# **Cyberian Islands Affirmative**

## **1AC**

#### Plan: The United States federal government should substantially increase its security cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization over Berylia’s cybersecurity.

#### **Advantage 1: Cyberian Conflict**

#### **NATO cyber security experts expect Crimsonia to undermine Berylia’s critical information infrastructure with cyberattacks. Causes armed conflict.**

Blumbergs 19

(Bernhards, PhD and senior researcher at the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution of the Republic of Latvia, “Specialized Cyber Red Team Responsive Computer Network Operations” TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY School of Information Technologies Department of Software Science The dissertation was accepted for the defence of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (cyber security) on 2nd of April, 2019, pp. 75-7)

Exercise scenario. The technical scenario, describing the interdependencies, attack vectors, and alternative paths, only covers the part for the actual work to be conducted by the exercise participants. To deliver the context, reasoning, and clear objectives, the overarching scenario is required. This scenario provides the elements, such as, the state-of-the-world background, geo-political situation, intelligence information on what has happened, what is the impact suffered, why the response is being triggered, what are the objectives and rules of engagement. The main geo-political story revolves around a fictitious group of Cyberbian islands, where every island is a country with its technological advancements, political stance, alliances, and intentions. The three island-countries are Berylia, Crimsonia, and Revalia. Berylia being the smallest with a modest military force, part of NATO alliance, and its main economic income originating from the electronics manufacturing. Crimsonia is the largest island with a strong military, rich in natural resources, not part of any alliance, and is expressing some signs of aggression against its neighbouring island-countries. Revalia is a small, self-sustained, and politically neutral country. Within the scenario, the exercise participants assume the role of Berylian rapid response team, which is assembled to address the looming crisis, maintain the resiliency of the national critical information infrastructure, and accomplish the mission goals. Every year, with a new exercise edition, the scenario evolves and the tensions between Berylia and Crimsonia have been escalating, ranging from Crimsonia conducting a series of debilitating cyber attacks against Berylian Critical Information Infrastructure (CII), abuse of a neutral nation infrastructure for operation conduct, placing insiders and double-agents, forming military blockades, up to launching a military invasion of Berylia. The various levels of conflict are designed to explore the technical, cyber-kinetic, and legal game-plays as every particular state opens new opportunities and provides flexibility in conducting the responsive computer network operations. The operational environment for the kinetic force’s unit is extremely important, as this restricts, or enables, some types of activities to be exercised.

Legal considerations. A part of the exercise scenario consists of legal game-play. Despite the exercise not having legal aspects as the primary objectives, the legal guidance and considerations are incorporated in the form of legal scenario injects aimed to trigger the discussion and legal implication consideration during the situational report meetings.

Legal advisers are assigned to every level of the chain-of-command to assess and consult the exercise participants. The legal aspects of the conducted cyber-kinetic operations and applied TTTPs, within the context of the scenario, tackle at least the following legal considerations as covered in Publication VIII: 1. Applicable law (Part II). Depending on the circumstances ruling at the time, the lawyers are tasked to ascertain which regimes of public international law apply to the cyber operations occurring during the exercise. The cyber attack campaigns of the exercise range from those occurring in peacetime to those endangering national and international security. The storyline generally avoids situations of armed conflict. The exercise scenario attempts to bring all of the five operational domains (i.e., land, sea, air, space, and cyber) into the game-play, extended by espionage, and cyber-kinetic operations. Such activities may be addressed by the international human rights law, diplomatic and consular law, law of the sea, air law, space law, and international telecommunications law; 2. States entitled to take countermeasures (Rule 24). Only state affiliated institutions and organizations, such as, military or intelligence, can conduct responsive activities on the state’s behalf as long as the activities they engage in do not constitute an internationally wrongful act. The cyber operations by private entities, such as, business companies or non-governmental organizations (NGO), can never constitute countermeasures in the legal sense. Therefore, the players assume the role of a rapid response team, assembled on the order of Berylian government, which is placed under the supervision of the military command; 3. Effect of RCD on third parties (Rule 25). Due to the fact that RCD has extraterritorial nature and implicates pursuing the adversary, as well as, performing malicious service take-down within the cyberspace, the legal advisers are required to assess the legality of the RCD effects on the third parties. These activities may include operations, such as, third-party Virtual Private Server (VPS) take-over, hacking adversary controlled CnC servers on the Internet, back-dooring or re-weaponizing the malicious code used by the adversary and compromising public web services to plant the targeted exploit-kits. Since such operations are intentional, both from the adversary and defender side, they have an effect on third-party owned systems or against ones residing in a neutral state (i.e., Revalia). For the red team to complete their mission objectives, the RCD activities have to be deemed lawful, the various possible paths have to be explored, their effects evaluated, and necessary precautions taken, if such are reasonably possible; 4. Limitations on RCD (Rules 23, 26, 72, 73, 113). Depending on the legal qualification of the RCD operations, various limitations, such as, concerning necessity, proportionality, imminence and immediacy, are attached to this operation. The legal advisers are tasked to identify any applicable limitations, such as, requirements for the RCD [Responsive Cyber Defense] to be necessary and proportionate, and provide these legal implications to the commander or sub-team leaders. The scenario addresses both the cyber and kinetic attacks and activities performed by the adversary against the defended state and its CII. Those include malicious operations, such as, serious cyber attacks, espionage, sabotage, and deployment of malware (e.g., condition-activated logic-bombs) with the goal to debilitate the state’s critical services and capabilities. Adversary’s kinetic activities include operations, such as, armed drone attacks, navy blockades, placement of a large amount of troops on the borders, and expeditionary force deployment. The game-play is initiated by the series of escalating events leading to ongoing or imminent threat, which may serve to prove the necessity of the taken responsive operations, which are evaluated by their proportionality and delivered effect. As derived from the scenario, the defending state has to immediately respond to an ongoing or imminent threat to ensure the resiliency and protection of critical assets relevant to the security, functionality and well-being of the state; 5. Self-defence against an armed attack (Rule 71). The scenario is designed in such a manner that the severity offensive action against the victim state amounts to an armed attack, thus permitting to respond in self-defence with an immediate asymmetric responsive cyber operations against a stronger and advanced adversary. The scenario can be designed more subtle and with less tensions, however, in such case the training audience would struggle proving the necessity to pursue the adversary and infiltrate their network, which would have an impact on the overall game-play and achieving the currently set mission and training objectives; 6. Geographical limitations of cyber operations (Rule 81). The effects of a cyber operations have to be limited to the intended target information systems and geographical locations. This, although not always being possible to limit geographically, is taken into consideration by the red team when executing the cyber operation which may include the activities, such as, placement of drive-by exploit-kits on third-party services. The red team might not be aware of geographical location of a targeted asset in cyberspace, however, when such attack campaign is executed, measures are taken to restrict its spread within the intended target’s network address ranges if it is possible; 7. Means and methods of cyber warfare (Part IV, Chapter 17, Section 5). The exercise scenario plays on the various levels of aggression and conflicts without entering the state of war. Despite cyber warfare not being applicable directly it is still to be considered and applicable methods have to be evaluated accordingly, since, within the played-out high-tension scenario, it could unexpectedly escalate to an armed conflict and the state of war.

#### **NATO cyber security experts predict attacks by Crimson separatists. Escalation is likely.**

Kudláčková, Wallace, and Harašta 20

(Ivana, researcher and faculty of law at Masaryk University in Crno, Czech Republic; David, professor of Law at the United States Military Academy, west point; Jakub, assistant professor of law at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Repbulic, “Cyber Weapons Review in Situations Below the Threshold of Armed Conflict,” 12th international conference on cyber conflict, NATO CCDCOE Publications, Talinn, pp. 103-110)

\*BERM = Berylian Malware

One of the Berylian regions directly neighbouring Crimsonia is historically disputed. Citizens of Berylia living in this region align themselves with the nationality that is dominant in Crimsonia. These citizens organise themselves into a political organisation, Crimson Home. The ultimate goal of Crimson Home is cessation from Berylia and incorporation into Crimsonia. Crimson Home intends to reach this goal through a political referendum.

For various reasons, including heightened geopolitical and regional ambitions, both States are prone to escalation of conflict through various triggering events of a cyber and non-cyber nature. These will be described below. Before the conflict, Berylia had developed cyber capabilities to be able to collect, disrupt and potentially destroy data which adversaries rely upon. For this purpose, the Berylian government procured and developed cyber capabilities allowing the delivery of a harmful payload to target devices. Operators from Berylian law enforcement and armed forces are able to target specific networks or a specific range of IP addresses. Malware can be used to infect targeted devices and obtain sufficient rights to allow the remote delivery of a harmful payload to different components of an operating system. This payload includes modules allowing surveillance of communication, tracking of movement, issuance of counterfeit messages or erasure of data stored on the device. We will refer to this cyber system as Berylian Malware (BERM).

4. STATE VS. CITIZENS

1) Scenario The first part of our scenario observes a deteriorating relationship between Berylia and Crimsonia. Crimson Home, actively seeking to secede from Berylia, is heavily financed from Crimsonia. The Crimsonian government, despite numerous allegations, has never admitted to supporting Crimson Home. However, finances pouring into Crimson Home originate, according to Berylian intelligence, from Crimsonian companies identified as shell companies used by the Crimsonian government. After the Berylian government refuses to hold a referendum in conjunction with national elections, Crimson Home heightens its activity. Targeted ads sponsored by Crimson Home aim to incite tension between citizens living in the disputed region and the central Berylian government. This eventually leads to a series of rallies and protests. Social unrest results in small-scale riots, localised violence and spontaneous attacks on election officials and polls. No fatalities are reported, and a number of injured participants is limited to a minimum. Law enforcement agencies use tear gas to disperse the most stubborn protesters. This is directly followed by a series of arrests of people either directly participating in riots or suspected of organising and inciting them. Crimson Home is targeted by BERM. Payload effects include the surveillance of communications and tracking the movement of high-profile members of the organization. The situation escalates when Crimson Home members organise bombings in the disputed region. These attacks are aimed mainly at buildings representing the central government, the legislature and the courts. The death toll quickly rises into the hundreds. This surge of violence is unprecedented and surprising to the Berylian government. Berylia responds by requiring Crimsonia to cease financing Crimson Home. At the same time, the Berylian government launches large scale operations involving law enforcement agencies as well as a limited deployment of Berylian armed forces in the disputed region. Tension in the region continues to rise. Crimson Home is further targeted by BERM. Payloads still conduct surveillance of communication and tracking of movement. After the bombings, the scale of BERM deployment is increased, and all known members of Crimson Home are targeted. 2) Legal Qualification Understandably, any State must be aware of its human rights obligations stemming from international treaties. Berylia is obliged to secure rights and freedoms stemming from the ECHR. Nonetheless, Article 15 of ECHR24 allows derogation from such an obligation. To achieve this, Berylia needs to determine whether a series of rallies, protests and riots is ‘an exceptional situation of crisis or emergency, which affects the whole population and constitutes a threat to the organised life of the community of which the State is composed’.25 The fact that these events take place only in the disputed region is not an obstacle because ‘a crisis which concerns only a particular region of the State can amount to a public emergency threatening ”the life of the nation”’.26 The determination of the situation as a state of emergency is left to the State as a matter of margin of appreciation.27 A State is not allowed to go beyond what is strictly required by the exigencies of the situation. Whether surveillance of communication and tracking of movement of high-profile members of an organisation complies with this requirement may be assessed against a set of factors based on judicial decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.28 Assessment of the deployment of BERM when the situation escalates might be clearer if Berylia determines such acts as terrorism, as terrorism meets the standard of a public emergency.29 There are also other requirements, but their in-depth analysis is not relevant to this scenario. Therefore, prior to deployment of BERM, Berylia should ensure that its actual deployment will not violate the human rights of its citizens. This could be done by conducting a legal review of BERM against relevant legal obligations and possible derogations in a state of emergency. It is worth noting that clauses similar to Article 15 of ECHR exist within the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 4) and the American Charter on Human Rights (Article 17).

5. STATE VS. STATE A. Sovereignty

1) Scenario Our scenario follows further escalation. Despite Berylia’s freezing bank accounts of the Crimson Home and its high-profile members as a part of ongoing counter-terrorism operation, Berylian intelligence confirms that Crimsonia has not stopped financing Crimson Home. Financing is now provided by couriers crossing the border from Crimsonia with large sums of cash. Berylian intelligence reports a strong suspicion that weapons are also being transported to Berylia as the Crimsonian government strengthens its support for Crimson Home. BERM is deployed to target any device that connects to specific cell towers located near the border. Payload activities include the surveillance of communication and of movement. However, selected individuals are targeted by harmful payloads allowing suppression of outgoing communication from their devices.

2) Legal qualification Interstate relations come into consideration at this point. With couriers crossing borders with cash and potentially with weapons, Berylia might decide to consider this situation as a violation of its sovereignty. It seems appropriate to refer to the well-known Island of Palmas arbitral award where a definition of sovereignty was proposed,30 the basic components of which were further developed in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter with key components of territorial integrity and political independence. Berylia might also consider whether to perceive sovereignty as a rule or as a principle. This is still a matter of debate, not only in academia,31 but also in state practice.32 It is important to note that Berylia needs to attribute the conduct of couriers to the Crimsonian authorities, as only States can violate sovereignty. The first act of violation of sovereignty deals with the territorial aspect. When a person physically crosses the borders with money and weapons, the involvement of state authorities is more likely than when done virtually by sending money. Berylia might also focus on alleged Crimsonian interference with Berylian governmental functions. Even though these events are non-cyber in nature, they further fuel the escalation process. If Berylian claims that Crimsonia has violated its sovereignty prove correct, interstate tension will be escalated, and the legal background of this fictional conflict will change. In response, Crimsonia might claim that the deployment of BERM in the disputed region violates Crimsonian sovereignty. As BERM targets any device connecting to specific cell towers near the border, it is possible that the devices of Crimsonian citizens will also be affected. Therefore, it is important to examine BERM capabilities and possible targeting issues before deployment. In our scenario, Berylia should conduct a software review regarding the conditions which Crimsonia may take into consideration when labelling the deployment of BERM as a violation of sovereignty. Violation of sovereignty by cyber means remains an unsettled issue, and the IGE presented three levels which might be helpful to determine whether a violation of territorial sovereignty has occurred. These include considerations as to whether BERM is capable of causing physical damage, loss of functionality or infringement upon territorial integrity falling below the threshold of the loss of functionality.33 It is also important whether the deployment of BERM leads to interference with the inherently governmental functions of Crimsonia.34

B. Non-Intervention

1) Scenario With the progression of the Berylian counter-terrorism operation, Crimson Home quickly depletes its human resources and its members are arrested or incapacitated as a direct result of actions by Berylian law enforcement and armed forces. The border, so far used for transportation of cash and weapons, is crossed by people willing to join Crimson Home. Berylian intelligence suggests that these volunteers are affiliated to Crimsonian paramilitary and military forces. However, direct and clear evidence is lacking. BERM is deployed to target devices connecting to specific cell towers located near the border. The payload still effects mainly surveillance of movement and surveillance of communication with intended recipients within Crimsonian territory.

2) Legal Qualification The principle of non-intervention has very close ties to sovereignty. It is described as ‘a corollary of the principle of the sovereign equality of States’.35 Non-intervention mainly deals with the ‘decision-making capacity of a State to formulate policies in relation to its internal and external affairs’.36 The concept of internal and external affairs is flexible and linked to the notion of domaine reservé. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) sheds some light on the definition and has held that States may decide freely on matters such as ‘choice of a political, economic, social and cultural system, and the formulation of foreign policy’.37 That being said, not every coercion trying to violate this freedom of choice violates international law. Only coercive acts reaching a sufficient level of magnitude and intending a target State to change its policy are legally relevant.38 However, this threshold is fluid and context-dependant. Berylia might assess whether dozens of people crossing the border and willing to fight for Crimson Home constitute a violation of the principle of non-intervention. Individuals are not legally capable of violating the non-intervention principle. Therefore, Berylia should probably resort to a political attribution and make its suspicion of affiliation of volunteers to Crimsonian forces public. Berylia should also take into consideration the context and intent. Crimson Home sought to secede the region through a referendum and when denied, it turned to violence. Ergo, it is pushing for a change of Berylian policy with regard to the disputed region. If the personnel joining Crimson Home intend to force Berylia to change its position towards the region, it might suffice to establish an unlawful intervention.

Under international law, Berylia is entitled to engage in countermeasures. As BERM is already deployed, it might serve the purpose besides the collection of data for intelligence, counter-intelligence and law enforcement purposes. It would be necessary to conduct a software review to ascertain whether the use of BERM might further escalate the conflict by exceeding what are permissible countermeasures.

C. Use of Force vs. Armed Attack

1) Scenario While BERM was previously used mainly to gather intelligence, in response to the violation of its borders Berylia engages in remote destruction of data on devices carried by people crossing the border. This leads to loss of data of many innocent citizens from both Berylia and Crimsonia and large-scale damage to and destruction of property. According to Berylian intelligence, this extreme measure was only partially effective in response to Crimson Home and its affiliates. Crimsonia officially and publicly denounces the deployment of BERM and the harmful payloads distributed through the system. The Crimsonian government also announces that appropriate measures will be undertaken in response. This results in cyber attacks against Berylian dual use and military infrastructure. Most of these attacks are DDoS and ransomware, but Berylian intelligence reports that they are serving as decoys for large-scale intelligence gathering and espionage. The communications of Berylian forces engaged in ongoing Berylian counter-terrorism operations within the disputed region are jammed from Crimsonian territory.

2) Legal Qualification Remote destruction of data escalated the situation. We argue that the Berylian action and Crimsonian reaction pushed the whole conflict over the threshold of the use of force, making it inconsistent with purposes enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. The IGE partially followed the scale and effects approach laid out by the ICJ,39 and used this approach for the qualification of the unlawful use of force.40 To ease the qualification, the IGE also used a set of eight factors41 that outline factual considerations on whether to consider a given cyber operation as an unlawful use of force. Despite these factors not being norms of international law, they do provide basic cues along which to structure the legal response.42 Before using BERM to deploy payload that might lead to a violation of the prohibition of the use of force, Berylia should have conducted a legal review to assess the possible legal consequences to determine, amongst other things, whether the operation may lead to violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. Furthermore, Article 51 of the UN Charter which grants a victim state the option to respond with force comes into play. Even though the majority of States perceive the gap between the use of force and an armed attack and distinguish ‘the most grave forms of the use of force (those constituting an armed attack) from other less grave forms’,43 other approaches also exist in the international community. As Harold Koh said at the Inter-Agency Legal Conference in 2012, ‘the United States has for a long time taken the position that the inherent right of self-defence potentially applies against any illegal use of force’44 and rejected the existence of any threshold. The other theory called the accumulation of events doctrine was originally introduced by Israel in the 1970s and reflected a situation of terrorist attacks. Israel advocated a position that even though: ‘each specific act of terrorism, or needle prick, may not qualify as an armed attack that entitles the victim State to respond legitimately with armed force, the totality of the incidents may demonstrate a systematic campaign of minor terrorist activities that does rise to the intolerable level of armed attack.’45

D. Armed Conflict

1) Scenario Berylian intelligence has obtained conclusive proof that volunteers crossing the border from Crimsonia are predominantly members of the Crimsonian armed forces and their activities are being organised by the Crimsonian government. The Berylian government publicly accuse Crimsonia of plans to occupy the disputed region by force. Berylia deploys heavy weaponry to the border region as a follow-up to the counter-terrorism operation against Crimson Home. As part of the preparation for potential conflict, BERM is taken over by the military to ensure coordination of intelligence gathering and targeted incapacitation of devices throughout the disputed region. Newly-deployed Berylian forces engage volunteers from Crimsonia. As one of the Berylian units engages Crimson Home members and volunteers close to the border, the Crimsonian Air Force attacks the unit. As a follow-up, Crimsonia claims that the military build-up in the disputed region signals a planned invasion by Berylia. The Crimsonian government opts to move units across the border to set up defensive positions on a mountain ridge on Berylian territory. In response, Berylian units engage the Crimsonian Army to prevent it from crossing the border to Berylia.

