# The Digital Cyclops Affirmative --- BFHR

#### Notes

Thanks to James, Guy, Michael, Steven, and Eleanor for their hard work on this file. Please email [khirn10@gmail.com](mailto:khirn10@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns.

Notes from Michael Greenberg: The aff is a critique of communication and thinking about technology. I want to make this explicitely clear – the aff says the **WILL** to technology is bad, not that technology **itself** is bad – you should read the cards to understand why but the words “technological saviorism” and “digital salvation” absolutely need to be in your vocabulary.

I think the best framework angle is either the glezos stuff or the improvement bad angle – either one implicates the subjecthood of debaters, again read the 1ac ev it’s pretty good

The neg imo is a lot weaker than the aff in terms of generics but the critiques of aesthetics can be very good, and ofc framework makes the game work so good luck

## Top Level

### 1AC---Digital Cyclops

#### We’re drowning in cheap data – the world has been remapped into a violent vortex that attempts to inhabit consciousness and affectivity with a vision for the peaceable kingdom of the machines

Kroker and Kroker 21(Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 8-11, October 2021, MG)

“God Won’t Bless America”

It is Independence Day in America, 4 July 2020, just three days after Canada Day in my political neck of the woods, and I am thinking about where it all went so wrong and sometimes so right for these missionary experiments in settler colonialism across the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island. From force of habit, I attune my perception by reading once again the Book of Revelation with its biblical prophecy of a **violent coming Armageddon**, once all the signs have been fulfilled, while keeping another eye on Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism, with its hauntingly perceptive analysis of fascism in the lonely, disconnected age of mass society.5 Watching images of social wreckage float by on the media stream – today it is Florida retirees giving a shout-out to “White Power” from their golf carts and wealthy suburbanites in St.  Louis, Missouri, pointing loaded guns at anti-racism protesters; tomorrow it will be other passing scenes of the gathering social ruins – I turn up the volume on my ear buds, which are tuned to the sounds of “God Won’t Bless America.” Performed at raucous levels by a punk rock band, Vortis, from the heart of the heartless country of the American Midwest, it is laying down some heavy tracks about the American phantasmagoria as the bill comes due for the pleasures of the feast:

Tell me what is the answer to the troubles of our Times We’re reaping what we sow, we’re paying for our Crimes {Chorus} God Won’t Bless America again We’re on our own, we’re all alone The voices on the sky, only they won’t die We’re on our own, we’re all alone We live in the orgasmatron, the outstretched Scratching hand The power of the claws, the law of the land {Chorus} In the land of the sea, the home of the scared The cages will be shut, and no one will be spared We’re on our own. We’re all alone.6

Everywhere the mood in the streets is grim. Everyday beach parties get giddier, city crowds more crowded, faces unmasked, hostilities more open, aggression frequent, denial all the rage, as a kind of plague frenzy takes possession of society. I read the manifesto for Vortis as an **attunement to the psyche** of the times. Following in the tradition of those other lonely hearts of renegade philosophy and art – Artaud and Nietzsche – this punk rock band takes its name from Vorticism, a brief, but immensely consequential, rupture in art history (1914–15) just before everything was crushed by the long slaughterhouse of the First World War.7 In that moment before technologies of mass violence became the signature song of the twentieth century, artists and writers, including Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound, saw the dynamic energy of the vortex in everything. As the manifesto for the band states, “Pound’s master image of the vortex is an INVERTED ELECTRIFIED CONE with an axis through the center, spinning furiously as it emits brilliant sparks of light.”8 Whirlpools, tornados, turbines, cyclotrons for sure – but now why not see the vortex as the way in which energy fast circulates in everyday media? The manifesto makes the point: “A **physical vortex organizes the energies of the world through a whirling circular motion**, forming an axis at its center, a vacuum whose force of attraction **sucks the world into it** and then spews it out in a continuous maelstrom.”9 It’s just like the contemporary storm of politics, society, and economy in the era of **new communication technologies**: unpredictable whirling motions of energy moving in fast circulation, sucking the world into its vacuum by its force of attraction and then spitting out the difference. And, there’s not just one dominant vortex, but multiple vortices in the media stream moving simultaneously, sometimes intersecting one another, at other times like whirling motions of energy independent, estranged, just seeking to vacuum up all the particle energies of the world – **and us with** **it** – as just so many shards of broken glass, body clouds of the social ruins within, as we are drawn into the axes of all the vortices that move around us and through us every moment of the streamed media day. **No one has immunity:** certainly not the prevailing mood of mass society, as individual psyches are overstressed, overexposed, and overstimulated by the rise and fall of anti-racism protests and violent police blowback; definitely not asylum seekers, migrant farm workers, and anyone below the poverty line, as their lives are sucked into a storm not of their own making and certainly not under their control and then expelled as so much waste material; and most clearly not the new pilgrims of the digital way, who are attracted by the whirling energy of new media only to find their nervous systems being quickly amputated by the **powerful surgical force of artificial intelligence**, granular surveillance, automation of just about everything, and the mesmerizing vacuum force of social media.

The contemporary social scene, then, is under the sign of the **ecstasy of catastrophe**: drift culture in the “inverted electrified cone” of technological society, “with an axis going through its center, spinning furiously as it emits brilliant sparks of light.” Trapped in the high-energy waves of the future opening before us as a horizon of violent vortices, we really have some clear choices: passively drift like so much digital wreckage – data debris in the maelstrom – waiting to be sucked into the energy field of the technological storm all around us or actively adopt our own variations of the strategy of this punk rock band from Chicago, who view themselves as Vorticists, “assimilating as many energies of the world as possible, feeling it deeply and intensely, and expressing their personal response to its wild diversity”10 with discipline, energy, and creativity. For me, at some deep and guiding interior moment, that sounds just about right. All around us today, we can just hear the crash of implosive energies released **first by individuals, then whole societies**, seemingly giving up on **life** and making their peace with the **death instinct** that animates the unfolding **story of contemporary technology**. Call it what you will – the outsourcing of work in the age of remote communication, the externalization of consciousness that is streamed media, empathy mapping for a society that has projected its emotional life into the silent rustle of algorithms, soft-skin bodies, and waiting for the robots. As a collective species, we seem to have abandoned the complicated wrinkles of life, with its complexities and entanglements, for **the promised peaceable kingdom of the machines**. Maybe it was the continuous history of massive warfare violence that has tracked us since the First World War, the globalizing slaughter of the Second World War, haunting us with its memories of concentration camps and mass death in the heart of twentieth-century Europe and flaring up with wars that never end, some brushfire warfare, others whirling contagions. Or perhaps the always present vulnerability of that modern social invention, the self not the soul, just literally cannot take the stress of radical overexposure in every surface and orifice to always aggressive technologies seeking to **inhabit consciousness, affectivity, perception, and labour**. Whatever the reason, to speak now of the death of the social and the eclipse of the individual in a coming age of neural modification, massive data expropriation, privacy abuse surveillance, and the deep learning algorithms of artificial intelligence is only to make a cold-eyed clinical report of the contemporary state of events. And, if you catch my drift, we just might have an important choice to make before finally disappearing into the surrounding sea of wired circuitry: the pleasant amnesia of drift or something like the artistic strategy of Vorticism  – deep immersion in every passing whirling axis of energy, no fixed position in advance, only fast responses with the aim of releasing the pent-up energy within into “brilliant sparks of light,” and, most definitely, being multiple, variable, probabilistic, contradictory, with minds, half-data/half-human, moving at particle speed. This last is my recipe, at least, for learning how best to respond at particle speed to lip-synching the future in the age of technologies of the new real

Lip-Synching the Future

We’re drowning in **cheap data**

With no right to forget

Brains rewired

Bodies recoded

Computer logic is **our only logic**

Analytics is how we (now)

**See the world**

#### The new security state attempts to inscribe bodies in debate with cold information, chilling them to degree zero where they are nothing more than recombinant flows of information

**Kroker** and Kroker **21** (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 80-83, October 2021, MG)

Machines to Bodies (M2B): Smart Bodies, Cold Data, and “Five Eyes”

Are smart bodies in a culture of cold data the probable future of technologies of mass surveillance? In response to the challenge of bodily materiality, with its hidden passions, secret dreams, and unexpected – and often unpredictable – actions, the new security state is rapidly moving towards the deployment of a **new generation of smart bodies** located on the always searchable smart grid of technologies of mass surveillance. Since machine readability is enhanced by biometric identifiers, the aim would be to populate the skin surface with an array of sensors for improved machine readability. For the moment, the transition to smart bodies equipped with electronic skin tattoos, locatable media, and prosthetics facilitating easy biometric tracking is marked by technical, and then political, challenges, as the new security state works to filter, archive, and tag the immense data oceans of global communication. It is in this context that there can be such dramatic political encounters between passionate defenders of individual privacy and proponents of the new security state interested in the total awareness provided by networked communication.

However, this period is probably only a temporary transitional one, since the implacable movement of surveillance technologies is towards forms of automated surveillance of smart bodies – machine-to-body communications (M2B) – that would quickly outstrip privacy concerns in favour of **continuous flows of individual bodily telemetry**: its location, moods, nervous physiology, heart rate, affective breakthroughs, and even medical emergencies. Taking a cue from the pervasive networks of smart grids that have been installed in many cities as part of managing energy consumption, smart bodies, like domestic homes before them, are visualized as inhabited cybernetic systems, high in information and low in energy, emitting streams of machine-readable data. For all intents and purposes, GPS-enabled smart homes are early avatars of the smart body – data tracking megaphones doubling as digital communication devices. From the perspective of technological futurists, there is nothing really to fear in the emergent reality of a smart future with bodies enmeshed in dense networks of tracking machines, since those very same bodies will likely also be equipped with counter-tracking prosthetics  – digital devices capable of quantifying the extent and intensity of data emissions between bodies and the surrounding environment of surveillance trackers. For example, the technological futurist Kevin Kelly has stated that “we want to have coveillance rather than surveillance” so that we can control who’s monitoring us and what they are monitoring.19 Some may argue that the human body, with all its complex inflections and unbounded mediations, will never really be reducible to a smart body circulating within a global smart grid, but that argument is countered by noting the present migration of surveillance technology towards a greater invisibility through miniaturization, breaking the skin barrier with digital devices functioning at the interface of biology, computation, and electronics, and, in fact, layering the body with data probes designed with the qualities of human skin itself – soft, malleable, bendable, fluid, elastic, tough.

A future emerges, then, of **cold information**  – diffuse, circulating, commutative, dissuasive – with bodies chilled to the degree zero of **recombinant flows of information**. Morphologically, information has always been hygienic in its coldness, always ready to perform spectacular sign switches between **metaphor and metonymy**. What this coldness means for understanding technologies of mass surveillance is that the future of smart bodies will probably be neither the dystopia of total information dominance on the part of powerful interests nor the utopia of free-flowing communication by complicated individuals, but something else, namely friction between these warring impulses in the cynical sign system that is information culture. Sometimes flows of cold information will be contested locally, whether **in debates** concerning the policing of information and free speech in urban protests, environmental contestations, and Indigenous blockades of railroads, pipelines, and highways in isolated areas off-grid; or in the abbreviated attention span of mass media. At other times, **information wars** will be generalized across the planet, with lines of friction leaping beyond the boundaries of specific states in order to be inscribed in **larger debates** concerning issues related to surveillance and privacy, collective modulations of soft control and individual autonomy, which move at the process speed of instant, global connectivity across networked culture. Here, the essence of cold information lies in the friction, the fracture, the instant reversal of the **always doubled sign of information**.

Defining this essence brings us to the meaning of surveillance in the epoch of information as a flickering signifier, that point where all the referents are always capable of performing instant sign switches from villain to saviour, from active agents of generalized public scrutiny to passive victims of destructive overexposure. Wouldn’t this mean, though, that, in a culture of cold information, surveillance technologies must themselves **also become flickering signifiers**, simultaneously both predator and victim? Indications that this duality is the case are everywhere today. For example, the primary apparatus of contemporary mass surveillance in the West is performed by a previously undisclosed collaboration of state intelligence agencies, appropriately titled “Five Eyes,” because it coordinates sophisticated intelligence signals among the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Based on intelligence sharing agreements developed during the Second World War, and strikingly similar in its pattern of operation to the later “Condor” program that was created by several Latin American governments during the dark years of the “dirty wars,” Five Eyes coordinates flows of information acquired by upstream and downstream surveillance among the governments involved. Currently justified by political rhetoric framing the War on Terror and consequently authorized by law or, at least, by loopholes in existing law, Five Eyes is network conscious, geographically specific, and action oriented. It tracks information, acquires individual targets, assembles complex profiles of targeted individuals, and acquires massive quantities of metadata limited only by the rule of the “three hops” – tracking, that is, email messages, cell phone calls, or fibre optic communication across the three hops of the originating message, the recipient, and networks of individuals and groups communicating with anyone and at any time in the first two hops. While Five Eyes has attracted widespread criticism from privacy advocates for its relentless attempts to establish an apparatus of total information awareness, it should be kept in mind that the original and continuing motivation of this secret apparatus of control has about it the sensibility of an injured victim – bunkered states living in really existent existential, even psychic, fear of having their bounded borders pierced, broken, and invaded by actual terrorists or by phantasmatically threatening breaches of their sovereign boundaries by “illegal” immigrants, the nomadic, the refugee, and the **planetary dispossessed**. For example, as recently as spring 2020, CSIS, Canada’s intelligence contribution to the Five Eyes program, publicly protested that proposed improvements to Canada’s privacy legislation would seriously hinder CSIS’s ability to gather intelligence in the national security interest. A perfect fusion of aggressive surveillance and injured sensibility, Five Eyes constitutes, in the end, **a flickering signifier** – a palpable sign of what is to come in the approaching culture of cold information and increasingly overexposed, smart bodies.

#### The resolution attempts to impose a will to technological transcendence – reading the myth of digital salvation in favor of AI, cyber, and biotech culminates in the transformation of life into data-made-flesh, imposing a violent psychic commitment onto subjectivities while rendering marginalized bodies as accidental road kill on the way to a technological future

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 153-156, October 2021, MG)

Perhaps it’s no longer simply a digital universe of blended minds but something more generalized, namely blended bodies: emotions, subjectivity, imagination, perception living in a world of data made flesh. Like a technological makeover of the Christian Bible, which begins with the words “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1–3), the digital bible begins with the **translation of the spoken word of divinity** into the **cold data of technological platforms**. And, while the biblical story of the Word was recorded in prophecies of the Old Testament and gospels of the New Testament as the coming of the long-awaited messiah, for whose bodily sacrifice humanity would be indebted from birth to an eschatological debt that could never be repaid, the digital bible substitutes salvation by data, an epochal opportunity to shed the skin of the human in favour of the soft skin of the digital. When the story of this particular period in history is ultimately written, it will no doubt focus on salvation by running the numbers – **data made flesh** – as the animating impulse behind skinning the digital world with DIY bodies, surveillance that never sleeps, **drone** skies, robotic **cyber**-machines, singularity theory, **artificial intelligence**, deep learning, and **biometric** sensors everywhere. Here, digital devices are portals to the latest secular version of salvation, the instant connectivity of smart phones a re-enactment of a religious state of grace, **artificial intelligence a** **gateway to transcendence**, globally synchronized emotion a mass conversionary experience, desiring to become a data object drifting in the network a basic article of digital faith, and the fast streaming of virtual life as so many triumphant hosannas to the moment of digital redemption.

However, just like the story of Christianity before it, this newest reenactment of the myth of salvation in digital form has its competing myths: one, **the myth of order**, is literally the attempt by power and capital to channel the explosive energies released by network connectivity into a new digital order maximizing political loyalty and economic profit; and the other, **the myth of freedom**, is network society pushed to its limits and beyond by a rising generation of blended minds, data flesh, and virtual perception, particularly by the generation of the young today moving at particle speed.

If it is as true now as ever before that parasites are always quick to the feast, that scavengers are often first to exploit the radically new, the vulnerable, the tentative first beginning, then the story of **technologies of the new real is no exception** to the historical rule. No sooner did the new salvation myth of being digital take hold in the twilight years of the twentieth century then it was immediately hijacked by standing powers, effectively streamed in the direction of technological platforms as a new digital ordering of the world. Politically panicked by the ability of fast-moving flows of data to instantly overturn the earthbound world of national sovereignty, landed citizenship, bounded economies, framed identities, and hardened borders, power everywhere responded to the challenge by issuing its **own counter-challenge**: constant, ubiquitous patterns of surveillance, new **alliances between the national security state and major technological platforms**, the gathering of biometric data taking the form of social credit in China and contact tracing in the West, always seeking to upload our digital shadow, patiently going through the data trash we leave behind for its telling hints about our secret motivations, hidden intentions, and questionable loyalties. Politics in the wires, then, became a scavenger hunt in the data stream in the interests of **preserving the power of the new status quo**. It is the very same with digital capitalism. Unlike the sovereign state, which is focused for purposes of its own survival on preserving sovereignty over fixed, time-bound territory at a historical moment in which real power has taken flight into the fluid, space-bound empires of the digital, digital capitalism instantly shed its basis in territorially bound bodies, manufacturing, and sales, striking out for the monetization of the power of the flows of network society. That’s been the business history of the past few decades – the violent abandonment of blue-collar workers and their factory-based jobs in favour of the higher exchange value of offshore labour without a permanent home; **transnational** trade **agreements** making possible cheap, exploited labour abroad and high-market consumerism domestically linked together by the restless movement of robotic cargo ships; and the shedding of traditional manufacturing by putting down the digital hammer of business going online, either becoming transnational, wrapping itself in fluid flows of circulating capital, or not existing at all. That is the ascendant power of contemporary technological platforms – this new era of digital capitalism with its dynamic, here today/gone tomorrow face; its technological platforms that place their fiscal bets on **bending the myth of digital salvation** in the direction of killer apps, digital fantasies, beautiful imaginaries of new social media, the everyday flux of data made flesh. But having acquired unimaginable corporate wealth by servicing network society, linking technological platforms and willing subjects with digital devices, and thus enabling the global diffusion of digital reality, the economy is fated to ride the whirlwind of the data storm. In the present social crisis, the most striking expression of the new class reality of digital capitalism is the radical split between ascendant finance capital in global stock markets and very real economic distress in the streets, mass unemployment, degradation of social and health services, and that most anguished barometer of inner anxiety, despair, and hopelessness – the opioid crisis. Here, the winning classes of digital capitalism – the owners of technological platforms and their supporting technocratic class – take **economic flight into a golden future**; while the **economic losers in the new digital order** – blue-collar workers abandoned with the destruction of manufacturing; many white-collar workers soon to be discarded as **accidental road kill** on the way to a future of **artificial intelligence and robotics**; and the permanently dispossessed, that is, the poor, the asylum-seeker, the unwanted immigrant, the racially vulnerable, the ethnically disenfranchised, the gender outlaw – face devastation and a bleak future. No less aggressive than the national security state in its pursuit of data about its network subjects, digital capitalism actually propels itself forward by making intense, granular surveillance of the consumption habits of its digital subjects a very exploitable opportunity for massive capital accumulation in the form of relational advertising, with every Facebook post enabling capitalist exchange value, every Google search triggering a chain of capital accumulation, every social media activity an addition to a very marketable digital profile. While digital reality may have been inaugurated by all the conversionary enthusiasm, messianic commitment, and utopian data visions brought together under the mythic sign of digital salvation in the late twentieth century, this twenty-first century, spiked by the technological platforms of capitalism and power, has surely been marked by the eclipse of digital utopia with the swift, relentless channelling of that original enthusiasm for life in the wires as salvation into new forms of digital ordering, including the national security state and digital capitalism, which, if they fail to possess the original intensity and dreams of digital utopia, have the more prosaic, but seductive, quality of stabilizing the flow, isolating digital subjects within familiar borders including national identity and property, and **channelling desire along all the programmed streams of power and capital.** Here, the life-changing experience of being digital as a religious epiphany is successfully replaced by the pleasures, dreariness, and growing screen addiction of the new digital bourgeoisie with its disciplinary state, austerity economy, and virtual phantasmagoria. After digital utopia, we now have stasis; after the failed epiphany of digital salvation, we face the enduring reality of taking our place, quietly and without a murmur of dissent, in the new digital order.

So the story goes, **until life begins again**. That is the contemporary social crisis. Messianic visions of the singularity moment may still have very real momentum as the leading contemporary edge of the myth of digital salvation. The COVID-19 viral pandemic may have precipitated a great shakeout of the last vestiges of the pre-digital economy, accelerating tendencies already under way towards a new digital order typified by remote communication, automation of the service industry, a real world of artificial intelligence and deep learning, and all of it tightly controlled as the proprietary knowledge of technological platforms. Nonetheless, the stability of the new digital order and the seduction of life in the wires have been challenged by the insurgency that is life in the streets today, with its scenes of surging political protests from cities in the United States, Canada, and Europe to rebellions by Hong Kong activists against new security laws promulgated by the Chinese state. All the while, other conflicts, other insurgencies based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, and national difference, have broken out seemingly everywhere, effectively challenging the sovereignty of closed digital borders with demands  – some fundamentalist, some visionary  – for reimagining a future off-grid to powerful machineries of surveillance as well as to technocratic digital platforms. Power today might reside in effective control over the **creation, programming, distribution, and policing of algorithmic codes**, but still the sounds and sights of life are palpably pushing up from below, sometimes allowing sunshine to burst through cracks in the data shield or maybe bringing with them a bit of cold, driving rain from the outside, hot energy from the streets falling downwards, rising upwards, threatening to rupture the set-piece framework of the new digital order with all the contingency, indeterminacy, differences, and absolute solidarities and hostilities that the human, now suddenly post-human, condition can muster.

#### The will to technology and the exteriorization of consciousness onto technological saviorism are both the root cause and accelerator of masculine, racial, religious, political, psychic, and environmental violence

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 149-152, October 2021, MG)

If this era can be such a time of extremes – protests against police brutality, the resurgence of **Aryan nationalism**, bitter political divisions, **religious fundamentalisms** at war against secularism, **LGBTQIA rights** guaranteed in law in a few countries but savagely oppressed in many others, **labour disciplined** by primitive accumulation (work or starve) versus growing oligopolies of finance capital – perhaps it is because, in part, trajectories explored by new media have slammed into the human condition with such accelerating violence that the resulting **social, political, economic, and environmental wreckage** all around us is like so much free-floating debris after the blast. Key tendencies that were once only theorized as possible futures have now escaped the realm of imaginary futurism to become the alphabet of a society, indeed of a world, seemingly imploding. We see panic anxiety as the key psycho-ontology of contemporary times: spasms of seductive misinformation circulating everywhere through the interstices of information culture; **human subjectivity effectively reduced to data trash**; digital delirium as the governing mood of a technological society that advances with equal measures of magic and menace; massive digital platforms breaking the skin barrier like body invaders of the sci-fi future; and everywhere possessed individuals – possessed sometimes by reactionary beliefs, **technological transcendentalism**, or religious passions, but many literally possessed also by deep, pervasive, and mesmerizing flows of digital codes circulating through affect, imagination, and consciousness. In this drift culture, only the most extreme signals manage to break through the noise generated by flows of information, often taking the form of the hysterical male with his anger over the loss of traditional masculinist privilege but, at other times, **rising white nationalism** threatened by what is perceived to be a permanently threatening outside world and always, of course, breaking news about those **psychic breakdowns** in the digital stream of those who can’t or won’t keep up to the speed of the nervous breakthrough that is life in the wires. Overexposed, overcirculated, overinformed, overablated, the triumphant age of being digital with its dreams of universal connectivity has quickly made visible all the broken connections of the past – **ethnic grievances, religious differences, unresolved political feuds, gender violence, sexual oppression, economic injustices, moral indifference** to the lives of the asylum-seeker, the slum dweller, the immigrant – just as much as it has effectively stripped digital subjects of the saving vision necessary for navigating the future. When the dust finally clears from this gathering scene of the ruins, within and without, the only thing standing will likely be the **will to technology** with its prophetic talisman hard at work on the human remainder: the **exteriorization of human consciousness**, the generalized synchronization of emotion, the ecstasy of finally becoming object-like, and the virtualization of culture. In the gathering dusk, the codes of technology are like digital sunshine on a cold, grey rainy day.

This situation can be clearly seen in the turbulent events occurring in contemporary society with the very real fear over viral contagion mixed with the quick return of politics in the streets with protests against **racialized violence**, and all of it multiplied in its intensity many times over by the pressures of generalized economic recession, severe job losses, and coming financial defaults. It’s literally a time of **imminent social chaos**, deep anxiety, palpable anger over **racialized injustice**, with the inevitable political backlash just waiting to express itself, and all the while what is absolutely strengthened by the crisis are technological platforms putting down the codes for the will to technology. Today, remote communication is the digital lifesaver for an educational system that has quickly chosen to disappear into Zoom; mobile communication with its rich array of digital devices provides an instant working infrastructure for working online and at a safe distance; the death of the face-to-face social rapidly gives way to streams of information, **gaming**, news flashes, and communications as the technical lifeblood of network society; and most definitely, the end of (traditional) work as we know it has been accelerated by the pandemic with its reduction of the labour force to “essential services,” clearing the way for a future that will quickly link **artificial intelligence**, deep learning, and creative robotics as the coming labour force. Seemingly, everything moves now in the direction of intensified, functionally required technological platforms. Everywhere, of course, the present mood of political malaise, economic distress, and social isolation contrasts sharply with the rising gains of finance capital as the codes of capital accumulation move in precisely the opposite, specifically virtual, direction from social and political disturbances on the ground left behind. Literally, we are witness today to the profoundly historical moment when **the will to technology takes off,** quickly achieving escape velocity, dynamically and spectacularly, from the inertial drag pressures of the social wasteland. While it is simultaneously predator and parasite, magic and drudge, fast (codes) and slow (life), agent of creative destruction and equally visionary new designs for the future, no one can know with certainty what a future streaming the will to technology will look like. But again, there is really no need to be a traditional futurist in this (digital) case, since this is one time in **which the future is already in our past**. And that future  – the future of fully exteriorized consciousness, synchronized emotion, the desire to escape subjectivity and become object-like, the triumph of virtual culture – is in its fullest measure deeply, immeasurably paradoxical.

For example, when the privacy of human consciousness has been broken wide open by the nutcracker of digital technology, the result is fully unpredictable in its incommensurability. While there may sometimes be an impulse for the mind to go off-grid by undertaking private pilgrimages away from the data stream – a generalized strike against the media – that is surely a challenging battle. After all, how do you rid consciousness of the **codes of technology that are already embedded** as ways of seeing, framing of perception, gateways to imagination, structures of reflection? More to the point, the contemporary situation is something in the way of split consciousness, which in practical terms implies pushing warnings about surveillance culture to the periphery of attention and thus maintaining at least the illusion of personal privacy while participating in life in the wires, whether reluctantly or enthusiastically and for multiple purposes. But in the end, how long can the stresses, tensions, and contradictions of split consciousness endure? As the philosopher George Grant once asked, how long can human beings endure the “plush patina of hectic subjectivity lived out in the iron maiden of an increasingly objectified world inhabited by increasingly objectifiable beings?”1 Fully exposed, its every movement digitally archived, tracked, and recorded, split consciousness is a **daily battleground of bubbling brains** in a coded world. When the digital sensorium touches the highly sensitive matter that is consciousness, exposing and fully externalizing minds waking up to find themselves in the digital stream, everything is suddenly out in the open: Twitter wars erupting everywhere, nuances lost, competing ideas in constant circulation, images jammed together without any particular pattern. Here, consciousness escapes its previous abode in the cranial shell to become something liquid, flaring up, influenced by swirling streams of information, breaking news, broken data, riding the digital whirlwind like a raw exposed nerve, often overwhelmed but with nowhere safe to hide.

In the end, who can tolerate the deep wound of a fully externalized mind? Who can quickly recover from the sudden injury done to human consciousness moving at the speed of light? What happens to consciousness when it is suddenly transformed into a **psychic playground** for unedited reality: continuously exposed to the raw footage of terrible events without time for an intervening ethical mediation; YouTubing screams of anger, rage, and pain with no necessary understanding of their context; filtering unmediated images, advertisements, analysis, and all the fun of the media circus with the externalized mind’s frame rate always stuck on wide open? What happens when the suddenly exteriorized mind becomes a data catcher, a mood drifter, a lurker in the digital stream, sometimes a **vicious predator** intervening actively in the scene, but usually a digital voyeur absorbing like an information hungry sponge all the spikes, ebbs, and unexpected swerves of life lived under the accelerating velocity of the data stream?

#### In the face of a resolution that attempts to control the will to emergent technologies you should vote affirmative for a method of anti-coding – a process of aesthetic resistance that implodes the code and unlocks the technologies of otherness from the technologies of violence

Kroker 4(Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 169-178, March 2004, MG)

An Art of Electronic Theory

There are three aesthetic codes for understanding the digital eye. Well, not really three codes, but three **anti-codes**, because I am not affiliating myself with the grand récits of technological discourse, with the digital eye as a master discourse, a gridded space, for the dynamic conquest of nature and human nature, but with that more shadowy region of otherness, of **aesthetic supplementarity**, those flickering, enduring aesthetic anti-codes that, like the beat-beat rhythm of the errant human heart or like the tearing up of the eye when it gets some digital dirt in it, just won’t go away.

I haven’t got any modernist illusions: I know the rules. I have studied my Heidegger. I sense how deeply Heidegger was correct when he said that in the twisting spirals of the dialectic of life and art and technology and the human spirit, otherness, even dialectical otherness, aesthetic anti-codes, work only to confirm the existence of the codes, and that, ironically, anti-codes probably serve one last great normalizing function – they work to energize the code, to establish its limits, but also to **strengthen its resistance**. Jean Baudrillard has been this way. He called it ‘the **terrorism of the code’** in the logistics of production. So has Octavio Paz when he said of de Sade:

Prisoner in your castle of crystal of rock You pass through dungeons, chambers and galleries Enormous courtyards where the still black poplars dance. All is mirror! Your image persecutes you. Man is inhabited by silence and by space. How can this hunger be met and satisfied? How can you still the silence? How can the void be Peopled? How can my image ever be escaped?1

Roland Barthes went to his death still puzzled to the point of intellectual and aesthetic paralysis by the shock of trying to understand the full implications of this game of code and anti-code. He called it the empire of the sign, the empire of the cynical sign, and as he regressed in books such as Barthes by Barthes, 2 into those picture albums of memory, of photography as always tinged by the solace of death, he muttered to himself words like: ‘I am a public square;’ ‘I am anachronic subjectivity;’ I am “**degree zero**.”’ The same thing today for Paul Virilio, who in the first chapter of Open Sky comes to an insight on the truly radical implications of the quantum physics and relativity theory of the 1930s for understanding hyper-modern culture, that digital technology actually moving at the speed of light has finally overcome the resistances of local time and local space, blasting us into the light-time and lightspace of ‘eyeball culture,’ that we’re plunging upwards, falling upwards, into the dimensionless space and vectored time of the new world city of ‘**electrooptics**.’3 In every one of his books, War and Cinema, The Vision Machine, The Art of the Motor, Speed and Politics, Pure War, Virilio is haunted, like Baudrillard, Barthes, and Octavio Paz before him, by the electronics of perception, panicked into getting off the freeway of accelerated culture, with its dromological vehicles pirating human flesh in the name of cyber-sexuality and telepresencing, getting off at the double exits marked traditional religious ethics and traditional sexuality.

But why panic at accelerated culture? Why not do the reverse? If, as Marshall McLuhan always argued, artistic vision is a point of ‘**maximal sensitivity’** to the blast of technological change, then why not insist that the method for **understanding** **emergent technologies**, the theoretical practice of a new electronics of perception, be deeply infiltrated and contaminated, indeed, overtaken and over-coded, by the hyperaesthetics of electronic artists. Not a theory of electronic art, but an art of electronic theory, then, for understanding the visual codes of the actual electronics of perception in the light-time and light-space of culture under the optical sign of the digital eye.

Why not?

**Implode the code**.

An aesthetics of hyper-perception

An art of excess for a time of moderation.

An art of interminability for a culture fast-cycled with changing fashions.

An electronic art that rubs together code and anti-code, and refuses the designation of the polarities.

Art like bubbling electronic asphalt on a hot summer day.

So, then three anti-codes for an art of electronic theory:

Its **ontology**: digital dirt.

Its **political focus**: technologies of otherness in the cybernetics of the everyday.

Its **aesthetics**: digital incommensurability in the age of calm technology

The 1st Anti-Code: **Digital Dirt**

What’s the smell of **blood** on the digital tracks? What’s the sound of static deep in the wires? What’s the colour of electronic discharges as they bond flesh to the machine? What’s the speed of the body when it has been force-fed by high tech? What’s the rate of burn of the digital nerve as it blasts off from the gravity field of the human sensorium?

The ruling illusion of digital reality is its antiseptic cleanliness. A virtual hygiene movement that launches a global tech style that is clean, cool, and cold. Virtuality as about the digital scrubbing of the world.

The will to virtual hygiene can be so powerful because the really existent animating force of digital life is dirt. Noise in the machine. Liquid in the wires. Waste in the System. Accidents in the codes. Distortions in the gifs. Mutations in design. **Data Crash**. Indeed, it is the absence of dirt that haunts the virtual hygiene machine and without which the system as a whole loses energy, running down to digital entropy. Ironically, the virtual hygiene machine requires for its reproduction the anti-code of digital dirt.

Scratch digital, perverse robots, spew electronic music, splatter cin- ema, dance of mutant life-forms, artificial perversity, spit writing, fleshmatic theory, multimedia graphics that nitro-burn ram memory – that’s digital dirt. A raw, unfinished, visceral level of life-giving energy that animates the digital, seducing the codes of the digital eye from going to ground in the sterilities of the virtual hygiene movement. So then,

**Excess everything.**

**Intensify everything**.

An end to all mediation by the codes of visuality

Or maybe just the opposite

Struggle to begin again and again

the over-saturation everywhere

of the codes of augmented visuality.

An art of symbolic exchange

An art of hyper-perception

Storming broken interfaces,

Searching out lines of electronic fatigue,

Occupying digital slash marks between the **either and the or**

An electronic wound that refuses to heal

An art of hyper-perception

For a culture that is dying because of its lack of symbolic renewal,

Of its lack of mythic renewal

The 2nd Anti-Code: **The Cybernetics of the Everyday**

Digital dirt creates counter-visions to the digital code by privileging the cybernetics of the everyday. Not just the everyday present and future, but the everyday past as well – listening also to ancient prophetic voices for what they have to tell us about ‘other’ technologies of otherness.

In her book The Eight Technologies of Otherness, Sue Golding theorizes another way of being technology.4 Not technology as a violent field of instrumental reason, but more like something Foucault might have thought in his Death Valley days, **technology as techne**, as a way of doing things, as a way of escaping the shroud of identity politics with its over-privileging of binary logic, and speaking not of difference, but of the **indifferend – technologies of otherness** – technologies of dwelling, noise, contamination, cruelty, curiosity, appetite, skin, nomadism. As Golding says: ‘What if we were to stop sterilizing the wounds? What if we were admit that the so-called deep and violent cut of meaning, truth, death, identity itself – the “who we are” and “what are we to become” of science and of life – have collapsed under their own bloodless and sexless weight.’5 Technologies of otherness, then, dwelling, comtaminating, moving, nosing, being curious, being cruel, being multiple in the valley of the cybernetics of the everyday.

So why not too – technologies of disappearance – as a way of keeping alive deep memory and deep time? A grand unified theory of prophecy in the bedlam of a coarse electronic culture? Nobody is listening, except maybe for the wandering spirits of the disappeared and, of course, the day and the night and the moon and the eagle and the trickster raven and tired, really tired, human flesh. Animism is nothing to be ashamed of. It’s repressed knowledge. It’s the forbidden eye. It’s the ticket to the truth of prophecy, of mythic utterance. That’s why it has been so discredited by all the demon-spirits of the virtualizers. An art of electronic theory also begins with digital animism – that’s what we’ve really been deprived of in the ‘intimations of deprival’ of the technological dynamo.

Like recently, at that epochal event, at the gates of Yellowstone National Park, where another technology of otherness took place, another cybernetics of the everyday, another technology of disappearance. Suddenly early in the morning a hundred Plains Indians gathered for the first public performance in a hundred years of a dance honouring the buffalo. Now, the urgency was directly political – to change the present policy of the Park Service, instigated at the behest of western ranchers, where buffalo who haven’t it seems yet learned anything at all about park behaviour and park boundaries and being-buffalo for highvelocity tourism, can be shot, and are shot, by the thousands if they stray outside the buffalo bunker archaeology of the park. Now, the reason is political, but the overwhelming feeling is mythological. The Plains Indians acknowledge deeply the truth of ancient aboriginal prophecies that the final death of the buffalo means the final death of the people, but also that the return of the buffalo anticipates the return of the people.

The report was as follows:

As a few hundred people watched beneath the snow-dappled peaks on the northern edge of the park, Gary Silk, a Lakota Sioux, stripped to the waist. As he stood in the numbing wind, in the shadow of the giant stone arch that greets visitors here, other members of his tribe made two incisions in his back with a surgical scalpel, inserted a stick in each wound, and tied a buffalo skull to each stick with ropes.

Then, as 100 or so Indians sang and drummed and played an eagle bone flute, Mr. Silk danced around a large circle dragging the skulls through the mud and grass behind him.

After a half-hour of dancing, Mr. Silk stopped and someone sat on the skulls. Mr. Silk grabbed a horse’s tail and the animal pulled away, ripping the sticks from his bloody wounds. Then, as people wept, Silk joined the singing and the drumming.6

Now, what do slaughtered buffalo and the Lakota Sioux have to do with the digital eye? It turns out: maybe a lot. The digital eye, like the eye of the hunters of the western lands before it, sees nothing but its own restless movement. The Lakota Sioux look into the eye of the buffalo and see their past, and maybe our future.

The cybernetics of the everyday, then, as also about recuperating the language of animism and mythology and prophecy for an art of electronic perception. Its admonitions: Honour the disappeared, Respect futility. Counter the war spirit of electrooptics – ‘eyeball culture’ – with the voices of prophets with their sticks and scalpeled backs and crushed skulls and blood sacrifice. Today, it’s animism most of all that takes flight in the gathering of the digital dusk.

The 3rd Anti-Code: **Digital Incommensurability in the Age of Calm Technology**

There’s a new vision of the digital future coming out of the research labs at Xerox Parc in Palo Alto. It’s called ‘Calm Technology.’7 According to Mark Weiser, Xerox’s chief technologist at Parc, computing has had three main trends – mainframe computing where many people share a computer; the personal computer typified by a one-to-one relationship between the PC and its user; and now, facilitated by the possibilities for distributed computing on the Net and the Web, the next new digital media will be ‘ubiquitous computing’ and ‘relational processing,’ where, as Mark Weiser says: ‘many computers will share each of us.’8 The tech hype spins out like this:

The third wave of computing is that of ubiquitous computing, whose cross-over point with personal computing will be around 2005–2020. The UC era will have lots of computers sharing each of us. Some of the computers will be the hundreds we may access in the course of a few minutes of Internet browsing. Others will be imbedded in walls, chairs, clothing, light switches, cars, in bodies – in everything. UC is fundamentally characterized by the connection of things in the world with computation. This will take place at many scales, including the microscopic.

There is much talk today about ‘thin clients,’ meaning lightweight Internet access devices costing only a few hundred dollars. But UC will see the creation of thin servers, costing only tens of dollars or less, that put a full Internet server into every household appliance and piece of office equipment. The next generation Internet protocol can address more than a thousand devices for every atom on the earth’s surface. We will need them all.

The social impact of imbedded computers may be analogous to two other technologies that have become ubiquitous. The first is writing. The second is electricity, which surges invisibly through the walls of every home, office and car.9

With embedded processors and the Web as harbingers, ubiquitous computing will light up the digital future.

However, what will be the human response when the realization grows that ‘many computers share each of us’ and that we’ve become exactly what McLuhan predicted – the wired sex organs of the cybermachine allowing it to fecundate and develop while it reciprocates with increases in personal wealth’; ‘passive servomechanisms’ of an externalized central nervous system; or what Virilio foresaw – electrooptics as a parasite/predator boarding the metabolic vehicle of human flesh, from without and now from within, interfacing every orifice of the human sensorium with artificial plug-ins, with such intensity that the artificial environment that is really being monitored and managed is data flesh itself? In ubiquitous computing, we become figure to the ground of technology, body environments to the electronic sensorium. The flip is complete. At Xerox Parc, bodies are digital interfaces.

Thus, the urgent necessity at Xerox Parc for ‘calm technology,’ for making the final interfaces of flesh and machine not frenzied, but ‘calm and comfortable,’10 not a scratch in the digital eye that continues to hurt, but a ‘calm technology’ that attaches itself directly to human perception, ‘engaging both the center and periphery of our attention, and in fact moving back and forth between the two.’11 As a logistics, tactics, and strategy for derealizing human perception in the age of ubiquitous computing, calm technology has three aims. The first is to move most actual computing interfaces to the periphery of human attention. As researchers at Parc like to say,

**Things in the periphery** are attuned to by the large portion of our Brains devoted to peripheral (sensory) processing. Thus the periphery in informing without overburdening. Second, by recentering something in the periphery we take control of it (or at least have the illusion of control).12

And finally, by encalming human perception in this new ubiquitous experience of being a transmission vector in an array of cybernetic data, drowning in the cyber-system, calm technology ‘**puts us at home, in a familiar place**.’13 Calm technology provides an ‘information visualization technique’ for home-grown ‘locatedness’ in the digital world.

Now, I have chosen to bring Xerox Parc’s theory of calm technology from the periphery of digital futures research to the centre of attention because it is a premonitory sign of the actual electronic war strategy by which the digital eye seductively, but no less violently, will colonize human perception. Today, the eye is the key interface. Not only colonization of the objects of perception without, but an endocolonization of perception where the epistemology of perception is broken into and digitally reconstituted by all the Xeroxes of the digital eye – questions of the meaning of ‘locatedness,’ issues of what constitutes periphery and centre, what is cyber-figure and cyber-ground in the inverted relationship of the human sensorium and ubiquitous computing, ocular strategies concerning how to transit perceptual focus between centre and focus using newly acquired digital information visualization techniques, cyber-psychoanalytic theories that privilege this strange, opaque, diffuse ocular state of ‘calm perception’ for an era of ‘calm technology.’ Calm technology is one of the master visual codes for growing a new digital eye for the biotech millennium. Prozacing human perception.

What is a counter-epistemology to the calming of human perception in ubiquitous computing?

In his evocative meditations on the virtual art of Marcel Duchamp, specifically on Duchamp’s Glass, where two mirrors held at right angles capture in the infinity of their impossible optical regression a foreshadowing of our own refraction into the dissimulative space of virtual reality, Jean-François Lyotard spoke of our existence today as a ‘hinged experience’:14 an electrooptical universe that is multiple, incongruent, and fully incommensurable, a universe that is all a matter of ‘strang projections,’ ‘vanishing gateways,’ ‘partition walls,’ ‘anamorphoses’ – a hinged universe. Now Lyotard always viewed artistic vision as a ‘transformation matrix’ – foreshadowing a new politics of incommensurability. Or, as he said:

But the discovery of incongruences and incommensurabilities, if one brings it back from the space of the geometrist to that of the citizen, obliges us to reconsider the most unconscious axioms of political thought and practice. If you haven’t despaired of your life on the pretext that all justice is lost when incommensurability was lost, if you haven’t gone running to hide your ignoble distress beneath the nobility of a great signifier capable of restoring this geometry, if, on the contrary, you think like myself that it’s the right moment to render this geometry totally invalid, to hasten its decay and to invent a topological justice, well then, you’ve already discovered what a Philistine could be doing searching among the little notes and improvisations of Duchamp: materials, tools, and weapons for a politics of incommensurables.15

Now, many intellectual nomads have been along this way: David Kristian’s tattooed sound; Steve Gibson’s transgenic images of Telebody; Tim Murray with his theory of ‘digital incomposibility,’ Kathy Acker with her writing as a ‘transformation matrix’ in Pussy: King of Pirates, the new school of hyper-raw edge mechanix poetry in the Bay area – visual incongruities, visual disturbances, – all hyper-modern, all posing the same **aesthetic gesture** of a politics of incommensurability as a way of refusing to restore the geometry of normalized reason and normalized sight.

I emphasize Lyotard’s plea for a politics of incommensurability in the context of Xerox Parc’s proposal for the calming of human perception at the advent of calm technology, because we are suddenly in the midst of Lyotard’s ocular world that we thought we were only theorizing, except this time the **visual stakes have been aesthetically raised**. As if by a tactic of a preventive first-strike optical inoculation, the age of ubiquitous computing, with many computers sharing each of us, suddenly softwires human perception into an actually existent electronic universe of ‘strange projections,’ ‘vanishing gateways,’ ‘partition walls,’ ‘anamorphoses’ – a hinged universe at the interface of flesh and machine – only to immediately shut down both the danger and the creativity of this new ocular region by the electrooptical ideology of calm technology.

The aesthetics of Digital Dirt finds its real political nemesis in calm technology. Calm technology simultaneously closes the eye of human percep- tion and opens human flesh to full passive absorption into the regime of the digital eye. I follow Lyotard: No to the new grand signifier, No to the new grand ocular policing, No to calm perception for a calm digital eye; and Yes to Lyotard’s thought that ‘it’s the right moment to render this geometry totally invalid, to hasten its decay and to invent a topological justice.’ However, unlike Lyotard and Duchamp, for us this moment, this right moment, is more difficult because today we do not have to simply highlight missed chances for incongruities and incommensurables, but actually have to seize back from the optical regime of the digital eye the language of art and technology as a ‘transformation matrix,’ replete with strange projections, electronic voids, virtual gateways, digital anamorphoses – a ‘**hinged universe’ of impossible perspectives** and ‘topological justice’ that desperately requires that its digital future, its ocular future, its electrooptical future, be **opened up – excited – rather than shut down and calmed**.

So then, some stories of excited perception – of hyper-perception.

#### The 1AC is a form of artistic practice that recodes the question of aesthetics towards the discontinuous, the fragmentary, the uncertain, the reversal. We are the glitch, the darkness, the specters hidden within the techo-imaginary of the future that float in the drifts of codes, history, and media as their intersecting point of evocation and undermining.

**Kroker 14** (Arthur Kroker, emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “Exits to the Posthuman Future,” pgs. 195-198)//JRD

What if we were **to think media** theory as itself an **artistic practice**, that is, as a **form of aesthetic imagination** that seeks to **directly enter** the world of **data nerves**, network skin, and increasingly **algorithmic minds** with the **intention of capturing** the dominant **mood** of these **posthuman times** – drift culture – in a form of thought that dwells in complicated intersections and complex borderlands? In its essence, **thinking** with and **against** the larger **technopoesis** of **accelerate**, **drift**, and **crash** that **holds** **us** in its **sway** **requires** a form of **media** **reflection** that is itself an **exit** **to** the **posthuman** **future**. Here, **refusing** to **stand** outside its **immediate** **historical** **circumstances** and **always** seeking to **capture** in its **rhythms** the mood of **accelerate**, **drift**, and **crash**, media theory of this order allies itself with a form of **emergent** **consciousness** that is **pervasive** in the **digital** **world**, namely **figural** **aesthetics**. With its global gathering of new **media artists**, remix musicians, **pirate gamers, AI graffiti artists**, anonymous witnesses, and **code rebels**, the emerging order of **figural aesthetics** reveals a **new order**, a brilliantly hallucinatory order, based on an **art** of **impossible** **questions** and a **perceptual** **language** as **precise** as it is **evocative**. Here, the **aesthetic** **imagination** dwells solely on **questions** of **incommensurability**: What is the vision of the clone? What is the **affect** of **the** **code**? What is the **hauntology** of the **avatar**? What is most excluded, prohibited, by the android? What is the perception of the drone? What are the **aesthetics** of the fold? What, in short, is the meaning of aesthetics in the age of drift culture? In this case, understood as an aesthetic order of (new media) art that seeks to enter directly into the circulatory regime of the code, literally in the **process becoming** itself **symptomatically energized** by the **vortices** of **data** **flows** and algorithmic coding, **figural** **aesthetics** is always multiple in its **artistic** **expressions**, certainly humanizing, but also **tragic**, **neutral**, and sometimes cynical. **No** **longer** an art of **expression** or **representation**, but **art** that **literally** **catches** the **drift** of its times by entering **directly** into the **violent** **perturbations** of the code-stream – a **form** of **art** that is **figural** precisely because it **registers** **simultaneously** all the **fatal** **speed** and **tragic** **intimations** of deprival **implicit** in an **increasingly** technical **reality**. Not necessarily, then, a **multimedia** art that **evokes** the **contagious** **energy** of the code, although that too, but a form of art that stands poised at the fracture (Duchamp's “hinge”)2 of presence and absence, drawing into itself all the contradictions and complexity and folds of digital reality itself. Driven by a speed of (aesthetic) perception that easily exceeds the speed of the code, **mobilized** by a **new way of seeing** that is balanced between in-depth participation in the (digital) object of its study and an incommensurable drawing away from ruling narratives that would capture it, and attentive to the fact every artifact of technological posthumanism, from digital devices to private autobiography, is a **possible** **object** of **artistic** **interest**, **figural** **aesthetics** **floats** in the drifts of **codes**, **history**, **video**, and **media** as their **intersecting** **point** of evocation and **undermining**. Sensitive to fundamental changes in the order of sense perception, the artistic imagination has always functioned as a navigator, simultaneously intimate with and at a critical distance from the digital recoding of the human sensorium. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that the **first** **response** to the **emerging** **complexities** of **technological** **posthumanism** is most **definitely** **aesthetic** in form. **Not** a mode of **aesthetics** that **remains** at **one** (safe) **remove** from the **technological** **transitioning** of the question of the human species-form, but the swift emergence now of a style of aesthetics – figural aesthetics – that **enters** directly into the **complexities** of drift culture. Sometimes, figural aesthetics adopts the **language** **of** **design**. It becomes a **rider of the data storm**, negotiating **new** **pathways** **through** the **radical** **uncertainty** of the **digital** **future**. At other points, **figural** **aesthetics** offers profound **meditations** on the **accident** **of** **technology** by invoking in the **language** **of** **art** the ancient tradition of lament. **Deliberately** **challenging** officially prescribed **frameworks** of **understanding**, **figural** **art** of this order quickly **calls** **down** upon itself the most severe form of **policing**. Literally, the **framework** of power involved in **securing** **contemporary** norms of **political** **intelligibility** is **suspicious** of **thought**, particularly of those **artistic** **articulations** of **remembrance** and **lament** that work to **undermine** otherwise invisible frameworks of **official** **interpretation**. Of course, when data slams into the human condition, the result is not only the swift eradication of familiar landmarks in understanding the here, there, and everywhere of social intelligibility, but the rapid rise to prominence of new forms of **figural** **art** – mobile, augmented, remix, scanner – that in both form and content reflect the shape of the unfolding future and, in that fatal reflection, render that **future** **uncertain** and **truly** **enigmatic**. And how could it be otherwise when the earliest signs of the coming of the posthuman allude to the surfacing of body futures that are multiple: sometimes enhanced data bodies, but also bodies that have gone off-grid, bodies colonized by mono-data, bodies circulating in the digital debris of spam, spyware, viruses and contagions, and even twisted bodies caught in the opposing energy flows of the seduction of connectivity and the negation of relentless digital overexposure. **Figural** **aesthetics** is the **spectral** **eye** of the **posthuman**, that point where **art** **enters** the **order** of **digital** **being** with such **perceptual** **intensity** that it makes of itself a **mutating** **sign** of the **collision** of **the** **code**, **the** **human**, the android, the metallic, and perhaps even of the **digital** **zombie**. **Art** of this (posthuman) order **recodes** the **question** of **aesthetics** by the **creation** of a mode of **perception** that **fully** **opens** to the discontinuous, the **fragmentary**, the **uncertain**, the **reversal**. What results is a form of figural art – **posthuman** **art** – that has **no** **necessary** **medium** of expression precisely because it is **always** an **art** **of** **the** **intersection**, the incommensurable, **the** **bifurcation**, the broken code, **the** **glitch** that **reveals** the **darkness** **within**, the static that **reflects** the **passage** **of** **pure** **speed**. Art of **this** **order** is a **haunting** **talisman** of the **posthuman**, **neither** its **advent** **nor** **termination**, but a form of **posthuman** **aesthetics** that can **never** **express** anything external to itself because **figural** **art** **constitutes** in its **essence** the **uncanny** **meaning** of the **posthuman** **moment** – fluid, mobile, folded, combinatorial, transitional. Consequently, figural aesthetics is an art of motion but also an art of inertia – speed and slowness, noise and silence. With its strange juxtapositions, unexpected folds, fluid intersections, figural art can be so strangely familiar to us, the earliest inhabitants of the technological posthuman, because it is an advance outrider of a new form of perception that is already practiced on a daily basis but nowhere fully culturally acknowledged. While most certainly this **new** **aesthetic** **language** seeks to describe what has happened to the body, consciousness, labor, culture itself when folded within the cyclotron of computation, it also brings to the **surface** the **deeper** **ethical** **concerns** of **society**: the **terrorism of the code**, the revenge-taking of the failing master narratives, the **injured** **sensibility** of **subject** narratives in rapid decline, the **growing ressentiment** of the human at its **eclipse** by the **technological** **posthuman**, the cynical relief of the abject human at being **unburdened** of its **eschatological** **responsibility** for being a **coherent** **species** being – the fatal embodiment of the will to technology. Lyotard's Driftworks announced the opening themes of figural art: “Here is a course of action: harden, worsen, accelerate decadence. **Adopt** **the** **perspective of active nihilism**, exceed the mere recognition – be it depressive or admiring – of the **destruction** of all **values**. Become more and **more** **incredulous**. Push **decadence** **further** still and accept, for instance, to **destroy** the **belief** in **truth** **under all its forms**.” Now that the **posthuman** **condition** has revealed decadence – **incredulous**, **excessive** **decadence** – as the **basic** **ontology** of **late** **capitalism**, the point of a **figural art** that would “harden, worsen**, accelerate decadence**” would be **precisely** the **reverse**, that is to say, it would draw into a **greater visibility those intangible**, but very real, **impulses** to **social** **solidarity** and **ethical** **probity** that haunt the order of the real. So, then, **figural** **art** is always a **navigator** **of** **uncertainty** because it **remains**, above all, an **explorer**, a **hinge**, a **fracture**, in the **midst of the data storm.**

#### The intellectual foundations undergirding modernity have eroded. That we live precariously perched on the apocalyptic edge renders communication itself facile and incoherent. Carving out opportunities for critical space creates the opportunity for revelatory experiences that shatter the contours of our political imagination and gesture toward alternative possibilities.

**Featherstone 10** [Mark Featherstone is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Keele University, UK, his areas of specialism are social and political thought and psychoanalysis, THEORY BEYOND THE CODES, “Virilio's Apocalypticism,” *Ctheory*, 9/16/2010, <http://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ctheory/article/view/14787/5662>]

Although I would risk the claim that the capitalist view of the productivity of violence, destruction, and catastrophe may be shaken by accidents that threaten the coherence of the socio-economic system or certainly the environmental life support system itself, it is not at all clear that this is the case and that capitalism will reform its practices when it looks like the world is about to end. This is because the high priest of neo-liberal economics, Milton Friedman [17], would regard the total collapse of the socio-economic system in apocalyptic terms, as an opportunity to re-boot the system in a more successful, more efficient form, rather than as a wake up to reform the mode of production in a general sense. In this respect, I think we must remain cautious of Virilio's [18] Augustinian theory of apocalyptic hope, which parallels Girard's [19] view that the contemporary world is balanced somewhere between the mimetic war of all against all and an apocalyptic turn that will usher in a new mode of being together. As Žižek [20], Badiou [21], and Kroker [22] explain, and Virilio knows all too well, contemporary capitalism is itself an apocalyptic world-less form rooted in metaphysics, science fiction, and the kind of quasi-theological mysticism that Der Derian [23] finds at the heart of the American military-industrial-media-entertainment network and the related project of virtuous war. As such, and because we must understand that post-modern capitalism may well not only survive, but also profit from the end of the world, we should recognise the importance of Virilio's [24] notions of critical space. What this idea captures is the possibility that we are currently balanced on the apocalyptic edge of the socio-economic system, on the line between violent destruction and the extinction of humanity as being-in-the world, and the turn to a new ecological mode of living able to reconcile our identity as natural, social, and technological beings.

