# K Answers

## Cybernetics K

### 2AC---AT: Cybernetics K---T/L

#### Algorithmic subjects cannot replicate humanity — rather, orienting policies around them solves.

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Increasingly, “power” grasps the subjects of algorithmic governmentality no longer through their physical body, nor through their moral conscience – the traditional holds of power in its legal discursive form [13]

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As well as its disciplinary form – to use Foucauldian models of… – but through multiple “profiles” assigned to them, often automatically, based on digital traces of their existence and their everyday journeys. Algorithmic governmentality is quite close to what Foucault already had in mind with his concept of security apparatuses:

14The fact of power having a digital rather than a physical “grasp” in no way means that individuals are ontologically and existentially reducible to networks of data that can be recombined by apparatuses, nor that they are totally under the grip of these apparatuses. It simply means that, irrespective of their capacity for understanding, willpower and expression, “power” approaches them no longer on the basis of these capacities, but rather on that of their “profiles” (as a potential fraudster, a consumer, a potential terrorist, a student with high potential, etc.). Algorithmic governmentality further exacerbates the ambivalences of the time regarding the question of individualization. Our era is often considered as that of the victory of the individual, in the sense that an individualization of services is observed, due to the possibility afforded by statistical practices to closely target the needs and dangers specific to each individual. At the same time, it is also seen as an era in which individuals are jeopardized, as their intimacy, privacy, autonomy and self-determination are threatened by those very practices. Some even write about the risks of pure desubjectification. Both hypotheses – that of the individual at the centre of everything, and that of desubjectification – are, in our opinion, equally wrong. Let us see why.

Is personalization really a form of individuation?

15IBM presents “individualized” marketing – “smart marketing” – as a revolution that is turning marketing and advertising into “consumer-oriented services”, sounding the great return of the customer-king who, placed at the heart of companies’ concerns, no longer has to even conceive of or express his or her desires, which are commands. In the words of Éric Schmidt, the CEO of Google: “we know roughly who you are, roughly what you care about, roughly who your friends are [in other words we know your ‘school of fish’] the technology will be so good it will be very hard for people to watch or consume something that has not in some sense been tailored for them” (in other words a seemingly individualized prediction would be possible). In fact, this form of individualization resembles more of a hyper-segmentation and a hyper-plasticity of commercial offers than comprehensive consideration of the needs and desires specific to each person. In fact the aim is of course precisely not so much to tailor the offer to individuals’ spontaneous desires (assuming such a thing exists), as to adapt those desires to the offer by tailoring sales strategies (the way of presenting the product, of pricing it, etc.) to each person’s profile. Thus, “dynamic pricing” strategies or the adaptation of certain goods’ or services’ price to each potential customer’s “willingness to pay” appear to already be in place on certain airline ticket sales websites. This is not only about individualization: it is indeed market segmentation. Here is a rather trivial example: you go onto the website of an airline whose name we shall not mention (call it Company Y) and find out about the price of a flight to Pisa from Brussels, leaving in three days. Say that the price shown is €180. As this is a bit too expensive for you, you go onto another company’s website (Company Z), or you look elsewhere online, to find a cheaper ticket. Suppose that you do not find better. You return to Company Y’s website and – surprise surprise – you realise that the ticket price has increased by €50 within less than half an hour, just the time for you to do your research. This is simply because you have been attributed a “captive traveller” profile: based on your online browsing and your desired departure date, the website has detected that you really need this airplane ticket and that you will therefore be prepared to spend an extra €50 to get it, especially since you will have the impression that if you do not hurry up to buy it, the price will only increase. If, instead of reacting “logically” and buying the ticket as fast as possible, you change computer and IP address and visit the airline’s website once again, your ticket will cost you €180 instead of €230. Why? Because the vendor relies on your first reflex being to buy as soon as possible following the “alert” raised: the price is increasing, and fast. In this case, the consequences are relatively trivial. But this example clearly shows how, rather than scrupulously respecting each singular consumer’s individual desires, the approach automatically detects certain (purchase) propensities and the (in)elasticity of individual demand regarding a price variation to trigger a purchase. The latter will then be based on a reflex response to an alert stimulus short-circuiting individual reflexivity and the formation of singular desire.

16The aim is therefore to prompt individuals to act without forming or formulating a desire. Algorithmic governance thus seems to signal the culmination of a dispersal of the spatial, temporal and linguistic conditions of subjectification and individuation. These are being replaced by objective, operational regulation of possible behaviours, based on “raw data” that carry no meaning on their own and whose statistical processing is primarily designed to accelerate flows – avoiding any form of “detour” or subjective “reflexive suspension” between “stimuli” and their “reflex responses”. The fact that what thus “flows” is a-signifying is of no importance [14]

Because digital signals “can be computed quantitatively irrespective of their possible meaning” (Eco, 1976: 20 cited by Genosko, 2008), everything happens as though meaning were no longer absolutely necessary, as though the universe were already – independently of any interpretation – saturated with meaning, as though it were therefore no longer necessary for people to connect to one another through meaningful language, nor through any symbolic, institutional or conventional transcription. It consequently seems that the apparatuses of algorithmic governmentality consecrated both signifiers’ emancipation from the signified (quantification, algorithmic recombinations of profiles) and the substitution of signifiers with the signified (production of reality within the world itself – the only reality that “counts” for algorithmic governmentality is digital reality) (Rouvroy, 2013b). This assignation of human action to a preconscious stage has everything to do with what Bernard Stiegler calls proletarianization:

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“Historically, proletarianization was the loss of workers’ knowledge to machines, which absorbed this knowledge. Today, proletarianization is the standardization of behaviours through marketing and services, and the mechanization of minds through the externalization of knowledge in systems, such that these ‘minds’ no longer know anything about these information processing devices, of which they merely set the parameters. This is precisely what the electronic mathematization of financial decision making shows, and it affects everyone: employers, doctors, designers, intellectuals, leaders. More and more engineers take part in technical processes whose functioning they know nothing about, but which are ruining the world”.

(Stiegler, 2011)

18Maurizio Lazzarato sums up quite well how a-signifying semiotics, exemplified by digital behaviourism, produce machinic enslavement rather than subjective alienation:

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“If signifying semiotics have a function of subjective alienation, of ‘social subjection’, a-signifying semiotics have one of ‘machinic enslavement’. A-signifying semiotics synchronize and modulate the pre-individual and pre-verbal elements of subjectivity by causing the affects, perceptions, emotions, etc. to function like component parts, like the elements in a machine (machinic enslavement). We can all function like the input/output elements in semiotic machines, like simple television or Internet relays that facilitate or block the transmission of information, communication or affects. Unlike signifying semiotics, a-signifying semiotics recognize neither persons, nor roles, nor subjects. […] In the first case, the system speaks and generates speech; it indexes and folds the multiplicity of pre-signifying and symbolic semiotics over language, over linguistic chains, by giving priority to its representative functions. In the second case, however, the system does not generate discourse: it does not speak but it functions, setting things in motion by connecting directly to the ‘nervous system, the brain, the memory, etc.’ and activat[ing] the affective, transitivist, transindividual relations that are difficult to attribute to a subject, an individual, a me.”

(Lazzarato, 2006)

The paradoxes of personalization: an algorithmic governmentality without subjects but compatible with contemporary hyper-subjectification phenomena

20However “impressive” it may be, the hypothesis of desubjectification, of “the jeopardization of the individual”, of the individual diluted in networks, is in no way self-evident. One could even say that social networks and so on produce “hyper-subjects” – probably because for their users, they are full of signifying semiotics –, that many people have become obsessed with producing subjectivity, and that it has even become some individuals’ reason to live. It therefore seems too simplistic to us just to claim that the transformations underway produce desubjectification only, on the grounds that they weaken the bastions of intimacy (even this is debatable: certain devices in the information society, on the contrary, reinforce individuals’ isolation, sparing them from interacting with others…) and of privacy, and that they perhaps affect the conditions of autonomy and free choice (how this happens remains to be seen: intelligent environments sparing us from constantly having to make choices in perfectly trivial areas of life can also free our minds, make us available for more interesting intellectual tasks, make us more altruistic, etc.). Yet laws protecting privacy and personal data, essentially motivated by risks of personal, private or sensitive information being revealed, of inappropriate disclosures, of individuals losing control over “their” profiles and of infringements of the principles of individual autonomy and self-determination, have focused on erecting a series of essentially defensive and restrictive “barriers” around the individual.

21Without considering this as pointless, we would like to strongly emphasize this “algorithmic governance’s” indifference to individuals, insofar as it simply focuses on and controls our “statistical doubles”, in other words combinations of correlations, produced automatically and using big data, themselves constituted or collected “by default”. In short, what we are, “roughly”, to use Éric Schmidt’s term, is precisely no longer ourselves (singular beings) in any way. And that is precisely the problem, a problem which as we shall see is more the result of a rarefaction of subjectification processes and opportunities, of a difficulty to become subjects, than the product of a “de-subjectification” or jeopardization of the individual.