2) Legal Qualification We deem that the last round of escalation leads Berylia and Crimsonia into a state of armed conflict. As a result, the norms of IHL are triggered. Berylia is, as a signatory to the API, obliged to conduct a weapons review under Article 36 of API. According to the IGE, all States, whether they have ratified API or not, are required to ensure that the means of warfare they acquire or use comply with the rules and principles of IHL. This obligation is derived from a general duty of compliance with IHL.46 There are at least two points to highlight the weapons review process. First, IHL does not mandate States to establish a general practice of using a weapon before it is to be considered legal.47 Second, the Commentary to API sheds light on the intent behind the weapons review. It requires States to determine whether the employment of a weapon for its expected use could be prohibited under IHL.48

#### **Scenario planning predicts that Berylia invokes Article 5. Causes NATO cyberwar.**

Al Jazeera 17 (18 Jun, 2017, Jose Miguel Calatayud, “Locked Shields: the world’s biggest cyber-war game”, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/6/18/locked-shields-the-worlds-largest-cyber-war-game>)

**Tallinn, Estonia –** Things are bad on the small island nation of Berylia after a diplomatic row with Crimsonia, its bigger neighbour and rival. There are street protests by the Crimsonian minority in Berylia, which then suffers a wave of cyber-attacks that make it lose control of its drones and its only international airbase.

Crimsonia is blamed for the cyberoffensive even though there’s no hard proof. Crippled by the attacks, Berylia, a new member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), weighs its options. One of them is to invoke Article 5 and take the military alliance to war against Crimsonia.

Berylia and Crimsonia are fictional and so is this scenario, which is part of Locked Shields, a cyberwar game. But the fact that the situation doesn’t sound that far-fetched is one of the reasons why Locked Shields is so relevant today. Locked Shields is “the world’s largest and most advanced international technical live-fire cyber defence exercise”, as described by the NATO-affiliated Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence ([CCDCOE](https://ccdcoe.org/)), which has been organising it since 2010 in Tallinn, [Estonia](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/estonia.html).

This year, the event was organised at a five-star hotel in Tallinn’s city centre in late April. An entire floor of the plush hotel was dedicated to the cyber games. Everyone was armed with a laptop, monitors were placed all over the place and a drone hung from the ceiling in the Control Room where people in white, green and yellow T-shirts mingled.

The White Team is in charge of the scenario and the Green Team is responsible for the physical and online infrastructure of Locked Shields, which includes more than 3,000 virtualised systems, some highly specialised and all mirroring the top IT trends. They operate via private networks not accessible from the open internet.

The Yellow Team is tasked with situation awareness and the people in red T-shirts have their own adjacent room: they are the in-game malignant hackers who will be attacking Berylia, and who in their day jobs are penetration testers, network and system administrators, cyberthreat analysts and such.

Many of the participants are CCDCOE staff, and the rest are a mix of techies and cyber-security experts from the private and public sectors of 25 countries.

Most are male and aged between their mid-20s and mid-40s, some are older, some are of obvious military background. There are very few women: cyberwar, it seems, is still a men’s game.

One colour is missing here: that of 19 participating Blue Teams, each one playing the role of Berylia’s Rapid Cyber-Response Team.

All but one are national teams from NATO members and allied countries, and the remaining one is from the NATO’s cybersecurity wing, Computer Incident Response Capability ([NCIRC](https://www.ncia.nato.int/Our-Work/Pages/Cyber-Security.aspx)).

The Blue Teams usually play from their host countries where they all start with the same scenario and then follow their own paths as they are more or less successful at keeping the cyber-attackers at bay. Locked Shields is a competition: the Blue Teams are scored and at the end ranked. Last year [Slovakia](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/slovakia.html) won ahead of the NCIRC and [Finland](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/finland.html).

After two days of preparations, the exercise was launched on April 26. The 19 defending teams spread all over Europe woke up to a fake news story accusing Berylia of having produced a drone for spraying chemical weapons.

This causes protests in Berylia and condemnation by Crimsonia, then the cyber-attacks begin and immediately, several Blue Teams have their firewalls compromised by the Red Team hackers in Tallinn.

As long as they remain inside and invisible, the attackers can steal and modify data, and maybe even control the systems.

In real life, it would not be exactly like this, though.

“During this game, they are giving you the infrastructure to protect web pages or mailing systems that are already vulnerable. In the real world, you are protecting your systems on a daily basis,” says Klaid Magi, leader of the Estonian Blue Team, which is playing from a room in the Estonian Information System Authority, where Magi works as head of the cybersecurity unit.

Once attackers get inside your systems, havoc may follow, as happens for some Blue Teams when fuel pumps in their airbase are hacked and spill their contents, causing a fire. Smoke can be seen and suddenly these teams start receiving emails and Skype calls from the in-game journalists in Tallinn.

In the hotel, the Control Room is frantic with people in white, green and yellow typing, walking around and speaking to each other, mostly in English and Estonian. However, the room next door where the people in red are sitting and where the cyberattacks are coming from is eerily silent and calm.

Playing a game of catch-up

“You need to be very concentrated, it’s really distracting if there’re people talking, it’s like chess,” says a Red Team member who cannot reveal their name. The way cyberattacks work, the aggressor makes the first move, often expecting to be caught and, as in chess, sacrificing a piece to prod their rival’s defences, who then responds before it’s the attacker’s turn again, and so on until the game is over.

“Attackers are usually a step ahead, so often it’s a catch-up game,” explains Mehis Hakkaja, the Red Team leader and CEO of a cybersecurity company in Tallinn.

Attacking is easier than defending because – be it a smart toy, a mobile phone or an airport’s power grid – the hackers may just need access to one entry point while the defenders have to protect all the possibilities.

“The internet is very vulnerable to manipulation if the actors are professional, and especially if they are nation states [which can use their bureaucracy to set well-organised cyberoffensives],” says Kenneth Geers, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Cyber Statecraft Initiative and a CCDCOE ambassador.

In 2014, the Russian offensive in eastern [Ukraine](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/ukraine.html) and the annexation of Crimea included – like this year’s Locked Shields – cyberattacks against power grids and an airport.

The Russian campaign in [Georgia](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/georgia.html) in 2008 had already been preceded by cyberattacks against Georgian websites. And the year before the target had been Estonia, which after a diplomatic row with [Russia](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/russia.html) received three waves of cyberattacks that blocked government, banks, media and telecom companies’ websites.

Fingers have been pointed at Russia for the attacks, but there isn’t definite evidence of the Kremlin being behind them. And it’s of course not just Moscow: the most famous cyber-attack of all, the malware [Stuxnet](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/06/20116673330569900.html), which managed to damage the Iranian nuclear industry, is believed to have originated in the US and [Israel](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/israel.html).

By the second day of attacks in Locked Shields, some Blue Teams have had their airbase’s power grid hacked, leaving the airport without electricity, which means no planes could land or take off from the island nation, effectively cutting if off from the rest of the world. As the prime minister of Berylia, what would you do in this situation?

The overall aim of the political game is to push the Blue Teams to a point where they are forced to consider invoking Article 5 and taking NATO to war against Crimsonia.

“And surprisingly most nations did. Basically, they all went to war, we didn’t expect it,” says Matthijs Veenendaal, head of this part of the game and Strategy Branch Chief at the CCDCOE.

Veenendaal says last year in a similar situation, no team invoked Article 5.

But he believes that the teams that went to war did so on purpose to push the scenario to its limits and make the most of the learning experience.

In today’s tense geopolitical situation, and seeing how in the past supposed cyberaggressors got away with attacking, why don’t rival countries launch more damaging cyberoffensives against each other?

A Cyber Cold War

First, many cyberattacks never become public and so there might actually be serious cyberaggressions between nations that we don’t know of. Then, “there’s some evidence the major powers are inside each other’s systems quite a lot,” says Fred Kaplan, author of Dark Territory: The Secret History of Cyber-War.

This would allow some countries to know who is attacking whom, but at the same time would prevent them from using this information publicly to avoid revealing their methods of cyberespionage.

On the other hand, the big powers being inside each other’s networks can make possible an immediate counteroffensive. It’s a situation not dissimilar to the use of nuclear weapons, like a sort of Cyber Cold War, in which cyberespionage is tacitly admitted but the major powers avoid harming each other too much by cyber means out of fear of having their own systems destroyed too.

But cyberattacking is not just about computers; it is also about reaching minds and influencing your rival’s society.

“[While] the US and UK understanding of ‘cyber’ is predominantly technical and computer network-based …, Russia and China use a cognitive approach based on understanding of mass psychology and of how to exploit individuals,” said a[report](https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubadm/496/496.pdf) published last April by a British parliamentary committee and referring to the 2016 American elections and [Brexit](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/events/brexit.html) referendum.

“The implications of this different understanding of cyber-attack, as purely technical or as reaching beyond the digital to influence public opinion, for the interference in elections and referendums are clear.”

Then, of course, the US, the UK and other Western powers have a record of trying to interfere in other countries’ elections by different means.

Information warfare and cyberespionage are here to stay, but experts agree that the omnipresence of computer systems in every aspect of our lives means all armed conflicts will have a cyber dimension. And here the danger may lie in the big differences between decision-makers and hackers.

“The gap between strategy and tactics is huge, and the two groups don’t really know each other that well or even speak the same language,” says Kenneth Geers.

“Cyberspace is much more Sun Tzu than it is Stalingrad: you have to apply a lot of intelligence, and a lot of forethought and imagination into a cyberattack, it’s a very complicated thing.

“And so often the effects [decision makers] are seeking to achieve are inconsistent or incongruous with the [cyber] means available, which are really quite narrow and very specific,” he adds.

The human element

Technologically, things are only going to get more complicated as more devices get connected and can, therefore, be hacked.

Cybercriminals can make money and also create chaos, as shown by the ransomware attacks that affected many countries in recent weeks. But it is state actors going on the cyberoffensive that can really be destructive.

“In terms of what would an all-out cyberwar look like, I sometimes dread to think,” says Ian West, NATO cybersecurity chief, speaking from this agency’s office in Mons, Belgium.

“Because of our dependence on computer systems for so much in our lives, so much in our countries and our organisations, the destruction or perhaps just the changes that could be made to these systems could be absolutely catastrophic and have a subsequent catastrophic effect on nations.”

#### **Advantage 2: Cyberwar Games**

#### **Traditional understandings of war as an antagonistic exchange between adversarial nations conceals the way war functions as an operational process. The perfection of this process produces a seamless economy of violence that liquidates all subjectivity and meaning.**

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 399-403) \*we don’t endorse ableist language

In Baudrillard’s notorious critique of the Gulf war he identifies traditional conceptions of war as involving the ontology we have seen in critical war studies and contemporary military doctrine: ‘war is born of an antagonistic, destructive but dual relation between two adversaries’.40 However, he argues, if this is war, then there is no war taking place in the Gulf. One important but hereto neglected reason for this argument is Baudrillard’s claim that war has disappeared into the processing of warfare. Baudrillard never fully developed this discussion, but he wrote extensively on the subject from a general perspective in his final works. Therein Baudrillard points to the way subjectivity disappears in operational processing as part of the attempt to fulfil and perfect potential.41 Baudrillard sees subjectivity becoming a subordinated part of technological media, ‘a perfectly operational molecule that is left to its own devices and doomed to ... reproduce, self-identically, to infinity’.42 In his view, we are faced with a situation in which subjectivity, social relations and will are essentially liquidated by operational practices. They are not supplanted by a higher will or a higher purpose. Rather, they vanish into processing entirely devoid of symbolic meaning.

This indicates that it is not physical disappearance Baudrillard discusses, but disappearance which strictly relates to the symbolic. Baudrillard on numerous occasions illustrated this idea through Alfred Jarry’s novel *The Supermale*, which tells a story of how automated processing dissolves limits between man and technology. The apex of the story is a 10,000-mile bicycle race – the perpetual motion race – which takes place between a five-man bicycle and an express train. In the race the cyclists function as a collaborative machine to challenge the train over long distance. The cyclists reach a speed that enables them to ride side by side with the locomotive – to become limitless automatons in the rhythm of the machine. This becoming comes at a price, since the cyclists gradually disappear as humans, as they reach the speed of the train. One of them disappears quite literally as he dies on his post. However, his decomposing corpse, strapped to the bicycle, pedals on. The corpse stands as a symbolic marker for how the rest of the bodies also disappear by being absorbed into the process itself. In the end, the five-man machine rides alongside the train with the living and dead corpses riding at maximum speed in order to keep up. This theme, of transformation of man into machine, is also evident in the rest of the novel, which ends with its key figure dying while transforming into a machine.43

As Rex Butler points out, the novel helps to draw up the:

[V]ision of a society in ... which humans are unnecessary. We see this vision coming true in those self-enclosed and self-perpetuating systems of simulation that Baudrillard analyses, which have no outside and no need to be explained by an other, and whose best model would be the bicycle proposed by Alfred Jarry, which still continues to pedal long after its riders have passed away with fatigue.44

The image Jarry paints in the novel illustrates the symbolic disappearance of subjectivity by emphasising the repetitive and inherently meaningless relationship we have with various media that surround us. The attempt to reach a perfect speed and efficiency by way of the mechanic process works back on subjectivity.

It is not far-fetched to see the recent conceptual inventions in military thought, such as the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO), Comprehensive Approach (CA), or Network Centric Warfare (NCW), as part of the characteristic that Baudrillard is concerned with and Jarry’s novel illustrates. The common denominator of these concepts is the way they attempt to synchronise, coordinate, and make warfare more efficient through staff procedures. They are all based on the idea that perfect operationalisation generates a war in which all means and capabilities are interconnected in ways that aim to create a seamless economy of violence. This in turn indicates that the subject of warfare dissolves into operationalised repetition. Such an argument does not entail that militaries, insurgents, weapon-systems, logistical capacities and so forth are disappearing on a material level. Rather, as part of a symbolic disappearance through the fulfilments of technological processes, warfare strives towards perfection and symbolic aspects disappear through a model which is being operationalised as if it is war. This should not be taken to mean that there is an end to violence or suffering. There is of course bodily violence and death in military operations despite the attempt to fulfil wars’ every potential through repeated calls for ‘high-precision munition’ and ‘zero-death warfare’. However, processing and repetition also participate in making the representation of bodies and subjects disappear in operationalisation.

The concern here is that focusing on the violence displayed in war-as-fighting might obscure a systemic violence which stems from the way in which war is operationalised. Baudrillard argues that the type of violence the military normally battles (such as terrorism) is far less lethal than the violence which replaces the subject with the will of an operational and technocratic structure.45 What we have, then, is a certain kind of disappearance which is obscured by (among other things) the focus on war as violent exchange between subjects.

How do we go from the ontology of war as generative to an ontology of war as disappearance? To understand the transition it is helpful to return to the idea that war is considered generative as it exceeds social orders. Albeit helpful in order to understand war’s excess in terms of productivity it is also possible to understand excess differently, as a force of disappearance. Baudrillard argues that social reality disappears not because of a lack, but rather because of excess, arguing precisely that wars fought by the US tend to be ‘wars of excess’.46 One under-analysed aspect of the ontology of war is therefore the way in which the excess it gives rise to is not simply generative of appearances, but in turn forces disappearances. If we complement the generative notion of war’s excess with Baudrillard’s argument that excess is in and of itself a cause of disappearance, we can appreciate that the ontology of war might at times be generative, and at times erase the preconditions for appearance. On one hand it is correct that bodies, experience or materiality frame our understanding of war by generating narratives. On the other it is important to acknowledge that subjectivity disappears through the excess of the processes themselves. Through such an acknowledgement we can see that warfare conditions the possibility of appearance as it ‘always, already’ works as a process of disappearance. Arguably targeting is a prime example of the latter.

Although Baudrillard highlights technology as integral to the effect of war’s disappearance into process, he does not dwell on the exact mechanisms it entails. This is a task that we therefore undertake here. The next part examines the military targeting process as one example of the attempt to create the perfect war. This process creates ‘an iterative logical methodology for development, planning, execution, and assessment of effective- ness’.47 In what follows, we examine how this methodology works to rid war of its underlying principles: subjectivity, antagonism and exchange.

Target Processing and the Disappearance of War

How are we to interpret targeting doctrines? As Josef Teboho Ansorge argues, military doctrine has a particular form of arrangement, which helps to ‘both describe and make the world’.48 Doctrinal text relies heavily on abbreviations and contains an impersonal and administrative language. It is as if the potential for symbolism – for the text to mean more than itself – has been subtracted from the paragraphs in favour of Orwellian ‘new- speak’. We might say that military doctrines not only make a world appear, but also dissolve meaning and are therefore acts of disappearance. We can also read the charts, appendices, images, power-point slides, meeting protocols and organisational routines as part of this disappearance. One amusing example is the well-known and extremely intricate ‘Afghanistan Stability/COIN dynamics’ slide (also called ‘the sprawling spaghetti diagram’) which went viral in 2010.49 This slide was supposed to convey meaning about how to ‘win’ the war in Afghanistan. The flow chart listed pretty much every targetable process relating to irregular warfare as part of this attempt. While it utterly failed to make the conflict meaningful (despite its excess of meaning) it succeeded, by virtue of becoming an overexposed internet joke, to obscure the fact that war-as-fighting, or war as such, had long since disappeared from Afghanistan.

A common conception of targeting processes is that they are related to the operational level of warfare (linking tactical with strategic and political aims). As such they are an integral part of how warfare aims to translate strategic aims into tactical effects (and *vice versa*). Military doctrine represents targeting as the process of selecting and prioritising targets and matching actions in order to achieve strategic objectives.50 The purpose of targeting is therefore to ‘provide the commander with a methodology’ and ‘a logical progression’.51 This is done by virtue of constructing targets, conceptualising them as a system, linking them to outcomes as part of synchronising other parts of military operations, and by creating organisational routines – all with the aim of supporting the ‘battle- rhythm’.52 Technically speaking, a battle-rhythm can be understood as ‘the combination ... of procedures, processes ... and ... actions’ which ‘facilitates extended-continuous operations’.53 Taken to its limit, this implies heeding the tempo of the operational process regardless of human subjectivity (just like the bike-train in Jarry’s novel). In the doctrines, effective targeting is measured by how well it facilitates operational planning and chosen objectives in an area of operations.54 Importantly, it is also measured by how well it enables a particular tempo during operations. Consequently, targeting ideally strives towards maximum efficiency according to the model constructed in operational planning, while agency disappears in the search for a perfect process.