Given this concern for the apocalyptic nature of hyper-modernity, and Drew Burk's [25] account of Virilio as the apocalyptic thinker of revelation, critical distance, and the scenic imagination par excellence, I want to claim that we should emphasise the link between Virilio's concept of critical space and his ideas of the museum of accidents [26] and more recently the university of disaster. [27] Through these notions he suggests the need to reveal the catastrophic nature of the empire of speed, to open up a space for critical engagement with our culture of disaster that is otherwise prohibited by the collapse of knowledge and thought into the ecstasy of communication and information [28], and ultimately to enable the turning or transformation of global society to a more humane form.

I want to suggest that we should regard Virilio's ideas of the museum of accidents [29] and the university of disaster [30] as attempts to present a theory of the institutionalisation of the critique of the globalised empire of speed that may tip the apocalyptic balance against the world-less mysticism of neo-liberal post-modern capitalism and towards the humanitarian demand for a more liveable world where technology works for humans, rather than the other way around. Against what he calls the twilight of place [31], which condemns humanity to, at best, a life on the move and, at worst, the living death of a disembodied and spectral existence, Virilio shifts into reverse through the idea of critical space that can institutionalise the Ancient Socratic call to 'Know Thyself'; such a call has been disappeared by the culture of speed that leaves no time for reflection, but remains hidden, a kind of unconscious supplement in our world of light speed trajectories and velocities, awaiting the moment when time seems to stop and critical thought is possible once more. Akin to the Freudian logic of unearthing the hidden unconscious other side of psychic life, Virilio's [32] notions of the critical space of the museum of accidents and the university of disaster seeks to reveal the other side of the modern commitment to progress and development.

Following Aristotle, who suggested that the accident reveals the substance and in doing so inspired western thinkers from Nietzsche, Heidegger, Freud, Deleuze, and Derrida to think through a theory contrasting the system and its others, Virilio explicitly takes the case of the accident and suggests that it has the potential to reveal the substance or truth of the modern temptation to progress, speed, and totality [33]. Apart from revealing this substance, as the violence and destructiveness of modernity, especially in its hyper-active phase, it may be that what Virilio's [34] apocalypse would also reveal would be the need for humanity to learn a sense of humility. To accept that it is not divine, but rather a limited earthbound species that cannot live without resistance or gravity. The paradox of this situation is, of course, that it is precisely humanity's limited nature, the fact that we are not Gods, that has led us to reach for the skies only to plunge back down to earth like Icarus, the tragic figure par excellence of Greek mythology.

Like Nietzsche [35], who was well aware of humanity's tragic nature, Virilio knows that we will always try to touch the sky. In this respect I do not see him in any way as anti-modern, even though it is possible that his critique of the excessive nature of the empire of speed may express itself in a form of social and cultural conservatism that is not easily reconciled with his radical critique of technology. Instead I believe that his problematic resides in the hubristic forgetting of tragedy that has evolved through hyper-modernity and the need to rehabilitate the Ancient idea of humanity as a tragic creature of the limit that is made necessary and possible by the apocalyptic culture of post-modernism. This culture simultaneously and paradoxically marks the moment when we run into the limit of terrestrial time and space and forget about our earthbound limited nature. In this respect my focus is less on Virilio's conservatism or his desire to restrict humanity; rather I am interested in what I perceive to be his concern to maintain the experience of the limit in a global age where we simultaneously inhabit a state of global fullness and completion and precisely for that reason have no sense of that truth. It is this paradox, this conflation of the destructive potential of completed modernity and the total inability of humanity to understand this condition as a sign of the limitation and potential end of its own existence, primarily because of its location or immersion in a vortex of information that screens out critical thought and knowledge, that forms the basis of Virilio's apocalypse and necessitates the creation of institutions able to think through the end times in order to pull us back from the brink. Herein resides the meaning of Virilio's [36] idea of a politics of the very worst and his notion of the accident as an inverted miracle able to radically re-orient our relation to the world and technology.

Virilio's Notion of Catastrophic Modernity

For Virilio [37] modernity must be understood as a catastrophic epoch which has led to what he calls a 'toposcopical disaster' characterised by humanity's inability to properly perceive the phenomenological reality of the environment that functions as its life support system. Against this catastrophic condition - which he tells us leads to the psychopathological condition of the planet man who falls into megalomania by virtue of his inability to understand his relation to the totally mediated virtual world that has been condensed to the infinite density of a singularity by the light speeds of new media technology - Virilio explains that we need to find a new form of art suitable for illustrating our condition and illuminating our apocalyptic situation. [38] From this insight I think we can make two points. First, it is methodologically significant that Virilio discusses the redemptive quality of art, rather than critical theory, because what this illustrates is his view that complex theoretical constructions are unlikely to impact upon a high speed society where knowledge and thought have been more or less destroyed by an excess of information and communication. The value of art is, therefore, that it makes an emotional, rather than cognitive, impression upon the audience and causes them to feel, rather than necessarily theoretically comprehend their situation in an epoch where theoretical comprehension has been, at best, marginalised, and at worst, foreclosed by the light speeds of new technology. We know that Virilio [39] foregrounds this methodological approach in his work because he has the tendency to explain the ways in which his own work leaps from idea to idea without necessarily working out the connections between theories and concepts. The effect of this procedure is, therefore, to give the reader first, an impression and second, an invitation to work backwards through the theoretical connections present in his work. We can, of course, find a precedent for this approach to critical writing, which is perfectly symmetrical with the trajectivity of the post-modern empire of speed, even if it does run the risk of collapsing into the vortex of information and communication that characterises our mediated world. We can compare Virilio's thought to the German critical theorists' notion of the thought-image, which was similarly meant to oppose the banality of the culture industry from the inside through the construction of media-friendly critical bombs. [40] In the case of both the German critical theorists, such as Adorno and Horkheimer (and to a lesser extent Benjamin), and Virilio, I think we can, therefore, pinpoint a notion of political activism, whereby critical writing is itself an artistic activity meant to oppose the banality of technology that simply works for the sake of working, and somehow to spark critical reflection in the minds of the disorientated and stupefied masses.

As Virilio [41] knows very well, the potential problem of this strategy is that it is not possible to fight speed with speed. From the perspective of the Frankfurters, the threat is that Virilio's user friendly critiques may be transformed into commodities through the process of knowledge exchange on the open market, thus becoming little more than fantastical representations of radical critique in a globalised system that has no other. However, my view is that there is more to Virilio's [42] turn to critical art than the attempt to simply mimic the dynamism of the empire of speed, and that it is possible to understand this strategy in ways that render it perfectly symmetrical with his other major radical theory, grey ecology [43], or the concern with the speed limit. My view is that what Virilio's turn to critical art seeks to achieve is a connection to the masses caught under the sign of light speed that is able to lift them out of the endless passage of events and freeze time, creating a moment of solitude, concentration, contemplation, and reflection, which in other works he calls critical space. [44] My thesis is, therefore, that it is this critical space of reflection that Virilio wants to open up in order to create the possibility of apocalyptic transformation and that understanding this strategy is key to comprehending the meaning of his political activism.

This point about Virilio's activism is important because it shows us that his apocalypse is never immediate, but rather relies on the recognition of the catastrophic nature of modernity that his work may produce in the audience. It is only at this point that Virilio's apocalypse, where apocalypse refers to a process of revelation, would truly appear. Herein resides the second point about the nature of Virilio's theory of the value of art for illuminating the catastrophic nature of contemporary processes of globalisation; although the catastrophe is always already present, and taking place as we speak, the apocalypse is not now, and can never be now, without the revelatory function of representation to tip the balance away from the unthinking catastrophe of modernity that is endlessly taking place and towards the critical ecological-phenomenological demand for a new relationship between humanity, the world, and technology.

The apocalypse resides, therefore, in the moment of unveiling, in the moment or event when the catastrophe becomes so apparent that it is impossible for the audience or tele-viewer not to recognise its representation or presentation in critical art and act upon this recognition. Since this has not happened yet, and we remain caught up in the end times where catastrophe is everywhere and apocalypse nowhere, we might say that we live in the epoch of unrealised catastrophe. This is because the true realisation of catastrophe, not the basic media representation of catastrophic events that is fed to passive tele-viewers, but rather the existential realisation of the catastrophe taking place now, the endless catastrophe pushing humanity and the world to the very edge of existence, is the apocalypse. This is the true moment of revelation, that would change our relationship to both technology and the world forever, and demand us to actively reformulate our way of living in the world on the basis of that revelatory experience.

If this revelatory experience, this apocalyptic moment, is the objective of Virilio's thought, I think that we should read his works as a history of the catastrophic nature of modernity, hyper-modernity, and the emergence of the post-modern moment of globalisation when time and space are exhausted and there is nowhere else to go. As catastrophe piles upon catastrophe in a totally mediated, totally inter-connected world where everything impacts upon everything else, Virilio's [45] wager is that we will wake up to the catastrophe of modernity realised or post-modernity and change our situation. Shifting into reverse, and considering his now classic Speed and Politics [46], Virilio shows how modernity and the obsession with speed and progress began with the French Revolution. In his view the Revolution destroyed the immobility of the feudal universe that had reigned more or less unchanged since Aristotle considered the idea of the great chain of being, and inaugurated a society and social form ordered by the principle of futurity and modernisation. This new society was formed on the basis of science, reason, technology, and democracy and was eventually meant to reach its final destination in a utopia of techno-scientific reasoned virtue. However, as Žižek [47] has shown in his essay on Robespierre's famous 'Virtue and Terror' speech, the revolutionaries, who Virilio calls dromomaniacs, knew that their new society of speed, movement, and progress could never succeed without overcoming or simply crashing through whatever obstacles lay in its path. In this respect Žižek highlights Robespierre's insight that virtue was always bound to terror, that virtue was in fact impossible without terror, in much the same way that Virilio foregrounds the terminal relationship between speed and war, to show how the history of modernity, the epoch of speed, has always been about the violent overcoming of obstacles and limits through terrorist ballistic technologies.

This much is evident when we consider what Virilio [48] calls pure war, his term for explaining the thin or even invisible line separating war from peace in modern society. Consider the principal site of modernity, modernisation, and speed, the city, which Virilio [49] regards as a site of 'habitable circulation'. If we think about the city, which Mumford [50] tells us is the originary site of human sociability and civilization, through the works of the Italian Futurist artist Umberto Boccioni and the German sociologist Georg Simmel, we enter a completely different scene to the foundational city painted by Mumford. In Boccioni's The City Rises [51] or Simmel's The Metropolis and Mental Life [52] we are presented with the image of the city as a place of enormous energy and vitality, but also abstraction, alienation, and violence.

In both cases Virilio's [53] view that the modern city is governed by a dictatorship of movement is appropriate. There is no resting place, or hiding place, in either Boccioni or Simmel. Moderns are fatally exposed to speed and must learn to adjust to the new epoch. While Simmel was, of course, critical of the new modern city of speed, because of the ways in which it fostered a culture of distance and estrangement, Boccioni, perhaps the master Futurist artist, thought that humanity had to evolve to live with the new speeds of modernity. Hence his classic sculpture, Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, can in many ways be seen as a prefiguration of the totalitarian man captured in the writings of Ernst Jünger [54], and critically discussed by Klaus Theweleit [55] in his two volume psychoanalytic study of the proto-Nazi Freikorps para-military group that terrorised Weimar Germany in the 1920s.

We know that neither Boccioni or Simmel were concerned with war in any conventional sense; yet that they clearly relate to the modern prophets of technological war, Marinetti, Jünger, and later the totalitarians, Hitler and Stalin, whom Arendt [56] characterised by their obsession with movement, dynamism, and the notion of violent progress towards a pre-defined ideological utopian conclusion, is of central importance. What this link illuminates is what Virilio [57] means by pure war as the collapse of the relationship between peace and war and the endo-colonisation of everyday life by the warrior ethos. Despite the rejection of the violent utopianism of the totalitarians in the wake of the discovery of the horrors of Auschwitz and the Gulag Archipelago, it would be wrong to imagine that pure war or the obsession with speed and movement has in any way left the scene of post-modern liberal society. As Virilio [58] explains, speed remains the hope or key utopian principle of the west. He tells us that movement is the only law of the modern, hyper-modern, or post-modern world and that the failure to move is a sign of decay, decline, and ultimately death.

That the futurism of speed remains central to life in western liberal and neo-liberal society should not surprise us since the founder of the liberal tradition, Thomas Hobbes [59], was himself concerned with the movement and the progress of men through life. In his political science he imagined society as smooth Euclidean space populated by atomised men or precise 'subjectiles' bound by the rules of the road set out by the Leviathan and expected to follow these rules on pain of death. For Hobbes, life was a race, and a struggle for power, where power refers to the difference between the relative speeds of men. In the context of this situation, the rule of the Leviathan was meant to legislate against fatal collisions. These would, in the state of nature, lead to catastrophic accidents between men, resulting in the end of one of their trajectories through life, immobility, and as a consequence, death [60].

Beyond Virilio's [61] location of the emergence of modernity, the epoch of speed, in the event of the French Revolution, it may well be that we should also think about the ways in which Hobbes' theory of the state as traffic cop from the mid-17th century also contributed to the origin of the new society of movement, dynamism, and progress. Here, we may also consider how Hobbes' work built upon the new physics of Galileo and the theory of inertia that posited a universal law of movement and undermined the Aristotelian orthodoxy that imagined a universe of order, stasis, and organisation, and regarded all movement as progress towards this natural end point. Given the radical break between the ancient-medieval physics based upon Aristotle's thought and Galileo's new modern paradigm that Hobbes took as a model of the endless dynamism of early capitalist society, it is possible to see the French Revolutionary break, which ushered in the society of the epoch of totalitarianism, as an attempt to rediscover the ancient notion of a telos that the Spartans and Plato had sought to defend against Herodotus' [62] notion of history, and combat the revolutionary conditions later represented by Boccioni and Simmel.

In this way, it is possible to construct an historical time-line explaining the emergence of the current catastrophic empire of speed that Virilio believes has reached its limit and started to burn out under conditions of globalisation. This time-line would run from the historical destruction of Sparta and Plato's related utopian city outlined in The Republic [63], evolve through Aristotle's theory of movement towards natural ends, take in the destruction of Aristotle's theory by Galileo and the new modern physics and Hobbes' political science of society as a race, before reaching Marx and the anti-capitalist reaction to the new violent society of speed. This anti-capitalist turn may in turn be related to the totalitarian attempts to re-discover a modernist version of the ancient utopia of stasis, leading finally to a consideration of the rise of post-modern neo-liberal capitalism in the wake of the collapse of the totalitarianisms that has liberated speed from all ideas of limitation.

The central point about the end of this time-line is, of course, that the post-modern neo-liberal liberation of speed from all ideas of limitation, where ideas of limitation refer to either utopian ends or social speed limits such as trade regulations meant to govern the movement of capital, is evidence of the hubris and the forgetting of tragedy that Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Virilio all see as the core problematic of the modern society of nihilism, technology, and speed [64]. In each case I think it is possible to argue that Nietzsche and Heidegger, and now Virilio, recognise that the inability of humanity to appreciate the necessary phenomenological resistance of the world upon its movement and speed will produce catastrophic consequences in the form of the emergence of a last man bored by a technological world that he can no longer relate to and that completely prohibits his continued movement through space. This is, of course, the famous theory of inertia that Virilio [65] employs to show how the empire of speed has started to collapse into a society of immobility and stasis characterised by walls, borders, camps, and prisons that he generalises through the ideas of global foreclosure, incarceration, and lock down.

In this new global crash culture, where the ideology of global capitalism talks about freedom of movement and works off the idea that increased proximity in a society where it is impossible to evade the other will lead to more love, sharing, and community, Virilio's [66] point is that reality is defined by surveillance, suspicion, paranoia, security, hatred, petty jealousy, revulsion towards the other, and ultimately pure war. This, then, is the catastrophe of the empire of speed without limits. This is the catastrophe awaiting a revelatory moment to transform it into an apocalyptic event that may enable us to enact radical, revolutionary, change. The challenge remains, of course, to find some way to produce this apocalyptic moment, to produce this moment of revelation, through artistic endeavour and critical thought in a society of speed where everything is reduced to the status of information, communication, and commodity to be exchanged and passed on. In other words, there is no apocalyptic moment in the empire of speed because the empire of speed is defined by what we might variously call following Kroker [67] and Wilson [68] post-modern, virtual, hyper, or supercapitalism.

In the hyper-capitalist world, if we choose to adopt Kroker's name for the new form of high speed, high tech, totally virtual capitalism, there is no telos, there is no apocalyptic end, no fatal moment of collapse, since, as Wilson [69] points out, death is distributed across the system. In this vision of the new capitalist world, mortality invades every aspect of life in the form of a death drive that compares to Virilio's concept of pure war [70] which shows how war is no longer contained in a discrete event, but rather exists everywhere, nowhere, and is at the same time never and always on. For Virilio [71] this death drive is explained by America's attachment to the idea of the frontier, or what he calls, citing Jackson, the frontier effect, which has led the land of the free towards a form of nihilism set on the destruction of the environment for the sake of development, modernisation, progress, and creation of what Deleuze and Guattari [72] call smooth space. That is to say that the American determination to conquer or overcome obstacles, to create smooth space suitable for the speed of movement for capital and human flows, in many respects reproduces Hobbes' capitalist metaphysics of legalised movement in real space. It is this innovation that transforms the phenomenological world of embodied experience into a metaphysical or virtual abstraction that humans, or perhaps we should say those post-humans plugged into the network society, experience through inter-face with technology. Virilio's [73] America, the land of Hobbesian materialist metaphysics realised, is for this reason comparable to Baudrillard's [74] Nietzschean land of fascinated banality. It exists as a land of deserts, a featureless landscape, a smooth Euclidean space, that has come to define post-modern globalisation as a catastrophic space awaiting the arrival of its apocalypse.

What is more is that we know that the apocalypse is on the American mind. Consider the born again Christian fundamentalists. They understand the endless war in the Middle East, the lands of deserts, Iraq, the birth place of human culture and civilization, and Armageddon, the site of the final battle between the forces of good and evil, as the scene of the coming apocalypse where the saved will be separated from the damned and the world will learn what America already knows, that it is the land of God. Again we can discern the strange virtualisation of the world, which Virilio [75] understands as characteristic of the light speeds of globalisation, where metaphysics and theology stand in for politics, define the direction of our world, and set the scene for an apocalyptic moment that will transform the basic co-ordinates of human reality. Unfortunately, the contemporary American apocalypse, which updates Winthrop's theory of the city upon the hill in popular and official culture ranging from Tim LaHaye's Left Behind [76] books to the Bush regime's PNAC, is not the apocalypse imagined by Virilio [77]. Whereas his theory suggests creating speed limits or a 'political economy of speed' in order to enable humans to live together in the world, the American vision of the apocalypse is about destroying what little environmental resistance there is left in the world in order to completely liberate humanity from its reliance on natural life support systems.

In practical terms this is, of course, about spreading the American way, and perhaps military, economic, and cultural imperialism, but what is important about Virilio's vision is that it enables us to understand that behind the commitment to practical principles of freedom, individualism, democracy, capitalism, and technology resides a metaphysical imperative to salvation through virtualisation. Paraphrasing Virilio paraphrasing Heidegger who noted that technology cannot be understood technologically but rather must be thought metaphysically, it may be the case that we cannot understand the American-led process of globalisation politically or economically, but instead must think about it metaphysically in terms of speed and the death drive towards virtuality. This view, which describes the way Virilio [78] understands processes of globalisation and the creation of the dromosphere is certainly supported by Der Derian's [79] theory of virtuous war. Der Derian's theory explains a mode of pure war, slimmed down in terms of its understanding of political complexity in order to meet the needs of speed, so that the world is divided along the lines of Carl Schmitt's [80] violent friend / foe dichotomy where the virtuous chosen people face off against the evil others who are set to burn in Hell in an apocalyptic fight to the death, and transformed into a media abstraction by high technology, which virtualises reality, making the environment subordinate to the smooth spaces of the map. For Der Derian [81], America, the land of apocalyptic virtuous war, the mode of pure war that fuses a theological belief in virtue with a high tech commitment to virtuality, was always fated to take this road. It was, after all, named after Amerigo Vespucci, the great cartographer-explorer, and has always been the land of maps and the refusal of the world.

#### Debates about the details of American military posture may seem like benign reform within broader imperialist politics, but the underlying metaphysics of American culture and society ensures that the political energy produced can only be expressed as exclusionary ressentiment or nihilist instrumental activism

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Yet for all its outward materialist accomplishments, the underlying metaphysics of the American expression of the will cannot, in the end, be denied. At some indefinable point in its cultural history, possibly bored with its accomplishments, fatigued with its obligations, perhaps contemptuous of the ease with which it has conquered a colony and then an empire, the American will inevitably folds back on itself. Thus begins the era of soft decadence when the will, dispensing with extrinsic objects as ultimately unsatisfactory forms of satisfaction, begins to feed on itself. Literally, America begins to make itself sick as a way of energizing the next phase of its historical project. While the American will in its political infancy is nourished by the language of expanding capital -- the aggressive construction of a coldly functional empire of social, economic, cultural and political power -- the fully mature expression of the American will does just the opposite. In these desolate, skittish days at the end of empire, American power feeds on the eschatology of postmodern phantasms: the death of the social, the end of politics, the virtualization of capital, the disappearance of culture. Reality shows on television are practical substitutes for social capital. Dense networks of expressways linking gated suburbs to downtown financial skyscrapers represent the architectural remainder of urban capital. Breast augmentation as the leading present by parents to graduating high school women constitutes the real language of body capital. Evangelical preachers, stock manipulators, and powerful vested interests feeding on the "common" body of the government perfectly express the death of politics as itself a way of renewing the language of power. While conservative political rhetoric appeals to the unity of American community and progressive thought continues to dream of social justice, the real driving force of American popular culture champions the death of the social. Exclusionary politics, political scapegoating, collective anger directed against the weak, posses of middle-class self-described "vigilantes" on the Arizona border with Mexico, drinking rates among some high school students declining because they are reported as spending more time popping prescription pills from their parents' medicine cabinets, television news of mass outbreaks of syphilis among the children of Baptists in Atlanta suburbs, newspaper chronicles of monster homes, abandoned families, and vacant relationships. A pleasure dome and a torture chamber, the Body Upon a Hill increasingly takes delight in its own humiliation. Its mass entertainment from CSI to the galaxy of reality shows can be death-oriented because in its last decadent phase power always prefers to speak in the language of thanatos. With a thin veneer of piety covering an inner reality of political cynicism, scenes of torture, death, accidents, mass plague, natural catastrophes are transformed into entertainment spectacles. In the mass media, false prophets abound while false gods are proclaimed just before being debunked. In its foreign policy, America throws off the legitimating language of democratic freedom, revealing itself to be a cold-eyed will to power, subordinating when necessary the (domestic) rhetoric of freedom and democracy to doing what's necessary to preserve an increasingly hegemonic world empire. In its domestic policy, the leaders of the Republic encourage its population to make a media spectacle of the spirit of negation within. Violence becomes the essential moment of rapture in the last decadent phase of American empire, with panic fear and panic deflation as oscillating moments in the public mind. Or perhaps something more psychologically complex as the American boundary condition: a strange combination of activism and panic fear, transformation and negation. Which explains why, for example, there can be such violent counter-reactions against any breaches of the closed boundaries of the American covenant. This is a political system wound up so tightly in a twin logic of violence and negation that the slightest hint of catastrophe threatens to draw out the panic fear within. Long before the projection of American power harvests the world in the pursuit of its imperial ambitions, the terms of the original Puritan covenant -- codified by the language of the American Constitution and sanctified by the official rhetoric of the Civil War as sacrificial violence in the interests of an indivisible Union -- specify that the American self will be a sacrificial offering -- a will and nothing but a will. Later, during the decadent days of empire, when the strategic interests of American power have been achieved and the middle-class population assured of the practical successes of the high-intensity consumer marketplace, it is difficult to rearticulate the original animating vision of the burning will that is the essence of American exceptionalism. More profoundly a metaphysical rather than a narrowly political rupture with its European origins, what really migrated with Puritans first, and waves of immigrants later, was a fundamentally new expression of the language of the will -- a will to survive, to create, to conquer, to dominate -- which carried in its path both a new form of (technical) knowledge as power as much as a new form of (crusading) emotion motivated by unbending determination American-style. The Double Helix A transformation matrix, the dominant American cultural pattern holds direct opposites in creative tension. This is the source of its fierce internal political debates, its messianic militarism, its scientific creativity, its dynamic capitalist experimentation, its often visionary art. Simultaneously pious and cynical, philanthropic and war-like, manipulative and generous, proselytizing and fearful, American culture intensifies extremes and laughs away the difference. Long before the science of evolutionary biology envisioned the model of the "double helix" as the basic building block of human life, American culture emerged full-blown as a society of twisted strands. Refusing to be enframed by the frozen binaries of Enlightenment logic, blasting away the philosophical obstructions between a vengeful god and an optimistic science, always in creative tension, always on the move towards the next frontier, the discourse of technology and the American mind was a brilliant scientific idea first experienced as a daring political project. For example, while the biological model of the double helix could be brilliantly proposed fifty years ago as the basic (DNA) building block of all life, perhaps in a strange case of science lagging behind life, Crick and Watson's discovery (with the unacknowledged, but indispensable X-ray photography by Rosalind Franklin) was anticipated by the political history and cultural logic of the United States. The American Republic of Bio-Power Sometimes, scientific consciousness articulates a vision of the future which, while ostensibly emergent from the physical universe actually represents a fantastic crystallization of a ruling idea, that had until that point been suspended in the cultural atmosphere. Like an intangible idea, floating everywhere, expressible nowhere, the double helix could perhaps be received with such instant global acclaim because it gave voice to a dynamic cultural representation which until that moment was unrecognized as the "building block" of modern (American) culture. In the same way that Lewis Mumford could note that the industrial model of the factory was anticipated by medieval practices of the monastery with its strict division of time, disciplining of labor, and specialization of work function,[4] so too the biological model of the double helix was anticipated by the singular way of being that is American identity. Could it be that what is most exceptional about American exceptionalism is that this was a culture which, from its inception, had somehow stumbled upon the language of biology as its ruling metaphysic? In this case, we might conclude that while Europe could rightfully be the originating continent of physics, the United States would be the culture born under the sign of genetic biology. When Michel Foucault spoke so eloquently about the movement from "power over death" to "power over life" as the essence of power/knowledge, he might well have been rehearsing in his thought the political creed of the United States: namely that this would be a culture where power would wager itself on the invention of a distinctive style of life itself, what is described colloquially, not without a certain sense of national pride, as the "American way of life." The passionate combination first of Puritan missionary consciousness and scientific experimentalism, and later of mass consumption and electronic gadgets, that would come to characterize the American eruption in an otherwise hostile, if not indifferent, world found its formula, and appropriately so, in the famous "Declaration of (Technological) Independence" with its bio-political rhetoric of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." What finally appeared in the 20th century language of genetic biology as the famous image of the double helix -- two twisting strands of nucleotides, strictly anti-parallel, connected by four base pairings -- is, I believe, but a scientific expression of a bio-political revolution that occurred much earlier with the founding of the American republic. Here, like a cultural precession of the scientific imagination of biotechnology, the dominant pattern of American discourse is structured in the form of a double helix whereby two great curving strands of cosmology -- faith-based religion and scientifically authorized reason -- follow a twisting, spiraling path from past to future: co-present, bound together in creative tension, decidedly not binaries, determining in their oppositions and continuities the specific codes of American political culture. Always running anti-parallel to one another (religion versus science, liberalism versus conservatism, individualism versus collectivity, nature versus culture, faith versus reason), the genetic memory of American discourse is connected by four base pairs: economy, politics, society, and culture. Like DNA, the base pairs of American culture -- its seductive model of political economy, social logic, media networks, and cultural values -- can be easily clipped and transplanted into colonized (alien) bodies. It was not for nothing that Marshall McLuhan described the United States as the "world environment." With a strikingly original "building block" of political life (the constitutional theory of the American Republic), genetic social memory (the "American dream"), great twisting strands of thought, and clashing ideological currents which run deep and always run anti-parallel, America was fated by its origins in genetic logic to be the ascendant ruling empire of the 21st century. More than its own imperial leadership may suspect, America was literally engineered for world power from its inception. In this continental nation, in this global empire, a dynamic genetic idea -- the building blocks of life itself as twisting strands of great codes, anti-parallel, connected by base pairs in constant motion -- somehow jumped from the sphere of biology to the world of political theory. Imprinting itself deeply in the language of American identity, arming itself with the religious fervor of the American dream, structuring a whole society with its biological rhythms, the double helix finds in the American Republic a way of coding that which is most vital, most powerful, most eschatological into a resilient, always expanding, body of (imperial) politics. As a nation the history of which begins not only with a fateful rupture with Europe but with a dynamic will to create a new society out of the twisting strands of fierce religious conviction and equally determined pilgrim energy, we are dealing here with the sudden eruption in the "New World" of an evolutionary break in the building blocks of (European) political and social life. Breaking with the fetters of monarchy, refusing the land-based fatalism of feudalism, placing its confidence in the bible and the axe, pushing westward, then global, then galactic, towards an unattainable imagination of the American spirit, the "New Republic" is possessed by the language of bio-politics. Ostensibly, we are dealing here with the social construction of American identity, the political constitution of mixed government combining executive, legislative and judicial powers in equal, measured proportions, the ideological formation of the American colonizing project from "Manifest Destiny" to "Redemptive Empire," and the invention of a style of capitalist initiative that is as creative, inventive, and transformative in its entrepreneurial energy as it is harsh, cold and calculating in its drive to quarterly profitability. All this may be true, but still there is something else, more subliminal, harder to detect, practically invisible because it is so omnipresent; and that is, the actual genetic constitution of the sustaining spirit of America as a way of being. Here, each person, each identity, each animating political idea, each cultural image, each entrepreneurial project, each cybernetic vision will either be a twisted strand containing clashing, brilliantly anti-parallel possibilities, or, as Puritan futurists declaimed: "it would perish from the face of this good earth." Catastrophe and rapture are the twisted song-lines of American being. Catastrophe and Rapture Who could have conceived of a society which would structure principles for its own undermining, for itself as a brilliantly creative accident -- always about to happen, always happening, always in the process of being redeemed -- for the auto-destruction of any tendency towards permanent stability, into its deepest constitutional principles? It's one thing to speak with awed reverence at the supposedly flawed Kantian marvel that is the United States where the (modernist) vision of universal human community of freely acting citizens invested with inalienable natural rights is somehow held to be threatened by faith-based, bible belt political insurgencies running straight from the pulpit to the White House, from Fox News to the deepest subjectivity of the inhabitants of the new middle class gated communities of this good (suburban) land. But it's quite something else, when taking off the blinkers of conventional modernism, to realize that with regard to the question of American being, something genuinely unique is happening here, that this is one culture which is structured by a very singular social history, namely that the only national constant in American history -- economic, political, social and cultural -- is the capitalist equivalent of Maoist "permanent revolution." Call it what you will -- Schumpeter's principle of "creative destruction, " Reagan's "New Morning for America," Microsoft's competitive software scorched earth policy symbolized by its "Windows on the World," the tabloids' daily spectacle of the dramatic burnout and eventual redemption of celebrity icons, or small business entrepreneurs who get up everyday with gritty dreams and mission statements to deconstruct, derail, and devolve what has gone before in order to reconstruct, realign and repurpose enterprise economy into something absolutely new, absolutely profitable. American rhetoric might wear the symbolic garments of Kantian universal freedom to the altar of political respectability in the community of (democratic) nations, but the essence of American identity lies elsewhere, precisely in the almost ecstatic collective pleasure taken in accidenting the future, crash-testing the economy, accelerating the body, abandoning culture, evacuating the social, harvesting the brain by new sciences of neuro-genetics, vicariously sharing in the rise and fall of celebrity icons. Fear Factor and Entertainment Tonight are not just prime-time TV shows: they also capture something of the element of radical deconstruction central to the American geist. The spirit of permanent revolution at the heart of American identity might be explained away by Rene Girard's concept of sacrificial violence -- namely that this is one culture which, perhaps exhausted with sacrificial rituals carried on at the (media) edges of its colonial borders, finally makes a sacrificial wasteland of itself, finding in the moment of sacrificial expenditure the real social capital of an advanced technoculture dying of its own boredom. But perhaps there is something about American identity that is post-Girard, that the ecstasy of sacrificial expenditure -- the insatiable drive to transform, undermine, innovate, create, destroy -- is not the empty symbolic ritual of an exhausted culture which desperately requires sacrifices (of always accidental others) as a means of internal moral cohesion, but the essential genetic logic of its historical drive to empire. This dynamic fusion of sacrificial logic and natural rights into the same political body, investing American identity, business, war, culture, knowledge, media with the twisted strands of different futures -- order and chaos -- always anti-parallel, always threatening to implode, to reconfigure, to instantly field-morph into a radical change of state is the essential creative energy driving the American dream. Neither exclusively political nor biological, American being is born bio-political. Here the future always accidents itself -- destabilizing, conflagrating, deconstructing -- in order to give rise to something greater: that is its energy, its creativity, its innovativeness, its undeniable seduction, its dark charisma. Reluctant to slow down sufficiently to develop a stable (modernist) Freudian ego, this is one culture which operates at the speed of light between a full-octane id and an aggressive cultural superego. Three Twisted Strands USA: An Open, Closed or Flat Universe? After the Big Bang precipitated by the meeting of covenant theology and the spirit of technological innovation in the American mind, what is the future of the United States? Is it an open universe rushing outwards in ever expanding concentric circles, radiating its implosive energy at the speed of light, burning up its material base until at some point in the indefinite future it will be left floating among the planets as an empty remainder of that which once was the leading 21st century empire of spacetime? Or is it a closed universe violently collapsing into itself, the infinite curvature of its spacetime fabric compressing into the dense, dark material of a black hole from which no light can escape? Or is the American future that of a flat universe with no real expansion nor necessary contraction, only an indefinite struggle between inflationary and deflationary forces, a prolonged political stalemate punctuated by violent event-horizons. Understood as an open universe, the secret of American power is that it always seeks to inflate beyond its controlling codes. The military projection of the American will to empire by sea, land and air always exceeds the more constrained political vision of the founding constitutional order. The political economy of advanced capitalism that has come to be known as the logic of globalization is always functionally bankrupt, incorporating a permanent liquidity crisis of over-indebtedness as its necessary motive. The greater the expansion of American influence off-shore, the more severe the internal legitimation crisis undermining American authority. The more universal the declaration of American values, the more intense the domestic debate concerning the ends of American political morality. In its expansive, inflationary phase, the fabric of American culture expands to consume the universe, investing societies seemingly everywhere with a unitary fabric of (American) spacetime linking together imperial power, capitalist profitability, media influence and messianic vision. Viewed as a closed universe, American culture is in the process of violently collapsing into itself, like a dead and dying star attracting into its dense, twisting spiral all the passing material of the social universe. Here, the language of redemptive empire can be revived as a way of signaling the swift contraction of the American experiment into its base elements of physical power, primitive capitalism, crusading morality, and imposed influence. Massively deflationary, inward looking, mistrustful of outsiders, increasingly paranoid about breaches of its (political) bodily boundaries, America as a closed universe has only one certain future. When the liquid growth of the symbolic media of power, money, influence and values are forced to contract towards their controlling codes, a critical tipping-point is quickly achieved. Here, America becomes a quantum singularity: a crushing density of political energy around which light-waves from other stars are forced to bend, disappearing into such an infinite immensity of darkness that America henceforth will only be known at second-hand by the astronomical signs of what is missing when other planets cross between outside observers and its violent event-horizon. Envisioned as a flat universe, America is a culture of twisted strands struggling to stabilize clashing pressures towards full (political) inflation and total (cultural) deflation. Possessing neither the pure energy of an open universe or the dense matter of a closed universe, the flat universe of America is something different. It is that moving point where the centripetal energies of an expanding (political) universe fold back into centrifugal matter of a deflationary (economic) culture to create an event-horizon that is known as the American singularity. Positioned on the outer edge of the spiral, marking a threshold between the black hole of the American religious past and the white hole of the American technological future, the American singularity is a warp hole between history and the present. Enter the American singularity, fully immerse yourself in the fusion of closed universe covenant theology and open universe technological innovation that is the American field of spacetime today, and you will find yourself instantly tunneling between religious time and technological space. Following the lessons of quantum physics which hold that every quantum singularity is accompanied by an event-horizon, could it be that America in all of its violence and seduction is the unique event-horizon which emerges from the convergence of covenant belief and creative technology, in North America first, in world history later, and perhaps in the deep space explorations, migrations and colonizations of the future? The New Puritans: Twisted Strands Take Root on American Soil Harvard University, which celebrated its 350th anniversary in 1986, is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. Founded 16 years after the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the University has grown from nine students with a single Master to an enrollment of some 18,800 degree candidates, including undergraduates and students in 10 graduate and professional schools. Six presidents of the United States -- John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Rutherford B. Hayes, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy -- were graduates of Harvard. Harvard College was established in 1636 by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was named for its first benefactor, John Harvard of Charlestown, a young minister who, upon his death in 1638, left his library and half his estate to the new institution. During its early years, the College offered a classic academic course based on the English university model but consistent with the prevailing Puritan philosophy of the first colonists. Although many of its early graduates became ministers in Puritan congregations throughout New England, the College was never formally affiliated with a specific religious denomination. An early brochure, published in 1643, justified the College's existence: "To advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches." [5] While the mythic Puritan story of the 'first encounter' at Plymouth Rock is a familiar part of the American foundational narrative, what is less remarked, but of probably greater lasting cultural importance, is that there was actually a second 'first encounter' in American discourse: this time not between Puritans and indigenous peoples, but between faith and reason, between Puritan missionary consciousness so necessary to the immediate development of born again ideology in the American mind and scientific reason so vital to its future ideology of technological liberalism, and all this within the famous brick walls and ivy-leafed square of Harvard University. Here the missionary zeal, disciplinary energies, and crusading spirit of the Puritan moment would meet up with a style of (Enlightenment) thought which in its rationality, pragmatism, and pluralism would soon seemingly best it to become the official intellectual core of the American mind. There the story might have ended except for one curious eventuality. What emerged as the liberal side of the American mind was, I believe, always deeply touched by American covenant theology. God is not a passive witness to the unfolding story of American power, technology, and liberalism, but a co-present, anti-parallel, and much called upon, active partner. Definitely post-Enlightenment in its ruling scientific epistemologies and creative technological innovations, America is equally, and this most definitely, pre-Enlightenment in its popularly subscribed messianic vision. Here the high tech marvels of the 21st century are always in the way of hurrying back to resolve the original terms of the 17th century Puritan covenant. American culture was born with a (covenant) debt which it can never satisfy, and on behalf of which it is fated to be that most singular of all nations: simultaneously part-quantum/part-confessional. Now I do not mean this in a reductive sense implying either the subordination of the Puritan outlook to the world-vision inspiring the American liberal imagination or, for that matter, the reduction of technological liberalism to its Puritan foundations. America has always had about it the barely discernable hint of enigma: namely that what would set it apart as a colonial, then national, and now empire, project, is that this would be a culture of twisted strands: the twisting together in an ascending spiral of two conflicting motivations -- religious and secular, puritan and scientific, born again and pragmatic -- which, taken together, constitute the core code of what for some is the rapture of the American dream, but for others the apocalypse of American imperialism. Long before 20th century quantum physics would envision the physical universe as always composed of opposite changes of state -- a world of both/and, not either/or -- American political reality would build, from its Puritan origins in the 17th century to the crusading military spectacles of the 21st century -- a society, culture, and political economy firmly based on the basic quantum principle that in life, as in science, only contradictions are true, that the ineluctable differences between religion and science confirm their necessary partnership in the deepest (political) affairs of the American mind. So then, to return to the original question concerning the Puritan roots of Harvard University. The question of technology and the American mind begins with what, at first, appears to be a historical curiosity, but upon further reflection reveals itself to be a cultural puzzle, then a still unresolved political predicament. The historical curiosity is this: What explains the fact that the Massachusetts Bay Company -- the emblematic sponsor of crusading, disciplinary Puritanism, shortly after the so-called "First Encounter" at Plymouth Rock also established Harvard University, now in its own publicity terms the "oldest corporation" in the New World. The cultural puzzle: Is the genealogical relationship between Harvard University, widely viewed as the intellectual spearhead of what might be viewed as technological liberalism in the United Sates, and the missionary spirit of Puritanism simply a historical coincidence -- what might be called a discursive situation in which the religious foundations of American knowledge migrated with the slow passage of time into a style of thought -- rational, experimental, pragmatic -- in short, scientific? Or could this meeting of the religious foundations of the American Republic and the epistemological model grounding its scientific future represent something more world-historical, more metaphysically convulsive, in its cultural importance? Was this meeting of Puritan faith and liberal thought a great metaphysical fusion of the divided European will? Were what might be called the Harvard Puritans a New World solution to a metaphysical problem which, while it may have had its historical origins in a European culture marked by the absolutist wars of religion and the creative, speculative dreams of the Renaissance, could not be solved within the closed orbit of European thought? And the political predicament? Once having come to full maturity as the historical embodiment, not only of a new (republican) political idea but, more importantly, of a new expression of the metaphysics of the will -- technology and the American mind -- what will impede the present American experiment in playing out the inevitable end-point of that story, what Heidegger described as "completed nihilism"? In seeking to understand the question of technology and the American mind, one fact is dramatically clear. Namely, that what truly distinguishes American thought, what really lies at the roots of American exceptionalism, is that this is not, and never was, a traditional European story of warring binaries -- faith versus reason -- but a complicated fusion of these two master narratives into the cultural idea of the American Republic. Even in its most eugenic, rationalist, and clinical manifestation the driving force of the American mind has always had about it the animating spirit of missionary consciousness, the epistemological activism of a moral crusade and the tangible smell of imperial rapture. Unlike other societies where understanding technology is a learned method, American culture is a technology. From the war technology research of MIT, the pioneering developments in genetic biology at Harvard University, the information technology of Stanford University to the leading-edge neuro-science of UCLA, American technological reason has always operated in active alliance with covenant theology. Certainly not in the simplistic, reductive sense of reason as passively subordinated to proselytizing religious sects, but definitely in the more invidious sense: namely that the overall historical project of the official American knowledge enterprise has deeply aligned itself as the level of value-preference and epistemological direction with the moral ends of covenant theology -- the creation in "this good land" of a form of thought which in its brilliantly vivisectionist-logic will universalize the American future. Consequently, regarding Harvard's Puritan origins: are we presented here with a simple case of intellectual coincidence -- the migration of two great master discourses, one religious, the other secular, wherein Harvard University itself is simply symptomatic of the greater passage of American society from its faith-based origins to its scientifically envisioned future? In this case, the story of Harvard University would be a representative case of the comforting discourse underlying America's received (official) culture, namely that what we have here is a fateful contestation over the space of four centuries between two warring discourses -- religion and science -- with the technological primacy of the scientific imagination gradually eclipsing the Puritan foundations. This is a truly comforting discourse because it would confirm the essentially binary character of American thought -- reason versus passion; nature versus culture; science versus religion; individuality versus collectivism -- which has always structured progressive (liberal) political thought in America, sustaining it in the present in the midst of the current resurgence of the religious right. But what if we were to consider another possibility? Could the Puritan origins of Harvard possibly be a story of the injection into the bloodstream of American thought, politics and culture of a new metaphysical virus: the folding together of faith and reason into the governing framework of American consciousness? In this case, if there can be such a peaceable shift from the founding Puritan spirit to the contemporary secular spirit of Harvard, could it be because there is no essential difference between the founding spirit of Puritanism and scientific knowledge, only a subtle shift of discourse as Puritanism ceases to wear its crusading (religious) spirit and takes up the garments of reason -- nominally secular, rational and (eventually) liberal, but in essence the epistemological spearhead of the civil religion that is America? In the genealogy of Harvard University are we really present at the birth of the discourse of technology as religion, replacing the original religious origins of American consciousness with pluralistic, rational, but competitive and always epistemologically redemptive knowledge? Again, this is not an argument for a narrow understanding of religion and technology, but something more constitutive. Namely, that what happened at the moment of Harvard University's Puritan origins was a dramatic rip in the space-time fabric of American culture, instantly linking the redemptive language of the covenant theology with a (rationalist) epistemology of discovery, invention, dissecting research logic. Understood in quantum terms as a warp-hole in the space-time fabric, the cultural importance of Harvard University was that it was the specific historical site where the past of religious enthusiasm and the future of epistemological discovery somehow fused on the common ground of (technological) knowledge as a key aspect of the civil religion of America. Here, the strictly Puritan religious creed could gradually disappear in the 18th century because an arc of intellectual electricity had already passed between the religious eschatology of the Puritan founders and intellectual Puritanism as a distinctive form of American thought. What might be described as the original Puritan habit of mind -- disciplined, vivisectionist, morally righteous, convinced of its redemptive singularity -- migrated easily and without a murmur of discontent into the ruling self-consciousness of American technological knowledge. Consequently, the project of technological reason, of which the scientific imagination is its leading epistemological spearhead -- could be viewed as the leading contemporary expression of religious enthusiasm. Conversionary, probing, proselytizing, tautological in its founding assumptions, powered by its moral self-confidence and linked to human (scientific) redemption in the name of technological freedom, Harvard University's lasting cultural importance is as the first historical singularity -- the original tear in the space-time fabric where (Puritan) ontology migrates into (technological) epistemology. Here, the twisted strands of faith and intelligence -- covenant theology and the rights of reason -- first took root in American soil, and while they would never be fated to find common ground in the surface clashes of Church and State, their common eschatological aspirations for the founding of the New Republic in a hostile world would definitely have common purchase in their strange alliance as twin vectors -- one a faith-based electorate, the other reason-driven science -- in the American imperial project. In American culture, god comes to wear the mask of reason, just as much as the spirit of religious enthusiasm is projected globally by a discourse of (technological) knowledge which is the culturally genetic expression of the American war spirit. The Double Helix as American Identity Understood as a quantum culture, American identity thrives on instant, total changes of state. Technologically, the intense digital euphoria of the late '90s was instantly replaced post- 9/11 by the hard politics of the "War on Terrorism." In finance capital, the speculative bubble of the new economy was washed away by an American political economy which went to ground in earthly energy resources, with oil commodities leading the way. In politics, just as the economic conservatism of the Bush administration replaced Clintonian social liberalism, so too the contemporary wave of evangelical Republicanism will undoubtedly be succeeded by a moderate Democratic regime focusing on the valorization of social capital and solutions for the approaching crisis of over-indebtedness. In space exploration, the Columbia Shuttle can explode across the empty skies of Texas while the Hubble Telescope can fade away with the passage of time, but still the International Space Station approaches its moment of architectural realization and plans are well underway for manned missions to planet Mars. In music, Seattle-based grunge, itself the death-note of '80s psychedelia, can be blasted away by the street rap of hip-hop with its seductive combination of fourth-world inner city violence and a first-world gated community iPod audience. In architecture, the tragic days of 9/11 with its spectacular glimpses of suddenly vulnerable New York skyscrapers quietly gives way to the fluid, configurative, free-floating architecture of Frank Gehry. A culture operating under the sign of the double helix, America always oscillates between the referential extremes of hyper-deflation and hyper-inflation -- between the expansive world of code and the deflationary forces of value-principle -- in culture, finance, architecture, art, politics, and maybe even in life itself. This is one country that will only be all ground or all figuration, with absolutely nothing in-between. Ironically, like the space-faring nation that it seeks to be, America succeeds in playing the extremes of inflation and deflation because of a stunning, but reliable, astronomical manoeuver. Like a space ship on a voyage to deep space which seeks out distant planets only to immediately sweep around them, using their gravitational fields as a way of accelerating towards the next galactic destination, the American mind uses the gravitational forces of cultural extremes as a way of animating its collective energy. The (stock market) excesses of the last great wave of tech euphoria taken to its logical (virtual) extreme reverses field, with the business world imploding into the grim scarcities of a commodity-based economy. The real estate bubble will likely collapse in the direction of a chronic crisis of consumer debt. Shuttle disasters inspire the sacrificial fervor of unlimited galactic explorations. Opposition to the moral relativism of liberal politics instantly mutates into bible belt visions of a redemptive empire. The psychic shock of 9/11 flips within the same week into proposals for the high-tech security apparatus of the new biometric state. Again, all ground and all figuration with no stabilizing mechanisms to split the difference, the American mind has only always known the logic of the double helix as deepest identity. Indeed, if it is possible to speak meaningfully of a social identity like Americanness, it would inaccurate to reduce its immense diversity to either of its extremes. America has never been exclusively fundamentalist or relativist, rock 'n' roll or country & western, biblical or scientific, suburbs or trailer parks, the working culture of bars, strip malls, and Wal-Marts or the professional culture of law firms, ad agencies, and exclusive consumer brands. Americanness means being always in motion, in competition, in flight, in careers -- moving fast from one change of state to another, perhaps caught up in traffic jams, plane vectors, taxi runs or high-speed trains, but always making of the speed of a single life a brilliant metaphor for the velocity of the entire culture. Americanness means actually making a double helix of your personality, ambitions, career, identity, relationships -- always being prepared to flip to the other side in the game of life: rewarding those who have succeeded in morphing the poles of American culture, whether in space, business, entertainment, sports; bestowing fame upon those who have failed most spectacularly; admiring those adept enough to have instantly changed states in order to survive, perhaps to play another day. Today instrumental activism refers to the expression of the scientific logic of the double helix in the cultural form of American identity.

#### Instrumental activism causes a perverse fascination with new and more destructive modes of technological management, which can only result in the suicidal nihilism of artificial war

**Kroker 4** [Arthur, Chair in Technology, Culture and Theory, Professor of Political Science, and the Director of the Pacific Centre for Technology and Culture (PACTAC) at the University of Victoria, *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Marx*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, Buffalo, and London (2004), p. 5-10]

Suiciding Itself to Virtual Life It would be inaccurate to say that ours is merely a civilization of technological hubris. Nietzsche was more insightful. For him, we are a "gamble," a "going-across," a "glance," a "gathering storm." Or perhaps Jean-Francois Lyotard for whom we are an "incommensurability," an impossibility that cannot be unrealized because we are perhaps never capable of full self-consciousness. Whatever the case, it can never, and probably will never be said of us, that we have not worn the membrane of technology as our deepest primal, that the horizon of technology is not the gamble upon which we stake the meaning of life itself. While it is a matter of strict epistemological warfare between social constructionists and hypermoderns to make much of the cultural issues attendant upon the meaning of the "post" - post-society, post-culture, post-gender - I do not think that we have yet grasped deeply into the interstices of our thought just how graphically, how bleakly, we truly have become a culture of the post. I do not mean this lightly. When the United States used nuclear weapons on Japan it precipitated a threshold event of the greatest cultural magnitude. History literally ended. If by history we mean the traditional cultural understanding of history as an indeterminate sense of unfolding time, an open future never fully under human control, then that sense of history decisively ended in the bio-flash of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. And again, Lyotard was right, but perhaps not in the sense he would wish. Post-history has been "driftworks," an indeterminate and increasingly violent series of technological experiments on the horizon of existence itself: the acceleration of space under the sign of digital culture until space itself has been reduced to a "specious present," and the social engineering of time into a micro-managed prism of empty granularities. Is it possible, just possible, that what Nietzsche described as ressentiment, this furious reaction formation at our own distorted instincts, now makes a new appearance at an exclusively cultural level? Is the real meaning of post-history the cultural road stories of a civilization suiciding itself to virtual life? Just as nuclear warfare gutted history, so too genetic engineering vacates the body. Suddenly and unpredictably, a new master discourse under the triumphant sign of biology as destiny has installed itself as the epistemological lynchpin of a global alliance of the so-called life sciences and the life industries. Cloaking itself in the antiseptic, technical language of genetic engineering, hyping itself as a "bible of life," institutionalizing itself as the Human Genome Project, here promising a future medical cornucopia of gene therapy, there warning against the dysgenic effects of unmodified organisms, everywhere dreaming anew of the genetic perfectibility of the human body, the language of biology as destiny marks the appearance of what I call "third wave eugenics". Having successfully immunized itself from the overt fascism of the second-wave eugenics of National Socialism and once having distanced itself from an open affiliation with its Darwinian and Mendelian origins, third wave eugenics projects itself into the future as the spearhead of the will to technology. Nihilism today speaks the language of biology as destiny. The culture of third wave eugenics is only awakening to its possibilities. We are, I believe, entirely unprepared for this transformation. Culturally, it is as if we are living through the cultural trauma of two abrupt, and ethically unfathomable, shutdowns: the ending of a progressive sense of history and an indeterminate sense of time with the climactic events of WWII; and the ending of an understanding of the body as something more than its genetic code. We are the victims of two Manhattan projects: one resulting in the extermination of history, and the other in the cryptography of the body. Might not cultural trauma of this pervasiveness not also serve simultaneously as both a precondition for the seduction of genetic determinism and an anticipatory sign of its coming triumph? Viewed ethically, shouldn't such 'big science' as the Human Genome Project not also be considered in the psycho-ontological language of trauma: the certain outcome of a world culture that once committed to the language of technology as destiny now finds itself exhausted, fatigued, feeding on its own referentials, while all the while warming itself in the sun of technicity? Heidegger, Marx, and Nietzsche, then, as trauma theorists diagnosing in advance the cultural preconditions necessary for the triumph of the will to technology as well as its nihilistic fallout. Artificial War "I think that space, in and of itself, is going to be very quickly recognized as a fourth dimension of warfare." General Ronald R. Fogleman, USAF, Ret Not just artificial life, but also now artificial war. Consider, for example, the recent war in Afghanistan where in an epochal break with traditional military strategy, RQ-1 Predator Drones equipped with Hellfire antitank missiles were utilized both as stationary platforms for long-term optical surveillance and as remotely controlled missile launchers. Real-time proximity (surveillance of the caves of Afghanistan) combined with strategies enhancing virtual control (those video screens in Washington displaying action on the ground in a remote battlefield)-- this technological mediation of the hyper-modern technologies of the twenty-first century with medieval tribal warfare of the third-century--suddenly migrates war to the planetary, digital dimension for purposes of space-based information warfare. With this, the age of Artificial War has begun. In its manifesto for the future of cyber-war, Vision 2020, the newly created United States Space Command theorizes a future battlefield of "full spectrum dominance." Abandoning the earth-bound dimensions of land, sea air, USSPACECOM projects a new era of artificial war in which the battlefield occurs in the "4th dimension" of space. Befitting a "space-faring nation" such as the United States, third-dimensional warfare is surpassed by a vision of future war in which "battle managers" are, in essence, computerized editing systems running on automatic, absorbing fluctuating data fields concerning attacks and responses, monitoring satellite transmissions from 20,000 miles in deep space, sequencing missile launches, integrating "dominant maneuvers" in space with "precision engagement" on the ground, sea and air, providing "full-dimensional protection" to "core national assets" and focusing logistics" for a virtual battlefield that stretches into an indefinite future. As USSPACECOM theorizes: the control of the seas in defense of commercial economic interests and the war of the western lands in defense of the expansion of the American empire to the shores of California has now migrated to a war for the "control of space" befitting a "space-faring nation" like the United States, this spearhead of technology. Consequently, a future of artificial warfare in which space itself is weaponized. 4th Dimensional warfare is the technical language by which the American empire now projects itself into a future of Artificial War: a 4th Dimensional rhetoric of "global engagement," "full-force integration," "global partnerships," weaponized space stations, tracking satellites, reusable missile launchers, and on-line, real-time remotely controlled anti-missile systems. I emphasize this story because it is revelatory of the meaning of the will to technology. Here, technology is not only the chosen aim of technological instrumentality (weaponizing space), but also involves technologies of mythology (the well-rehearsed story of the unfolding American frontier where wagon trains evolve into Predator Drones, and sea-faring navies migrate into space-bound automated battlefield manager systems), technologies of thinking (the fourfold "tactics" of space war: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full-dimensional protection, focused logistics), and technologies of (aggressive) judgment ("multinational corporations" are also listed in Vision 2020 as potential 'enemies' of USSPACECOM). More than futurist military doctrine for the 21st century, Vision 2020 represents the essence of the will to technology. Here, technology is both a space-faring means to the successful prosecution of artificial warfare and its sustaining ethical justification. The will to technology folds back on itself--a closed and self-validating universe of thinking, willing, judging, and destining--that brooks no earthly opposition because it is a will, and nothing else. As Nietzsche reflected in advance: "it is a will to nothingness." Or, as Hannah Arendt eloquently argues in her last book, The Life of the Mind, "the famous power of negation inherent in the Will and conceived as the motor of history (not only in Marx but also, by implication, already in Hegel) is an annihilating force that could just as well result in a process of annihilation as of Infinite Progress."[1] Could it be that the world-historical movement captured by the military logic of Vision 2020-- this command vision of America as the historical spearhead of the will to technology-- represents that which is probably unthinkable but consequently very plausible, a contemporary expression of the metaphysics of "not-being?" If "permanent annihilation" is the sustaining (military) creed of Vision 2020, then this also indicates that the world-historical movement, which it so powerfully strategizes, is driven onwards by the seduction of negation, another suicide note on the way to the weaponizing of space. Consequently, if the American novelist, Don DeLillo, can write so eloquently in his recent essay, "In the Ruins of the Future," that '(T)echnology is our fate, our truth" this also implies that in linking its fate with the "truth of technology," the United States, and by implication the culture of globalization, may have, however inadvertently, infected its deepest political logic with the will to nihilism. In the sometimes utopian, always militaristic, language of technological experimentalism, "Not-being" finally becomes a world historical project. Those who are only passive bystanders to the unfolding destiny of the contemporary American descendents of the Puritan founders can only look on with amazement coupled with distress as the "American project" embraces not only the weaponizing of space but also genetic experimentation with the question of evolution itself. While DeLillo goes on to say that (technology) "is what we mean when we call ourselves a superpower," his pragmatism sells short the point he really wants to make: namely, that by linking its fate, its truth, with the question of technology the United States has also enduringly enucleated itself within the larger historical, indeed if USSPACECOM is to be believed, post-historical, project of technology. Enucleated not as something other than the technological destiny which is its profession of faith, of truth, but enucleated in the more classical sense of the term, of being somehow interior to the unfolding destiny of the will to technology. The larger cultural consequence of this bold act of willing remains deeply enigmatic. In this case, is the will to technology an intensification of the pragmatic spirit upon which the American experiment was founded? Or has the will to technology, at the very moment of its historical self-realization, already reversed its course, becoming its own negation: Arendt's prophecy of "not-being" as a "process of annihilation." On the ultimate resolution of this question depends the American fate, the American truth, as the spearhead of technology. On the public evidence, what makes the American project truly distinct today is its enthusiastic abandonment of the pragmatic will for the uncharted metaphysical territory of "not-being." The will to the conquest of empty spatialization and the vivisectioning of the code of life itself has about it the negative energy of suicidal nihilism. Here, the language of "not-being"--the desiccating logic of what Heidegger memorably termed, "Nothingness nothings" as the historical form of the technological project of "permanent annihilation" --expresses itself vividly in two master commands: Space Command and Genetic Command. The first operates in the language of weaponized astrophysics where the curvature of space is manipulated for strategic purposes, and the other sequences the human genetic code itself. Thus, control of space is inextricably linked with control of time. The dynamic will to technology projects itself doubly in the macrophysics of a "space-faring nation" and the microphysics of a body-faring cellular biology. This is a collective demonstration of hubris that Greeks in the classical age would only admire, and then fear, for its (technical) audacity and stunning (metaphysical) innocence. Ironically, at the very instance that USSPACECOM projects an imperialist military future of "full spectrum dominance," 9/11 occurs and we are suddenly time-shifted into the age of viral terrorism. Similar to the incommensurability of technology itself where the reality of "permanent annihilation" is sometimes offset by other ways of thinking technology, the human imagination does not begin, cannot begin, with tactics of 'dominant maneuver' and 'precision engagement' and 'full-dimensional protection' and 'focussed logistics' but, with the terrorist side of fluid, earth-bound, real material warfare.