With this in mind, let us return to the question of the subject, or rather of “avoidance” of the subject in the three-stage normative process described above. The first thing to point out is the difficulty to produce algorithmic subjects who conceive of or think about themselves as such. First of all, as we have seen, the subject’s consent is weak when they share information (these data can often be used while still remaining anonymous, but this could just as well no longer be the case, as the meaning of their anonymity has become relative). That is not to say that this information is “stolen”, which would allow the subject to oppose it, to stand as a subject resisting such theft. Rather, we are witnessing a considerable decline in the “deliberate” nature of information disclosures – most of the time trivial, insignificant, segmented and decontextualized information –, of these “traces” whose subsequent trajectory and uses, for the “subject”, are unpredictable and uncontrollable, even if significant research investment is currently going into developing technical tools to allow computer service “users” to better control “their” data. Second, in terms of its processing, the main characteristic of the “knowledge” produced is that it appears to emerge directly from big data, without the hypothesis leading to this knowledge being pre-existent: the hypotheses themselves are “generated” from the data. Finally, the normative action deriving from these statistical processes will always be closer to action on / and therefore by the environment than to action on the individual themselves. The latter’s action no longer arises in direct confrontation with an external norm – law, average, definition of normality –; their realm of possibilities is directly organized within their environment.

23For these three reasons, we argue that both the force and the danger of the generalization of the statistical practices that we are witnessing lies not in these practices’ individual nature, but on the contrary in their autonomy or even their indifference to the individual. To put this as clearly as possible, our problem is not being stripped of what we considered as our own, or being forced to give up information that would violate our privacy or our freedom. Far more fundamentally, it stems from the fact that our statistical doubles are too detached from us, that we have no “relationship” with them, when at the same time contemporary normative actions are directed towards these statistical doubles in order to be effective. The confessional constructs the subject of the introspection which probes his/her soul, virtue, desires and deepest intentions, for through the process of confession “he who speaks promises to be what he affirms himself to be, precisely because he is just that” (Foucault, 2014: 16); the law produces subjects of law intent on their equality and the impartiality of procedures; and the average man once seemed too average compared to the singular subject likely to contradict this average. Algorithmic governance, however, neither produces nor provides an affordance for any active, consistent and reflexive statistical subject likely to lend it legitimacy or resist it [15]

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Our analysis claims a more nuanced stance regarding the trends…. That is precisely what we must now be attentive to, essentially through knowledge (even technical) and recognition of the discrepancy, the difference between these statistical representations and what constitutes individuals in their individuation processes, with the moments of spontaneity, the events and the sidesteps from possibilities anticipated that prevail in these processes.

#### Cybernetics isn’t conclusive---war machine isn’t a direct result of cybernetics

Hagmann 17 [Jonas Hagmann, 2017, “Security in the Society of Control: The Politics and Practices of Securing Urban Spaces,” International Political Sociology (2017)][\\pairie](file:///\\pairie)

Fourth and finally, the control society is associated with implicit and potential political projects and/or drivers. There is a widespread understanding that the perfection of control is fueled by neoliberal politics, the privatization of services, technological advances, and alarmist threat discourses—fear of terrorism especially (Munro 2002; Coaffee, O’Hare and Hawkesworth 2009). These elements stimulate an expansion of security dispositives that is uncontrolled and organized at the same time. Security instruments are seen growing horizontally in rhizomatic ways and with little strategic coherence (Rose 2000, 321–322), yet the advent of the control system is nonetheless deemed systematic and thus top-down overall (Coleman and Agnew 2007).2 And indeed, capitalism is recurrently identified as the one authority that, albeit rarely subjected to popular approval, orchestrates the control society and its apparatuses of security, which is why they are often associated with an implicit neoliberal agenda (Reid 2014).3 This political agenda is not the only one possible, of course, and following diagnoses of security dispositives encroaching on democratic politics, it is also not deemed desirable. That is to say that the comprehensiveness, exclusionary practices, totalizing aspirations, and implicit neoliberal inspirations of current security dispositives motivate scholars to critically engage the new control ensembles. Indeed, calls to problematize, resist, or even reject the new control systems abound in the literature (Lacy 2008). And although the components of such strategies or tactics are rarely specified in the scholarly literature (as opposed to activist writings elsewhere; see The Invisible Committee 2009), it is clear from the literature that followed the Postscript that new security dispositives should be met with resistant activities of some sort (Newman 2009; Deseriis 2011; Lundborg 2016). Taken together, it seems no exaggeration to state that with these analytical components, the Deleuzian control thesis advances an impressively rich, integrative, and topical research agenda. Even if the postulation of a neat paradigm shift from “discipline” to “control” seems overstated (Poster 2009)4—the control thesis directs attention to evolving varieties of functionally diverse security actors, the continuing recomposition of material and immaterial security assemblages, the multiple and evolving linkages between security and democratic politics writ large, and novel deterritorialization processes, as well as normative dimensions inherent in 2 It goes without saying that the postulation of a rhizomatic, yet systematic, expansion of security dispositives makes it difficult to identify the precise drivers of the latter process. Deseriis (2011) considers this challenge, to whose clarification Deleuzian scholarship contributed little, to reflect a deeper ambivalence in Marxist theorizing, namely the core question of whether capitalism organizes itself (a rhizomatic perspective set out in Marx’s Grundrisse) or whether it is orchestrated by a “capitalist general” (a systemic reading suggested in Das Kapital). 3 Seemingly, it is also the globalized nature of capitalism that motivates Deleuzian scholars to conclude a global control system—thus confusing characteristics of a driver of control with the nature of security dispositives’ own operation. 4 Since some “Deleuzian elements” had been anticipated or called for by Foucault already, such as the necessity to overcome institution-centric analyses of societal steering (Foucault 2004, 116-118, on the “crisis of disciplinary societies”; also Foucault 1978). Overall, and with the exception of Deleuze’s more explicit concerns with digitalism, privatization, and society’s ability to influence security dispositives perhaps, it thus seems useful to conceive of “control” more as an intensification and spatial expansion of the security arrangements set out by Foucault. Control is not a fundamental rejection of discipline, even if it is defined in relation to the latter. contemporary security management. Doing so, the Deleuzian framework advances a fairly integrative “critical” perspective on the interrelations between security dispositives, democratic politics, and emancipatory practices—indeed, more holistic maybe than the division of academic labor between Foucaultian/Bourdieuan, Arendtian, and Marxist approaches to security research (“Paris, Copenhagen, Aberystwyth”) allows. As important, the control framework allows a variety of highly current empirical observations to be engaged: Deleuzian control studies can address concerns about societies becoming governed ever more intimately in the name of security and about security dispositives becoming more intrusive and ubiquitous (Valverde 2010). It can situate the evolution of such logics and dispositives in broader contemporary processes such as technological innovation (evolving “infrastructural powers”), globalization (the reconfiguration of enclosures and borders), and urbanization (the intensification of the Foucaultian problem of population, or “coexistence”)5; and it can examine these through interscalar lenses (Delaney and Leitner 1997; Brenner 1999), addressing the variegated ways in which international security narratives become localized and local security dispositives transnationalized. Seen this way, the control thesis empowers highly topical and comprehensive accounts of the interplay between security ensembles, democratic politics, and normative choices and allows decidedly empirical “genealogies of governmentality” (Bevir 2010; Joseph 2010) across clinical levels of analysis. This said, a look at the contributions made thus far suggests that the control oriented literature has, in its applications to security, not exploited this potential very systematically. While the literature has offered sophisticated case studies and played a pioneering role in popularizing the control framework in the first place, some of its analyses appear surprisingly incomplete and little differentiated, if not outright overdrawn. Whether security dispositives indeed came to draw so strongly on private agents, for instance, clearly deserves further enquiry (Coleman and Agnew 2007), and so does their alleged reliance on digital instruments and pronounced flexibility (Blomley 2007; Bonelli and Ragazzi 2014; Meiches 2015). Whether the new security ensembles might reformulate democratic politics (Loader and Walker 2007), as opposed to closing it down, has not been answered conclusively, seemingly because the authoritarian penchant of security is considered wellproven among control scholars. The purported presence of global control warrants further analysis—not only because of the mere grandiosity of this statement but also given the literature’s strong reliance on insights from the United Kingdom and North America (e.g., Newman 2009; Vlcek 2010; Hallsworth and Lea 2011), that is, its narrow empirical base. The postulated linearity of the described shifts is counterintuitive, considering the genealogical method and ethos on which Deleuzian work draws, and the emphasis on terrorism as the most immediate justification for new control arrangements points to an exceedingly rapid reduction of security affairs to 9/11 discourses. Whether resistant practices are still to come, finally, is also a point to explore further, for most security studies applications of Deleuze’s control argument derive such need from the technical intrusiveness of new security instruments, not from an empirically verified absence of opposition to control ensembles (Merlingen 2006).Considering these limitations, it is important to challenge the Deleuzian control literature for its selectivity, its merits notwithstanding (Valverde 2010). Instead of providing holistic and contextualized accounts of contemporary security management and its variation across time and space, as its analytical set-up would permit (Goldstein 2010), its empirical contributions still emphasize some actors, instruments, and processes and ignore others. Today, such partial engagement with evolving security assemblages is little conducive to fostering a grounded understanding.