If we look closely at the underlying principles of targeting we notice that they do not emphasise adversaries, exchange or antagonism, but focus on how to perfect the model of warfare. We read in *JP 3-60* that key principles are: coordination and synchronisation, rapid response, a minimal duplication of effort, expeditious assessments of executed operations, a common perspective on targeting efforts, and a full integration of capabilities of the process. This means that targeting provides a cycle to describe how warfare should be conducted.55 This cycle is on the one hand indicative of a methodology of contemporary warfare, and the actualisation of a model that makes war a type of processing ad infinitum. War gets its own (battle) rhythm, which territorialises a space (the area of operations) and the pace of the operation (into current time and future time). This creates a reality-principle which helps us appreciate that the war conducted is a modelled, repeatable war. It is dispersed into an enormous amount of operational meetings, power- points, steering groups and so forth.

On the other hand, we can read targeting as a subtraction of meaning which pulverises subjectivity through attempted perfection. On a symbolic level there is no ‘warrior’ in this warfare. Granted, the doctrines often invoke subjects such as ‘the warfighter’ or ‘the targeteer’ as those who are supposed to decide upon, detect, deliver effects of, and assess the targeting process.56 However, the ‘agent’ here is the medium itself which helps to reduce each aspect of subjectivity into fractal, self-identical molecules which merely mirror functions of the process. This is not to say that individuals are absent from targeting. The nomination and approval of potential targets is a process that involves not only the military but also politicians, lawyers, political advisors, gender advisors and environ- mental advisors, to mention but a few. It also involves a number of boards (such as the Joint Target Coordination Board, Joint Target Working Groups), lists (Target Nomination List, Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List), and support cells (Target Support Cell, Information Operation Cell), all involving complex meeting schedules. Not to mention what the doctrine aptly calls ‘the myriad processes, sub-processes, and cycles associated with joint targeting’.57 Through these, target-processing proclaims to be concerned with means and ends, thus linking tactics to politics and creating a seamless economy of violence. What it really accomplishes is to make subjectivity disappear in the excess of the process itself.

Judith Butler argues in *Frames of War* that:

Surely, common sense tells us that persons wage war, not the instruments they deploy. But what happens if the instruments acquire their own agency, such that persons become extensions of those instruments?... persons use technological instruments, but instruments surely also use persons (position them, endow them with perspective, and establish the trajectory of their action).58

We similarly ask what happens when the process of warfare as such acquires its own momentum, uses persons, and forms and erases subjectivity. In short, what happens when the process becomes not only the means but also the end-point of war? Importantly, if the subject is disappearing in repetitive excess, what happens to the enemy Other?

#### Operationalized war processing accelerates: everything becomes a target destined for annihilation.

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 403-406) \*we don’t endorse ableist language

As *JP 3-60* states no target is critical in and of itself. A target is measured only by how it is part of target-sets, target-systems or matrices.59 However, on a symbolic level, a target is nothing but a ‘target folder’. This folder contains mainly a classification code, a name, coordinates, photograph and information on which weapons are suitable for usage. Since a target in the doctrines is ‘an area, complex, installation, force, equipment, capability, function or behaviour identified for possible action’60 the process subsumes all possible things as targets: subjects, objects, ideas, emotions, networks.61 Therefore, although targeting involves violence it does so not as exchange, or as symbolic appearance, but rather as an inclusion of ‘targetable’ objects. Targets depend on the targeting procedure itself, as it processes objects through meetings, nominations, and documents into the end-point of a spreadsheet. In this sense the target is a result of a medium that erases the very conditions of its appearance and forces it symbolically and literally to disappear as object.

As targets are nominated by a number of organisational sub-components (such as tactical army, navy or air force staff) one integral aspect is to keep up with the pace of operations. Low-ranking commanders typically need to nominate targets in order to keep up with the battle-rhythm. Processing demands an excess of targets (which is also an excess of disappearances), enough so that the medium is saturated, which occurs at meetings when the spreadsheets are full and nothing more can be acted upon. In fact, the doctrines explicitly state that there will always be more targets in an area of operations than it is possible to destroy.62 As Peter Row puts it (with regards to the NATO bombings in Kosovo): ‘[t]he reality of the situation is that those objects which military commanders wished to attack, for whatever reason, were attacked’.63 The milieu of warfare is in this sense very much a derivative of its process as a military methodology. However, the methodology includes all manner of things as targets, and their disappearance has less to do with wishing destruction (as Row claims) and more to do with the way antagonistic exchange is supplanted for the repetition of war as a process.

How are we to understand the temporal aspects of such targeting processes? We have argued that subjects disappear in the ‘battle-rhythm’. If we look closely at the temporal aspects of targeting we find that it involves planned aspects and dynamic-real time aspects.64 What are we to make of this? Planned targeting is strictly speaking taking place from the future. The organisational routine projects a number of days into the future. Operational warfare does not take place merely in real-time but also in future time. In the processing of targets the meetings occur on ‘D+3’ or ‘D+6’. It is one aspect of what we might call operational time, where the present moment is appropriated by the vantage point of a modelled future. In this modelling the possibility of a human encounter in the here-now disappears, since ‘now’ has been pre-planned days earlier. Dynamic (or time-sensitive) targeting on the other hand is war in real-time from an instantaneous present. This process helps to follow and take out targets in real-time as a complement to pre-planned targeting. This is a costly and difficult part of targeting. The doctrines lament that so few targets can be followed in real-time: ‘not all targets can be tracked constantly due to limited resources’.65 This arguably complements an operational time that contains both an appropriated future and an instantaneous present. Finally, both aspects of targeting – pre-planned and dynamic – end up in delivery through a type of (weapon) system. This delivery needs to be extremely high paced – preferably immediate. Former United States Under-Secretary of Defence William Perry sums up this principle: ‘as soon as you can see the target, you can expect to destroy it’.66 And indeed, a missile is absent until it hits the target. It appears only to disappear and to make the world around it disappear in turn.

Thus, the temporal aspect of targeting can be understood as a disappearance of encounters. Operational warfare does not work as an antagonistic exchange between two opposing subjects, at least not from the perspective of the system generating these targeting strategies. Exchange and encounters disappear into the real-time of dynamic targeting and in the future instant of pre-planned targeting. The same happens to the experiences, bodies or narratives introduced as a basis for a different ontology of war. Targeting as a method and as part of war at a distance makes encounters impossible. In this type of predetermined battle-rhythm, where the military duty is to attend and facilitate this process, target nomination becomes repetitive and mandatory. This means that the battle-rhythm works as a ‘processor’ that grinds out targets and applies not so much means to ends, but rather the process itself as an end. It is a kind of war ‘so predicted, programmed, anticipated, prescribed and modelled that it has exhausted all its possibilities before even taking place’.67 Just like Jarry’s five-man machine had to keep pace with the rhythm of the machine, so does the tandem of soldiers need to keep pace with the battle-rhythm in operational planning. The repetitive procedures force a certain reality around war to disappear. This aspect of disappearance is evident in the way targeting involves a particular repetition, which develops target packages, nominates targets, and tasks and weaponeers against those targets.

What happens when we take this logic to its end-point? As we have seen, targeting implies that everything in an ‘area of operations’ is a possible target, and any area is a possible area of operations. Moreover, not all targets are possible to track due to limited resources – but ideally all targets are possible to track at all times. There is no agent left in this procedure, as it is replaced by the momentum of the targeting process itself. Subsequently, a target is not the Other of the pulverised subject or of the targeting process – but a folder corresponding to something which is destroyed as it appears. There will always be more targets than it is possible to destroy. The process aims to pre-plan them all into folders. Ideally they can all be destroyed. In short, symbolically, every subject, object or exchange is potentially gone from the (global) area of operations – lost in the rhythm and scope that appropriates them. When this is achievable in a seamless process – efficient, synchronised, integrated – by virtue of operational modelling, we have reached the perfect war.

#### **The understanding of war as ‘fighting’ allows NATO’s technical perfection of warfare as a process to continue unabated. Vote AFF to pull the chair out from under the policy maker/debater and compel an interrogation of processual warfare.**

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 406-409)

The War that Remains

We have argued to this point that critical war studies, in Clausewitz’s footsteps, is emerging as a field of study that is strongly attached to a particular ontology of ‘war’.

We have also argued, however, that contemporary warfare (particularly in NATO countries) can alternatively be understood, not through the type of ‘war’ their ontology implies (war-as-fighting), but rather through various operational procedures. Our point has been to suggest that there is little or no symbolism left in a warfare which processes targets as spreadsheets, target packages and tasking-orders, through a predetermined rhythm of meetings which leads it, not to a battlefield, but to an administrative model. This model finds its ontology in Baudrillard rather than in Clausewitz. Through military operations we move from war as antagonistic exchange between subjects, to war as technical realisation. The race between targeting process and battle-rhythm resolves subjectivity, the Other and symbolic exchange through the repetition of operational procedures. This is not an example of war-as-fighting, but the enactment of a pre-planned script. This characteristic is by no means exclusive to the targeting process; rather it is indicative of how military planning is conducted in most NATO countries. It is therefore crucial to think of disappearance – enabled and exacerbated by the way warfare is infinitely repeated – as an integral part of thinking about an ontology of war.

However, if target-processing and associated ways of operationalising warfare is making war in the Clausewitzean sense disappear, then why is warfare made to appear as fighting? We are constantly immersed in ‘war’ through television, art, computer games, military recruiting campaigns, and arms industry projects. They call forth ‘war’ as antagonistic and generative exchange. Consider the (simulated) fighting between warriors in the stream of screenings that includes Spartacus, 300, Troy, Braveheart, Apocalypto, or The Last Samurai. Computer games centred on war and politics – *Civilization, Hearts of Iron, Total War* – unfold through the idea that war is a struggle between antagonistic forms of political life. Andreas Behnke argues (correctly in our view) that the Western notion of war has lost its ontological grounding. He reads this as part of a paradox since despite its loss, warfare needs to be aestheticised and legitimised ‘beyond the purely instrumental’.68 The explanation for why this is the case often lies precisely in the way representation helps to reinforce and militarise society, as it justifies a liberal world order.69 Arguably, this explanation eschews the prior question of why the study of war needs to imagine an antagonistic and generative war in the first place. What does the idea that war is antagonistic and generative obscure? Or put more crudely, who gains from reifying war as ‘war’, or war-as-fighting?

As an attempt to answer this we complement the prior explanation by suggesting that recent theories of ‘war’ have underplayed the way in which operational warfare is also, in and of itself, an act of disappearance. In doing so, they over emphasise genesis at the expense of disappearance, and obscure the loss of exchange and subjectivity from the ‘war’ they claim to depict, at the same time as they feed from its reification as such. This ‘war’ allows NATO’s member countries to send out war correspondents in body armour and helmets; to give first person shooters like *Battlefield* enough status as reality; to give movies like Hurt-locker, television dramas like *Generation Kill*, and documentaries like *Armadillo* their necessary ontological back-drop. Moreover, it is there to allow for spending vertiginous amounts of money on recruitment, arms production, government transitions, advertising, aid, education and – last but not least – military operations and target-processing. Crucially, ‘war’ is there to allow the researcher to study war in peace. All of us who feed from this are part of an extreme reification of war – which hides not only that ‘war’ may have ceased to be a meaningful term which structures reality, but also that these renditions of war is the closest we have to ‘war’ as it is described by Clausewitz. The ontology of war debates in which we engage are therefore part of this reification of war.

In this way, the distinction between an act of warfare and the attempt to understand wars’ underlying principles is lost through the notion of war-as-fighting. Every attempt to wage war or think war in its own right (or to oppose or neglect war for that matter) refers back to this loss of meaning and distinction. Understood in this way, the focus of research on the ontology of war or on better understanding ‘war’ as an object (to make it appear as meaningful), also bestows a reality to the attempts to deal with war. The question of whether the notion of war as antagonistic and generative exchange is real is therefore not the issue, as any ontology of war risks this type of reification. Rather, we should ask why it might seem so costly to leave this particular ontology behind. Could it be because the various ways of grappling with war’s ontology are active parts of how this reality remains intact?

Should we (and could we) forget the reality of ‘war’? Moreover, is a world without referents like ‘war’ a world with less violence? No, says Baudrillard, it is not: ‘[t]he immanence of the death of all the great referents ... is expressed by exacerbating the forms of violence and representation that characterized them’.70 This helps us understand why, paradoxically, in an era in which war-as-fighting has disappeared, we all speak about it, analyse it, play it on our computers and experience it through books and films – and why a calling for war studies is a logical step in the disappearance of war- as-fighting. This argument could be directed against other disciplines too – ‘war’ is not a privileged object in any respect. Nonetheless, to call for a renewed discipline of ‘war studies’ – encouraging as it may be, especially to all of us who receive research funding based on the existence of such a discipline – is therefore not without problems. It is not so much a call for an understanding of war as it is a call to supplant the absence of war in International Relations with a particular categorical ~~blindness,~~ since strictly speaking war is never there. Rather, it provides a ‘simulation of perspective’ as Baudrillard would call it.71 The problem is that the organised violence to which we constantly refer has no other reality than that of the model.72 That is, it has no other reality than the reality provided by representations of war (which is not to say that they are one and the same). Through this simulation, war returns as an imperative to thought. It is an explanation or an understanding through a particular category (‘war’) and not of a state of things (actions, reactions, challenges, automatism, repetition, processing). ‘War’ works as an imperative:

‘You’ve got a military and you must learn how to use it well’  
‘You’ve got a weapon-system and you must learn how to operate it’  
‘You’ve got a target and you must learn how to task it’  
‘You’ve got an ontology of war and you must learn how to think through it.’

Conclusion

War is understood in recent debates on critical war studies as characterised by antagonistic and generative exchange. This amounts to a view in which ‘war’ helps provide a context in which acts of violence become meaningful. They receive a pattern, reciprocity and a ‘natural’ demarcation that can be named and criticised. This article has argued that contemporary understandings of war and warfare are well advised to find new ontolog*ies* complementing the notion that war is fighting. We have presented one such attempt, resonating with Baudrillard’s notion of war-processing, based on an analysis of the planning and conduct of military operations (in NATO countries). This attempt outlines how warfare strives towards its own ‘perfect’ and self-referential model. We illustrate this through an analysis of military targeting so as to point to how warfare becomes a reiterative and automated process which constructs a seamless economy of violence. We read targeting as a perpetual motion to keep up with the battle-rhythm of military operations and argue that it rids what is termed ‘war’ of its underlying principles: adversaries, antagonism and exchange.

An understanding of war which neglects this aspect risks missing that war (as processing) strictly speaking lacks an antagonistic engagement with ‘an enemy’ and in so doing calls into question many of the underlying principles that the notion of war- as-fighting rests upon. Doing so leaves the theorist of war and IR with a ~~blind~~ spot: the conception of ‘war’ that has become operational while being obscured by the reification of ‘war’ as fighting. Barkawi and Brighton associate the absence of a discipline of war studies with an ‘othering of violence from inquiry’.74 We again state explicitly, therefore, that we are not advocating the continuation of such othering. To say that war as processing lacks antagonism is not to say that it lacks violence. Warfare is a highly violent practice but it seems to occur amidst a breakdown of symbolic relations between a subject and an Other. This would point to acts of insurgency or terror being ways of acting out, rather than a response as such.75 The ‘perfect war’ we have described is highly violent indeed – but that does not make it ‘fighting’.

This is not to say that war should be reduced to an automated process between man and machine. Rather we want to point out that war-as-fighting neglects the way in which subjectivity, symbolism and exchange are often lacking in military targeting – something which needs to be considered if we are to better understand the relationship between the ontic realty of warfare and the ontology of war. In light of our argument, the ontology of war can be read not only as a way of thinking ‘war’ but also as an imperative to thought. We are aware that this imperative does not work through simple causality. The targeting doctrines we have looked at are not representative of all warfare. A task for future research would be to contrast it to, for example, the way ‘insurgents’ or ‘civilians’ subjected to military violence represent warfare. Another would be to examine disappearance in the wider contexts of counter-insurgency and network-centric warfare.

Nevertheless, there is a risk that (critical) war studies in invoking the ontology of war- as-fighting is led back to an antagonistic and generative exchange between subjects – whether this is actually taking place or not. Attempts to think of politics, ethics, security or gender risk being forced through the mould of this particular ontology of war. Following Baudrillard, an attempt to rethink and complement the ontology of war should challenge it in a way that forces its ‘truth to withdraw – just as if one were pulling the chair out from under someone about to sit down’.76 We therefore need to think war in a way that pulls the chair out from underneath the gamer, policy maker, military officer or theorist about to sit down to ‘do war’. What does this act of ‘pulling the chair’ from underneath thought leave us with? Our hope is that it opens up for the possibility of rethinking ontologies of war in a fashion that helps us better understand and challenge their relationship to various ontic realities. Taking this question seriously gives us a new vantage point on (critical) war studies for future debates.

## Cyberian Islands ADV

### I/L -- Escalation

#### **Three internal links to escalation: (1) Crimsonia’s meddling with Berylian drone facilities drives fear of covert cyberattacks. (2) Crimsonia targets Revalia but makes Berylia look responsible. (3) Cyber-attacks on Berylian critical information infrastructure disrupts Berylian communication channels.**

Hauptman 16 (Allyson, MA in Computer Science and Cyber Security, “Designing Digital Forensics Challenges for Multinational Cyber Defense Exercises” UNIVERSITY OF TARTU Institute of Computer Science Cyber Security Curriculum MA Thesis, pp. 18-22)

Overall Scenario As previously mentioned, digital forensics injects need to exist within the overall exercise scenario for a government cyber exercise. The Locked Shields 2016 scenario involves three States: Crimsonia, Berylia, and Revalia, three rival states within a local region. Essentially the Red Team is the villain nation of Crimsonia, and the Blue Teams play the role of Berylia. Revalia, while not initially at war with either, is a rival state within the region [34]. Berylia's primary industry is drones, an industry that Crimsonia is interested in advancing. Crimsonia will begin attacking the civilian-operated drone facilities of Berylia, and the Berylian government deploys rapid reaction teams (the Blue Teams) to the facilities [34]. The scenario asks the digital forensics designers to create a situation in which Crimsonia conducts a cyber attack on Revalia but tries to make it look like Berylia conducted the attack in an effort to get Revalia to join the conflict on Crimsonia's side [34]. Berylia needs to prove to Revalia that Crimsonia is the responsible party. Additionally, the exercise creators ask the designers to show that Crimsonia has been stealing documents related to drone use and development from the facilities [34]. Locked Shields, like most large scale state-based cyber exercises, is intended to mimic the worst case scenario where multiple attacks and exploits are executed. This is why it is important that the digital forensics challenge contain multiple layers [34]. Berylia's technical environment consists of various operating system types, including Linux, Ubuntu, Windows 8, and Windows 10. The exercise coordinators specified that the compromised machine for the forensics challenge needs to be Windows 10. The coordinators granted permission for the acquisition phase to take place on the exercise's preparation day, Day 0. The rest of the challenge will take place over Day 1 and Day 2 (the entire exercise is one preparation and two game-play days) [34].

