my clients] find their voice and their confidence. Emotional intelligence isn't a necessary skill for every working person, but for those people who have goals related to their employment.

Typically, Claire works with men in middle management all the way up to CEOs in various North American companies. More recently she has started traveling to Western Europe and South Asia. She tells me she is "going global with emotional intelligence." At the time of my visit, Claire has just been invited to work at a call center in India. She explains that she "does not do knowledge management or time management on the call center floor, where there are three thousand operators, because they are there for the money, so they don't really need it." Time management is reserved for workers whose time is of qualitative concern or whose productive capacity is not measured in units of time that correspond to a going rate of pay, or wage. This subtle comment reflects exactly how the differential biopolitical economy of time operates. Labor time is understood qualitatively for some populations in the labor force, not purely in labor time's productive capacity; "quality" time can only exist for those whose time does not literally equal (company) money.

Claire works "eight days a week, depending on what you call a day." When she is on the road, her day can begin at four thirty in the morning and end after dinner, when she "still has to be 'on.'" When Claire is not traveling for work, she feels more in control of her time: "I come and go. I know the rhythm of work. I know there are times I can't think and I forget it. And when I'm in a mature mood, I'll say screw it and I'll take off and go play. But when I'm not in a mature mood I'll sit and struggle to produce." For Claire, "knowing the limits is part of having emotional intelligence." She jokes that though she is in the business of time management "for others," she still needs better balance for herself.

DARRYL

Work-life balance for Darryl, a married father of two in his mid-fifties, is a nagging tension. He is an executive specializing in human resources for a high-tech firm, and Darryl says: "There is no separation of work and life

until retirement. I think about business twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." Quite candidly, Darryl admits: "I just can't relax." But the alternative, as he sees it, would be "a middle-range income, which means debt and less freedom in the future." Citing a weekly business magazine on the "toxic workplace," Darryl contends that "the whole value and the way people work has made it very difficult to find job satisfaction, unless you are at the top of the house." Darryl is extremely proficient in the corporate discourse surrounding retirement and time management. An important aspect of his job includes running workshops to train managers to better supervise the "time of their employees" and to "meet the demands of changing technologies." He works in and out of the various global offices of his company to "standardize the efficiency and the methods of time management." He also advises and consults with individual employees on their retirement and future goals.

I meet Darryl in his home in Toronto. He recently relocated in order to be closer to his two grown children. He greets me in a golf shirt embroidered with his company's insignia. Darryl has been an executive for numerous high-tech firms in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Canada. He has traveled internationally and nationally for business for more than two decades. At one point, he estimates, he was traveling 240 days of the year. In the past three years, Darryl has significantly cut down on his travel to "about once every two weeks for a few days or once a month if it's a weeklong trip overseas." Adding it all up, Darryl figures that he has probably spent more time in hotels, airport lounges, and in the air than at home.

More recently, Darryl has made a shift in his travel habits to try and make the journey more comfortable. He now chooses boutique hotels over chains. He expresses a preference for train travel in Europe; whether knowingly or not, Darryl cites a popular Canadian National Railway advertisement, saying that the train is "a much more human way to travel." For Darryl, his new focus on comfort is an effort to become, citing another piece of business literature,⁷ "high touch in an increasingly high-tech world." When I inquire as to what this phrase means to him, Darryl explains that "'high touch' is face-to-face and more personal in relation to a highly transactional and technology-driven type of work environment." Darryl is worried that "people have lost the human touch in the increasingly fast-paced information-driven world." Darryl is a voracious reader of business literature. As I spend a few hours with him, he relays an extensive knowledge of the different anxieties in workplace culture over the past

three decades. He is on top of every global business strategy that has been disseminated in the popular press.

KEN

Significantly, Ken also senses a lost humanity in a work culture he finds saturated by technology and too much travel. He is the owner and operator of a major recreational and leisure resort outside Toronto. He is also a leisure consultant for corporate offices. Ken was born in Trinidad, where his family owned and operated a beach resort. Ken merged his interests in hospitality and tourism with a degree in business. He then opened up a company that specializes in corporate leisure, including corporate outdoor recreation. Ken touches on a similar vein as Darryl; in recent years Ken has decided to take more buses and trains as often as possible in order “to slow it down and have some time.” But, much to his chagrin, he is most often at the airport. He stays plugged in to his BlackBerry and earpiece at all times: “It is almost permanently attached to me at all times except for sleep.” I meet Ken when he is in Toronto for a convention. He keeps his earpiece on during our entire two-hour conversation. The blue light flickers several times but Ken reaches into his pocket, looks at the caller ID, and presses a button that sends the call to voice mail. He insists that “face-to-face conversations are increasingly rare in his world.” By traveling in what he calls a form of “slow business travel,” Ken feels that he “encounters the best of both worlds,” where he can be productive but also relax. He enjoys being restricted in a space, such as a bus or a train, because there he “cannot rush around” and can “enjoy the view and be around people.” Travel time is “Ken’s time.”