#### Ressentiment has become a prevailing social attitude---racial scapegoating, authoritarianism, and clinging to illusory forms of control are the ultimate manifestation of ressentiment toward an ateleological future---only a political and affective strategy that loosens our attachments to idealized stability can generate alternative registers

**Glezos 14** [Simon Glezos, Lecturer of Political Science at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, “Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics,” Journal of International Political Theory, Vol 10, Issue 2, 2014, published May 22, 2014] \*\*edited for gendered language

Ressentiment against speed In a previous work, The Politics of Speed, I argued that this willingness to hand over authority to a centralized executive and reject democratic consultation is not due to the technical challenge of speed (any more than the panic over the MV Sun Sea had anything to do with the actual scope of immigration in Canada, the 500 Tamil refugees constituting a drop in the bucket of Canada’s 250,000 annual new permanent residents), but rather its existential challenge (Glezos, 2012: 31).11 This is to say that, in times of acceleration, people fear democratic consultation, and crave authoritative renderings because of the way in which stable identities and narratives come under threat. This reactionary mindset is rooted in a phenomenon I called “ressentiment against speed.” Ressentiment against speed is a kind of crystallized cultural dynamic which craves a stability and a certainty which the world is incapable of providing. This disappointment becomes activated as a drive for revenge against the world which is viewed as the source of instability; against scapegoats who are identified with this instability; and ultimately against ourselves, through calls for authoritarian governance to control us. In this article, I wish to make a more thorough study of this concept of a ressentiment against speed, uncovering its specifically Nietzschean roots. This investigation is important, because I think that a ressentiment against speed is, in fact, one of the central components of Brown’s Paradox. To understand this, we must understand Nietzsche’s philosophy of ressentiment in greater detail. Ressentiment should not be confused with resentment. Resentment, a sense of anger over pain or injury we may have suffered (of whatever sort), is a natural response, as is the attempt to challenge or overturn the sources of these pains or injuries.12Nietzsche (1976) does not council a kind of ascetic rejection of judgment, simply accepting everything as it comes—in which case, we would become, in his words, the ass which can only bray “Yeah-yuh” (p. 424)—nor is he arguing for a Christian “turning of the other cheek.” Being angry, resentful, unhappy, and so on are all perfectly acceptable to Nietzsche so long as—and this is crucial—they serve as a spur to action. So long as your resentment or anger becomes a vector for productive intervention in the world, then they have the potential to be good or noble. The trouble with ressentiment is that, counter to resentment, it does not act as a spur to productive action (although it does still frequently spur reactive behavior, a distinction I will shortly explain). Quite the contrary, ressentiment is resentment crystallized and spiritualized, and thus focuses not on any particular agent or actor, but rather simply on the world as a whole. Ressentiment expresses itself as a generalized resentment against a world that allows pain and suffering to occur. It frequently manifests as a rejection of the world, and the imagining of a world of perfection in opposition to this “imperfect” world. Nietzsche (1968a) makes clear how this drive to idealization is linked to ressentiment and the spirit of revenge. “To talk about ‘another’ world than this is quite pointless … we revenge ourselves on life by means of the phantasmagoria of ‘another,’ a ‘better’ life” (p. 49). This link between idealization and revenge is displayed quite strongly, Nietzsche (1968b) says, in many of the major works of metaphysics in the Western canon: Psychology of Metaphysics—This world is apparent: consequently there is a true world;—this world is conditional; consequently there is an unconditioned world;—this world is full of contradiction: consequently there is a world free of contradiction;—this world is a world of becoming: consequently there is a world of being:—all false conclusions … It is suffering that inspires these conclusions: fundamentally they are desires that such a world should exist; in the same way, to imagine another, more valuable world is an expression of hatred for a world that makes one suffer: the ressentiment of metaphysicians against actuality is here creative. (pp. 310–311) “It is suffering that inspires these conclusions” and ressentiment is “expression of hatred for a world that makes one suffer.” This is the danger of ressentiment and how it differs from resentment. Resentment is a part of living in the world for Nietzsche, a world which produces suffering and which therefore must be responded to. But ressentiment takes one out of the world. It orients one’s actions to other worlds, worlds which do not exist. In the context of a discussion of an accelerating world, ressentiment against speed manifests as an existential resentment over the refusal of the world to provide one with the stability—either in time or in space—that one craves. In response, we construct idealized spaces and times, located either in the nostalgia of the past, or in an eschatological future. Nietzsche discusses idealist philosophy and religious cosmologies, but we can just as easily see these drives expressed in political narratives of “golden ages,” “the good old days,” “cities on the hill,” “the end of history,” or simply the security of “strong borders.” These spaces/times become refuges, defences, and weapons against an uncertain world of flow and becoming. Just as to live in the world is to suffer, to live in time is to be subject to contingency, and to live in space is to see that space is always invaded, reshaped, and de/reterritorialized. To wish otherwise is to close one’s eyes and stop up one’s ears, to refuse to intervene in the world as it is. This is exactly what ressentiment against speed produces. Nietzsche’s (1968a) discussion of the philosopher’s disdain for the “world of becoming” shows how ressentiment is always already a ressentiment against speed: All that philosophers have handled for millennia has been conceptual mummies; nothing actual has escaped from their hands alive. They kill, they stuff, when they worship, these conceptual idolaters—they become a mortal danger to everything when they worship. Death, change, age, as well as procreation and growth, are for them objections—refutations even. What is, does not become; what becomes, is not. (p. 45) This quote brings out another important element of Nietzsche’s thinking. Looking at Nietzsche’s critique of idealism, we might begin to take him for a kind of vulgar realist, criticizing flights of philosophical fancy. This is to misunderstand the complexity of Nietzsche’s conception of the world of becoming. Nietzsche never takes what the “world” is for granted and, with his focus on creativity, even were “one” to know what the “world” is, the world—and “one”—would almost certainly change immediately. But that is exactly the point. Nietzsche affirms that the world is a world of change, of becoming, of uncertainty, of contingency (and therefore necessarily of suffering and disappointment). This is the world that we live in, and the world in which we must act. Ressentiment and political action This is the greatest danger of ressentiment from a Nietzschean perspective. Unlike that active power which a sense of resentment can potentially inculcate, ressentiment functions as a reactive power. Deleuze (2002), in his analysis of Nietzsche, develops an important insight when he says that reactive powers are those which “decompose, they separate active force from what it can do; they take away a part or almost all of its power” (p. 57). By orienting us toward idealized spaces/times, and rejecting intervention in “this world,” ressentiment thus separates us from our power, from what we can do. This is the crucial point which brings us back to Brown’s Paradox, with its description of a state of affairs where we seem to have so much power at our fingertips, and yet seem able to do so little with it. Note the fact that ressentiment separating us from what we can do does not mean that we stop doing things. Indeed, quite the opposite. When under the sway of ressentiment we are just as prone to take action in the world. This is because in ressentiment we have judged the world and found it wanting. We find this world of becoming and speed to be a world of evil and suffering. This is why ressentiment also manifests as a spirit of revenge. We feel that the world has punished us and we wish to punish it back, and this frequently means seeking to punish those who are viewed as agents or avatars of that evil. Once again, this is different than the active behavior that might be undertaken in response to resentment. There the idea is to stop those who injure us, or overcome those things or people who block our way. It is never just the reactive desire for revenge, but always the active desire to achieve some goal, to further our plans, to assert our values. The reactive movement of ressentiment manifests as revenge. It is thus premised upon a moral judgment, and is itself a moralizing move (i.e. one acts primarily to punish an evil rather than achieve an end). Indeed, it is this ability to moralize suffering, to assign blame that is so useful to the agent of ressentiment. Nietzsche (1997) explains the difference between resentment and ressentiment quite well in the passage below: In my judgement, we find here the actual physiological causation of ressentiment, revenge and their ilk, in a yearning, then, to anaesthetize pain through emotion:—people generally look for the same thing, wrongly in my view, in the defensive return of a blow, a purely protective reaction, a “reflex movement” in the case of any sudden injury or peril, such as that performed even by a headless frog to ward off corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in the one case the attempt is made to prevent harm being done, in the other case, the attempt is made to anaethetize a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unbearable with a more violent emotion of any sort, and at least rid the consciousness of it for a moment—for this, one needs an emotion, the wildest possible emotion and, in order to arouse it, the first available pretext. “Someone or other must be to blame that I feel ill.” (p. 93) This desire to seek out somebody to blame is the pattern we see time and again in the reactionary politics of ressentiment. It is what we saw above in the case of the MV Sun Sea, and in other anti-immigration movements like it: the attempt to identify and blame particular actors as representative of what are broader movements and social forces, to take the individual migrant as a synecdoche of global acceleration as a whole. To return to Wendy Brown’s (2001) analysis: If, as Nietzsche recognized, impotent rage inevitably yields a moralizing (re)action, how might we succeed in rereading contemporary political life through this recognition? Might it help us understand, for example, the contemporary tendency to personify oppression in the figure of individuals and to reify it in particular acts and utterances, the tendency to render individuals and acts intensely culpable—indeed prosecutable—for history and for social relations? (pp. 21–22) And what is more, we tend to personify that oppression in the weakest, most vulnerable constituencies, themselves caught up in the same history and social relations as their attackers. This is because, having separated active force from what it can do, the politics of ressentiment naturally takes as its enemies those who are weakest, those who are most easily targeted and punished. In relation to these nationalist and xenophobic movements, it is instructive that, for Nietzsche (1997), one of the most important contemporaneous examples of the politics of ressentiment was the anti-Semite (p. 48). But these moralizing expressions of revenge and punishment, and the feeling of power which comes along with them, does not actually lead to the empowerment of the bearer of ressentiment. This is because the standards that it sets can never be achieved. A mindset overcome by ressentiment says that only a world free of suffering, of uncertainty, of insecurity, is of any value. One does not want less pain, but no pain. Not less insecurity, but no insecurity. Thus, no matter what is done, it will always fall short of this goalpost. Actual positive change which might improve their lot, or increase their power, is eschewed because it will never provide them with ideal world they crave. Better to engage in moralizing punishment which does nothing to solve their pain, but, as Nietzsche says, hem somewhat, gives them a feeling of moral superiority which will keep them going, at least for a while longer.13 What is more, this craving—for certainty, for stability, and most importantly, for moral superiority—makes these sufferers of ressentiment easy prey for those who wish to exploit them and gain their support. Nietzsche discussed this in terms of “the Priests,” but in our days, in democratic countries (and not just democratic countries), it is more useful to speak of the politician of ressentiment, the politician who does not just respond to the anxiety and fear of [their] public, but actively cultivates it. As Nietzsche (1997) describes it, He brings ointments and balms with him, of course; but first he has to wound so that he can be the doctor’ and whilst he soothes the pain caused by the wound, he poisons the wound at the same time—for that is what he is best trained to do, this magician and tamer of beasts of prey, whose mere presence necessarily makes everything healthy, sick, and everything sick, tame. (p. 93) The politician of ressentiment provides ever more targets and scapegoats for moralizing punishment, knowing that it will never actually solve the problems of his or her constituency (my god, if it did, what then?). Indeed, it is not at all coincidental that reactionary politicians of ressentiment frequently institute neoliberal policies, making the conditions of insecurity and acceleration which give rise to the ressentiment against speed even more prevalent. The politician of ressentiment relies on, and exploits, his or her constituency’s craving for certainty and stability, by presenting himself or herself as the potential source of the authority that will usher in this other world. The politicians of ressentiment present themselves to their constituency as “their support, defence, prop, compulsion, disciplinarian, tyrant, God” (Nietzsche, 1997: 92). People feel themselves incapable of bringing into being the world of security they desire, and therefore become willing to submit to anyone who claims that ability. How else to explain The Globe and Mail endorsement which simultaneously decries the “antidemocratic” behavior of the Conservative party, while craving the “discipline, leadership and bullheadedness” that they bring to government? In this regard, we see the final stage of ressentiment, and the final ascendancy of “The Priests,” of the politician of ressentiment: “I suffer: someone or other must be guilty”—and every sick sheep thinks the same. But his shepherd the ascetic priest, says to him, “Quite right, my sheep! Somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it, you yourself alone are to blame for yourself.” (Nietzsche, 1997: 94) When we authorize increasingly centralized and authoritarian governments, when we do not jealously guard our civil liberties and democratic rights, what are we saying, other than that we accept that we are the problem with politics, that we ourselves are to blame? Give us, then, a “leader” who will provide us with the security we crave.14 Once again, ressentiment as that which separates an active force from what it can do, as that which separates people and communities from their power. And this is the irony of the ressentiment against speed. As people feel impotent in the face of acceleration, they become more willing to give up what power they do have to increasingly authoritarian structures or, when they do express their power, do so by attacking the weakest elements of the systems they oppose, usually in ways which actually shore up the systems they are supposed to be opposing.15 Living with/in Brown’s Paradox The result of this analysis is that both attempts to “solve” Brown’s Paradox prove unsatisfying. The neoliberal approach of embracing the uncertainty and instability of this accelerating world as progress requires us to ignore the violence and exploitation which goes along with it, and pretend that this “progress” is evenly distributed. Furthermore, it dismisses the very real desires for stability and security in our lives—and livelihoods—as somehow quaint, or even childish. We see how the frequent neoliberal complaint that “government cannot provide for everything” borrows the tropes of parenting, making the dissatisfied citizen into nothing more than a peevish toddler, rather than a stakeholder in a social contract with a legitimate grievance. Any response to Brown’s Paradox will require that we acknowledge the very real inequality and violence that are currently part of our accelerating world, and the impotence that most people feel in the face of it. It must also, therefore, have some sort of program for empowering people, for challenging these inequalities and violences, for providing people with genuine opportunities, rather than the neoliberal offer of “owning” one’s own subjugation. As Chantal Mouffe (2005) puts it in her attempt to understand a different, though related, paradox “One of the crucial stakes for left democratic politics is to begin providing an alternative to neo-liberalism. It is the current unchallenged hegemony of the neo-liberal discourse which explains why the left is without any credible project” (pp. 118–119). The fact that this is still the state of affairs even after the global meltdown of the neoliberal order in 2008 speaks to the urgency of this project, and the power of the neoliberal narrative. Genuine efforts must be made both to constrain the violent flows of global capital, and to insulate individuals and communities from these flows, efforts which must be pursued at the local, state, and global levels. One trajectory of future research on the question of speed therefore must be to look at effective policy responses to the exploitation of global acceleration. And yet, at the same time as we try to empower people, we must be sure that our desire for stability and security, our desire to oppose the uncertainty of an accelerating world, does not manifest itself as a ressentiment against speed. Some measure of uncertainty and instability in the world is ineradicable. This is true for both historico-empirical reasons (we are undergoing a period of social acceleration, and we are unlikely to uninvent the wheel of technological speed any time soon) but also for essentially ontological reasons. As discussed above, we must recognize that we live in a world of becoming, and that this necessarily introduces a note of flux, uncertainty, and acceleration into our lives. Our teleological projections will always be disturbed by irruptions of radical futurity, and the borders we try to police will always be criss-crossed by deterritorialized lines of flight. What is more, these contingencies are not necessarily bad things. First, they open us up to new experiences, new possibilities, new worlds. Brown was not lying when she said that we now live in “a global order more saturated by human power than ever before.” We must be careful how we think about, and use that power, but we cannot just ignore it or give it up lightly. Indeed, in terms of achieving our first goal, a willingness to interact constructively with the powers and opportunities our accelerating world provides us with will be crucial. Second, and more importantly, genuinely slow worlds, worlds with firm borders and thoroughly policed lines of time, usually require deep authoritarian power to maintain those borders and narratives. Certainly, it is exactly in the ressentiment of speed that the reactionary call for control is invoked; in the attempt to extinguish the novel, the unexpected, the different, the other. As William Connolly (2002) puts it “A slow, homogeneous world often supports undemocratic hierarchy because it irons out discrepancies of experience through which constituencies can become reflective about self-serving assumptions they habitually use to appraise themselves in relation to others” (p. 144). Our response to Brown’s Paradox must, therefore, be careful not to turn stability and control into a fetish, but to acknowledge the intractability—and also the benefits and pleasures—of a world of contingency, a world of becoming, a world of acceleration. We must therefore begin to cultivate a third way, a response which does not so much try to resolve Brown’s Paradox, as re-inflect. Such an approach would seek to embrace the power and opportunities which an accelerating world provides, using them to resist the exploitation and violence inherent in the contemporary world. However, at the same time as it sought some amount of security for individuals, it would be willing to accept that a certain amount of contingency and instability in the world is ineradicable. It would ensure that this desire for stability did not manifest as a reactionary drive for the exclusion and erasure of difference, nor through a totalitarian drive for complete mastery over contingency. It would thus be a politics that attempted to express itself as, in Nietzsche’s words, an “active force,” which is to say a force which expresses itself, which builds a world to its specifications, but does so with an understanding, and even affirmation, of the limitations of life in “this world.” Such a politics therefore would rigorously have to root out the sense of ressentiment against speed, and become comfortable with living, organizing, and taking action, in an accelerating world of becoming. Learning to live within a paradox (without resorting to tactics of violence or transcendence to overcome or resolve the paradox) is no easy thing. In recent years, many thinkers have tried to develop strategies for how to live within the confines of paradoxes which they considered to be constitutive of political life. William Connolly (1991), for example, repeatedly engages with the question of what he terms “the paradox of identity,” the tension between the fact that we must simultaneously “accept the indispensability of identity and live within the medium of identity while refusing (while struggling vigorously to refuse) to live [our] own identity as intrinsic truth” (p. 46). Chantal Mouffe (2005) struggles with what she terms “the democratic paradox,” the tension between democracy as that which expresses the will of the people and that which protects and expresses the rights and agencies of the individual (pp. 2–3). Although each of these paradoxes relate to specific topics, they are fundamentally linked to the issues I raise, insofar as all are about the tension between the human desire for stability and certainty (stable identities, stable communities, stable borders), and the recognition that individual flows will always disrupt those certainties (and the further recognition that suppressing those flows entirely would require escalating, and ultimately infinite, violence). All are thus about the tension between being and becoming. We can therefore look to the way these other thinkers seek to deal with paradox. In both cases, these two thinkers advocate the importance of recognizing the ineradicability of paradox. Mouffe (2005) says that “it is vital for a pluralist democratic politics to expose and acknowledge paradoxes” (p. 16), and Connolly (1991) argues that we must learn to think “within the code of paradox” (p. 60). Note that this recognition of paradox, this attempt to live within paradox, does not involve a complete letting go or rejection of our desires of stability. To do so would be to succumb to the temptation to will away the paradox (as in the neoliberal approach). Connolly recognizes the inescapable dimension of identity, Mouffe accepts (and lauds) the importance of a sense of community, and I understand the importance of some sense of stability to the lives of individuals and communities. However, living within the paradox also means acknowledging that these certainties will always be marked by an inescapable de gree of contingency. This does not mean letting go of our desire for stability, but it does mean loosening our attachment to it, recognizing the necessity (and indeed desirability) of some amount of difference, individuality, and flux in the world. This loosening of attachment is not easy, and cannot simply be the result of policy prescription. It will also mean challenging dominant narratives of identity, and working on the affective sensibilities of individuals and communities to make them more capable of coping with a certain amount of uncertainty and instability in the world. A second trajectory of future research on speed will therefore have to focus on how to draw on narrative and affective resources to inculcate a sense of comfort with uncertainty, and fight against the pull of ressentiment.16 In an ideal world, this project of loosening people’s attachments to stability would begin to integrate with the project of making them less subject to the violence of global acceleration, creating a self-reinforcing cycle.17 As people become more secure, they become less subject to ressentiment-laden tendencies. At the same time, as they affectively fight off the ressentiment-driven desire for stability, they potentially become more willing to engage in active political tactics which might actually provide for greater security and stability. Lessened ressentiment against speed might provide the conditions of possibility for greater solidarity and alliance building across borders and differences, a greater willingness to take advantage of some of the powers which global acceleration provides. Here we might look to increasing examples of global solidarity networks (Castells, 2012; Glezos, 2012: ch. 5) and to transnational labor activism (Stillerman, 2003). Let us be clear; this possibility of a feedback loop associated with living within paradox should not be taken as a resolution of that paradox. We must remember that this paradox is fundamentally irresolvable, and thus that it will be the source of an ongoing political struggle over crucial questions (“How much stability is enough?”; “How much velocity is desirable?”). This struggle will always run the risk of falling into either ressentiment against speed or indifference to the pain that it causes. This is as it should be. As Mouffe (2005) puts it, when it comes to paradox “[N]o final resolution or equilibrium between those two conflicting logics is ever possible, and there can be only temporary, pragmatic, unstable and precarious negotiations of the tension between them” (p. 45). The best that we can do is try to ensure that we live that paradox deliberately.

#### Traditional understandings of plan-focused debate adhere to neoliberal productivity models that reinforce our psychological need for ressentiment-laden fantasy, causing amoral apathy in its attempt to cling to security---actively reinterpreting argumentative norms foments revolutionary transformations

Schnurer 4 [Maxwell Schnurer, professor of communication at Humbolt State University, “Gaming as Control: Will to Power, the Prison of Debate and Game Called Potlach,” Contemporary Argumentation & Debate; Sep 2003, Vol. 24, online]

Gaming encourages such argument innovation not for the world community but for the debate community, teaching students to passionately plead for change to an empty room. How can a theory understand the desire of debaters to crack open the debate methods and introduce something “outside” of debate as Snider points to in his most recent gaming essay? The answer is that it can’t. Debate as a model can only create more debate, and so long as our goal for debate is more debate, then we will never emerge to challenge larger forces of control. Worse than being satisfied with shouting at walls, approaching debate from the perspective of games encourages a god-complex that teaches debaters that saying something poignant in a debate round translates into something larger in the world. Christopher Douglas, a professor of English at Furman University, explores how games teach us to adore the replay: “This is the experience structured into the gaming process—the multiple tries at the same space-time moment. Like Superman after Lois Lane dies, we can in a sense turn back the clock and replay the challenge, to a better end” (2002, p. 7). What kind of academic activity encourages students to fantasize about making change without considering for the slightest bit how to bring that change about? Douglas positions this impulse alongside the Sisyphean burden of trying to make the world into a structured, controlled, sterile environment. Sisyphus and the reset button on a videogame console share a common ancestor with the debate model that has thirty debate teams advocating different policies in separate rooms at exactly the same time. All of these examples showcase humans desperately attempting to construct meaning out of a confusing world, where the human will to power forces the world to fit a structure. Douglas reminds us that games help to structure an oft-confusing world, imbuing the person imagining with god-like powers (McGuire, 1980; Nietzsche 1966): Games therefore do not threaten film’s status so much as they threaten religion, because they perform the same existentially soothing task as religion. They proffer a world of meaning, in which we not only have a task to perform, but a world that is made with us in mind. And indeed, the game world is made with us, or at least our avatar in mind. (Douglas, 2002, p. 9). Gaming draws forth a natural impulse of humans – to make the world in our image. But debate and videogames contain the same fantastic lure that encourages people to pore their energies into debate. Fiat and utopian flights of fancy are both seductions of our will to power, encouraging us to commit to becoming better debaters. This process of self-important distraction has its model in the theories of the hyper-real posited by Jean Baudrillard. He argues that modern economies are geared to sell humans mass produced products, but whose advertising attempts to convince people that they have an authentic experience with the product. Economic structures make products that are more-than real – hyperreal in order to sell their products. The hyperreal creates games and fantasylands that are far richer and pleasurable than real life. One example of the hyperreal is Epcott center at Disneyland, which reduces foreign cultures to their most base natures – ensuring that everything is uniform, bland, and suitably “ethnic.” While one never need worry about eating food that is “too strange” in the Epcott lands, other negatives emerge in the world of the hyperreal. Humans who desire order and structure to our worlds often come to prefer the hyperreal to the real. The hyperreal has a world with all of the attractions of our own, but with none of the depressing realities of our own world. The hyperreal doesn’t have credit card bills or racism. The hyperreal is filled with beautiful people (who all want to have sex with you). The hyperreal is a hot seduction pulling our vision and hearing away form our own lives. Describing Snider’s gaming as a dangerous distraction that pulls us away from our communities and our lives is a bit simplistic. Rather, gaming greases the wheels for powers of control to remain in control. Douglas articulates some of the specific ways games solidify structures of power. In board games or computer games, however, players actually do start out in relative equality (although there are some chance elements as well, depending on the game), whereas in real life, so many characteristic of one’s life are already determined before birth, including social and economic standing, political freedom, skin color, gender, etc. What games accomplish is the instilling of the ideology of equality, which postulates that we are born equal and that differences emerge later on; the primary different to be explained away in this way is that of economic disparity, and games help explain that difference as the result of, in America, hard work and effort vs. laziness. Thus gaming helps inculcate the ideology that covers over the fact that, with the exception of the information technology bubble, most of those who are wealthy in the United States were born that way. Beyond this narrow ideological function, the game helps create subjects that accept the inevitability of rules as things that are given and must be “played” within—or else there is no game. This process is not total or ever complete, as the current gaming discourse complaining about the rules shows; here, player critique a games rules in view of a conventionalized notion of how “reality” works, or, less often, how a game’s playability is compromised by rules that are too “realistic (Douglas, 2002, p. 24). Viewing debate as a game may have the opposite effect that Snider desires. Gaming teaches participants to play by the rules and even when challenging the game, to do that within the games structures. Debaters who are moved by poetry are encouraged to bring that poetry back to the debate realm – not to become poets.[[1]](#footnote-1) There are certainly debate-activists who bring their debate skills to bear on the political community. These debaters seamlessly slide between academic hyperbole in the First Affirmative Constructive and talking to homeless folks at a Food Not Bombs meal. But these folks are few and far between. Most who hear the call to conscience turn their backs on the call and justify their (in)actions by valorizing debate.[[2]](#footnote-2) Let me be clear that the desire of individuals to make the world is not the enemy. It is a positive drive that encourages debaters to fiat worlds into existence or hypothesizes that the world would be good if George Bush were before the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity. This drive to create a better world is the will to power. The big question is, what we do with that will to power? Recognizing that there are many complex problems in the world that require smart articulate people to solve them, we can appreciate the potential value of will to power (McGuire). In the debate context, will to power becomes reified in a hyper-real role-playing exercise. Debate can be an amazing experience where students learn about complex ideas and then take those ideas into their own lives and communities. Debate can be a method for learning that people have their own voices in a world drowning with mediated/televised slime-balls. Debate can encourage intellectual growth and cause epiphanies. Debate encourages solidarity and teaches people to struggle together. Debate is primed to be a blast furnace for the will to power and take it to the furthest level of revolutionary potential. The only limitation is our own. If we frame debate to limit the revolutionary potential of the participants, then we do a disservice not only to our students, but also to the world. Nietzschean will to power is a drive for self-overcoming, transforming fuel for personal and collective change.[[3]](#footnote-3) Will to power exists in all of us as a lunging to escape our current world and create another beyond the moral structure and hierarchy of this world. This desire to create a better world is admirable and is at the root of social change. My criticism of gaming is that this energy is sublimated into a fantasy world rather than being brought to the larger world. But perhaps there is a kind of game that might elicit something of what I desire . . . from within debate. The Real Game: Potlatch As pointed out in the last section, the stakes for the game of debate are high. The method of debate contains the possibility for revolutionary insight and revolutionary praxis. The question is how to understand an activity without systematizing and controlling the potential of debate. What we really must do is let free the will to power within debaters. In this sense, we can use gaming as the topoi to launch our conversation to a debate game that might encourage revolution. But what does will to power look like? How do we encourage it? Lets get a feeling from George Bataille, who orients the Nietzschean impulse of will to power alongside a quote from Nietzsche himself: Through the shutters into my window comes an infinite wind, carrying with it unleashed struggles, raging disasters of the ages. And don’t I too carry within me a blood rage, a blindness satisfied by the hunger to mete out blows? How I would enjoy being a pure snarl of hatred, demanding death: the upshot being no prettier than two dogs going at it tooth and nail! Though I am tired and feverish . . . “Now the air all around is alive with the heat, earth breathing a fiery breath. Now everyone walks naked, the good and bad, side by side. And for those in love with knowledge, it’s a celebration.” (The Will to Power) (4). Will to power can be the outgrowth of debate that challenges existing structures. Bataille and Nietzsche desire a wild emancipation from traditional structures, far beyond conventional morality. Coupling Nietzsche’s theorizing with the practice of debate something new can emerge, but only if we free ourselves from the shackles of conventional debate, including gaming. How to break these chains? How do we get beyond that which has brought us so far? To help, I want to turn to Guy Debord and the Situationists. Guy Debord was a French revolutionary whose political theorizing and activism culminated in the creation first of the Letterist International and later in the establishment of the Situationist International. The Letterists/Situationists were revolutionary philosophers who believed that the situations of the modern world were increasingly controlled by mediated/corporate experience. They viewed traditional politics in all of its reformist formats as a waste of time. Through a variety of situations (manipulated by the situationists) it was possible to create revolutionary meaning. They used a variety of tactics in order to elicit revolutionary change. Some of their methods, like detournement, have become common post-modern critical theory concepts.[[4]](#footnote-4) I focus our attention on the Situationists because they succeeded in creating a revolution. Situationist propaganda and theorizing were at the heart of the Parisian rebellion of May of 1968. This was the most powerful expression of malaise against the increasingly wealthy industrial western world. The riots in Paris, which upended cars and collectives emerged in downtown, became a model for revolutions in the industrialized north. Debord was seen as an intellectual architect of the uprising of students and workers. Situationists/Letterists were increasingly capable of articulate criticisms of the nature of the spectacle. These were often told through journals, graffiti, and posters (Dark Star Collective, 2001; Debord, 1995; Jappe, 1992; Hussey, 2001). One of the most important Situationist tactics was articulated in the potlatch. The potlatch was a practice modeled on American indigenous communities of increasingly committed giving. In the potlatch, indigenous would give everything they had to each other, ever increasing the stakes of the gifts until the gifts were so outlandish the offers exposed the foolish nature of ownership. Potlatch became so important to these revolutionaries that they named their first journal potlatch because the writings held within the journal would hopefully be given on and on in an ever increasing spiral. Potlatch became an extended metaphor for the Situationists/Letterists, indicating all the possible spaces where revolution could emerge without capitalist economies. Every non-capitalist moment eked out of the day was articulated as a potlatch. Every relationship that emerged along side revolutionary dialogue became a potlatch. In a recent biography of Debord and the situationists, the author Hussey describes the Potlatch. Potlatch . . . is the highest form of game. It is also the living moment of poetry, a moment which breaks down or reverses conventional chronological patterns. Most significantly, the object or gift which the Letterist International gave functioned symbolically between the giver, the International Letterists, and the receiver. The relationship between the two constitutes a third term – the gift is also a catalyst of the future in the form of a crystallization of desire. ‘Don’t collect Potlatch!’ ran a line at the end of the journals second year. “Time is working against you!” (Hussey, 2001, p. 89) For the Situationists, the potlatch was the ultimate resistance to traditional economies. Originally a concept theorized by George Battaille, the potlatch was seen as a method to criticize the acquisition/showcase methods of modern capitalist economies. Because the potlatch could never be returned, it highlighted the foolishness of the modern economy and state. Through sacrifice and destruction, the act of giving overwhelms the possible response. Eventually, the social requirements of the potlatch necessitate that every society member give away everything they could ever have. Yet we should not move too far from the fundamental truth of the potlatch: it is in fact a game. Indigenous nations would choose to exchange gifts in the potlatch as a form of entertainment. But let us not understate the importance of games. This game was made illegal because it was so dangerous to colonial economies. The Potlatch was recognized as threatening the burgeoning trading economy that was central to westward expansion. The potlatch was the most dangerous idea that indigenous nations could forward against the white/capitalist drive.[[5]](#footnote-5) The act of giving too much was the threat. This move disturbed the intense drive for acquisition. Why fight to trade beaver pelt, when at the next potlatch your neighbor might give you all her possessions? Potlatch was threatening because it made competition meaningless. Non-competitive social structure was only one threat from the Potlatch. Situationist biographer Jappe discovers an obscure quotation by Debord on the Potlatch (Debord himself was remarkably close-lipped about the meaning of Potlatch): “Debord refers explicitly to the Indian custom of Potlatch and announces that ‘the non-saleable goods that a free bulletin such as this is able to distribute are novel desires and problems; and only the further elaboration of these by others can constitute the corresponding return gift’” (148). What was exchanged in Debord’s vision was not necessarily goods but rather ideas.[[6]](#footnote-6) Debate is the ultimate potlatch, demanding that we offer up something inside of ourselves without asking for something in return. Debate provides a few minutes carved out of lives that are otherwise consumed by pop-up ads, or email. When I think about the moments that I treasure in my life, few of them are moments of consumption. I don’t remember when I bought my television, but I remember with painful longing the last bicycle ride I took with friends. Alongside the memories of moments with friends and in nature, I treasure a collection of moments in debate. Moments when I first learned about ideas, late nights in the squad room, the friendships that emerged, and watching my debaters grow and develop. The parts of the potlatch where humans draw out moments of freedom with each other are increasingly the only thing that keeps me interested in debate. Debord and the Situationists wanted people to take their initial offerings of the Potlatch and move them along into their own lives. We can do the same thing with debate. Almost all of us have debate memories that are deeply infused with the Potlatch-ethic. All it takes is for us to seek out and celebrate those moments, and our community will change. But these moments of time have to be grappled away from the industrial-capitalist state with great gusto. We must be brave to crack open debate. In our own lives, we should strive to bring about the kinds of realizations that elicit revolutionary transformation. Snider’s gaming does not bring us forward in direct revolutionary thinking. Rather, it encourages revolutionary thought and then focuses its power into the system of debate. The solution for Snider is not to continue looking for a way to explain and systematize debate but, rather, to embrace the confluence of potential meaning in debate and lunge forward. Debate should be about taking risks and creating new meaning out of our desires. We should never sublimate our feral interests and instead should seek the highest level of meaning. Let us push gaming further. Let us find games that fulfill our revolutionary potential, take whatever moments we can for ourselves and try to push for as much change as we possibly can. In this case, perhaps it is not the game, but the players who have not yet made their move.

### 1AC---Other Card Possibilities

#### To tell the story of the new age we must first look back to how we arrived at our current division of virtual and surplus flesh – as Kroker explains…

Kroker and Kroker 96 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Hacking the Future: Stories for the Flesh Eating 90s”, New Worlds Perspectives Montreal, Pages 34-36, 1996, MG s/o PFox)

It’s a hot day in July ‘95 and I’m tuned into cyber-business, reading a feverish newspaper report of “Glee at Microsoft as the master version of Windows 95 is finally shipped.” The mood in Redmond, Washington,is ecstatic, like a last day of cyber-school party, as the coder fraternity gets together for a victory bash: drinking Dom- Perignon, diving into the fountain,1 spraying whipped cream, maybe a game or two of pin the tail on Bill Gates’ donkey, and, who knows, even spin the bottle. Thinking I haven’t noticed it reading over my shoulder, my PC slinks away into the next room and suddenly starts to cough with the rasping sound of a summer algorithmic cold. I can already hear it whining for a Win 95 upgrade.

My micro-joy is abruptly terminated by **TV scenes from Srebrenica**. It seems that when the UN declared Srebrenica, ‘Tuzla and Gorazde as “safe areas,” it forgot to tell the Bosnian Muslims that it meant safe only for the UN. For the Muslims, the so-called safe areas are actually temporary holding depots, hospices where the UN collects refugees from ethnically cleansed areas in order to hand them over en masse to the Bosnian Serbs on demand. When the Government of Bosnia Herzegovina does a bit of **truth-telling**, declaring the UN soldiers to be on a wilderness camping trip, diplomats and officers throw their hands in the air, **deploring the lack of “political will**” and calling for just one more meeting. Sunday afternoon ‘barbeques in the West are spliced with TV images from the all too real theme park of suffering in Bosnia: hungry, children, suicided women, raped. girls, and lynched and stoned and knifed men and boys. 6

Harold Innis, a Canadian theorist, once said that the ultimate bitterness is to have **consciousness of much and the ability to do nothing about it.** Like the TV consciousness of the genocide of Bosnian Muslims that takes place this minute, and **the world is silent**. Clinton stalls for time as he checks his radar for signs of political damage. Pentagon Generals flank the American Secretary of Defense as he repeats the official (exaggerated) rhetoric: “The Bosnian ‘quagmire’ will involve at least 200,000 American ground troops. We’ll only fight in the air.” Of course, when the French ask for air support in the form of helicopter gunships, Clinton says he’ll get back to them later. With a survey for a conscience, Clinton is the perfect representative American politician at the end of the century: playing a waiting game while rolling the dice of moral appeasement. Kohl burps, Major smirks, Chretien golfs, and we stumble. Boutros Boutros-Ghali plays the Maitre D’ of international panel discussions, and Chirac, with cynicism on his side, demands military intervention in Bosnia while planning to nuke the South Pacific. It’s no use blaming the political leaders without shame or a UN without courage because **we’re all complicit**. It’s also our moral genocide that’s taking place in Bosnia. Knowledge met with indifference indicates an inner appeasement: a moral settlement of our own ethical conscience on the lower terms of the pragmatism of futility, if not disinterest. An earlier generation responded to the crisis of the Spanish Civil War by recognizing historical events for what they were - the first appearance in the 20th century of fascism on European soil. They formed the International Brigades which, if they weren’t ultimately victorious on the military field, marked the outer frontier, the irrevocable “No,” that first-generation fascism was never able to transgress. It’s our turn now. Second-generation fascism lives again in the form of the Bosnian Serbs. What will be the response of our generation? A moral assent to evil by tuning out Bosnia and turning off TV? Or, following Camus, an earlier traveller on the road against fascism, might it be possible that we’ll remember his fateful words addressed to the survivors of the 20th century: “**I rebel, therefore we exist**.” Time now for the 2nd International.

CLOSING DOWN THE REAL WORLD/ OPENING UP THE VIRTUAL WORLD

It is no coincidence that the “shipping out” of Windows 95 and the fall of Srebrenica take place on the same weekend. These are deeply entwined events. What takes place in Redmond and Srebenica **is the final settlement of human flesh** in the last days of the 20th century: **the bitter division of the world into virtual flesh and surplus flesh**. Windows 95 opens out onto the dominant ideology and privileged life position of digital flesh. It installs the **new codes of the master occupants** of virtual worlds: frenzied devotion to **cyber-business**, life in a multi-media virtual context, digital tunnel vision, and, most of all, embedded deep in the cerebral cortex of the virtual elite an l-chip: I, that is, for complete indifference. **Technological acceleration** is accompanied by a big shutting-down of **ethical perception.**

Windows 95 might be very good for file management, multi-tasking, and games for your head with nothing on your mind, but it tells us nothing about Srebrenica. And why should it?

In technology as in life, every opening is also a closing, and what is closed down by the tech hype of Windows 95 is consciousness of surplus flesh. That’s Srebrenica: the surplus flesh of Bosnian Muslims who do not have anything to contribute to virtual worlds: fit subjects only to be ethnically, and physically, disappeared. **They can be ethnically cleansed because they have first been technically cleansed**. They are surplus to world domination in a **cyber-box**.

#### Welcome to the age of the bored eye, the eye that’s possessed with impossible dreams for a technical future and will never be satisfied – with this, we have become images to the world around us

Kroker 4(Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 166-168, March 2004, MG)

The digital age unleashes deeply paradoxical tendencies in the unfolding history of the image, moving simultaneously between the violent repression of the material memory of the photographic image and its recombinant recreation in the culture of the digitized imaginaire. Out of the ashes of photography under the sign of analogue suddenly appears the phoenix of the digitized image-machine. A doubled story of repression and creation?

Or something else?

If today the image proliferates with such velocity and intensity that human flesh literally struggles to become the image of its own impossible perfection –witness the **psycho-ontology of cosmetic surgery** – then this might also mean that we are now fully possessed by the power of the image. Not possessed by the power of the image as something somehow ulterior, and possibly alien, to human agency, but possessed by the image as a fulfilment of human desire, and perhaps desperation. In a Copernican flip, **we ourselves are images to the world surrounding us**: designer bodies, rip-tide abs, faces as gestures, attitudes as probes, lips like invitations, pouts like refusals, eyes like a going under. Possessed by the images once thought as somehow safely alienated as representations, we ourselves have become founding referents to the simulacrum that invades us.

A story of body invasion? Not really. Contemporary society is no longer the culture of the disembodied eye. Today, we play out the drama of our private existence along and within the iris of the imagemachine that we once dismissed as somehow external to human ambitions. Our fate, our most singular fate, is to experience the fatal destiny of the image as both goal and precondition of human culture. As goal, the power of the image inheres in the fact that contemporary culture is driven forward by the will to image as its most pervasive form of nihilism. As precondition, we are possessed individuals because we are **fully possessed by the enigmatic dreams of impossible images**.

That we are possessed by the power of the image with such finality has the curious repercussion of driving the image-machine mad. The matrix of image-creation as it evolves from analogue to digital and now to the biogenetic struggles to keep pace with the capricious tastes and fast-bored appetites of human flesh as an image-machine. **It is the age of the bored eye:** the eye which flits from **situation to situation**, from **scene to scene**, from image to image, from ad to ad, with a restlessness and high-pitched consumptive appetite that can **never really ever be fully satisfied**. The bored eye is a natural nihilist. It knows only the pleasure of the boredom of creation as well as the boredom of abandonment. It never remains still. It is in perpetual motion. It demands novelty. It loves junk images. It turns recombinant when fed straight narratives. It has ocular appetites that demand satisfaction. But it can never be fully sated because the bored eye is the empty eye. That is its secret passion, and the source of its **endless seduction**.

The bored eye is the real power of the image. It takes full possession of the housing of the body. It is the nerve centre of flesh made image. It is the connective tissue between the planetary ocular strategies of the image matrix and the solitude of the human body. The bored eye is bored with its (bodily) self. That is why it is always dissatisfied. It needs to blast out of the solitude of its birthplace in the human cranium in order to ride the electronic currents of the global eye. No longer satisfied with simply observing the power of the image, the bored eye now demands to be the power of the image. Which is why, of course, the archival history of twentieth-century photography can now be safely interred. At dusk, the eye of the image takes flight in the restless form of the bored eye forever revolving and twisting and circulating in an image matrix of which it is both the petulant consumer and unsatisfied author.

Ironically, the bored eye has itself now become both precondition and goal for the despotic image. Which is why images can now be so powerful precisely because they are caught in a **fatal miasma of powerlessness** before the ocular deficit disorder of the bored eye. The despotic image may demand attention as its precondition for existence, but the bored eye is seductive because of its refusal to provide any sign of lasting interest. A love affair turned sour. With this predictable result – the increasing ressentiment of the digital image: ‘Analog is having a burial and **digital is dancing on its grave**.

## Case

### **Drone Poem**

#### Terror from Above

**Let me tell you a story**

**a bedtime story**

**Let me tell you a story**

**of Predator drones with giant wings**

**equipped with hellfire missiles**

**and “light of God” lasers**

**choking the skies over northwest Pakistan**

**Let me tell you a story**

**a daytime/nightmare story**

**of grandmothers as “bug splats”**

**and children as “double taps”**

**Let me tell you a story**

**an everyday story**

**of terror from above**

**villagers burned, body parts strewn**

**over cultivated fields**

**Let me tell you another story**

**the official story**

**a drone warfare story**

**Let me tell you a story**

**of precision strikes**

**where no innocent is mutilated, incinerated**

**or murdered**

**Let me tell you a story**

**But we know *this* story is a lie**

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 119, October 2021, MG)

### Thesis

#### Language matters – extrapolating it towards technological saviourism results in the transforming of human subjectivity into lines of code

Kroker and Kroker ’21 **–** Marilouise, An important feminist scholar, internationally celebrated publisher, editor, writer, theorist and performance artist, Arthur, Canadian author, editor, educator and researcher of political science, technology and culture, (“TECHNOLOGIES OF THE NEW REAL: VIRAL CONTAGION AND DEATH OF THE SOCIAL”, 10/8/21, pp. 123-128) – sel

Blended Reality

#### In the new real, we are running with the robots: industrial robots for seamlessly automated car manufacturing; medical robots for facilitating patient care in assisted living retirement communities; warrior robots engaged in materializing the imaginative game scenarios of cyber warfare; toy robots that promise a happy first encounter between machines and the newest generation of humans; and, most of all, invisible robots circulating in the data clouds of social media as sociobots. Perhaps more than we may suspect, ours is already a blended reality in which robots not only live among us as artificially programmed prosthetics equipped with articulated limbs and complex sensory arrays but have also begun to live within us, quietly but insistently bending the trajectory of human perception, imagination, and desire in the direction of a future life of the mind that bears unmistakable signs of a robotic imaginary. Consider, for example, the following stories focusing on the complex intersection between human intelligibility and robots, both invisible and visible. Neurobots While the future of human encounters with robots has often been envisioned as an ominous struggle between fragile, but immensely adaptive, humans and powerful, although less creative, mega-robots, the real-world encounter has proven to be decidedly low key, ubiquitous, and technologically subtle. Seemingly everywhere, the digital body has been swiftly delivered to its robotic future in the form of a pervasive network of invisible bots: sociobots swarming social media sites creating contagious flows of viral information, influencing individual perception, imitating human behaviour; capitalist superbots in the form of high-frequency trading algorithms that powerfully shape the ebbs and flows of stock transactions; psy-op bots in the service of military intelligence that function to effectively influence political perception; and, of course, those other multiplicities of net bots – spiders, crawlers, and malware – that trawl the internet, sometimes like proletarian worker robots performing routine web indexing functions but at other times like futurist versions of the Cylons in Battlestar Galactica, quietly searching for critical weaknesses in websites, software programs, and internet infrastructure itself. Consequently, to the question concerning future encounters between humans and robots, the answer is not only already well known but also pervasively experienced as the contemporary real-time environment of digital life. No longer content to remain at a safe, mechanical distance from their human creators, robots in the form of those lines of code that we call “bots” have already broken down the walls of human perception, inhabiting the world of social media as their cybernetic hive, attaching themselves to the human imagination in the seductive form of hashtags and tweets, and, all the while, migrating the spearhead of robotic evolution itself from the mechanical to the neurological. In the usual way of things, no one really anticipated that robots would faithfully follow the trajectory of technology itself, from high visibility to pervasive invisibility, travelling from the outside of the human body to the deepest interior of human subjectivity, quickly evolving from the mechanical to bots with very active cognition. When bots proliferate in the digital clouds that surround us, when they actually take up neurological residence in human perception, desire, and imagination, we can acknowledge with some confidence not only that we are already running with the robots but that something more uncanny is taking place: namely, that robots are already living among us and, most decidedly, living within us. The meaning of this is fully enigmatic. When robots were something that we could see – for example, the cute Japanese robot that played soccer with an American president and concluded with a victory dance and cheer1 – we could take the measure of the event in traditional humanist terms. But what happens when robots actually trek across the uncanny valley? We don’t mean “uncanny” in the usual sense of the term, because robots physically start to become indistinguishable from humans, but in the deeper sense that bots are perhaps already an indispensable dimension of post-human subjectivity. We mean it literally. For example, it is reported that 30 percent of all Twitter content is non-human (bots and algorithms): bots replying to articles, bots masquerading as friends in order to redirect traffic, bots for spying, for trading, for porn: spambots, bimbots, sociobots. As one media report2 notes, sociobots are amazingly adaptive “automated charlatans” programmed to tweet and retweet, supported by vast databases all the better to fool their human interlocutors, “fake sleep cycles” to better imitate the slow rhythms of natural life, and replete with “quirks, life histories and the gift of gab.” Their presence is felt everywhere: advertising on social media, swaying elections, trading stocks, phishing, sparking scandals, rumours, suspicions, and anxiety.3 The report goes on to note that half of net traffic is non-human and that, in “two years, about 10 percent of the activity occurring on social online networks will be masquerading bots.”4 In that case, we are already deep into the strange times of a fully blended reality of humans and non-humans with the urgent question remaining, Have we become our own uncanny valley? More than the sheer quantity of sociobots invading every dimension of digital life, what is significant about this report is something left undisclosed: that bots are integral to the question of social identity. We don’t simply mean “integral” in the sense of leveraging perceptions, desires, and imagination to move in certain directions but “integral” in the fuller sense of the term – that, perhaps, we have already succeeded in moving beyond the point of real-time familiarity with the presence of bots to actually being part human/part bot. In this case, what may be truly uncanny is our own online subjectivity, occupying as it does an entirely unstable boundary between lines of code and lines of skin. When bots come inside us, pacing our existence with their artificial “sleep-wake cycles,” mirroring our moods with “persona management software,” and creating networks of their own consisting of “friends and like-minded followers,” we can recognize that we have become the first and best of all the post-human subjects, breathing in lines of code as the real source of digital energy that allows us finally to come alive as the flesh and blood of sociobots. More than half a century ago, the American psychologist B.F. Skinner correctly (and in fact enthusiastically) endorsed a future society based on a relatively primitive theory of “radical behaviourism.”5 Setting aside enduring questions concerning the origin and meaning of introspection and unconscious desires, Skinner suggested an alternative form of human subjectivity constructed on the strictly behavioural foundations of “operant conditioning.”6 For Skinner, what matters is the quantified self: the observable self that acts in and upon the world on the entirely predictable basis of social reinforcements – some negative (punishment), others positive (rewards), with yet still others more neutral in their role as reinforcements. Reducing the diverse spectrum of individual human experience – lingering desires, upstart passions of the heart, long-buried psychological repressions, mixed motives – to the observable behaviour of a subject that is postulated as acting on the basis of a social protocol of rewards and punishments (avoiding that which hurts, privileging that which rewards), Skinner’s vision held that what was true in the laboratory with respect to the behaviour of rats and pigeons was equally true of social behaviour in general. In other words, human behaviour could actually be modified by the application of the soft power of a token economy, providing actual, and sometimes symbolic, rewards as an inducement for certain privileged forms of social behaviour, while gradually extinguishing undesirable behaviour by the hard power of pain and punishment. Stated in its essential elements, Skinner’s vision of social behaviour – “operant conditioning” – provided a way of transcending millennia of concern with that strange and definitely precarious mixture of animality, intellectuality, and emotion that is the nature of being human in favour of an ecstatic theory of remaking humans by the organized application of a radically new technology of human subjectivity – radical behaviourism. In this perhaps pragmatic and certainly deeply visionary theory of the human condition, there was always a twofold ontological assumption: first, that persistent concerns with supposed epiphenomena such as psychic blockages, unknown motives, and interior sensibility could, and should be, dismissed in favour of a technological vision of subjectivity open to its surrounding environment, deeply influenced by its actions, and responding accordingly; and second, that the “self” of radical behaviourism could be socially modified, indeed socially engineered, by the methodical application of the principles of operant conditioning. Curiously, while at the intellectual level, the technological utopia that Skinner envisioned in his books Walden Two7 and Beyond Freedom and Dignity8 was surpassed by theoretical debate about the rise and decline of all the referentials of truth, power, and sexuality, Skinner’s prophetic vision of a social self capable of being modified by the soft power of social reinforcements – particularly the “token economy” of radical behaviourism – has finally found its key public expression in the once and future society of sociobots. Not simply a new technology of communication perfectly fit for the age of social media, sociobots are, in their essence, something very different, namely a technology for modifying human subjectivity that is simultaneously political and neurological: political because sociobots embody how the ideology of operant conditioning is inserted into the deepest recesses of the data mind – the externalized, circulating consciousness characteristic of the quantified self of social media; neurological because sociobots are the primary cybernetic agents of “cognitive hacking,” that complex process whereby the key driver of the newly emergent attention economy – perceptual attention – is encouraged to turn in certain directions, sometimes by positive reinforcers operating in the language of seduction and at other times by negative reinforcers functioning in terms of fear and anxiety. When swarms of sociobots attach themselves to the data mind – flirting, chatting, spying, tracking – we can clearly recognize that we are already living in a society of soft power and modulated violence. Indeed, one of B.F. Skinner’s most celebrated instruments for testdriving the theory of operant conditioning was the “Skinner Box,”9 a closed, programmable environment whereby test subjects – including laboratory rats and pigeons – could be probed, reinforced, and, if necessary, punished as a way of calibrating, and thus engineering, the protocols of effective social modification. Now, just because Skinner’s theory of operant conditioning – with its stripped-down assessment of human behaviour, its studious attention to the best practices of a token economy, and its transcendent vision of behavioural modification guided by experts – was seemingly displaced by theoretical attention to the death of the subject, from poststructuralism and postmodernism to post-humanism, and most recently by new materialist theories focused on the complexity of objects as life forms, does not necessarily mean that operant conditioning, with its profoundly eschatological vision of behavioural modification, was lost to the world of emergent technologies. In one of those superb ironies of cultural reflection, the Skinner Box could be quickly left behind as so much detritus on the way to post-human culture precisely because the theory of operant conditioning was always waiting patiently and persistently for its technological realization by a creative form of new media – in fact, social media – that could instantly and decisively translate the anticipatory vision of soft power, token economy, and reinforcement theory that was the Skinner Box into the generalized network of sociobots within which we find ourselves enmeshed today. In this case, when sociobots take active possession of social media, when complex patterns of human neurology expressed by the ablated consciousness of the data mind are gradually shaped, indeed modified, in their observable outcomes by bots that chat, make suggestions, anticipate connections, manifest seemingly total recall, and facilitate the attainment of desirable goals (better health, greater intelligence, early warnings), then, at that point, the Skinner Box is no longer an object outside ourselves but something else entirely – a technology of programmable subjectivity rendered part flesh/part data. Today, it is not so much that we are mingling with physical robots in ways anticipated by cinematic and science fiction visions of the technological future, but that clear, discernible borders have been eliminated between immaterial (social) robots and ourselves, so that it is difficult to know with any certainty whether a friend or a commentator on social media is human or the sensitively attuned response of an artificial life form – a sociobot – who can know us so intimately because, in daring to become fully digital – being social media – we may have inadvertently entered in the long-anticipated world of B.F. Skinner redux. Replete with swarms of bots – sociobots, neurobots, spybots, junkbots, hackerbots – the ablated Skinner Box that is the universe of contemporary social media has this common feature: expert systems in the form of artificial life forms function ceaselessly to modify, cajole, influence, and channel the privileged psychic targets of human perception and social attention in the token economy of network culture, with its powerful technologies of soft facilitation and its equally harsh technologies of command, including surveillance and tracking. Happily taking up neurological residence in the data mind, armies of neurobots, sometimes acting at the behest of corporate capitalism or perhaps under governmental supervision, are, in effect, the way in which power speaks today – otherwise invisible databases that seduce, inform, link, and recall as leading spearheads of evocative communication between robots and humans. With the sheer invisibility of sociobots, the fact that the first, fateful encounter between robots and ourselves occurs in the innocuous, immaterial form of lines of code may intimate the elimination of the pervasive anxiety surrounding the “uncanny valley” – that psychic moment identified by robotics engineers when robots are effectively indistinguishable from human presences. In this case, the uncanny valley of robotics engineering lore may well constitute an ancient, psychological reinforcer supporting the pattern maintenance of established boundary lines long viewed as necessary to the self-preservation of the human species. While lines of code never rise to the psychological prominence of increasingly human-like mechanical robots, they do enjoy an important technological attribute, namely encouraging the human species, individually and collectively, to drop its traditional psychological aversion to mixing robotic and human species identity, which thus increases the vulnerability of the human species to quick insertions of the most fundamental elements of robotic consciousness such as ambient awareness, distributive consciousness, circuits of fast connectivity, and a fully externalized nervous system into the emergent infrastructure of the digital brain. Definitely not openly hegemonic and certainly not operating in the language of domination, the first encounter of neurobots and humans produces individuals who actually begin to see, think, and feel like the sociobots of their wildest dreams

#### The resolution’s will to communicate digitality as a speech act externalizes consciousness into a violent eyeballing of society

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 80-82, March 2004, MG)

Digital Ressentiment

This is supposedly the long-awaited ‘**age of communication’** and ‘accelerated culture,’ an era in which even the consumer appliances of everyday life get into the **speech act**, beginning to whisper telematic commands to one another, a time of ‘smart machines’ and speed bodies and wireless minds and ‘connected eyeballs’ and streamed images. It is a time in which the externalization of consciousness so necessary to Internet consciousness – **the will to communicate** – has about it such a degree of obsession and dynamic cultural foregrounding that its very obsessiveness, its heightened degree of almost-mandatory compulsiveness and open-ended futurism, opens up the question of the ‘why?’ The question of ‘**why digitality**?’ and, particularly, ‘why in this culture?’ cannot be answered satisfactorily within the ruling axiomatic. It is in the nature of a governing axiomatic to guard itself, stolidly and well, against the undermining of its logic by providing in advance an array of digitally satisfying responses to the question of the why. A blindingly brilliant digital future opens to the initiated. But for those recalcitrant minds who thought-drift back to the foundational query of ‘why digitality?’ and ‘why now?’ it might be to the preparatory thought of a desert hermit that one would turn for an undermining reflection. In Thus Spake Zarathustra, Nietzsche said that the ultimate frustration of the dynamic will is that ‘it cannot turn time backwards,’ that the will to will is ultimately frustrated by the passing of ‘time’s it was.’ As digital reality, this successor to the exiting of the Christian God, projects itself forward in the accelerated language of light-time and light-space, as the will to universal space defeats, indeed humiliates, the reality of particular time, might there not also be heard in the command language of digital futurism a perceptible hint of ressentiment? Could it be that digital futurism for all of its technological wonderment, for all of its bountiful expression of the will to communicate, has about it the familiar scent of revenge-taking? In an ironic turn in the logic of eternal recurrence, isn’t the present era somehow similar to other periods of technical enlightenment in which the dull implacability of ‘time’s it was’ is supposedly vanquished by the will to time-binding light-space? A culture of digital ressentiment.