#### Cybernetic information capitalism is inevitable

Zuboff 19 [Shoshana Zuboff, 2019, “Surveillance Capitalism and the Challenge of Collective Action,” New Labor Forum, [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1095796018819461]\\pairie](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1095796018819461%5d\\pairie)

The Challenge to Collective Action How do they get away with it? Dozens of surveys conducted since 2008 attest to substantial majorities in the United States, the European Union, and around the world that reject the premises and practices of surveillance capitalism, yet it persists, succeeds, grows, and dominates, remaining largely uncontested by either existing or new forms of collective action.28 In other work I have detailed sixteen conditions that enabled this new logic of accumulation to root and flourish.29 Here I want to underscore two of these conditions: The first is the absence of organic reciprocities between surveillance capitalist firms and their populations. This absence produces the second condition, in which dependency replaces reciprocity as the fulcrum of this commercial project. A first answer to the question “How do they get away with it?” concerns a novel structural feature of this market form that diverges sharply from the history of market democracy. For all the failings, injustice, and violence of earlier forms of modern capitalism, the necessity of organic reciprocities with its populations has been a mark of endurance and adaptability. Symbolized in the twentieth century by Ford’s five-dollar day, these reciprocities reach back to Adam Smith’s original insights into the productive social relations of capitalism, in which firms rely on people as employees and customers. Smith argued that price increases had to be balanced with wage increases “so that the laborer may still be able to purchase that quantity of those necessary articles which the state of the demand for labor … requires that he should have.”30 By the 1980s, globalization and neoliberal ideology, operationalized in the shareholder-value movement, went a long way toward destroying these centuries-old reciprocities between capitalism and its communities. Surveillance capitalism completes the job. Instrumentarianism is a market project that converges with the digital to achieve its own unique brand of social domination. First, surveillance capitalists no longer rely on people as consumers. Instead, the axis of supply and demand orients the surveillance capitalist firm to businesses intent on anticipating the behavior of populations, groups, and individuals. The result is that populations are conceptualized as undifferentiated “users,” who are merely the sources of raw material for a digital-age production process aimed at a new business customer. Where individual consumers continue to exist in surveillance capitalist operations—purchasing smart appliances, digital assistants, dolls that spy, or behavior-based insurance policies, just to name a few examples—social relations are no longer founded on mutual exchange. In these and many other 12 New Labor Forum 00(0) instances, products and services are merely hosts for surveillance capitalism’s data extraction operations. For example, the concept of the “smart home” has become emblematic of this new asymmetry. By 2018 the global smart home market was valued at $36 billion USD and expected to reach $151 billion by 2023.31 The numbers betray an earthquake beneath their surface. Consider just one smart home device: the Nest thermostat owned by Alphabet, the Google holding company, and merged with Google in 2018.32 The Nest thermostat collects data about its usage and environment. It uses motion sensors and computation to “learn” the behaviors of a home’s inhabitants. Nest’s apps can also gather data from other connected products such as cars, ovens, fitness trackers, beds.33 Such systems can, for example, trigger lights if an anomalous motion is detected, signaling video and audio recording, and even sending notifications to homeowners or others. As a result of the merger with Google, the thermostat, like other Nest products, will be built with Google’s artificial intelligence capabilities, including its personal digital “Assistant.”34 The thermostat and its brethren devices create immense new stores of knowledge and therefore new power—but for whom? Wi-Fi-enabled and -networked, the thermostat’s intricate personalized data stores are uploaded to Google’s servers. Each thermostat comes with a “Privacy Policy,” a “Terms of Service Agreement,” and an “End-User Licensing Agreement.” These reveal oppressive privacy and security consequences in which sensitive household and personal information are shared with other smart devices, unnamed personnel, and third parties for the purposes of predictive analyses and sales to other unspecified parties. Nest takes little responsibility for the security of the information it collects and none for how the other companies in its ecosystem will put those data to use.35 A detailed analysis of Nest’s policies by two University of London scholars concluded that were one to enter into the Nest ecosystem of connected devices and apps, each with its own equally burdensome and audacious terms, the purchase of a single home thermostat entails the need to review nearly a thousand so-called contracts.36 Should the customer refuse to agree to Nest’s stipulations, the Terms of Service indicate that the functionality and security of the thermostat will be deeply compromised, no longer supported by the necessary updates meant to ensure its reliability and safety. The consequences can range from frozen pipes to failed smoke alarms to an easily hacked internal home system.37 The absence of consumer reciprocities is complemented by the absence of employment reciprocities. By historical standards the large surveillance capitalists employ relatively few people compared to their unprecedented computational resources. This pattern, in which a small, highly educated workforce leverages the power of a massive capital-intensive knowledge-production infrastructure, is called “hyperscale.”38 The historical discontinuity of the hyperscale business operation becomes apparent by comparing seven decades of General Motors (GM) employment levels and market capitalization to recent post-IPO (initial public offering) data from Google and Facebook. (I have confined the comparison here to Google and Facebook because both were pure surveillance capitalist firms even before their public offerings.) Nest takes little responsibility for the security of the information it collects and none for how the other companies in its ecosystem will put those data to use. From the time they went public to 2016, Google and Facebook steadily climbed to the heights of market capitalization, with Google reaching $532 billion by the end of 2016 and Facebook at $332 billion, without Google ever employing more than 75,000 people or Facebook more than 18,000. General Motors took four decades to reach its highest market capitalization of $225.15 billion in 1965, when it employed 735,000 women and men.39 Most startling is that GM employed more people during the height of the Great Depression than either Google or Facebook employs at their heights of market capitalization. Zuboff 13 The GM pattern is the iconic story of the United States in the twentieth century, before globalization, neoliberalism, the shareholdervalue movement, and plutocracy unraveled the public corporation and the institutions of what historian Karl Polanyi called “the double movement,” a network of “measures and policies … integrated into powerful institutions designed to check the action of the market relative to labor, land, and money.”40 Polanyi’s studies led him to conclude that the operations of a self-regulating market are profoundly destructive when allowed to run free of such countervailing laws and policies. It was the institutions of the double movement that tamed GM’s employment policies with fair labor practices, unionization, and collective bargaining, emblematic of stable reciprocities during the pre-globalization decades of the twentieth century. The societal result was predictable. In the 1950s, for example, 80 percent of adults said that “big business” was a good thing for the country, 66 percent believed that business required little or no change, and 60 percent agreed, “the profits of large companies help make things better for everyone who buys their products or services.”41 [A]…survey in 2015 found 91 percent of respondents disagreeing that the collection of personal information “without my knowing” is a fair tradeoff for a price discount. Although some critics blamed GM’s institutional reciprocities for its failure to adapt to global competition in the late 1980s, leading eventually to its bankruptcy in 2009, analyses have shown that chronic managerial complacency and doomed financial strategies bore the greatest share of responsibility for the firm’s legendary decline, a conclusion that is fortified by the successes of the German automobile industry in the twenty-first century, where strong labor institutions formally share decision-making authority.42 Nearly seventy years later and in the absence of democratic checks on the power of surveillance capitalists, the picture is very different. For example, a major 2009 survey found that when Americans are informed of the ways that companies gather data for targeted online ads, 73 to 86 percent rejected such advertising.43 Another substantial survey in 2015 found 91 percent of respondents disagreeing that the collection of personal information “without my knowing” is a fair tradeoff for a price discount. Fifty-five percent disagreed that it was a fair exchange for improved services.44 In 2016 PEW Research reported only 9 percent of respondents as very confident in trusting social media sites with their data and 14 percent very confident about trusting companies with personal data. More than 60 percent wanted to do more to protect their privacy and believed there should be more regulation to protect privacy.45 Hyperscale firms have become emblematic of modern digital capitalism, and as capitalist inventions they present significant social and economic challenges, including their impact on employment and wages, industry concentration, and monopoly.46 In 2017 there were 24 hyperscale firms operating 320 data centers with anywhere between thousands and millions of servers (Google and Facebook are among the largest). One hundred more data centers are expected to be online by late 2018. Microsoft invested $20 billion in 2017, and in 2018 Facebook announced plans to invest $20 billion in a new hyperscale data center in Atlanta. According to one industry report, hyperscale firms are also building the world’s networks, especially subsea cables, which means that “a large portion of the global internet traffic is now running through private networks owned or operated by hyperscalers.” In 2016 Facebook and Google teamed up to build a new subsea cable between the United States and Hong Kong, described as the highest-capacity transpacific route to date.47 The surveillance capitalists who operate at hyperscale or outsource to hyperscale operations dramatically diminish any reliance on their societies as sources of employees, and the few for whom they do compete are largely drawn from the most-rarified strata of data science. The absence of organic reciprocities with people as sources of either consumers or employees is a matter of exceptional importance in light of the historical relationship 14 New Labor Forum 00(0) between market capitalism and democracy. In fact, the origins of democracy in both Britain and America have been traced to these very reciprocities. Even a brief glance at these histories can help us grasp the degree to which surveillance capitalism diverges from capitalism’s past, a divergence in which an extreme structural independence from people lays the foundation for surveillance capitalism’s unique approach to knowledge that we have called “radical indifference.” In Britain, the rise of volume production and its wage-earning labor force in the nineteenth century contributed not only to workers’ economic power but also to a growing sense of labor’s political power and legitimacy. This produced a new sense of interdependence between ordinary people and elites. Economists Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson show that the rise of democracy in nineteenth-century Britain was inextricably bound to industrial capitalism’s dependency on the “the masses” and their contribution to the prosperity made possible by the new organization of production.48 Acemoglu and Robinson conclude that the “dynamic positive feedback” between “inclusive economic institutions” (i.e., institutions defined by reciprocities) and political institutions was critical to Britain’s substantial and non-violent democratic reforms. Inclusive economic institutions, they argue, “level the playing field,” especially when it comes to the fight for power, making it more difficult for elites to “crush the masses” rather than accede to their demands. Reciprocities in economics produced and sustained reciprocities in politics. “Clamping down on popular demands,” they write, “and undertaking a coup against inclusive political institutions would … destroy … [economic] gains, and the elites opposing greater democratization and greater inclusiveness might find themselves among those losing their fortunes from this destruction.”49 The spread of democracy also depended on the reciprocities of consumption, and the American Revolution is the outstanding example of this dynamic. Historian T.H. Breen argues in his path-breaking book, The Marketplace of Revolution, that it was the violation of these reciprocities that set the American Revolution into motion, uniting disparate provincial strangers into a radical new patriotic force. Breen explains that American colonists had come to depend on the “empire of goods” imported from England, and that this dependency instilled the sense of a reciprocal social contract: “For ordinary people, the palpable experience of participating in an expanding Anglo-American consumer market” intensified their sense of a “genuine partnership” with England. Eventually, the British Parliament famously misjudged the rights and obligation of this partnership, imposing a series of taxes that turned imported goods such as cloth and tea into “symbols of imperial oppression.” Breen describes the unprecedented inventiveness of a political movement originating in the shared experience of consumption, the outrage at the violation of essential producer–consumer interdependencies, and the determination to make “goods speak to power.” The translation of consumer expectations into democratic revolution occurred in three waves, beginning in 1765, when the Stamp Act triggered popular protests, riots, and organized resistance finally expressed in the “nonimportation movement.” (Today we would call it a consumer boycott.) As Breen tells it, the details of the Act were less important than the colonists’ realization that England did not perceive them as political or economic equals bound in mutually beneficial reciprocities. “By compromising the Americans’ ability to purchase the goods they desired,” he writes, “Parliament had revealed an intention to treat the colonists like secondclass subjects,” levying a heavy price “on the pursuit of material happiness.” In the absence of the organic reciprocities between producers, customers, and employees that bind populations in a shared fate, “user” dependency is the fulcrum of the surveillance capitalist project. Surveillance capitalism spread across the internet just as digital communications became the salient means of social participation. A 2010 BBC poll found that 79 percent of people in twenty-six countries considered internet access to be a fundamental human right.50 Six years later in 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council would adopt specific language on the importance of internet access.51 In the United States, many people call the emergency services number, 911, on those rare occasions when Facebook is Zuboff 15 down.52 Most people find it difficult to withdraw from these utilities, and many ponder if it is even possible.53 The result has been an involuntary merger of personal necessity and economic extraction, as the same channels that we rely on for daily logistics, social interaction, work, education, health care, access to products and services, and much more, now double as supply chain operations for surveillance capitalism’s surplus flows. The result is that effective social participation leads through the means of behavioral modification, eroding the choice mechanisms that once adhered to the private realm––exit, voice, and loyalty. There can be no exit from processes that are intentionally designed to bypass individual awareness and on which we must depend for effective daily life. Users lack reliable channels for voice. Loyalty is an empty suit, as participation is better explained in terms of necessity, dependency, helplessness, resignation, the foreclosure of alternatives, and enforced ignorance.