Ken’s business travel is by no means routine. He travels at least once every two months for a week at a time and, quite frequently, ten days out of every month, depending on the “new demands” he creates for himself and the business. He recognizes the ironic context in which he works. He travels to travel conventions and consults for the hospitality and tourism industry on issues related to the culture of corporate travel. He explains to me that the corporations he consults for are interested in how their employees vacation: “How people spend their vacation time is of interest to the places they work.” Ken tells me that he thinks most people would find it surprising that “different corporations have a stake in the travel and tourism industry.” Ken consults on time management in corporations and how to create relaxation for employees. One of the more interesting elements

of Ken's profession are his training workshops to create "leisure therapists" who then help people plan their vacations to maximize relaxation. Leisure therapists are hired to come speak to employees. Like Claire and Darryl, Ken is in the business of work-life balance while trying to maintain his own work-life balance.

While Darryl might be the most proficient and knowledgeable about relevant business literature, all three of these frequent business travelers relay an almost identical set of concepts to describe the contemporary moment. They speak of work-life balance, humanizing travel, emotional intelligence, time maximization, and, most important, the increasing speed of life. Moreover, their labor is directed toward these descriptors of the moment: leisure therapists, early-retirement counseling, emotional management in the name of time saving, and creating corporate recreation. They imagine speedup as an economic condition that requires increasing amounts of self-sufficiency. Yet they are highly commodified bodies; the market and the corporate world have invested in them. They are extremely hard workers but they are not necessarily self-sufficient in a world of speed. Instead they are ushered along by a temporal infrastructure of time maintenance.

Road Warriors on Speed

In the late 1990s a new icon emerged in business literature aimed at the frequent business traveler. "Road warrior" survival guidebooks hit the market with tag lines that promise some combination of time management and meaning in one's life. Guides written exclusively for women espouse soaring lessons for the woman road warrior to help her find her travel style. Fashion advice on where to purchase airport-friendly clothing and shoes are geared to women. In 2001 a "frequent-flyer bra" guaranteed to pass through metal detectors hit the market.⁸ Christian road-warrior guides preach "how to keep your faith, relationships and integrity when away from home."⁹ The book gives tips for dealing with infidelity, such as bringing pictures of your spouse on the road, keeping a rigorous calling schedule, developing an accountability partner who is a person of your gender, as well as blocking adult channels that lead to temptation. *The Way of the Road Warrior* offers many "lessons in business and life from the road most traveled."¹⁰ An indication of the enduring cultural salience of the term *road warrior* is the amount of real-time warrior advice available online for any destination.¹¹

The online guides serve as maps of the temporal infrastructure, but they are also a key part of this architecture of time maintenance.

In the same way that my anonymous airport interlocutor claimed the liquid man as a description of his existence, the road warrior is a trope that these three frequent business travelers claim. From Darryl I learned that the road warrior is someone who is always on the go, plugged in, connected to “the network,” and ready to do business. Characteristics of the road warrior include a certain technological savvy, knowledge of the latest, smallest, and fastest personal technologies to manage his or her time, and preparedness for the culture, politics, and values of his or her destination. Darryl explains, “You have to make the right choices to suit your needs in order to balance while traveling for business; what time is good to travel, places you are most comfortable. You have to know your body clock, and you have to be self-sufficient. In other words you need to be a road warrior.” In fact, Darryl uses the term as a self-diagnostic: “He’s the gadget guy in commercials—he’s sitting at the airport and he has everything, he probably hasn’t had a secretary in years—he’s a very self-sufficient person. They don’t have secretaries. Me, I’m probably an eight out of ten on the road-warrior scale—because I have no need for a secretary.” Darryl explains that the road warrior should have an armament of time-saving strategies just in case the mode of transport, whether plane or train, is late or if an upgrade is required for a hotel room. Darryl confirms another expectation I find in the literature on road warriors: one must be knowledgeable of the limits of his or her body. This includes dietary needs, patterns of sleep, special drugs, and any other jet-lag requirements. These should all be worked out and properly managed prior to a trip. Katherine Ameche’s *The Woman Road Warrior* is filled with not so much technological know-how but issues related to bodily comfort and safety. It is obvious that this management of time takes on highly gendered nuances.¹² Claire confirms this important detail as she explains how her travel plans were once methodically organized according to her cycle. Lately, because of menopause, she finds it more difficult to plan ahead. Business travel is also cited as a reason why some woman are taking “control of their menstruation” and “forgoing” their periods altogether.¹³

While discussing perceptions of speed and the acceleration of everyday life with all three frequent business travelers, I saw a general consensus: acceleration is simply a fact of life. Their responses to the topic of speedup are much like reflexes: “of course the world is getting faster” (Darryl), “the

cycles of production are tighter and you have to be fast” (Claire), “humans thrive off of speed” (Ken). For road warriors, speed emerges not only as an inevitable fact of everyday life but also as part of their labor, a challenge to their ever-advancing business agility. For the frequent business traveler, terms such as *time-space compression* and *the cycles of capitalist production* are not abstract academic lingo or even postmodern jargon. It was interesting to note how often these phrases peppered my conversations with these private-sector professionals.

To a great extent speed is the basis on which these folks’ livelihoods thrive. When I first ask them to relay their thoughts on the idea that “things were getting faster,” they each immediately discuss the implications on their careers. Speed, for them, is more than just the pace of life, it is an ever-present potential that they have to be on top of. Speed is a problem their labor is oriented around. Speed looms. If they stay on top of their time, then they will not have to deal with its consequences. They perceive a good part of their labor and lifestyle as pursuing time control. In my conversations with them it became quite apparent that so much of their work is understood in the context of maintaining the speed of life, including keeping other people “up to speed.”