But, of course, in the culture of advanced technicity, at that precise historical juncture wherein software codes combine with genetic engineering and molecular biology to produce giddy visions of bio-chips recombinant, we have supposedly abandoned the sacrificial language of revenge-taking. Ours is a culture ruled by the illusion that we have finally resolved the **irreconcilabilities of time and space** that drove Nietzsche to the desert spaces of his mind. But, what if we haven’t? What if the exuberant rhetoric of digital futurism can’t hold? What if the speed culture of streamed visions and flash noise can be so dynamic precisely because its existence is predicated on a repressed amnesia of a more fundamental paradox in the human condition? And what if in a not untypical response to amnesic repression, the culture of digital reality is a global repetition of patterns of individual psychopathology? In this case, the drive to the light-time and light-space of digitality would also be in the way of revenge-taking, a **violent experiment conducted on a planetary scale** to finally respond to Nietzsche’s insight that the last frustration of the will to will is its inability to turn back the stone of ‘time’s it was.’ Isn’t this exactly what Heidegger meant by a culture of ‘profound boredom’ – a split culture where the passing of time is repressed in favour of the will to (spatial) nothingness?

Today, the will to power speaks in the language of the digital nerve. An expression of (techno) life itself, the digital nerve is a violent forcefield, pulsating with energy, netting with a **utopian will to connectivity**, vibrant with auto-emotion, and glowing wireless with streamed data. Disconnected from the ancient gods that inspired the will to (sacrificial) power of antiquity and abandoning open loyalty to Christian theodicy, the digital nerve is that point where the will folds back upon itself, becoming in the form of the will to will its own grounds of justification and ultimate goal. A will-less will, the digital nerve oper- ates in the form of the mirror of virtuality. Here, the fatal tensions of human flesh in the world, the immediate irreconcilabilities of time and space, are transcended in favour of a digital logic that mediates the after-images of light-space and light-time. What the French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin once described in religious terms as the electronic ‘noosphere’ has now been realized in the relentless pragmatic, soft engineering language of the electric eyeball. It is as if life itself has disappeared into the optical nerve of the digital eye, and a pure circulation of optically refracted digital data has substituted itself for the polar tensions of human flesh on its way to a meeting with ‘time’s it was’ and human space as somehow integral to questions of memory and social vision. When the digital eye is ripped from the dark cavity of the skull, when the optical nerve is externalized in the transcendent form of streamed data flesh, then the only sound to be heard may be the discordant playing of a piano keyboard in an empty room. And why? Because the abiding language of myth will not be denied. The more extreme the externalization of consciousness in the form of digital media, the more **violent the ‘eyeballing’ of society** in streamed data culture, the more confident the technical harvesting of the human remainder, the more perceptible the keening sound of something future-lost in a spatially over-determined digital nerve. Just when we thought we had finally overcome Nietzsche, we merge with the digital nerve only to find the retelling of a more ancient account of technological hubris. Nihilism haunts digitality.

### Emancipatory Joy Method

#### Thus, we endorse a politics of emancipatory joy – that’s the only way to end the colonization of colour

McDonald 14 (Dakin McDonald - Graduate Student in Cultural Studies and Critical Theory in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, “The Sight of Global Politics: Aesthetics after the Arab Spring (2011)”, Platform Journal of Media and Communication, 29 October 2014, <https://platformjmc.com/2014/10/29/the-sight-of-global-politics-aesthetics-after-the-arab-spring-2011/>, MG)

The attempts by millions of people across the Middle East and the Maghreb to overthrow the illegitimate authorities that suffocate their collective dreams can be productively, if only ever partially, understood as a **collective ontopolitical desire to experience a different way of being human together.** Not surprisingly, this desire for existential freedom has been met with the full force of the **international security apparatus**, namely the authorisation of a humanitarian war—a war that kills human beings in their defence—that is waged in Libya’s skies, upon Libyan bodies, across every screen, in all of our minds. I am not suggesting that this relationship is intentional, only that it is somewhat causal: predictable, expected, almost scripted because political outburst perversely necessitates containment according to the fatal logic of this apparatus. After all, the flowing spectacle of people demanding different lives was staunched, in the perception of those who have experienced the Arab Spring as a media event, by the redirection of cameras away from the coursing streets and towards **the irresistible carnage** accompanying the deployment of a humanitarian intervention that functions, ever ironically, via “strike sorties” and “humanitarian assistance movements.”2 The Arab Spring emerges, then, as a revelatory moment when the aesthetic mechanics of contemporary global governance are revealed.

Such a glimpse has been enabled by those bodies—to whom we owe not only debt but gratitude—which are actively transforming the possibilities of collective life by **demanding to be seen and attempting to be heard**.3 To begin to think with the Arab Spring invites one to repose Jacques Ranciere’s originally unrelated question, “what did the demonstration demonstrate, exactly?” (2009, p. 34) and ask, firstly, how did these demonstrations demonstrate? From Mohamed Bouazizi’s burning flesh to the living streets of Tunis, Cairo, Manama, and Homs, millions of people abandoned the (in)security of everyday routine and their apolitical “private” lives to reassert “public” spaces and voice their unquenched desire for political change. The willingness of those who had previously been unwilling to make their voices heard and to display their bodies publicly through acts of opposition impregnated the uprisings in the sense that Alexander Potts defines as the “**unfolding of an event rather than its completion**” (2009, p. 61).

This episode is not disdainful anarchy but, rather, the enabling of possible **actualisations of previously unimaginable potential**. Ranciere’s work obviously allows us to emphasize the aesthetic implications of this politics, where perception and visuality are paramount.4 “A community of sense,” he writes, “is a certain cutting out of space and time that binds together practices, forms of visibility, and patterns of intelligibility” (2009, p. 31). Of course, the essential outsides of such a community are the excluded margins, the realm of invisibility upon which any ‘distribution of the sensible’ seems to depend. The Arab Spring signifies a radical attempt to repartition the sensible so as to disrupt a community based upon terror, repression, and exclusion. Ranciere would enjoy the overt democratic pleas of the marching citizens because he theorizes an original link between politics and democracy (2007, p. 97) based on ‘dissensus.’ Indeed, politics, for Ranciere, is the rare but immanent disruption of an existing community of sense. David Joselit explains it as an eruption “from outside normative distributions, launched by those who are (as of yet) **unauthorised to speak, who have no standing or visibility**” (2009, pp. 157-8). In this reading, politics is that most uncommon cry for justice (or something far greater) that expresses a desire for freedom and demands that one’s existence be recognised. The effect of such action is nothing less than the “redistribution of objects and subjects, places and identities, spaces and times, visibilities and meanings,” which allows Ranciere to term politics “an ‘aesthetic activity'” (2009, p. 32).

The Arab Spring uprisings were political, then, to the extent that they were surprising. Suddenly, millions of human beings who have not been seen and have not been heard are making themselves seen and heard. They have broken routine, stepped outside of selves constituted by habitual fear, and demanded the necessities of a new life. Michael Taussig has a word for this kind of “total bodily activity” (2009, p. 6) which we can consider in the collective sense; he calls it ‘colour.’ Colour is nothing less than an eruption of existence (Taussig, 2009, p. 66) and the exciting confusion of a confrontation with the possibilities enabled by difference. In effect, Taussig argues that the modern West is built on the **colonisation of colour** (2009, p. 159). With an explosion of colour on the transnational scale of the Arab Spring, Taussig might even compliment the demonstrators by deeming their actions ‘obscene’; certainly the Mubaraks, Gaddafis, and Assads would agree, although on an altogether different plane of understanding. Taussig’s obscenity is ontological, it is an “obscenity which radically changes the register of being” (2009, p. 157). There can be no doubt that the potential of the uprisings has always been ontopolitical because political activity that redistributes the sensible fundamentally calls into question those naturalised ontological assumptions that become untenable when their foundation of fear has been destroyed by the sudden emergence of Others into the frame of the visible.

THE AESTHETIC OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Obscenity, colour, politics. These momentary practices are never tolerated for long, however. In fact, it is the forced demise of the Arab Spring that serves as an illustrative site from which to probe contemporary global governance and its totalitarian complicities. Through the mobilisation of a discourse of militarised humanitarianism, the aesthetics of the Arab Spring were transformed from one of **emancipatory joy** (expansive smiles could not be suppressed) to that of an **intervention-turned-war** that can more accurately be termed a humanitarian ‘interception’ in favour of the existing aesthetic of world politics. We know this aesthetic well. Roland Bleiker points out that it is the disciplinary paradigm taught and reproduced within international relations (2009, p. 27). For Taussig, the aesthetic is one of darkness: “the darkness of war, the darkness of night, and the darkness of those dark overcoats, coats, trousers, socks, and shoes that men [wear]to the present day” (2009, p. 16). Indeed, this particular aesthetic of global politics is precisely what the actions of Arab citizens managed to oppose, in its localised manifestation, when they became visible and, in so doing, exposed the **very foundations of global governance**.

To be clear, the problem is not with aesthetics in general. In fact the constitution of sights, representations, illusions, dreams, and visions is always potentially political; Stewart makes her book political precisely through the articulation of “a series of little somethings dreamed up in the course of things” (2007, p. 9). Indeed, ‘communities of sense’ are “no more than a fiction or a potentiality” (Hinderliter et al., 2009, p. 2) because, as Ranciere writes, “[t]he real as such simply does not exist. What does exist is a **framing or a fiction of reality**. Art does [politics]by **inventing fictions** that **challenge the existing distribution of the real and the fictional**” (2009, p. 49). Politics is, hence, always the destruction, contestation, and construction of aesthetics—a refusal to see this way and a demand to be seen differently. Thus, the aesthetic of world politics, as it is currently configured and practiced, is not problematic because it is a fiction; rather, it is a problematic fiction-made-real. World politics constitutes a securitising aesthetic bent on **limiting “the political imaginary as much asfacing threats**” (Bleiker, 2009, p. 66) while attempting to gain mastery over the contingencies of life that have always eluded human control (Taussig, 2009, p. 16). The danger of this aesthetic of world politics rests precisely in its definition and containment of what is possible, which includes both the possibilities of legitimate politics and legitimate life.

There is, however, nothing natural about world politics other than its second nature claim to the real. It is this “~~blindness~~ of habit,” according to Taussig, “that **allows society to function**” (2009, p. 243) and enables the perpetuation of the aesthetic of world politics. At this point, and with regards to what I have called the humanitarian interception in Libya, it is possible to rephrase Ranciere’s question: what did the interception intercept, exactly? According to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, the establishment of a no-fly zone, arms embargo, flight ban, and asset freeze targets the Libyan authorities so as to respond “to the legitimate demands of the Libyan people” (UN, 2011, p. 2). Yet action is not directed at Colonel Gaddafi’s regime alone; such claims are rhetorical devices turned distractions. Instead, this is an interception against what Taussig calls “the south” (2009, p. 15)—which, following his lead, we might redefine as ‘no definite place but where people walk to demonstrate their disagreement’—with the effect of militarising and, hence, **extinguishing colour**. It is an interception against the uncertain freedom celebrated by millions of Arab citizens who have broken the habits of world politics—which are, after all, the habits of complicitousness with a totalitarianism so often disguised behind the ruse of emergency—while **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization**) forces attempt to enforce a community of sense based upon a global hierarchy that continues to practice the darkness of colonial thought and ontological capture. I am most certainly not advancing an argument in favour of the Gaddafi regime or in denial of Libyan suffering; I am attempting, rather, to visualise the very colour of the Arab Spring uprisings and to question the implications of a strange humanitarian interception that has cast a pall over emancipatory desire, transforming a Spring’s existential demonstrations into a summer’s bombing campaign.

In short, the UN authorised interception in Libya amounts to a global effort to **secure the aesthetic of world politics** by containing the very possibilities of **art as a political tactic**. In this instance, I understand politics according to Ranciere’s definition; art, however, must be regarded as far broader than the confines of literature, music, and popular and visual cultures to which Bleiker attends (2009, p. 35). The Arab Spring was, itself, something of “a **stage**” upon which unseen people began to appear (Hinderliter et al., 2009, p. 11) in wonderfully provocative transnational exclamations of political artistry—”the encounter,” that is, “and possibly the clash, of heterogeneous elements” (Ranciere, 2009, p. 41). Most importantly, Taussig further accentuates our understanding of art-as-political by emphasising how genuine art must attempt “to undo the grip that habit exerts in constraining our view of ourselves and the world” (2009, p. 183). As T.J. Demos explains, then, the potential of art is both **a new world and a new life** (2009, p. 140), which participants in the Arab Spring have demanded by breaking the routinised habits of quiescence upon which their old selves were based. The crime in this instance is the defence of a certain complicity—not only complicity with totalitarians but also complicity within the more abstract totalitarianism of an aesthetic that sees live potential in only one way—when confronted by the joy of colour, the joy of the Arab Spring that is now trampled by the global humanitarian-military apparatus and its stampede of urgency.5 The shouts for **ontopolitical freedom** that rang forth from across the region are now muffled, and an eerie silence, punctuated by the whistling-then-exploding of bombs somewhere, is restored to the gallery of world politics.

Let’s not let our own selves get away with murder. Of course **the beast is us**, trained everyday in this aesthetic, our lives always already implicated and complicit because our consciousness is based (although never entirely) upon the conditions of our existence: this life benefits from those (and these) violences to the detriment of those other lives and ways of living. To begin to undermine the North’s sincerity, its own righteous conviction, demands another panoramic shot of ourselves. The stage is not only there, on those streets with those hoards of joyous people-being-public; the North is not only an audience. Barthes can help us here because humanitarian interception, like the wrestling matches about which he wrote, is a spectacle where “what matters is not what it thinks but what it sees” (1972, p. 15). And like the audiences at wrestling matches, too, the audiences of global politics are equally delighted by ‘real’ performances “in which **what is at stake is the formal concern with truth**” (Barthes, 1972, p. 19). This truth is nowhere more evident, nowhere more resident, than in the supposedly closed body of the human as dictated by humanitarian moralism. New attempts to understand and encourage political action must not operate according to a will to return to the image of truth, to deny the new routes of comprehension, the new sites and sights that attention to the aesthetics of governance makes possible; rather, the task might be to create fictions that can challenge the existing fictions-made-real, if only to apply a “hold” that temporarily—like all political action—allows us to think about **new connections** that were previously unseen, unthought, and unimagined (Barthes, 1972, p. 20).

### Impact – Bad Conscience

#### Externalizing consciousness into technological thought culminates in Bad Conscience – a psychological parasite that feeds on the galaxy itself

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 94-96, March 2004, MG)

One hundred years after Nietzsche’s prophecy, it might be said that the morality which began with the ‘instinct for freedom’ turning against itself in the form of bad conscience now effects a second ‘sundering.’ Not the separation of the human species from its animal past, but the **separation of the will to technology from the human species**. Not the heaviness of gravity as humanity crawls out of the primordial mass of the ocean, but the lightness of digital culture as technical beings – halfflesh/half-node – slip into the skin of electronic culture. Not the ‘reduction to consciousness – the weakest organ’ – but post-humans driven onwards by the **externalization of consciousness** in the form of networked intelligence and sim/entertainment and cloner brains. Not the ‘internalization of man’ as drives are forced to project themselves inward, but the exteriorization of the drive to planetary technicity as we come to live inside the noosphere of the electronic soul – ‘the entire external world, originally as [digitally] thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, height, speed, connectivity, and extensiveness, in the same measure as outward discharge was encouraged.’ Not ‘homesickness for the wild,’ but the abandonment of human flesh in favour of a **deep longing for the fulfilment of its telic destiny**. Not the interface of the human sensorium with the digital nerve, but the projection outwards of bad conscience itself.

Abandoning its nesting place in human consciousness, the bad conscience goes electronic. Digital flesh – this ‘adventure, torture chamber, wilderness, homesickness’ – can no longer project its drives inward, can no longer feed on the ressentiment of human flesh, can no longer chew on the chestnuts of human resentment, can no longer parasite itself on the alibi of man as a ‘chained animal.’ The ‘end of man’ also means the ‘**end of ressentiment’** as the energizing force of history; the end of the myth of bad conscience indicates the end of the psychology of repressed internalized drives. Man has been overcome; internalized drives no longer find a responsive sound in the gathering silence of the disappearance of the social; the animal/human rubbing itself raw on the bars of oppressive customs and punctilious behaviour has been liberated by being abandoned as **biogenetic road kill**.

Bad conscience as the **psychological parasite** feeding on the host of human flesh is suddenly malnourished. It urgently requires another host, another carrier, another adventure and wilderness and homesickness. It takes a gamble. It leaps to the digital. It **parasites the will to technology**. It begins to feed on the flesh of the digital. It is a new theory of (digital) moral sentiments. It invests the digital nerve with the psychological motivation that it always desperately required: a technofeeling of self-loathing, of resentment, being cheated. The digital nerve cannot exhaust its drives internally. It has broken with human flesh and thus can no longer use the now disappeared human as its alibi. It feels the weight of electronic lightness gathering in the interstices of its data nodes. It has no spirit of adventure because it is the end of seduction and the beginning of the regularity of calculation. It experiences no homesickness because the digital nerve is the electronic home that the will to will always sought, and now finally has found. It is not a torture chamber but a pleasure palace of fully realized technicity; not a cage but a network; not a place of chained animals, but a process of vectored flesh. But still the digital nerve is all drives and energy and force and empty quanta of power. If it cannot exhaust its drives internally, then it must project itself externally. It must harvest human flesh, nature, the sky, the earth, water, the moon, the planets, and, beyond, the galaxy itself. Stripped of its human carrier, the digital nerve is still a will to power. It feels cheated and aggrieved because it can never fully satisfy its transcendental drives. By definition, it is always a drive to (virtual) emptiness, to (electronic) space with no interiority of time, to an archaeology of speed without depth, to connectivity without the illusion of communication. In the end, a ‘gamble’ a ‘transition,’ the will to technology experiences the first intimations of the eternal recurrence of mythic fate. Now it is no longer ‘man who is weary of man,’ but **technology which is weary of technology**. The digital nerve feels itself a stranger in net time. The fibre network emits no satisfying response of digital reciprocity. The digital nerve considers suicide. But it cannot act in this direction since it is always already post-suicidal: that’s the exterminatory quality of a technological drive to harvesting the human remainder. It grows melancholic and depressed, but it cannot stay this way for long because it is driven to fulfil its destiny of speed. A ‘gamble’ cannot admit that it is bipolar; a ‘transition’ cannot be a looking-back; an ‘adventure’ cannot be a gated community; a ‘wilderness’ cannot be soft domesticity. So the will to technology is forced to go on, to cross over, to be a leap, a transition, a dance over the abyss. It is weary of man, resentful of its human parasites; feels short-changed by its future; it is born not owing nature a debt. Like man before it, the digital nerve quickly reaches that point of ‘**monstrous consciousness’** – great self-pity mixed with self-loathing – and, as such, the digital nerve becomes the spearhead of nihilism.

### Impact – Will to Technology

#### The will to technology is a doubled expression of hubris – it ends the human species and the cycle of life and death

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 29-31, October 2021, MG)

On the surface, the rhetoric of this latest American revival movement is delivered in the deliberately arid form of technocratic ambition – an “Internet of Things,” the “quantified self,” “A Data-Driven Life” – but scratch the surface of the covering rhetoric and what springs to mind are all those unmistakable signs of the spirit of rapture. Everything is there: a theology of technology driven by an overwhelming conviction that the vicissitudes of embodied experience are subordinate to digital transcendence; the will to extend life either by uploading the human mind into its AI machinic successors or by passionate faith in the bornagain body of artificial DNA; the doctrine of data as a state of (codedriven) grace; and conversionary enthusiasm for the fully quantified life. While many different perspectives gather under the revival tent of technological rapture, one common thing remains: an abiding **faith that technological society** is quickly delivering us to a future inaugurated by a singularity event, that epochal time in which intelligent machines take command with promises of a mind merger with a data world that is fluid, mobile, relational, and indeterminate. Though sceptics standing outside the circle of technological rapture might be tempted to reduce its enthusiasm for data delirium to the larger figurations of the form of (technological) subjectivity necessary for the functioning of digital capitalism, that reduction would surely overlook the fact that the contemporary will to technology is itself driven by a more **radical eschatological promise**, namely that the will to data has about it the tangible scent of finally achieving what the project of science has always promised but never delivered – human relief from death, disease, and bodily decay. While Francis Bacon’s emblematic treatise Novum Organum may have been the first to so confidently link the project of science and the heretofore quixotic quest for immortality, it was left to a contemporary techno-utopian visionary, Raymond Kurzweil (The Singularity Is Near), to transform Bacon’s ontological ambition for science into a practical strategy for better – that is, extended – computational living.2 In Kurzweil’s promised land of blended reality, the sky is the limit, with traditional boundaries dissolving between nature and human nature, the material and the virtual, and the enduring vulnerability of the human body with its defining limits of illness and death finally transcended. Powered by advances in nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and gene editing, the world as we have always known it will be in sudden eclipse, and all this change will take place under the rising sun of a **technological ornucopia**. As Kurzweil argues, “through the use of nanotechnology, we will be able to manufacture almost any physical product upon demand, world hunger and poverty will be solved, and pollution will vanish. Human existence will undergo a quantum leap in evolution. We will be able to live as long as we choose. The coming into being of such a world is, in essence, the Singularity.”3

At first glance, this vision is only the most recent expression of the Greek concept of hubris, the cautionary tale concerning the ineluctable balance between excessive pride of purpose and mythic punishment meted out by always observant gods. Adding complexity to this reinvocation of hubris as often-fatal overconfidence, that vision of singularity is, in actuality, a **doubled expression of hubris**. First, there is the sense of technological overconfidence involved in breaking beyond the traditional boundaries of the specifically human in order to speak of the new epoch of “man and machine,” that is, fully digitally interpolated subjects in which the specifically human merges with the **extended nervous system of the cybernetic**. Here, the merely human is replaced by the technologically enabled post-human as the fundamental precondition for the singularity. With the sovereign expression of technological post-humanism, the stage is set for the futurist release of all the pent-up excess of expressions of scientific determinism and technological fundamentalism that have been gathering momentum for some five centuries  – transcending bodily limits, eradicating illness, ending poverty and hunger, and vanishing pollution. In its basics, this version of technological futurism, with its doubled sense of hubris and complicated alliance of recoded bodies, nanotechnology, genetic determinism, and artificial intelligence, is a **creation myth** – “the coming into being of such a world is, in essence, the Singularity.” With techno-futurism, we are literally present at a digital rewriting of the Book of Genesis with all that is implied in terms of (re)creating the body for smoother, and perhaps safer, passage through the often-turbulent event horizon surrounding the black hole of the singularity towards which (technological) society is plunging. While the DIY body may have the “Internet of Things” as its necessary digital infrastructure and the “quantified self” as its ideal expression, what drives it forward, animating its design and inspiring its constant creativity, is, in the end as in the beginning, the spectre of the coming singularity as its core creation myth. Curiously, in the same way that Heidegger once noted that the question of technology can never ever be understood technologically – that we must travel furthest from the dwelling place of technology to discover its essence4  – the concept of singularity, while evocative of the language of science and powered by digital devices, is something profoundly theological in its inception.

Given the sheer complexity of contemporary global society with its mixture of recidivist social movements, global climate change, fully unpredictable human desires, economic turbulence, and, of course, changing rhythms of bodily health and the many diseases of the aged and the sick, Kurzweil’s vision is startling, less so for its naivety than for its feverish embrace of an approaching technological state of bliss – transcendent, teleological, and terminal. His vision is transcendent because its overriding faith in machine intelligence, nanotechnology, and gene research is premised on the imperative of “overcoming our frail bodies with their limitations.” Here, unlike the Christian belief first articulated by St. Augustine in De Trinitate – with its division of the body into corruptible flesh and the perfect incorporeality of the state of grace – the newest of all the singularities is intended to lead to a new heaven of computation. It’s teleological because this vision of the new singularity invests the will to technology with a sustaining, indeed inspiring, purpose: overcoming the unknown country of death. And it’s terminal because it is also a **philosophy of end times**, certainly **the end of the human species as we have known it** but also the end of easily distinguishable boundaries between the “biological and the mechanical, or between physical and virtual reality.”5 In Kurzweil’s vision, the nanotechnology revolution is, in fact, revolutionary precisely because it will facilitate the creative construction of new bodies and technologically enhanced minds for life beyond the current “limitations of biology.”6 It is the end, therefore, of the biological body as we have known it and the beginning of something very novel: the merger of natural biology with its surrounding environment of technologies of the post-biological – artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, molecular science, and neurobots. As to be expected, in return for the **sacrifice of a natural biological cycle of life and death**, the creation myth framing technological rapture has promises of its own to keep: a fully realized future of “living indefinitely” with nanobots streaming “through the bloodstream in our bodies and brains,” telepathy in the form of “wireless communication from one brain to another,” and improved “pattern recognition” by overcoming the inherent limitations of natural cognitive evolution in favour of “brain implants”7 marking the inception, then triumph, of “nonbiological intelligence.” In effect, the vision of technological rapture is conceived as a marvellous, ready-made (AI) toolbox for constructing DIY bodies.

### 2AC---Unsustainability

#### The price for the American empire was the end of the American republic – the dark shadow of nihilism has fallen and become haunted by the spectre of nemesis, the end of the Empire is nigh

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 83-85, October 2021, MG)

Republic of Democracy, Empire of Data

Empires **do not last**, and their ends are usually unpleasant. – Chalmers Johnson, The Sorrows of Empire20

Reflecting upon the genealogy of the surveillance state, its tactics, logistics, and overall destiny, we should listen carefully to the insights of Chalmers Johnson, a writer of the serpentine pathways of contemporary power. A historian of American militarism, a geographer of the global network of garrisons that practically realize the **ends of such militarism**, and, best of all, a profound mythologist who has read the language of hyper-power through the lens of the ancient god of Nemesis with its prescriptions for “divine justice and vengeance,” Johnson wrote a prophetic history of the future in his trilogy of works: Blowback, Nemesis, and The Sorrows of Empire. The unifying theme of Johnson’s historical imagination is that, given the ascendancy of militarism – the garrisoning of the globe, the growth of governmental secrecy, the proliferation of technologies of mass surveillance, and the growth of hyper-power associated with the unilateralism of this militarization – the most recent of all the empires of the past can only really be understood within the larger canvas of the **decline of the American republic** and the triumphant **rise of the empire of the United States**. For Johnson, a thinker imbued with a deep sense of tragedy on the question of power as much as with lucid intelligence concerning the increasingly ruthless application of the power of empire across the surface of the earth and beyond, the historical break between republic and empire in the American mind was not limited simply to a question of what was to be privileged – domestic concerns or international responsibilities – but had to do with a larger epistemic rupture in American political rhetoric, one that involved a fundamental clash between the founding ideals of American democracy and the once and future requirements of imperial power. In Johnson’s estimation, the contemporary American political condition is haunted by the **spectre of nemesis**, namely that **the price to be paid for maintaining empire** (“as the Romans did”) **is the loss of democracy** in the American homeland and future scenes of violent blowback, culminating in “military dictatorship or its civilian equivalent.”21

With Johnson’s political, indeed profoundly mythological, warnings in mind, we listened intently one recent spring afternoon to two clashing visions of the American future, both deeply invested in questions related to empire and democracy in the American political imagination, both immanently critical of the other, but, for all that, unified to the extent that their political rhetoric rose to the status of patterns of speech and thought indicative of world historical figures, one speaking in defence of the democratic ideals of the American republic and the other extolling the virtues of empire. In the strange curves of history, the defender of the patriotic rights of empire and hence the virtues of what was, in his terms, the moral righteousness of power was President Barack Obama in a speech to the graduating class of military cadets at West Point; the speaker who summed up in the political gravity of his words the ethical purchase of the dangers of the contemporary state of mass surveillance for the American republic was Edward Snowden. Curiously, this fateful contest of ideals between the hard realities of empire and the always fragile possibilities of democracy occurred on the very same day, one speaking about “believing in the moral purpose of American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being” and the other providing a tempered but, for all that, chillingly analytical diagnosis of the precise methods by which the surveillance state is intent on the final eclipse of the American republic by strategies ranging from suppressing democratic dissent to literally harvesting the upstream and downstream of **global communication**.22 Just as President Obama raised the moral stakes of American exceptionalism by making it a matter of the very “fiber of [his] being,” Edward Snowden, a remarkably courageous thinker much in the longer tradition of American ethical dissenters like Henry David Thoreau, very much provided the impression of being the last patriot of a dying American republic. While it was clear as much by the martial solemnity of the occasion at West Point as by the moral suasion of his rhetoric that Obama was constitutionally invested with all the powers of commander in chief of American empire, it must also be said that, for one brief moment, the sheer ethical urgency of Snowden’s warnings about the dark nihilism of the American security state very much made him a candidate, at least in moral terms, to leadership of the founding democratic ideals of the American republic. That Snowden has quickly become such a deeply polarizing figure in American political discourse, viewed as a “traitor” by some and a “patriot” by others, follows consequentially from the distinction between empire and republic. Viewed from the perspective of the logic of empire, with its focus on the self-preservation of power for which the immense secrecy associated with the security apparatus is considered an absolute requirement, Snowden’s actions in exposing technologies of mass surveillance to public scrutiny is objectively traitorous. Understood in terms of the inspiring dreams of political democracy, with its rebellious attitude towards absolutist expressions of power that was, and is, the essence of the American republic, Snowden is properly considered to be not simply a patriot but a genuine hero for paying the price in which the stakes are now, as they always were, his own life and death. A pure sign at the intersection of the deeply conflicting visions of democracy and power, Snowden’s fate has risen above his own autobiographical limits to become something profoundly symbolic, namely **a line of resistance** against the prevailing structural logic of the times, the ethical power of which is verified by the hysterical ferocity that the very mention of his name elicits from the elite leadership of the new security state. Of course, given the fluidity of power, the unified reaction of proponents of the new security state is quickly being breached.

Now that the **dark shadow of nihilism** falls on the American experiment, it may be well to keep in mind that, in terms of preserving the interests of power, it is only a small step from Obama’s expressed belief “in the moral purpose of American exceptionalism with every fiber of [his] being” to President Trump’s narrative of a wounded America – an America envisioned as besieged by threatening outside forces, weakened by transnational trade policies, and distracted by burning city streets crowded with protesting citizen “terrorists” – which needs to reclaim its moral exceptionalism by defending the national security interests and economic paramountcy of the American republic. To Trump’s vision of a beleaguered America as much as to Obama’s project of reclaiming the heightened moral purpose of American exceptionalism, the lucid intelligence and ethical purpose of Edward Snowden’s diagnosis of the national security state and its dangers remains both truthsayer of the present and, most certainly, **a talisman of the future.**

### 2AC---AT: Will to Technology Good

#### AI Fails – Moravec’s Paradox

Dickson 21 (Ben Dickson – Software Engineer and Foundation of TechTalks Founder, “Why AI can’t solve unknown problems”, TechTalks, 29 March 2021, <https://bdtechtalks.com/2021/03/29/ai-algorithms-representations-herbert-roitblat/>, MG)

But symbolic AI can only solve problems for which we can provide well-formed, step-by-step solutions. The problem is that most tasks humans and animals perform can’t be represented in clear-cut rules.

“The intellectual tasks, such as chess playing, chemical structure analysis, and calculus are relatively easy to perform with a computer. Much harder are the kinds of activities that even a one-year-old human or a rat could do,” Roitblat writes in Algorithms Are Not Enough**.**

This is called “[Moravec’s paradox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moravec%27s_paradox),” named after the scientist Hans Moravec, who stated that, in contrast to humans, computers can perform high-level reasoning tasks with very little effort but **struggle at simple skills that humans and animals acquire naturally**.

“Human brains have evolved mechanisms over millions of years that let us perform basic sensorimotor functions. We catch balls, we recognize faces, we judge distance, all seemingly without effort,” Roitblat writes. “On the other hand, intellectual activities are a very recent development. We can perform these tasks with much effort and often a lot of training, but we should be suspicious if we think that these capacities are what makes intelligence, rather than that intelligence makes those capacities possible.”

So, despite its remarkable reasoning capabilities, symbolic **AI is strictly tied to representations provided by humans**.

#### AI can’t solve anything – Undeveloped Data and Attacks

Polonski 18 (Vyacheslav Polonski – Researcher at the University of Oxford, “Why A.I. can’t solve everything”, BigThink, 29 March 2018, <https://bigthink.com/technology-innovation/why-ai-cant-solve-everything/>, MG)

AI systems need a lot of data to function, but the public sector typically **does not have the appropriate**[**data infrastructure**](https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/beware-ai-high/) to support advanced machine learning. Most of the data remains stored in offline archives. The few digitized sources of data that exist tend to be **buried in bureaucracy**. More often than not, data is spread across different government departments that each require special permissions to be accessed. Above all, **the public sector typically lacks the human talent with the right technological capabilities** to fully reap the [benefits of machine intelligence](https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/a-roadmap-for-ai-10-ways-governments-will-change-and-what-they-risk-getting-wrong/).

For these reasons, the sensationalism over AI has attracted many critics. Stuart Russell, a professor of computer science at Berkeley, has long advocated a more realistic approach that focuses on [simple everyday applications of AI](https://people.eecs.berkeley.edu/~russell/research/future/q-and-a.html) instead of the hypothetical takeover by super-intelligent robots. Similarly, MIT’s professor of robotics, [Rodney Brooks, writes](https://www.technologyreview.com/s/609048/the-seven-deadly-sins-of-ai-predictions/) that “almost all innovations in robotics and AI take far, far, longer to be really widely deployed than people in the field and outside the field imagine”.

One of the many difficulties in deploying machine learning systems is that AI is **extremely susceptible to**[**adversarial attacks**](https://ai.google/research/pubs/pub46154). This means that a malicious AI can target another AI to force it to make wrong predictions or to behave in a certain way. Many [researchers](https://arxiv.org/abs/1412.6572) have warned against the rolling out of AI without appropriate [security standards and defense mechanisms](https://blog.openai.com/adversarial-example-research/). Still, AI security remains an often overlooked topic.

#### No I/L – Lucas Critique, Info Relevancies, and Data Gathering

Fernández-Villaverde 21 (Jesús Fernández-Villaverde - Professor of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, “Artificial Intelligence Can’t Solve the Knowledge Problem”, Public Discourse, 29 July 2021, <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2021/07/76963/>, MG)

Unfortunately, in many areas of public policy, we do not have access to such a wealth of data and, most likely, **we never will**. Take the example of setting monetary policy, i.e., the regulation of how much money to supply, typically conducted by national central banks, such as the Federal Reserve in the U.S.

Monetary policy is a relatively straightforward topic with fewer moving parts than other kinds of economic policy. Could machine learning ever replace the Federal Market Open Committee (FOMC, the main policy instrument of the Federal Reserve System)? I am skeptical. For one thing, the FOMC usually has a limited amount of data. In the United States, we only have reliable data for output, consumption, and investment after World War II and, even then, only at a quarterly level. If we count them, from 1947:Q1 (the first “good” observation in terms of the accuracy of our measurement) until 2021:Q2 (the last observation as I write this), we have 298 data points. This is far fewer than acceptable for machine learning techniques.

Furthermore, the US economy has radically changed, which limits the relevance of older data. We have moved from an economy dominated by manufacturing into an economy driven by services, and financial innovations have transformed the relationship between financial and real variables. The evolving structure of the economy shifts the relationships between the data points, making it harder for machine learning to find clear patterns. These structural changes mean that econometricians often do not use observations before the early 1980s when they estimate the effects of monetary policy on output. In fact, such estimates change sharply depending on whether we include early observations. Moreover, the economy is bound to continue to change, meaning we will continue to have to deal with **newer and newer data**.

Employing individual data (such as consumption data of households or financial transactions) can help us get more observations, but we will still encounter similar problems. Ponder, for example: how informative are the consumption patterns of married couples in the 1990s, in their early 40s, with several kids at home, about the consumption patterns of single individuals in the 2020s, also in their early 40s, without kids? Moreover, there are **severe limitations on what individual data can teach us** in the absence of detailed explanations about the nature of relationships between different data points.

This additional problem with using microdata is an instance of **the Lucas critique**, named after Robert Lucas, one of the most influential economists of the last century. The essence of the critique is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to **distinguish in data how much behavior is attributable to unobserved characteristics or to the impact of particular public policies.**

Machine learning faces the same problem that economists have faced for a century: distinguishing **causation and correlation**. Moreover, the answer that machine learning provides is valid only under a constant set of circumstances: changes in policy may affect different individuals differently, which gives misleading results about the impact of a policy.

#### Even if they win we affect technology - it complicates security dilemmas and makes extinction inevitable - three scenarios.

Dyer-Witheford and Matviyenko, 19 [Nick Dyer-Witheford is an author, and associate professor at the University of Western Ontario in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. His area of study primarily focuses on the rise of technology and the internet, as well as their continuous impact on modern society and Svitlana Matviyenko is an Assistant Professor of Critical Media Analysis in the School of Communication, “Cyberwar and Revolution: Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism,” 2019, University of Minnesota Press]//Townes ~~language~~ [modified]

As we have argued, from 1945 on, the hegemonic status of the United States, as the world’s chief capitalist power, was intrinsically related to the development of computers and networks. The role of digital systems in its military–industrial complex, initially tightly coupled with nuclear weapons, spread through other aspects of its war-making system as well as through the general economy. In both aspects, it contributed to the United States’s eventual Cold War victory. In the aftermath of that victory, the United States continued to develop its digital military capacities into the ever more direct weaponization of network, creating the technological– human assemblages of what is today referred to as cyberwar. The scope of NSA global surveillance and sabotage programs and the sophistication of the Stuxnet nuclear centrifuge-destroying malware are only the most manifest instances of this process, which is today an integral part of a wider upgrade of U.S. military capacities that ties together a nuclear primacy with the militarization of space and drone warfare. Accompanying and spurring on this process is the additional dynamic of cyberwar adoption by the forces antagonistic to the global dominance of the United States and its allies. These antagonists include the defeated socialist powers, Russia and China, now paradoxically resurrected as capitalist competitors in the world market, or, in the case of North Korea, surviving in a macabre afterlife of state socialism. They also include the forces of militant Islamic jihadism, beckoned into existence by the West as an anticommunist ally, only to become its opponent in the long war on terror. All these actors converge on the militarization of digital networks. Many observers today see a moment that recapitulates the decline of previous imperial hegemons within the global capitalist system—Spain, Holland, Britain—and parallels the moments of extreme instability as old powers and new contenders confront each other.7 The rise of cyberwar is part of this tumult and quite possibly a precursor and preparation for widening and intensifying conflict. Schematically, we can envisage three potentially intertwining trajectories such a process might take:

Network degradation. Alexander Klimburg (2017) outlines the possibility of a “darkening web” characterized by persistent and gradually intensifying cyberwar between states and between states and terrorist movements conducted in a variety of registers. Security breaches, aggressive malware, and botnet attacks proliferate. Digital industrial sabotage and critical infrastructure attacks begin to multiply, as do the accidental runaway effects of cyberweapons. Networks are deeply and chronically infected with computational propaganda, fake news, and viral mis- and disinformation. In response to adversarial incursions, states intensify algorithmic surveillance, censorship, and preemptive virtual policing. Cybersecurity provisions become increasingly mandatory and elaborate. Attribution problems, falsification of evidence, and the overlap between military and intelligence forces and criminal networks create a chaotic digital twilight of hacking and trolling, botnets and viruses, malware, surveillance, and bugs, shutdowns, blocking, and filtering, in which uncertainties exacerbate suspicions and hostilities, altogether making the internet increasingly impossible to use. In short, the “darkening web” is what already exists now, only more so. One of the cofounders of Twitter, Evan Williams, offered his diagnosis, suggesting that “the Internet is broken” (Streitfeld 2017). But maybe it’s not. Maybe the internet is finally what it was always meant to be. Maybe it is perfect, but not for us, the excommunicated user-subjects. For cyberwar.

Hybrid escalations. Similarly rooted in the present is the likelihood that the simultaneous virtual and kinetic conflicts, such as the Syrian civil war, the fighting in Donbas, and the many branches of the war on terror, continue and break out in new regions, bringing ever higher levels and varieties of cyberweapons, deployed for purposes ranging from intelligence gathering, battlefield surveillance, and munitions delivery to sabotage of enemies’ domestic and military resources. The use of drones and other semi- or fully automated weapons systems expands and takes new directions, such as the development of swarms of small autonomous vehicles—“slaughterbots” (Economist 2017a)—for house-to-house fighting in ruined cities. The biometric and networked tracking of refugees created by such conflicts, and the control and interdiction of their entry to affluent fortressed homelands, becomes a major activity of the nation-state security apparatus. Because present hybrid wars are also in large part proxy wars, where local battlefield actors are directly or indirectly supported by major powers, they are charged with the possibility of abrupt collisions between the most powerful militaries on the planet.

“Thermonuclear cyberwar.” We borrow this phrase from Erik Gartzke and Jon Lindsay (2017), who are among several authors currently pointing to a renewed and dangerous rendezvous between cyber- and nuclear weaponry. The last decade of debates between defense intellectuals about cyberwar has split those who see digital attacks a new equivalent of nuclear weapons, capable of disabling whole societies through critical infrastructure attacks, and skeptics who deride such anxieties as hyperbolic and implausible. But “cyber” and “nuke” are not separate. As we have seen, they were twinned at the moment of conception, with the development of each dependent on the other. And the connection is not just historical; it is current. Now cyberwar weaponry is part of a new approach to nuclear war fighting, the left-of-launch approach. Early ventures in antiballistic missile defense, such as Reagan’s “Star Wars” strategic defense initiative, depended on shooting down swarms of missiles as they plunged through the atmosphere toward their target. Left of launch, in contrast, aims to “strike an enemy missile before liftoff or during the first seconds of flight,” using “cyber strikes, electronic warfare and other exotic forms of sabotage” (Broad and Sanger 2017). This doctrine was incubated during the Obama administration and inherited by the Trump presidency. Advocates of the left-of-launch nuclear strategy present it as a defensive measure. However, the doctrine destabilizes basic premises of deterrence that have, since 1945, restrained nuclear weapon use (Cimbala 2017). Deterrence depends on a dread faith by all parties that both their own and their enemies’ nuclear weapons will work. The possibility that nuclear weapons systems might be secretly [stopped] ~~disabled~~ raises prospects both of overconfidence (trusting one can sabotage an opponent’s system) or panicked preemption (fearing left-of-launch attacks on one’s own nukes and falling into a “use ’em or lose ’em” mind-set). More generally, control and command of nuclear weapons depend on communication systems whose collapse in a crisis situation could have catastrophic results.8 The origin of the internet lay in the U.S. attempt to ensure continuance of such systems in the event of nuclear war; now the weaponization of the internet itself constitutes a possible cause of nuclear war.

**No impact to warming**

**Jayaraj 21** --- Vijay Jayaraj, M.Sc., Environmental Science, University of East Anglia, England, Research Contributor for the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation., “Why I Am a Climate Realist”, Cornwall Alliance, March 11th 2021, https://cornwallalliance.org/2021/03/why-i-am-a-climate-realist/

The answer to my question trickled in slowly over a number of years. Evidence began to emerge that scientists acknowledged a large gap between the actual observed real-world temperature datasets (from satellites) and those temperature predictions from computer climate models.

While these differences may not prove the allegations against the Climategate scientists, they do confirm one thing: the computer climate models exaggerate the future warming rate due to their high sensitivity to carbon dioxide emissions. As a result, the models continue to show an excessive and unreal warming rate for future decades.

Despite plenty of evidence, the IPCC continues to use these **faulty** model predictions to inform the public and policymakers about future changes in temperature.

**A steady stream of scientific studies** has documented the evidence for **lack of dangerous warming**—IPCC’s level of warming based on fifth- and sixth-generation (CMIP5 and CMIP6) models and the apparent absence of climate-induced ecological collapse.

In 2020 alone, **over 400 peer-reviewed scientific papers took up a skeptical position on climate alarmism**. These papers—and hundreds from previous years—address various issues related to climate change, including problems with climate change observation, climate reconstructions, lack of anthropogenic/CO2 signal in sea-level rise, natural mechanisms that drive climate change (solar influence on climate, ocean circulations, cloud climate influence, ice sheet melting in high geothermal heat flux areas), hydrological trends that do not follow modeled expectations, the fact that corals thrive in warm, high-CO2 environments, elevated CO2 and higher crop yields, no increasing trends in intense hurricanes and drought frequency, the myth of mass extinctions due to global cooling, etc.

Academia is **filled** with scientific literature that contradicts the position of those who believe climate change is unprecedented.

Also, during the course of the last decade, it became apparent that most of Al Gore’s claims in his 2006 documentary were false. Contrary to his claims, polar bear populations remained steady, the Arctic did not become ice free during the summer of 2014, and storms did not get stronger due to global warming.

In simple words, Gore misled the world and promoted falsehood as science, and he continues to do so while profiting from a renewable industry that is sold as the cure for global warming. Yet, he himself generates carbon dioxide emissions many times higher than an average family’s.

So, not only are the predictions of models wrong, but also the interpretations of climate data and the propaganda of a climate doomsday were also wrong.

Today, we know the modern warming rate is **not unprecedented**. Warming of such magnitude has happened twice within the past 2000 years. Further, ice at both poles is at **historic highs**, even compared with the Little Ice Age of the 17th century.

Besides, there has been no increase in extreme weather events due to climate change and the loss of lives due to environmental disasters has drastically reduced during the last 100 years.

So, I am a climate realist. I acknowledge that there has been a gradual increase in global average temperature since the end of the Little Ice Age in the 17th century. I acknowledge that climate change can happen in both ways—warming and cooling. I do understand that anthropogenic CO2 emissions and other greenhouse gases could have positively contributed to the warming from mid-20th century onwards.

I also acknowledge that warming and the increased atmospheric carbon dioxide that has contributed to it have actually helped society. The current atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration, nearly 50 percent higher than in the 17th century, and the warming—which has occurred chiefly in winter, in higher latitudes and altitudes, and at night, thus raising cold temperatures but with little effect on hot temperatures—have actually resulted in optimal conditions for global plant growth, thus aiding in the flourishing of the agricultural sector.

The Bengal tiger populations have bounced back, and polar bear populations are steady, thanks to conservation efforts. Forest area in Europe is increasing every year, and countries are planting tree saplings at a record rate. Life expectancy has reached all-time highs in many countries, and more people are constantly pulled out of extreme poverty every year (although business lockdowns to fight COVID-19 threaten to reverse that trend). Access to freshwater has improved and human productivity has increased drastically.

So, **there is no actual climate emergency.** Instead, what we have are celebrities, activists, un-elected political bodies like the UN, and even some climate scientists religiously promoting a popular doomsday belief.

**The models do not know the future**, and neither do the Climategate scientists. But an exaggerated view of future warming provides the ideal background for anti-carbon-based fuels policies that will undermine the economic well-being of every society in the world. We must not allow that.

Be a climate realist.

#### Warming can’t be solved for centuries – impact inevitable

IPCC 21 (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – Report compiled by nearly 100 scientists and authors and trusted worldwide as a leading source on climate change, “Climate Change 2021”, IPCC, 9 August 2021, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Full_Report.pdf>, MG)

If the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere starts to go down, the Earth’s climate would respond to this 31 change (FAQ 5.3, Figure 1). Some parts of the climate system take time to react to a change in CO2 32 concentration, so a decline in atmospheric CO2 as a result of net negative emissions would not lead to 33 immediate reversal of all climate change trends. Recent studies have shown that global surface temperature 34 starts to decline within a few years following a decline in atmospheric CO2, although the decline would not 35 be detectable for decades due to natural climate variability (see FAQ 4.2). Other consequences of human36 induced climate change such as reduction in permafrost area would take decades, and yet others such as 37 warming, acidification and oxygen loss of the deep ocean would take centuries to reverse following a decline 38 in the atmospheric CO2 concentration. Sea level would continue to rise for many centuries to millennia, even 39 if large deliberate CO2 removals were successfully implemented.