#### Data is good for policymaking

Reiter 15 [Dan Reiter, 08-27-2015, “Scholars Help Policymakers Know Their Tools," War On The Rocks, [https://warontherocks.com/2015/08/scholars-help-policymakers-know-their-tools/]\\pairie](https://warontherocks.com/2015/08/scholars-help-policymakers-know-their-tools/%5d\\pairie) \\iris

A third critique is that much of this academic work on foreign policy tools is unusable by policymakers because it is too quantitative and technically complex. Here, echoing a point made by Erik Voeten, there is a danger in not appreciating the importance of rigorous research design, including sophisticated quantitative techniques, for crafting effective policy. Sophisticated research design is not the enemy of effective policy, it is critically necessary for it. Certainly, the current academic focus on building research designs that permit causal inference speaks exactly to what policymakers care about the most: if implementing a certain policy will cause the desired outcome.

Or, put differently, bad research designs make for bad public policy. A classic example is school busing. In the 1960s and early 1970s, some cities adopted voluntary integration programs for public schools, in which families could volunteer to bus their children to schools in neighborhoods with different racial majorities. Policymakers used the favorable results for the voluntary programs to make the improper inference that mandatory busing policies would also work. The result was bad public policy and violence in the streets.

Sophisticated technical methods can improve our ability to make causal inferences, and can help solve other empirical problems. Consider that the heart of successful counterinsurgency is, according to U.S. military doctrine, winning the support of the population. Assessing whether certain policies do win public support requires collecting opinion data. A conventional method for measuring popular opinion is the survey, but of course, individuals in insurgency-stricken areas may be unwilling to reveal their true opinions to a survey-taker out of fear for their personal safety. Methodologists have crafted sophisticated techniques for addressing this issue, improving our ability to measure public support for the government in these areas. These techniques have been used to assess better the determinants of public support in insurgency-affected countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India.

Going forward, we will continue to need advanced methodologies to address pressing policy questions. Consider the U.S. military’s commitment to gender integration. The implementation of this commitment will be best informed if it rests on rigorous social science that address outstanding questions. Is there a Sacagawea effect, in which mixed gender units engaged in counterinsurgency are more effective than male-only units? How might mixed gender affect small unit cohesion in combat? How might mixed gender units reduce the incidence of sexual assault, both within the military and of assault committed by troops against civilians?

Certainly, other areas of public policy understand the importance of rigorous research design. Economic and development policy communities read the work of and employ economics Ph.D.s. Policymakers incorporate the findings of sophisticated studies on policy areas such as microfinance, gender empowerment, and foreign aid, knowing the best policy decisions must incorporate these studies’ findings.

Or consider public health policy. Lives are literally on the line as decision-makers must make decisions about issues such as vaccinations, nutritional recommendations, and air quality. Policymakers know they must use sophisticated technical studies executed by epidemiologists and other public health academics to craft the best policies.

Critics will argue that some U.S. policymakers remain alienated from contemporary academic IR work, with the suggestion that if IR academics let go of an obsession with technique, they will then be better able to connect with policymakers and help them craft better policy. I agree that IR academics need to find ways to communicate their results in clear, non-technical language. But the technical components of the work need to be there. Stripping them out directly undermines the ability of the research to give the right kinds of policy recommendations.

Let me conclude by noting that I am sympathetic to the concern that IR academics should think about the big picture as well as smaller questions, the forest of grand strategy as well as the trees of foreign policy tools. IR academics have the potential to make real contributions to big picture debates, to think hard about the essence of grand strategy by assembling a framework that effectively integrates foreign policy means and ends. The nature of the IR subfield and its integration of political economy and security, and its ability to think about structure as well as units, make it especially well positioned to consider these broad questions. The ability of IR academics to contribute to contemporary foreign policy debates is one of many reasons why political science should retain the subfield of IR and resist the temptation to replace the traditional empirical subfields of IR, comparative, and American with new subfields of conflict, political economy, behavior, and institutions.