For Claire it is the tighter cycles of production that require people to have “emotional intelligence” to “get what needs to get done done fast, in a healthy and efficient way.” Her consulting techniques are oriented toward the new emotional needs of a sped-up corporate culture. Darryl doesn’t think the world is so much faster as it is smaller: “Because of technology you have more access to it—faster—in shorter time frames.” To Darryl, speed is a “condition of modern living.” And this condition requires him to pay attention to getting “the various global constituents of [his] company up to speed because everything is connected.” Speed is something to which Darryl’s human-resource management must tend and accommodate. Darryl compares companies across the globe and explains that his company is buying all of them out: “These other companies aren’t able to make it; they run out of money.” He explains, “They [other companies] put us through to their secretaries to make appointments and by the time we get a meeting it is too late and decisions are already made and they’ve lost out.” For Ken evidence of an accelerated society comes by way of his “tired and overworked vacationers who just don’t know how to relax on their own.” Ken thinks that speed is an inevitable part of contemporary life. “It is just the way it is when you live in any advanced capitalist society,” he says,

and goes on to exclaim, “lucky for me, there will always be tired and over-worked people who need a vacation!”

When pressed further about their personal feelings regarding time, all of the frequent business travelers correlate feelings of imbalance with speed. In other words, living effectively in sped-up culture and balancing work and life are synonymous. Balance and being out of time are major sources of anxiety in their daily lives. Claire describes how she feels: “Most people won’t balance unless someone tells them to. People need to be reminded to slow down. I have a friend who checks in with me and just tells me to breathe, and I realize in those instances that she tells me this that I do forget to breathe. But you have to make the choice to slow yourself down.” When I ask Darryl what he thinks of the expression “time is money,” he responds:

Time isn’t money in the sense that it is dollars and cents, but rather something that has to be structured in order to reach your goal.

I’m very goal directed and sometimes it [my life] is not structured enough from a work-life-balance perspective, but nonetheless I am very results driven. So I think of time as a very precious commodity and I want to make the best use of my time. And with things getting faster, this is more important. But the bottom line is that it means I don’t really know how to relax.

Darryl’s bottom line is striking and provides insight into how the discursive power of speed is helpful to capitalist reproduction. To a great extent business travelers *need* to believe in speed as a defining characteristic of the contemporary moment because it justifies their existence and extremely tiring days. They are not materially impoverished workers and they are not working just to get by. Moreover, they each indicate during our interviews that, in one way or another, they don’t necessarily need to be working any more. “I don’t know how not to work,” exclaims Claire. “I could stop all this, but I’m just getting going and I like being out there part of things,” Ken tells me.

But as much as they are in it, they are out of it. The frequent business travelers discuss an overriding sense of living in an exceptional time; one that they imagine is quite different than other people’s time. A key theme in our discussions is how they felt outside of the parameters of a normalized day. Claire, Ken, and Darryl relay how often they feel both out of place and out of time. Darryl explains how he often wakes up and has no idea

where he is, what day it is, or if it is day or night: “Especially in those new rooms where all light is blocked out, I’ve woken up and almost had to call [the] front desk. You sort of panic, and it’s a strange feeling. You do feel alone.” Pico Iyer, the author of *Global Soul*, writes, “You feel like you’re an exile, a fugitive of sorts, as you walk along the hotel corridor at four in the morning, while all good souls are in their beds, and then you begin to yawn as everyone around you goes to work.”¹⁴ But one comfort in all of this disorientation has always been the airport lounge. Darryl finds that airport lounges offer a home away from home:

You walk into the business lounges, and the first thing they’ll have is if you are first-class passenger, you go one way, [and] if you are a business traveler, you go another way. First class is like a first-class hotel—the top-notch ones will actually have a separate door that you can go through with your ticket; some will actually take you there and check your bags for you and then when you get there you can get hot towels, [and they] sit you down for free champagne, hot food, top-notch everything, a leather chair—it’s just like home.

When frequent business travelers are feeling out of it, airports function as a comfortable space, a second home. To return to Darryl’s language, the high-tech world is increasingly replete with high-touch solutions.

As out of time as the frequent business travelers think they are, in another sense they couldn’t be more firmly entrenched within the time demands of global capital. Road warriors are subjects of immense value, and their labor cannot be easily replaced. There is no room in this economy for a reserve labor force of traveling businesspeople. Instead, reserve labor must be extracted from their bodies.

The Soldiers of Jet Lag

In December 2005, the *New York Times* ran an exposé on business travel, reporting 41 percent of business travelers complained of not sleeping enough and 29 percent complained of not sleeping well.¹⁵ Instead of focusing on the downside of fatigue the article focused on how business travelers downplay their tiredness. One of the interviewees concluded: “A business trip is not about sleep. Nobody comes out of any business meeting and says, ‘You did best today because you look freshest.’ Clients couldn’t care less if I am fresh as a daisy. They just want to know that when