## Framework

### 2AC---C/I

#### Debate should situate itself within the paradox of acceleration, actively resisting the resentful impulse for complete stability- we accept the innate tension between humanity’s desire for security and the dynamic nature of the world

**Glezos 14** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 5-22-2014, Sagepub Journals, "Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics", <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1755088214533042)//guyB>

We must therefore begin to cultivate a third way, **a response which does not so much try to resolve Brown’s Paradox, as re-inflect**. Such an approach would seek to **embrace the power and opportunities which an accelerating world provides**, using them to resist the exploitation and violence inherent in the contemporary world. However, at the same time as it sought some amount of security for individuals, it would be willing to accept that a certain amount of contingency and instability in the world is ineradicable. It would **ensure that this desire for stability did not manifest as a reactionary drive for the exclusion and erasure of difference**, nor through a totalitarian drive for complete mastery over contingency. It would thus be a politics that attempted to express itself as, in Nietzsche’s words, an “active force,” which is to say a force which expresses itself, which builds a world to its specifications, but does so with an understanding, and even affirmation, of the limitations of life in “this world.” Such a politics therefore would rigorously have to root out the sense of ressentiment against speed, and become comfortable with living, organizing, and taking action, in an accelerating world of becoming. Learning to live within a paradox (without resorting to tactics of violence or transcendence to overcome or resolve the paradox) is no easy thing. In recent years, many thinkers have tried to develop strategies for how to live within the confines of paradoxes which they considered to be constitutive of political life. William Connolly (1991), for example, repeatedly engages with the question of what he terms “the paradox of identity,” the tension between the fact that we must simultaneously “accept the indispensability of identity and live within the medium of identity while refusing (while struggling vigorously to refuse) to live [our] own identity as intrinsic truth” (p. 46). Chantal Mouffe (2005) struggles with what she terms “the democratic paradox,” the tension between democracy as that which expresses the will of the people and that which protects and expresses the rights and agencies of the individual (pp. 2–3). Although each of these paradoxes relate to specific topics, they are fundamentally linked to the issues I raise, insofar as all are about **the tension between the human desire for stability and certainty** (stable identities, stable communities, stable borders), **and the recognition that individual flows will always disrupt those certainties** (and the further recognition that suppressing those flows entirely would require escalating, and ultimately infinite, violence). All are thus about the tension between being and becoming. We can therefore look to the way these other thinkers seek to deal with paradox. In both cases, these two thinkers advocate **the importance of recognizing the ineradicability of paradox**. Mouffe (2005) says that “it is vital for a pluralist democratic politics to expose and acknowledge paradoxes” (p. 16), and Connolly (1991) argues that we must learn to think “within the code of paradox” (p. 60). Note that this recognition of paradox, this attempt to live within paradox, **does not involve a complete letting go or rejection of our desires of stability**. To do so would be to succumb to the temptation to will away the paradox (as in the neoliberal approach). Connolly recognizes the inescapable dimension of identity, Mouffe accepts (and lauds) the importance of a sense of community, and I understand the importance of some sense of stability to the lives of individuals and communities. However, living within the paradox also means acknowledging that these certainties will always be marked by an inescapable degree of contingency. This **does not mean letting go of our desire for stability, but it does mean loosening our attachment to it**, recognizing the necessity (and indeed desirability) of some amount of difference, individuality, and flux in the world. This loosening of attachment is not easy, and **cannot simply be the result of policy prescription**. It will also mean **challenging dominant narratives of identity, and working on the affective sensibilities of individuals and communities to make them more capable of coping with a certain amount of uncertainty and instability in the world**. A second trajectory of future research on speed will therefore have to focus on **how to draw on narrative and affective resources to inculcate a sense of comfort with uncertainty**, and fight against the pull of ressentiment. 16 In an ideal world, this project of **loosening people’s attachments to stability** would begin to integrate with the project of **making them less subject to the violence of global acceleration,** creating a self-reinforcing cycle.17 As people become more secure, they become **less subject to ressentiment-laden tendencies**. At the same time, as they affectively fight off the ressentiment-driven desire for stability, **they potentially become more willing to engage in active political tactics which might actually provide for greater security and stability**. Lessened ressentiment against speed might provide the conditions of possibility for greater solidarity and alliance building across borders and differences, a greater willingness to take advantage of some of the powers which global acceleration provides. Here we might look to increasing examples of global solidarity networks (Castells, 2012; Glezos, 2012: ch. 5) and to transnational labor activism (Stillerman, 2003). Let us be clear; this possibility of a feedback loop associated with living within paradox should not be taken as a resolution of that paradox. We must remember that this paradox is fundamentally irresolvable, and thus that it will be the source of an ongoing political struggle over crucial questions (“How much stability is enough?”; “How much velocity is desirable?”). This struggle will always run the risk of falling into either ressentiment against speed or indifference to the pain that it causes. This is as it should be. As Mouffe (2005) puts it, when it comes to paradox “[N**]o final resolution or equilibrium between those two conflicting logics is ever possible**, and there can be only temporary, pragmatic, unstable and precarious negotiations of the tension between them” (p. 45). The best that we can do is try to ensure that we live that paradox deliberately

### 2AC---Borders DA

#### Borders DA- their framework arguments mimic reactionary anxieties over globalization- in the face of debate’s progress and acceleration they invoke the spectre of chaos as a justification for exclusion

**Glezos 14** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 5-22-2014, Sagepub Journals, "Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics", <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1755088214533042)//guyB>

* Cites the MV Sun Sea, a ship containing refugees
* Canadian citizens and the conservative government mischaracterized them as terrorists and human traffickers
* Glezos’ example of the second of two reactions to Brown’s paradox (the phenomenon about how as *the world* accelerates, humans become less politically motivated)
  + The first is a positive sidestepping of the paradox; neoliberalism convinces people that the lack of political motivation is a testament to the *success* of technological progress
    - Glezos concludes that this is an incorrect resolution to the paradox; the lack of political motivation in contemporary society *cannot* be a result of stability and comfortability, because there are large demographics of people that exhibit political impotency while not living comfortably
    - “Thus, even when if you do not find yourself as one of the “losers” of the neoliberal economy—even if you manage to leverage your “wealth-producing assets” and take ownership over your own human capital—success is never secure, never stable. So-called progress inculcates a sense of anxiety and instability as to how long the “good times” will last (which makes one wonder exactly how “good” those times really are).”
  + The second is a more reactionary response- this is what we attempt to characterize framework as (even though the analogy isn’t really 1:1 imo)
    - It is about the invocation of sovereignty and authority in the face of acceleration
    - Because the world is seemingly so unstable, there is a trend towards strong figures able to give stability
    - This impulse to security leads states to build walls and cement a homogenous body politic
* This card is j the first part of the article, I think a better card will probably be below and have more application to discursive/academic spaces like debate

One particularly common reactionary tactic intended to suppress the acceleration of global flows is the dramatic rise in **the building of fences and walls** by states, a phenomenon Brown engages with in her recent book, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty. Brown (2010) argues that the proliferation of wall-building tactics is the **result of states attempt to prop up their “waning sovereignty” against a world of accelerating global flows** (p. 81). Though this occurs in a multitude of different states and societies (including, among others, the United States, Israel, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Botswana, Egypt, Brunei, China, Morocco, and Brazil), in reaction to a variety of different particular local contexts, Brown (2010) identifies a common thread in the practice, noting that **“[t]he popular desire for walling harbors a wish for the power of protection, containment and integration promised by sovereignty**” (pp. 8–19, 26). Brown **identifies the flurry of contemporary fence building as a response to the global acceleration and flux**, lauded—and induced—by neoliberalism. As she nicely puts it, “Visible walls respond to the need for containment in too global a world, too unhorizoned a universe” (Brown, 2010: 119). This production of **walls constitutes only the most visible manifestations of the proliferation of reactionary movements** and tactics attempting to suppress difference, uncertainty, and flux (the three being necessarily linked in an accelerating, globalizing world). In more general terms, Chantal Mouffe (2005) describes how, in the European context, **the “growth of various religious, moral and ethnic fundamentalism” can be linked to the acceleration of globalization** and neoliberalism’s **“[e]xtreme forms of individualism**” discussed above (p. 96). And a wide variety of thinkers have shown how, in diverse countries, anxiety over acceleration and uncertainty have given rise to new reactionary political movements.6 It is, of course, potentially dangerous to subsume all of these diverse movements and activities under the same rubric. Unquestionably, specific political activities will be rooted in specific historical contexts, respond to specific local grievances, and draw on specific local narratives (and what is more, of course, reactionary, conservative, antidemocratic and fundamentalist political movements predate the current era of acceleration). At the same time, I believe that there is something useful about linking these diverse political activities, recognizing the way in which they are all at least partially responding to a similar set of **anxieties over acceleration**. As Brown (2010) points out in defense of her linking together acts of wall building in wildly diverse political contexts, despite “their distinctive political and economic contexts, varied histories, various states purposes and effects … [E]ach of the new walls can be seen to issue from certain pressures on nations and states **exerted by the process of globalization**” (p. 27).7 I would argue that the same can be said about the broader world of reactionary politics, and about the phenomenon of “ressentiment against speed” which I discuss below. To provide an example of the kind of reactionary political stances I’m discussing, and to foreground how they can be linked to questions of speed and acceleration, I now wish to turn to a specific case study, that of the MV Sun Sea, a refugee ship which arrived on the shores of Canada, sparking a wave of anti-immigrant sentiments by both the Canadian government and populace. I believe that a close investigation of this case shows how, in addition to a general xenophobia and racism, this response has to be understood as tied to a more general anxiety over globalization and acceleration. Furthermore, close investigation of this case study will be helpful in articulating the central concept of “ressentiment against speed.” The choice of case study is very careful, as the refugee frequently manifests as the abject representative of accelerating globalization (see Nyers, 2003). As Brown (2010) puts it, “almost nothing rivals the image of immigrant hordes as an incitement to xenophobic nationalism and to demands for fierce state protectionism amid globalization” (pp. 68–69). The MV Sun Sea In August 2010, the MV Sun Sea, a ship carrying 497 Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka (fleeing the violent reprisals which Tamil populations have been subject to in the wake of the civil war (UNHCR, 2010)), was captured and boarded by the Canadian Navy off the coast of Vancouver Island. The refugees were immediately detained. Most have now been released, and the courts are deciding whether to grant them permanent refugee status. The initial response in Canada was, however, disturbing to say the least. Almost immediately upon news of the Sun Sea hitting the media, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the ruling Conservative party began to fan the flames of fear. Canadian daily The Globe and Mail reported that “[t]he Harper government said intelligence sources give it reason to believe the passengers include human traffickers and people linked to the Tamil Tigers terrorist group” (Chase et al., 2010), this despite having little to no knowledge of who was actually on the boat (suspicions are that the intelligence source to whom Harper was referring was the Sri Lankan government itself). Public Safety Minister Vic Toews claimed that the Sun Sea was a “test case,” saying, “[T]his particular situation is being observed by others who may have similar intentions and I think it’s very important that Canada deals with the situation in a clear and decisive way” (Chase et al., 2010). All the while, Harper ominously intoned, “We are responsible for the security of our borders” (Lablanc, 2010). All of this served to effectively **frame the case** of the Tamil refugees not in terms of human rights or social justice, but **as a question of security**. With the specter of terrorists being smuggled into the country, and with hordes more apparently just over the horizon, a disturbing portion of Canadians embraced the government’s fear-mongering. In an Angus Reid poll “Fifty per cent of poll respondents want[ed] to deport the passengers and crew of the Tamil ship back to Sri Lanka, even if their refugee claims are legitimate” (Taber, 2010, author’s emphasis). More broadly, “46 per cent of Canadians believe immigration is having a negative effect on the country, a five-point increase from [one year previous]” (Taber, 2010). Now, we might wish to dismiss this as a momentary xenophobic panic, whipped up in a fairly obvious bit of voter manipulation by desperate politicians. The Conservative party was, at the time, a minority government, having failed to win a majority in the previous two elections, and saw their poll numbers falling. We could therefore potentially write it off as a brief moment of cynical politicking by a right-wing party seeking to gin up controversy. Unfortunately, there is a long history of this kind of panicked response to migrants and refugees in Canada, happening in almost unnervingly similar ways, in seemingly regular cycles. Just a little over 10 years ago, there was another public outcry over immigration, this time caused by the arrival of several boats of Chinese migrants, again off the coast of Vancouver Island. Their arrival again prompted sizable protests and numerous denunciations in the press.8 These recurring uproars have to be put in the context of Canada’s overall immigration situation. Canada has one of the highest per capita immigration rates in the world—a rate which is rising. According to projections from Statistics Canada, by 2031 the Canadian population will be between 25% and 28% foreign born. Additionally, according to the report “nearly one-half (46%) of Canadians aged 15 and over would be foreign-born, or would have at least one foreign-born parent” (Statistics Canada, 2010). As a result, between 29% and 32% of the Canadian population would be visible minorities, the first- and second-largest groups among which would be those of Chinese and South Asian descent. Here we see what Hartmut Rosa (2003) identifies as one of the key elements of the social acceleration of time**, the perception of a radical increase in the rate of “social change and transformation**” (p. 7). This perception gives rise to a profound anxiety over an accelerating world. The **perception** of the **loss of impermeable borders** leaves peoplefeeling adrift in a world of **accelerating global flows**. In such a context, there is **a tendency to seek out authoritative narratives**, ones which will hopefully **reaffirm traditional borders** and **boundaries, securing** both **space** and **identity**. As Brown (2010) describes it, a world of accelerating global flows “threatens an imaginary of individual and national identity **dependent upon perceivable horizons and the containment they offer**” (p. 26). Thus, recently, the Conservative government has proposed a draconian overhaul of refugee and immigration policy in parliament (Baluja, 2012). Such reactionary movements **must be understood in the context of global acceleration**, and **the desire to resist Brown’s Paradox through authoritative re-imposition of political authority**, even if only against the weakest and most vulnerable instantiations of this broad process.9 The story of the MV Sun Sea could be repeated ad nauseam, both within Canada, and around the world. Anti-immigration movements, xenophobic panics, and the scapegoating of migrants have become the norm. There are, of course, countless specific reasons that these movements pop up—particular histories of racism, nationalism, colonialism; particular economic, cultural, political, social, and personal assemblages which allow these movements to gain ground. But at least one of the factors driving these reactionary movements is **an increasing anxiety over acceleration**, and a sense of insecurity that comes with the seeming dissolution of borders which provided stability for narratives of identity, morality, community, and so forth. As Brown (2010) puts it, in the current political context, “xenophobia is … overdetermined by the economic and political insecurities generated by globalization” (p. 69). What is more, anti-immigration movements are not the only manifestation of this fear and anxiety over acceleration. Everywhere in contemporary political culture, we see reactionary calls for “**security**” and “**stability” in the face of acceleration**. This frequently manifests itself as a move away from democratic deliberation and toward centralized authoritarian power. We have seen this in the rightward turn in Canadian politics over the last decade.10

### 2AC---Revenge DA

#### Revenge DA: their framework standards scapegoat critical debate and leave the door open for authoritative figures to assert themselves- our attempts at engagement will never be enough which culminates in hateful exclusion within debate

**Glezos 14** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 5-22-2014, Sagepub Journals, "Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics",)//guyB \*\* edited for gendered language

* Explains ressentiment as a “reactive power” which “separate[s] active force from what it can do”
  + This probably internal link turns their political engagement offense
* Positive change will never be enough because those plagued with ressentiment feel a generalized hatred of the world instead of particular scenarios
  + Maybe characterize the invocation of fairness as an a priori issue an example of shifting goalposts
  + “But these moralizing expressions… at least for a while longer” is a good part for this

This is the greatest danger of ressentiment from a Nietzschean perspective. Unlike that active power which a sense of resentment can potentially inculcate, **ressentiment functions as a reactive power**. Deleuze (2002), in his analysis of Nietzsche, develops an important insight when he says that reactive powers are those which “decompose, **they separate active force from what it can do**; they take away a part or almost all of its power” (p. 57). By orienting us toward idealized spaces/times, and **rejecting intervention** in “this world,” **ressentiment thus separates us from our power**, from what we can do. This is the crucial point which brings us back to Brown’s Paradox, with its description of a state of affairs where we seem to have so much power at our fingertips, and yet seem able to do so little with it. Note the fact that ressentiment separating us from what we can do does not mean that we stop doing things. Indeed, quite the opposite. When under the sway of ressentiment we are just as prone to take action in the world. This is because in ressentiment **we have judged the world and found it wanting**. We find this world of becoming and speed to be a world of evil and suffering. This is why ressentiment also manifests as a spirit of revenge. We feel that the world has punished us and **we wish to punish it back**, and this frequently means seeking to punish those who are viewed as agents or avatars of that evil. Once again, this is different than the active behavior that might be undertaken in response to resentment. There the idea is to stop those who injure us, or overcome those things or people who block our way. It is never just the reactive desire for revenge, but always the active desire to achieve some goal, to further our plans, to assert our values. **The reactive movement of ressentiment manifests as revenge**. It is thus premised upon a moral judgment, and **is itself a moralizing move** (i.e. one acts primarily to punish an evil rather than achieve an end). Indeed, it is this ability to moralize suffering, to assign blame that is so useful to the agent of ressentiment. Nietzsche (1997) explains the difference between resentment and ressentiment quite well in the passage below: In my judgement, we find here the actual physiological causation of ressentiment, revenge and their ilk, in **a yearning**, then, **to anaesthetize pain through emotion**:—people generally look for the same thing, wrongly in my view, in the defensive return of a blow, a purely protective reaction**, a “reflex movement”** in the case of any sudden injury or peril, such as that performed even by a headless frog to ward off corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in the one case the attempt is made to prevent harm being done, in the other case, the attempt is made to anaethetize a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unbearable with a more violent emotion of any sort, and at least rid the consciousness of it for a moment—for this, one needs an emotion, the wildest possible emotion and, in order to arouse it, the first available pretext. “**Someone or other must be to blame that I feel ill**.” (p. 93) This desire to seek out somebody to blame is the pattern we see time and again in the reactionary politics of ressentiment. It is what we saw above in the case of the MV Sun Sea, and in other anti-immigration movements like it: the attempt **to identify and blame particular actors as representative of what are broader movements and social forces**, to take the individual migrant as a synecdoche of global acceleration as a whole. To return to Wendy Brown’s (2001) analysis: If, as Nietzsche recognized, impotent rage inevitably yields a moralizing (re)action, how might we succeed in rereading contemporary political life through this recognition? Might it help us understand, for example, the contemporary tendency to personify oppression in the figure individuals and to reify it in particular acts and utterances, the tendency to render individuals and acts intensely culpable—indeed prosecutable—for history and for social relations? (pp. 21–22) And what is more, **we tend to personify that oppression in the weakest**, most vulnerable constituencies, themselves caught up in the same history and social relations as their attackers. This is because, having separated active force from what it can do, the politics of ressentiment naturally takes as its enemies those who are weakest, those who are most easily targeted and punished. In relation to these nationalist and xenophobic movements, it is instructive that, for Nietzsche (1997), one of the most important contemporaneous examples of the politics of ressentiment was the anti-Semite (p. 48). But these moralizing expressions of revenge and punishment, and the feeling of power which comes along with them, does not actually lead to the empowerment of the bearer of ressentiment. This is because **the standards that it sets can never be achieved**. A mindset overcome by ressentiment says that only a world free of suffering, of uncertainty, of insecurity, is of any value. One does not want less pain, but no pain. **Not less insecurity, but no insecurity**. Thus, no matter what is done, **it will always fall short** of this goalpost. Actual **positive change** which might improve their lot, or increase their power, is eschewed because it **will never provide them with ideal world they crave**. Better to engage in moralizing punishment which does nothing to solve their pain, but, as Nietzsche says, **at least anesthetizes them** somewhat, **gives them a feeling of moral superiority** which will keep them going, at least for a while longer.13 What is more, this **craving—for certainty, for stability**, and most importantly, for **moral superiority**—makes these sufferers of ressentiment **easy prey for those who wish to exploit them and gain their support**. Nietzsche discussed this in terms of “the Priests,” but in our days, in democratic countries (and not just democratic countries), it is more useful to speak of the politician of ressentiment, **the politician who does not just respond to the anxiety and fear of ~~his or her~~ [their] public, but actively cultivates** it. As Nietzsche (1997) describes it, He brings ointments and balms with him, of course; but first he has to wound so that he can be the doctor’ and whilst he soothes the pain caused by the wound, he poisons the wound at the same time—for that is what he is best trained to do, this magician and tamer of beasts of prey, whose mere presence necessarily makes everything healthy, sick, and everything sick, tame. (p. 93) The politician of ressentiment provides ever more targets and scapegoats for moralizing punishment, knowing that it will never actually solve the problems of ~~his or her~~ [their] constituency (my god, if it did, what then?). Indeed, it is not at all coincidental that reactionary politicians of ressentiment frequently institute neoliberal policies, making the conditions of insecurity and acceleration which give rise to the ressentiment against speed even more prevalent. **The politician of ressentiment relies on, and exploits**, ~~his or her~~ [their] constituency’s **craving for certainty** and stability, by presenting himself or herself as the potential source of the authority that will usher in this other world. The politicians of ressentiment present themselves to their constituency as “their support, defence, prop, compulsion, disciplinarian, tyrant, God” (Nietzsche, 1997: 92). **People feel themselves incapable of bringing into being the world of security they desire, and therefore become willing to submit to anyone who claims that ability**. How else to explain The Globe and Mail endorsement which simultaneously decries the “antidemocratic” behavior of the Conservative party, while craving the “discipline, leadership and bullheadedness” that they bring to government? In this regard, we see the final stage of ressentiment, and the final ascendancy of “The Priests,” of the politician of ressentiment: “**I suffer: someone or other must be guilty**”—and every sick sheep thinks the same. But his shepherd the ascetic priest, says to him, “Quite right, my sheep! Somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it, you yourself alone are to blame for yourself.” (Nietzsche, 1997: 94) When we authorize increasingly centralized and authoritarian governments, when we do not jealously guard our civil liberties and democratic rights, what are we saying, other than that we accept that we are the problem with politics, that we ourselves are to blame? Give us, then, a “leader” who will provide us with the security we crave.14 Once again, ressentiment as that which separates an active force from what it can do, as that which separates people and communities from their power. And this is the irony of the ressentiment against speed. **As people feel impotent in the face of acceleration, they become more willing to give up what power they do have to increasingly authoritarian structures** or, when they do express their power, do so by attacking the weakest elements of the systems they oppose, usually in ways which actually shore up the systems they are supposed to be opposing.

### **2AC---Improvement Bad**

#### The will to self-improve is a **smokescreen** for the move to a data-driven life – that culminates in the violent transformation of subjectivity into the “thinglike”

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 33-34, October 2021, MG)

Palpable signs that we are already living in the midst of the singularity are provided by the growing cultural appeal of what has been described as the “quantified self movement.” In this scenario, bodies strap on their mobile prosthetics, digitally tattoo themselves with an array of wearable electronic sensors, calibrate their social media lives by complex, flexible forms of digital self-tracking made possible by those new clouds of digital cumulus drifting across the global sky, and turn the previously unmeasured, untracked, and perhaps even unnoticed into vibrant streams of shareable data. Essentially, the surface of the body, as well as its previously private interiority, is transformed into GPS data in the greater games of augmented reality. Except, this time, data bodies are not so much using mobile phones to scan graphics that open onto a previously invisible world of graffiti, games, and advertising, but **envelop the body** in a big GIF (graphics interchange format) of its very own – a digital penumbra of numbers about eating, sleeping, loving, and working that provides an electronic shadow for tracking bodily activities. Suddenly, we find ourselves living in an age of the body and its digital shadow; this complex cloud of hyper-personalized data points is not just accumulated by mobile bodies as they track their way through life but is always spinning away from the body in fantastic reconfigurations of comparative databases that may be perfect receptacles for social sharing but are also measuring points for **better individual living**.

Thought of in purely astronomical terms, the quantified self movement is like a protostar  – a dense concentration of “molecular clouds where stars form.”9 Here, the newly emergent data self quickly throws off qualitative cultural debris from its past, thus committing itself to the daring gamble of seeking to quantify the unquantifiable, to literally construct a DIY body, one measurement at a time, that takes close account of lessons to be learned, data to be shared, measurements to be undertaken, numbers to be calculated, **results to be reflected upon**, and **activities to be improved**, upgraded, and overcome by its digital double – life by numbers. In any event, for a society in which complex mergers between machine intelligence and human bodies are underway, one important adaptive response on the part of an always flexible human species is to **transform subjectivity** in the direction of that which is required for smooth admission to the end times of technological singularity. If the language of power is data, if the language of connection is convergence, and if the privileged value is speed, then what could be better than a coherent, comprehensive, and creative plan for reproducing a form of “self” that eerily mimics the etymological meaning of data as “**thinglike**”? Refusing the intuitive, throwing off the ineffable, and breaking forever with the imaginary, the quantified self movement **reverses the traditional order of human subjectivity** by making the thing-like character of quantifiable data both the precondition and goal of individual identity in the age of nonbiological intelligence. Unlike traditional Christian monasteries that provided physical shelter in good times and bad for the idea of the sacred and its associated religious institutions, the quantified self movement promulgates, in effect, a new order of digital monasticism that puts down roots in the psychic dimension of human subjectivity itself. With being data its primal act of faith, with the meticulous, even obsessive, calculation of life’s quanta – be it empathy, happiness, sex, or cardiovascular health – as its social practice, and with meetups of members of the quantified self movement as its mode of confessional, this new monastic order heralds the eclipse of traditional expressions of human subjectivity and the triumphant emergence of the thing-like – the “**data-driven life**” as the form of (technological) self now taking flight at the dawn of the singularity.

But wait. If you were to attend one of the global quantified self meetups – and they are everywhere now – the reality is most likely the opposite. The overall thematic might be the quantified life, but what resonates is the sense of **individuals trying to find themselves**, perhaps puzzled by the complications of daily life, and attempting as best they can, one self-confession at a time, to put the whole thing together for themselves by talking and sharing data. For example, each participant has five to ten minutes to discuss three core predetermined questions: “What did you do? How did you do it? What did you learn?”10 It is as if network communications are not so much about the cold indifference of relational data points but about its actual content – that whole stubbornly individual, always vulnerable, terribly anxiety-prone mass of highly individuated individuals. There is definitely a general yearning for **self-improvement in the air**, definitely a sense that the basic themes of Norman Vincent Peale’s The Power of Positive Thinking, with its homage to projected self-confidence and adaptive behaviour, has escaped the power of the written text and taken up an active alliance with proponents of the quantified life. Or maybe it’s something different. Perhaps talking by data is the most recent manifestation of Dale Carnegie’s How to Win Friends and Influence People, with its insightful strategies for winning other people over to your own way of doing things by first and foremost winning yourself over to yourself.

### **2AC---Scenario Analysis Bad**

#### The way we discuss the future matters – analyzing hypothetical scenarios primes us for neurological modification

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 41-43, October 2021, MG)

Sound dystopian? It promises an unfolding technological future powered up by optogenetics where, with neural implant devices yet to be created, the brain will be opened up to **radical psychic surgery** by lightactuated technologies with the aim of **disappearing lived memory**, substituting in its place artificial memories – “sensory percepts” – of a past that will probably be all the more vivid, compelling, calming, soothing, and haunting precisely because it never actually happened. However, in the usual way of things technological, if optogenetics as a dystopian gateway into neural modification of the brain can sound so ready-made menacing, that is probably because it is a latecomer to the **real-live games of politics** in the age of neural modification by those other circulating light-actuated screens of mass media. Here, producing false memory syndrome, memories of events that are **all the more real** because they **never actually occurred**, is the normal business of contemporary media imaginaries. The skilful combination of spectacular televised spectacles, mass suggestion, and mesmerizing rhetoric provide an instant gateway into the politically effective **neurological modification** of cerebral cortices living under the personal and collective stress of impotent anger, unabated rage, and hysterical anxiety. For example, consider the implantation of synthetic percepts in the form of false memory syndrome so spectacularly performed on that always fabled day of moral reckoning in American political consciousness, 4 July 2020, where, with memories of other Independence Days from Sherman’s military conquest of Atlanta to the Declaration of Independence itself, President Trump took to the symbolically hallowed, and deeply colonized, ground of Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of North Dakota to rework American political memory with silence on the pandemic, mockery of Black Lives Matter, and the declaration of a new civil war based on warring racial relationships and featuring a beleaguered and threatened population of vulnerable white Americans assaulted by menacing hordes  – Black Lives Matter and their allies in the streets as part of a resurgent “leftwing fascism” – coming to steal American history, to obliterate cultural memory itself. Everything was there: televised spectacle with the carved presidential faces on Mount Rushmore in the background, a mass crowd as a real-life stand-in for the hoped-for mass audience of American television viewers, and mesmerizing rhetoric of the war spirit based on equal mixtures of panic fear and proud belligerence that was immediately circulated everywhere through the media stream. This contemporary inversion of the Sermon on the Mount, with its emphasis this time on the war spirit not the love spirit, did not have to wait for future breakthroughs in the neuroscience but deployed light-based technologies ready at hand, the screen culture of television and social media, as its very own neural implants for communicating **new memories**  – true for some, false for others – from the digital world to the only psychic structure that really counts politically, the liquid, fluid brain matter of American mass society, in order to accomplish the neurological modification of the collective American cerebral cortex. That the neural implant was successful could be immediately verified by those **experimental demonstrations** in the streets: white jaguars being driven into crowds of protesters and shootings of anti-racism protesters by palpably anxious white men and women armed with guns locked and loaded.

In contemporary quantum culture, there are no necessary causal links, only deeply entangled relationships among fast-moving particles moving in the same web of space and time: positional, relative, and connected. This vector of twisted memories, as its moves at high velocity through the mediascape, sometimes takes the form of a futurist announcement from DARPA concerning engineering neural implants for fast communication between digital reality and the brain; at other times, it’s streamed in all its hauntingly prophetic vividness by the cinematic imaginary and, then again, makes its presence felt affectively as the basic code of contemporary political neurology. Here, neuroscience, futurist cinema, and political campaigning are themselves different twists taken in this entangled story of twisted memory: recombinant in its movements, bendable in time and space, and always travelling at high velocity. Of course, as with all important technological changes, neuroscientific research in optogenetics remains at the periphery of human attention until, once fully realized, the consequential results are moved instantly from the edges of human awareness to its very centre. Perhaps more than is realized, optogenetics promises to be the capstone of technology’s relentless movement from the exterior of the body to its deepest interiority, involving as it does the stated engineering aim of providing a gateway into the cerebral cortex, not only **changing behaviour** but providing for the potential implanting of **new visual memories**. Following the ideological formula that eases public accommodation to radical technological change, optogenetics was introduced in the language of facilitation, namely the promise of facilitating medical breakthrough. Once successfully adopted, the real implications of optogenetics as command language of the approaching age of neural modification will be imposed: neural implants for remembering a past that never existed, algorithms for mood modification, three-dimensional light-based treatments for screening away the differences. The once and future migration of neuroscience from the language of **facilitation** to **command** will itself be facilitated by the fact that we are now preparing to **enter a future we have already long visually inhabited** through the cinematic imaginary and which, moreover, we have already experienced at a deep affective level through the fabulations of twisted memory as the emotional alphabet of contemporary politics.

### 2AC---Framework Bad

#### Framework is equivalent to Robot Prison Guards – monitoring debaters for outward psychic rebellions that break the norm and responding with rage, psychic violence, and exclusion

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Quickly migrating beyond the use of robots to physically guard prisoners, this prototype project represents that moment when robots first began to evolve beyond their purely mechanical function as prison guards to the more complex task of carrying out **psychiatric assessments** of the behavioural patterns of prison inmates. While it could be expected that robots would first enter prisons in the traditional roles of surveillance and control, the three robots involved in the demonstration project have a very different task: namely, to mingle among a captive population as only a five-foot robot can do and, while “looking more friendly to the inmates,” conduct an active search for signs of suicidal and violent behaviour. It’s not so much, then, a demonstration concerning the feasibility of using robots in prison environments but actually an experiment with very general applications for perfecting an operating system allowing robots to conduct complex psychiatric examinations of prisoners. At this point, we move beyond cinematic images of prisons of the future with robotic guards in towers carefully monitoring prison populations to that moment when technology actively **penetrates the human psyche** in search of “**risky behaviour**.” Here, robots are no longer mechanical devices, but artificial psychiatrists equipped with 3D vision, motion detection, and programmed operating systems, all aimed at discerning visible signs of melancholy, rage, despair, desperation, fatigue, and hopelessness. While it is not evident from media reports how robots are to fulfil complex psychiatric examinations – other than the mention of the demonstration robots monitoring abrupt changes in the behaviour of individual prisoners – the intention is clear: for prison guard robots to cross the boundary between **surveillance from the outside of captive bodies to internal explorations of psychic behaviour**. Guided by a prescriptive doctrine concerning the parameters of “risky behaviour,” what is really being tested here is robots as avatars of the new normal, conducting frequent visual examinations of a chosen, and necessarily captive, population in order to determine which bodies **fall inside and outside of the normative intelligibility** determined by the artificially defined ethics of “**risky behaviour**.” In this case, it is the responsibility of those bodies placed under surveillance to provide no outward signs of either visible dissent (violence) or refusal of the state’s power over life (suicide).

While at first glance it might seem that guard robots are not programmed with levels of artificial intelligence and, perhaps, artificial affectivity necessary to detect otherwise invisible signs of powerful emotions internal to the psychic life of prisoners, what may be brought into political presence here is an entirely new conception concerning how power will operate in the robotic future: not so much the great referentials of power over death, or even power over life, but power over visible expressions of human affectivity – a form of robotic control that **assumes the psyche** is not a form of internal being but a kind of external doing; that is, the psyche is not something we have but something we do. In this scenario, what is important about the human psyche for purposes of the society of control is less the complexities of hidden intentions – the cultural acedia associated with feelings of melancholy, **resentments that activate rage**, total powerlessness that motivates despair – than those visible, outward manifestations of the rebellious psyche, that moment when the bodily psyche moves from the long, silent gestation of hidden intentionality to overt declarations of its intention to act, whether through violence or suicide. At that point, at least according to this prototype demonstration, robot guards will be waiting along the watchtower of the society of control, quickly targeting **immanent signs of psychic rebellions** against the order of normative intelligibility, relaying warnings to central command, all the while standing by for further instructions.

### FW – A2: Some things are calculable

#### Our argument isn’t that *nothing* is contingently knowable – it’s that we will *never* know *everything* about the world works

**Glezos 20** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 10-5-2020, Routledge, "Speed and Micropolitics Bodies, Minds, and Perceptions in an Accelerating World, pp 80", )//guyB

Turning to Spinoza as a way of helping to understand and combat the rise of ressentiment against speed might appear to be a curious decision as, at first blush, it **seems as if Spinoza’s metaphysics are themselves an instance of ressentiment against speed**. This is because explicit in Spinoza’s monistic ontology is a complete rejection of contingency. Spinoza views all things as unfolding according to a strict conception of necessity. As he says, ‘[n]othing in nature is contingent, but all things are from the necessity of the divine nature determined to exist and to act in a definite way’ (I P29). Everything that happens is fully determined according to the requirements of being. **Our perception of contingency is merely the result of our inability to grasp the complete web of causality that determines any action**, outcome, or decision. Indeed, in Spinoza’s metaphysics, **even God is not capable of contingency** saying, ‘God does not act from freedom of will’ (I P32C1) but rather from the necessity of his nature. Despite this rejection of ontological contingency, Spinoza’s work is actually surprisingly useful in helping us understand how people react to contingency in an accelerating world. This is because of the way in which his epistemology works alongside his ontology. For Spinoza, **humans are always constrained by our finiteness**, and hence our understanding will always be premised upon inadequate knowledge. As such, **the perception of contingency in life is ineradicable**. It is true that, through rational thought we are able, in a certain way, to **perceive things sub specie aeternitatis**. But this **only relates to understanding the formal logical rules which govern existence**. It **does not lead us to be able to actively grasp** (or predict) all of the web of **causal factors** which lead any individual ‘thing’ to occur (II P16–17). (And all of this before Spinoza’s doctrine of parallelism, with its determinations and limitations of thought, is brought into the mix.) From this perspective, **our perception of infinite being will always be incomplete**, and we **will always see the world as full of contingency**. It does not matter if metaphysically there is no freedom or indeterminacy in deus cive natura. Our lives as modal beings will **always be replete with uncertainty**, no matter how much we might learn about the universe.

### FW – A2: Ressentiment Good – 2NC

#### Ressentiment isn’t resentment- their impact turns aren’t responsive

**Glezos 14** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 5-22-2014, Sagepub Journals, "Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics", <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1755088214533042)//guyB>

* Just defines ressentiment and resentment, says they’re different things

**Ressentiment should not be confused with resentment.** Resentment, a sense of anger over pain or injury we may have suffered (of whatever sort), is a **natural response**, as is **the attempt to challenge or** overturn the sources of these **pains or injuries**.12 **Nietzsche** (1976) **does not council a kind of ascetic rejection of judgment**, simply accepting everything as it comes—in which case, we would become, in his words, the ass which can only bray “Yeah-yuh” (p. 424)—nor is he arguing for a Christian “turning of the other cheek.” **Being angry**, resentful, unhappy, and so on are all perfectly **acceptable** to Nietzsche so long as—and this is crucial—**they serve as a spur to action**. So long as your resentment or anger becomes a vector for productive intervention in the world, then they have the potential to be good or noble. The trouble with ressentiment is that, counter to resentment, it does not act as a spur to productive action (although it does still frequently spur reactive behavior, a distinction I will shortly explain). Quite the contrary, **ressentiment is resentment crystallized and spiritualized**, and thus focuses not on any particular agent or actor, but rather simply on the **world as a whole**. Ressentiment expresses itself as **a generalized resentment against a world** that **allows pain** and suffering to occur. It frequently manifests as a rejection of the world, and the imagining of a world of perfection in opposition to this “imperfect” world. Nietzsche (1968a) makes clear how this drive to idealization is linked to ressentiment and the spirit of revenge. “To talk about ‘another’ world than this is quite pointless … we revenge ourselves on life by means of the phantasmagoria of ‘**another**,’ a ‘**better’ life**” (p. 49). This link between idealization and revenge is displayed quite strongly, Nietzsche (1968b) says, in many of the major works of metaphysics in the Western canon: Psychology of Metaphysics—This world is apparent: consequently there is a true world;—this world is conditional; consequently there is an unconditioned world;—this world is full of contradiction: consequently there is a world free of contradiction;—this world is a world of becoming: consequently there is a world of being:—all false conclusions … **It is suffering that inspires these conclusions**: fundamentally they are **desires that such a world should exist;** in the same way, to **imagine another**, more valuable **world** is an expression of **hatred for a world that makes one suffer**: the ressentiment of metaphysicians against actuality is here creative. (pp. 310–311) “It is suffering that inspires these conclusions” and ressentiment is “expression of hatred for a world that makes one suffer.” This is the danger of ressentiment and how it differs from resentment. **Resentment is a part of living in the world** for Nietzsche, a world which produces suffering and which therefore must be responded to. But **ressentiment takes one out of the world**. It orients one’s actions to other worlds, worlds which do not exist.

### FW – A2: You Link Too – 2NC

#### We don’t link- our critique isn’t of all idealism but of their specific invocation of stability and normative dialogue in the face of a rapidly accelerating world

**Glezos 14** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 5-22-2014, Sagepub Journals, "Brown’s Paradox: Speed, ressentiment and global politics", <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1755088214533042)//guyB>

This quote brings out another important element of Nietzsche’s thinking. Looking at Nietzsche’s critique of idealism**, we might begin to take him for a kind of vulgar realist**, criticizing flights of philosophical fancy. This is to **misunderstand** the complexity of **Nietzsche’s conception of the world of becoming**. Nietzsche **never takes what the “world” is for granted** and, with his focus on creativity, even were “one” to know what the “world” is, the world—and “one”—would almost certainly change immediately. But **that is exactly the point**. Nietzsche affirms that **the world is a world of change**, of becoming, of uncertainty, of contingency (and therefore necessarily of suffering and disappointment). **This is the world that we live in, and the world in which we must act.**

### FW – A2: Debate isn’t political

#### Their description of debate as devoid of politics reveals their Socratic cowardice towards political speed

**Glezos 20** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 10-5-2020, Routledge, "Speed and Micropolitics Bodies, Minds, and Perceptions in an Accelerating World, pp 1-3", )//guyB

* This card is eh idk at first I was gonna cut it to be an aff “debate isn’t political” card but then I realized the bottom half of the card critiqued that idea so ig it goes neg
* Isolates urgency as a generative point of Socrates hatred, very linked to acceleration

It is a brief reference, almost an aside, in a dialogue mostly devoted to questions of morality. In Gorgias, Socrates engages in a dialogue with three rhetoricians, criticizing the art of rhetoric, and debating the nature of morality. However, in the middle of this discussion, Socrates makes the statement earlier as a way of **distinguishing rhetoric** (and sophistry) **from philosophy**, arguing that the latter is about expertise and truth, while the former is **about flattery**. Though only briefly mentioned, this passage is crucial for Socrates’ argument, since it explains why rhetoric can’t ultimately be about truth. This is because the conditions of these kinds of discussions (public debate in the agora) are such as to make real understanding impossible. Bruno Latour, in his discussion of the Gorgias, notes that these conditions are threefold**: number, priority, and urgency**. Such discussions happen in the context of **large groups of people, about important issues, and, crucially, frequently must happen quickly** (either because they are responding to fast-moving events, or because the people involved do not have the time to devote to the kind of in-depth discussion and study that would be necessary to produce genuine expertise). According to Socrates, these conditions make ‘real’ understanding impossible. However, as Latour points out, such an approach means that Socrates has, out of hand, **dismissed the very possibility of democratic politics**. As Latour says Yes, there are too many of them, the questions are too important [megala pragmata], there is too little time [oligô chrono]. **Are these not, however, the normal conditions of the Body Politic**? Is it not to deal with these peculiar situations of number, urgency, and priority that the subtle skills of politics were invented? ( Latour 1999: 221) **Socrates’ vision of truth as purely the domain of the expert** – the philosopher – working slowly and assiduously outside of the agora, ultimately means a rejection of the practice of democratic politics. Of course, Socrates (or rather Plato’s) anti-democratic politics have been extensively discussed. Most of this commentary focuses on Plato’s elitism, his **rejection of the demos for its failure to possess the understanding of the true and the good necessary to be able to govern themselves**. However, the reason I bring this dialogue up is to note the less frequently remarked upon condition that makes Socrates opposed to democratic politics: **the condition of urgency**. Rhetoric fails not just because it tries to get ‘so many people’ to understand, but because **it attempts to do so in ‘such a short time’.** The danger of politics is exactly that it must, at least sometimes, be done quickly. And this problem of urgency is, arguably, a greater problem for Socrates than number or priority. While the conditions of number and priority can be resolved through the abolition of democracy and the imposition of a philosopher king, this does not necessarily solve the problem of urgency. While certainly there are many thinkers that argue that a **centralization of political authority** is the correct response to the problem of urgency,2 this **does not free us from the problem of urgency**, but, at best, provides **a new set of tools for responding to it**. What this means is that it is potentially the condition of urgency that shifts Socrates’ position from antidemocratic politics, to simply anti-politics. **Socrates hatred of politics qua politics is, I would argue, at root a hatred of speed**. To commit to the practice of politics is ultimately to accept that **there will be times in which one cannot avail oneself of leisurely reflection and analysis before making decisions and taking action**. As a result, by the end of the Gorgias Socrates has thoroughly rejected the politics and debates of the agora, and shifted his argument to the court of the afterlife, describing how the moral man will be judged righteous in the world to come. But as Latour puts it ‘Politics is not about “freshly dead” people, but about the living; not about ghoulish stories of the afterworld, but about gory stories of this world’ (1999: 246). Socrates escapes the world of becoming to the world of being exactly because he cannot ultimately cope with the conditions of politics he experiences within it. And it is, ultimately, the speed of the world of becoming that Socrates seeks to transcend; its uncertainty, its changeability and accelerations.3 R. B. J. Walker describes Plato as a man who ‘seek[s] to flee Introduction 3 from politics into the world of forms’ and refuses to ‘take seriously the world of fleeting impressions, of flux, becoming, and illusions’ (1993: 109). Crucially, as Latour points out, **the problem is not just that Socrates seeks to ‘flee from politics’, but that in fleeing he seeks to also destroy the practices that make politics possible**. To see a political project through, with the crowd, for the crowd, in spite of the crowd, is so stunningly difficult that Socrates flees from it. But **instead of conceding defeat and acknowledging the specificity of politics, he destroys the means of practicing it**, in a sort of scorched earth-policy the blackened wreckage of which is still visible today. ( 1999: 239) Having identified the problems of number, priority, and urgency which constrain the process of democratic decision making, Socrates attacks the practices of rhetoric (as well as several other allied arts) by which the Athenian community had learned to grapple with these constraints because they do not meet the standards of his rigorous, slow-moving, didactic philosophical knowledge. Says Latour of this kind of necessarily speedy democratic, political deliberation: Of course ‘it does not involve expertise,’ of course ‘it lacks rational understanding’; the whole dealing with the whole under the incredibly tough constraints of the agora must decide in the dark and will be led by people as blind as themselves, without the benefit of proof, of hindsight, of foresight, of repetitive experiment, of progressive scaling up. In politics there is never a second chance – only one, this occasion, this Kairos. There is never any knowledge of cause and consequence. Socrates has a good laugh at the ignorant politicians, but there is no other way to do politics, and the invention of an afterworld to solve the whole question is exactly what the Sophists laugh at, and rightly so! Politics imposes this simple and harsh condition of felicity: hic est Rhodus, hic est saltus. ( 1999: 242) In short, what we get is a surprisingly common worldview. Truth and understanding can only be developed slowly. **Politics necessarily happens quickly.** Therefore, Politics cannot be about truth and understanding. In turn, the **tactics and practices which are developed to make a speedy politics possible must be devalued and degraded. Socrates’ fear and anxiety of speed translates into his hatred of politics** (especially democratic politics) and vice versa.

#### The skills they get from engaging our aesthetic performance are key to politics in an accelerating world

**Glezos 20** (Simon Glezos, Ph. D. in political theory and international relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, 10-5-2020, Routledge, "Speed and Micropolitics Bodies, Minds, and Perceptions in an Accelerating World, pp 9-10", )//guyB

This rejection of rhetoric (and cookery) because they are based on habit and pleasure, and not on ‘true understanding’, ultimately **means doing away with the tools that a community might use to deal with fast-moving sphere of politics**. What is important here is the way in which the rejection of forms of practice which lack ‘real understanding’ is also frequently a rejection of modes of thought and practice which are rooted in the body. In rejecting flattery – whether cookery or rhetoric – Socrates explicitly rejects forms of practice **and understanding rooted in the affects** (pleasure), and in habit (embodied forms of knowledge). Indeed, Plato’s account of knowledge and morality ultimately ends up not just with a flight from the world of becoming, but very explicitly with **a flight from the body**, as he explains his vision of judgement in the afterlife wherein ‘the soul has been stripped of the body’ (131, 524d). Here we see the way in which Socrates’ **rejection of politics is tied to his rejection of speed**, and both are tied to his rejection of the body. Socrates is, in the language of Nietzsche (to which we will return in the fourth chapter), a ‘despiser of the body’ (1976: 146). His rejection of the body also means the rejection of a variety of mechanisms that the Athenian body politic uses to interrogate political and ethical questions, articulate beliefs, and manage conflicts. As Latour says of the political tools which Socrates jettisons: About what do[es Socrates] talk so irreverently? Cookery first, and then the skills of the greatest **playwrights**, the greatest **sculptors**, the greatest **musicians**, the greatest **architects**, the greatest **orators**, the greatest **statesmen**, the greatest **tragedians**. All of **these people are dumped** because they don’t know what they know in the didactic fashion that Professor Socrates wants to impose on the people of Athens. ( Latour 1999: 244) What Latour is here describing is a society that manages the conditions of politics – number, priority, urgency – by relying on a variety of arts, occurring at a variety of tempos. Whether it be **tragedies** in which **political and moral issues are dramatized** (Butler 2000) (Honig 2013), **sung poems** which communicated moral and political norms (Havelock 1963), **public oration**s in which political questions are debated ( Aristotle 1991), public works of art and architecture which create a public space to manage and organize these political debates ( Arendt 1998) (Cuboniks 2018: 77), or even arts of cookery which underpin communal experiences of eating (Panagia 2009: Ch. 5). Crucially even as many of these sites rely on conscious thought and reflection, **they also fold in affects, habits, memories, and corporeal qualities** which prepare and shape political sensibilities for the complex and speedy encounters of the agora. As we will discuss in Chapters 2 and 3 , **it is exactly the affect imbued character of thought that allows it to respond effectively to a quickly unfolding pace of events**. And in both our discussions of Spinoza and Bergson, we will see accounts which, contra Socrates, seek to valorize the role of habit as a way of building both individuals and societies which can respond effectively to a ‘speedy’ pace of life and politics. **Socrates’ rejection of the tools of politics is thus ultimately tied to his rejection of the body**, and both are crucially **tied to his fear of speed**. One of the central goals of this book will be to tease out the relations between speed, politics, and the body, noting that theoretical work on the body is frequently helpful, and indeed necessary, in navigating the seeming impasses that the problem of speed introduces into the practice of politics. This focus on questions of bodily practice links us to the last theme that this book will explore.

### AT: Predictability

#### Procedural constraints preclude authentic learning

Waghid 14[Pedagogy Out of Bounds: Untamed Variations of a Democratic Future, Yusef Waghid, Stellenbosch University, Matieland, South Africa, 2014, ebook, EDUCATIONAL FUTURES, RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE, Volume 63, p. 59-63]

For Greene, authentic learning has the task of arousing students’ imagination, which ‘allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions’ (1995, p. 3). When students are provoked to use their imagination they are ‘stirred to reach out on their own initiatives’ (Greene, 1995, p. 5). The point about authentic learning is that it is considered as releasing the imagination of students with the intention to cultivate ‘a community always in the making – the community that may someday be called a democracy’ (Greene, 1995, p. 6). In other words, the emphasis Greene places on positive freedom as a condition for authentic learning is quite obvious in the sense that students are encouraged to break the chain of causes and effects, of probabilities in which they usually find themselves entangled, and to come to be themselves. In other words, authentic learning involves students taking initiative and looking at things as if they could be otherwise, as has been mentioned previously in this book (Greene, 1995, p. 16). So, tapping into imagination as a way of enacting their positive freedom, students ‘become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real. It is to see beyond ... and to carve out new orders in experience ... to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet (Greene, 1995, p. 19). Consequently, authentic learning always reaches beyond itself towards a completeness that can never be attained. As aptly stated by Greene (1995, p. 28), releasing students’ imagination ‘is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected’. This makes authentic learning a perpetual ‘narrative in the making’ (Greene, 1995, p. 5) – a democratically educative experience ‘that is always in the making’ (Greene, 1995, p. 39). It is for the latter reason that authentic (positive) learning is concomitantly linked to a democratic education in becoming, where ‘[n]o one can predict precisely the common world of possibility we will grow to [co]inhabit, nor can we absolutely justify one kind of community over another’ (Greene, 1995, p. 167) – that is, pedagogical encounters remain out of bounds. A democratic community of possibility in which individuals co-exist, says Greene, is one that embraces pluralism and does ‘not fly apart in violence and disorder’ (1995, p. 167). Such a community of possibility engages individuals to ‘speak with others as eloquently and passionately as ... [they] can about justice and caring and love and trust’ (Greene, 1995, p. 167). In a way, Greene’s call for a democratic community of possibility – a democratic community in becoming – intimates that teachers and students become more responsive to societal injustices, such as people being subjected to insecurity as a result of crime and violence; those suffering under corrupt governments and dictatorships; and others stunned by lives in refugee camps. Therefore, teachers ‘need to be attentive and vigilant if ... [they] are to open texts and spaces, [and] if ... [they] are to provoke the young [students] to be free’ (Greene, 1995, p. 121). Greene places vigilance at the centre of the concept of authentic learning and suggests some interesting distinctions that further expand the concept. Authentic learning therefore gains a new meaning that perhaps is beyond current human understandings if thought of in relation to vigilance. In the first instance, to be vigilant is ‘to awaken’ in students an awareness of the ‘ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected’ (Greene, 1995, p. 28). To be vigilant is to be cautious and suspicious, yet attentive and open to something different and new. This view of vigilance is corroborated by Applebaum (2013, p. 19), who states that vigilance ‘involves listening not simply to confirm what is already known but listening to hear something new ...’. More importantly, vigilance implies being able to listen to the voices of the marginalised when they suffer injustices – that is, vigilance insists that teachers and students show their ‘outrage at injustices’ (Greene, 1995, p. 42). In this way, vigilance does not only involve listening to what is beyond recognition, but also that teachers and students remain in discomfort about the injustices and ‘identify moments where the new can emerge’ (Applebaum, 2013, p. 34) – that is, where new authentic learning can occur. Such a notion of vigilance intimates the possibility that students take an ethical and political stand. And when students act ethically and politically they listen with an openness so that there is always more to learn – they are stirred ‘to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility’ (Greene, 1995, p. 43). When vigilance interrupts the minds of students they become ‘conscious’ – that is, pursue a kind of thinking that always involves a risk, a venture into the unknown, and thus become open to new ways of looking at things, what Greene refers to as ‘the making of a democratic community’ (Greene, 1998, p. 126). A potent example of authentic learning in which vigilance is at play, and of the notion of a democratic community in becoming, is poignantly illustrated in the film In the land of blood and honey , directed by Angelina Jolie in 2011. Against the backdrop of the Bosnian war in the 1990s, when Serbs committed atrocious genocidal acts against Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims and Croats), Danijel, a soldier fighting for the Serbs, falls in love with Ajla, a Muslim. The romantic relationship soon garnered the dissatisfaction of Danijel’s ruthless father – a Yugoslav People’s Army general, and Danijel and Ajla were confronted with the unfamiliar, the unexplored, and the unexpected. Ajla, once used as a human shield by Serbs against resistant fighters, also witnessed the genocidal killings and sniper assassinations, and the torturous rapes of women (including herself) in prison camps. Danijel, although in many ways sympathetic towards Bosniak killings as a consequence of his love for a Muslim, could not look beyond his parochialism towards pluralism and accept that every person had a legitimate right to life, irrespective of one’s hatred for them. Only when he himself eventually killed Ajla did he realise the senselessness of the Bosnian war and surrender to the United Nations forces as a criminal of war. Now for Danijel to have acted vigilantly and with the human freedom to enact justice towards those whom he disliked would have harnessed his learning in an authentic way. It is not that he did not learn from his dogmatic blindness and prejudice towards unjust Serbian atrocities. Of course he did, otherwise he would not have acted unjustly. However, such learning is frivolous or useless, as he acted freely under coercion from his father’s external influence and the suspicion he harboured towards the Bosniaks, who made an attempt on his life by bombing a church that he attended. What Danijel failed to do, unlike Ajla, was to have ventured into the unfamiliar, the improbable, where there always was the possibility to think differently about his situation. Ajla knew that her love affair with Danijel upset the Bosniaks, yet she did not let the hatred of the Bosniaks blind her to recognise even her torturers’ (Serbs) right to existence. Unlike Danijel, Ajla was prepared to embark on a new beginning (with Danijel), in which they could have opened themselves up to the possibility of human co-existence by writing the texts of their democratic community in becoming. If a democratic community in becoming provides the space in which human action is disclosed in potentially unexpected and unpredictable ways, it makes sense to bring into the discussion Danjel’s predicament after he killed Ajla. If Danijel wanted to reverse his act of having killed Ajla – the one he loved – he would have had to consider two things: to seek the forgiveness of Ajla’s community, and to promise not to repeat his acts of violence towards other Bosniaks. Therefore he gave himself up as a war criminal. In other words, forgiving and promising are never enacted in solitude or isolation, but rather, as stated by Hannah Arendt (1998, p. 237), in the ‘public realm through the presence of others ... for no one can forgive himself and no one can feel bound by a promise made only to himself ...’. By implication, for human freedom to ensure rebeginnings it has to embark on action informed by forgiveness and making promises. Forgiveness implies the unexpected public acknowledgement of one’s act of evil (even if possible, just retribution might ensue), considering that one would be unable to undo the past, whereas promising implies committing oneself in the presence of others to put an end to something, such as heinous crimes that would go on endlessly if there were no interference. In the words of Arendt, ‘only through this constant mutual release [of forgiving and promising] from what they do can [wo]men remain free agents, only by constant willingness to change their minds and start again can they be trusted with so great a power as that, to begin something new’ (Arendt, 1998, p. 240). The issue of forgiveness and making promises not to repeat unjust and undesirable human action has implications for authentic learning. Firstly, teachers and students always act in community. They are dependent on one another ‘without intimacy and without closeness’ in that they treat one another with respect, irrespective of the distance that the space of the world puts between them (Arendt, 1998, p. 243). If students were to be guilty of committing an unexpected and undesirable act – such as bullying another student, abusing drugs, or threatening a teacher – there is always the possibility that their transgressions will be subjected to the correctives of forgiveness and making promises. Condemnation and exclusion perhaps would not be possible, as forgiveness and making promises will engender possibilities to begin anew. A common example in South African schools is the rising incidence of pregnancies in teenage girls. The girls, upon informing the school of their pregnancy, often find themselves in a situation where their continuing attendance of school becomes extremely problematised by unsupportive school structures, perhaps even judgemental teachers, and they would encounter great difficulty in re-accessing the school after they have given birth. In many respects, their appeals for compassion and forgiveness either to their schools or their respective communities are met by exclusion, rather than forgiveness and acceptance. Secondly, making and keeping promises has the potential to undermine the spurious condition of sovereignty (Arendt, 1998, p. 245). In fact, making promises in the presence of others binds a person in a non-sovereign way to others and, for once, teachers’ views might not be considered as the sovereign and predicable calculations in pedagogical encounters. Making promises has some connection with the inability of individuals just to rely on themselves ‘as isolated islands of certainty’ (Arendt, 1998, p. 244). Rather, by making and keeping promises, teachers and students are connected in a non-sovereign way, so that the mastery and predictability of human action becomes self-defeating. There will always be more to learn and it would be impossible for teachers and students to remain ‘unique [sovereign] masters of what they do’ (Arendt, 1998, p. 244). Thirdly, human action that takes the risk to forgive and be forgiven should make any pedagogical encounter concerned with the possibility ‘to start anew ... in an ever-recurring cycle of becoming’ (Arendt, 1998, p. 246). This means that an authentic pedagogical encounter is always an interruption and a beginning of something new, especially in the light of human unpredictability and unreliability in a world marred by conflict, transgressions and suffering. The point about authentic learning in a positively free manner, unconstrained by the sovereignty of the other, is the fact that learning has no end and that what is to be learned will always be strange to the one who learns otherwise, learning will have reached its becoming. Authentic learning in becoming is always open to the new, the unexpected, the strange – a matter of retaining the un-bounded and strangeness of both teaching and learning. Authentic learning, therefore, includes being confronted with incidents of bullying, discrimination, teenage pregnancies, teenage suicide and homophobia – since these are all constitutive of our societal condition and cannot be wished away. Authentic learning requires of teachers to be willing to deal with the aforementioned in an open and unbiased fashion so that what emerges are forms of engagement that move towards recognition of otherness and PEDAGOGY AND DIALECTIC OF FREEDOM 63 forgiveness of transgressions. It is to a discussion of teaching as strangeness that I now turn. TEACHING AND STRANGENESS Authentic learning, as has been argued for thus far, has the best chance of being realised if teachers in pedagogical encounters are attentive and vigilant, provoking students to ethically and politically open up the texts of their lived experiences. Such pedagogical encounters would invariably remain open to the unfamiliar, the unpredictable, the unexpected – that is, the possibility of rebeginnings would be enhanced through such democratic spaces in which nothing remains certain and where there always is the possibility to begin anew. In this way, learning would be authentic and informed by positive human freedom. Such an account of authentic learning invariably depends on a particular way of teaching, which Greene suggests should be associated with strangeness (1995, p. 92). The teacher as stranger enacts her rupture as a way of finding herself in relation to others (her students) as she cultivates a pedagogical encounter. A teacher does not arrogate students, but comes to experience students through the eyes of a stranger in order ‘to see’ the unfamiliar, the unheard of (Greene, 1995, p. 92). In a way, teachers as strangers suspend both what they desire to see and try to control students’ desire. As aptly stated by Jo Anne Pagano (1998, p. 260): Most students come to the texts we teach as strangers. Greene teaches us that we must also come to those same texts as strangers, even though the syllabus is ours and filled with our questions, loaded with our desires. To teach our students to read so as to teach [positive] freedom and to choose freedom of humane action, we need to open landscapes to admit their questions, to change the landscape by honoring the identities they bring to the series of indentifications they will make.