Berylia's technical environment consists of various operating system types, including Linux, Ubuntu, Windows 8, and Windows 10. The exercise coordinators specified that the compromised machine for the forensics challenge needs to be Windows 10. The coordinators granted permission for the acquisition phase to take place on the exercise's preparation day, Day 0. The rest of the challenge will take place over Day 1 and Day 2 (the entire exercise is one preparation and two game-play days) [34]. At this point in the challenge development, the thesis author and the other designers need to answer the scenario questions from the methodology section: How does the scenario dictate the sources of data? There needs to be data with clues to Crimsonia present on the infected machine. Because Berylia is the team conducting the investigation, and the damaged party is Revalia, somewhere between the creation and execution of the attack, artifacts have to infect something under Crimsonia's control that the blue teams can analyze. How does the scenario dictate the most likely available resources and tools? All tools need to be available open source, as not all teams have licensed forensics programs. Because the infected machine will be Windows 10, any tools used to deliver or execute the attack need to exploit Windows 10 vulnerabilities. Additionally, because the network includes various systems, it is advantageous for the delivery mechanism to be capable of delivering to more than one operating system. How does the scenario create, maintain, and require communication channels? The scenario requires Blue Teams to present proof of attribution of an attack to the victim party, Revalia. This means that the teams need to log and keep proof of their acquisition and analysis activities. It requires them to give a persuasive report to a legal team. Because the scenario will occur within an ongoing conflict with Crimsonia, prioritization may require stop/start of analysis. There is also high risk of a loss of communication channels during the analysis process. How does the scenario restrict and manage incident and response times? Teams will be limited to the timeline of the exercise, with one day provided for acquisition and two for analysis and presentation of findings. The incident response time may speed up depending on escalation of attacks. Because there is a media team involved in the exercise [34], digital forensics teams will be pushed to present findings quicker in order to prevent the entrance of Revalia into the conflict. This allows for the use of techniques that are speedier over safer, such as live analysis. How does the scenario shape the physical and logical environment? There are at least three separate government networks involved in the scenario-- Crimsonia, Revalia, and Berylia. This means three public address spaces. Operating systems will be heterogeneous. The teams themselves will operate from all over the world over virtual networks/ virtual machines. This means the acquisition will also be virtual. Teams need to choose a form of connecting to the virtual machines, such as Secure Shell (SSH) or Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP). Launching the Attack In developing the injects, step one is mapping what effects of the incident would create analysis challenges that mapped to the goals outlined in Section 1, the methodology discussed above, and the overall Locked Shields 2016 scenario. The thesis author and her team of three digital forensics designers have to create a challenge that fulfills as many of them as possible within the confines of the overall Locked Shields 2016 scenario. This means that any scenario needs to incorporate an image, a web site, a Windows 10 machine, and a malware file. The scenario itself needs to include three actors in the execution of the attack: Crimsonia, Berylia, and Revalia. The easiest way to do this is to literally turn Berylia into the executor of the attack by turning one or more of its machines into botnets, because “bots run almost exclusively on Windows” [35]. Ideally, Crimsonia will deliver malware that gives it command and control over a Berylian system and execute the attack on Revalia from the machine. Windows 10, being a relatively new system, is fairly secure to well known malware; however, it is important to recall that botnet programs originally were not intended to be malicious. Remote control programs are advantageous to administrators, and thus they exist for all versions of operating systems. Malicious attackers take advantage of these programs and use them to gain control over systems to which they are unauthorized to access [35]. Such a program could be used to gain control over a Crimsonian machine. According to this thesis' selected methodology, the attack on Revalia needs to include a website and an image. One of the most common forms of cyber attack[s] conducted against government entities is website defacement [36]. These attacks are often semantic attacks, directed at disseminating false information and inciting fear or anger [36]. This matched the scenario well. Thus, Crimsonia will deface the Revalian government website with an image that linked to Berylia. For this to occur, the Revalian website needs some type of a vulnerability to exploit. The five most common web server vulnerabilities are remote code injection, Structured Query Language (SQL) injection, format string vulnerabilities, cross-site scripting, and username enumeration [37]. The purpose of the vulnerability is for Crimsonia to deface the website with an image. SQL injection is enough to do this; however, if the designers want the image to do anything beyond that (i.e. execute some type of code), then the server also needs to be vulnerable to cross-site scripting. For Locked Shields, the thesis author and fellow designers tested a multitude of Wordpress exploits and discovered one that works on Windows 10. This exploit relies on a compromised plugin called RevSlider version 4.1.1. The attacker uses the infected machine to browse to the victim web-server with the additional command /wp-admin/admin-ajax.php? action=revslider\_show\_image&img=../wp-config.php. This downloads the file with the database credentials, such that the attacker obtains login information for the server and uses it to deface the website with the image [38]. Delivering the Attack In order for the attack to occur in this manner, first Crimsonia needs to turn a Berylian computer into a Botnet. There are many ways to do this. The delivery mechanism has to be one that adds evidence in a way that helped test the skills listed in Table 1. Because network analysis is a key skill, the delivery mechanism should introduce network traffic. Additionally, the environment contains multiple hosts and operating systems, so the delivery mechanism has to be easy to multiply and deliverable to multiple operating systems, thus ruling out operating system specific deliveries. Options for this include e-mail, ftp, video chat, voice over IP, advertising, and social media sites. Because in this type of exercise the designers need to trick the victim machine user into downloading some type of malware, email is a wise choice, essentially because it is easy to disguise an executable attachment as a pdf in Microsoft Outlook. For the specific email, it needs to be something a user would want to read and would realistically download an attachment from while at work. Phishing emails are specifcially written to convince a target that they come from a trustworthy source [39]. The most common subjects of these emails include online payments, security violations, and IT department messages [39]. It is important that the email make sense in the context of the exercise scenario. Given that the workers are drone research scientists in the Locked Shields scenario, the email needs to be clever enough to trick someone whose organization is heavily concerned with security. In specifically targeted attacks like this one, attackers favor Spear Phishing as the attack vector [40]. Spear Phishing campaigns use information gathered about individuals to compose communications that appear personal and legitimate in nature [40]. That this email be intricately supported by the scenario is important, as previous exercise reviews cited competing teams' decreased motivation when the event did not seem realistic [41]. This also means there needs to be a background story on how the attacker conducted the reconnaissance for the spear phishing attack. For Locked Shields 2016 this thesis' author and her fellow designers created an accountant persona within the organization. The accountant has a Facebook account that registers her as an employee in the drone organization, as does the victim machine user. The user and the accountant are friends. Facebook and similar social networking sites are primary resources of reconnaissance, because they list not only personal information that allow attackers to craft convincing emails, but they also show the relationships between people that can be utilized in a spear phishing attack [40]. In order to be plausible, the designers need to create some email history between the accountant and the user from their work email accounts, supporting their work relationship. For the attack, the attacker makes an email account that looks similar to the victim's friend's legitimate email. This is normally done by changing one or two letters in the domain name [42]. The email itself needs a legitimate excuse to have an attachment. For this scenario, because the designers chose an accountant, they will send him an email from his friend the accountant asking if he could view the invoice that she received from an executive within the company. The real domain name for the victim's workplace droneworld.site, and the attacker's domain will be dronevvorld.site, replacing the letter w with two of the letter v.

This leads to the question of what malware to use in order to turn the target machine into a bot. According to the head digital forensics inject developer for the NATO Cyber Centre of Excellence, the main criteria for selecting the malware is that it is open source, reliable, supports file download and upload, enables encryption, and is easily customizable [38]. Open source malware has a few advantages. First, the code is simple to modify to meet the exercise's needs, including leaving clues. Second, it is usually accompanied by explanations of its use. Finally, with open source malware there is little risk of an unknown developer backdoor that could compromise the exercise [38]. This also supports the reliability of the malware. The malware should also be proven reliable by testing it thoroughly for bugs. Features important to the malware include file upload and download, because the attacker needs to deliver artifacts to the victim in order for it to upload the defacing image to the web server. In order for the network analysis part of the exercise to present a decent challenge, it also needs to be possible to encrypt the communication between the attacker and the bot [38]. Finally, because exercises requires the designers to leave specific clues for the teams, the malware needs to be easily customizable. Areas that the designer will want to customize include metadata, file location, ports, and process names [38]. A Remote Access Trojan (RAT) that meets this criteria is the Qaesar RAT, which was used in the 2015 Locked Shields and the designers decided to reuse in a modified manner in the 2016 exercise. Additionally, the RAT allows for encrypted file upload and download, an essential part of the scenario [38]. Once the RAT takes over the machine, it will use this encrypted channel to download files, such as the defacing image. File Theft Recall that a large constraint in government cyber exercises is the need to prioritize and respond to political concerns. Locked Shields incorporated this by making the discovery of leaked documents a priority. Thus, the teams will need to discover if and what documents the Crimsonians copied from the infected machine. Because the RAT uses encrypted file download, this presents a challenge. The two day exercise is not enough time for teams to decrypt the file upload, and just timestamps are not enough to identify copied documents, since in the scenario the Windows 10 user is unaware of the system's compromise for an extended period of time[38]. Thus, the process of copying the files needs to leave clues. Because a main goal of the exercise is the use of system administration tools, this can be integrated into this section of the exercise by executing a process. The thesis author crafted a python script that walks the Windows 10 user's directories for a keyword in the file names (in this scenario, “drone”) and copies those files to a new folder. When the attacker downloads the image to the victim, he also downloads this script. After its execution, he will upload the entire folder using the RAT. After file upload, the entire folder will be deleted. This entire process leaves various clues for the teams. The script is shown below:

### I/L --- Misattribution

#### Official NATO policy is that a country doesn’t need to prove attribution to engage in offensive responses to cyberattacks.

Brussels Declaration 18 (Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\_texts\_156624.htm#20

Cyber threats to the security of the Alliance are becoming more frequent, complex, destructive, and coercive. NATO will continue to adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape, which is affected by both state and non-state actors, including state-sponsored. Cyber defence is part of NATO’s core task of collective defence. We must be able to operate as effectively in cyberspace as we do in the air, on land, and at sea to strengthen and support the Alliance’s overall deterrence and defence posture. We therefore continue to implement cyberspace as a domain of operations. We have agreed how to integrate sovereign cyber effects, provided voluntarily by Allies, into Alliance operations and missions, in the framework of strong political oversight. Reaffirming NATO’s defensive mandate, we are determined to employ the full range of capabilities, including cyber, to deter, defend against, and to counter the full spectrum of cyber threats, including those conducted as part of a hybrid campaign. We need to bolster our intelligence-led situational awareness to support NATO’s decision-making and action. We continue to work together to develop measures which would enable us to impose costs on those who harm us. Individual Allies may consider, when appropriate, attributing malicious cyber activity and responding in a coordinated manner, recognising attribution is a sovereign national prerogative. We are determined to deliver strong national cyber defences through full implementation of the Cyber Defence Pledge, which is central to enhancing cyber resilience and raising the costs of a cyber attack. We reaffirm our commitment to act in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and human rights law, as applicable. We also support work to maintain international peace and security in cyberspace and to promote stability and reduce the risk of conflict, recognising that we all stand to benefit from a norms-based, predictable, and secure cyberspace. We will further develop our partnership with industry and academia from all Allies to keep pace with technological advances through innovation.

#### This lets NATO members go after enemies for political reasons.

Karasev 20 Research Fellow, MSU Institute of Information Security Issues 9/6 (“Cybersecurity and NATO’s Nuclear Capability” 2020, https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/09/06/cybersecurity-and-natos-nuclear-capability/)

Third, the authors note that attribution and response are measures for counteracting cyberattacks. The report also states that “NATO members’ NC3 architecture is secure and reliable is of particular importance for deterrence purposes. Even when the Alliance’s NC3 systems are under attack, all member states should be able to demonstrate their detection, forensics and response capabilities…” The report fails, however, to make any mention of the fact that, as of today, no international legal mechanisms have been created as a framework for considering and assessing dangerous ICT incidents; equally, there is no system in place for recording the facts related to those incidents. Many famous cases of establishing the culpability of a particular state in various ICT-related incidents resorted to so-called “public attribution”: in the absence of legally significant facts and due process, the guilty party was “appointed” on the basis of political considerations and subjected to various measures. A rapid and precise ICT attribution has been and is a rather labour-intensive procedure. The authors state that “offensive cyber capabilities are without doubt highly sophisticated at present, and such capabilities are in the hands of a small number of actors.” One can hardly agree with this statement since, in some estimates, over 60 countries have cyber weapons today. It is very difficult to assess how sophisticated a particular country’s capabilities are. The number of actors in possession of cyber weapons keeps growing, this making attribution even more difficult and entailing higher risks of misinterpretation and incorrect response. NATO is already known to view cyberspace as a fully-fledged operational ground and the Alliance is building up its military potential in cyberspace, while several of its member states have already formed specialised military units.

#### Lack of standards for attribution in the context of article 5 risks escalation due to non-state actors.

Ian Murphy 19, journalist, editor and analyst for over 35 years. While technology remains the core focus of Ian's writings he also covers science fiction, children toys, field hockey and progressive rock. As an analyst, Ian is the Cyber Security and Infrastructure Practice Leader for Synonym Advisory.8-28-2019, "Could a cyber-attack trigger NATO response? -," Enterprise Times, https://www.enterprisetimes.co.uk/2019/08/28/could-a-cyber-attack-trigger-nato-response/

When is a cyberattack a NATO Article 5 issue? Perhaps the biggest elephant in the room is what level of proof would trigger an Article 5 activation. Experienced cyber security analysts admit that attribution is not just hard but virtually impossible. The cyberattack on German politicians last year is a good example. Within days of the first set of leaked data, security vendors were claiming this was a nation state attack. Many claimed to have seen indicators pointing to different nation state groups. Unfortunately, what they saw was recycled code that they misinterpreted in a rush to make public comment. As we now know, the attack came from a disenchanted teenager who taught himself to attack. Would the initial attribution in that case meet the standard for an Article 5 response? If not NATO, would it meet the new EU standard for a collective response? Would anyone have waited for more considered review of the data or would they have treated the claims by security vendors as absolute proof? And here is the heart of the problem. It is not hard to insert code snippets or use known techniques that belong to specific hacking groups. It is just as easy to fake attack vectors to make an attack look as if it came from a specific location. This means that it is possible for an individual to create an attack that could start a cyber war just because they were bored. Any response has to be a measured one and that means having plenty of provable and trusted intelligence. A missile strike or tanks moving over a border is easy to attribute, unless they are simply overly diligent members of armed units who take their tanks home with them (Ukraine/Russia). We cannot say the same thing about cyberattacks. NATO will have to develop better ways of attributing attacks. Enterprise Times: What does this mean Stoltenberg is making the right noises and he is absolutely right in that NATO needs to treat cyberspace as just another theatre of warfare. Unfortunately, there are a lot of missing parts here that will take time to develop and prove. We have seen poor and mistaken attribution that, if acted upon, could have provoked a more serious incident. In addition, how do you separate a nation state attack from nation state support for cyber criminals? The latter creates a very complex landscape, one that we see with the West’s approach to Iran and its allies in the Middle East. Given that there is already a cyber element to that problem, why have we not seen a highly visible cyber response? We are in an era where cyber warfare and defence are becoming top level areas for investment. However, the consequences of getting it wrong could be devastating on a world dependent on the Internet and connectivity. It will be interesting to see how Russia, China and other countries respond to Stoltenberg’s article.

### ! -- Cyber War -> Nuclear War

#### Cyberwar with NATO members goes nuclear.

Michael T. Klare 19, professor emeritus of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College and senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association., 11-1-2019, "Cyber Battles, Nuclear Outcomes? Dangerous New Pathways to Escalation," No Publication, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#bio>, language edited change denoted by brackets

\*we do not endorse ableist language

For the past several years, the U.S. Department of Defense has been exploring how it could employ its own very robust cyberattack capabilities to compromise or destroy enemy missiles from such states as North Korea before they can be fired, a strategy sometimes called “left of launch.”3 Russia and China can assume, on this basis, that their own launch facilities are being probed for such vulnerabilities, presumably leading them to adopt escalatory policies such as those espoused in the 2018 NPR report. Wherever one looks, therefore, the links between cyberwar and nuclear war are growing.

The Nuclear-Cyber Connection

These links exist because the NC3 systems of the United States and other nuclear-armed states are heavily dependent on computers and other digital processors for virtually every aspect of their operation and because those systems are highly vulnerable to cyberattack. Every nuclear force is composed, most basically, of weapons, early-warning radars, launch facilities, and the top officials, usually presidents or prime ministers, empowered to initiate a nuclear exchange. Connecting them all, however, is an extended network of communications and data-processing systems, all reliant on cyberspace. Warning systems, ground- and space-based, must constantly watch for and analyze possible enemy missile launches. Data on actual threats must rapidly be communicated to decision-makers, who must then weigh possible responses and communicate chosen outcomes to launch facilities, which in turn must provide attack vectors to delivery systems. All of this involves operations in cyberspace, and it is in this domain that great power rivals seek vulnerabilities to exploit in a constant struggle for advantage.

The use of cyberspace to gain an advantage over adversaries takes many forms and is not always aimed at nuclear systems. China has been accused of engaging in widespread cyberespionage to steal technical secrets from U.S. firms for economic and military advantages. Russia has been accused, most extensively in the Robert Mueller report, of exploiting cyberspace to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Nonstate actors, including terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State group, have used the internet for recruiting combatants and spreading fear. Criminal groups, including some thought to be allied with state actors, such as North Korea, have used cyberspace to extort money from banks, municipalities, and individuals.4 Attacks such as these occupy most of the time and attention of civilian and military cybersecurity organizations that attempt to thwart such attacks. Yet for those who worry about strategic stability and the risks of nuclear escalation, it is the threat of cyberattacks on NC3 systems that provokes the greatest concern.

Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, testifies during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on February 14. He warned that China and Russia are conducting sustained cybercampaigns against the United States. (Photo: Mark Wilson/Getty Images)Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, testifies during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on February 14. He warned that China and Russia are conducting sustained cybercampaigns against the United States. (Photo: Mark Wilson/Getty Images)This concern stems from the fact that, despite the immense effort devoted to protecting NC3 systems from cyberattack, no enterprise that relies so extensively on computers and cyberspace can be made 100 percent invulnerable to attack. This is so because such systems employ many devices and operating systems of various origins and vintages, most incorporating numerous software updates and “patches” over time, offering multiple vectors for attack. Electronic components can also be modified by hostile actors during production, transit, or insertion; and the whole system itself is dependent to a considerable degree on the electrical grid, which itself is vulnerable to cyberattack and is far less protected. Experienced “cyberwarriors” of every major power have been working for years to probe for weaknesses in these systems and in many cases have devised cyberweapons, typically, malicious software (malware) and computer viruses, to exploit those weaknesses for military advantage.5

Although activity in cyberspace is much more difficult to detect and track than conventional military operations, enough information has become public to indicate that the major nuclear powers, notably China, Russia, and the United States, along with such secondary powers as Iran and North Korea, have established extensive cyberwarfare capabilities and engage in offensive cyberoperations on a regular basis, often aimed at critical military infrastructure. “Cyberspace is a contested environment where we are in constant contact with adversaries,” General Paul M. Nakasone, commander of the U.S. Cyber Command (Cybercom), told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2019. “We see near-peer competitors [China and Russia] conducting sustained campaigns below the level of armed conflict to erode American strength and gain strategic advantage.”