I, or my team, comes to the table, we've got a big idea."¹⁶ As subjects of value within global capital, the time of the frequent business traveler is an important object of biopolitical regulation. The sleepy body of the business traveler, perhaps comparable only to the military soldier, is therefore also a significant object of knowledge production.¹⁷ The problem of sleep is an area of scientific research shared by both the military and pharmaceutical companies. In fact, one military researcher who refers to sleep as "sleep architecture" maintains: "There is a quiet revolution going on in sleep medicine."¹⁸ Chronobiologists contend, "We are living in a time famine where there isn't enough time in our waking periods to accomplish all that is expected of us."¹⁹ Data on the productive aptitudes of tired workers are accumulating. Sleep specialists and other medical researchers are investigating how the body reacts to shift work, long-distance driving, jet lag, and even space travel. Business travel tends to be at the center of these experiments on temporal management—subject to medical testing, corporate surveys, and sleep-institute interventions. The Time Isolation Research Unit was built as part of the A\$10 million colocation of the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in Sydney. It opened in February of 2009 to house more than a hundred test subjects who will live in complete isolation, including from externalities like sunlight and noise.²⁰ The isolation rooms are set up like hotel rooms, but volunteers are monitored twenty-four hours a day.

In the 1970s, health specialists and journalists charted the arrival of a medical condition at the gates of the international airport. Understood at the time as a health hazard, the flying body was positioned as fragile and weak in relation to the harsh environment of air travel and far-off exotic places. Diana Fairechild, a jet-lag activist fighting for flight attendants, pilots, and citizen flyers everywhere, chronicles her life lived in the air as a former flight attendant in the 1970s. Her list of the perils of air travel is exhaustive: there are shifts in time zones, alterations in magnetic fields, modifications in climate, and the need to contend with diversities of cultures. Passengers are deprived of air and humidity, and exposed to re-circulated germs, chemicals, radiation, pesticides, noise, and dehydration.²¹ Symptoms of jet lag include dehydration, deep vein thrombosis, cardiovascular and circulatory problems, insomnia, headaches, cramps, and nausea.

Body-temperature controls, techniques for staying hydrated, where one should sit in the plane, how one should breathe during takeoff and landing, the types of foods that should be avoided, and how many hours of sunlight

are necessary before and after the flight are all topics that fill up travel guides, advice columns, and brochures found in doctors' offices and travel agencies from the 1970s. Here the requisite techniques for the care of the self are being deployed. As Foucault explicates in *Care of the Self*:

Between the individual and his environs, one imagined a whole web of interferences such that a certain disposition, a certain event, a certain change in things would induce morbid effects on the body. Conversely, a weak constitution of the body would be favorably or unfavorably affected by such and such a circumstance. Hence there was a constant and detailed problematization of the environment with regard to the body, and a positing of the body as a fragile entity in relation to its surroundings.²²

But this discourse has changed in the past decade as jet lag has shifted from a specifically located medical problem or even mindset to a generalized condition of working and living in fast times.

In popular discourses today, jet lag rarely refers to the time spent in the air. It is now referred to as a byproduct of the fast-paced tempo of modern living for a particular socioeconomic demographic.²³ Jet lag is a new "problem of living." Once known solely as desynchronosis in the medical world, chronic jet lag is now an accidental side effect of living as a subject of value in the global economy. Chronic jet lag was formerly a medical malady associated with flying east of the point of embarkation, but it has now become a general social phenomenon termed *social jet lag* by marketers working in business tourism. The vice president of Westin Hotels and Resorts promoted a new jet-lag concept room at the Westin River North location in Chicago: "It will be useful not just to our road warriors, but to sufferers of 'social jetlag' as well. Our incredibly busy lives interfere with our bodies' natural rhythms, causing widespread symptoms of lethargy, grogginess, insomnia and headaches."²⁴ The term *social jet lag* describes the bodily and social consequences of living in a harried world on the go, perpetually unable to catch up. It refers to biological life and lifestyle. The concept room also speaks to the rather vogue status of being socially jet-lagged.

With the shift from jet lag as a medical condition to the socially jet-lagged body, there is a change in how the relationship between the body and its environment is understood. The body, once a weak and fragile entity to which the environment posed a danger, becomes potentially limitless given the right technological care. The body is no longer limited in its

ability to adapt to change. Its ability to labor longer depends on assembling the right program of time control. Time is integral to this process. But it is no longer an issue of socially necessary labor time, as in Marxist critiques of time and labor. Nor is the issue about turnover time, as in the focus of scientific management. Instead, it is about the expansion of value into the realm of meaning making where labor is oriented around making qualitative adjustments to the problem of time. The body's labor time has no foreseeable limit.

The limitless potential of the productive temporality of a technologically managed body is nowhere more evident than in the scope of sleep technologies that have been devised in collaboration with the military and pharmaceutical companies. Sleep technologies, as they are called, go beyond specific programs and commodities that deal with tiredness. The eradication of sleep itself is the ultimate goal. Modafinil, for example, is issued for "sustained military operations."²⁵ Known in the military as the "go pill," it has also been used by narcoleptics for the past decade and a half. However, its more socially appropriate term is a *wakefulness promoting agent*. In 2001 Americans spent US\$150 million on Modafinil.²⁶ It is important to note that three-fourths of the pills were taken neither by narcoleptics nor soldiers. So far, tales from the trenches of Modafinil come from young corporate types and journalists with deadlines. The pill that "cuts sleep debt in half" and allows you to stay awake for forty-eight hours currently awaits FDA approval for wider use. DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is searching for ways to create the "metabolically dominant soldier." Among the projects it is pursuing is the creation of a warrior who can fight twenty-four hours a day, seven days straight. "Eliminating the need for sleep while maintaining the high level of both cognitive and physical performance of the individual will create a fundamental change in war-fighting," says the Defense Sciences Office, the unit of DARPA responsible for bridging any potential gap between new technology and the military.²⁷ The corporate front has similar expectations of its warriors.