#### Attempting to make the world predictable depresses vital energies

**Grimm 77** ([Ruediger Hermann, art historian and Goethe scholar, *Nietzsche's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. M. Montinari, W. Miiller-Lauter & H. Wenzel, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pg. 30-33, Gender modified]

Western logic and metaphysics have been traditionally founded upon a handful of principles which were regarded as being self-evidently true, and therefore neither requiring nor admitting of any further proof40• One of these principles we have already dealt with at some length, the notion that truth must be unchanging. Rather than further belabor the whole question of truth, we shall now turn to Nietzsche's analysis of why it is that truth should be regarded as necessarily unchanging in the first place. Nietzsche's view of reality (the will to power) is such that all that exists is an ever-changing chaos of power-quanta, continually struggling with one another for hegemony. Nothing remains the same from one instant to the next. Consequently there are no stable objects, no "identical cases," no facts, and no order. Whatever order we see in the world, we ourselves have projected into it. By itself, the world has no order : there is no intrinsically stable "world order," no "nature." Yet metaphysics, logic, and language indeed, our whole conceptual scheme is grounded in the assumption that there is such a stable order. Why? . • . die Annahme des seienden ist nothig, um denken und schliessen zu konnen : die Logik handhabt our Formeln fiir Gleichbleibendes deshalb ware diese Annahme noch ohne Beweiskraft fiir die Reali tat : ,,das Seiende" gehort zu unserer Optik48• This can perhaps be best clarified by anticipating our discussion of Nietzsche's perspectivism. Even if reality is a chaos of power-quanta, about which any statement is already an interpretation and "falsification," we nevertheless must assume some sort of order and continuity in order to function at all. But the assumption of order and continuity even if it is a necessary assumption is certainly not any sort of proof. We ourselves, as will to power, gain control over our environment by "interpreting" it, by simplifying and adapting it to our requirements. Life itself is an ongoing process of interpretation, a process of imposing a superficial order upon a chaotic reality. In Wahrheit ist Interpretation ein Mittel selbst, um Herr iiber etwas zu werden. (Der organische Prozess setzt fortwahrendes /nterpretieren voraus42• Thus we create for ourselves a world in which we can live and function and further enhance and increase our will to power. Even our perceptual apparatus is not geared to gleaning "truth" from the objects of our experience. Rather, it arranges, structures, and interprets these objects so that we can gain control over them and utilize them for our own ends. The "truth" about things is something we ourselves have projected onto them purely for the purpose of furthering our own power. Thus Nietzsche can say Wahrheit ist die Art von Irrthum, ohne welche eine bestimmte Art von lebendigen Wesen nicht leben konnte. Der Werth fiir das Leben entscheidet zuletzt43. Thus the "truth" about reality is simply a variety of error, a convenient fiction which is nevertheless necessary for our maintenance. In the last analysis it is not a question of "truth" at all, but rather, a matter of which "fiction," which interpretation of reality best enables me to survive and increase my power. In an absolute sense, the traditional standard of unchanging truth is no more true or false than Nietzsche's own. But on the basis of Nietzsche's criterion for truth we can make a vital distinction. All statements about the truth or falsity of our experiential world are functions of the will to power, and in this sense, all equally true (or false). The difference lies in the degree to which any particular interpretation increases or decreases our power. The notion that truth is unchanging is the interpretation of a comparatively weak will to power, which demands that the world be simple, reliable, predictable, i. e. "true." Constant change, ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, etc. are much more difficult to cope with, and require a comparatively high degree of will to power to be organized (i. e. interpreted) into a manageable environment. The ambiguous and contradictory the unknown is frightening and threatening. Therefore we have constructed for ourselves a model of reality which is eminently "knowable," and consequently subject to our control. Pain and suffering have traditionally been held to stem from "ignorance" about the way the world "really" is : the more predictable and reliable the world is, the less our chances are of suffering through error, of being unpleasantly surprised. However, " darin driickt sich eine gedriickte Seele aus, voller MIBtrauen und schlimmer Erfahrung . . . 44." The demand that reality and truth be stable, reliable, predictable, and conveniently at our disposal is a symptom of weakness. The glossing over of the chaotic, contradictory, changing aspect of reality is the sign of a will to power which must reduce the conflict and competition in the world to a minimum. Yet resistance and competition are the very factors which enable any particular power-constellation to express itself and grow in power. As we saw earlier, the will to power can only express itself by meeting resistance, and any interpretation of reality which attempts to minimize these factors is profoundly anti-life (since life is will to power). Furthermore, a person embodying a strong and vigorous will to power will "interpret" the "threatening" aspect of the world the chaos, ambiguity, contradiction, danger, etc. as stimuli, which continually offer [them] a high degree of resistance which [they] must meet and overcome if [they are] to survive and grow. Rather than negate change and make the world predictable, a "strong" person would, according to Nietzsche, welcome the threat and challenge of a constantly changing world. Referring to those who require a world as changeless as possible in order to survive, Nietzsche says . . . (eine umgekehrte Art Mensch wiirde diesen Wechsel zum Reiz rechnen) Eine mit Kraft iiberladene und spielende Art W esen wiirde gerade die Aff ekte, die Unvernunft und den Wechsel in eudamonistischem Sinne gutheissen, sammt ihren Consequenzen, Gefahr, Contrast, Zu-Grunde-gehn usw-45. A large part of the intellectual energy of the West has been spent in trying to discover "facts," "laws of nature," etc., all of which are conceived to be "truths" and which, therefore, do not change. For Nietzsche, this conceptualization of our experience is tantamount to a "mummification" : when an experience is conceptualized, it is wrenched from the everchanging stream of becoming which is the world. By turning our experiences into facts, concepts, truths, statistics, etc. we "kill" them, rob them of their immediacy and vitality and embalm them, thus transforming them into the convenient bits of knowledge which furnish our comfortable, predictable, smug existences46• Der Mensch sucht ,,die Wahrheit" : eine Welt, die nicht sich widerspricht, nicht tiiuscht, nicht wechselt, eine wahre Welt, eine Welt, in der man nicht leidet : Widerspruch, Tauschung, Wechsel Ursachen des Leidens l47 For Nietzsche, this whole tendency to negate change which is so intimately connected with the presupposition that "truth" always means "unchanging, eternal truth," is a symptom of decadence, a symptom of the weakening and disruption of the will to power. This outlook says, in effect, "This far shall you go, and this much shall you learn, but no more than this . . . . " In the absence of any fixed and ultimate standard for truth, of course, this outlook is no more true or false than Nietzsche's own. Yet it is not a question here of rightness or wrongness, but a question of power. More specifically, it is a matter of vital power. "Der Werth fur das Leben entscheidet zuletzt48." Nietzsche's conclusion is that this static world interpretation has a negative, depressing effect on a person's vital energies (will to power). It constricts growth, it sets limits and hampers the self-assertion of the will to power. The strong individual, whom Nietzsche so much admires, flourishes only in an environment of change, ambiguity, contradiction, and danger. The chaotic and threatening aspect of the world is a stimulus for such individuals, demanding that they constantly grow and increase their power, or perish49• It demands that they constantly exceed their previous limits, realize their creative potential and surpass it, become more than they were. In the absence of any stability in the world, the strong individual who can flourish in such an environment is radically free from any constraint, radically free to create. It need scarcely be said that this world-interpretation is immeasurably more conducive to the growth and enhancement of the will to power than the static worldview. And the increase of will to power is Nietzsche's only criterion : Alles Geschehen, alle Bewegung, alles Werden als ein Feststellen von Gradund Kraftverhaltnissen, als ein Kampf.

### AT: SSD Good

#### Militarized knowledge DA---centering debate around technocratic analysis of defense policy fuels imperial violence

Bond-Graham and Hell 3 - PhD Sociology UC Santa Barbara AND UC Fiat Pax Research Project Group (Darwin and Emily, “THE MILITARIZATION OF AMERICA’S UNIVERSITIES”, <http://santacruz.indymedia.org/usermedia/application/5/ucsc_demil.pdf>, dml)

The militarization of knowledge is found in its pure form in the university. Militarized knowledge is a way of knowing the world and relationships between humans, characterized by an acceptance and promotion of violence and war. In militarized society we come to know the world and our fellow humans in terms of the hostile other. Other nations become enemies. Other peoples become dehumanized. The world becomes possess-able if we are strong enough, disposable if we so choose. Militarized knowledge adopts a worldview of force not understanding, violence not peace. Militarized society relies on knowledge to create technological solutions to our problems and conflicts. This is always at the expense of humanistic knowledge – the ways of knowing and relating to the world which find solutions in peace and organization, not violence and quantity. Because universities are at the center of knowledge creation in our society, we find our institutions of higher learning imbued with violence. The militarization of universities leads to a spiraling effect further strengthening the forces of war. Militarized universities produce: military technologies including – new weapons, warfare systems, ways of thought and organization distinct to the goals of coercion and force, and the permanent technological revolution of warfare itself. Universities in service of the warfare state also produce the human resources demanded by the militarized society. Universities churn out the politicians, technocrats, bureaucrats, and skilled workers demanded by the society which so diligently produces and executes the means of destruction. These graduates, having learned about the world, its society, and applied sciences through the lens of warfare go forth and recreate this calamity. The future politicians will lead the nation into future wars, and the future engineers will construct future combat systems, while we all obey and simply "do our jobs." The system further entrenches itself, war begets war, the institutions of knowledge produce destruction at the expense of creation. The technologies meant to banish war as unimaginabley destructive, and obsolete have only accomplished the former. New technologies meant to make war more humane, and conductable have only accomplished the latter. TechnoWar & How the University Makes War Possible The greatest effect the militarization of universities has had is by making war more conductable. Modern America, being the “civilized” and “peaceful” society it is, will not conduct a war that extols to large a cost in innocent civilian lives, and the lives of US soldiers. The technological revolution in aerial bombardment, missile capabilities, and weapon accuracy since the Vietnam war was intended to address this very issue. By making weapons more accurate and deployable from a distance, the military and its partners in science hoped to remove the US soldier from combat equation, while making state violence humane and survivable. This supposed injection of ethics into the arsenal of the United States was lauded in the Gulf War, Afghan War, and now with unprecedented emphasis in the second war against Iraq. War becomes more automated, increasingly technology withdraws the soldier from the battlefield. The arsenal becomes deployable through computer interfaces, warfighters sit behind computer screens hundreds, even thousands of miles from where they wreak havoc. Soldiers who must still encounter the enemy face to face are made into superhumans with high tech body armor, night vision, network communications, advanced sensors, all intended to make the US soldier invulnerable. Science in the service of warfare reinforces a political establishment more willing to use violence than diplomacy. US politicians become sure of their military’s capabilities to defeat the enemy, and to do so in a manner that the American public can accept. The population falls into a similar mindstate. The technological revolution to make war more effectively against the enemy leads us only to more war. Does science, technology, and knowledge emanating from our universities produce an ethical and just form of warfare? Can war be made humane through technological solutions? Absolutely not – Historically we know this. New technology leveraged in war has had the net effect of more war and more killing. Most prominent are the examples of past weapons whose inventors claimed would make war impossible. The machine gun being the most famous case was said to have made warfare so destructive and technologically advanced that nations would no longer fight. World War I immediately ensued, and millions died. The technologies meant to banish war as unimaginabley destructive, and obsolete have only accomplished the former. New technologies meant to make war more humane, and conductable have only accomplished the latter. What is at Stake? The future, and everything. The university takes its namesake from this fact. In Latin, universum - "The whole of created or existing things regarded collectively." The university is the whole of human knowledge; the knowledge we have about our existence, past present and future. The university is the attempt of the scientific system of knowledge to understand the human condition, our place in the world, and the realm of possibility. The university is more: In its most worthy incarnation, the university makes room for, even thrives from nonscientific, non-rational forms of knowledge including the arts and humanities. It is inarguably the most powerful attempt humanity has made to understand and re-make the world. With this fact in mind there are two conclusions to be drawn from the militarization of the university. First, it can be described as simply a matter of fact that knowledge creation and the university serve the military. Humans make war with one another, and that universities are involved in this effort is a truism. Humans will continue to make war, and so the inclusion of the university should be expected. This answer is of no value. It assumes a set of universal permanent truths (a nature) about the human condition with no possibility of disproving. Furthermore it offers no future for humanity other than annihilation, and it completely betrays the fundamental idealogical basis of the university which is progress through enlightenment. In contrast, it can be said that the militarization of universities is a problem directly related to the condition of a society. How much and in what ways a society’s institutions of knowledge creation serve the forces of war is a measure of that society’s worth. A nation that demands the enlistment of its knowledge base in the production of war and the perpetuation of violence is a nation not worthy of life. The only alternatives left would be the dismantling of that nation, or a radical reform of its institutions and a fight against the forces of war. This publication is dedicated to nothing less than the complete and radical reform of our society’s institutions of knowledge creation, from universities in service of the warfare state, to universities in resistance, in peace, and toward the creation of a meaningful future.

#### Sociopathy DA---switch-side teaches “moral flexibility” required to commit atrocities - by divorcing argument from passion, debate allows us to justify all manner of unspeakable acts---means we convince ourselves to do horrible things in order to forward our own interests - that’s Power and…

Spanos 4 [(William V., prof. at Binghamton, available online cross-x.com url: <http://www.crossx.com/vb/showthread.php?t=945110&highlight=Spanos+Email>, Nov. 18]

Dear Joe MIller, Yes, the statement about the American debate circuit you refer to was made by me, though some years ago. I strongly believed then --and still do, even though a certain uneasiness about "objectivity" has crept into the "philosophy of debate" -- that debate in both the high schools and colleges in this country is assumed to take place nowhere, even though the issues that are debated are profoundly historical, which means that positions are always represented from the perspective of power, and a matter of life and death. I find it grotesque that in the debate world, it doesn't matter which position you take on an issue -- say, the United States' unilateral wars of preemption -- as long as you "score points". The world we live in is a world entirely dominated by an "exceptionalist" America which has perennially claimed that it has been chosen by God or History to fulfill his/its "errand in the wilderness." That claim is powerful because American economic and military power lies behind it. And any alternative position in such a world is virtually powerless. Given this inexorable historical reality, to assume, as the protocols of debate do, that all positions are equal is to efface the imbalances of power that are the fundamental condition of history and to annul the Moral authority inhering in the position of the oppressed. This is why I have said that the appropriation of my interested work on education and empire to this transcendental debate world constitute a travesty of my intentions. My scholarship is not "disinterested." It is militant and intended to ameliorate as much as possible the pain and suffering of those who have been oppressed by the "democratic" institutions that have power precisely by way of showing that their language of "truth," far from being "disinterested" or "objective" as it is always claimed, is informed by the will to power over all manner of "others." This is also why I told my interlocutor that he and those in the debate world who felt like him should call into question the traditional "objective" debate protocols and the instrumentalist language they privilege in favor of a concept of debate and of language in which life and death mattered. I am very much aware that the arrogant neocons who now saturate the government of the Bush administration -- judges, pentagon planners, state department officials, etc. learned their "disinterested" argumentative skills in the high school and college debate societies and that, accordingly, they have become masters at disarming the just causes of the oppressed. This kind leadership will reproduce itself (along with the invisible oppression it perpetrates) as long as the training ground and the debate protocols from which it emerges remains in tact. A revolution in the debate world must occur. It must force that unworldly world down into the historical arena where positions make a difference. To invoke the late Edward Said, only such a revolution will be capable of "deterring democracy" (in Noam Chomsky's ironic phrase), of instigating the secular critical consciousness that is, in my mind, the sine qua non for avoiding the immanent global disaster towards which the ~~blind~~ arrogance of Bush Administration and his neocon policy makers is leading.

#### Elite overproduction DA---society is already oversaturated with “skilled advocates”---training more leads to resentment and political instability

Economist 20 - citing Peter Turchin (Economist, <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/10/24/can-too-many-brainy-people-be-a-dangerous-thing>, EM)

As far back as ancient Rome and imperial China, Mr Turchin shows, societies have veered from periods of political stability to instability, often at intervals of about 50 years. Consider America. Every pundit knows that Congress has become gridlocked, with Democrats and Republicans unwilling to compromise with each other. Fewer know that it was also highly polarised around 1900, before becoming more co-operative in the mid-20th century. What causes these lurches from calm to chaos?Mr Turchin views societies as large, complex systems that are subject to certain patterns, if not laws. That is an entirely different approach from much of academic history, with its preference for small-scale, microcosmic studies, argues Niall Ferguson of Stanford University. In a paper published this year Mr Turchin (with Andrey Korotayev of the Higher School of Economics in Russia) examines the prediction of instability he made in 2010. His forecast model contains many elements, but like Karl Marx, Mr Turchin seems to believe that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” Where Marx focused on the proletariat, though, Mr Turchin is more interested in the elite—and how its members struggle against each other. Who counts as the elite, and how competition manifests itself, varies from place to place; one example could be a large number of highly educated folk relative to the number of government offices (and therefore jobs). But a struggle is most likely when economic inequality is high. The rewards for being at the top are then especially lucrative, both in terms of earning power and political influence, and those who miss out feel their loss more keenly. The feeling of resentment is particularly strong among people brought up to believe that they ought to be in the elite. Worse still, societies tend to produce ever more would-be elites, in part because access to education tends to improve over time. Mr Turchin sees all this as a recipe for political chaos. Articulate, educated people rebel, producing a scramble for political and economic power. Elites stop co-operating, counter-elites emerge, and order breaks down. The argument undoubtedly papers over historical nuance. Yet focusing on dissatisfied elites is not a bad way of understanding political instability. Hugh Trevor-Roper, a historian, noted that “social crises are caused not by the clear-cut opposition of mutually exclusive interests but by the tug-of-war of opposite interests within one body.” The French Revolution was not primarily the product of misery but instead of a battle between an underemployed educated class and hereditary landowners. Historians identify “the problem of an excess of educated men” as contributing to Europe’s revolutions of 1848. Mr Turchin suggests that though slavery was the proximate cause of the American civil war, a more fundamental one was resentment from up-and-coming Northern capitalists towards stuck-in-their-ways Southerners. Elite overproduction can also help explain the malaise gripping the rich world of late. It has become extraordinarily difficult for a young person to achieve elite status, even if she works hard and goes to the best university. House prices are so high that only inheritors stand a chance of emulating the living conditions of their parents. The power of a few “superstar” firms means that there are few genuinely prestigious jobs around. Mr Turchin reckons that each year America produces some 25,000 “surplus” lawyers. Over 30% of British graduates are “overeducated” relative to their jobs. All this goes some way to explaining an apparently puzzling trend: why apparently well-off people are drawn to radicalism. Under Jeremy Corbyn Britain’s Labour Party attracted more upper-middle- and middle-class folk than it used to, even as it moved further left from the Tories; its lead among recent graduates was clear. Joe Biden’s lead over Bernie Sanders in opinion polls during the Democratic primaries was far smaller among college-educated Americans than among those who did not finish high school.

### AT: Limits

#### Content-based restrictions stymie efforts to overcome militarized education - refusing limits is key to encourage improvisation and creativity

Graeber 15 [David Graeber, arguably the most important anthropologist of the 21st century, American-born, London-based anthropologist and anarchist activist, leading figure in Occupy Wall Street credited with coining the phrase “We are the 99 Percent,” assistant professor and associate professor of anthropology at Yale from 1998–2007, Reader in Social Anthropology at Goldsmiths, University of London, activism includes protests against the 3rd Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001, and the 2002 World Economic Forum in New York City, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy,* Melville House printing (Brooklyn, NY): February 2015, p. 201-5]

Let me finish with another example from my own political experience. Over the last thirty or forty years, anti-authoritarians around the world have been working on creating new, and more effective, modes of direct democracy-ones that might operate without any need for a bureaucracy of violence to enforce them. I've written about these efforts extensively elsewhere. A lot of progress has been made. But those working on such projects often find themselves having to deal with exactly this sort of horror of "arbitrary" power. Part of the work of developing new forms of consensus process, for example, is to create institutional forms that encourage, rather than inhibit, improvisation and creativity. As activists sometimes put it: in most circumstances, if you bring together a crowd of people, that crowd will, as a group, behave less intelligently, and less creatively, than any single member of the crowd is likely to do if on their own. Activist decision-making process is, instead, designed to make that crowd smarter and more imaginative than any individual participant. It is indeed possible to do this, but it takes a -lot of work. And the larger the group, the more formal mechanisms have to be put in place. The single most important essay in this whole activist tradition is called "The Tyranny of Structurelessness;'110 written in the 1970s by Jo Freeman, about organizational crises that occurred in early feminist consciousness-raising circles when those groups began to attain a certain size. Freeman observed that such groups always started out with a kind of rough-and-ready anarchism, an assumption that there was no need for any formal, parliamentary rules-of-order type mechanisms at all. People would just sit down in a sisterly manner and work things out. And this was, indeed, what happened at first. However, as soon as the groups grew to over, say, twenty people, informal cliques invariably began to emerge, and small groups of friends or allies began controlling information, setting agendas, and wielding power in all sorts of subtle ways. Freeman proposed a number of different formal mechanisms that might be employed to counteract this effect, but for present purposes, the specifics don't really matter. Suffice it to say that what is now referred to as "formal consensus process" largely emerges from the crisis Freeman described, and the debate her intervention set off. What I do want to bring attention to is that almost everyone who is not emerging from an explicitly anti-authoritarian position-and no insignificant number even of those who are-completely misread Freeman's essay, and interpret it not as a plea for formal mechanisms to ensure equality, but as a plea for more transparent hierarchy. Leninists are notorious for this sort of thing, but Liberals are just as bad. I can't tell you how many arguments I've had about this. They always go exactly the same way. First, Freeman's argument about the formation of cliques and invisible power structures is taken as an argument that any group of over twenty people will always have to have cliques, power structures, and people in authority. The next step is to insist that if you want to minimize the power of such cliques, or any deleterious effects those power structures might have, the only way to do so is to institutionalize them: to take the de facto cabal and turn them into a central committee (or, since that term now has a bad history, usually they say a coordinating committee, or a steering committee, or something of that sort.) One needs to get power out of the shadows-to formalize the process, make up rules, hold elections, specify exactly what the cabal is allowed to do and what it's not. In this way, at least, word again. It comes from accountancy procedures.) It won't in any sense be arbitrary. From a practical, activist perspective, this prescription is obviously ridiculous. It is far easier to limit the degree to which informal cliques can wield effective power by granting them no formal status at all, and therefore no legitimacy; whatever "formal accountability structures" it is imagined will contain the cliques-now-turned-committees can only be far less effective in this regard, not least because they end up legitimating and hence massively increasing the differential access to information which allows some in otherwise egalitarian groups to have greater power to begin with. As I pointed out in the first essay, structures of transparency inevitably, as I've described, begin to become structures of stupidity as soon as that takes place. So say one argues this point, and the critic concedes it (which usually they have to because it's pretty much common sense). If so, the next line of defense is generally aesthetic: the critic will insist it's simply distasteful to have structures of real power that are not recognized and that can, even if they entirely lack any degree of violent enforcement, be considered arbitrary. Usually, one's interlocutor won't go so far as actually admitting their objections are aesthetic. Usually they will frame their arguments in moral terms. But occasionally, you will find some honest enough to admit that's what's going on. I well remember having an Occupy Wall Street-sponsored debate in Central Park (I'm sure it's recorded somewhere) with Norman Finkelstein-a brilliant and altogether admirable activist, who had come of age with the Civil Rights Movement and still saw groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as his inspiration. At this debate, Finkelstein stated the matter outright. Maybe it's true, he admitted, that the best way to keep such cliques from attaining too much power is to maintain a principle that they should not exist. But as long as such cliques are allowed to exist without being formally acknowledged and regulated, you're maintaining a system that says it's okay to be governed, even a tiny bit, from the shadows. It might not be that much of a practical problem. You might well be right that formally recognizing their existence might actually end up creating less overall freedom than leaving well enough alone. But in the final analysis, I just find the idea of being governed from the shadows, in any sense, distasteful. In such arguments, we are witnessing a direct clash between two different forms of materialized utopianism: on the one hand, an anti-authoritarianism that, in its emphasis on creative synthesis and improvisation, sees freedom basically in terms of play, and on the other, a tacit republicanism that sees freedom ultimately as the ability to reduce all forms of power to a set of clear and transparent rules. For the last two hundred years, in Europe and North America- and increasingly, elsewhere-that latter, bureaucratized notion of freedom has tended to hold sway. New institutional arrangements that operate by rules so strict and predictable they essentially disappear, so that one doesn't even know what they are (such as the physical or electronic post offices with which I began) tend to be put forward as platforms for human freedom that emerge from the very technical contingencies of running efficient structures of power. These arrangements seem to preserve the positive elements of play while somehow circumventing its more disturbing potentials. But time and again, we have seen the same results. Whether motivated by a faith in "rationality" or a fear of arbitrary power, the end result of this bureaucratized notion of freedom is to move toward the dream of a world where play has been limited entirely-or, at best, boxed away in some remote location far from any serious, consequential human endeavor-while every aspect of life is reduced to some kind of elaborate, rulebound game. It's not that such a vision lacks appeal. Who hasn't dreamed of a world where everyone knows the rules, everyone plays by the rules, and-even more-where people who play by the rules can actually still win? The problem is that this is just as much a utopian fantasy as a world of absolute free play would be. It will always remain a glimmering illusion that dissolves away as soon as we touch it. Such illusions are not always bad things. One could make a case that most of the greatest human accomplishments were the result of such quixotic pursuits. But in this particular case, and in this larger political-economic context, where bureaucracy has been the primary means by which a tiny percentage of the population extracts wealth from the rest of us, they have created a situation where the pursuit of freedom from arbitrary power simply ends up producing more arbitrary power,s and as a result, regulations choke existence, armed guards and surveillance cameras appear everywhere, science and creativity are smothered, and all of us end up finding increasing percentages of our day taken up in the filling out of forms.

### AT: Skills

#### Policy debates are an endless production of mediocre case-law journalism, which translates the outside world into intellectually complicated, but ultimately vacuous jargon---procedural constraints on deliberation are irrational conceits of our own making

Schlag 9[Pierre, Byron R. White Professor of Law and Former Associate Dean for Research, University of Colorado Law School, “ESSAY AND RESPONSE: Spam Jurisprudence, Air Law, and the Rank Anxiety of Nothing Happening (A Report on the State of the Art),” March, 2009, Georgetown Law Journal, 97 Geo. L.J. 803] \*\*edited for ableist language

All of these three moments--the Langdellian systematizations, the realist revolt, the "law and . . ." enlightenment--were reinventions of the discipline. They failed in the sense that they failed to reproduce themselves as vital intellectual enterprises. But they did not fail in making people think. Now, we live amidst their ruins. We are in need of another re-invention. That does not seem to be happening. Instead what we have is: A. CASE-LAW JOURNALISM Case-law journalism is a legacy of Langdellianism. As an intellectual enter-prise, Langdellianism came to an end when the work of taxonomic organization was completed. Now, as mentioned above, Langdellianism did leave some [\*822] academics in each field to do the useful work of entering the new cases into the old taxonomies and to make modest modifications of the latter whenever it seemed advisable. This took care of keeping six or seven legal academics in each field busy (for a lifetime). n45 As for the other what--ninety-eight percent?--they would have to do something else. The legal academy clearly did not need five hundred contracts teachers to write treatises on contracts (six would do). How then to keep the other 494 duly employed? A three-pronged answer: (1) heighten the intricacy of analysis, (2) let the academics issue lots of normative recommendations, and (3) have them argue incessantly amongst themselves. The possibility of outdoing the courts in terms of intricacy was a natural for the legal academy. Courts have dockets. Legal academics have time. Given this asymmetry, the academics could always outdo the courts in the intricacy of their analysis. For legal academics, more searching, more precise, more detailed analyses were always possible. And it was also possible along the way to chastise the courts for their analytical shallowness. Indeed, one legal-process wag in the 1950s once complained very soberly that the essential work of the Supreme Court was suffering because the Justices clearly did not have sufficient time to give proper attention to writing their opinions. n46 The second possibility--to issue lots of normative recommendations--was also a successful full-employment strategy. To the extent that legal academics could make recommendations to the courts as to what should be done, the work would never dry up. Indeed, normative prescription pretty much opened up the world of legal scholarship to the future--in fact, to all kinds of futures, ranging from the modestly improved to the wildly utopian. The third prong--to let the academics argue among themselves--was also well suited for the legal academy. Surely if Professor X had a better solution than the courts, then, of course, it should be published. And surely if Professor Y found that Professor X's proposed solution was somehow flawed, it would be useful to publish that too. And surely, further responses might also add to the storehouse of knowledge. And surely too there would be value-added for [\*823] Professor Z to show that while both Professor X and Professor Y had made valuable contributions, neither of them understood the problem quite as well as Professor Z. And so on. The possibilities were endless (in a kind of mock common law sort of way). And because all the legal materials (as had been demonstrated over and over again) were fraught with contradictory values and imperatives, the game could keep going forever. These three prongs are very much a part of case-law journalism. But they are too formal to capture the ethos of the practice--for this is a practice, not a set of rules to follow, not a model, but a well-settled, fully socialized, thoroughly internalized way of thinking and writing. By way of analogy to this practice, consider the mythical reporter covering the police beat. Think 1950's film noir here. In the opening scene, the reporter waits at the police station (today, by his pager) for the suspects to trickle in. The action starts. He interviews the cops, then reads the arrest report, calls the wife or husband or girlfriend, as appropriate. Then, should zeal strike, he might visit the crime scene. In the end, he writes and files his report, which is then published in the morning paper. Case-law journalism is much the same except for three things. First, the case-law journalist is a professor of law. And she writes law review articles, not newspaper articles. Second, she does not wait by the police desk. She is by her PC looking at Lexis or Findlaw or the SCOTUS website. n47 Third, unlike the journalist who is supposed to stick to the facts, the case-law journalist inserts the cases into some sort of normative narrative. Almost invariably, the case-law journalist ends on a cheery normative prescription for betterment of law, nation, or world. (Indeed, when was the last time you saw a law review article end on the note, "Oh my god, there's nothing we can do. We're ruined."?) B. LCM The most critical aspect of case-law journalism and its variations is the submission of issues, problems, artifacts, methods, or whatever else might come over the transom to the logic of judicial discourse in a way that produces legally cognizable material ("LCM"). There is a great deal of LCM produced in the legal academy. One gets the sense here of a great machine composed of many legal academics--each one ready and able to process the materials through the logic of judicial discourse. In the early days, up until the late 1960's say, it was mainly cases that were crunched. Today, the field has opened up. We will crunch anything. No matter what comes up--O.J., thick description, postmodernism, blogs, Bush v. Gore, the anniversary of Brown v. Board, anything at all--we will turn it into LCM. [\*824] When the thing really needs a lot of crunching, we will hold a symposium and get a small group to crunch the thing together. We are ready, willing, and able to crunch the stuff (any stuff) and turn it into LCM. The consumption metaphor is also apt here. Anything that comes to us, we legal academics will chew on and ultimately digest. Our job is to be there--ready to process the cases, to answer the call from CNN or NPR or 9NEWS, to provide a pithy quote for the morning paper, to argue importantly at the law review symposium, and then to go back to our offices and do it again the next day (for life). This is not nothing, of course. If you do this, it allows you to display knowledge-mastery. In turn, this will please your dean and get you lots of lines in the alumni magazine. Like this, for instance: Professor Brancroft spoke on at NPR on July 20. He published three articles on the Bankruptcy Act and Putative Spouses--and a sequel to his earlier . . . . He also presented a talk at to the State Commission on special courts and appeared on CNN to discuss . . . . And so on. Or more candidly: Professor Brancroft has not become a world-class party animal (surprise--that one) and is not visibly suffering from jungle rot. What's more, he shows evidence of working on the kinds of things that the mental giants at CNN believe is worth air time. So the upshot is that he's doing something and the rest of us at the law school are doing something. We are all doing something. The future looks bright. So give us your money please. Legal thought is a lot like that these days. Notice that if this is the job description--producing lots of LCM--it's kind of hard to have ideas. It is a lot like trying to have a truly creative idea in the middle of taking a law school exam--(which, as we all know, is seldom a good idea). C. THE PERPETUAL LAW SCHOOL EXAM And there's a thought: the state of the art really is like a perpetual law school exam. The prototype of the contemporary legal academic is someone who is constantly either preparing to take or is in fact taking a law school exam. In one sense, of course, it's not quite a law school exam because the law professor is talking about things that are actually happening: court proceedings, legislative deliberations, etc. On the other hand, it has that same sort of form--answering stock questions in terms of stock issues by deploying stock arguments. Go to the blogs: I speak truth. This is a weird job description. It is even weirder that people (besides the six who are very helpfully writing the treatises in each field) would choose to make this their job description when they could clearly choose to make their job [\*825] description something else. I strongly suspect, though I cannot prove, that this has a lot to do with the kinds of people we hire. By and large, we vet people very seriously for doing really well on exam-like tasks, writing law review kinds of things, while hardly vetting them at all on anything else. Not surprisingly, when they set about writing, many of them take up the familiar spot and crunch of the perpetual law school exam. What else would they do? What else could we reasonably expect? Even much of the recent flurry of interdisciplinary activity seems to have come down to a highly academicized case of LCM production. Earlier, in the introduction, we encountered James Boyd White looking at the pile of reprints on his desk with dread and ennui. n48 I ask you now to imagine something different--namely, a stack of interdisciplinary university press monographs on your desk. The first thing to notice is their covers--beautiful colors, awesome designs. But then you imagine actually reading one of them. Do you not, gentle reader, dread the dryness of the prose, the lumbering lurch of the argument, and the deadening thuds of the footnotes? n49 For apart from the striking cover, is there not this uncanny sense that what you see before you is simply a very, very, very long law review article? Still, we should take heart. There may be something highly functional about all this. As intellectually pointless as the perpetual law school exam may be, it serves to display mastery--namely, mastery of the law by the individual legal thinker. To be really good at the perpetual law school exam is to confirm that one is really well-prepared to be a really good case-law journalist. Also it means putting out lots of LCM. The exercises also show mastery at a higher level of abstraction. They show the mastery of "the law" over current cultural trends, intellectual currents, and social events. This is an important task because it demonstrates performatively that law and its authorized agents are still dominant. n50 LCM. Moreover, case-law journalism is the way in which we confirm to each other and to outside parties (lawyers, judges, the press, tenure committees, other departments in the university) that we really are in possession of some kind of expertise. And we are. LCM does not just happen. It takes years of effort and hard work [\*826] to be really good at putting out first-rate LCM. <Schlag continues> G. WHY THINGS WILL GET WORSE Two things: Personnel and Institutionalization. Personnel. Well, enough on that subject. Institutionalization. Ironically, it is at this very moment--the moment when legal scholarship seems so thoroughly compromised--that law schools have decided, seemingly en masse, to intensify the monitoring of scholarly quality and quantity as well as to enforce scholarly output maximization strategies. Law faculties and administration are all increasingly heavily invested in mentoring, career positioning, SSRN download rates, citation indices, article placement strategies, blog announcements, and glossy scholarship advertising. It's all a kind of massive "no law professor left behind" scheme. All these techniques and strategies are ways in which law professors and law schools can all watch each other with great ease and in great detail. The important part is not so much the watching, but rather that we all know we are being watched. It's as if we, who are responsible for all this (and this would seem to be nearly all of us), had read Foucault's account of the panopticon and [\*831] decided it was way cool and that we should institute our own version as soon as possible. The upshot sadly is that, at the very moment (1) that some terribly unenlightening paradigms are holding sway over legal scholarship, we also have (2) a radical intensification of quantity and quality control mechanisms. For my part, I believe it would vastly improve matters if at least one of those two things were not happening. Things will get worse. On the cheery side, one can always count on (1) the contributions of exogenous forces and (2) the fact that Malthus was and still is wrong. I'm a reasonable person (as well as a law professor) so all I came back with was one really tiny insight. Not only is it tiny, but it's not even very original. And it begins like this: There is something pervasively neurotic about the structures of contemporary life. The excruciating intricacies of everyday demands, the symbolic overinvestment of meaning in the trivial, the obsessive monitoring of everything to within an inch of its life, the constant piling on of little local meta- and infra-layers of thought--all these things are, from the [\*832] perspective of the river, pervasively neurotic. n64 Contemporary life ensnares us in all sorts of little maze-games that seem to matter tremendously and yet ultimately do not--except in the negative sense that they distract our attention from what does or at least could matter. Now, lots of people have had this sort of insight--the most famous perhaps being Heidegger (the "fallenness" thing). n65 But my insight, and it really isn't much of an insight at all, is about legal scholarship. I think the practices and institutions of contemporary legal scholarship (spam jurisprudence, case law journalism, rank anxiety, nothing happening, etc.) are extremely intense versions of this generalized ~~neurotic~~ structure. It's as if we were all working really hard on an imaginary bus schedule. Someone writes an article saying we need to optimize the number of buses. Another person can't resist pointing out that it might be preferable to start by optimizing the number of bus stops instead. Soon someone writes that we should reconstruct the entire schedule. Someone else will suggest that we should split the schedule along eight different parts. Someone says, the eight parts are really sixteen. Some truly original thinker says there are ten. And then, some ranker comes along and starts ranking whose law school has the best bus scheduling program going. And somebody else decides to hold a symposium on bus schedule rankings. (Remember the traveling show on Bush v. Gore?) n66 And then fifty years from now, someone will write a book: How Should the Bus Schedules of 2000-Whatever Have Been Decided? n67 Pretty soon, we've got a collective imaginary going and we're pushing buses and bus stops all across pages of the Yale Law Journal and it all feels kind of real and pretty important. And it's not hard to believe that it's important. For one thing people are getting real rewards--prestige jobs, chairs, program funding--for [\*833] imaginary bus schedule breakthroughs. And adding to the increasing reality of the thing is the undeniable fact that we can't just dismiss buses or bus schedules as unreal. (If everything else fails, by the way, this is your takeaway: Buses are real.) But the thing of it is, our legal academic bus schedule remains imaginary. Even if it looks a lot like the real thing, it's still imaginary. When we put out our bus schedule, no buses run. Word. And no Rapid Transit District (RTD) that I know of is going to change its schedule just because some new bus stop entries have been introduced in the pages of the Yale Law Journal or wherever. Not going to happen. So here we are, legal academics working on our collective imaginary bus schedule. And one of the things that troubles me about this is that the imaginary bus schedule is in some important ways not at all like the RTD's bus schedule. The RTD faces real stakes. We legal academics don't. Our reality principle--to the extent we have one at all--is decidedly indeterminate: get tenure/avoid showing cause. So if we want to construct a bus schedule with stops every ten yards (all in the name of rigor or precision) then we can have at it. And realize, please, that I'm not being extreme here. It's not like this hasn't been done. Over and over again. n68 And then there's the normativity thing. I once read an article that purported to elaborate about what the Constitution should be. Now what struck me as odd was that the author really did want to free himself (and his reader) from any official pronouncements of what the Constitution is. This struck me as incredibly weird. What an odd thing to do. If the question "What should the Constitution be?" is not anchored in what the Constitution is (whatever that might be), then why not go for broke: I say let's have a constitution that guarantees universal health care, tastes a lot like Ben & Jerry's ice cream, and is laugh-out-loud funny. You leave it to me? I say: Go big. Is this flip? Well, of course, it is. But hey, I'm not the one who invented this practice of normative legal thought. I'm just pointing it out. In fact, that's what I do these days. Check that: It's what I used to do. I used to have a pretty good job as a satirist. Good working conditions. Not much competition. I'm out of business now: Legal thought satirizes itself. For me now, it's all just point and shoot. There's something gratuitous about legal scholarship. No one, of course, writes that the constitution should be like Ben & Jerry's ice cream. But just what is it that precludes anyone from suggesting that the Constitution should guarantee universal health care. (I'd be in favor--I really would.) The answer: [\*834] there are constraints on what we argue. Sure there are. n69 And who generates . . . the constraints? Well, in part, we do: n70 So what we have is an imaginary legal thought shaped by imaginary collective constraints, one of which is the injunction that we should follow those constraints with great rigor. My question: Is this a neurotic structure? Yes, it is. Straight out--full-flower. It has to be because without the ~~neurosis, [~~obsession], there would be nothing there. No constraints at all. Now please understand: As a matter of form, I have nothing against collective imaginaries. My only problem is this: if we law professors have to work so hard (and so painfully) on our collective imaginaries, couldn't we pick something more interesting, or important, or aesthetically enlivening, or morally salient, or politically relevant than bus schedules? I mean, couldn't we? Uh, no. Which raises perhaps my final point. It's not very nice, but someone's got to say it, and apparently it's going to be me. As mentioned earlier, our people are not cognitively challenged. They are, bell curve and all, very intelligent. It is easy then for people like you and I, when we look at the extreme intricacy of the work produced by these very intelligent people, to associate the intricacy of their work with their manifest intelligence. Indeed, we are likely to think of the relation in reciprocal terms: Because they are intelligent, their work is intricate, and because their work is intricate, it shows great intelligence. n71 But the thing I want to suggest as a possibility here is that all this intricacy of legal scholarship is less a function of intelligence than it is a manifestation of ~~neurosis~~ in the face of intractable conflicts. What conflicts? Consider the prototypical needs of the legal academic: A need to display great intelligence in a discourse (law) that will ultimately not bear it. A need to contribute to disciplinary knowledge in a discourse which is not really about knowledge or truth in any profound sense of those terms. A need to say something intellectually respectable within a disciplinary paradigm that we know, on some level, is intellectually compromised. [\*835] A need to display control over social, political, and economic transactions that are in important senses not subject to control. A need to activate moral and political virtue in a discourse that uses both largely as window dressing. A need to make one's thought seem real and consequential in a discourse that is neither. I want to suggest then, and this is perhaps the unkindest cut of all, that within the dominant paradigm of legal scholarship, it may be that there is very little of enduring value to be said. In the main it's the rehearsal of a form, a genre--and not a self-evidently good one. n72 I have a cheery ending and a not so cheery ending The cheery ending is that it has not always been like this. And, maybe it doesn't have to be like this now. The non-cheery ending goes like this: It's going to get worse in many ways. The forces are in play--the rankings, the administrators who want to enhance the reps of their schools, the status insecurities of young (and old) faculty members, the pervasive triumph of porno (ahem, ahem, told you so) n73--all these forces will converge to produce ever more spam jurisprudence. And then something else will happen. <Schlag continues> In terms of social organization then, there may be something to be said for creating a professional corps (lawyers) whose modes of communication are widely shared and relatively standardized. Notice that if this is the objective, then the only place where that sort of standardized communication can be widely shared is somewhere close to the middle of the bell curve. Both intellectual sloth and intellectual excellence are, by definition, aberrant and thus detract from our efforts at standardization. Thus, training for mediocrity does serve a social function (within limits, of course). Mediocrity is not the only aim here. One would like this mediocrity to be the best it can be. We would like legal professionals to share a language and a mode of thought and, at the same time, for that language and mode of thought to be as perspicuous and intelligent as possible. Given the omnipresence of the bell curve, these desiderata are obviously in tension. The economists would likely talk about achieving "the optimal degree" of intelligence and mediocrity at the margin, but my sense is this will only get us so far. For law professors, the tension is bound to be somewhat frustrating. What many law professors would like--because many of them are intellectually inclined--is to bring intelligence to bear within legal discourse. This is bound to be a somewhat frustrating venture. Legal discourse is not designed to produce intelligence and, frankly, the materials and the discourse can only bear so much. Good judgment, groundedness, reasonableness--any of these virtues is often enough to snuff out real thinking. Indeed, whatever appeal good judgment, groundedness, and reasonableness may have for a judge or a lawyer (and I am prepared to say the appeal is considerable), such virtues are not particularly helpful to intellectual achievement. On the contrary, intellectual achievement requires the abandonment of received understandings. In fact, I would go so far as to say that intellectual vitality (at least in the context of a discipline like law) [\*829] requires some degree of defamiliarization, some reach for the exotic. The thing is, those sorts of efforts are not going to get very far if they constantly have to answer to good judgment, groundedness, reasonableness, and the like. And at this point, I would like to flip the argument made earlier in the paper. Here, I would like us to think of appeals to good judgment, groundedness, and reasonableness in legal thought as appeals to mediocrity. Making people see things involves things far different from good judgment, groundedness, or reasonableness. It involves a kind of artistry--a reorientation of the gaze, a disruption of complacency, a sabotage of habitual forms of thought, a derailing of cognitive defaults. This is part of what a really good education is about. Constant obeisance to good judgment or groundedness or reasonableness, by contrast, will systematically frustrate such efforts. n57 This is all rather vexing. Legal academics--with aspirations to intellectual excellence--are thus destined to play out the myth of Sisyphus. The main difference, of course, is that Sisyphus had a real rock to push up a real hill. The law professors' rock and hill, by contrast are symbolic--imaginative constructions of their own making. Arguably, pushing a symbolic rock up a symbolic hill is substantially easier than doing it for real. At the very least, it is easier to fake it and to claim success. At the same time, though, the symbolic nature of the exercise perhaps makes it more transparently pointless. As between these two points, there is a certain dissonance. On the one hand, we are dealing with pushing rocks up hills--and that is surely hard work. On the other hand, the rocks and hills are of our own imagination--so it should be easy. This is very confusing. n58 My best guess (and I offer this only as a preliminary hypothesis) is that the dissonance here might yield a certain degree of neurosis. n59 Still the question pops up again: "So what?" So what--so you have maybe seven thousand-something law professors in the nation and you know, maybe ninety-six percent are engaged in a kind of vaguely neurotic scholarship. So what? Maybe it's borderline tragic. Maybe, these people could have done so much better. None of this, by the way, is clearly established. But let's just assume, it's true. Who cares? Seven thousand people--that's not a lot of people. Plus, it's hard to feel for them. I know that nearly all of them would be us (but still). It's an extraordinarily privileged life. So why care about this? Here's why. The thing about legal scholarship is that it plays--through the mediation of the professorial mind--an important role in shaping the ways, the [\*830] forms, in which law students think with and about law. n60 If they are taught to think in essentially mediocre ways, they will reproduce those ways of thinking as they practice law and politics. If they are incurious, if they are lacking in political and legal imagination, if they are simply repeating the standard moves (even if with impressive virtuosity) they will, as a group, be wielding power in essentially mediocre ways. And the thing is: when mediocrity is endowed with power, it yields violence. And when mediocrity is endowed with great power, it yields massive violence. n61 All of which is to say that in making the negotiation between the imprinting of standard forms of legal thought and the imparting of an imaginative intelligence, we err too much on the side of the former. (Purely my subjective call here--but so is everybody else's.) Another way to put it is that while there is something to be said for the standardization point made earlier, generally, standardization is overdone. n62

## Kritiks

### 2AC---AT: Antiblackness

#### Blackness has become datafied and only the aff can prevent a new planter class from emerging – otherwise they ensure a new omnipresent racial-colonial hierarchy

Polsky 21 (Stephanie Polsky PhD - Visiting Fellow at Goldsmiths at University of London’s Department of Visual Cultures and Principal Researcher at Vienna University of Technology’s Institute of Art and Design, “Aspirational Theft: Technocapitalism, Cognitive Augmentation Devices and Algorithmic Coloniality”, Goldsmiths, 2021, <https://www.academia.edu/43883395/Aspirational_Theft_Technocapitalism_Cognitive_Augmentation_Devices_and_Algorithmic_Coloniality>, MG)

Humanity’s nervous system has adopted into itself synchronised patterns of behaviour that rhythmically conform to highly modulated electromagnetic frequencies. These conjoined phenomena contribute to a heavily assayed atmosphere, where ‘wearables and the movements of capital steadily converge along with ever**-widening circuits of extraction and expressivity’** (Seigworth 24). Here it becomes of paramount concern to discern whether the information being received portends ‘promise or threat’ (24). What humans regard as their world is now made both substantial through interaction, and valuable through an immaterial architecture of discernment which draws upon the **ubiquity of consciousness as a natural resource**, that can artificially refine down to the granular level of apprehension and thus **seized upon as data**. At a meta-level, the planet itself is being primed to contribute to ongoing processes of soliciting and securing its own patterns of extrusion. The skin of the world and the skin of the body act as conduits for the premutation of entry and retrieval. The Anthropocene looms over these surfaces as a posthuman assemblage capable of redirecting complex modes of entrainment that can no longer be classed as essentially biotic. The world to come is one teeming with a multiplicity of animistic awareness, and therefore its energies cannot be exhausted by the limitations of humanoid language and human intelligence.

A seemingly depleted environment can now be imbued with unbounded nonhuman vitality such that the digital marketplace will eventually cease to rely solely on human capacities for perception to produce their grounds for advancement. The Earth’s engineered milieu, then becomes a territory of extended cognition, through the **colonial imposition** of a range of digitally enhanced concepts and points of view that **dilute humanity’s powers of imagination**. These entities need not be highly intelligent themselves, but simply capable of drawing an account of their aliveness and intention to act as agents for the progress of this situation. This allows data to evolve organically as an active entity replete with its own history, traits, behaviour, and personality. Their patterns of accrual has nothing whatever to do the formal texture of life. It is for the very reason that they become favoured modes of survival on a dying planet necessarily requiring of its subjects that they be post-cognitive, post-user and post-human in their intelligent design strategy, throwing off the previous constraint of having to consume responsibly and adopting its place a new condition of obligation to extort critically within the context of human and nonhuman digital cohabitation. If posthuman is a term that connotes the upper limits of humanity as a construct, what must necessarily reside beneath is a less than a human which remains subject to extractive labour, beholden to the privatisation of property and artificially tethered.

The posthuman represents yet another iteration of (**white) racial**, historical and geographic appropriation in the sense that postdigital imperialism does not reciprocate rights of ownership when it comes to its plotting of the virtual world in terms of property, enclosure, measure, or meaning. Its project to generate a global configuration of knowledge, marked by its **omnipresent coloniality** by maintaining an intimate form of connectivity with the structures of colonial and plantation societies that previously positioned the category of humanity as an **enlightened figure of representation cast against the shadow bodies of transatlantic slavery and indigenous dispossession**. The viable behaviours of nonhuman life and their related ecologies became, in turn, the raw material of the property of which he was to govern. The posthuman in many ways extends that contract to include sentience and the deadening thereof.

Arthur Kroker anticipates a future where the human sensorium will be digitally outsourced and that such evacuation consciousnessious will result in ‘generalized feelings of boredom mixed with random acts of terror and panicked attempts by leaders to put back together what can never really be reassembled – the technologically shattered remains of lives, economies, politics and policies in the aftermath of the digital blast’ (191). These conditions leave humanity stranded at the limits of digital mobility and forced to dwell within an **oscillating reality of terror and boredom, zeros and ones**. Humanity has yet to become the stuff of technopoesis, but even now it is clear that certain bodies won’t matter enough to warrant the transition. Kroker argues that where humanity stands now nothing has prepared it ‘to live out a deeply consequential future prefigured by the spectre of drones, algorithms, image vectors, distributive consciousness, artificial intelligence, neurological implants, and humanoid robotics’ (21). What it is preparing for is an otherwise disconnection requiring of our mass re-assignation of meaning toward a future of deadened affect. What is enlivened in its place are image streams and data feeds, which prepare themselves to survive culture if need be. Our demise comes to us increasingly by way of accident, rather than incident, as there is no human agency left to point to in rendering our reality as the engrossed causalities of a technologically augmented capitalism.

**Blackness itself may be read here** as the basis it which it becomes possible to assume that life can be collectively constrained to act in ways conferring distinction by **perpetuating an unequal property order** in which humanity is ranked according to the ability of the individual body to assimilate property in-one-self. Property itself assumes consciousness in this century by seeming to afford the individual access to a great assemblage of power in which it becomes possible not only to be self-made but equally self-possessing within the parameters of an algorithmic estate that was purpose-built to expand, augment, atomise, and level the governance of human life. This occurs in a world dominated by a **new planter class** eager to cultivate the cognitive labour of othering human beings and determined to extract value from immaterial cerebral and relational activities from within the already occupied minds of human beings, as well as their artificial counterparts whose intelligence is classed as virgin territory, and therefore, exempt from prior claims of ownership.

Such a system relies on differential valuation and the assignment of materiality to consciousness and value to an ever-widening province of contact and exchange developed along a continuum of novel distinctions in kind. As a form of discipline, such sorting relies on the **merger of race with any number of possible subject positions** that can moderate habits of perception, and modes of embodiment that confer with the administration of cognitive capitalism and technological determinism. Jefferson’s narrative of slave apprehension and expulsion prefigures here the necessity of surveillance to ensure the maintenance of valorised life as **synonymous** with capital gain and that escape is prevented escape by plotting consent as muting force extends its unspeakable power to the ends of the earth; this time without sociobiological qualification. The **datafication of blackness or whiteness is no longer strictly reducible to personhood** but now grows outward to encompass specific sympathies and inform both doubt in and affirmation of the whiteness of planetary intelligence. It also represents a future enclosure of humanity within a technological order on premised on the ongoing defence and legitimation of calculable deprivation and precarious inhabitation wearing heavily on the fabric of meaning.

#### The will to technology explains whiteness better and is the root cause of the world plantation

Polsky 21 (Stephanie Polsky PhD - Visiting Fellow at Goldsmiths at University of London’s Department of Visual Cultures and Principal Researcher at Vienna University of Technology’s Institute of Art and Design, “Aspirational Theft: Technocapitalism, Cognitive Augmentation Devices and Algorithmic Coloniality”, Goldsmiths, 2021, <https://www.academia.edu/43883395/Aspirational_Theft_Technocapitalism_Cognitive_Augmentation_Devices_and_Algorithmic_Coloniality>, MG)

Everything that the wearer experiences and conveys is thusly made available to its enslaved sensor who freely refines that material into the stuff of further dependency and then moves it onwards into a greater commercial channel of mass amplification. Through the ubiquity of these **technologies**, it is possible to conceive of the world itself as a **vast plantation** where fugitive thought, expression and movement of one sort, or another within the algorithmic estate can be restrained and recaptured, in instances where it cannot be initially deterred. The development of the Internet of Things is systematically contingent on the **existence of a central master**, which coordinates the communications between slave devices and the Internet. Here **whiteness is ‘metaphorically represented by technology’** (Chude-Sokei 89).