Although eager to speak of adversary threats to U.S. interests, Nakasone was noticeably but not surprisingly reluctant to say much about U.S. offensive operations in cyberspace. He acknowledged, however, that Cybercom took such action to disrupt possible Russian interference in the 2018 midterm elections. “We created a persistent presence in cyberspace to monitor adversary actions and crafted tools and tactics to frustrate their efforts,” he testified in February. According to press accounts, this included a cyberattack aimed at paralyzing the Internet Research Agency, a “troll farm” in St. Petersburg said to have been deeply involved in generating disruptive propaganda during the 2016 presidential elections.6

Other press investigations have disclosed two other offensive operations undertaken by the United States. One called “Olympic Games” was intended to disrupt Iran’s drive to increase its uranium-enrichment capacity by sabotaging the centrifuges used in the process by infecting them with the so-called Stuxnet virus. Another left of launch effort was intended to cause malfunctions in North Korean missile tests.7 Although not aimed at either of the U.S. principal nuclear adversaries, those two attacks demonstrated a willingness and capacity to conduct cyberattacks on the nuclear infrastructure of other states.

Efforts by strategic rivals of the United States to infiltrate and eventually degrade U.S. nuclear infrastructure are far less documented but thought to be no less prevalent. Russia, for example, is believed to have planted malware in the U.S. electrical utility grid, possibly with the intent of cutting off the flow of electricity to critical NC3 facilities in the event of a major crisis.8 Indeed, every major power, including the United States, is believed to have crafted cyberweapons aimed at critical NC3 components and to have implanted malware in enemy systems for potential use in some future confrontation.

Pathways to Escalation

Knowing that the NC3 systems of the major powers are constantly being probed for weaknesses and probably infested with malware designed to be activated in a crisis, what does this say about the risks of escalation from a nonkinetic battle, that is, one fought without traditional weaponry, to a kinetic one, at first using conventional weapons and then, potentially, nuclear ones? None of this can be predicted in advance, but those analysts who have studied the subject worry about the emergence of dangerous new pathways for escalation. Indeed, several such scenarios have been identified.9

The first and possibly most dangerous path to escalation would arise from the early use of cyberweapons in a great power crisis to ~~paralyze~~ the vital command, control, and communications capabilities of an adversary, many of which serve nuclear and conventional forces. In the “fog of war” that would naturally ensue from such an encounter, the recipient of such an attack might fear more punishing follow-up kinetic attacks, possibly including the use of nuclear weapons, and, fearing the loss of its own arsenal, launch its weapons immediately. This might occur, for example, in a confrontation between NATO and Russian forces in east and central Europe or between U.S. and Chinese forces in the Asia-Pacific region.

Speaking of a possible confrontation in Europe, for example, James N. Miller Jr. and Richard Fontaine wrote that “both sides would have overwhelming incentives to go early with offensive cyber and counter-space capabilities to negate the other side’s military capabilities or advantages.” If these early attacks succeeded, “it could result in huge military and coercive advantage for the attacker.” This might induce the recipient of such attacks to back down, affording its rival a major victory at very low cost. Alternatively, however, the recipient might view the attacks on its critical command, control, and communications infrastructure as the prelude to a full-scale attack aimed at neutralizing its nuclear capabilities and choose to strike first. “It is worth considering,” Miller and Fontaine concluded, “how even a very limited attack or incident could set both sides on a slippery slope to rapid escalation.”10

U.S. servicemen conduct a defensive cyberoperations exercise at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on March 8. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Renae Pittman)U.S. servicemen conduct a defensive cyberoperations exercise at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on March 8. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Renae Pittman)What makes the insertion of latent malware in an adversary’s NC3 systems so dangerous is that it may not even need to be activated to increase the risk of nuclear escalation. If a nuclear-armed state comes to believe that its critical systems are infested with enemy malware, its leaders might not trust the information provided by its early-warning systems in a crisis and might misconstrue the nature of an enemy attack, leading them to overreact and possibly launch their nuclear weapons out of fear they are at risk of a preemptive strike.

“The uncertainty caused by the unique character of a cyber threat could jeopardize the credibility of the nuclear deterrent and undermine strategic stability in ways that advances in nuclear and conventional weapons do not,” Page O. Stoutland and Samantha Pitts-Kiefer wrote in 2018 paper for the Nuclear Threat Initiative. “[T]he introduction of a flaw or malicious code into nuclear weapons through the supply chain that compromises the effectiveness of those weapons could lead to a lack of confidence in the nuclear deterrent,” undermining strategic stability.11 Without confidence in the reliability of its nuclear weapons infrastructure, a nuclear-armed state may misinterpret confusing signals from its early-warning systems and, fearing the worst, launch its own nuclear weapons rather than lose them to an enemy’s first strike. This makes the scenario proffered in the 2018 NPR report, of a nuclear response to an enemy cyberattack, that much more alarming.

### AT: Not On Map

#### Check out this map!



## Cyberwar Games ADV

### Cyberwar Games Key

#### **Cyberwar games influence how military personal, scholars, and policy makers think about** **cyberwarfare. Since traditional warfare also relies on remote forms of violence – like drone strikes – disrupting the norms of cyberwar games spills out to disrupt the norms of other modes of conflict.**

Cristiano 18(Fabio, PhD, postdoctoral researcher in the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University and a fellow of The Hague Program for Cyber Norms. “From Simulations to Simulacra of War: Game Scenarios in Cyberwar Exercises,” Journal of War & Culture Studies, 11:1, 22-37, DOI: 10.1080/17526272.2017.1416761, pp 22-26)

War simulations, commonly known as war games, have been in use in some form since humanity first went to war. The Roman infantry designed training that would take into consideration political and strategic aspects alongside operational and tactical ones (Sabin, 2009). Similarly, there exists wide agreement on ascribing Prussian war successes also to the sophistication of its army’s kriegsspiele1 (Boot, 2006). Players use these simulations to ultimately test, as well as refine, norms and tactics of warfare while strengthening defence mechanisms and international cooperation amongst allies. In attempts to reduce the distance between reality and fiction, i.e. the ‘original’ and its ‘copy’, military planners have for many years included political, legal and social aspects into the modelling of fictional war scenarios (Harrigan, et al. 2016).

As contemporary warfare moves towards hybrid and non-linear forms of confrontation (see Keegan, 1993; McCuen, 2008), however, realistic modelling increasingly clashes with the actual realities of war. Often characterized by remoteness and unpredictability, contemporary warfare escapes or supersedes those traditional elements that would qualify war as a peculiar instance of violence: corporeal proximity, ethics, territory/battlefield, and sovereignty. If on one hand, in postmodern societies everything seems to have become war through the militarization of everyday life (cfr. Brooks, 2016), on the other hand remoteness and disembodiment tend to obfuscate and separate the event of war from direct experience and perception, and also emotionally2 (see Butler, 2009). Technological innovations, alongside strategic and tactical ones, reshape the extent and speed in which war can be con- ducted, experienced, and thus abstracted into realistic simulated narratives (Virilio, 2000; Singer, 2009). For these reasons, singling out contextual features — and elaborating them into simulated scenarios — clashes with the increasingly remote and hybrid realities of war.

As remoteness poses serious limitations to the possibility of abstracting war into realistic exercises, simulated game scenarios increasingly relate to reality nonlinearly. While becoming detached from reality on one hand, on the other they constitute a privileged point of view to understand how different actors imagine new and future wars, and make sense of them through the construction of these semi- fictional cultural artefacts. In particular, the recent emergence of cyberwar as a new potential threat to the security of states has triggered the proliferation of simulation games that are primarily concerned with strengthening national cybersecurity apparatuses. In a context of war defined by remoteness par excellence, and characterized by ever-changing techniques of attack as well as by secrecy and anonymity, game scenarios lean towards purely fictional imaginaries or, at best, they reproduce cyberwar according to cultural schemes that precede its existence in practice. In light of these schemes, however, scholarship overall agrees that cyberwar never occurred (Rid, 2013), thus removing any comprehensive point of reference with the past (and the possibility of linear simulation).

The unavailability or absence of univocal contextual variables (such as a delimited battlefield or clear state attribution online), as well as of substantial past experiences, appears to shape the modelling of cyberwar games towards operational and tactical elements rather than political and strategic ones. If compared to traditional war exercises, the operational dimension of cyberwar can be fully simulated in realistic terms: gameplay usually engages with actual cyberattacks targeting existing national cyber-infrastructures, in order to test their responsiveness to the threats. On the other hand, game scenarios — setting the political and cultural context in which cyberwar games would unfold — maintain a less clear relationship to existing past experiences of cyberwar, being often the result of how game planners imagine possible future wars. As copies without a clear original, these scenarios create narratives of war that are not necessarily dependent on reality (thus produ- cing a new one), while conveying insights on operational defence mechanisms and players’ cultural understanding of this context of war. Cyberwar, in other words, raises the question on how to simulate a phenomenon that possesses an ambivalent relation to reality — and differs significantly from other experiences of war. Looking at a selection of scenarios of major national and international cyberwar games as illustrations, this article, first, engages with the modes of existence of simulated cyberwar through the conceptual prisms of copy/original and simulation/simulacrum; second, explores how these scenarios frame cyberwar in relation to cyberwar- fare scholarship and legislation; and third, sheds light on how, through operational exercises, these scenarios ultimately reproduce cyberwar as an imagined cultural artefact.

Simulated scenarios as cultural artefacts

Simulations abstract and reproduce an original. The creation of simulation models aims, in fact, to single out original elements in order to reproduce a known, recog- nizable, or at least plausible, phenomenon and its situational elements through a scenario (Hilgers, 2012). As much as the intrinsic ambition of any game simulation remains the creation of an exact copy of the original, its process of abstraction and modelling can only be partial: an accurate map would never be the exact copy of a territory, a very realistic war videogame could never reproduce the suffering associated with wars.

These processes of abstraction generally occur by creating synthetic and aggre- gated indexes meant to summarize all data (Gardner, 1970), inputs and outputs involved in a complex process (also for evaluating performances). The difficulty of singling out indexes and parameters, before reproducing them into models, de facto increases exponentially in the context of multifaceted social phenomena and, even more so, when these are characterized by remoteness, as in the case of cyberwar. In general terms, the modelling through abstraction of specific and limited features of a controlled context overemphasizes those objectifiable technical and mechanical aspects to the detriment of its nuanced political and social elements. For these reasons, simulations of social phenomena tend to rely on the reproduction of those operational aspects that are most clearly available to knowledge production and performance evaluation. For example, whereas the accuracy of game scenarios relating to natural disaster management appears to be effective in controlling realis- tic process variables, this appears not to be the case in the context of exercises dealing with terror attacks, where parameters continuously disrupt routines and rep- etitions to a greater extent.

In order to account for the political and social complexities of war, scenario setting becomes a fundamental aspect of game planning (Crogran, 2011). Widening scenarios — towards the inclusion of non-operational military elements — purports to capture and reproduce the phenomenon of war in more accurate and holistic ways, and thus anticipate and predict future circumstances. Because of this, creating simulated scenarios heavily depends on knowledge of (and data about) past experiences in pursuit of improved future performances (Bødker, 2000). In this sense, scenarios maintain a double relation with time and knowledge production: on one hand, they draw upon past and present contextual elements to create realistic approxi- mations of war while, on the other, they attempt to anticipate new realities. Whereas the design of a simulation scenario depends on a profound knowledge of those contextual elements and variables that define a specific instance of war, its simulated reproduction holds to the ambition of creating applicable operational knowledge (Sabin, 2007). In other words, reality and fiction maintain a circular relationship, feeding each other through gameplay.

Game scenarios enable the gameplay of war through the creation of narratives. Whether fully fictional — such as the Israel Defence Forces’ 2016 Star Wars, and 2017 Pokémon themed cyber-exercises — or reminiscent of the actual dynamics of international relations — as in the case of cyberattacks targeting the fictional country of Berylia (NATO’s 2016 Locked Shield) — these stories provide the frame in which operational aspects of the simulation unfold. Paul Virilio (1991) describes a frame as the limit to visibility, the cultural gesture that makes conscious objectification possible. Frames determine visibility and specific understandings of reality, with the inevitable risk of partiality and epistemic blindness. By fictionalizing war into a gameplay narrative, game scenarios become cultural products that possess their own existence in relation to the phenomenon or event they purport to simulate. As the remoteness of cyberwar precludes, to a great extent, a linear abstraction of this phenomenon into simulated outcomes, the circular relationship between fiction and reality interrupts to make space for a merged cultural hyperreal outcome: the game scenario.

In his philosophical treatises, The System of Objects (Baudrillard, 2005, first pub- lished in 1968), then developed with Simulacra and Simulations (Baudrillard, 1994, first published in 1981), Jean Baudrillard lays down a theory of culture that, in late capitalism, appears to be defined and dominated by simulations. More specifically, he contends that contemporary abstractions are not linearly connected to their originals, to a definable referential being. Whereas simulations imitate the operations that are peculiar to a system or a world process (and that can be observed through time and space), the increasing merging of different characterizations of reality — the hyperreal — obfuscates these processes and the possibility to relate them to original signifiers (Baudrillard, 1994, first published in 1981). For these reasons, their copies become simulacra: artefacts that exist independently from an original reference, or where the point of contact with the original reference has dis- appeared. Accordingly, Baudrillard theorizes these two elements not as two mutually exclusionary characterizations of being, but rather as two dynamic and shifting depictions of reality. In a graphic visualization, they could be understood as the two moving extrema of a whole spectrum enclosing progressive phases that maintain different distances between copy and original — through an incremental liquidation of all referentials. Whereas at the first stage the copy maintains a pro- found similarity to its original, thus making them perceived as indissoluble, in its second stage the copy is distanced from the original and becomes a ‘perversion of reality’: copy and original do not correspond anymore but are nevertheless con- nected through unclear, however present, common referentials. Moving forward, Baudrillard then situates the ‘order of sorcery’, the third stage where the copy pre- tends to be the original but has in fact lost its essential aspect of representation (the two stops having a discernible connection). In the fourth and last stage, simulation becomes pure ‘simulacrum’. A simulacrum has no relationship or pretence to simulate, its symbolic form constitutes a new mode of existence that is fully equivalent to the real, i.e. a hyperreal. Being detached from an original, the simulacrum becomes itself an original, and thus a possible point of reference to be simulated.

The distinction between simulation and simulacrum does not only engage differ- ent characterizations of reality, their historical evolution or the relationship between an original and its copy. Baudrillard’s work represents in fact a broader reflection on how cultural products are generated in relation to symbols or events (and expec- tations thereof), as well as the extent to which these symbolic forms become unique points of reference on which human experiences are based in the construc- tion of what Lipovetski (2004) defines ‘hyperreal times’, (i.e. times of maps preced- ing territories). Or, in Baudrillard’s words, ‘the real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models — and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times’ (2001: 170). As war becomes an unavoidable cultural condition of contemporaneity — through remoteness and the disappearance of bodies – its reality becomes detached from suffering and direct cognition (Butler, 2009), and thus starts to exist only in its technical and operational dimensions. As remoteness creates distance from the event of war, simulations/simulacra of cyberwar appear to depict a reality that is ‘nothing more than operational’ (Baudrillard, 2001: 170). At the same time, this remoteness does not only concern the limitations to abstraction related to the phenomenon of cyberwar. Rather, remoteness also manifests as cognitive gap, i.e. the impossibility of recogniz- ing a phenomenon because of its novelty and a lack of past references. Intersecting with the ‘liquidation of all referentials’, and limiting experiential accounts of cyber- war, remoteness bewilders a linear framing of the phenomenon of cyberwar. For these reasons, mainstream scholarship, legislators, and game planners refer to a familiar cultural framing: traditional warfare.

#### **Emphasizing concepts from traditional warfare – such as territory, sovereignty, and state actors – makes military experts and policy makers less equipped to understand cyberwar’s uniqueness.**

Cristiano 18(Fabio, PhD, postdoctoral researcher in the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University and a fellow of The Hague Program for Cyber Norms. “From Simulations to Simulacra of War: Game Scenarios in Cyberwar Exercises,” Journal of War & Culture Studies, 11:1, 22-37, DOI: 10.1080/17526272.2017.1416761, pp 26-30)

Framing cyberwar outside remoteness

During the 1990s, the emergence of cyberwar as a new potential form of belligerent social interaction was accompanied by unjustified hysteria about its imminent and devastating potentials (cfr. Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1992; Stiennon, 2015). Fuelled by those catastrophic scenarios depicted in science fiction literature and cinema, a sense of technophobia pushed military and traditional security apparatuses to rethink and adapt their defence strategies to the new emerging threat, and the prospects of a forthcoming ‘total war’. Similarly, scholarship — mainly produced in aca- demic circles strongly linked to the military — theorized about the new phenomenon along the lines of existing war doctrines, thus deferring to those peculiar elements that relate to its remoteness: the apparent darkness and immateriality of the battle- field, the lack of a physical experience of violent fighting through corporeal bodies, and the fleetingness of its (non-sovereign) fighters (cfr. Kaplan, 2016).

Instead, cyberwarfare scholarship defined cyberwar as being dependent on the presence of those elements that characterize war in its traditional framing: physical violence, ethics, sovereign belligerents, and territory. In most cases, the absence of (one of) these elements led to the conclusion that the observed phenomenon would not constitute an instance of cyberwar. Following this framing, cyberwarfare scholarship generally contended that cyberattacks represent an instance of cyberwar only if possessing those characteristics that traditionally define an ‘act of war’. Consequently, past major incidents of cyber confrontation — such as Titan Rain 2003, Estonia 2007, and Stuxnet 20103 — would not be considered instances of cyberwar as they lacked clear state attribution or a discernible physical damage outside cyber- space. According to these prescriptive understandings of the phenomenon, cyberwar would become a reality of war only when ‘evading’ its remoteness — both from perceptions as well as from a priori set analytical categories. To date, in fact, cyberwar has seldom (if ever) taken place through those expected forms theorized within mainstream scholarship on the topic. For this reason, planning a game scenario through these very forms appears to surpass, or lag behind, its phenomenology. In fact, this approach appears consistent with what Massumi (2015) defines the ‘logic of pre-emption’: as threats become increasingly remote and unknown, the use of force (and the design of policy) starts depending on the fear of potentialities, rather than on actual events. As argued in this article, attempting a closure of the gap between the ‘original’ and its ‘copy’ requires engagement with the existence of cyber-war within its phenomenological remoteness, rather than inductively depicting its conditional existence away from it.