### 2AC---Link---AT: Death?

#### Bifo’s theory is wrong – collapse has been empirically disproven

Malcolm Harris 11, Senior Managing Editor and Columnist for The New Inquiry, Writer and Editor for Sharable, “I Sure Hope Bifo Doesn’t Count Vibrators as Tools of Estrangement”, Destructural, 2-20, [https://destructural.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/i-sure-hope-bifo-doesnt-count-vibrators-as-tools-of-estrangement](https://destructural.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/i-sure-hope-bifo-doesnt-count-vibrators-as-tools-of-estrangement/)\\iris

I just finished Franco Berardi’s The Soul at Work, and though there’s a lot to agree with in there, the conclusion left me feeling argumentative. In reviving Baudrillard’s critique of the politics of desire, Berardi argues that horizontalism and affirmation – two cornerstones of Deleuze and Guatarri’s schizo thought – have been irredeemably co-opted by capital. Our social pathology is no longer Freudian repression, but overabundance of affirmation, of injunctions to consume and desire that produce panic and depression. When our very affective expressions have been colonized, the multitude is nothing but a robotic swarm:

“The multitude can speak hundreds of thousands of languages, but the language that enables it to function as an integrated whole is that of the economic automatisms embodied in technology. Seized in a game of mirrors of indeterminacy and precariousness, the multitude manifests its dark side and follows automatisms that turn its wealth into misery, its power into anguish and its creativity into dependency.”

“The effective exercise of politics (that is to say of political government) presupposes a conscious possibility of elaborating of the information collectively shared by the social organism. But the information circulating within digital society is too much: too fast, too intense, too thick and complex for individuals or groups to elaborate it consciously, critically, reasonably, with the necessary time to make a decision. Therefor the decision is left to automatisms, and the social organism seems to function ever more often according to evolutionary rules of an automatic kind, inscribed in the genetic cognitive patrimony of individuals. The swarm now tends to become the dominant form of human action.”

As the ultimate horror, Berardi looks to a biotechnological post-humanism as described by Bill Gates. The idea of a literal hive-mind, a freely flowing general intellect, is too much for Berardi; he offers the only solution he can think of to this dangerous acceleration of affective communication: slow down. In a more recent article, he calls, in the middle of the largest wave of global youth insurrection in over forty years, for a process of growing old. “[T]he process of senilization may open the way to a cultural revolution based on the force of exhaustion, of facing the inevitable with grace, discovering the sensuous slowness of those who do not expect any more from life than wisdom—the wisdom of those who have seen a great deal without forgetting, who look at each thing as if for the first time.” The assumption underlying this call to inaction is that the system of semiocapital is nearing its inevitable collapse. Berardi sounds like an aged and depressive Saint-Simon when he writes a hopeful narrative in which the machines will make stuff for us which, combined with income delinked from employment, will give us all the necessary time we need to play mahjong and dominoes, which is the goal of life. Actually, to be fair, Berardi never ceases to use sex as the goal, the time necessary to fuck is what we must carve away from capitalist control.

Baudrillard’s critique of Foucault and Deleuze that Berardi revives was prescient in some ways. He saw the appropriation of affirmation by capital coming, and he asks essentially how we can stand to read Deleuze while wearing Nike. “Affirm your desires” is an advertising slogan, and it could handle even the queer negation of Gregg Araki which it transformed into Hot Topic. In the final scene of Araki’s breakout film The Living End, two HIV-positive lovers are entangled half-fighting half-fucking in the desert. While one sucks off a pistol, the other yells at him to “just do it!” – four years after it became a shoe slogan. Berardi thinks we’ve been overtaken and the only solution is switching into reverse. (Which is going to happen whether we like it or not because semiocapital is collapsing anyway.) Always already co-opted, the multitude has no choice but to break down its constitutive links and start over. The only thing left is catastrophe: made by us, but not done by us.

Okay, my issues:

1. Berardi should be the last one to think a brain of any sort is univocal. He’s horrified by Bill Gates’s idea of business at the speed of thought, but what is the speed of thought really? Brains can be and are used to produce value for the market, but any friend of Felix Guattari should know brains are chaotic. They produce ideas for the boss, but they inevitably produce jokes and nightmares as well. Just because capital has organized a social brain – transcending more spatial and interpersonal barriers than ever before – doesn’t make it the hive’s necessary owner. The processes that Berardi outlines (“wealth into misery, power into anguish, creativity into dependency”) present the possibility that it could be otherwise, that there could be a reverse movement. What capital offers is this impoverished multitude, but we ought not treat this as an offer to be either accepted or refused.

2. I feel pretty derisive about this fear of speed. Certainly a lot of his critiques about the schizogenic nature of contemporary knowledge-work are valid, but the worry that society is not able to deliberate “reasonably” at these speeds is misplaced. The swarm has been empirically capable of making decisions contrary to its instructions in Egpyt, Tunisia, The UK, Wisconsin, etc., and these actions have been successful to the degree that they’ve been fast and unreasonable. Crisis calls on creativity and innovation, and sabotage requires the multitude to seize the boss’ networks. In Madison, WI, the Capitol occupiers are engaged in the sabotage of the labor of citizenship, which is, as Tahrir Square was/is in Egypt, productive of new relations and subjectivities. Berardi points to the role of prescription drugs in pacifying and anesthetizing young people as intrinsically related to the speed technology requires, but I’m willing to bet there are a bunch of students in Madison who may be on Twitter, but haven’t needed to take their ADD meds.

#### Bataille is a fascist who views war as an aesthetic---reading his cards justifies mass violence---reject it

Wolin 96 [Richard Wolin, 1996, “Left Fascism: Georges Bataille and the German Ideology,” The Inheritance of the German Right, Constellations, Volume 2, Issue 3, [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.1996.tb00037.x]\\pairie](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.1996.tb00037.x%5d\\pairie)

Moreover, the cultural attitudes of both Spengler and Bataille are linked by an aesthetics of violence that is highly characteristic of the “front generation.” In a key passage in The Decline of the West, Spengler, depicting the “life-world” of blood and instinct that had been repressed by the Faustian spirit of modernity, observes: “War is the primary politics of everything that lives and so much so that in the depths battle and life are one, and being and will-to-battle expire together.”2’ Similarly, for Junger, “War is an intoxication beyond all bonds. It is a frenzy without cautions and limits, comparable only to the forces of nature.”29 Bataille (the meaning of his name in French should be recalled), too, is convinced, that “conflict is life. Man’s value depends upon his aggressive strength. A living man regards death as the fulfillment of life; he does not see it as a misfortune. . , , I MYSELF AM WAR.”30 As Jay observes in this connection: “on a deeper level, the war [World War I] seems to have exercised a certain positive fascination [on Bataille]. For it is striking that many of Bataille’s obsessive themes would betray an affinity for the experiences of degradation, pollution, violence and communal bonding that were characteristic of life in the trenches. In the worldview of both Bataille and that of German young conservatives, war plays an essential, positive role. It serves as a means of dissolving the principium individuationis: the principle of bourgeois subjectivity, on which the homogeneous order of society - a world of loneliness and fragmentation - depends. For, according to Bataille, “the general movement of life is . . . accomplished beyond the demands of individual^."^^ It is in precisely this spirit that he celebrates the nonutilitarian nature of “combat” or “war” as a type of aestheticist end in itself: “Glory . . . expresses a movement of senseless frenzy, of measureless expenditure of energy, which the fervor of combat presupposes. Combat is glorious in that it is always beyond calculation at some moment.”33 For the same reasons, Bataille eulogizes those premodern “warmer societies in which pure, uncalculated violence and ostentatious forms of combat held sway.” For under such conditions, war was not made subservient to the vulgar ends of enterprise and accumulation, as is the case for modern-day imperialism, but served as a glorious end in itself. Yet, in the early 1930s, it was precisely this aestheticist celebration of “violence for violence’s sake,” or “war for war’s sake,” that Benjamin viewed as the essence of modern fascism. As he remarks in a well known passage : “Fiat ars - pereat mundus,” says fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. . . . Mankind, which in Homer’s time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its selfalienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which fascism is rendering aesthetic.~

#### Bataille is wrong… living is probably good.

Johnson 03 [David Johnson, 2003, “Why View All Time from the Perspective of Time’s End? A Bergonsonian attack on Bataillean transcience,” Time & Society][\\pairie](file:///\\pairie)

Existential Aspects Life is a serious business of highly charged temporal stakes, involving a being’s struggle to secure for itself the experience of pleasure time/free time rather than pain time/slave time. Since lived time is a living stake, death is not the profound phenomenon that Bataille thinks it is. For one who is racked by drawn-out pain, the pain of death situated at the end of time is an irrelevance. And for one who is caught up in the throes of extended pleasure, the dubious pleasure of death is likewise irrelevant. Death, far from being profound, may simply provide a pragmatic escape from a life of pain and toil, or a simple halt to a life of pleasure and freedom. We can see death as important to time in that it is the end of the great game of time, the great flow. But death is relative in importance to time for the same reason; it is simply the end of the great game of time, a game without which it would be pure abstraction. However, we are not suggesting that death has absolutely no importance for living beings. On the contrary. By countering Bataille’s view of death, which tries to domesticate death through attempting to engage it in ‘intimate’ dialogue, and which tries to make political gain out of death, we can see death as a real, non-negotiable phenomenon. Death can no longer be thought of as an ambiguous but essentially accessible deity, but must instead be seen as that which wipes out real substantial time with no hope of appeal. Death can now be viewed as a certain element in the game of time, as something to be dreaded or desire as the end of time, but which has no fixed moral or political meaning in itself. By affirming the reality of time we are in fact affirming the reality of death, and so we are proposing a more tragic philosophy than the one Bataille proposes – which is ironic, given that Bataille is considered by most postmodernist/post-structuralist philosophers to be perhaps the cruellest thinker.