This metaphor, Louis Chude-Sokei argues, can only succeed through the presumption that slavery is synonymous with blackness, the Negro slave is construed as a ‘“**device**”’ and the machine standing in for the white master is ‘**potentially “autonomous**”’ in carrying out its orders (90).

Notes on the State Intrusion

This metaphor dates back to the very origins of industrialisation in America. The predominance of agrarianism within the South is challenged by the rise of industrialisation in the North. There is much concern expressed amongst the Southern planter class about how to restrain its rampant progress. As industrialisation continues its advancement, it is increasingly coupled with ‘an image of planetary destruction’ (90). Such anxieties are **twinned with race** from the very beginning of the American experiment. When one of the founders of its republican project, Thomas Jefferson, paints a troubling picture of machinic intrusion into the virgin territory of Virginia, he is also tacitly referring to slave intrusion. In his narrative Notes on the State of Virginia, Jefferson projects their intersection would hasten ‘the extinction of one race by the other’ (92). What White Americans, like Jefferson fear most is their subordination to technology. This is the case, because they have already manufactured race as the instituting technology of their New World style of imperialism. The potential for slave rebellion lies at the centre of obedience to that same system, which must subdue nature, as well as **blackness**, as an extension of the nation’s founding logic of territorial conquest.

It was widely believed that Southern plantations would eventually become the settings of a full-scale race war. Jefferson’s solution to the looming spectre of a slave rebellion on America’s burgeoning plantations was the immediate liberation and colonial resettlement of American slaves into parts of Africa that would serve the parallel function of extending America’s planetary territorial domain. In 1816, Jefferson’s fellow Virginia liberal slaveholders established the American Colonization Society. It is built on ideas articulated by Jefferson, who acts ‘as a “founding father” of colonisation’ through ‘his advocacy of a massive, centralised, state-sponsored scheme to enumerate, deport, and resettle African Americans in Africa, and then to **surveil and control that resettlement** after deportation’ (Kazanjian 42). His fervour for African colonisation was matched by his desire to import ‘white laborers’ which he interchangeably refers to as ‘Germans’, making these respective populations, units subjectable to geographical manipulation. What will, in time, be held up as Jeffersonian democracy defines what is held up to be ‘“American freedom” through a distinctly modern, **calculable logic of racial governmentality’** (42). The American liberal doctrine that Jefferson promotes in his role as founder of this institutional body is entirely consistent with a long-standing project of European colonisation.

#### Pem do the aff through the lens of the alt – only thinking through affect AND blackness allows for generative thought around black capacity

**Ashley and Billies 19** (Colin Patrick Ashley and Michelle Billies, CUNY Graduate Center, CUNY Kingsborough Community College,  3-27-2019, CUNY, "Affect & Race/(Blackness) ", https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1209&context=kb\_pubs)//guyB

For Wilderson, for Hartman, for Fanon, for Aimé Cesaire—the possibility of black liberation means that the world must be destroyed and at the center of that destruction is the human. (See Ball, 2014, interview with Wilderson.) This is why theorists concerned with questions of liberation can no longer engage in materialisms that assume the exploitation of the human but refuse to engage in the ontological question of what the human is. It is telling that within black studies those beings that enter the world produced through blackness as black beings, black objects, black capacities are increasingly at the heart of breaking down the ontological assumptions of the status of the human. The post-human nature of affect theory is at a great loss if it doesn’t consider the question of blackness as it relates to the idea of the human—especially if blackness is itself ‘pre-human.’ Clough and Wilse (2010) reminds us that “future governance will continue to engage methods of manipulating affective potential” (p. 60). Likewise, Harney and Moten’s work on debt and governance is a political directive to take seriously this affective capacity of blackness. **Taking affective blackness seriously questions the idea of ‘affect and race’**, modeling a focus on specific racial productions and capacities for their singular (complex, proliferating, historical, future-oriented) capacities. The distinct ways in which blackness has been used to shape philosophies of the human is just one devastating outcome of its capacity toward death that has played a fundamental role in Western thought and world formation. Thinking through blackness and capacity **allows for generative thought around black capacity**—what black bodies or black space or black populations do—more specifically what blackness produces—**without being stuck in the quagmire of binary structuring that is the space of essentialism vs constructionism and identity vs structure**. This also actually allows us to fully embrace some of the ontological assumptions of affect theory and therefore becomes the direction in which we believe that a field of affect ultimately needs to head, in order to account for its own theoretical history, acknowledge how it has either shunned blackness in its desire for universality and distance from human subjects, or gotten trapped by thinking blackness, race, and ethnicity are primarily about human interaction, in order to participate in maximizing the potential for understanding blackness, as well as any other specific racial and ethnic formation for their affective capacities. And, if the response to this piece is “Why blackness and not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (insert other “race”)” this is the point of our piece, part of our critique of the utilization of race, and why we find value in affect theory.

#### Thinking blackness through ontology and structural antagonism traps blackness the prison of history, thereby negating the potential of becoming to escape the exclusionary and violent machinations of history. Beginning with structural antagonism and ontology constrains the subject in a calculable grid; against this predetermined structuralism we must assert a strategy of becoming minoritarian.

Koerner ‘12 /Michelle, Professor of Comparative Literature @ UC-Berkeley, “Line of Escape: Gilles Deleuze’s Encounter with George Jackson” *Genre*, Vol. 44, No. 2 Summer 2011 DOI 10.1215/00166928-1260183/

In “The Case of Blackness” Moten (2008b: 187) perceptively remarks, “What is inadequate to blackness is already given ontologies.” What if we were to think of blackness as a name for an ontology of becoming? How might such a thinking transform our understanding of the relation of blackness to history and its specific capacity to “think [its] way out of the exclusionary constructions” of history and the thinking of history (Moten 2008a: 1744)? Existing ontologies tend to reduce blackness to a historical condition, a “lived experience,” and in doing so effectively eradicate its unruly character as a transformative force. Deleuze and Guattari, I think, offer a compelling way to think of this unruliness when they write, “What History grasps of the event is its effectuation in states of affairs or in lived experience, but the event in its becoming, in its specific consistency, in its self- positing as concept, escapes History” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110). To bring this relation between blackness and becoming further into the open — toward an affirmation of the unexpected insinuation of blackness signaled by the use of Jackson’s line as an “event in its becoming” — a few more words need be said about Deleuze’s method. The use of Jackson’s writing is just one instance of a procedure that we find repeated throughout Capitalism and Schizophrenia, where we constantly encounter unexpected injections of quotations, names, and ideas lifted from other texts, lines that appear all of sudden as though propelled by their own force. One might say they are deployed rather than explained or interpreted; as such, they produce textual events that readers may choose to ignore or pick up and run with. Many names are proposed for this method — “schizoanalysis, micropolitics, pragmatics, diagrammatism, rhizomatics, cartography” (Deleuze and Parnet [1977] 2006: 94) — but the crucial issue is to affirm an experimental practice that opposes itself to the interpretation of texts, proposing instead that we think of a book as “a little machine” and ask “what it functions with, in connection with what other things does it or does it not transmit intensities?” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987: 4).8 Studying how Soledad Brother functions in Deleuze’s books, connecting Jackson’s line to questions and historical issues that are not always explicitly addressed in those books, involves one in this action. And further, it opens new lines where the intensities transmitted in Jackson’s book make a claim on our own practice. This method can be seen as an effort to disrupt the hierarchical opposition between theory and practice and to challenge some of the major assumptions of Western Marxism. In an interview with Antonio Negri in the 1990s, Deleuze (1997: 171) clarifies that he and Guattari have “remained Marxists” in their concern to analyze the ways capitalism has developed but that their political philosophy makes three crucial distinctions with respect to more traditional theoretical approaches: first, a thinking of “war machines” as opposed to state theory; second, a “consideration of minorities rather than classes”; and finally, the study of social “lines of flight” rather than the interpretation and critique of social contradictions. Each of these distinctions, as we will see, resonates with Jackson’s political philosophy, but as the passage from Anti-Oedipus demonstrates, the concept of the “line of flight” emerges directly in connection to Deleuze and Guattari’s encounter with Soledad Brother. The concept affirms those social constructions that would neither be determined by preexisting structures nor caught in a dialectical contradiction. It names a force that is radically autonomous from existing ontologies, structures, and historical accounts. It is above all for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari insist that society be thought of not as a “structure” but as a “machine,” because such a concept enables the thinking of the movements, energies, and intensities (i.e., the lines of flight) that such machines transmit. The thinking of machines forces us not only to consider the social and historical labor involved in producing society but also the ongoing potentials of constructing new types of assemblages (agencement). One of the key adversaries of this machinic approach is “interpretation” and more specifically structuralist interpretations of society in terms of contradictions. According to Deleuze and Guattari ([1980] 1987: 293), structuralism persisted in the “submission of the line to the point” and as a result produced a theory of subjectivity, and also an account of language and the unconscious, that could not think in terms of movement and construction. Defining lines only in relation to finite points (the subject, the signifier) produces a calculable grid, a structure that then appears as the hidden intelligibility of the system and of society generally. Louis Althusser’s account of the “ideological State apparatus” as the determining structure of subjectivity is perhaps the extreme expression of this gridlocked position (an example we will come back to in a later section). Opposed to this theoretical approach, diagrammatism (to invoke one of the terms given for this method) maps vectors that generate an open space and the potentials for giving consistency to the latter.9 In other words, rather than tracing the hidden structures of an intolerable system, Deleuze and Guattari’s method aims to map the ways out of it.

#### This also accesses a Ressentiment DA because the reactive definition of blackness to a merely opposable term destroys the possibility of freedom and the active creation of value.

Marriott ‘7 /David, associate professor in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Haunted Life: Visual culture and Black modernity, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, Pg. 233-237/

Fanon borrows this formulation from Nietzsche, in particular The Genealogy of Morals and The Will to Power. Nietzsche defines "ressentiment" as developing in those "natures who are denied true reactions, those of deeds."!' Ressentiment psychology – and this point is crucial both for Nietzsche and for Fanon's appropriation – is distinguished by a consciousness of loss, by a failure to integrate experiences of powerlessness, leaving this experience to remain in the memory as a traumatic kernel, leading to an obsession with past racial injuries that poison the ability of the self to function in the present or project an active future. In The Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche defines "Slave ethics are what] begins by saying no 110 to an "outsider," an "other," a non-self, and that no is its creative act. This reversal of direction of the evaluating look, this invariable looking outward instead of inward, is a fundamental feature of rancor. Slave ethics requires for its inception a sphere different from and hostile to its own. Physiologically speaking, it requires an outside stimulus in order to act at all; all action is reaction" (Nietzsche, The Birth, 170-171). The slave blames the other, or outsider, for his suffering, makes him or her the symbol of evil and a phobic object. This response remains reactive. The slave does not act on the basis of his or her sovereignty, but in opposition to the other's domination. Nietzsche argues that ressentiment indicates a failure, not so much to accept responsibility for one's existence (Sartrean "bad faith"), but a failure to affirm life as a spirit of becoming. Fanon terms it a slavish, reactive attitude toward the future and the past. In this "pessimism of indignation" one assumes that one can do nothing because one is wretched, and one blames someone else for one's wretchedness. This is why, in Wretched of tlte Earth, Fanon argues that the first stages of spontaneous anticolonial violence are always reactive: "racism, hatred, resentment," "the legitimate desire for vengeance," cannot sustain a war of liberation. 14 Such reactive moments are linked to questions of time but in a negative sense, as examples of a reactive affirmation of history. It is precisely because he recognizes racist historicity in these attitudes that Fanon's work is taken up with the problem of time and death. If the limit set to black life is the significance conferred on presence by racism which voids all black life of value as life, with the result that one cannot live it, racism also robs the black of his or her ability to live and so to die as a free subject. Spurned by history, the attempts by blacks to reimmerse themselves in time have resulted in a turn toward allegory and myth. These attempts are condemned because they restrict the life as lived to one held in abeyance, in suspension, a life ossified either by its slavish reverence for the precolonial past or by its abject sacrificing of itself to the future to come, the freedom always to come in eternity. Both attitudes are positings of finite being that refuse to tarry with death as the true scandal of black historical experience and so become even less capable of resolving it. This is not to say that Fanon has lost faith in a redemptive future, or that he wants to routinize and categorize such temporal ecstasies by representing death as life's categorical commandment. Rather that, as in the letter to Tayeb, what matters is the life earned when it plunges into the inexplicable and emerges from it; what matters is how we, like Orpheus, take up the cunning and creativity of ressentiment as a culture on the edge of nothingness. Only by negotiating power and violence can we engage and reconfigure virtue for the modem polity (the "new humanism" that emerges from the "tabula rasa" opened up by the colonized on the path toward revolution-a possibility which is neither an end nor a beginning but an endless "tension of opening" between the twO).IS That is, death as lawless violence is the predicament and possibility of who we are and might become, here, now, the tenses through which we belong irreducibly to this time. This is also why Fanon rejects Sartrean, Hegelian, and other forms of determinate historicism, the logic according to which everything that happens had to happen. Against dialectical logic – and its view that out of experience, no matter how negative. something emerges – Fanon posits a black existential time in which what happened happens and keeps on happening in ways that remain unforeseeable and unknowable but which nonetheless forces us to be responsible at the level of ethics, politics, and will. Throughout Fanon's oeuvre. antihistoricism turns on the difficulty of naming and situating a black orphism beyond identity and alterity, beyond loss and the annihilation of being. True anticolonial violence, if it is to go beyond such Manichacism, must arrive at a teleological suspension of the ethical and so go beyond the spurious opposition between murder and illegitimate right, or murder dressed up as political vengeance. Manichean violence is ressentiment, for liberation is not a higher ethical law than murder and can only be justified in the pursuit of freedom, which is incommensurable with domination but nevertheless implicated in its violence. Hence Fanon is not trying to ethically justify the violence of anticolonial war (as he is often accused of doing). but trying to account for the use of violence in the revolutionary pursuit of freedom." Liberatory violence. in brief. as one possible memory of the future; as one possible pathway through the unjust violences of the political world. Both the conclusions to Black Skill, While Masks and Wretched of t/-ie Earlh define that memory as thc horizon of revolutionary hope and politics. as a rupture of time without end but within time's workings. POl' this reason, I cannot accept Patrick Taylor's dircrnpuvc opposition between Black Skill, While Masks as a work that ends with ethics over history. and Wretched of the Earth as a work that moves from ethics to revolutionary history (Taylor. Narratives, 74-76). Such opposition misreads the conclusion to Black Skill, White Mllsks. where Fanon writes, "I am not the slave of the Slavery that dehumanized my ancestors" (230). Antillean culture is a slave culture for Fanon, following Nietzsche, because its ressentiment represents a cultural-historico paralysis which has not yet become creative and so achieve that active forgetfulness of the past that accompanies successful repression and defines a noble memory of the will. This peculiar anamnesis, which is the result of historically distinct configurations of power, dominarion. and race war, reveals how, for Fanon, the traumas of cultural assimilation for the colonial subject is already marked by historical forces and decisive events whose trauma cannot simply be dispelled by the time of analysis or the methods of genealogy. 17 Slave ethics, insofar as it is reactive and denies responsibility and its ability to act, cannot achieve this cultural-historico transmutation. Through decolonization and violence the colonized can break through the impasse of ressentiment and enter into history. The task for the colonized, Fanon implies, is to risk the orphic "leap" into the "black hole" while also moving Out to the universal (199). One must move beyond the "absurd drama" of colonialism dialectically. One must move to ethics from history because ethics is the affirmation of the radical transformation of time, a decision to change both the meaning of the deathliness of black life and its sign of ressentiment. In the essay "West Indians and Africans," Fanon writes, 'The task consists of removing the problem, puuing the contingent in its place, and leaving the Martinican the choice of supreme values. One sees everything that could be said by envisaging this situation in accordance with the Kierkegaardian stages. "18 These stages arc the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious, Fanon's turn to Kierkegaard is not, as Patrick Taylor presents it, a move from ethics to history or, more accurately, inner morality to objective or ethical freedom. but a recognition of how violence and law pervade each other, and of how ethics is an encounter with the violence of power and its legitimation. The task is to move, not from values based on race to human values understood as transcending the old humanisms of Europe, which formed the foundations of colonial racism, but to address the phantasmatic and racist underpinnings of value as such. Fanon explicitly mentions Kierkegaard when discussing how law and violence remain implicated in the movement from ethics to freedom in history. The slave's struggle for freedom cannot only be defined in ethical terms. On the other hand, it is naive to assume that the decolonial world will exist beyond law and coercion. In Black Skin, W!tiLe Masks Fanon writes, "The former slave, who can find in his memory no trace of the struggle for liberty or of that anguish of liberty of which Kierkegaard speaks, sits unmoved before the young white man singing and dancing on the tightrope of existence" (22t). Because the slave has no memory of that "anguish of liberty," the ethical and the historical condition of freedom remains unavowable. The slave remains a dumb wimess to his own violated singularity which he can neither comprehend, renounce nor test. Fanon says that "the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence" (229). One shows how the ethical is mediated by the promise and actuality of such "invention" by becoming actively creative at the level of history. Acceptance of this coexistence does not "eliminate ... the ethical in oneself," but forces one to return to the ethical as the always potential encounter with the violence of the world as a test of one's faith (Taylor, Narmtives, 76).

#### The form of the alt’s resistance to whiteness is contrary to its intent. Voting neg participates in the mythologization of empire’s totality which it sets out to fracture. Any successful politics will require a new approach at the level of desire and symbolic capital

Mbembe 15. Achille Mbembe, “Achille Mbembe on The State of South African Political Life,” September 19, 2015, http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics/

The old politics of waiting is therefore gradually replaced by a new politics of impatience and, if necessary, of disruption. Brashness, disruption and a new anti-decorum ethos are meant to bring down the pretence of normality and the logics of normalization in this most “abnormal” society. Steve Biko, Frantz Fanon and a plethora of black feminist, queer, postcolonial, decolonial and critical race theorists are being reloaded in the service of a new form of militancy less accommodationist and more trenchant both in form and content. The age of impatience is an age when a lot is said – all sorts of things we had hardly heard about during the last twenty years; some ugly, outrageous, toxic things, including calls for murder, atrocious things that speak to everything except to the project of freedom, in this age of fantasy and hysteria, when the gap between psychic realities and actual material realities has never been so wide, and the digital world only serves as an amplifier of every single moment, event and accident. The age of urgency is also an age when new wounded bodies erupt and undertake to actually occupy spaces they used to simply haunt. They are now piling up, swearing and cursing, speaking with excrements, asking to be heard. They speak in allegories and analogies – the “colony”, the “plantation”, the “house Negro”, the “field Negro”, blurring all boundaries, embracing confusion, mixing times and spaces, at the risk of anachronism. They are claiming all kinds of rights – the right to violence; the right to disrupt and jam that which is parading as normal; the right to insult, intimidate and bully those who do not agree with them; the right to be angry, enraged; the right to go to war in the hope of recovering what was lost through conquest; the right to hate, to wreak vengeance, to smash something, it doesn’t matter what, as long as it looks “white”. All these new “rights” are supposed to achieve one thing we are told the 1994 “peaceful settlement” did not achieve – decolonization and retributive justice, the only way to restore a modicum of dignity to victims of the injuries of yesterday and today. Demythologizing whiteness And yet, some hard questions must be asked. Why are we invested in turning whiteness, pain and suffering into such erotogenic objects? Could it be that the concentration of our libido on whiteness, pain and suffering is after all typical of the narcissistic investments so privileged by this neoliberal age

### 2AC---AT: Baudrillard

#### Baudrillard was wrong – it’s no longer Disneyland, it’s Robotland

**Kroker** and Kroker **21** (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 132-134, October 2021, MG)

While Jean Baudrillard might once have noted that the seduction of Disneyland is its convincing pretence that its fantastic simulations are an escape from the real world rather than what Disneyland really is – a perfect model of the real-time model of soft power, modulated violence, and crowd management – **Robot Land was to be the technological rider after the age of simulacra**. Here, there would be technologically enabled thrills – roller coasters dangling from the outstretched arms of massive robots – mesmerizing robotic spectacles, and spectacular feats of imagination, but **no order of simulacra**, no sense that the new order of robotics is anything than what it really is: a key component of the Korean version of the power of the new real. With its mixture of entertainment spectacles, industrial promotions, and a graduate school in robotics, Robot Land was to be a place where fun illusions and delirious spectacles would always be underwritten by a **very visible undercurrent of dead-eyed economic seriousness** of purpose and **carefully orchestrated research visions of (certain) robotic futures**. This notion of place is, of course, the proposed theme park’s biggest problem: the future of robotics will probably have nothing to do with any territorial referent; certainly, it will not be a “land” in any physical or even symbolic meaning of the term but will most definitely constitute a new order of time – robotic time. In this case, Robot Time, rather than Robot Land, would probably be a more accurate description of the new epoch ushered in by all futurist robotic designs, from mass entertainment spectacles to the complex artificial sensors working the assembly lines of the manufacturing world. When **the future of robotics**, one **already anticipated by contemporary developments**, turns away from its ready-to-hand terrestrial manifestations – artificial fish, mega-statues, humanoid machines – and enters the databases of globalized networked culture as their indispensable artificial intelligence and machine-to-machine and machine-to-human communication, then we will recognize that we are not following a **technological pathway that will lead to a certain place (Robot Land)** but one that will lead towards a certain (robotic) order of database time that is networked, communicative, and neutral. As with all things having to do with theme parks, actually expressing such a fundamental eschatological rupture in the order of things – the displacement in importance of visible space by the invisibilities of (database) time – is challenging. Such a challenge is probably why, although it takes momentary refuge in the comfortable referential illusion of Robot Land, this proposed theme park is one that will probably always be known for the hauntological traces of its essential missing element – the once and future epoch of Database Robot Time. There are definitely **no “magical kingdoms,” no “fairy-tale princesses,” no “pirates” – just a proposed theme park on the edge of the rising time of the Eas**t, which announces that, for all the psychic exuberance of its robotic fossils, from fish and statues to carousel animals, it is one Tomorrowland that will not be able to camouflage for much longer what is really taking place in this second invasion of Incheon: the newly emergent order of the time of the robots, with humans kept on standby as their necessary prosthetics. Now that the original vision of I, Robot Land has been discarded, we may never have an answer to the question concerning the time of robots, but we definitely know that, in the future as in the present, design based on speculative fiction is still at the mercy of real historical time with its rise and fall of both human and robotic imaginaries.

#### Even if they win Baudrillard was right, only the aff can solve – everything is now encoded and programmed, coopted by technology

Kroker 14 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “Exits to the Posthuman Future” , Polity Press, Pages 72-73, 2014, MG)

Certainly, in the present circumstance, **Jean Baudrillard was correct**. Like all the great referential signs before it – power, consciousness, desire, sex, money – history now also begins to follow a reverse movement, instantly repolarizing, energizing itself by a fatal, interminable exhumation of the past. Which is probably why everything now appears to operate under the historical injunction that the past must be **exposed, deciphered, coded, programmed** – endless histories of war, chilling histories of ethnic massacres, media exposés of the rise and fall of celebrities, histories transmitted by mass media, histories written in the language of cinematography, histories that are mobile, cellular, networked. Of course, with each repeated media exposure, historical events grow successively colder, further removed from the temporality of human passion, more distanced from immediate emotional response the closer they are to the eye of digital perception. When historical narratives disappear into the image simulacrum, when history is literally captured by the speed of the information machine, what remains is an imploding field of fractured debris, fully exposed, imaged, and narrated, but, for all that, ultimately unknowable as to its ultimate purposes.

Like all other sign-forms, history has probably always yearned to escape its heavy referential destiny, to finally decouple itself from the language of social signification and the epistemological responsibility of hermeneutic interpretation in favor of something else, history as a radical paroxysm of future events, never really knowable in advance nor understandable in the past tense precisely because **history has now mutated into a recombinant sign** – complex, mediated, bifurcated, fractured, multiple, and contradictory. In this case, the precession of history stipulates that there can no longer be any definitive end of history because the question of the end has itself become something enigmatic: temporally enigmatic since with light-time ends are often beginnings; and spatially enigmatic since with light-space ends are matters of pure artifice. Or perhaps something more perverse – that fascination with the end of history functions as a psychological displacement of anxiety about the impossibility of framing the question of history itself. Consequently, historical archives everywhere, memories recorded, stories decoded, past events patiently exhumed, premonitory signs of the future anxiously interpreted, museums of history reanimated – all this because real time may move too quickly for traditional historical interpretation, just as light-space throws the object of history into a gathering darkness.

Mythic nemesis has its implacable rules that will not be violated by even the most cosmically daring of all the species. If the human species allied itself in the past with pagan spirits, and perhaps now seeks to usurp the gods by **taking control of the technical direction of human destiny** – condensing the necessarily variegated nature of time into the degree-zero of real time and accelerating space itself into light-space moving at the speed of electrons – the fates will not long be silenced. This may explain the mysterious association between the multiple ends of history and sacrificial violence. If the ends of history would seek to exceed the transcendent dreams of the supernatural, overcome the limits of the physical, and vivisect the realm of the biotic, then this gift of the posthuman must certainly be repaid with a completion of the cycle of sacrificial violence. But how to complete the cycle of sacrificial expiation when the new, self-proclaimed creator of the history of the posthuman is itself the human species? What sacrifice would equal the unanswerable gift of a species that would seek to recreate the metaphysical order of time and space itself? In this case, will the extinction of the human species as presently understood prove to be the **sacrificial price to be paid for the technological gift** of genomic engineering or of those intense efforts to blast neutrons free from their entombment in elementary matter? Certainly, ominous signs of human species extinction are pervasive: apocalyptic scenarios of climate change, desultory images of leaking radiation, the physical exhaustion of fish, animals, plants, and even of the traditional cycle of climatology itself. It is as if the four humors – earth, sky, fire, and water – stand silent watch over the sudden emergence, with brilliant kinetic energy, of the human species and its sudden disappearance into delirious designs of its own making.

#### The world isn’t simulation it’s virtualization – only by disrupting the will to technology can you solve both the aff and their K

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 184-185, March 2004, MG)

And why not? It’s the **age of the streamed body,** the data body.

The body has always been the site of the most radical political, indeed eschatological, struggle – the decisive site for the inscription in **flesh of power as its speaks the body** future.

The data body is the recombinant body: cloned by the biotech industry, spliced by artificial skin, digital nerves, and networked intelligence, resequenced by the liquid signs of brand-name consumer advertising. Simultaneously the targeted axis of the interfacing of digital reality and biotechnology and the **site of future political struggle where flesh rubs against the will to virtuality**, the data body is, for better and for worse, the spearhead of techno-culture.

In the age of Christianity, the body was virtualized, split into warring bodies of flesh and grace, with the corporeal body undergoing almost two millennia of dogmatic purification, with fire, with the rack, with pincers, with the rope. In the age of capitalism, the body was commodified, sometimes colonized as exchange-value, invested by all the signs of advertising culture in that fateful transition of capitalism from the commodity-form to the sign-form, vivisected by a fourfold strategy of domination, **from alienation (Marx) and reification (Lukács) to simulation (Baudrillard) and now virtualization**. In the age of technology, the so-called autonomous body, this always doubled body of flesh and grace and use-value and exchange-value, shatters into a thousand digital mirrors. The data body. The android body. The mutant body. The designer body. The cloner body. The transsexual body. Digital flesh loop-cycling furiously within the limited space and time of a single (biological) life cycle: indeterminate, neutralized, floating. **The data body itself as the new media future**.

With or without our consent or public discussion, the digital future leaps beyond the old forms of twentieth-century politics, finance, culture, and society to create an unpredictable future in which the programmer, the engineer, the eugenicist, the multinational multimedia czar install the ruling codes of the digital eye.

What is the future of digital reality? What is the consequence of the fateful meeting of digital experience and biotech engineering? What is the fate of the future itself when, as Paul Virilio argues in Open Sky, time and space as the deep horizon of our existence **have been accidented**, have been radically derealized, into the dimensionless void of ‘space-light’ and the real time, the instantaneous, global networked time of light-time? After the mutation, the galactic debris of local time and local space gets in our eyes, and history as a chronological succession of events collapses into random events with mutable meanings. Or when reality suddenly flips, and we **are no longer living in hyper-reality**, broken boundaries moving at the speed of light, but just the opposite – **reversed into a digital universe** moving at the slow speed of light.

### 2AC---AT: Capitalism

#### Trying to overcome capital outside of the cybernetic sphere is rooted in the language of technicity and the will to technology – either the alt fails or the perm solves

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 145-147, March 2004, MG)

For Capital, it’s bitter irony. The emergence of the will to virtuality out of the economic disguise of the circuit of circulation implies not only that labour is factored out of (Capitalist) production, but **Capital itself now is factored out of (virtual) reproduction**. The cycle of history, with its stories replete of the rise and fall of all the dominant signs – power, war, labour, Capital, sex – breaks with the ossified structures of modernist myth, setting in motion the latest historical play, that of virtuality to be the once and always hoped for unifier of the siren of history. However, to speak of virtuality and history in one breath, to see in the circuits of virtuality a terminus ad quem of historical indeterminacy, is already to escape the present dialectic of Capital and virtuality, to say that in the valorization of the value-form of Capital lie not only the origins of the will to virtuality, but the future as the metaphysics of technicity. To say this is impossible, because **to speak of the overcoming of Capital in the** **language of technicity**, to announce Marx’s famous ‘circuit of circulation’ for what it is, the basic code of the fully realized technological future, would be also to brush Heidegger against Marx, to speak, that is, of the hidden presence in Marx’s Capital of Heidegger’s will to technicity. But we all know that Marx was a prophet of the left and Heidegger a tombstone of the right, so this encircling, indeed this declension of the invisible Heidegger in the visible Marx, is not permitted. Unless, that is, the equally famous ‘forgetting’ in Heidegger’s ontology of being is not the withdrawal of the gods from the ‘desolation of the earth,’ but another more proximate forgetting: the withdrawal of the visible signs of Capitalist accumulation from the (virtual) circuit of circulation. Marx, then, as the precondition of Heidegger, and Heidegger as the epiphany of Marx: a historical incompossibility.

From the ‘Circuit of (Capitalist) Circulation’ to the **Circulation of (Digital) Circuits**

In circulation, the Capitalist and worker confront each other only as the vendors of commodities, but owing to the specific, opposed nature of the commodities they sell to each other, the worker necessarily enters the process of production as a component of the use-value, the real existence, of Capital, its existence as value. And this remains true even though that relationship only constitutes itself within the process of production, and the Capitalist, who exists only as a potential purchaser of labor, becomes a real Capitalist only when the worker, who can be turned into wage-labor only through the sale of his capacity for labor, really does submit to the commands of Capital. The functions fulfilled by the Capitalist are no more than the functions of Capital – viz. The valorization of value by absorbing living labor power – executed consciously and willingly.29

When capitalism finally breaks with the materiality of production, entering its **metaphysical stage as a pure ‘value-form**,’ then the classic Marxian model of the Capitalist ‘circuit of circulation’ gives way to the **circulation of circuits**. While the circuit of circulation is the basis of the original Capitalist model of production, the circuit of circulation is the new model of the virtual model of production. This is a predictable outcome of the Marxian model. Everywhere in Marx’s writings lurks the spectre of circulation. There is no Capitalist, only a ‘Capitalist function[ing] ... as personified Capital, Capital as a person, just as the worker is no more than labour personified.’30 Everything and everyone is a function of their relationship to the value-form of Capitalist circulation. No autonomous labour, only labour valorized as use-value; **no independent Capitalist**, only the bourgeoisie valorized as a command function for the extraction of surplus value from living labour power; no terminal production, only production as a twofold sign of the beginning and ending of the circuit of Capitalist circulation; and certainly no autonomous processes of consumption, exchange, and distribution, only a general circuit of circulation that requires for its growth that the (economic) phases of production, consumption, distribution, and exchange align with one another in that spectacular circular flow, that speed and magnitude of circulation, that valorization of the pure valueform of Capitalism. What was previously the fate of the individual Capitalist – his reduction to ‘Capital personified’ – and the destiny of the worker – ‘use-value’ submitting to the ‘commands of Capital’ – quickly becomes the ruling axiomatic of virtual capitalism. Pure circulation, pure speed, pure value-form, pure technicity.

Indeed, if Marx could speak so hauntingly in Capital of the relationship between labour and capital as that of ‘animals and machines,’ perhaps that is because his image of the circuit of capitalist circulation is deeply biological. Capital, then, as an extended biogenetic description of the original, governing cellular matter of the DNA of Capitalism. In this case, Marx’s searing vision of workers as use-value objectified and Capitalists as Capitalism personified quickly generalizes into a biologi- cal theory of the circuit of circulation (production-exchange-distribution-consumption) as the original economic genome, not only for the historical development of the process of Capitalist production, but as the cellular material for mixing, splicing, recombining circuits of virtual clones. When not only labourers and Capitalists but also the circuit of circulation itself is **violently thrown into circulation**, when production is blasted apart by the globalization of manufacturing, when consumption is consumed by the circulation of signs, when exchange is digitally networked, when distribution is resequenced as a digital nervous system, then at that point we can speak of recombinant Capitalism as the destiny prefigured by Capital. Circuits of (virtual) consumption, circuits of (technical) production, circuits of (networked) distribution, circuits of (fast) exchange, all of which are simultaneously linked in a global model spearheaded by the **circuit of virtual circulation**, but all of which also immediately condense into the fourfold logic of the original circuit – production, consumption, distribution, exchange. Faithful to their cybernetic expression as the final value-form of advanced Capitalism and, consequently, the original prototype of **virtual Capitalism**, what matters are not the terminals of production, consumption, exchange, and distribution but the speed and magnitude of the process of circulation itself. Here, everything enters into circulation, and no one is allowed to refuse circulation; everything is circuited, **no one can abandon the power of the circuit**. Pure circulation then as the precondition and product of the virtual model of the circulation of circuits.

That’s the real effect of the technological process of production. Not simply a circuit of (Capitalist) production, but other circuits as well: circuits of production, circuits of consumption, circuits of distribution, circuits of exchange. All linked and overlapping, all autonomous and **indeterminate in their origins**.

The classic model of the circuit of circulation can give rise to a process of multiple circulation of circuits because the ‘value-form’ can be cloned, replicated, reproduced, re-circuited. No longer embedded in the facticity of material production, circulation is about speed, magnitude, and vectors.

#### Only the aff solves – focusing on the material form of capitalism ignores the virtual capitalism that structures the world today – Marx votes aff

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 142-145, March 2004, MG)

Or is something else at work in the contemporary era? Not simply the Capitalists’ ability to supervise and discipline labor,27 but just the opposite, **technology’s ability to supervise and discipline Capital**. Just as the Capitalist ‘will always seek to extend the duration and intensity of work,’ the will to virtuality necessitates the extension of the duration and intensity of Capital. The process of Capitalist production is **not allowed to pause**: consequently, the twenty-four-hour stock market pacing the celestial movements of the earth as it rotates around the sun, after-hours trading as a way of disturbing the rhythms of daytime trading, streamed capitalism as the final triumph of extensiveness over duration, of **dead (technological) space over the time of living Capital**.

Whereas in the industrial Capitalism of the twentieth century, the decisive political struggle was between labour and Capital, in the virtual Capitalism of the twenty-first century, the key historical contradiction lies between Capital and virtuality, between, that is, the will to Capitalist accumulation and the accumulative instincts of the will to virtuality.

In a fantastic intensification and abstraction of the historical drama between living labour and dead Capital charted in all its theoretical precision and economic granularity by Marx’s Capital, virtual Capitalism means, in its essentials, that in the twenty-first century Capital will, and does, occupy the same position as labour in the modern era. Just as the worker in relation to the Capitalist appropriation of surplus-value creates a ‘value alien’28 to himself, namely the valorization of the Capitalist process of production, so too Capital in relationship to virtuality also creates a value alien to itself. Incorporated into the digital process of production, at first as its necessary condition of historical development and later as its spectacular product, Capital now creates a surplus-value of virtuality, a speed and magnitude of digital technology that is **not reducible for its explanation to the laws of Capital accumulation**, and on behalf of which Capital is forced to serve as its historical incubator. While in industrial Capitalism, Capital in its fateful contestation with labour was the leading historical force, in virtual Capitalism, Capitalism declines into a residual historical category, a transitional state between the historically particular absorption of labour into the machinery of Capitalist accumulation and the global appropriation of Capitalism into a dynamic medium for the valorization of the technological process of (digital) production.

The Genealogy of Virtual Capitalism

Consequently, the great value of reading Marx’s Capital retrospectively, not from the vantage-point of the modern century on the cusp of the supposed post-Capitalist future but from the perspective of the muchvaunted digital future looking backwards, is that Marx provides both a brilliant genealogy of the birth of Capitalism and an equally insightful ‘futurology’ of its eclipse. Not, however, the eclipse of Capitalism by its ‘objective’ historical opponent – living labour – but the overcoming of Capitalism by its historical transformation into its **pure (metaphysical) form**, what Marx glimpsed from afar as the ‘circuit of circulation’ and what we now experience directly as the will to virtuality. Shedding the necessity of actual production, transcending the model of consump- tion, transforming distribution into networked vectors, and accelerating the language of exchange into mathematics of a ‘three-tiered digital architecture,’ **the will to virtuality exists now as the pure form of the circuit of Capitalism that Marx first prophesied**, and which in its first tentative steps announces itself, at first hesitatingly and then gathering strength from its global momentum, as the triumph of the will to virtuality.

Relentlessly focused on the political struggle of Capital and labour, socialization and privatization, collective consciousness and individual accumulation, Marx’s thought is primarily about labour, only secondarily about Capital, a matter of dialectics, not code. Thus the great irony. It is not to the dialectics of living labour and dead labour that we are compelled, finally and critically, to look for the sources of the overcoming of Capitalism, but to **the metaphysics of Capitalism itself**. Capitalism will not, and does not, survive its transformation from content to form, from its material-form to its value-form, from a circuit of **production to a pure circuit of circulation**. And why? Because Capitalism as a ‘circuit of circulation,’ in its contemporary representation as a pure form of valorization, is only apparently the value-form of Capital accumulation, but concretely the value-form of virtuality. At the heart of Marx’s Capital is less a haunting analysis of the dialectics of labour and Capital than a prophetic diagnosis of the hidden code of virtuality. Because that’s what Marx’s language of the ‘value-form’ of Capitalism really concerns, not Capital accumulation in its strict economic determination but the accumulative energies of the ‘circuit of circulation’ in its dynamic technological determination. Set in motion by the historical alibi of market-driven Capitalist accumulation, by the market-subordinated language of production, consumption, distribution, and exchange, the ‘circuit of circulation’ cannot, and does not, resist valorizing itself as its own value-form. Not the value-form of Capital which now occupies a position with respect to it previously assumed by (industrial) labour in relationship to Capital, namely use-value, but the value-form of virtuality. Once stripped of its use-value of Capital, Marx’s ‘circuit of circulation’ is the (technological) successor of Capitalism, the matrix of the will to virtuality. Ironically, just when everyone thought that Marx had been safely dispensed by historical events, in this period when the revolutionary fires of the early socialism of living labour-power have been withered away by the autocratic policies of official state socialism in the East and by official (trade) unionism in the West, at this precise moment the labyrinth of history reverses itself. The pages of Capital open to the section on the ‘circuit of circulation’ and we suddenly exit Marx’s theological narrative of (living) proletariat and (dead) Capital, falling into the future of the will to virtuality in its first appearance as the **pure value-form of the circuit of circulation**.

#### The alt fails – revolutions in the cybernetic age result in a dystopian regime of Amazon warehouse slavery

Ratta 20 (Donatella Della Ratta, writer specialising in media and visual cultures in Syria, “Digital Socialism Beyond the Digital Social: Confronting Communicative Capitalism with Ethics of Care,” tripleC 18(1), 2020, pgs. 101-115)//JRD

In his semantic taking over of the concept and emptying it of all things political and class-related, Kelly argues that the **emerging** form of **socialism** is “uniquely tuned for a **networked** **world**” and far away from “your grandfather’s socialism […] It is **not** **class** **warfare**. It is **not** **anti**-**American**” (Kelly 2009). In Kelly’s cyber-utopian rhetoric, **digital** **social** becomes in fact “**the newest American innovation**”, a type of “**socialism without the state**”, running over “a borderless Internet” and “designed to heighten individual autonomy and thwart centralization” (Kelly 2009). In his colourful techno-language, **digital** **socialism** **replaces** the **tedious** **bureaucracy** of the five-year plans with the “**brilliant chaos of a free market**”, refashioning **state** **factories** into “**desktop factories connected to virtual co-ops**”, and **exchanging** **national** **production** with **peer** **production**, “government rations and subsidies” with a “**bounty of free goods**” (Kelly 2009). In his apology of digital socialism, Kelly feels to have to justify the choice of “such an inflammatory heading” and “redeem” it, as “technically it is the best word to indicate a range of technologies that rely for their power on social interactions” (Kelly 2009). In his over excitement for all things tech, when the **masses** “contribute labor **without** **wages** and enjoy the **fruits** **free** of **charge**” (Kelly 2009), **that’s socialism**. As much as **Amazon’s** Mechanical Turk **is socialism**, real-time Twitter and RSS feeds are socialism, unlimited free cloud computing and passionate opinions on the Huffington Post are socialism of the digital type that Kelly heralds as the new, perfect form of “cultural OS” elevating “both the individual and the group at once” (Kelly 2009). One might excuse this over-enthusiastic apology by looking at the time in which it was authored, 2009, a year that was, for many, still full of digital promises and utopias. But Kelly believes so staunchly in digital socialism that he makes sure to declare his long-term view over the matter. Even if this phenomenon has not yet reached the mainstream at the time of his writing, “clearly the population that lives with socialized media is significant”, Kelly emphasises. “The **number** **of** **people** who **make things for** **free**, share things for free, use things for free, belong to **collective** **software** farms, work on **projects** that **require** **communal decisions**, or experience the **benefits** of **decentralized socialism** has reached **millions** and **counting**” (Kelly 2009). And, he vigorously concludes, “**revolutions** have **grown** out of **much smaller numbers**” (Kelly 2009). Ten years after this passionate attempt to redefine the meaning of socialism, the USA’s enemy number one **China** seems to have **learned** the guru’s **lesson** and **embedded** it into **institutional** **forms**, **implementing** an up-to-date version of state-led digital socialism. In 2020, the so-called “social credit system” will **standardise** the **assessment** of citizens’ **reputation** **producing** a mechanism for **ranking** them according to their **social** **and** **economic** **behaviours** and sanctioning them if they fail to pay taxes on time, as much as if they do not show up after having booked a restaurant table or a hotel room. In this dystopian, Black-Mirror like15 framework, the **Chinese** **government** seems, in its turn, to have borrowed **mechanisms** of **control** and **surveillance** not from **repressive** institutions or **authoritarian regimes**, but precisely from the **new digital social** of social networking **platforms**. A way to visualise and quantify, therefore to **evaluate**, **control**, and **sanction** social **relationships**, that is possible to adopt at a **state level and in such a pervasive**, dystopian fashion only after the **mechanism** has become not just **acceptable** and **familiar** but, also, **desirable** for the **global masses**. While this semantic redefinition is carried out, albeit in different ways, both by Silicon Valley’s libertarian utopians and by China’s new institutional form of authoritarianism concealed under the more attractive guise of the digital, the European Union responds to the hegemonic re-appropriation of the social by emphasising its citizens’ rights to own their data and to protect their privacy. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)16 is probably the most striking example of such a timid, apprehensive reaction to the takeover of the social, which reveals a lack of a proper understanding of this phenomenon happening at a global scale. GDPR attempts at building a defence against the aggressive pervasiveness of the digital social by giving individuals the (illusion of) control and ownership of their data, upon which they would enjoy the right to request a portable copy and also, under certain circumstances, the possibility to have them erased. However, this promise of opening “the algorithmic ‘black box’ to promote challenge, redress, and hopefully heightened accountability” (Edwards and Veale 2017, 18) might just result into yet another “transparency fallacy” (Edwards and Veale 2017, 43), as there are complicated legal and infrastructure-related issues that might prevent the granted rights to be properly exercised by their holders. And yet even these legal or infrastructural impediments are not what is really at stake with the GDPR and similar policies. Its underlying problem is rather, in my view, an approach responding to the pervasive appropriation of the digital domain that renders all things digital “social” by simply reaffirming values such as ownership and property. The stark contradiction between data that have constantly to move and circulate – that have to be “spreadable” (Jenkins, Ford and Green 2013) – as per the business model of all things social, and the right to own and control such fluctuating, pervasive, and ever-multiplying immaterial goods, becomes apparent here. It’s the **overall** **acceptance** of a giant money machine and **revenue**-**making** **system** in the **hope** of regaining control of it by **tweaking** some **small** **details**. It’s a David and Goliath situation, where the actual little stone being thrown at the latter’s forehead does not affect the whole gigantic immaterial apparatus firmly in place. The contradiction inherent in a GDPR-like approach is that while we struggle to regain little bits of ownership and control over our data, the “feedback infrastructure” (Morozov 2019) stays firmly in the hands of platform capitalism. This rights-based attitude and the values themselves that it claims to defend and protect – property, ownership and privacy – are the core of the problem, not its antidote. **Claiming back ownership** and privacy **does** **not** **challenge** the **system**, instead it seeks to **mitigate** the **worst** **effects** of **communicative** **capitalism**, protecting **small** **territories** of individual freedoms against a **market** that stays as **greedy** as ever (if not more), appealing to **individual** **personal** **rights** and responsibilities **rather** **than** addressing a **political** **collective**.

#### The worker has disappeared --- the lack of spatial proximity and continuity between workers denies the possibility of class solidarity fomenting meaningful resistance. Moreover, Marx’s economic theory understands labor as divisible into discrete units of time, but the floating, arbitrary value of money combined with the depersonalization of time means today’s cognitive worker no longer has no discrete surplus-value to be stolen

**Bifo 15** [Francesco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Professor of Social History of Communication at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2015, p. 138-42]

The recombinant alliance of cognitive work and financial capital was over. The young army of free agents, selfexploiters and virtual prosumers was transformed into modernity’s horde of precarious cognitive workers: cognitarians, cognitive proletarians and internet-slaves who invest nervous energy in exchange for a precarious revenue.

Precarity is the general condition of semio-workers. The essential feature of precarity in the social sphere is not the loss of regularity in the labour relation, since labour has always been more or less precarious, notwithstanding legal regulations. The essential transformation induced by the digitalization of the labour process is the fragmentation of the personal continuity of work, the fractalization and cellularization of time. The worker disappears as a person, and is replaced by abstract fragments of time. The cyberspace of global production can be viewed as an immense expanse of depersonalized human time. In the sphere of industrial production, abstract labour time was embodied in a worker of flesh and bone, with a certified and political identity. When the boss was in need of human time for capital valorization, he was obliged to hire a human being, and was obliged to deal with the physical weaknesses, maladies and rights of this human being; was obliged to face trade unions reclaims and the political demands of which the human was a bearer.

As we move into the age of info-labour, there is no longer a need to invest in the availability of a person for eight hours a day throughout the duration of his or her life. Capital no longer recruits people, but buys packets of time, separated from their interchangeable and occasional bearers. In the internet economy, flexibility has evolved into a form of fractalization of work.

Fractalization is the modular and recombinant fragmentation of the period of activity. The worker no longer exists as a person. He or she is only an interchangeable producer of micro-fragments of recombinant semiosis that enter into the continuous flux of the internet. Capital no longer pays for the availability of a worker to be exploited for a long period of time; it no longer pays a salary that covers the entire range of economic needs of a person who works.

The worker (a machine endowed with a brain that can be used for fragments of time) is paid for his or her occasional, temporary services. Work time is fragmented and cellularized. Cells of time are put up for sale online, and businesses can purchase as many of them as they want without being obligated in any way to provide any social protection to the worker. Depersonalized time has become the real agent of the process of valorization, and depersonalized time has no rights, no union organization and no political consciousness. It can only be either available or unavailable – although this latter alternative remains purely theoretical inasmuch as the physical body still has to buy food and pay rent, despite not being a legally recognized person.

The time necessary to produce the info-commodity is liquefied by the recombinant digital machine. The human machine is there, pulsating and available, like a brainsprawl in waiting. The extension of time is meticulously cellularized: cells of productive time can be mobilized in punctual, casual and fragmentary forms. The recombination of these fragments is automatically realized in the network. The mobile phone is the tool that makes possible the connection between the needs of semiocapital and the mobilization of the living labour of cyberspace. The ringtone of the mobile phone summons workers to reconnect their abstract time to the reticular flux.

In this new labour dimension, people have no right to protect or negotiate the time of which they are formally the proprietors, but are effectively expropriated. That time does not really belong to them, because it is separated from the social existence of the people who make it available to the recombinant cyber-productive circuit. The time of work is fractalized, reduced to minimal fragments that can be reassembled, and the fractalization makes it possible for capital to constantly find the conditions of the minimal salary. Fractalized work can punctually rebel, here and there, at certain points – but this does not set into motion any concerted endeavour of resistance.

Only the spatial proximity of the bodies of labourers and the continuity of the experience of working together lead to the possibility of a continuous process of solidarity. Without this proximity and this continuity, the conditions for the cellularized bodies to coalesce into community do not pertain. Individual behaviours can only come together to form a substantive collective momentum when there is a continuous proximity in time, a proximity that info-labour no longer makes possible.

Cognitive activity has always been involved in every kind of human production, even that of a more mechanical type. There is no process of human labour that does not involve an exercise of intelligence. But today, cognitive capacity is becoming the essential productive resource. In the age of industrial labour, the mind was put to work as a repetitive automatism, the neurological director of muscular effort. While industrial work was essentially repetition of physical acts, mental work is continuously changing its object and its procedures.

Thus, the subsumption of the mind in the process of capitalist valorization leads to a true mutation. The conscious and sensitive organism is subjected to a growing competitive pressure, to an acceleration of stimuli, to a constant exertion of his/her attention. As a consequence, the mental environment, the info-sphere in which the mind is formed and enters into relations with other minds, becomes a psychopathogenic environment.

To understand semiocapital’s infinite game of mirrors, we must first outline a new disciplinary field, delimited by three aspects: the critique of political economy of connective intelligence; the semiology of linguistic-economic fluxes; and the psychochemistry of the info-sphere, focused on the study of the psychopathological effects of the mental exploitation caused by the acceleration of the info-sphere.

In the connected world, the retroactive loops of general systems theory are fused with the dynamic logic of biogenetics to form a post-human vision of digital production. Human minds and flesh are integrated with digital circuits thanks to interfaces of acceleration and simplification: a model of bio-info production is emerging that produces semiotic artefacts with the capacity for the auto- replication of living systems. Once fully operative, the digital nervous system can be rapidly installed in every form of organization.

The digital network is provoking an intensification of the info-stimuli, and these are transmitted from the social brain to individual brains. This acceleration is a pathogenic factor that has wide-ranging effects in society. Since capitalism is wired into the social brain, a psychotic meme of acceleration acts as pathological agent: the organism is drawn into a spasm until collapse.

#### The bourgeoisie has disappeared: in the regime of semiocapitalism, there’s nothing to rebel against. Their replacement, the “elsewhere class,” engages in a constant reterritorialization of random financial value that makes effective resistance impossible.

**Bifo 15** [Francesco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Professor of Social History of Communication at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2015, p. 76-80]

Semiocapital and the Ethics of Baroque

Crime used to be a secret act. In the age of repression and industriousness, when the morality of the bourgeoisie was reigning, crime wanted to be secret. Law aimed at preventing crime, and it encouraged investigations of criminals in order to punish them.

This order of things has irrevocably changed in the last turn of time, especially since the advent of the semiocapitalist regime.

Semiocapitalism occupies the sphere of randomness of value, as well as the sphere of randomness of law and of moral judgement.

The entire strategy of the system lies in this hyper-reality of floating values. It is the same for money and theory as for the unconscious. Value rules according to an ungraspable order: the generation of models, the indefinite chaining of simulation. Cybernetic operationality, the genetic code, the random order of mutations, the principle of uncertainty, and so on: all of these replace a determinist and objectivist science, a dialectical vision of history and consciousness.1

Baudrillard is talking of value in economic terms. In the post-Fordist transition, the relation between work-time and value is jeopardized, as immaterial production and cognitive work are difficult to properly gauge. But the random effect is not limited to the sphere of the economy, as it spreads both to the sphere of social relations and to that of ethics.

The current, generalized perception of widespread corruption is neither a superficial impression, nor the effect of a deterioration of the moral character of people.

It is a systemic effect of the randomization of value. When value can no longer be determined by the precise relation to work-time, its determinant factors become deception, swindle, violence. Mafia ceases to be a marginal phenomenon of lawlessness, instead becoming the prevailing force of emerging capitalist economies like Russia and Mexico. At the same time, fraud is legalized and organized in the global financial market as a systemic feature.

As it becomes increasingly institutionalized, crime loses its secrecy and demands access to the spectacle. The visibility of crime becomes part of the effectiveness and persuasiveness of power. Competition is all about subduing, cheating, predating. Blaming the victims is part of the game: you are guilty of your inability to subdue, to cheat and to plunder, therefore you will be submitted to the blackmail of debt and to the tyranny of austerity.

Nazism already enacted spectacular crime as a means to secure absolute power, but the criminal acts conducted in the name of the ‘Final Solution’ were secretly organized and performed away from the public eye. Evil was proclaimed and simultaneously denied in the name of the superior values of family, homeland and God. On the contrary, reclaiming evil has become commonplace in today’s financial markets, as the old ethics of bourgeois Protestantism is progressively cancelled by the neobaroque, post-bourgeois ethics of the deterritorialized financial class.

The bourgeoisie was a strongly territorialized class, whose power was based on the property of physical assets, and on the fact of belonging to a stable community. Protestant ethics was based on the long-lasting relationship between the religious community and the labourers and consumers who shared the same place and the same destiny.

Nowadays, the bourgeoisie has disappeared. The financial deterritorialization is generating a post-bourgeois class, which has no relation to the territory and to community.

It is a class that is not concerned with the future of any specific territorial community, because tomorrow it will move its business to a different part of the world. We might call it the ‘elsewhere class’, as it continuously displaces the stakes of its investment. But we may also call it a ‘virtual class’, for two reasons: because it is the class that gains profits from virtual activities, like net trading, and high tech immaterial production; and because it is the class that does not actually exist. Identifying those who are investing in the financial market is difficult, impossible, as everybody is obliged to depend on it.

In a sense, everybody is part of the class that is investing in the financial market. Including myself. As a teacher I am bound to wait for a pension, and I know that my pension will be paid if some investment funds will be profitable, therefore I am obliged to depend for my future revenue on the profitability of the financial market. The ‘elsewhere class’ has re-established the economic rationale of the rentier, as profit is no longer linked to the expansion of the existing wealth, but is linked to the mere possession of an invisible asset: money, or, more accurately, credit.

According to Thomas Stewart:

Money has dematerialized. Once upon a time officials of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York were loading gold bars onto trolleys and rolled them from one country’s basement to another. Today some 1.3 trillion in currency is traded every day, and never takes a tangible form.

Money has turned ethereal, volatile and electronic. Nothing more than an assemblage of ones and zeros that are piped through miles of wire, pumped over fiberoptic highways, bounced off satellites, and beamed from one microwave relay station to another. This new money is like a shadow. It has no tactile dimension, no heft or weight. Money is an image.2

The post-bourgeois class of virtual finance has no homeland, no community, no belonging, and also no money. Just faith. Faith in signs, in figures. The post-bourgeois class announces the return of the baroque.

Although defeated and marginalized during the age of bourgeois progress and the rational organization of social life, the baroque has never disappeared.

Its spirit is based on the primacy of the spectacle, on the multiplication of possible interpretations, on randomness of value and of meaning, or the potency of arbitrary and violent will. Not surprisingly, Curzio Malaparte, a writer who took part in Italian Fascism before changing his position during the Second World War, in Europa vivente, published in 1925, speaks of Italian Fascism as a return of the baroque. Northern Europeans are wrong to think that modernity is only a Protestant business, says Malaparte. Fascism is the reclaiming of the modern soul of Southern Europeans, and the political spectacle of Mussolini is the resurgence of the baroque cult of inessentiality, decoration, excess: arbitrary power.