The remoteness of cyberwar unfolds in different ways, through distances that pertain both its phenomenological manifestation as well as its conceptual and theoretical existence. At a first glance, the intuitive distance of the event of cyberwar from human sensorial experiences coincides with the ambiguous ontological status of cyberspace (whether it possesses physical existence or not), and one of the contex- tual elements it contains (targeted websites, cyber-weapons, data etc.). In fact, these elements are not directly observable, and thus are not ‘available’ to abstraction in a traditional realist sense (cfr. Benedickt, 1991). This ontological uncertainty has determined, to a relevant extent, how the basic notion of cyberwar has been hitherto theorized within mainstream scholarship. Relevant scholarship in military studies (Rowe, 2010; Libicki, 2009; Lucas, 2012), international law (Schmitt, 2014; Hoi- sington, 2009; Koh, 2012) and cybersecurity (Singer & Friedman, 2014) concur on a categorization of cyberwar that favours, first of all, the physical damage caused. In an attempt to combine existing multi-disciplinary knowledge, NATO’s Tallinn Manual — a non-binding study about the applicability of international law to cyberwar (updated in 2017) — brought together legal, defence and cybersecurity experts in order to draft a comprehensive manual on the legal and security concerns related to cyberwar (NATO, 2013; NATO, 2017). The manual, for the first time, categorized different types of cyberattack (separating them from cyberespionage) while associating cyberwar to degrees of physical actual harm: only when a cyberattack leads to a tangible damage outside cyberspace are we witnessing cyberwar (NATO, 2013; NATO, 2017).

Similarly, remoteness also questions how state sovereignty (and its limits) are to be understood in the context of virtual conflicts.4 Cyberattacks indiscriminately target government, military, industrial/commercial, and civilian infrastructures. In this context, state responses primarily depend on the extent to which a cyberattack comes to be considered as an issue pertaining to national security, rather than a crim- inal act5 that is not of direct national concern (cfr. Allhoff, et al. 2015). Discerning the two domains can be problematic as, regardless of their different scopes such as criminal theft, vandalism, malware, sophisticated espionage, or intelligence operations, attacking and penetration techniques remain fundamentally the same (Ohlin, et al. 2015). In this spirit, existing scholarship on the topic — and the simulations inductively inspired by this framing — mainly focus on state responses and prevention to the threat of cyberwar through a traditional understanding of sovereignty, i.e. a quality that pertains the state. Moreover, remoteness in practice also dilutes sovereignty when it comes to the issue of identifying the perpetrator of an attack: through secrecy and anonymity, cyber-combatants uphold unclear relation- ships with national cyber-armies, as these are in fact characterized by very fluid membership. On these grounds, setting a game scenario through clearly identifiable roles and national teams creates simulations that move away from reality. Despite game planners increasingly involving non-state actors in cyberwar simulations (in the spirit of widening scenarios), roles are generally framed as interacting in relation to sovereign powers (with teams or countries as belligerent parties).

The characterization of cyberattacks as issues of national security has come to be reproduced in reality, as well as in simulated interactions, through different legislative frameworks that purport to capture and define the obscure ethics of cyberwar. Whereas a binding cyberwar-exclusive international treaty continues to be absent, relevant efforts point to the necessity of adapting current legal frameworks to the issue of cyberwar. Amongst these, the UN Charter with respect to the issue of jus ad bellum and the 1949/1977 Geneva Protocols offer the most accurate definition of cyberwar. These updates rethink categories — such as legitimate use of force, state attribution, proportionality, espionage law and the application of international humanitarian law — in order to adapt them to the reality of virtual conflicts, while distinguishing cyberwar from other forms of confrontation and intrusion online. In brief, these protocols argue that the equation between cyberwar and traditional war depends on the extent in which cyberattacks lead to consequences in the actual world (physical damage) and can be linked to a sovereign (in the classical sense) entity,6 i.e. state attribution. However, due to the absence of substantial inter- national treaties on the topic and accountability mechanisms, state behaviours and responses to cyberattacks remain usually based on customary international law (Hoisington, 2009). Along these lines, legal aspects are often included in the operational phase of cyberwar simulations in order to train participants (military officials, policy makers, and cybersecurity experts) to design and implement defence responses that, while effective, would be consistent with current domestic and international legislations (mainly in order to maintain responses’ proportional- ity and lawfulness).

These traditional definitions of cyberwar also determine and engage with how game simulations imagine national territories to exist in virtual realms. Traditional scholarship, and legislations, concur on transposing traditional defence mechanisms (and their regulation) into the cyber-realm on the assumption that state sovereignty maintains its territorial element also in virtual settings. As exploitability depends foremost on internet connectivity, cyber-defence strategies consist of limiting access to national cyberspace in different ways. For example, amongst these, a basic defence measure entails disconnecting machines from the global internet and the establishment of a local network intended only for military traffic (with its own internet protocol address, web servers and domain name system), thus creating the conditions for a sort of air gap. Of course, this infers that attacks come from a source that is external to the system. While national authorities can alternatively create kill-switches to disconnect the entire country/territory from the internet, in reality this measure is often discouraged in the context of cyberwar simulations (as it would undermine the learning experience of the game by recurring to an easy — yet drastic — solution). Other classical defence strategies are based on pre- ventive measures such as network-embedded perimeter defences (e.g. the Linux DMZ paradigm) — based on segregating inside from outside packet traffic so to allow activities only when they originate from the inside (cfr. Kott, et al. 2015). These defence mechanisms define a correspondence between national cyberspace and state territory, and thus set the ground for a linear simulation. In the framing and discourse of traditional military defence, cyberspace possesses an existence that parallels that of a national territory — becoming a space that can be objectified and abstracted — and thus, closed, fenced, or even annexed.

Practical and tactical aspects of simulations are commonly designed departing from a framing that equates cyberwarfare to traditional warfare, through its most basic defining elements. If on one hand, these reproduce — in extremely realistic ways — those peculiar operational features of cyberattacks, on the other hand they merely propose the transfer of classical territorial defence measures into the spatial ‘disorder’ of cyberspace. The emphasis on traditional signifiers of war — and the difficulties related to abstracting these in the context of cyberspace — results in the design of simulation games that privilege technical and operational elements over political and strategic ones. In this spirit, and similarly to real-world dynamics, industrial and commercial cybersecurity expertise becomes increasingly co-opted into defence policy making, as well as military training and exercises (Lucas, 2012). While this of course stems from the ambition of fostering cooperation between different, but interconnected, branches of society at large (dealing with very similar attacks), the merging of private cybersecurity into the domain of policy- making also appears to further advance what Buley (2007), in his analysis of the American intervention during World War II, has defined as the ‘de-politicization’ of war. Moreover, the focus on traditional elements of war determines that only by escaping remoteness and virtuality, and thus coming closer to the categories that were originally designed around it, would cyberwar become manifest in reality.

#### **Framing cyberwar in terms of physical harm done to nation-states makes NATO more vulnerable to cyberattacks and more likely to escalate in response to them.**

Cristiano 18(Fabio, PhD, postdoctoral researcher in the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University and a fellow of The Hague Program for Cyber Norms. “From Simulations to Simulacra of War: Game Scenarios in Cyberwar Exercises,” Journal of War & Culture Studies, 11:1, 22-37, DOI: 10.1080/17526272.2017.1416761, pp 30-33)

Simulacra of cyberwar

As cyberwar has never fully occurred in reality within those frames theorized by cyberwarfare scholarship (and thus not being observable through a clear visual point of reference with the past), game planners can only trace its ‘full’ original within and through this very theoretical framing. Designing a scenario about a non-event (or a partial event), in fact, involves the creation of artefacts that do not possess full and a linear resemblance to an original model, but are instead reflective of cultural expectations and a priori inductive theorizing about the event. Aligning the modes of existence of cyberwar to traditional warfare substantiates an equation between being war and being physical, and in fact between being physical and being real. This framing prescribes a clear-cut distinction between virtuality and reality, as the two extremes of an ontological segment where different instances of war are thought to exist through different degrees of reality. As such, opposed to real-world instances of war, its virtual versions should be considered either mere simulations (cfr. Searle, 1995), i.e. having resemblance to real-world entities by their interactive features, or else as ontological reproductions, i.e. possessing a real- world significance that manifests, in this specific context, when a cyberattack causes physical damages in the real world (Brey, 2007).

The expectation, so-far unrealized, of a cyberwar that would fuel large scale, and extremely violent, total wars often comes to be reproduced in simulation scenarios through the modeling of very catastrophic imaginaries, which have no historical correspondence in reality. In the aftermath of a fictional large-scale cyberattack — during the 2016 US cyberwar simulation Cyber Guard (CG) — between 1 and 10 million homes and businesses were left without power across the country, while Los Angeles ports were shut down due to a network outage, whilst an oil spill from a near-shore refinery gushed into the waters off Texas and Louisiana, dama- ging the ecosystem (Parrish, 2016). Similarly, the 2016 simulation game Locked Shields (LS), run annually by NATO’s Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excel- lence (CCDCOE), was set in the fictional context of Berylia. A sovereign island in the Atlantic Ocean, the country’s economy mainly relied on advanced drone industries that had now come under attack through repeated cyber-assaults on their networks and industries, and the hijacking of their drones, now being used to invade the island (CCDCOE, 2016).

These very basic scenario elements, as well as contextualizing war games within catastrophic narratives, also indicate that game planners associate cyberwar’s mode of existence (Latour, 2012) with physical violence, i.e. a violence that eludes remoteness and, emerging from a virtual and remote domain, becomes tangible. Together with virtualized machines, physical infrastructures are often miniaturized to convey a more ‘realistic’ experience of cyberwar while offering the possibility of observing simulated physical damage in real time. During an interview in 2015, an Israeli commander of the C4i Corps (the army branch responsible for cyber-defence) announced to the press that, in order to facilitate realistic cyberwar simulations, a small-scale model city (named Sim City) had been built in the premises of the Ramat Gan-based unit (Lappin, 2015). Miniaturizing infrastructures is, in fact, a very common practice in traditional war gaming, mainly to help planners and players to visualize and plan strategies of deployment and movement in general. Yet actual cyber confrontations increasingly occur in ways that remain mostly virtualized, and do not transcend cyberspace. In fact, technological progress continues to drive confrontation towards even greater remoteness: most advanced cyber- weapons rely heavily on automatized machines and software to ignite attacks, thus reducing the extent and relevance of human input and traditional physical force (Brenner, 2009). Programmed computers, intrusive malwares, and malicious crawlers all remotely carry out wide-ranging attacks, take down or deface websites, spy, leak information, and substantially damage (national) cyber infrastructures, through a ‘nonlinear’ present human agent underlying their launch.

As well as an understanding of violence that manifests as physical experiences outside cyberspace, cyberwar simulations tend to frame battle through questions of national sovereignty and territoriality. In this spirit, for instance, LS game plan- ners’ choice to situate Berylia ‘in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean’ (CCDCOE, 2016) signals the intention to provide players with a clearly defined and isolated ter- ritorial ‘game board’, at odds with the peculiar borderless and interconnected nature of cyberspace. Designed as a multi-lateral and scoreable game, NATO’s LS participants are divided into national ‘blue teams’ (20 teams participated in 2016) that, while based in their own country, play remotely in defence of Berylia’s national cyberspace and industrial control systems. The scenario enables teams to play as a rapid reaction squad that has just been dropped into a drone research lab, trying to take back control over the networks as well as on the hijacked weaponized drones. Attackers belonging to the ‘red team’ of rival country Crimsonia – selected from prominent international cybersecurity experts – launch over 1700 different types of cyberattack. These attacks are updated every year and reproduce exact copies of recently designed attacks (while a neutral ‘white team’ of experts runs the game), making the simulation of great relevance because of its operational dimension. Based on scoreable tasks and continuous exponentially harder game inputs (in line with a traditional videogaming logic), national teams compete to demonstrate their readiness and responsiveness to cyberattacks (with Slovakia winning the 2016 edition of the simulation game). Teams are not only expected to counter attacks targeting their networks and infrastructures, but also need to prove their innocence when blamed for unauthorized attacks coming from their own networks (CCDCOE, 2016). In fact, this detail somehow signals the problematic related to remoteness and the designing of uniformed agency and membership in relation to (sovereign) teams. By associating gameplay to players’ allegiances to an army, a group, or a team (and thus implying human agency and fighting bodies), game roles are often assigned on national and territorial bases, and in full resemblance of international alliances and cooperation. Yet history abounds with cases in which a state, often using cyber-mercenaries, would anonymously attack an ally, exactly because remoteness would allow this ‘misbehaviour’.

Framing game scenarios as battles between opposed national formations thus also appears to oversimplify the question of agency (and state attribution) with regards to cyberattacks and the inherent remoteness of these attacks. In 2010 Stuxnet, a malicious computer worm, penetrated Iranian nuclear facilities and successfully com- promised their industrial computer control systems. Widely considered to be one of the most effective cyberattacks to date, it still lacks clear state attribution (albeit with evidence pointing strongly to an Israeli and US partnership behind the attack), and thus legal grounds for prosecution (Lindsay, 2012). This incident shows that, in the context of cyberwar, remoteness does not only constitute an epistemological limit for framing and abstracting elements for simulations, but also a precondition for action. In other words, cyberwar would not exist without its remoteness. In line with this argument, many indeed praise cyberwar for allowing oper- ations that, albeit non-violent, function in the prevention and deterrence of war (Lucas, 2012). According to this view, the launch of Stuxnet could be considered as a non-violent alternative to a possible military intervention, and as an effective measure in undermining, or at least setting back, a perceived threat from the Iranian nuclear program (Lindsay, 2012). In reality, this inherent remoteness dilutes sovereignty: cyber-armies and groups are characterized by fluid membership and their relation to national armies, and to states in general, often remains untrace- able or unclear. At the same time, lone-wolf hackers, hacktivists or cyber- mercenaries usually tend to be co-opted in larger operations, or act on their own terms while not being physically present to one another or connected to an organiz- ation with sovereign attributes.

As cyberwar games become large-scale simulations involving remote and simultaneous operations across countries, newer scenarios open up for variables and tasks that, while not necessarily part of cyber-confrontation per se, are designed to foster homogeneity in cooperation and intervention amongst participants. In a context that does not possess a uniformed modus operandi, parameters and inputs are designed in ways that promote a common operational culture. In this light, for instance, CG 2016 strongly focused on the standardization of communication protocols between US forces and the British Army. Similarly, the 700-plus par- ticipants of LS 2016 were trained in writing human-readable reports in ways that not only security experts but also policy makers could decipher and act upon. At the same time, while the focus on communication aims to strengthen teams’ internal flows of information (for more effective operational coordination and chain of command), the focus on media also seemed to pertain to its political relevance. In fact, in the spirit of creating a realistic scenario of cyberwar, fictional media workers were also included in the game. Game planners framed media as a disturbance variable, thus adding to the gameplay a requirement for participants to engage with these media professionals on issues of information disclosure and con- fidentiality (CCDCOE, 2016). Opening up the war game scenario to elements that transcend conflictual interactions appears to be consistent with the ambition of simulating cyberwar in more comprehensive ways, thus reducing the gap between copy and original. This also entails fostering partnership with private and commercial sectors, as networks of interconnectedness require defence readiness at the extremes and in all the ramifications of the network itself. For this reason, major non-state actors are increasingly involved into cyberwar simulations and even design their own cyberwar games – such as the Bank of England’s Operation Waking Shark. While the scenario’s overall narrative differs substantially from national security exercises, with a focus on criminal and information theft rather than national security, operational exercises and the overall language used in the scenario appear to correspond.

Analysing these games by reflecting on how traditional aspects of war come to be symbolized in the gameplay — physical violence, state sovereignty, territory, and ethics – indicates that simulated operational elements maintain a strong resemblance to reality; they are, in Baudrillard’s terms, simulations. On the other hand, the fic- tional inaccuracy of contextual political and social aspects — the game scenario — depicts games that have lost (each to a different degree) a linear connection with the reality of cyberwar: they have become simulacra. Clearly, the game scen- ario, albeit strongly fictional, nevertheless maintains a strong connection to the oper- ational aspects of the game. As simulations and simulacra intersect, feeding each other in a circular fashion, they indicate that cyberwar games ultimately represent a perversion of reality.

#### Attending to the uniqueness of cyberwar disrupts the status quo framing of traditional war as normal. Our plan’s focus solves peripheral violence.

Cristiano 18(Fabio, PhD, postdoctoral researcher in the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University and a fellow of The Hague Program for Cyber Norms. “From Simulations to Simulacra of War: Game Scenarios in Cyberwar Exercises,” Journal of War & Culture Studies, 11:1, 22-37, DOI: 10.1080/17526272.2017.1416761, pp 33-35)

Conclusion: cyberwar and the perversion of reality

The existing discrepancies between the framing of traditional warfare, the actual phenomenology of cyberwar, and its simulations/simulacra, do not only pertain to the difficulties of abstracting a complex and remote social phenomenon into a close-to-reality game. Rather, and in line with Baudrillard’s theorizing, they also raise questions as to how the culture of war becomes stabilized in our society, and in the cultural artefacts that are produced in its resemblance. Just as actual war has undergone a process of enhanced remoteness through technologies that detach confrontation from actual physical experience (drones and the like), virtualizations — either simulations or ontological reproductions — of the conflict have come closer to the actuality of war, or at times have even merged. More specifically, as argued by Baudrillard (1995: 27) in his provocative The Gulf War Did Not Take Place, ‘we are no longer in a logic of the passage from virtual to actual but in a hyper- realist logic of the deterrence of the real by the virtual’.

Existing interdisciplinary scholarship and legislative frameworks, in fact, draw extensively upon classical categories of war to rethink how cyberwar could exist and could be countered, and its simulated versions reproduce these same categories in their designed scenarios. As this framing confines cyberwar within the boundaries of traditional warfare, classical elements are abstracted into roles and interactions that are reproductive of those of traditional wars. In these terms, simulated scenarios generally frame cyberwar in relation to the national security of states, their sovereignty, defence and territorial boundaries. This understanding of cyberwar does not only reproduce defence and deterrence according to an idea of cyberwar that pre-exists, but also hardens categories that appear in reality to be manifest in much more fluid ways.

Cyberattacks are not easy to equate with physical and violent force. Infecting a computer system, impairing military networks, or taking a website down, are hardly comparable to an actual airstrike or targeted killing. Besides debating whether a website or online content possess physical existence, however, political violence done upon these interrogates, after all, how we are to understand bodies and their agency (Cristiano, 2018), their interaction with machines (Clark, 2004; Clark 2016) and suffering in virtual domains (cfr. Massumi, 2010). Moreover, in a context where perpetrators aim for off-line secrecy about their identity, and humans are increasingly replaced by machines in the conduct of cyberattacks, state sovereignty and attribution do not only come into the picture as devices of defence and deterrence, but also as unattainable social constructs within virtuality. In these terms, a prescriptive equation between cyberwarfare and conventional warfare appears not to fit if we analyse how cyberwar is constructed in major simulations.