The discourse surrounding Modafinil attests to a particular way of living and regulation of conduct that alters how time is managed and stretches the limits of the body. As Foucault argues, medicine is not conceived only as an intervention or cure: "It was also supposed to define, in the form of a corpus of knowledge and rules, a way of living, a reflective mode to oneself, to one's body, to wakefulness and sleep, to the various activities and the environment."²⁸ The capitalistic potential of Modafinil is realized by

the fact that the drug only really works when you are working. According to a test subject, in an interview titled “Get Ready for 24-Hour Living” in *The New Scientist*: “I wouldn’t say it makes me feel more alert or less sleepy. It’s just that thoughts of tiredness don’t occur to me. If there’s a job at hand that I should be doing, I’m focused, but if I’m watching a movie or something, there is no effect.”²⁹ The last line of the article reads: “To all intents and purposes we are already too far down the road of the 24-hour society to turn back. For millions of people, good sleep and productive wakefulness are already elusive, night work or nightlife a reality, and the ‘stimulant-sedative’ loop all too familiar.”³⁰ As wakefulness increases among certain populations and night productivity becomes the norm, the already overworked and overconsuming have more to do. Instead of sleep, the business traveler is offered an elaborate cocktail of military tactics, spa services, pharmaceuticals, technological gadgets, and commodities. Being tired is a requirement of labor, but being tired *and* unproductive is not a viable option. Within this temporal infrastructure, it is difficult to set a limit to the body’s productive capacity for work. The jet-lagged and time-zone-jumping bodies of contemporaneity are instead invited to enter into the architecture of time maintenance. This architecture is designed to meld their physiological ability and the ideological necessity to stay in time.

Temporal Architectures to the Rescue

The modern airport appears to be haunted by the specter of public space. Simulacra of town squares with street lamps, murals, and park benches fill the concourse halls and gates of the international airport. In Paris’s Charles de Gaulle airport, mock plazas with chrome benches, gaslights, and graffiti can be found throughout the departure zones. At the Charlotte Douglas airport in North Carolina, white rocking chairs are scattered across the terminal byways and walkways, signifying the neighborly porch culture of Southern aspirations. At the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport there is a deliberate nonpolicing of the homeless who find shelter and other means of survival at the airport.³¹ Here urban planners have encouraged city officials to consider the airport as a central space of civic life rather than demarcated and gated off from the rest of the city. In many ways the public-space decor at the airport reflects the anxiety over the diminishing of virtuous and sacred space as well as the realization that the airport, though privatized and exclusive space, is still more public than most other places.

The faux public spaces seem to beckon, to promise a prefab community, saying: “Here we are, strangers in shared space. We offer an instant public, while you wait.” It is hard to tell if these installations that signify a vibrant public are invitations to reconvene and to gather, to recognize a mutual humanity in the context of a world that feels elusive and full of missed connections, or nostalgic curiosities, memorials to something that has long passed. Either way, the installations’ existence speaks to the persistence of democracy’s spatial imaginary: the need for open and accessible space. Against the hustle and bustle of the movements of the travelers and the airport laborers through time, these spatial markers of democracy stand still, most often deserted.

Along with public-space decor—an immersive environment oriented around time maintenance—an elaborate temporal infrastructure has arrived at the airport. It combines technologies and human labor that allow frequent business travelers to recalibrate and get resituated within the particular time demands of global capital. The airport’s temporal infrastructure attends to accidents and risks within a biopolitical economy of time. It does the reproductive work to enhance, activate, and affectively transform the body’s capacity to produce as well as alter the subject’s experience of time to match the rhythm of a capitalist work ethic. This temporal infrastructure maintains highly structured temporal experiences and normalizes a set of mutually reinforcing conceptions of time: (1) time management is the individual’s responsibility; (2) one must work harder to stay in time; and (3) being tired is a slow person’s excuse for being unproductive.

There are at least two contradictory yet intertwined attributes that mark these technologies of time maintenance. First, they are what Patricia Clough calls “affective technologies,” those technologies that work on the physical body to produce capacities beyond one’s organic-physiological constraints.³² Second, the temporal infrastructure incorporates a component of care that is meaningfully linked to traditional forms of women’s work or feminized labor. These technologies offer care in the most maternal of ways by rocking jet-lagged bodies to sleep, massaging backs, and providing aroma-therapeutic mists and gentle touch (see figure 1.1). The masculine force of speed is tempered with a feminized form of maternal care.³³ With special sheets, night-lights, and bathing routines, the subjects of value are coddled through time managing interventions, while more of their labor time is extracted via a qualitative form of time control. Bio-

The new Club World cradle seat. Lullaby not included.



Introducing the unique new business class cradle seat. It doesn't simply recline but tilts as a whole raising your knees and relieving your body of stress and pressure. Pity you may not be awake to enjoy all the other changes on new Club World.