#### Let’s cheer up---cybernetic capitalism is sustainable and Bifo is wrong

Sayarer 15 [Julian Sayarer, 06-15-2015, “Cheer up ‘Bifo’—history hasn’t ended yet,” openDemocracy, [https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/cheer-up-bifohistory-hasnt-ended-yet/]\\pairie](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/cheer-up-bifohistory-hasnt-ended-yet/%5d\\pairie)

Verso’s new Futures series was put together, so states the inside page, to assess the “outer limits of social and political possibility.” So it’s disappointing to find in Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi’s contribution Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide, such a lack of the possible. Indeed, the book often seems little more than a lament for the impossible scale of the task facing advocates of progressive politics in an age of neo-liberalism.

From Virginia Tech to Norway’s Anders Breivik, mass shootings are mashed together with collateralised debt obligations and credit default swaps to create an antediluvian collage of the variety used to caricature leftists as disgruntled losers with a dislike of progress.

By the closing chapters, when Berardi seems to disown his own ‘horrible’ miscellany of bloody mental health disasters as only a form of purging, the reader is somewhat confused as to what the author was meaning to achieve in the first place. Misleadingly, there is very little of the ‘future’ in the book at all.

Rather, Heroes is more the presence of a man looking constantly for answers to problems as they would have manifested in the past. Berardi, aged 66, has created a rich nostalgia, often very eloquent, but possessing an internal consistency that unravels with the gentlest application of the world and events outside his theory.

It being far easier to criticise than create, however, it’s important to recognise the value of Berardi’s offering: the absolutism of his ideas on the destructive relationship between mental health and modern capitalism. These ideas, at the very least, present a strong blueprint from which the issues can be examined in the future with less dogma and more light.

Berardi is at his most insightful when asking compassionate, human questions rather than enjoying his platform for polemical rhetoric. Is it problematic for humans and our ability to communicate with one another that children are now exposed to more speech and dialogue via media and screens, so that language is learned without direct need for human interaction? Does the market-logic of neo-liberalism—the all-pervasive idea of competition and optimisation—encourage behaviour in which the spectre of competition destroys our sense of self and our ability to be amongst others as relaxed, non-economic beings? Since human labour inputs have become mental rather than physical, is the mechanisation of our brain some sad inevitability?

Heroes reads more as an impassioned, despairing plea for reason than its grand, academic tones suggest, and the book would likely be less frustrating if read as such. Its pages are fit to bursting with a sense of end-of-history, though Berardi seems to date this varyingly—1978 and David Bowie’s release of ‘Heroes;’ 1977 and a mass suicide in Japan; 1492 and the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, along with Columbus’ landing in America; the Berlin Wall; Paris 1968; and the death of Charlie Chaplin.

Most of all, Berardi seems determined to create an emblem of suicide as the triumphant, self-obsessed pinnacle of some orgiastic misanthropy. The Germanwings plane crash in the Austrian Alps occurred tragically close to his book’s publication, perhaps giving the author an ugly validation as he toils to present the death of society and a diminishing love for our fellow humans. And yet more than an explanation of the world, Berardi seems in thrall to writing some stoic but cherry-picked portrait of despair, taking an obvious enjoyment in a mode of theorising that seems to assuage any misery, or even genuine engagement with the perils he proclaims now engulf us.

His concluding remarks summarise a book that’s trying hard to stand for something. Berardi proscribes joy as the antidote to despair (despite providing many reasons for the latter and none for the former), suggesting vaguely that what he terms “neuro plasticity” will be the key asset in twenty-first century liberations. He concludes in praise of irony, while instructing his readers not to believe or take-seriously the previous 225 pages of (by now we must presume) recreational doom-harbinging.

Indeed, were it not that Berardi’s logic were so selective and its perspective so narrow, the book would be all the more disheartening. Fortunately, also conspicuous is an author who is himself struggling with the present, soothing his concerns with an easy, leftist lament that envisages no greater role for humans than that of the happy worker.

He raises objections to algorithms (rather than—more helpfully—arguing that these tools might serve human ends), and wishes for a time when humans made ‘real objects.’ The book also advances an elementary critique of monetary systems that rightly illustrates the economy of faith that is currency, but seems only to conclude that some finite resource (such as gold and the gold standard it once underpinned) might in some way be an improvement.

All of this is profoundly unfortunate, for few would deny that modern work patterns must be made fairer and more human. Early on, Berardi writes:

“History has been replaced by the endless flowing recombination of fragmentary images… frantic precarious activity has taken the place of political awareness and strategy.”

The ironic missed opportunity of Heroes is that in it, the author has produced only one further recombination: a pastiche of graphic events, mass shootings and assorted corporate abuses that fall victim to the same shallow lust for spectacle that Berardi devotes such worthy efforts to decry. Anders Breivik, Virginia Tech, the Aurora Killings, Japanese suicide patterns and much else besides—modern capitalism has had an enormously detrimental effect on the lives of billions, and yet a statistically irrelevant number of these sorrows and grievances culminate in either mass shootings or suicides.

Berardi identifies the existence of an iceberg, and yet contents himself with describing only its very tip. He eschews the banal and the human to focus on the fast-sell of the sensational, prophesising some coming end rather than taking on the more trying but rewarding task of explaining how things persist when so much suggests they might fall apart. He explains exceptions delightfully, while seldom troubling himself with the rule itself, or the norm he condemns.

It is this very tendency that must be redressed, as Berardi probably would agree. He affords no attention to peer to-peer lending, fossil fuel divestment, credit unions, ethical banking growth, worker co-ops, fair tax certification, communication expansion through cell phones and the internet, or innovations in mobile currency.

All of these changes are potentially problematic developments that are of course vulnerable to the replication of old injustices. No less certainly, however, they offer evidence that the status quo Berardi describes is neither static nor condemned only to change the world for the worse.

Heroes reads like a man eloquently giving up, and, in the last event, trying hard to assure the reader that this was never his intent. In this and many other regards, Berardi does not convince.

#### Bifo is wrong---he doesn’t cite any data and is incoherent

Lack 19 [Tony Lack, 2019, “Franco “Bifo” Berardi: The Second Coming,” Marx & Philosophy Review of Books,” [https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/17192\_the-second-coming-by-franco-bifo-berardi-reviewed-by-tony-lack/]\\pairie](https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/17192_the-second-coming-by-franco-bifo-berardi-reviewed-by-tony-lack/%5d\\pairie)

According to Berardi, the system is immune to transformative criticism because it entertains all positions and allows every voice to be heard. Serious criticisms mix and mingle with absurd conspiracy theories, apocalyptic scenarios, and fake news.

How do we begin to bring about the solution, the second coming of communism? Berardi reinterprets Marx’s Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, stressing the importance of interpretation as a form of political praxis. He claims, ‘It may be that Marx’s famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach – the central pillar of the revolutionary methodology of the last century and a half – simply needs to be overturned. Marx wrote there that ‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it’ – and the philosophers of the last century tried to do so. The results are catastrophic’ (3).

We need to develop radical interpretations of our contemporary situation that open up possibilities for genuinely liberating action in a world that is meticulously interpreted, ranked, rated, and prepackaged for us. There is a wealth of knowledge, potential, and possibility in what Berardi refers to as the ‘General Intellect,’ that stock of global knowledge which we all, in principle, have access to. In the more prosperous societies it seems possible to realize Marx’s ideal of self-development as outlined in The German Ideology, each person becoming fully human by doing many different things without becoming any one of those things. However, the system is so relentless in its production of what is probable that it becomes difficult to see what is possible.

Turning to a few criticisms, Berardi’s text is a loosely-woven collection of insights, many of which have appeared in previous publications. As such, it suffers from a coherent method and structure. Although his rhizomatic approach is suggestive and useful, he often falls back on conventional and unconvincing methods of analysis. He is especially fond of positing inverse relationships similar to those employed by Marx in The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, ‘The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces . . .the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. The devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things.’

Berardi employs the same logic throughout the text, like an hourglass, one part of life fills up in proportion to the other part emptying out. ‘Technological potency has steadily expanded while social consciousness has decreased proportionately’ (12).

Berardi also tends to use anecdotes instead of evidence when it suits his purpose. For example, he claims that two factors responsible for our inability to interpret our way out of the labyrinthine system are sensory overload and a decline in the quality of education. ‘The expansion of the infosphere has forced the acceleration of the mental reaction to info-nervous stimulation. But the critical mind is unable to function in conditions of info-nervous saturation, while the rate of education and the quality of education have fallen and deteriorated’ (19).