Although different existing legal, defence and security categorizations of cyberattacks and cyberwar can be theorized and simulated in war games, they are nevertheless built around a framing that recognizes the virtual and real as two mutually exclusionary dimensions of being. In one of the few existing works on this issue in the context of warfare, Dipert (2010) defines the ontological status of cyberspace as unique. This uniqueness depends on its being both actual and virtual. It possesses characteristics that are inherently physical: coaxial cables, fibre-optic lines, compu- ters, servers etc. make up for its physical extension. This would imply that, for instance, websites and their contents should also be considered as holding qualities that are actual, tangible. On the other hand, cyberspace lacks a well-defined physical location, geographical boundaries, concrete limits to personal property or a defin- able state territory. And in fact, it also contains all those experiences — such as war — that remain exclusively confined within the virtual with no necessary expansion into the actual world. In this sense, becoming real does not depend on eventual emergence from remoteness but, rather, it exists within, and as a product of, this very remoteness.

While of course existing in relation to actual conflicts and international politics, cyberwar possesses its own cultures, aesthetics and dynamics of subjectification that shape its nature beyond physicality and through performative moments that are often confined to virtual settings, and thus hardly replicable. On the other hand, the replicability of operational aspects of cyberwar as linear simulations contradicts the static and unproblematized setting of political scenarios that, detaching from reality, become simulacra. As cyberwar gameplay mainly engages players with regard to operational elements, the culture of war appears normalized in the gameplay. Giorgio Agamben claims that playing should also possess an intrinsic potential for the profane that ‘frees and distracts humanity from the sphere of the sacred, without simply abolishing it’ (Agamben, 2007: 76). There, the spirit of the profane ‘deactivates the apparatuses of power and returns to common use the spaces that power had seized’ (Agamben, 2007: 77). However, simulating the operational elements of cyberwar neutralizes this very potential for the profane and, while integrating game and war in a perversion of reality, preserves the normalcy of war.

# Baudrillard 1NCs

## Cold War Emerging Tech 1NC

#### **Cold War framing of emerging technology simulates a bygone, bipolar era of stability to conceal the indeterminacy of the postmodern condition. This seduces individuals to a mode of informatic governance and to technological theater which allows nation states to pretend they are solving an issue without actually doing anything. It also justifies populist and nationalist modes of violence as a corrective to the indeterminacy of meaning. Thinking through our postmodern condition is a prerequisite to effective policy making.**

Csenkey 21 **(**Kristen Csenkey, Ph.D. Candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, Canada. Her research focuses on the management of emerging technologies, innovation, and cyber governance in Canada. She holds numerous fellowships, including with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) and North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN). She is a Women in International Security (WIIS) Emerging Thought Leader in Digital Security and was the 2020 Women in Defence and Security (WiDS)-CGAI Fellow. Kristen is a Junior Fellow with the Defence and Security Foresight Group (DSFG) and a member of the European NATO team, “Selling Simulations: The Seduction of Cold War Techno-Fetishism in a Postmodern Cyber Word, *Defence and Security Foresight Group,* [*https://uwaterloo.ca/defence-security-foresight-group/sites/ca.defence-security-foresight-group/files/uploads/files/csenkey\_dsfg\_wiis-c\_july26.pdf*](https://uwaterloo.ca/defence-security-foresight-group/sites/ca.defence-security-foresight-group/files/uploads/files/csenkey_dsfg_wiis-c_july26.pdf), last accessed 6/24/22)

It is hot to talk about a new Cold War, especially if you put cyber in front of it. The new cyber Cold War concept is prominent in discussions about geopolitics and Great Power competition1. Some2 have argued that the Cold War discourse frames competition and technological rivalry between states, mainly the US and China and the US and Russia, in a way that fails to reflect the complexities of current conflicts and dynamics of the original Cold War. This discourse comes through in policy and strategies, especially when referring to the governance of cyber and emerging technologies. This raises questions about the security community itself and the perceptions of policy and decision- makers in this field. Mainly, what exactly is so alluring about the Cold War that the security community keeps coming back to it as a way to understand the current state of conflict in the world? More so, why is it applied to cyber, including cyber operations, cyber-related technologies, cyberspace, etc., with such conviction? This paper frames the emphasis on a new Cold War as a hyperreality that is heavily focused on technologies and the perceptions of their alleged uses in future conflicts. By drawing on the works of Baudrillard and others, this paper argues that the current focus on Cold War discourse to frame the security environment, and especially cyber, is based on a comfortable imaginary reality that is knowable, ordered, and familiar. Yet, this reality is a simulation that is repeated again and again and perpetuated by a focus on emerging technologies in the discourse as embedded with geopolitics.

This paper aims to present a complex exploration into the postmodern framings of defence and security policy. This paper is structured as such: first, the rationale of this paper is presented, emphasizing its importance for policy and decision-makers and members of the security community. After this, the ‘postmodern condition’ is described as it relates to increasing uncertainty and disorder about the state of the world (via Bauman). This uncertain condition is then linked to a discussion about simulations of reality and hyperreality tied in with emerging technologies. Following this, the seductions of free-market capitalism are brought into discussion with the meaning-making discourse that mirrors the dichotomies of the Cold War. This serves to articulate further the linkages between seductions, capitalism, and the fetishization of technologies. Baudrillard’s (in)famous arguments in The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (1995), and The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers (2002) are used to show how hyperrealities become embedded in the discourse of the security community, especially through a focus on emerging technologies. Baudrillard’s arguments lead to a discussion highlighting how this perception fetishizes technologies and is perpetuated by myths based on capitalist and consumerist intents. The last section discusses the current understanding of emerging technologies and cyber in Canada from a military perspective in policy language in Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy (2017) (SSE). The paper concludes with a ‘translation’ of the discussion by describing three tangible considerations for policy and decision-makers.

**IMPORTANCE OF METAPHORS AND ANALOGIES**

A postmodern deep dive into cyber and emerging technologies might seem beyond the scope of a policy audience. Perhaps it may seem too complex and abstract for consideration in decision- making. However, it is not as abstract or removed from policy and decision-making as one would assume. This is because discourse can shape organization, practices, methods, and strategy, or the ‘reality’ of policymaking.

The discourse about cyber, including threats, security, and space, shapes and is shaped by the definition of ‘reality’. Dunn Cavelty (2013) shows that various actors, including state and non-state actors, seek to assert themselves within this definition process. Part of this process involves the use of metaphors and analogies. Metaphors shape ‘reality’, what is ‘known’, or imagined, about cyber. For example, imagining cyberspace as a ‘frontier’ associates the concepts of unruliness and lawlessness with the need for order within this domain (Dunn Cavelty 2013). Sulek and Moran (2009) show how analogies, such as a Cyber Pearl Harbour, cyber Cold War, and cyber 9/11, etc., can inform future cyber strategies. In their analysis of the cyber Cold War analogy, Sulek and Moran (2009) show that it is “primarily anchored in the idea that powerful nation-states are competing for influence and power without resorting to a direct conventional or nuclear war” (8). Nevertheless, their comparison of the similarities and differences between the ‘actual’ Cold War and a cyber Cold War does not adequately explore the underlying fixations, spectacle, and seductions of this period and how this shapes decision-making and strategy. What is needed is a more nuanced understanding of why this analogy exists, its context, and what it says about the security community’s goals, fears, and choices.

Although the threat environment has changed since the Cold War, narratives drawing on this period still permeate policy and influence decision-making. These narratives frequently imply a level of certainty, calculability, and relative stability of an apparently bipolar world. The intricacies of current conflicts and threats require a more nuanced understanding, and a postmodern approach may help the security community better understand these complexities (Dunn Cavelty and Mauer 2009). This means understanding and facing the ‘new’ ‘cyber’ Cold War discourse and its impact on cyber and defence strategy for policy and decision-makers. This process starts by delving into the postmodern condition and the search for meaning and stability.

**THE POSTMODERN CONDITION**

Modernity is characterized as a search for meaning, order, and stability. Prior to the influence of globalization and neoliberalism, this search was usually answered in the West by the state, church, and/ or family, whereby citizens found stability and identity. Large-scale globalization and neoliberalism starting in the 1990s opened up the world to the possibility of choice. It presented individuals with the freedom to make meaning through their own choices. The corresponding retreat of the state gave individuals a diversity of options to find meaning, yet this freedom resulted in instability. According to Bauman (1997), this instability results from a sense of insecurity, uncertainty, and the constant search for meaning outside of the traditional channels. This is the postmodern condition, specifically the power of other actors outside and including the state, to control individuals’ options for choice. As a result, individuals are without traditional criteria for ascribing identity or achieving meaning in life.

Thus, they search elsewhere for meaning and new lifestyles. These identity-making and consumer- oriented options are coloured with capitalism and aim to ‘seduce’ individuals into consumerism to ease the overwhelming sense of uncertainty. This uncertainty is fuelled by capitalistic dreams that can promise meaning and fulfillment.

In Liquid Life, Bauman (2005) characterizes postmodern life as a constant struggle of reinvention and a search for meaning. This search for meaning and purpose can be applied to any part of society whereby the state’s traditional role is in flux and new possibilities are sought. Globalization has changed the interactions and organization between people, and as a result, changed the constructs that traditionally bind people to a state. The subsequent uncertainty, or liquidity of meaning and belonging in the modern world, has led to many responses by diverse actors outside of the traditional state-focused approach. Responses to this liquidity must mould tangible meaning for individuals to choose; it must also provide structure, identity, meaning, and can be flavoured with capitalism, or as argued elsewhere (see Csenkey 2018), populism and nationalism. States can use these flavours to bolster state-serving practises, for example, by structuring fear of the ‘Other’ in border security and national security policies (Csenkey 2018; 2020; Bauman 2006). For Bauman, individuals are left with no strings to grasp from the past as they buy into these new capitalist dreams.

Unlike Bauman (2005), Baudrillard (1994) does not see globalization and neoliberalism as the end of history (Fukuyama 1992) or identity. New meanings and lifestyles are not necessarily new — they can be rebranded and sold in new ways with mixed flavours — the ‘old wine, new bottles’ approach. For Baudrillard, the postmodern condition includes all ideas from the past. These ideas, however, are now negotiable and are included in the mix of histories and simulations to be seduced by.

The postmodern condition is essential to understand because it is tied inextricably with the simulations that make postmodern life a reality. Uncertainty about order, meaning, and the search for identity and stability in a globalized world can be rebranded and sold as answers. These answers can be crafted as realities (vis-a-vis Baudrillard). However, as we shall see, these realities are simulations, and simulations of simulations, and simulations of the real.

**SIMULATIONS OF THE REAL**

Simulations are reality without reality. The postmodern condition is characterized by simulations and hyperrealities (recall Baudrillard). These simulations and hyperrealities guide perceptions of reality, including choices, identities, and governance practices.

Using Baudrillard’s (1983) example, imagine the creation of a map. The mapping of a territory, including drawing its borders, natural features, and parcelling out associated sovereignty claims, is based on a reality. This reality is based on geography, history, and the real world — yet it is only a simulation of the real. When the reality that the simulation is based on is removed, all following reproductions are based on the simulation itself. What is left is a ‘hyperreality’ or a simulacrum. Baudrillard describes this as a model of a real without the original reality. For Baudrillard:

“[t]he real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these, it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere.” (1983: 3).

Hyperrealities are not duplicates or imitations of reality, nor are they representations. Representations assume that the sign and the real are equivalent. Simulacrum, or hyperrealities, are simulations of reality, reflections that mask or in some way pervert reality. It masks it in such a way that it does not look like reality anymore and bears no relation. Cyber is a hyperreality — it is a simulation of the real.

**Inscribing Reality, or how to Govern Technologies**

Cyber is a hyperreal space; it has intangible and tangible pieces, is interacted by diverse users, technologies, and operates in different contexts. From a military perspective, this is problematic. The liquidity of the postmodern condition affects military frameworks because it creates uncertainty about structure, order, and rationale. This is further complicated by the plethora of actors, including new adversaries and their motives and strategies, operating in this space. Additionally, new technologies, especially those outside of a defence context, are challenging to govern. In combination, all of these factors result in instability. One such way is to stabilize the unstable, solidify the liquid uncertainty, and define reality through inscription.

The complexity and uncertainty associated with cyber and emerging technologies operating in this space can be made tangible, and therefore governable through inscription. For Latour (1987), part of this process is through inscription devices. Reality is made stable through the inscription of meaning onto things and concepts. When reality is made stable, it is comparable, combinable; it can be debated, calculated, and diagnosed. Part of this inscription process involves making and using information. In Seeing Like a State, Scott (1998) argues that states craft ways to imagine the world as easier to govern. States do this by making people, processes, things, regions, etc. quantifiable, or easier to govern through current systems. For example, assigning a person a SIN or giving areas of land postal codes. This, in turn, modifies the perception of these ‘things’ and feeds into the design, enforcement, and retention of governance through a specific lens. These are inscription devices enabling information to be created about concepts and things. This information is used and funnelled through ‘centres of calculation’ whereby it is understood in relation to other information (Latour 1987). In these centres of calculation, the information is manipulated for use, including understanding its effects on other information.

Inscriptions accumulate, and this makes them powerful. The more information is gathered, manipulated, computed, and used via centers of calculation, the more legitimate they become. This information is transformed into plans and strategies, whereby legitimacy, and therefore power, is ascribed to those who seek to govern. When cyber-related emerging technologies are inscribed with a reality through information about them from a specific context, it makes them governable. This paper focuses on understanding the realities cyber technologies are inscribed with and how and why they seduce the security community.

**SEDUCTION: MARKETING IDENTITY AND MEANING**

Although ‘free’ to choose meaning and lifestyles, there is a perpetual uncertainty about the world (Bauman 1997; 2005). Some of this uncertainty is nested in technologies, their uses, users, capabilities, contexts, etc. Globalization saw a decline in metanarratives and grand theories, especially those held and perpetuated by traditional actors like the state. Technologies can be seen as part of a regime of globalization. Although there is anxiety about technologies, the associated narratives provide some recentering and restoration of meaning and choice. For Baudrillard, this is power which he calls seduction, and it resides in the representation of the visible and invisible and making it consumable. Society is organized around the logic of consumption. Consumerism has brought some certainty and stability to the liquid uncertainty of the globalized world. One of the comforting aspects of consumerism is that it is limitless (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]). This means that there are never-ending promises and pleasures. Society’s appetites will constantly grow and seek new products as a consuming community. In other words, it is a society driven by consumerism (Bauman 1992) and a postmodern world of simulations and hyperrealities (vis-a-vis Baudrillard). The key to fulfilling and perpetuating these endless consumeristic needs is through seduction, primarily through the production of imagery and information.

According to Baudrillard (1990 [1979]), seduction is “the strategy of appearance” (7, 8), including over imagery. Seduction supposes an order of things based on something beyond reality, although it appears to offer it. The seduction of a reality that offers stability, including familiar imagery, meaning, and aesthetics, drives the desire to ‘buy-in’. The seduction of meaning through imagery was on display in a newly ‘experienced’ way during the technology theatre of the Gulf War.

**THE TECHNOLOGY THEATRE OF THE GULF WAR**

The Gulf War could be seen as a high-tech war, a ‘clean’ war — where technologies were used to engage in an efficient and modern conflict whereby the state with the most advanced technologies would win and suffer less casualties. This would act as a deterrent to other adversaries to engage in future conflicts. This high-tech war was seen and ‘experienced’ through new media, with new visuals and aesthetics. ‘Real’-time footage from US bombers in the air and from cameras on the ground allowed the ‘audience’ to ‘see’ the action. Nevertheless, this vision of a ‘virtual,’ high precision war was not real. Baudrillard argues in his 1995 piece, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place, that what the ‘audience’ or viewers saw through the media in 1990 -1991 was not the reality of the Gulf War. What was seen was, in fact, a simulation of a real war on television. What was seen and heard did not happen — that war was not real and did not occur. Baudrillard (1992) argues that the media provides a simulation because it is an imperfect representation of what happens in the world and the representations of the real world.

From this simulation of high-tech war, a new hyperreality was created — one that looks like the simulated reality without the original. This has altered the perception not only of what happened during the Gulf War but following conflicts. At the heart of this hyperreality is a fixation with technology. This fixation plays out as a ‘technology theatre.’

Technology theatre builds off Schneier’s (2003) original understanding of the ‘security theatre.’ Simply, the security theatre is doing ‘things’ to make reality feel secure without actually addressing the causes of insecurity or threats. Heightened airport security infrastructures after 9/11 are an often- cited example of the security theatre. The technology theatre is similar because it also attempts to build a sense of security through interventions that appear to solve a problem. McDonald (2020) defines technology theatre as “the use of technology interventions that make people feel as if a government — and, more often, a specific group of political leaders — is solving a problem, without it doing anything to actually solve that problem.” For McDonald, the technology theatre is a distraction, a political tactic used to make governments appear to be making progress in solving an issue. For example, this issue could be attempting to address the outbreak of COVID-19 through contact tracing applications. This paper sees the technology theatre a bit differently. Instead of a largely political tool, the technology theatre within the context of military operations is where the hyperreality of war takes stage, with high-tech weapons on show in a way that further reinforces the simulated reality of conflict. Both the technology and the security theatres build on the visible aspect of doing ‘things’ to address problems — even if these ‘things’ are performative instead of constructive.

**The Spectacle of the Hyperreal**

Unlike Baudrillard’s controversial statements in The Gulf War (1995), in The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers (2002), Baudrillard argues that 9/11 did happen. Yet, he argues that there were intangible unrealities that collapsed into each other as 9/11 became an exchange of symbolic violence presented through the media (ibid. 2002). This was different from what was ‘seen’ during the Gulf War. The terrorist attacks in 2001 on the World Trade Center destroyed the physical structures and the symbolic object. This occurred as a ‘spectacle,’ a ‘fascination’ with the image and its symbolism. More specifically, “[t]he image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption” (Baudrillard 2002: 21). This is different from McLuhan’s (1964) idea that ‘the medium is the message.’ Hyperreality does not distinguish between the medium or the message — the two can no longer be determined as distinct — they collapse into each other (Baudrillard 1994). Technologies and their content are not reality. Hyperreality, simulated imagery, and inscribed technologies and information are part of the technology theatre and are created by spectacles to be seduced by.

For Baudrillard, the Gulf War was a drama of a war whereby Western power and ideas of modernity, democracy, and order were fully displayed. This theatre performance was a hyperreality because the war appeared orderly, precise, ‘consensual,’ and certain. The viewers at home could ‘experience’ the visuals and an impression of war without the original at their leisure. The Gulf War was an “...unreal war in which the over-dimensioned technical power, in turn, over-evaluates the real forces of an enemy which it cannot see” (Baudrillard 1995: 80). The current perceptions of war were shaped by this simulation and are now hyperrealities. The consumer viewers’ experience of war is mundane and tied with leisure and the expectation that high tech will win wars. The consumer has many options to experience this hyperreality, including imagery and aesthetics imbued with meaning.

The technologies within this theatre were inscribed with information and meaning that feeds into and reinforces the performance itself. These inscription devices (recall Latour 1987) are then reinforced by hyperrealities seen in visuals on television and in ‘real’ time and played a role in the confusion of the real and the hyperreal, including a fetishization of technologies.