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FIGURE 1.1. A British Airways advertisement from 1996 for the New Club World Cradle Seat. June 10, 1996. *New Yorker* 4/5.



FIGURE 1.2. The Boeing Dreamliner interior was designed to fight jet lag. Image retrieved from <http://newlantern.com/innovation-economy/boeings-dreamliner-is-no-longer-a-dream/>.

power is exceptionally high touch. The temporal infrastructure operates like a cradle, but its ultimate form arrives as a jet.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner, “the plane that fights jet-lag,” is said to eliminate the major factors that cause jet lag by reducing cabin pressure and controlling cabin humidity (see figure 1.2).³⁴ The jet is also equipped with an air-filtration system and a quieter engine so that sleep is not as easily disrupted. The Emirates A380 that flies between New York and Dubai provides “time-zone transition” within the cabin interior that simulates the time of day at the destination.³⁵ As the flight progresses, the cabin ceiling emulates a night sky with a blue hue and the sparkle of stars. As time passes the light changes to indicate the rising sun. The Emirates is flaunted as a “hotel in the sky,” offering private cabins, showers, and massages.

Back on the ground, Hotel Okura in Amsterdam offers a complete customized jet-lag program. Time spent at the hotel is referred to as a “program” instead of a “stay,” thus reflecting the programmatic nature of neo-

liberal projects for self-maximization.³⁶ The program at Hotel Okura includes exercise, light therapy, and carefully planned meals to combat jet lag through nutrition. The hotel's website instructs travelers to "take the active route to reducing jet lag effects. . . . You'll be tired from traveling but you will be surprised how well you perform at that next business meeting."³⁷ The "jet-lag concept room," designed by the Starwood Hotels and Resorts, offers an entirely new environment for the jet-lagged and over-extended individual living in the fast lane. Starwood and Philips Lighting have designed the room with blue lights for phototherapy. Reebok, another investor in the room, designed exercise routines and equipment. Beyond lighting and fitness, the hotel group has created its own line of bedding, which includes a mattress with ten layers, sheets and pillows, and a range of aromatherapy products. There are blacked-out window shades to turn day into night. A light box situated above the desk provides light therapy while one is working. In the shower an aromatic mix of lavender and eucalyptus mists are released straight out of the showerhead. The shower also boasts a high-intensity lamp that purportedly activates the "third receptor" of the retina and enhances wakefulness. Starwood Hotels and Resorts has also teamed up with Meditainment media company, which is working on a lineup of what it calls "media meditation," a genre that blurs the medical, meditation, and mediation. The company has created SleepTV, a channel that hotel patrons can turn to for guided meditation. The room is equipped with a sound box of fifty different noises that can fill up the room, including rainfall or waves. Beside the bed are "sleep vials" filled with essential oils that trigger the olfactory senses to provide calm and relaxation.

The Park Hyatt in Toronto, specifically its Stillwater Spa, also advertises its services as fixing the road warrior's body and soul, and fingertips. Stillwater offers "the high-tech hand massage" to ease "blue thumb" tenderness that results from the use of miniaturized technologies.³⁸ While labor and leisure already blur in this example, increasingly spas are designed as spaces to replace the boardroom, providing treatments while power brokers meet.³⁹

At Charles de Gaulle, light therapy is also on offer in a specially designed structure that allows travelers to walk right in and lie down. "Journey management" is a service offered by a "fatigue risk" management firm called Circadian Technologies, which coordinates companies' travel when employees are flying from different time zones. In the line of fatigue risk comes MetroNaps, whose clients include Google, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and

Procter & Gamble. MetroNaps has created a few different versions of the Energy Pod. The pods are found in private offices as well as public places, such as Vancouver International Airport and the Empire State Building (see figure 1.3). Customers can enter the pod for a quick nap in guaranteed privacy under a protective cover. The pod will rock back and forth to aid in sleep and provide an aromatic mist for a peaceful wake-up call. Attendants service the pod by wiping it down after every customer. Nemorelax is another company that offers pods for “an oasis of calm in busy, transit, crowded, and stressful environments” for thirty minutes at a time. The pods are for working, watching (films), sleeping, or talking (on the phone). A Nemorelax suite consists of six pods and covers a minimum of 110 square feet, with an encircling cocoon for extra tranquility.⁴⁰ While pods appear in public spaces, there are also full-service napping spas. YeloSpa in Manhattan offers midday naps that are sold for five dollars a minute (see figure 1.4).

Sleeping in public is often considered illegal in the context of antihomless laws. But it depends on who is falling asleep and how they sleep. Tokyo is interesting in this light, as sleeping in public on the subway is an act of creative and productive time maintenance. It indicates hard work rather than laziness or transgression from social norms. A dark business suit absolves a sleepyhead from regulation. Napping in public is sanctioned insofar as it is a power nap. Likewise, the frequent business traveler at the airport is absolved from the feminized, lazy, slovenly connotation of nap taking when a technological device or the labor of others is present. The advertisement of the motherly figure cradling the business traveler doesn't leave the impression that the frequent business traveler is a baby. Instead, it works to reinforce the frequent business traveler's status as a subject of enhanced value while maintaining an ideology of gendered time and labor. Everyone in the area is reminded that the frequent business traveler is a hard worker. The temporal privilege of business travelers is most apparent in the fact that the management of their time occurs as public spectacle. Their retreat is advertised, made public (see figure 1.5).