Both of these assertions are problematic. Regarding sensory overload, which Berardi refers to as the inability of the ‘psychosphere’ to keep up with the ‘infosphere,’ humans have always been challenged by information rich environments. We adapt quite rapidly to large quantities of stimuli that remain constant in our environment and we learn quickly how to focus our attention on the essential aspects of a complex situation. However, as the demand for screening out information increases we do probably become less empathetic and sensitive, which is one of Berardi’s important points.

Rather than brute information overload, it seems more likely that part of the problem is total absorption. We are like fish who don’t recognize the water, and the water is the ubiquitous complexity of prepackaged social relations expanding in open-ended structures, paths, and networks. The system works so well because the overall feel is not constriction and limitation, but expansive freedom and endless novelty.

The other problem is that it is not clear that we are becoming dumber. This is a form of Golden-Age thinking. Berardi claims that, ‘Idiocy is spreading worldwide as a revolt against the mathematical rationality of financial plundering: a blackout of reason, as revenge does not listen to reason’ (5). Yet the data suggests otherwise. The global literacy rate has increased by 4% every 5 years for the past 65 years, increasing from 42% worldwide in 1960 to 86% in 2015.

On the other hand, if Berardi’s concern about the spread of ‘idiocy’ refers to racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of retrograde thinking, it is unlikely that this is a reaction to the unassailable machinations of the international financial system, as he claims. It seems more likely that our awareness of social injustices, as well as our capacity for empathy has increased, while the phenomena themselves have not become more widespread or barbaric.

#### Bifo’s apolitical understanding of communism ensures the continued existence of capitalism

Lear 12 [Ben Lear is an underemployed researcher living in Manchester, UK. He recently co-authored an article in Occupy Everything! Reflections on Why it's Kicking off Everywhere, and is a member of Plan C. “Lifeboat Communism – A Review of Franco “Bifo” Berardi’s After the Future”//ASherm]

What does the end of the future mean for radical politics? It is at this point that Bifo’s argument becomes problematic. In an argument that intersects with groups such as Tiqqun, Bifo argues that we must see “Communism as a necessity in the collapse of capital.” Distant from the voluntarism of previous forms of Communist politics, this “post-growth Communism” will be best understood as a necessary response to capital’s refusal of labour. Cut adrift from the “opportunity” to work, with welfare systems dismantled, Bifo argues that we will witness the proliferation of zones of autonomy responding to the needs of an increasingly precarious and superfluous social body. Communist politics will emerge from an exodus, both voluntary and compulsory, from a stagnating and increasingly predatory state-capital nexus. This exodus is both social, in the development of an alternative infrastructure, and personal, in the withdrawal from the hyper-stimulation of the semiotic economy. Bifo abandons hope in collective contestation at the level of the political. Bifo’s politics could be described as a kind of “lifeboat communism.” As the crisis ripples, mutates, and deepens, Bifo sees the role of communism as the creation of spaces of solidarity to blunt the worst effects of the crisis of social reproduction. Gone is the demand for a better world for all, the liberation of our collective social wealth, or the unlocking of the social potentials of technology. Rather, Bifo’s politics are based around insulating a necessarily small portion of society from the dictates of capital. By withdrawing from the political sphere, we accept the likelihood of losing the final scraps of the welfare state and concede the terrain of the political to zombie politics and predatory capital. Rather than seeking new forms of organization to re-enter the political stage, Bifo seems to suggest that we seek shelter beneath it as best we can. This shying away from the political stage is the weakness at the heart of the book. Recent eruptions of political struggle have captured the collectiveimagination because they demonstrate that political contestation is still possible today, in spite of the obstacles Bifo has described. The Occupy movement and the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa have resonated with all those who still have hope in collective struggle. Although these movements have encountered varying problems, to which we must develop solutions, they dispel the idea of an unchangeable present. The current blockages to successful organising have been shown to be strategic and tactical, not terminal. Misdiagnosing the current inertia of post-political public life as a terminal condition leads the left towards an evacuation of the political, while we should instead reassert its primacy. If we abandon any hope of fighting in, against, and beyond the existing architecture of the state and capital, and instead seek refuge in small communes, and go-slow practices, we abandon all real hope of a generalized, or generalizable, emancipatory politics. Although Bifo’s analysis of the difficulties of collective action resonates with all of us who have attempted to organize struggles in the past few decades, the proposal for a simple withdrawal from capitalism is a bleak politics indeed – which, at its most optimistic, calls for an orderly default by portions of the proletariat. The horizons of communist politics appear much narrower when capitalism is no longer seen as the repository of a vast store of social wealth awaiting collective redistribution, but rather redefined as an unassailable site of universal and permanent austerity combined with widening social redundancy. It is hard to imagine a network of self-organized projects and systems supporting the majority of the population in the context of an increasingly predatory capitalism. Emerging from the and isolated leftist scenes, this lifeboat communism will by its very nature have a limited carrying capacity, as the anarchist experience in post-Katrina New Orleans attests. The lifeboats that Bifo calls for will undoubtedly be too small and makeshift to harbor us all. The crisis is twofold. It is a crisis of capitalist profitability, and of an increasingly precarious and surplus global proletariat whose reproduction (as both labour and body) is under threat. It is unlikely that the proliferation of communes, squats, food co-ops, file sharers, urban gardeners, and voluntary health services will bring forth a new, better world. But while the current seemingly post-political situation throws up massive obstacles to organizing, there is still a potential for collective contestation. The capitalist state, racked by its own legitimacy crisis and weekly political scandals, is more vulnerable than it appears. We need only recall the period of unexpected hope built by students in Britain, occupiers in Oakland, and vast swathes of North Africa and the Middle East during the past two years. These movements were mobilised through the betrayal of a vision of the future – but alongside their rage, they put forth a hope which can guide our politics. The task at hand is to unlearn old behaviour and to forge new tactical and organisational weapons for struggle. Bifo’s contribution is a timely and challenging one, but it ultimately leads us back towards a DIY culture and “outreach” politics. As our movements come to terms with these limits, we must also hold onto the belief that luxury for all is possible. The social potential of unfilled blocks of flats, emerging technologies like 3D-printing, and the desires of the millions of underemployed, should remind us of this. This will not be possible without a collective struggle against the state and the demands of capital, one which simultaneously defends what we have and attempts to move beyond it. A retreat to lifeboat politics is both premature and a self-fulfilling prophecy. While Bifo correctly analyses the current conjuncture – clearly identifying the post-political state, the weakness of the Left, the crisis of profitability and new forms of labour, and their impact on the subject – his political prescriptions lead us in the wrong direction. Just as Bifo does, we place the struggle against work at the center; but we can also seek to liberate social wealth, rather than insulate a lucky few from the ravages of capital. Rather than “No Future,” we must raise a different banner: “The future’s here, it just needs reorganizing.”

#### Bifo’s theory justifies the massive violence done by contemporary capitalism

Keefer 11 [Lucas Keefer is currently a graduate student studying philosophy and psychology at Georgia State University. “Review - The Soul at Work” //ASherm]

Of course, some Marxist theorists have already been aware of this need for a critique of contemporary consciousness and have suggested important alternatives. Berardi follows Deleuze and Guattari in adopting a therapeutic approach, though we might also follow Lefebvre (1943/2009) and suggest that a critique of semiocapitalism might also depend on returning to an analysis of the reality of alienation in the everyday lives of those oppressed. If the “soul” oppresses itself under semiocapitalism, it does so only by investing all meaning in the symbolic reality of simulations. Marxist-scientific critique remains, therefore, one way of returning this oppressed symbolic consciousness to the reality of its oppression (see also e.g. Martín-Baró, 1994). Berardi also notes the ways in which semiocapitalism pathologizes (and medicates) reactions against alienation (207). The increased rates of depression and availability of anti-depressants, Berardi suggests, are an indication of humanity’s resistance to a system of symbolic production that exploits subjectivity. As a result, no medicalization of depression can ever hope to successfully treat the root cause of depression, which lies in the alienated existence of postmodernity. The problem here is striking: treatments for depression cost money and only further demand that people labor under semiocapitalism to afford their medications and therapy. It is a race to the bottom in which exploitation and treatment perpetuate each other indefinitely. Berardi suggests a therapeutic shift towards schizoanalysis, following Deleuze (214-219), which suggests that therapeutics must be an ongoing project of restoring autonomy in the face of capitalism’s control over desire. One noteworthy omission from this text is the absence of any consideration of semiocapitalism’s relationship to other capitalisms. While Berardi illustrates the process of alienation in semiocapitalism, these analyses must be tempered by a recognition that cognitive labor is not the norm. While globalization may change this over time, we should recognize that semiocapitalism itself depends upon the more concrete alienation of the physical laborers who provide food (e.g. de Botton, 2009), etc. For semiocapitalism to be parasitic upon the “souls” of human laborers, it must also be parasitic upon the bodies of others to perpetuate the physical existence that underlies the alienation of the soul.