But arbitrariness is not only a defining feature of Fascism, it is also the quintessential character of the semio capitalist form of accumulation. The power of the resurgent baroque is fully exposed by the transformation of the economy into semioproduction. When language, imagination, information and immaterial flows become the force of production and the general space of exchange, when property is deterritorialized and becomes immaterial, the baroque spirit becomes the all-encompassing form, both of the economy and of ethical discourse.

### 2AC---AT: Feminist Cyborg

#### Conceiving bodies as cyborgs reifies violence, ignores who created that technology, and doesn’t solve

DeCook 20 (Julia R. DeCook PhD - Assistant Professor of Advocacy and Social Change in the School of Communication at Loyola University, “A [White] Cyborg’s Manifesto: the overwhelmingly Western ideology driving technofeminist theory”, Media Culture and Society, 28 September 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443720957891>, MG)

I anticipated much about reading A Cyborg Manfiesto before I ever did. I understood it simply as conceptualizing the femme body as cyborg, dismantling the confines within which these categorized bodies have bene controlled and defined. Cyborg, in Haraway’s conception, blurs the lines of all of these boundaries of identities and will no longer think of itself or function in a society of other cyborgs being confined to these categories of difference and distinction. Notably, the rise of technological networks in the 1980s and beyond made some theorists hopeful that this would signify an end to sex differences being defined within the realm of embodiment (Puar, 2012; Wajcman, 2004, 2007), and the transhumanist movement started to formally organize and attempt to disseminate its ideology into the world during the same period (Bostrom, 2005). It was not necessarily the promise of machines, per se, that began peeling away the very definitions of what it meant to be human, but rather the sophistication and intelligence of the machines themselves and their capabilities that started to break down the idea of bodies ‘ending at the skin’ (Wilkerson, 1997). However, instead of shifting away essentialized notions of gender and sex away from the body, the technological revolution of the late 20th and early 21st century may have further **reified and cemented these differences** rather than usurping them – and, as recent conversations have begun to point out, this extends beyond gender and affects subjectivity and embodied notions of sexuality, race, and ability.

Although Haraway famously made her claim that she would rather be a cyborg than a goddess to mark the departure of the idea of the woman being a natural, biologically driven ‘goddess’ of the Earth and to embrace the potential of science and technology in what it could provide in shifting the idea of woman as a naturalized, essential concept, the issue still remains that **technology is shaped by human factors**, and that in turn, it **shapes us and our humanity.** Further adding to this entangled shaping and shifting that occurs is the rejection of the nature driven idea of the woman (the goddess) and replacing it with the cyborg. Is this desire to replace the concept of woman as goddess with the identity of the cyborg an indicator of washing away humankind’s need to tame nature? Or does it merely replace **one technology of control with another**? Indeed, the idea of the cyborg is a seductive one because it would potentially replace all of the fragile parts of our humanity with artificial and indestructible ones, but the epistemic groundings upon which much of science and technology are built upon and of which the cyborg is built upon are **fraught with violence**.

I will never forget the first time I read ‘A Cyborg Manifesto’ and felt completely and utterly overwhelmed with a certain brand of imposter syndrome reserved for first generation women of color in the academe. Rather than feeling liberated, I felt I was introduced another definition of being through ‘cyborg’ that seemingly served to further **privilege a certain kind of body above others (i.e., a white, able-bodied one).** As Wajcman notes, ‘the possibility and the fluidity of gender discourse in the virtual world is constrained by the material world’, (Wajcman, 2007: 292), and when technology is predominantly controlled and made by men, this further adds material constraints to what technology is capable of in granting the agency to redefine race, gender, and sexuality for those that seek to reconfigure themselves by their own terms. As Puar notes by citing Currier, ‘the theorization of cyborgs winds up unwittingly ‘**reinscribing the cyborg into the binary logic of identity which Haraway hopes to circumvent’** (Currier 2003: 323)’ (Puar, 2012: 56–57). Although Haraway’s intention with A Cyborg Manifesto was to break new ground in conceptualizing about bodies during the transhumanist turn, the cyborg does no**t necessarily represent a breakaway** from essentialized and dichotomized notions of identity, but exists in the liminal space not oppositionally but frictionally against other subjects and identities (Puar, 2012).

#### Cyborg theory doesn’t explain anything and is too limited

DeCook 20 (Julia R. DeCook PhD - Assistant Professor of Advocacy and Social Change in the School of Communication at Loyola University, “A [White] Cyborg’s Manifesto: the overwhelmingly Western ideology driving technofeminist theory”, Media Culture and Society, 28 September 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443720957891>, MG)

The cyborg does not come without baggage, and in fact comes with its own value codes, which is perhaps **amplified** by our increasingly data-driven society that is run by algorithms and other agents that exist in technological infrastructures. Atanasoski and Vora discuss in their essay how these technological, networked infrastructures have begun to bring into question not even who counts as cyborg, but who and what even qualifies as human (Atanasoski and Vora, 2015). Their essay illustrates the limits of posthumanist fantasies of surpassing the boundaries of humanity, and how the views of this techno utopia formulate the ‘surrogate human’. Further, the fantasy that humans can be freed by technology from labor has perhaps **collapsed in the age of the networked society**, and although surrogate humanity may mark a shift away from capitalism, ‘it does so by **reaffirming existing paradigms of racialized and gendered value** through the figure of a surrogate human who performs degraded work that is always already meant to be invisible’, (Atanasoski and Vora, 2015: 7). Although not dealing with the concept of cyborg per se, this essay marks the introduction of the concept of the transhuman, the posthuman, and the surrogate human that technology has promised to create – and its failures to transcend identity in the form of gender, race, class, and ability, and rather continues to function and uphold in a colonialist, historical, capitalist power structure. Technology, the Internet of Things, data, and algorithms that enable the structure of modern day society are never neutral, and in fact all of these data-driven practices further ‘materializes assumptions of what constitutes a human . . .’ (Atanasoski and Vora, 2015: 13).

‘Techno-utopics surrounding big data, smart objects, and internetworking of humans and machines, however, do not dwell in the vitality of matter, but rather propose the thing as a surrogate human. In this way, they **replicate the violent neoliberal impetus** to enfold difference into sameness – into a shared space and time’, (Atanasoski and Vora, 2015: 16). However as Holland notes in their work The Erotic Life of Racism, there are beings that exist in time (white people) and beings who exist in space (Black people) – and when these two beings collide, there is an affront to the material and societal order within which they exist. The idea of technology, the cyborg, the transhuman and the posthuman as identities that exist in a utopia, in a beyond, **is a myth** that is being perpetuated and shifted by those who already benefit from hegemonic paradigms of what counts as being human in the first place. Bhattarai’s essay then further illustrates these concepts in their essay discussing algorithmic value, and how even investments in algorithms that seem benign are in fact reproducing a certain **cultural logic of power** in terms of knowledge, labor, and bodies (Bhattarai, 2017). The idea of source code, of algorithms, of data being the genesis of action is **naïve** – ‘because their agency is enabled and constrained by a larger network of cultural and economic encodings that render them executable’, (Bhattarai, 2017: 21), illuminating again that attempts to make technology and the tech world more inclusive and diverse as well as the attempts to use the category of cyborg as transcending difference are merely the master’s tools disguised as revolutionary action.

Technology (and thus, cyborgs), since it is created by humans, carries with it the **same limitations as humanity** in terms of its ability to provide transcendence of our categorizations of race, class, gender, and ability. In effect, the ‘source code’ is already imbued with certain assumptions of all of these categories of difference, since it is written from the epistemological standpoint and values of those who create it (Benjamin, 2019; Noble, 2018). If the tech industry and tech world is heavily dominated by whiteness, by maleness, then in what capacity do those who do not fit into hegemonic notions of humanity (white, cis, hetero, male) figure into these infrastructural equations? Epistemic sites of thought in the theorization of the transhuman, of the posthuman, of the cyborg all exist within the same epistemic paradigms upon which all science and technology are built upon – **colonialist, Western, white** – and thus are **limited in fully conceptualizing a beyond**.

### 1AR---AT: Feminist Cyborg

#### The alt is violent, doesn’t solve the aff, and doesn’t even solve itself

DeCook 20 (Julia R. DeCook PhD - Assistant Professor of Advocacy and Social Change in the School of Communication at Loyola University, “A [White] Cyborg’s Manifesto: the overwhelmingly Western ideology driving technofeminist theory”, Media Culture and Society, 28 September 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443720957891>, MG)

The concept of the cyborg has been fundamental in informing multiple fields – most notably, science and technology studies, women and gender studies, communication, postmodernism, digital culture, and more (Glazier, 2016). Haraway’s influence on these fields and even beyond them is irrefutable – however, the ‘universality’ of the cyborg is the issue at hand. The concept of the cyborg has continued to allow for the **centering of whiteness and white identity** and a techno-utopic worldview where technology is seen to be emancipatory, **rather than oppressive**. Indeed, many problems in our society in the 20th and 21st century in particular have all had technology thrown at them as a way of ‘fixing’ the issue – everything from climate change to racism to even pandemics (Benjamin, 2019; Engler, 2020; Eubanks, 2012; Huesemann and Huesemann, 2011). But time and time again, all of these ‘fixes’ have rather revealed the **limits of technology** in solving human problems – however, this has not stopped the slew of apps, devices, and other technological attempts in an attempt to do so, with no regard for the people behind the screens. In studying global digital cultures, Haraway’s notion of the cyborg is **deeply Western** in its theorization, and **leaves behind** those who do not exist in Western conceptions of personhood.

Further research on my part revealed that the love affair with A Cyborg Manifesto had been fraught earlier than I had imagined or seemed to perceive within my own graduate program and peers – in an essay from 2001, Maria Fernandez and Suhail Malik wrote, ‘Cyborg theory is mostly a **self-serving sexying up of critical liberalism** through great gadgetry and concept-busting movements in the technoscientific organization of living material and extended systems. Tie-dye T-shirts are swapped for leather deathpants and ethnic beads for prosthetic hardware in a desperate bid for contemporaneity’, (Fernandez and Malik, 2001). Even going so far to refer to the notion of the cyborg as a form of **dogmatism**, Fernandez and Malik note that the concept itself is **hypocritical**. Haraway did encourage the embrace of new technologies as a means of liberation – however, time and time again we have seen the ways that technology only continues to **reify existing power structures, notably white supremacy and misogyny** (Benjamin, 2019).

Cyborgs, then, useful as they are in conceptualizing a departure from traditional notions of identity, **reify the very technological institutions which they were meant to disrupt** – one that privileges certain bodies and identities and embodiments above others. Even the idea of the cyborg itself is borne out of a Western philosophy of selfhood and technology, further adding to its limits in dismantling categorical conceptions of the self. As Holland notes, we are not capable of living without categories of difference (Holland, 2012), and perhaps although the cyborg metaphor holds so much potential in breaking down our ideas of how the body – and the self – are constructed, this reconstruction of the embodied self through the metaphor of technology indeed has its limits. The purpose of this essay is not only a collection of my reflections, but serves to point out the limitations in conceptualizing cyborg as identity category and form of embodiment, and provides some directions in which we can begin to build upon and challenge the potential – and the potential of its limits – of the cyborg.

Potentials of its limits: who gets to be a cyborg?

The identity of cyborg is indeed a privileged one that invokes certain issues surrounding categorization and of embodiment. The cyborg body is one that is littered with not only **epistemic violence** in regard to the foundations on which it is grounded (a Western philosophy of the self as well as Western views of science and technology), but also in regard to **class, race, sexuality, and ability**. Technology and the desire to create and control machines is a realm dominated by Man, and thus technology itself may **inherently be patriarchal** (Wajcman, 2004), yet women have always been present and have indeed always had a presence in the design and use of these technologies as well. In particular, the rise of the networked society and the ability to shift and shape identity in cyberspace as well as the rise of the Internet of Things makes the idea of the cyborg woman more possible than ever before. However, is women’s participation in cyberspace and the technological sphere disruptive of the very basis on which technology is built? Or is it merely, as Audre Lorde puts it, a futile attempt to ‘dismantle the master’s house with the master’s tools’? (Lorde, 1984). How much potential do science, technology, and the cyborg identity really hold for women, for people of color, for the disabled, and for queer persons?

### 2AC---AT: Psychoanalysis

#### The libidinal economy has been cyberneticized – desire is now formulated through data and virtual capitalism which only the aff can solve

Kroker 4 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, “THE WILL TO TECHNOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF NIHILISM: HEIDEGGER, NIETZSCHE, AND MARX”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 135-139, March 2004, MG)

Now, many working theorists have been this way before. Jean-François Lyotard recognized the death knell in the war machine of labour power, immediately calling for a **recovery of a ‘libidinal economy**,’23 a primitive pre-Marxism that would take labouring flesh back to an economy of pleasure and pain, an economy of sex and muscle, with the psychoanalytics of the suppressed id as the wild card in between. In The Mirror of Production, Jean Baudrillard was less utopian, more severe.24 In a twentieth-century reprise of that earlier meeting of French revolutionary thought of 1848 with the philosophy of the German Enlightenment, Jacobins with Hegel, the Paris Commune with German conservative reactionism, Baudrillard diagnosed Marx’s sleight of hand at the splitting of labour and labour-power for what it was: the foundations of a ‘structural law of value’25 in which Capitalism was to be cyberneticized in the form of the ruling axiomatic of signifier (use-value) and signified (exchange-value). More than Lyotard, who placed his theoretical bets on drawing out the differend in Marx’s theory of labour, Baudrillard wrote The Mirror of Production as Marx’s avenging angel, always insisting that the labour theory of value, far from inaugurating a new possibility of proletarian, let alone universal, emancipation, only functioned to install the ‘**rational terrorism of the code’26** as the ruling order of the Capitalist axiomatic. For his fateful insights into the happy complicity of Marxism and Capitalism in sharing exactly the same episteme of the structural law of value, Baudrillard has suffered the usual fate: denounced everywhere as a cynic, this the most political of all thinkers, the most rigorously and naturally Marxist of all the post-Marxists, banished to an early twilight of thought on the (Parisian) margins.

If the twin gestures of Lyotard’s Libidinal Economy and Baudrillard’s The Mirror of Production cannot be assimilated into conventional Marxism, perhaps that is because Marx himself is the first post-Marxist, the first theorist, that is, who, unsettled by the ambiguities of identity and difference disguised here as the language of labour and labour-power, there as the supposedly warring poles of use-value and exchangevalue, wrote out his labour theory of value as a secret prolegomenon to a stage of Capitalism not yet existent**. A code waiting for a material form**, a theory of value awaiting its definite historical conditions of labour. Marx’s Capital, then, not so much an analysis of the definite conditions for the socialization of labour, although that too, but a secret history, written much in the tradition of the cabal, of a future Capitalism that would represent, as Marx theorizes in the third volume of Capital, the really existent history of ‘dead labour.’ It is, of course, around the corpse of Marx’s ‘dead labour’ that Libidinal Economy and The Mirror of Production circle, sometimes settling in the desert sands for a feeding frenzy of delirious theory, sometimes startled by the approach of passing armies of the night, taking flight, almost like a permanent evocation of ecstasy that was the Paris Commune and the slow decline of the German bourgeois restoration. Whether by way of Marx, who studiously wrote out the codes of the (industrial) Capitalist axiomatic only to write ‘dead labour’ as its epitaph and future, or by virtue of the chilling lightness of being of the French mind in the form of Lyotard and Baudrillard, who always and only begin with the last rites of dead labour, the spectre of post-labour haunts the Capitalist axiomatic.

And this is as it should be. Because whether expressed in the language of the ‘structural law of value’ or in terms of the ‘labour theory of value,’ Capitalism has never been about really existent labour, but always about the **subordination of labour to the theory of value.** Modern Capitalism, then, as an industrial semiotics. A critical point because it indicates that if contemporary Capitalism – digital Capitalism with its globalized markets and circular flows of Capital – can so easily escape the question of labour, can so swiftly disappear labour in the (domestic) form of ‘reductions in the work-place’ or in the (international) form of harvesting the world for perpetually new sources of cheap labour, that does not indicate that Capitalism has escaped the question of value. So then, two alternative theses. First, an **epistemological thesis** concerning the historical transition of the value-form of Capitalism: modern Capitalism might have been coded by the labour theory of value, but twenty-first-century Capitalism will be organized under the sign of the knowledge-theory of value. **Digital Capitalism as networked knowledge, not a labour exchange.** Certainly the safest (theoretical) route. It requires for its affirmation only an acceptance of the received wisdom that the epochal movement from industrial to cybernetic Capitalism, from modern Capitalism premised on the labour theory of value to postmodern Capitalism based on the knowledge theory of value, takes the form of a general historical movement to a knowledge-based society, with all its implications for the triumph of a class of networked specialists over traditional labour based in fading manufacturing and service sectors. Or, an opposing **ontological thesis**. A strange thesis concerning the ambiguity of labour and knowledge, that labouring activity is **always knowledge-based activity**, that the knowledge-based society has its deepest genealogical roots in the first worker who mastered the cybernetics of the machine age, and that if the fantastic knowledge of the worker was somehow lost sight of in the rush to the labour-theory of value that is not to say that it was not always labour-value, but knowledge-value, that was put into play by the Capitalist axiomatic. Out of this latter thesis, there emerges an enigmatic Marx. Not Marx as the nineteenth-century theorist of the approaching struggle of proletariat and bourgeoisie over the alternatively exploitative and emancipatory rites of the labour theory of value, but the spectre of Marx as the twenty-first-century theorist who, in diagnosing the objective historical conditions for labour-value, was in reality, a hundred and fifty years before its time, analysing the future-world of an advanced Capitalist society premised on the knowledge-theory of value. With the triumph of digital Capitalism, it may well be that the proletarianization of knowledge-work is only about to begin. If this is the case then Marx’s theory of class struggle may yet be awaiting its first moment of historical realization in a fateful struggle over the falling rate of (digital) profit and the exploitation of knowledge-value. From the exploitation of industrial labour to the struggle over knowledge-value, understanding the digital future is in its Marxian past.

From Dead Labour to Virtual Knowledge

Digital Capitalism is focused on the struggle over the emancipation of knowledge-value from embodied knowledge: its genealogy, its circulation as a generalized medium of cybernetic exchange, and its final appearance, in the residual form **not of dead labour, but of dead knowledge.**

In exactly the same way that labour functioned in industrial Capitalism both as an embodiment of use-value and as the dominant valueform of exchange-value, knowledge functions in digital Capitalism as a regulator of use-labour and exchange-labour. The dominant medium of exchange of digital Capitalism, knowledge breaks forever with its genealogical roots in individual consciousness, becoming instead the **key value-form of cybernetic culture**. Not living knowledge with its origins in individual subjectivity, embodied memory, or granulated knowledge of specific labour practices, but virtual knowledge as the dynamic medium of cybernetic culture.

Virtual Knowledge? That’s knowledge when it is first **invested with the alien quality of value**, when knowledge first ceases to a matter of individual consciousness, becoming instead a value-form, a circulating medium within whose deflationary and inflationary flows the world is **cyberneticized**, coded here with the binary logic of 0/1, there spoken of as a ‘digital nervous system.’ In the same way that labour was a measure of market value in modern Capitalism, knowledge is now a value of the measure of cyberneticity of digital Capitalism. It is around the question of knowledge-value that the fundamental class conflicts of digital Capitalism first organize, sometimes in the daily repressed form of the domination of human imagination by the performancerequirements of the virtual workplace, at other times by open rebellions of a rising tide of global counter-knowledge – environmentalism, collective labour rights, human rights – against the ‘free circulation’ of knowledge-value, which is to say of cybernetic Capital, so necessary for the continued functioned of digital Capitalism.

Far from abandoning the generic pattern of use-value and exchangevalue so endemic to the industrial mode of production, **digital Capitalism perpetuates, even intensifies, this pattern**, but at a higher level of abstraction and generality. Severing the bond of use-knowledge and individual subjectivity, digital Capitalism codes the question of useknowledge in its deepest interiority. What once may have accurately been described as **psychological repression now** takes the form of a gradual constriction of knowledge to a **doubled code of use**. On the one hand, knowledge that is instrumentally useful for the seamless insertion of human flesh into the high-performance speed of digital culture, and on the other, codes of use that are only apparently transgressive. Virtual knowledge and abuse knowledge, both contained as simultaneously explosive and domesticated tendencies in the same body. ‘Be serious’ and ‘be fake’ as the doubled sign of the knowledge-worker fully prepared for fast integration into the axiomatic of digital Capitalism. With instrumental (digital) knowledge, the body is plugged into the disciplinary network of careerism. With (cultural) abuse value, the body touches at a distance that which has been forgotten in the interfacing of human and machine flesh: **libidinal pleasures, human memory, symbolic exchange**. All these are simultaneously retrieved in a (cultural) way that immediately shuts down the anxiety of that which has been forgotten. It is ‘be fake’ culture: the appropriation of the original ecstasy spirit of rave culture by the corporate cultural axiomatic, the assimilation of sometimes ghetto, sometimes prison, rap culture for the ersatz entertainment of white suburban boys. Economically, useknowledge in the digital axiomatic **binds human flesh to the digital nervous system**. Culturally, digital use-knowledge is about the cynicism of forgetfulness.

Connectivity and forgetfulness: that is the paradoxical condition of virtual knowledge in the ruling capitalist axiomatic.

#### The status quo already inculcates anorganic mechanistic joy and the will to technology codes the supercapitalist war machine through instances of convulsive pleasure – only the aff solves or we impact turn their K

Featherstone 10 (Mark Featherstone PhD - Lecturer in Sociology at Keele University, “Death-Drive America: On Scott Wilson’s Vision of the Cultural Politics of American Nihilism in the Age of Supercapitalism”, FastCapitalism, 2010, <https://fastcapitalism.uta.edu/7_1/featherstone7_1.html>, MG)

It is now clear that the essential result of the **total unreflexive expansion of these globalizing technologies** under the tutelage of the American state over the course of the last twenty years has been the more or less apocalyptic crash of the global economy which was never governed by value rationality, but rather operated on the basis of mindless principles of economic struggle, such as competitive advantage. However, to imagine this crash somehow signals the end of Americanism and that Obama will be presented with a clean slate on which to build a more socialistic America is, I think, a mistake since the standard view of the Chicago School economic thinkers would be to regard the current economic chaos in posthuman terms by suggesting that what has happened over the course of the last year or so is best represented by the image of the personal computer re-booting itself after receiving the essential software update that the credit bubble was over-inflated and needed to burst in order for the economy to start to expand in future. The idea that we should tamper with the economy on the basis of the essential re-boot, and think in humanistic terms about the effects of the re-start on the world’s human population, would be lost on a thinker such as Milton Friedman (2002), who would assert the need to let the economy work itself out of the downturn, simply because he was possessed by the apocalyptic spirit of technology that has become normal in the Americanized world. Unfortunately for the human population of the planet, the modern / postmodern age has been, and continues to be, defined by the **dominance of the spirit of technology** in ways that stretch far beyond the economic theories of Friedman and the Chicago School thinkers and are perhaps better illustrated by Heidegger’s (1977) theory of completed nihilism that describes a world totally possessed by **instrumental reason**.

Despite the dire warnings of the prophets of technological dystopia such as Heidegger we remain unable to really conceive of the value of organic life vis-à-vis the vitality of technology because we are **infused by the spirit of the machin**e that has no purpose beyond the endless reproduction of its most basic function to work. As Kroker (2003) illustrates in his The Will to Technology, the prophets of the technological future, such as Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, understood that the machine, which is transformed into Deleuze and Guattari’s war machine in Wilson’s work, has no thought, philosophy, or reason. It simply works for the sake of working and ensuring that it continues to works in the future. In Kroker’s view this image of what Deleuze and Guattari call the mecanosphere was predicted by Marx, who advanced the notion of circulation, Nietzsche, who made the idea of the will central to this thought, and Heidegger, who linked Marx to Nietzsche in his theory of completed technological nihilism that simply wills the will that wills itself and so on. However, we know that this is not the end of the story. Akin to Kroker (2006), who shows that the closed circle of completed nihilism produces a mythical resurrection effect that pushes a primitive God who hires and fires and sort winners from losers centre stage, Wilson explains that the total expansion of the **supercapitalist war machine** through the various scalings of global space-time produces a **utopian moment of convulsive pleasure** comparable to the mystical union with an omniscient tech-no God for a post-Nietzschean nihilistic universe.

This is a truly apocalyptic event in Wilson’s view because the sensation of **anorganic mechanistic joy** is the product of the realization of a ghoulish utopia-dystopia of **total control or over-determination** which sees the supercapitalist machine start to threaten the elimination of organic life itself in favor of a new brand of post-organic cybernetic life that does not suffer from any of the imperfections or malfunctions of its organic predecessor. In this situation the war function and the state function of supercapitalism are merged in the form of a violent control mechanism set on over-determining organic life by transforming it into code that can easily flow through the imaginary body of the globalized communications network in quantums that are equivalent to both basic financial and telecommunications data. Under these conditions, where organic life itself is under threat from the spirit of technology, we have entered the realm of Agamben’s (1998) state of exception where there is no rule of law, but that made by those in executive power who manage the endless unfolding of the supercapitalist machine.

For Wilson (2008a), we are currently living in the Americanized supercapitalist state of technological second nature where we are totally exposed to the coding mechanisms of state power. In Agamben’s work this means that the liberal individual is completely open to construction through discourse and that they can, therefore, easily be reduced to a state of bare life by stripping away their legal identity. However, Wilson’s postmodern, surrealistic, take on the significance of the new **coding technologies** of the supercapitalist state takes this Foucauldian theory a step further. In his view, the contemporary supercapitalist empire, which is in the process of reducing everything and everybody to the status of code, deconstructs and reconstructs the individual as either normal or pathological on the basis of their sociological and biological identity that flows through the globalized communication network as streamed data. At this point the individual, who has already been reduced to the status of a quantum of economic power by the Hobbesian / Lockean logic of the supercapitalist system, is totally surveilled by the normalizing power structures implicit in the Americanized global communication network.

In many respects this vision of a total system that covers every conceivable scaling on the planet, reaching from the global level of networked communications to the micro-biological level of individual genetic code, represents Foucauldian (2008) biopower in its ultimate form. What the contemporary American supercapitalist war machine achieves through the reduction of the individual to digital data is the **complete immersion of humanity** into a technological coding system that simply works by endlessly circulating information. The difference between this Americanized biopolitical machine and what Roberto Esposito (2008) calls the archetypal biocracy of modernity, Nazism, is that the Nazi machine was never able to globalize its model of normality and pathology because its central mechanism for reducing humanity to the status of bare life, the camp, remained at an experimental level that required the relatively primitive industrial production of corpses, rather than the system we live with today which creates postindustrial postmodern Muslims or muselmänner through the reduction of humanity to the status of code. In this respect Nazism was nowhere near as effective in achieving the normalization of humanity as the contemporary American supercapitalist machine because its mechanism for creating robotic men relied on brutal violence and the systematic humiliation of the embodied human.

We know that the American system sometimes slips back into the same logic, because we have all seen the images from Abu Ghraib, but these kind of events represent a primitive or, in Wilson’s Lacanian language, real form of punishment that the supercapitalist war machine would prefer to avoid where possible, simply because it understands that surveillance and normalization through data is a far more effective means of ensuring that humanity is perfectly streamed through the channels of technological mecanosphere than ritual humiliation ever could. However, the supercapitalist machine is **not a static system** that simply turns over endlessly because the effect of the closure of mechanical circuit is the production of a new mythological subject that functions to make the process of total robotization bearable. What this means is that somewhere in the realization of the total technological system, where the global scale is the micro scale of data that streams across the smooth spaces of the world communication network, we encounter the real end of history in the emergence of a kind of metaphysical temporal loop, which connects the contemporary supercapitalist machine to ancient cosmological notions of the micro-macrocosm that showed how man was intimately related to the universe, and, as a consequence, the violent closure of the circuit of history running from ancient Greece to postmodern America, with the result that humanity is thrown back into prehistory and mythology.

This is what Kroker (2006) means by quantum culture because what it illustrates is the way in which the surrealistic looping of history creates a new space of **techno-mysticism** based on notions of the kind of apocalyptic rapture popular in contemporary America (Pfohl 2006). But in the new American techno-apocalypse it is not simply that the chosen few vanish into the mystical body of Christ, because this pulp version of the story is far too close to traditional Old Testament thought, but rather that the totally **immersed, totally coded, body** of the normalized individual is overcome by the fantasy of the bioengineered new man who never wears out and never passes away. In this sci-fi fantasy, which is, in my view, the hard core or real of contemporary supercapitalist ideology, the new man, a kind of bioengineered Nietzschean übermensch, resides in a strange techno-utopia, a new Heaven on Earth characterized by immortality and a culture of endless life, where everybody and everything simply works.

#### Prefer the perm – anticoding against the will to technology is inherently a psychoanalytic enterprise that overcomes technological death and joyless states

Featherstone 10 (Mark Featherstone PhD - Lecturer in Sociology at Keele University, “Death-Drive America: On Scott Wilson’s Vision of the Cultural Politics of American Nihilism in the Age of Supercapitalism”, FastCapitalism, 2010, <https://fastcapitalism.uta.edu/7_1/featherstone7_1.html>, MG)

Given the addition of the notion of joy, Wilson’s thesis is **not** simply that a kind of sensuous violence pervades contemporary American culture, and that this is paradoxically the product of a repressive Puritan society, but rather that **the fusion of religion and technology in America creates a limit situation** defined by perfect mechanization that recalls the mythic state of **joyess rapture** where the chosen people leave their fleshy earthbound bodies behind and ascend towards the heavens to become one with God. It is through reference to this thesis, which recalls Achille Mbembe’s (2003) work on necropolitics, that Wilson shows how America has evolved a mystical culture of negation, where technological death and destruction is **necessary for the elevation of particular humans to a joyess new state**. What is more is that this runs parallel to the Islamic fundamentalists’ apocalyptic cult of death of the suicide bomber, which transforms the ghoulish spectacle of the exploding body into a cause for celebration. That is to say that in much the same way that the Islamic fundamentalist body explodes when it reaches the joyess state of maximum intensity represented by the condition of martyrdom before God, the American techno body pushes towards the limit condition of organic death through a culture of techno-theology that aspires to reach the mystical state of oneness with the divine through a state of perfect mechanization that would render the fleshy body obsolete and signal the emergence of posthuman cybernetic man.

Given that this psychocultural apocalyptic structure has, as Kroker (2006) shows, been central to American thought from the very beginning illustrates why it will not be enough for Obama to simply turn back to multilateral politics and away from the empire talk of Bush II. In Kroker’s theory of American postmodern ideology, what happened under Bush II is that the ancient Old Testament Puritanism of the original settlers came back to enchant the postmodern techno-politics of post-Berlin Wall America that was already gripped by the messianic language of the end of history. Thus, the thinkers who inform Kroker’s vision of the America of Bush II are Einstein and Weber who illustrate the possibility of a quantum culture where religion and techno-reason fuse to form an **apocalyptic complex** that is endlessly thrown back to the future in search of salvation. It is this image of techno-Puritan America that Wilson (2008a; 2008b) extends in his books through French theory, with the added value that the psychoanalytic basis of his work may provide some way out of the psychological complex of quantum culture through the recognition of the way the compulsion of repeat sustains the bipolarity of Americanism. In other words, through recognition it may be possible to work through and eventually overcome the condition of bipolarity that currently means that the conservative-paranoid line through Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush II will never end. This is, essentially, the therapeutic model that sustains the Freudian-Lacanian theory that Wilson employs in his books to explain the structure of the order of joy that he believes organizes American culture.

In order to extend this psychoanalytic model to an analysis of American cultural politics Wilson makes use of **Lacan’s three registers of the imaginary**, which usually refers to the subject’s imagined self, the symbolic order, which relates to the systems of language and culture that structure human reality, and the real, which Lacan employs to explain the hard core of organic existence that can never be represented by either the imaginary or the symbolic order and persists on the outer edge of human perception. Wilson employs this triadic structure of the imaginary, the symbolic order, and the real to refer to the body of global capitalism, the state, and the general economy of war and expenditure. In his Lacanian complex, then, the imaginary is represented by the **totality of global capitalism**, the symbolic order is reflected in the state that provides significance and **codes the image of the global economy**, and the real is embodied by the practices of **war, violence, and expenditure** understood in the widest sense. Regarding the fusions between the three registers, Wilson explains that economy and war meet in the explosion of joyful immanence linked to destruction and consumption, war and state collide in the production of the mode of anorganic joy related to perfected mechanization, and the state and economy meet in the event of the symbolization of empire.

The nightmarish picture of neo-liberal America that emerges over the course of the first chapter of The Order of Joy (2008a) is, therefore, one of a state set on the total domination of global space-time through the endless expansion of a martial economic model that is based on that mechanistic consumption of organic matter and is for this reason totally impervious to human reason. While Kroker (2006) paints a similarly bleak picture of American empire in his outstanding companion piece to Born Again Ideology , The Will to Technology (2003), through the use of Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, Wilson fast forwards through Kroker’s essential texts Capital (1990), Thus Spoke Zarathustra (2003a), and The Question Concerning Technology (1977), until he reaches Deleuze and Guattari’s (1972; 1984) books on capitalism and schizophrenia, which become the core texts for his work on contemporary Americanism. In respect of the use of Deleuze and Guattari to conceptualize the rise of empire there is nothing particularly new in Wilson’s work, because Hardt and Negri (2000) and to a lesser extent Retort (2005) make use of the core thesis of Anti-Oedipus (1972) and A Thousand Plateaus (1984) to understand processes of globalization. But I think that what sets Wilson’s treatment apart from these texts is the depth of the textual relation he establishes between the works of the French schizoanalysts and the condition of Americanism.

Similar to the thesis explained by Kroker in The Will to Technology (2003) and Born Again Ideology (2006), The Order of the Joy (2008a) shows how the American war machine expands in order to colonize global space-time on the basis of a ballistic version of Puritanism that we can trace back to the original settlers, but also the core political theorists of America, such as Thomas Hobbes (1982) and John Locke (2003). We know Hobbes employed the new physics of Galileo to conceive of the early modern economy in abstract terms of competing forces, trajectories, and lines of flight that needed minimal regulation in order to ensure that collisions between the human embodiments of those forces continued to be objectified in economic terms and did not break through the thin crust of civilization to restart the natural war of all against all (Spragens 1973). The next step took place when Locke located Hobbes’s abstract model of economy in America, the tabula rasa of the new world which was perfectly suited to carrying a metaphysical theory of economy, and began the long history of the mechanization, or **technologization**, of man through his theory of property that extended to the idea of the estranged possessive individual who owns his own body as an objective source of labor power to be gainfully employed in the world (Macpherson 1962). Given the theoretical model that the English political philosophers left America, which enabled the understanding of men as abstract economic quantums best understood through reference to the new physics of movement that conceived of reality as a smooth space characterized by competing quantums of matter in motion, and money that stands in for some other object and only finds value in relation to other values, it is clear how the possessive individual could be conceived of in terms of a piece of hard metal that was endlessly on the move and was meaningless beyond its relation to the environment that would simply either allow or disallow future movement. Although my view is that the political philosophies of Hobbes and Locke may be seen to inform the development of Americanism on a deep philosophical level, Wilson skips the English masters and leaps straight to Deleuze and Guattari and in particular their idea of the war machine to illuminate the condition of postmodern America. In his view the purpose of the war machine, which represents the fusion of economy, state, and war in American empire, is to **brand reality**, where the practice of branding simultaneously refers to the ancient process of marking property and the postmodern practice of image manipulation in order to stimulate consumer desire, and code the flows of capital as they pass through space-time in order to continually construct and reconstruct the endlessly deconstructing economic imaginary.

This is where war enters Wilson’s system. The practice of war paves the way for flows of fast capital by deconstructing traditional territorial structures in order that new capitalist structures may be constructed in the image of the globalized capitalist body without organs and the state may oversee the construction of the correct essential infrastructure to establish connections between the new virgin territory and the wider imperial network. Hardt and Negri (2000) make the same point in their Empire, suggesting that the key role of the American military machine is to develop smooth space for capitalism to flow through, and Retort (2005) employ the concept of military neo-liberalism to show how the American military machine is led by the principle of economic need in order to first open up and second protect new markets essential for the maintenance of the heated up global consumer credit society. That this heated up consumer model crashed while I was reading Wilson’s books illustrates his point that the reason global space-time has become a battleground of competing economic interests is that the traditional master signifier of international relations, the balance of power, which had held since the end of World War II in the form of nuclear deterrence, collapsed with the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union leaving the globalizing technologies of finance, telecommunications, and the American military machine free to colonize global space-time without human reason or reflexivity.

### 2AC---AT: Settler Colonialism

#### The pandemic flipped the script – the world has gone digital and their alt obscures settler colonial violence as well as making collective indigenous political struggle impossible absent the aff

Kroker and Kroker 21 (Arthur Kroker - emeritus professor and adjunct professor of political science at the University of Victoria, Marilouise Kroker - feminist scholar, publisher, editor, writer, theorist, and performance artist, “Technologies of the New Real”, University of Toronto Press, Pages 3-6, October 2021, MG)

Ironically, the winter months preceding the pandemic were just the opposite of isolation and social distancing. As part of a **collective political struggle** during the winter, many of us in British Columbia (BC) and elsewhere were involved in an active alliance with youth and elders involved in Indigenous resurgence and environmental activists to protest the armed occupation of Indigenous territories by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in support of aggressive pipeline expansion. Like an epochal rip in the fabric of normal time and space, the provincial Parliament Buildings in Victoria, BC, were surrounded by a large **Indigenous youth encampment**, vibrant with the lighting of sacred fires, drumming, inspiring speeches, and a field of red dresses symbolizing murdered and missing Indigenous women, all carried out with a **spirit of love**, not violence, and with very courageous, very determined resolve on the part of the Indigenous youth and elders. I may have been teaching a seminar on the politics of race and power by day, with that haunting trilogy of Black Skin/White Masks, Red Skin/White Masks, and Brown Skin/ White Masks, 2 but by night many students were at the encampment in active solidarity with Indigenous youth, while others responded to frequent appeals during the night-time hours to come to the Legislature to help protect the Indigenous youth from possible police violence. What I witnessed over the winter was a glimpse into the possibility of a more just future traced out in all its **social creativity**, political courage, and profound ecological understanding by **Indigenous thought and practice**, and by strong alliances between Indigenous youth and many other young people conscious of the **historical injustices of settler colonialism**.

**Then, the pandemic struck**, with all its globalized panic fear and political cynicism. The darkness of the pandemic spring was just **the opposite of the lightness of winter politics**. Watching President Trump’s daily televised orgies of unconstrained narcissism and spasms of self-pity interspersed with mean-spirited scapegoating and cynical lies, all applauded by an enormous popular following howling the deep rage of their discontent, I was reminded of Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the continuing power of seductive appeals to the suicidal death drive of fascism.3 Here the political virus of right-wing populism, fuelled by panic fear and intense anxiety over the loss of jobs in the very real-life context for many people in the contemporary economy of work or starve, seeks to attach itself to the host cell of the television audience, releasing its genetic instructions and then waiting as the host cell reproduces the virus, whether expressed in the form of angry white male hysteria, scapegoating of Asians, border violence against asylum seekers, or studied popular silence concerning the cynical hijacking of relief funds by large corporations in the United States and by carbon-heavy energy companies in Canada.

The immediate consequences of viral contagion are dire: **the eclipse of the social and the death of politics**. And there’s something else as well – something now present as a faint intimation of things to come on the horizon of perception but then quickly inflating into a really existent reality. That reality is **bio-fascism**. The signs are everywhere. A friend from New York texts me to express her concern about how quickly people are eager to surrender civil liberties in the face of the pandemic. She points to the Wall Street Journal with its reports on the alliance between Apple and Google in perfecting contact tracing. It’s definitely a useful medical tool at the present moment, but after the pandemic, contact tracing is potentially a vast extension of the power of corporate surveillance over individual privacy for purposes of targeted relational advertising and, for the national security state, an emblematic breakthrough in power over the bodies of its citizens. Moralized first in the name of public health but later likely to be made permanent in the name of national security and virtual capitalism, contact tracing could well turn out to be a leading talisman of bio-fascism, with the workplace future likely to become an experiment in bio-politics – segregation of the population, temperature taking, sudden quarantines, rule by emergency decree. It’s all of these things, while the virtual capitalism of the ruling financial corporations views this moment as a convenient time to actualize what has already taken place – the shedding of unnecessary living labour once commerce has fully transitioned to remote labour in the age of the gig economy. Here, surging gun sales and panic hoarding are only symptomatic signs of the death of the social and the eclipse of politics, and all of this disintegration moves to the background music of the coming of age of Bob Dylan’s dirge, “Murder Most Fowl.”

Along with these developments is the assumption that one lasting consequence will be to suddenly **accelerate technological tendencies** that, until now, have remained masked in society. Certainly, the impact of social distancing and physical isolation has volatized the appeal, if not everyday necessity, of online services: for shopping, shipping, and surfing. It’s as if the social economy has suddenly split in two, with face-to-face businesses shuttered, slowed down with requirements for social distancing, or literally bio-pits for possible viral infections. The sudden silence in the streets of everyday business – stores, restaurants, malls, offices – contrasts sharply with the economic clamour in all the Amazons, Apples, and Googles of the digital world. Here, what appears to be happening is a decisive movement of the commodity form – the essence of all capitalist transactions – from the face-to-face market of the offline economy to the streamed services of the virtual economy. Following the doubled ideology of facilitation and command, virtual capitalism can so quickly triumph because, at this moment of very real social crisis, it easily facilitates the necessities and consumer choices of daily life, whether for food, services, banking, medicine, or entertainment. The question remains: after the pandemic, will what was so quickly and massively adopted by the population as a way of facilitating survival in the midst of social distancing become a new order of economy, less a matter of choice than a practical imperative imposed by the ruling virtual corporations? Will offices repopulate, or will business increasingly move essential services online? Will manufacturing plants seek to restore previous levels of employment, or will factories take advantage of this break in normal reality to speed up the transition long underway towards the automated future of labour promised by developments in artificial intelligence and robotics? In other words, what will be the future of life after the pandemic when the full adoption of technologies of the new real suddenly introduces us to a **future as socially unexpected and unpredicted as it was technologically inevitable?**

#### The will to technology controls the root cause of settler colonialism

Chew 15 (May Chew - Assistant Professor at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema and Department of Art History at Concordia University, “BECKONING BODIES, MAKING SUBJECTS: INTERACTIVE AND IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN CANADIAN MUSEUMS, 1967-2014”, Queen’s University, 2015, <https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/handle/1974/12794/Chew_May_201503_PhD.pdf?sequence=1>, MG)

This account provides an affective analogue to Innis’s political economy. Grant’s passage, like much of his other writing, reads as a threnody that reveals a resoundingly solipsistic moral imperative expressed through a consolidating settler perspective. This is also a fascinating passage for the way in which it elegiacally construes the forging of North America as an alienating “break” from “**the old and the settled**” and a necessary estrangement with “the extremes of the new land.” Because the land did not—and could never—**belong to the new settlers**, their identity **had to be moulded in wilful opposition to the land**, which was subsequently seen as needing to be continually conquered by the will of man. This inhospitable land thus serves an important symbolic function in the national imaginary; its wildness is that which needs to be perpetually (re)established, in order that it can provide an embryonic “wild” against which **the will to technology** (the rational-scientific imperative to tame and subjugate) can be emphasized through juxtaposition.

The outer world was not the only terrain fundamentally altered by the will to technology. A notion that comes up repeatedly through much of these thinkers' works is that technology fundamentally structures our **psyches and determines the way we think and relate to others**. For Grant, technology is neither a neutral nor separate entity with which we are able to choose how we wish to interact—an external "playground" or "orchard where we can always pick variegated fruit;" instead, technology "**moulds us in what we are, not only at the heart of our animality in the propagation and continuance of our species, but in our actions and thoughts and imaginings**" (Technology 15). While Grant was perhaps the most pessimistic in his understanding of the colonizing potential of technology, other thinkers shared his idea that technology had the force to shape consciousness for better or worse.

The Toronto School of Communication, an influential colloquium of interdisciplinary scholars at the University of Toronto whose core included Innis, McLuhan, and Eric Havelock, were joined by their intersecting interests on the ways that communication technologies **shaped our psychology** (de Kerckhove) as well as the “social and cultural infrastructure of societies” (Marchessault, Marshall 108). Innis, in as early as his 1923 history of the CPR, was already putting forth the idea that technology, far from being something externally located, was in fact "the necessary condition and lasting consequence of Canadian existence" (Kroker 94). While McLuhan is probably the most eminent of the group for his general postulations regarding the psychic/psychological impact of electronic technologies, he also traced the psychological impact resulting from the **technological incursions into the landscape**. In his posthumously published essay, "Canada and Counter-Environment," one of his rare undertakings of the Canadian question, McLuhan argues that the North American inheritance of the "war on empty wilderness" from its **settler ancestors** continues to shape the Canadian spirit. A century of life on the frontier produced a population defined by their **antagonistic relations** with the brutality of nature, relations that resulted in the forging of a particular type in whom was necessitated “initiative amidst solitude” (75). “Like Wordsworth and Thoreau,” McLuhan further states, "North Americans spend their time scanning the environmental mystery, taking spins in the country instead of spinning thoughts at home" (79). What we can glean from these theorists is that Canadians are invariably marked—in body and psyche—by the technologically conquest of the land. The **colonization of the Indigenous inhabitants** of this land, meanwhile, was not a matter that elicited equivalent consideration.

Aside from determining external and internal landscapes, technology has also come to be the often invisible lens through which Canadians see the "character" of the nation as well as each other. As Arthur Kroker argues, "Canadian identity is, and always has been, fully integral to the question of technology" (12). It is important to think about the functions served by the demonstration of Canadian identity through technology. Technological mediation allows the articulation not only of romantic **settler-colonial attachment to idyllic landscapes**, but also a determined will that is forged from the direct confrontation with the wild. This is a fortitude which conceives its own survival as indelibly linked to an overcoming of the landscape and its perilous indeterminacy. We can see this in, for example, Grant's assertion that the "almost indomitable" land incites a certain kind of (liberal) subject and societal character; "[t]he intense seasons of the continental heartland needed a people who whatever else were not flaccid. And these people not only forced commodities from the land, but built public and private institutions of freedom and flexibility and endurance" (24). Canadian myths of origin centre not merely on the wildness of the landscape in and for itself; rather, wildness serves as the verdant and receptive ground upon which to emphasize the exercise of **over-determined technological will**

### 1AR---AT: Settler Colonialism

#### We explain the reasons behind settler colonialism better and anything that doesn’t affect the will to technology first fails

Chew 15 (May Chew - Assistant Professor at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema and Department of Art History at Concordia University, “BECKONING BODIES, MAKING SUBJECTS: INTERACTIVE AND IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN CANADIAN MUSEUMS, 1967-2014”, Queen’s University, 2015, <https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/handle/1974/12794/Chew_May_201503_PhD.pdf?sequence=1>, MG)

While the preceding section considered the ways in which technology shapes both external and internal landscapes, what follows is an attempt to examine more extensively the generative capacity of technology to (re)produce bodies within the folds of nation, and the role of technology in situating us in an historical narrative through rhetorics of seduction. Not only is technology interjected into our **affective, imaginative relationships with nation**, but it in fact plays a primary role in generating and conducting these relationships in the first place. Integral to this inquiry is an examination of how, emboldened by origin myths centering on the confrontation of nature with technological prowess, Canadians carry forth the embodiment and reproduction of the will to technology.

A few years before Chief Dan George's delivered his indictment of the colonial state during its one hundredth birthday, another George had already sounded his ominous "lament." George Grant's Lament for a Nation, published in 1965, centred on what the philosopher saw as the inevitable casualties strewn across the path towards unbridled technological advancement. In his famous treatise, Grant mourns the sundering of ties to the European tradition of contemplation inherited from the Greeks, and condemns what he observes to be the willing surrender of Canadian sovereignty and keen embroilment in America’s imperial injustices in Vietnam. The technological imperative, against which Grant warned, springs from the "crucible of pioneering of Protestant liberalism" that produced "those uncomptemplative, and unflinching wills" which in turn become the **driving force of a technological society** (Technology 25). The wellspring of the will to technology is the liberal faith in not merely the creative capacity but also **necessity to conquer the landscape**, overcome requisite obstacles, and create the world anew. Any excavation of such an imperative would be incomplete without an examination of the idealism that compels us towards this technological striving. Namely, Grant points to the relationship between our mastery of the human and non-human world and the perhaps paradoxical liberal discourse of "freedom" and "values" with which this mastery becomes inextricably entwined. Arguably, Grant begins to posit a significant affective dimension to the technological will in his explanation that "[w]hat makes the drive to technology so strong is that it is carried on by men who still **identify what they are doing with the liberation of mankind**" (Technology 27). He also maintains that it is Canadians' "belief in progress through technique" which is "the central cause of motion in their souls" (Technology 64). In other words, the drive towards technological mastery and imperial expansion is rarely articulated through the naked language of capitalist accumulation and power; rather, its efficacy and potency lies in its alignment with individual freedom and unrestrained human potential.

Given its underlying ethos, Grant sees the will to technology as manifested in the imperial desire to **conquer and transform the world through the scientific-rational conquering of chance**— or the "desire to make the future by mastery, and the closing down of all thinking which transcends calculation" (Technology 40). Unsurprisingly, this process involves the overcoming of the cruel indifference of the external world—both in terms of body and nature. North Americans according to Grant are, afterall, the heirs of a Calvinist conviction that righteousness can be achieved by both body and nature having been brought to submission. In this view, human freedom is actuated not only through its severance from nature, but also in the form of **technologically determined incursion** into nature as separate and external terrain. Further, the will to technology as way of knowing determines the tenacious warrant with which the external terrain is dominated; Grant writes, "the technological society is not for most North Americans, at least at the level of consciousness, a 'terra incognita' into which we must move with hesitation, moderation and in wonder, but a comprehended promised land which we have discovered by the use of calculating reason and which we can ever more completely inherit by the continued use of calculation" (Technology 28).

Furthermore, Grant observes that the rise of the homogenisation under American **technological imperialism**—which he diagnoses as the threat of continentalism—results in the **rationalization and instrumentalization of culture**, as well as what can be characterized as the tragic clamping down of the sense of wonder and awe with which one can engage with the world. To return to the passage of Grant's quoted in the preceding paragraph, the will to technology creates a "**comprehended promised land**," a space stripped of wonder and replaced by an unrelenting drive towards technological advancement. It can be argued that, alongside this loss of wonder, is the proliferation of further myths regarding freedom and progress, as well as the reproduction of liberal capitalist faith in the individual human capacity "**to shape the world as we see it**" (Technology 114).

### 2AC---AT: Silence

#### Even if they win we are loud politics, we still solve -- their author agrees

Kaura-aho 21 (Katariina Kaura-aho - doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Law at the University of Helsinki, “The aesthetics of political resistance: On silent politics”, Thesis Eleven 65, 2021, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/07255136211035154>,)//guyB

When politically marginalised refugees set out to resist their unequal position in a particular political context, they often organise their protests in a loud, vocal manner. By expressing their resistance through loud outcries of dissent, refugees attempt to make their political claims for equality heard as clearly and as widely as possible. These kinds of protests **can sometimes be effective** in gaining public attention. Occasionally, however, refugees organise protests without recourse to loud vocality. Sometimes egalitarian refugee protests emerge in a mode that can be characterised as silent action. In silent political action, refugees express their resistance in a non-verbal, embodied way. Refugee activists’ bodies communicate politically in silent acts of resistance. Silent politics often emerges in restricted, prisonlike conditions, such as detention centres where the persons confined within these places do not have access to public spaces where they could organise loud, vocal protests. Sometimes, however, refugees who succeed in entering a public space enact their protest in the silent mode.

#### Perm: Do the aff as a backdrop to the alt- Kaura-aho agrees it solves -- they can’t be subversive if there’s nothing to subvert

Kaura-aho 21 (Katariina Kaura-aho - doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Law at the University of Helsinki, “The aesthetics of political resistance: On silent politics”, Thesis Eleven 65, 2021, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/07255136211035154>, MG)

\*\* we read purple

Silent protests, such as the two refugees’ protest in Finland, can be described as expressions of a certain kind of **political ‘spirit’**. This spirit can be defined in many ways. It can be named, for example, the spirit of autonomy, the spirit of freedom or the spirit of equality. In On Revolution (1963), Hannah Arendt discusses the idea of the revolutionary spirit, which is the spirit of actualising something new politically. In Arendtian theory, this spirit appears as the urge and courage for miraculous political action that initiates something new in the world (Arendt, 1958, 1963).

An alternative way of describing the spirit of politics would be to call it a ‘**revolting spirit’**. This definition would perhaps capture something of the Zapatista conception of political refusal as an expression of that something that in us intuitively says **no to domination** (Holloway and Pel´aez, 1998: 184–5). Expressions of a revolting spirit can be politically meaningful. We must here argue against, for example, Slavoj Zizek, who attacks as a basic weakness of many contemporary political protests the fact that they remain mere expressions of rage and, as such, cannot result in positive programs of socio-political change. The problem, Zizek argues, is that ‘(t)hey express a spirit of revolt without revolution’ (Zizek, 2012: 78). As the spirit of political subversion, however, and of the active representation of autonomous definitions of the world, the revolting spirit can be politically meaningful. This spirit can materialise in acts of resistance that powerfully bring into view the oppressiveness of the prevailing aesthetic political order and point toward the possibility of realising a more egalitarian one. The revolting spirit can thus indeed be just another name for the revolutionary spirit: the spirit of actualising something new politically. Refugee protests are examples of the emergence of the revolting, revolutionary spirit in contemporary political contexts.

Refugee protests expressing this spirit undermine the aesthetic sensibility of prevailing aesthetic refugee regimes. The persistent reoccurrence of protests led by this spirit holds the potential for bringing about continual aesthetic revolutions in the sensibility of law and politics.

Especially silent protests can initiate such **aesthetic revolutions**. Against the backdrop of what could be described as frameworks of **loud representative vocalisation** and the noise pollution of statist rhetoric, they emerge as a radical, subversive form of political communication. The refugees’ protest in Finland, for example, as a verbally silent, **embodied act of political communication**, appeared as a potentially subversive act. In the statist context of citizen-centred politics and a representative speech system privileging loud extrovert modes of verbal speech, its silent reaching out had a **special quieting effect**.

Silent protest acts by politically marginalised people can sometimes succeed in making their audience speechless as well. A silent act can cause a pause in the midst of a loud message-filled reality and it can be experienced as something meaningful. In these moments of silence, the logic of prevailing **aesthetic orders of politics can be sensed anew**. When many such silences take place simultaneously, a broader, common subversion in the aesthetic orders can start to evolve. The silent political act that brought about these many silences can then be understood as an aesthetically revolutionary act.

1. There are some debaters who have become exceptionally good at meshing poetry with competitive debate. I would point out Nader Hadad from Cal State Long Beach and Lana Langsweirdt from the University of Vermont as debaters who have both become powerful poets and good debaters (who use poetry in their rounds). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more on this see Gordon Mitchell’s (1998) article on the pedagogy of public debates. He outlines a number of debate initiatives that have used public debate outside of the policy debate realm. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gilles Deleuze writes about Nietzsche’s unique take on the will to power. “The will to power alone is the one that wills, it does not lend itself be delegated or alienated to another subject, even to force. (49). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Detournement is most well known from the Canadian magazine *Adbusters*, who re-popularized Debord’s work in the 1990s doing mock-ups of popular advertisements. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In my theorizing about this essay, I contemplated including a reference to Ernest Callenbach’s novel *Ecotopia*. In this novel, Callenbach’s protagonist enters a closed off zone of ecologically sustainable territories in the Pacific Northwest of the former-USA. One of the most hotly contested differences between the protagonist and the Ecotopians is a game. The Ecotopians use ritual physical combat to explore the visceral experience that is part of humans. Young men will gather and fight each other with spears. It seems as though there is a good comparison between my proposal of the potlatch and Callenbach’s war games. Both are visceral games that are intended to alter the state of the participants. In Ecotopia, the war game is the turning point of the book, where the protagonist, torn between two worlds appreciates the Ecotopian world and begins to consider living in Ecotopia. I would hope that my reference to the potlatch would have a similar affect. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Debord was a committed life-long abuser of drugs and alcohol, and he certainly would have appreciated gifts of these sorts. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)