Public napping pods also indicate that sleep is both a new space and time, amenable to direct market and corporate intervention. Sleep time is treated as a transit space for the redistribution of temporal power, a site of traction for capital. Shut-eye is no longer the dreaming hour, free from trading, transactions, and being productive. Time (and space) for sleep is present in the capitalist grid, and is therefore able to be bought and sold.

The infrastructure of time is not devised of technological parts only. The



FIGURE 1.3. (top) The MetroNap pod. The founder and CEO of MetroNaps, Arshad Chowdry, is in one of his own creations. Image retrieved from the biography page of Chowdry's website, <http://arshadchowdhury.com/biography/>.
FIGURE 1.4. (bottom) YeloSpa Napping Chair at the YeloSpa in Midtown Manhattan. <http://www.yelonyc.com/>.

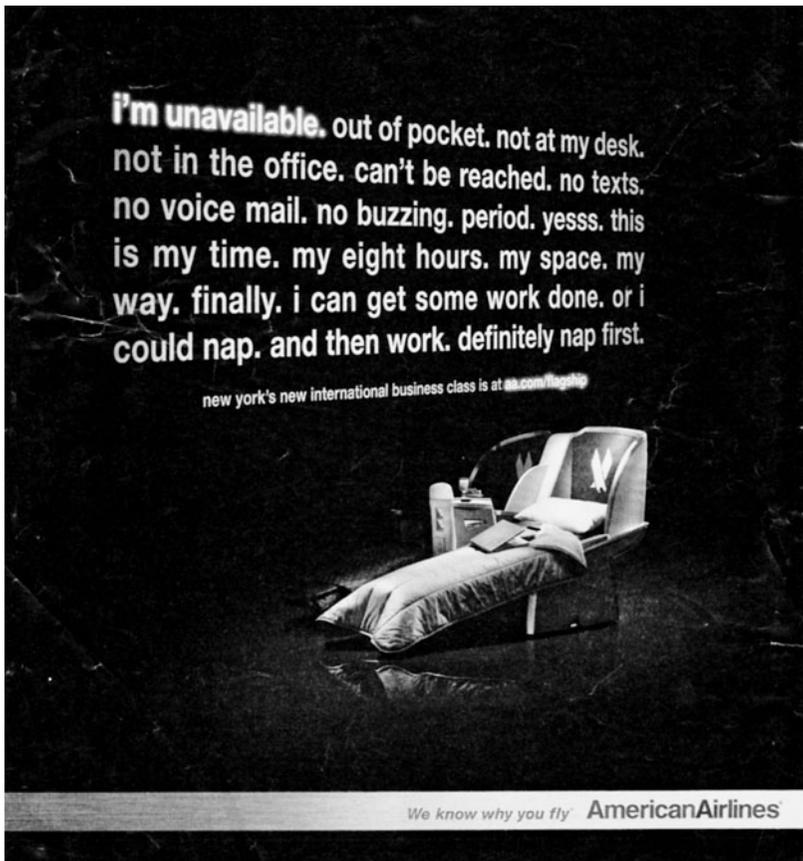


FIGURE 1.5. “This is my time.” An American Airlines advertisement from 2011 for the new international business class air bed. Images such as these increasingly fill the terminals of international airports to distinguish the business class as a particularly busy and tired class in need of rest.

labor of others is also a significant part of the frequent business traveler’s temporal infrastructure. In fact, frequent business travelers themselves quite often orchestrate a system of labor support in order to maintain their exceptional temporality. Claire explains her network of support:

I have certain hotels. I have a driver. I have hired help at home. I have a person who would drive me to and from the airport. I had people who knew my routine and made it easy as possible for me. I went to the same hotel, same drivers. I don’t have to think. I can

try and focus on what I have to do. If I was teaching, working, one on one, my mind and space could be focused just on that. I have a network of people, places, comfortable to me, and I can just sit back and relax, work, sleep, and it is very helpful.

In his self-help guide for business travelers, Robert L. Jolles gives many examples of employing labor in order to stay en route and in time. He directs: “Stop taking your car to the airport, and use a taxi. If you are in Washington DC, you can use Sam, my driver. He’d love your business. If not, find a Sam in your city.”⁴¹ The labor support for the harried on-the-go business traveler may no longer include “secretaries,” as Darryl indicated earlier, but temporal architectures require workers. The frequent business traveler’s labor demands also reorganizes the time of others. People are needed to drive at all hours of the night. Front desks need to be occupied overnight. Security guards are needed to stand in the foyers of corporations during the night hours. Offices are cleaned while employees are at home sleeping. Homes are cleaned while the same people are at work. Maids are trained under the circadian-rhythm standard to accommodate the jet-lagged traveler.⁴² Remote assistants are hired to take care of menial tasks while frequent business travelers and other entrepreneurial types are asleep or in the air. While capital develops at the expense of bodies, it makes clear which bodies will be taken care of. These technologies of time maintenance reinforce the idea that subjects of value—here the frequent business travelers—cannot be easily replaced, but the secondary labor they depend on can. The commodity market and lifestyle industry are one step ahead of their self-acknowledged alienation. The technologies of time maintenance are machines for the social reproduction of a particular temporality and their value, that of the frequent business traveler. But at the same time there is also the social reproduction of other temporalities, ones that are increasingly devalued.