#### Calling for the ballot re-affirms the status quo

Campbell 98 [David, “Performing Politics and the Limits of Language, Theory & Event”]

Those who argue that hate speech demands juridical responses assert that not only does the speech communicate, but that it constitutes an injurious act. This presumes that not only does speech act, but that "it acts upon the addressee in an injurious way" (16). This argumentation is, in Butler's eyes, based upon a "sovereign conceit" whereby speech wields a sovereign power, acts as an imperative, and embodies a causative understanding of representation. In this manner, hate speech constitutes its subjects as injured victims unable to respond themselves and in need of the law's intervention to restrict if not censor the offending words, and punish the speaker: This idealization of the speech act as a sovereign action (whether positive or negative) appears linked with the idealization of sovereign state power or, rather, with the imagined and forceful voice of that power. It is as if the proper power of the state has been expropriated, delegated to its citizens, and the state then rememerges as a neutral instrument to which we seek recourse to protects as from other citizens, who have become revived emblems of a (lost) sovereign power (82). Two elements of this are paradoxical. First, the sovereign conceit embedded in conventional renderings of hate speech comes at a time when understanding power in sovereign terms is becoming (if at all ever possible) even more difficult. Thus the juridical response to hate speech helps deal with an onto-political problem: "The constraints of legal language emerge to put an end to this particular historical anxiety [the problematisation of sovereignty], for the law requires that we resituate power in the language of injury, that we accord injury the status of an act and trace that act to the specific conduct of a subject" (78). The second, which stems from this, is that (to use Butler's own admittedly hyperbolic formulation) "the state produces hate speech." By this she means not that the state is the sovereign subject from which the various slurs emanate, but that within the frame of the juridical account of hate speech "the category cannot exist without the state's ratification, and this power of the state's judicial language to establish and maintain the domain of what will be publicly speakable suggests that the state plays much more than a limiting function in such decisions; in fact, the state actively produces the domain of publicly acceptable speech, demarcating the line between the domains of the speakable and the unspeakable, and retaining the power to make and sustain the line of consequential demarcation" (77). The sovereign conceit of the juridical argument thus linguistically resurrects the sovereign subject at the very moment it seems most vulnerable, and reaffirms the sovereign state and its power in relation to that subject at the very moment its phantasmatic condition is most apparent. The danger is that the resultant extension of state power will be turned against the social movements that sought legal redress in the first place (24)

#### Bifo’s analysis is reductive and over-totalizing

Pursley 10 [Mike, “From Alienation to Autonomy by Franco "Bifo" Berardi”//ASherm]

Here’s a taste of some of the most abstract: “The infinite capacity of replication of the recombining simulator device erases the originality of the event.” Or how about: “The productive finalization of technology ends up subjugating the thinking process from the standpoint of its own epistemological structures.” Indeed. Capitalism, and his absolute distaste for it, is where Bifo makes himself absolutely clear. It’s the catch-all cause for all modern strife, a “pathogenic mechanism” that is the ruin of everything. Preaching “liberation from capitalism” is where the author will most likely loose all but the most radical of readers. The capitalist system is clearly not without faults, but presenting it as scapegoat for every ill we face may be too simple. At times Bifo seems a cranky old curmudgeon madly shaking his fist at the present. This is the Bifo that bemoans “collective mental pollution” and says of the world: “too many signs, too fast, too chaotic.” His qualms with hyperreal society are at times a good diagnosis of our problems, but the prescribed anti-capitalist panacea remains questionable. For all the theory involved to make his case, Bifo’s solution is strangely and kind of awesomely underwhelming. We are urged to reconsider how wealth is defined, to focus more on friendships and an easygoing life rather than profits. Who but Henry Ford himself could argue with that? The volume ends with a few thoughts on the current Great Recession, where the collapse of the economy “can be read as the return of the soul.” For that, we will have to see.

### 2AC---Link---AT: Diplomacy

#### Cybernetics hasn’t eliminated the effectiveness of diplomacy

Unker 17 [Akin Unker, 06-11-2017, “Computational Diplomacy: Foreign Policy Communication in the Age of Algorithms and Automation,” Cyber Governance & Digital Democracy,” [https://edam.org.tr/en/computational-diplomacy-foreign-policy-communication-in-the-age-of-algorithms-and-automation/]\\pairie](https://edam.org.tr/en/computational-diplomacy-foreign-policy-communication-in-the-age-of-algorithms-and-automation/%5d\\pairie)

Automation doesn’t change the fact that diplomats and embassies still matter. Foreign policy, like all politics, is a factor of human condition, including sense, gut feeling and cultural cues, along with its imperfections. However, there is a clear trajectory whereby states that can best adapt to automation – in war, foreign policy and economy – will develop more efficient ways of dealing with the challenges of an interconnected, data-centric world. Diplomacy too, can retain its relevance and influence over politics between nations, so long as it can properly designate areas where automation can help and where it can’t. Although all states will come up with their own answers to these questions, based on their own individual interests and needs, the common direction in which automation and foreign policy is headed is more or less similar for all countries. In the future, diplomacy has to build data processing and management capabilities, with dedicated departments and scientists supporting diplomats and negotiators on the ground. The structure of this new framework will also heavily depend on regime type, scope of foreign interests and alliance behavior.

The structural shadow of uncertainty over diplomacy is stronger than ever. Some communicative rituals and practices of diplomacy are growing more obsolete, as modern political communication slides increasingly to short and sharp rhetoric, coupled with automation tools that bombard audiences at unprecedented levels. Diplomacy itself is hardly obsolete however, as the task of mediating and negotiating power relations is perhaps as important as it was during the Cold War. New power centers – in the form of technology companies and big data brokers – are changing the state-centric parameters of classical realism perhaps, but the inherent dynamics of power realignment still render diplomacy a crucial endeavor. To rise to the challenge however, modern diplomacy has to develop a strong computational capacity, able to adapt to the changing nature of digital communication and advances in automation.

### 2AC---Impact---AT: Dystopia

#### It won’t cause a dystopia---surveillance capitalism isn’t strong enough---err aff assume that all of their evidence is biased

Dupont 08 [Benoit Dupont, August 2008, “Hacking the Panopticon: Distributed Online Surveillance and Resistance,” <<Benoit is the holder of the Canada Research Chair in Cybersecurity and the Research Chair for the Prevention of Cybercrime>>, D\_Sociology of Crime Law and Deviance][\\pairie](file:///\\pairie)

I offer an additional interpretation inspired by Gary Marx’s (2007) techno-fallacies article and the heuristics’ theory of Tversky and Kahneman (1982). Just like technophiles often succumb to the false belief that there is a technological fix for every security problem, surveillance scholars (as an epistemic community, not as individuals) are not immune to biases that lead them to assume that the monitoring technologies embedded in virtually every aspect of our lives are a clear indicator of our inexorable fall into a 1984 reality. Three biases are particularly salient in this belief system. The first bias is the initiative bias, which leads people to attribute less initiative and less imagination to others than to themselves (Kahneman & Tversky, 1993, p. 3), especially if they belong to a lower socio-economic group. While surveillance scholars are able to offer elaborate narratives of the hidden power of the electronic panopticon and its significance, they frequently discount the interpretive capacities and agency of surveillance subjects and the resistance strategies that ensue. The loss aversion bias refers to the asymmetrical evaluation of positive and negative outcomes, where losses are systematically overestimated and gains are underestimated. This bias seems particularly pronounced ‘‘when the reference point is the status quo, and when retention of the status quo is an option’’ (Kahneman & Tversky, 1993, p. 14). This bias corresponds in surveillance studies to the reticence manifested toward the study of positive developments (Haggerty, 2006, p. 35) such as the accountability produced by meta-surveillance applications or the independence afforded to elderly patients by monitoring systems that let them stay at home. The tendency to predict widespread erosions of freedom has also been a prominent feature of surveillance studies, despite the lack of empirical and historical data to support this claim. Democracies have not crumbled since advanced monitoring technologies have invaded our lives, and the lack of sophisticated surveillance tools has never prevented authoritarian states to enroll thousands of informers to control internal dissent (Pfaff, 2001). Finally, the third heuristic is the probability bias whereby a confusion is made between what is possible and what is probable (Ohm, 2007). This bias is very closely connected with the previous one, because on contentious subjects such as surveillance and privacy, people tend to focus on disastrous outcomes and neglect the role played by randomness (Taleb, 2004), complexity, and contested rationalities (Espeland, 1998) among supervisors. Surveillance scholars frequently present what may happen as what will happen, obscuring the mechanisms that so often derail the best plans. Perhaps, the fact that Bentham’s panopticon was actually never built and that the British government preferred instead to deport its prisoners to Australia, an open-air prison where convict supervision was deliberately kept at a minimum (Kerr, 1989; Jackson, 1998), should serve as a reminder that dystopias are about as likely to materialize as utopias.