<metaspace>
a re- reading of John Barlow
video in 4 parts of one minute each

> *"Maybe RW (Real World) is not the final arbiter of what's real after all."*
>
> Peter Ludlow
> in "Crypto Anarchy, Cyberstates and Pirate Utopias"

a re-reading ?

<meta space> a re-reading of John Barlow is a 4 parts vidéo of one minute each. it has been created for V.I.R:us , the web-art project on virtual utopias launched by meetopia.net.
In each part of this work, some extracts from "A declaration of the Idependance of Cyberspace", of John F Barlow are staged in a visual and sound landscape which becomes a mental environment of Cyberspace.

Parts of images come from computers animations, some are extracted from documentaries on open sources projects and Linux system. Most of these contents are available, more or less freely, directly from the Web.
Sounds have been downloaded from websites, and are under creative common licences which allow anybody to use and transform them or part of them.

John Barlow has written his manifesto ten years ago, in Davos, in february 1996. He was reacting to the Telecom Reform Act, voted the day before by the US senate, allowing a bigger control of the contents exchanged on the Internet.

We can understand this modification of law as the first step in a long run of modification and creation of legislations being used in the "slow" disintegration of the digital rights.

I like very much John Barlow's text.
This is the kind of manifesto which stages a libertarian world integrated into the technologies of the digital revolution, a topic developped by the mediatized utopias since the begining of the 90s.

In the world after September 11th, 2001, the centralized powers relayed by embedded media draw on the new technologies as means of control, restriction and manipulation (of data and information).
An alienating technological universe is   developing insidiously right in front of our eyes. The discourse emphasizing security which is attached to it serve mostly as an alibi to the slow dismantling of our civic freedom.
Technologies used in the control and repression of contents and sharing, strengthen totalitarian structures and remind us of the disturbing and dystopian universes of "1984", "Brave New World", "Matrix" or "Gattaca".

The Digtial Technologies have disrupted our understanding of the «real» and our social means of communication. They are creating new virtual and existing spaces in which borders and limits of the world we have defined as ; "real" are overtaken. Digital data and code - as a meta language -   circulate and replicate in these environments, which become the democratic platforms of the Digital Era.

Barlow's text evoke a metaphoric universe in which the new technologies can open horizons of possibilities and contribute to build connected communities, creating developing and replicating contents shared and exchanged as collective goods. Technologies that carry then the viruses of a liberation of a new kind.

In the world after September 11th, 2001, horizons are closing up and the imperial war is deploying on humanity. The utopian universes keep then all their virulence. In a world that is closing up, they create spaces, a " meta space " which open new fields, redefine our identities, and our multiple realities, organize our relationships in horizontality, and replay a brotherly, united and pacified humanity, upon the ruins of the old patriarcal world. An ideal we have never stopped dreaming of. This is a way of resistance.

nathalie perrin, october 2006