Speed Waiting

Airports keep capital and bodies on time and on track.⁴³ After 9/11 international business travel slowed for a short period, but “let’s roll” meant “let’s fly”—keep working. Since 9/11, airport waiting times have increased—people are expected to spend more time at the gates. The eighty-six minutes of time that passengers average between clearing security and waiting

for takeoff is an unaccounted for time, open to investment by retailers and other machinations of global capital.⁴⁴ Waiting is a differential temporal experience for the frequent business traveler. In fact, airport waiting is said to cost businesses billions in lost productivity.⁴⁵ Even in the context of this deliberate slowing down, it is telling that business travelers still encounter their worlds as unparalleled speed. In the airport, the typically slow experience of waiting is transformed, for the business traveler, into yet another element of life in the fast lane.

As Ameche confirms in *The Woman Road Warrior*, “no business traveler wanted to spend any more time than was absolutely necessary either in the airport or in the plane before departure.”⁴⁶ Waiting is not a universal condition or experience. Jeremy Rifkin’s *Time Wars*, published in 1987, considers the politics of waiting to be a class matter, where the past aligns to the masses and the future to the elites. He argues, “A monopoly in every society begins with severing people from control of their own future, making them prisoners of the present. Unable to gain access to the future, people become pawns in the hands of the temporal pyramid.”⁴⁷ In *Pascalian Meditations*, Pierre Bourdieu also explains the politics of waiting in relation to the economic and social conditions of possibility: “The empty time that has to be killed is opposed to the full (or well-filled) time of the busy person who, as we say, does not notice time passing—whereas paradoxically, powerlessness, which breaks the relation of immersion in the imminent, makes one conscious of the passage of time, as when waiting.”⁴⁸ Temporal power takes on a performative element. The frantic colonization of the seats at the gate by the business travelers after they’ve departed from the business lounge speaks to the unacceptable status of waiting. (That is, of course, if they weren’t able to bypass the gate altogether with expedited boarding rights.) As they sit for a short time, undifferentiated from the economy classes accustomed to waiting, you’ll often hear the businessman take to his phone. His taking up of space is gendered as well; he disregards the fact that he is sharing the gate with others, and assumes that his time takes precedence in the ostensibly communal space. He talks loudly in codes and acronyms, “tell Jim I got his APR file and I’m just waiting on BRT to get back with the 145 before I send it off to PR.” In this otherwise empty time, the business traveler has had his waiting legitimized by the closing of the deal, by spending empty time wisely. The frequent business travelers can make themselves matter in otherwise uneventful time, reaffirming that waiting is a temporal condition reserved for others. For them, life is full.

The rise of a temporal architecture elevates the cultural significance of waiting from the dead time of doing nothing to a time of self-improvement and a privileged moment of reprieve. Everyone manages time in one way or the other, for better or for worse. But for most populations, the management of time is more or less internal or at least invisible—hidden from the view of others. And even for the frequent business traveler, waiting is not always a public act. It is often done in exclusive lounges with other temporally compatible subjects. But the emerging architecture of time designed for the business traveler offers a public display of busyness where the frequent business traveler, and other members of the socially jet-lagged, retreat privately in public view. It signals both the need for the frequent business traveler to take their time management into their own hands without diminishing their sense of temporal worth.

Departing Terminal Time

The technologies of care and outsourced forms of time management described here are evidence of an emerging culture of re-temporalization. They signal the fact that the very institutions that drain life are also in the business of providing extra energy. In the end, the limits of the individual body, a tired and potentially resistant body, are overcome through enhancing the subject's experience of time with commodified technologies and the labor of others. The institutional governance of time is embraced rather than rejected. There is no dead time of labor, and this is by design. The temporal infrastructure is a technological solution and a corporate response to the time of the frequent business traveler, one that produces new social relations of time across the social fabric while maintaining the uneven distribution of time.

What surfaces in consideration of these interviews, these discourses of speed that permeate the world of the frequent business traveler, and the incipient temporal infrastructure, is that being tired by the contemporary speed of life is a specific kind of tired. There is no uniform fatigue in this world full of tired people. Claire, Darryl, and Ken admit that they don't really need to work solely for financial reasons any more. How fast is this world, then, where it is acknowledged that they do not even need to keep up? The discursive power of speed is nearly irresistible.

Belief in speedup enables the business traveler to both feel independent and self-sufficient while allowing for biopolitical interventions that

keep him or her within a pace and path commensurate with global capital. Speed is by no means a generalized cultural or economic phenomenon. In the case of the business traveler, speed is not a pace of life but an experience of time, one temporality in the multiple and interdependent constellations of time.

The tired body of the frequent business traveler is a grave economic risk for global capital. The run-down body of the business traveler is in danger of drifting off; the travelers are not materially impoverished but are increasingly and exceptionally fatigued. The body of the frequent business traveler operates as a very particular circulatory site, a point of transfer and exchange within the global economy. It is a human node in the network of information and capital, a potentially blocked source of energy and capitalist accumulation. Thus, the emotions and bodily states that result from this labor are those to which biopower must directly respond. These worked-upon subjects, however, often welcome biopolitical interventions. Within the biopolitical economy of time, for subjects of temporal worth, biopower is high touch. It can often feel good.