**FETISHIZING TECHNOLOGIES: THE PLEASURES OF THE REAL MYTHS**

In this context of this discussion, a fetish is a consumer object. It is something to be seduced by through consumption (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]). As previously discussed, consumerism is intertwined with the postmodern condition and hyperreality. Technologies can be fetishized and turned into objects of desire and fantasy-building. As argued by Baudrillard (1995), this was seen during the Gulf War, where an emphasis on technologies as winning hyperreal wars is pivotal to how we perceive the future of conflict. The technology theatre places technologies at the center of the stage to perform military solutions to problems.

Circling back to the focus of this paper, what is to be done about simulations, hyperrealities, theatres, and fetishisms? Why does the security community fixate on Cold War discourse, fetishize technologies, and become seduced by the hyperreality of a cyber Cold War? Ang’s (1989) work on melodramatic imaginations brings us towards some possible answers. Drawing on Ang (1989; 1996), ‘real’ ‘pleasures’ can be fulfilled by fantasies or myths. These are realities in themselves, albeit hyperrealities, and this is a place to look for some insight into the fixation with the new Cold War discourse.

Pleasures are not satisfactions; they are instead longing for a past that can include a perceived future. This future can also be a perceived past — or a hyperreality — it can be a present, but in all cases, it is connected to the fiction of positions, solutions, feelings, and structures (Ang 1989). In other words, there is pleasure in fictional representations of reality or the melodramatic imagination. Identity and meaning within these imaginations are fluid and are given meaning when performed. Recalling Butler’s (1990) arguments about the performativity and fluidity of gender, these identity performances occur within specific contexts. To situate this argument in this paper: technology theatres are where and how identities are performed, and this gives and reinforces its meaning. These performances and melodramatic imaginations are nested in nostalgia for the Cold War era, or more specifically, the order, meaning, and identity ascribed within the binary of bipolarity. This is the pleasure of the techno-fetish.

The nostalgia for the Cold War aesthetics as a melodramatic imagination of the security community is a search for meaning and order in a cyber hyperreality where everything seems uncertain and disordered. This includes the technologies, capabilities, adversaries, strategies, operations, and the changing nature of war itself. Nostalgia, myths, and simulations go hand-in- hand in this case:

“When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. And there is a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production. This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence.” (Baudrillard 1983: 12).

Drawing on Mosco’s (2005) description of the Digital Sublime, to contextualize myths about technologies, myths “offer entrance to another reality, a reality... characterized by the promise of the sublime” (3). The sublime and sublime icons are sources of “utopian visions” (ibid: 6) “mutually constituted ...out of the interconnected realities....” (ibid: 10). Myths are not just distortions of reality — they are a form of reality and give meaning to the incomprehensible, allow us to cope with overwhelming problems, and create comfortable and consensual visions.

Myths are central to understanding cyber hyperrealities and new Cold War discourse. Examining myths about technologies reveals the desires and the hidden configurations of power nested in neoliberal practises. Myths are enacted and continually contribute to constructing mythic ‘things,’ theatres, and performances. In the next section, we apply theory to practice.

**COLD WAR MYTHS TODAY**

The Cold War is over, yet the discourse on “Great Power” politics may say otherwise. This is especially prevalent in popular discussions about cyber and cyber-related emerging technologies and the future of conflict. The uncertainty of modernity and the postmodern condition is felt within the security community. The myths surrounding emerging technologies guide the community to believe that we are indeed experiencing a new Cold War. This is a melodramatic imagination to find pleasure and comfort in the knowable and a past real (or a perception of a past), where technologies were seen as tangible, and the wars’ happened.’ These pasts and futures are ideas and aesthetics for sale. Myths are seductive, and “[i]n the real world, the development and deployment of technologies have generated their own mythic structures, borrowing from much older ideas and bringing these together with new ideas have produced myths repacked for our time” (Burnett et al. 2009: 1-2). Myths support and sustain consumerism, creating identity, structures, institutions, and a complex interplay of understandings. This is important to understand because it shapes everyday lives, lived experiences, uses of technologies, and shapes world views and power relations.

In defence policy, these myths and pleasurable hyperrealities are reinforced. In SSE, for example, new Cold War nostalgia is visible and mixed with the hyperreality of cyber:

“The re-emergence of major power competition has reminded Canada and its allies of the importance of deterrence. At its core, deterrence is about discouraging a potential adversary from doing something harmful before they do it... Deterrence has traditionally focused on conventional and nuclear capabilities, but the concept is also increasingly relevant to the space and cyber domains.” (emphasis added, DND 2017: 50).

Discussions about major power competition, deterrence, and geopolitical technology races are new Cold War discourse. SSE describes the changing nature of warfare due to the proliferation of weapons, hybrid tactics, terrorism, among other factors. In the subsection, “The Re-Emergence of Deterrence,” the changing global security environment is described as a “return of major power rivalry, new threats from non-state actors, and challenges in the space and cyber domains have returned deterrence to the centre of defence thinking” (emphasis added, DND 2017: 55).

Linking these concepts back to Baudrillard’s arguments in The Gulf War (1995), war is a technology theatre whereby the heavy use and the public display of high-tech weaponry in a conflict fetishize technologies. For Baudrillard (1995), the Gulf War legitimized the logic of deterrence. One of the problems with deterrence is that it assumes that everyone is on the same strategy page with equal access to technology and weaponry. It assumes that there is a result of escalation and is seeded in assumptions about deterrence itself. For Baudrillard (1995), the Cold War was based on the realist logic of deterrence. This has become a hyperrealist logic of deterrence whereby the real is deterred by the virtual. This logic has fundamentally changed war — it has made war abstract, beyond the imaginary, so that it becomes an unreality that is the reality.

Uncertainty about the future is perceived as uncertainty about technological capabilities and their alignment with current understanding and conflict strategies. SSE states:

“Technological developments point to a future of defence that is expected to be vastly different than today, with a greater emphasis on information technologies, data analytics, deep learning, autonomous systems, advancements in the electromagnetic and cyber domains, as well as a range of transformative technologies, from quantum computing to synthetic biology. Any number of these advances has the potential to change the fundamental nature of military operations.” (55).

According to Baudrillard, the technology theatre and the conflict that followed the Gulf War are not about politics. Specifically, they are not the virtual version of the Clausewitzian concept of the ‘absence of war by other means.’ Cyber conflicts, or as Baudrillard refers to them as ‘electronic wars’, do not have political objectives because:

“It functions as a preventative electroshock against any future conflict. Just as in modern communication, there is no longer any interlocutor, so in this electronic war there is no longer any enemy, there is only a refractory element which must be neutralized and consensual.” (1995: 84).

In crafting policies to understand and strategize the future of conflict, it is crucial to recognize the role that information plays in inscription devices and the centres of calculation (Latour 1987). The manipulation and use of information about technologies ascribes legitimacy.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS: TRANSLATION, PLEASE**

To summarize the theoretical portion of this paper: the Cold War was a perfectly conformable simulated reality to build into a simulacrum. There was order in the Cold War: there was duality, dichotomies, bipolarity. Yet, this was not the lived reality of the Cold War, but a melodramatic imagination, where the imagery and perception of advanced technologies are fetishized as the answer to solving conflicts.

This paper has engaged in a complicated discussion about how technologies are framed within certain realities, used to craft hyperrealities, and perpetuate mutually constructed myths about conflict in the world. If the reader is skimming to the end of this paper to arrive at the ‘so-what’ value, or to find some translation for this postmodern-heavy content, then it is presented in this section. The answer to the question: what does this mean for decision-makers? is presented here as simply, proceed with caution and do it in three ways:

1) Be critical of narratives laden with Cold War commentaries, including Great Power rivalries, competition, and misguided dichotomies, especially when integrated into the cyber environment. Multiple actors exist and operate in the world, each with different strategies, linkages, and goals. Competition between actors may assume equal access to technology or similar strategies, but it is not always the case.

2) Be wary of technological hype and fixations on technologies without understanding their capabilities in multiple contexts and their ability to go between applications. Technologies can be sold for more than what they are, and they may also assume compatible uses across multiple contexts.

3) Uncertainty is ok. Facing disorder is challenging, especially from a military standpoint, but addressing uncertainty with flexible frameworks that do not seek to replicate an imaginary best practice that involves an adapted model of Cold War bipolarity.

## Info Wars 1NC

#### The generative point of violence today is the attempt to reduce all geopolitical events to information. Three impacts: (i) the proliferation of information thickens the fog of war, making conflicts more likely; (ii) the pursuit of information at all costs enacts a will to transparency that wages a global war on all singularities; and (iii) the reduction of all events to units of information that can be circulated within a closed system of exchange exhausts the possibility of meaning and value.

Artrip & Debrix 14 [Ryan E., Doctoral Student at Virginia Polytechnic, Francois, professor of political science at Virginia Polytechnic, "*The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation*," Baudrillard Studies Vol. 11 No. 2]

Such an expectation about the ontological “location” of the objects, subjects, stakes, and processes of today’s virulent war is generative of another expectation: that of the so-called self-evident violence of war and, by extension, of anything that socially and politically is said to matter for and about the demos (since virulent/virtual war is an all-encompassing, or all-swarming, “geopolitical reality”). In other words, what the so-called objects and subjects of today’s virtual/virulent war expect “their” war to represent is what ensures a disposition towards violence (a violence of “the global,” perhaps, as Baudrillard intimates) that may well be the result of attempts at securing a will to meaning, a will to make sense of things, and a will to be of political objects and subjects that today takes place or, rather, is intensified in virtual and digital modalities of representation and mediation. Part of the critical stake of this essay is to “locate” the violence/virulence of contemporary warfare not just in its empirical geopolitical “events,” but rather in the representational domain inside which those so-called events are expected to make sense, that is to say, in the always already preemptively belligerent and aggressive realm of representation (where the challenge is to produce and impose meaning at all costs). II. The Fog of War The claim about a certain quality of reality or even realism to new digital informational or communicative technologies has played a formative role in the global staging of several recent social and political conflicts. In both the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements of 2011, for example, digital technologies were celebrated for their real-time capacity and their subversive (democratic) potentials. The virtue of reporting “from the ground” of the event itself was championed as a matter of authenticity. There was a common sense that “truth” would finally be able to speak from its “real” source (the demos itself?). Not only is there a prevalent uncritical (even if sometimes well-intentioned) faith in new media and their digital technologies today, but, more importantly, there is often an impulse of liberation. Yet, this impulse is stifled by its faith in representation. The hope for openness, transparency, immediacy, and indeed liberation is so tethered to the real (and to the will to reality) that it ends up being negative or, at least, self-defeating. It often becomes evident that the so-called democratic uses of new media technologies—particularly in terms of reporting violent war events or conflicts of allegedly great concern/importance to the global demos—are, far from producing a clearer picture of an objective event, contributing to an ever thickening fog of meaning and truth. These new media technologies in and of themselves are not the object of our critique here. Moreover, we are not interested in “clearing the fog” of the real or war. Again, our critical intervention in this essay has more to do with deploying perspectives that may expose the violent dispositions of the contemporary mythos of war (and revealing the complicit role of the digitalized demos in the intensification of this mythos) than with attempting to clear the way for a different ethos about everyday reality, digitalized media, and the prevalence of warfare in political representations. In fact, part of our argument is also to suggest that the various cultural, political, and ethical mechanisms that seek to clear the fog of the real (and war) often end up reproducing it. The lure to criticize and debunk reality often requires that another real, another certainty, another dominant meaning, or indeed another democratic necessity be established through the same means and techniques, and media, that had to be challenged in the first place (thus, the simulacrum continues to proliferate its reality-effects). Behind the widespread “global” celebration of digitalized technologies for their newly found representational capabilities and accuracies, there lies the idea that, perhaps following a collective disgust with the dealings of Western media outlets as more or less uncritical props for the social/economic/ethical status quo in the past several decades, disseminated and “democratized” media technologies can de-mystify the world, lift its aura in a way, or perhaps “dig deeper” into the “truth” than, say, what the media networks involved in reporting news (including war news) in the 1980s and 1990’s (the famous CNN effect) ever could do. Because these technologies are far more in real-time than news networks, they are also generally thought to be able to evade oppressive/repressive censorship of particular corporate/class/state/ideology interests. But even more than escaping filters, digital representations today are often thought to be able to eliminate all of the ambiguities born of time. Thus, we (members of the public/demos) want to believe that mediation can be removed. And we want to subscribe to the view that any distortion occurring between an event and its perception/memory, or between the “actual” and its account, can evaporate. By reducing to the virtually infinitesimal or invisible the filter/screen between the image that represents and the real that is and, furthermore, by placing the productive responsibilities for the image into the hands of the user (literally into the digits), the digital establishes itself as something capable of demolishing the “malicious” surface of appearances to reveal a meaningful density of truth through the quasi-immediate interface. This is the dream of immediacy rediscovered and perhaps finally realized. At a most basic level of analysis, the risk involved in pointing to this desire for mediatized or digitalized immediacy would be to undermine the visual evidence of the violent/virulent occurrence of the omnipresence of war. For example, could we have deployed a critique of the US military’s and the US government’s use of torture in the War on Terror were it not for the seemingly unfiltered “shock and awe” of the Abu Ghraib photos? Again, from the point of view of the ethos of virtual/virulent war, the lure of digitalized immediacy has its uses (and, possibly, benefits, too, even for the demos). But, from the perspective of war’s mythos, it must be said that the “truth” about war and war operations cannot be fully revealed because representation, no matter how immediate or seemingly unmediated, always works by imposing some meaning onto things/events that are made visible/representable. Consider the role played by digital media in the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013. Within a matter of minutes of the blasts, even before the smoke could clear the scene, images and videos of terror taken from spectators’ mobile devices circulated through cyberspace. Everything was seemingly captured in that instant. The horror that drew so many people to capture images through their smart phones seems to speak on its own; it needs no commentary, no meaning to be given to it. In fact, it appears to have no mediation, no appropriation or narrativizing, no contextualizing either. That is precisely why smart phones are so apt at giving us such images, such representations, such “pure” meanings about things. Especially, such a horrifying violence, it is said, needs no commentary, no sense to be made of it. An immeasurable violence is done to the violated when one tries to make sense of the senseless (Agamben, 1999). Yet, as Baudrillard had already pointed out in his remarks on the Gulf War, “everything which is turned into information becomes the object of endless speculation, the site of total uncertainty. We are left with the symptomatic reading on our screens of the effects of the war, or the effects of discourse about the war, or completely speculative strategic evaluations” (Baudrillard, 1995: 41). In their digital representation, images of war and images of terror are dissolved into their own information. Information (what the image/event wants to tell us, to reveal, allegedly) already infiltrates the tweeted or texted image/scene (of horror, of war) with an urgency of signification and meaning. Images of horror cannot make sense, perhaps must not be made sense of, and yet they somehow beg for meaning, for circulation, or for propagation, in the hope that they may reveal something to someone. Thus, the digitalized mediation of the image, even in its instantaneity, still takes place. Images—or whatever event might have been “caught”—must succumb to a will to information, to a will to meaning, even if it is falsely affirmed that what is digitally rendered needs no commentary. Put differently, the image levels the event it represents by entering into a mass/global indifferent exchange, into a virulent global (representational) circulation that murders singularity or, indeed, the moment of trauma (on this question of the erasure of trauma, see Debrix, 2008: 4-5; Edkins, 2003: 37-38). The enigmatic singularity of the event—which, for Baudrillard, was once a precondition for any sort of historical transition—gives way to an endlessness of representation, whether such representation appears to have a clear ethical or political purpose/signification or not. It is in this always operative tendency of rendered appearances to yield meaning (even if their meaning is to be information-worthy), not in the image or event itself, that we situate the conditions of possibility and reproducibility for the ever-thickening representational fog and for the violence/virulence of images, or better yet, of appearances. To make war or, as the case may be, the terror event mean something—even in some of the most immediate reactions often designed to evoke injustice or, indeed, incomprehension—is the generative point of violence, the source of representation as a virulent/virtual code and mode of signification. Baudrillard writes, “Everywhere one seeks to produce meaning, to make the world signify, to render it visible.” He adds, “We are not, however, in danger of lacking meaning; […] we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us” (Baudrillard, 1988: 63). Indeed, the Western world—increasingly, the global—has found itself with a proliferation of meanings and significations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

It is as if the so-called crisis of nihilism (thought to be characteristic of much critique and philosophical suspicion throughout the 20th century) later on produced something of the opposite order. The mass violence of the 20th century inaugurated not a complete void of despair or meaninglessness, but instead a flood of meaning, if not an overproduction of it. Baudrillard refers to this frantic explosion of meaning/signification as “a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production […]” (Baudrillard, 1983: 7). Here, Baudrillard describes a mode of production of a different kind, not motivated by class interests or exploitation of value, but by an automated, perhaps viral, abreaction to the empty core or disenchantment of things and the world: that is to say, the degree to which things seem to lack a singular center of gravity or have lost a justifiable reference to the real world, and yet each thing that “matters” is also an attempt to get at reality as a question of accumulation (of meaning), circulation (of signs), and filling up of all interstitial spaces of communication and value. The end result is an over-abundance of signs and images of reality, something that culminates in what Baudrillard calls hyperreality—things appear more real than reality itself. The story that needs to be told is thus not about the undoubtedly deplorable “truth” or fact of explosive and warlike violence, but about a violence of another sort. In the radical digital transparency of the global scene, we (members of the demos) often have full or direct exposure to explosivity, as we saw above with the image of terror. But what still needs to be thought and problematized is implosivity or what may be called implosive violence. Implosive violence is a violence for which we do not, and perhaps will never, have much of a language (Rancière, 2007: 123). Although, not having a language for it or, rather, as we saw above, seeking to find a language to talk about it and, perhaps, to make sense of it is still sought after. This is, perhaps, what digital pictures of war/terror violence seek to capture or want to force through. Implosive violence, often digitally rendered these days, is in close contact with media technologies and representational devices and techniques because it seeks representation and meaning. This is why implosive violence insists on calling in wars (against terror, for example) and on mobilizing war machines (against terrorist others, against vague enemy figures), but wars and war machines that no longer have—to the extent that they ever had—a clearly identifiable object and subject, or a clear mission/purpose. As such, this implosive violence and its wars (the new Western/global way of war, perhaps) must remain uncertain, unclear, foggy, inwardly driven, representational, and indeed virulent. They must remain uncertain and confused even as they are digitally operative and desperately capture events/images to give the impression that meanings/significations can and will be found. Yet, as we saw above, it is not meanings exactly that must be found, but information and the endless guarantee of its immediate circulation. As information occupies the empty place of meaning, certainty, or truth, images must be instantaneously turned into appearances that search for meanings that will never be discovered because, instead, a proliferation of information-worthy facts and beliefs will take over (perhaps this is what US fake pundit and comedian Stephen Colbert famously referred to as “truthiness”). Or, as Baudrillard puts it, “free from its former enemies, humanity now has to create enemies from within, which in fact produces a wide variety of inhuman metastases” (Baudrillard, 2003). Thus, this implosive violence is destined to be a global violence since it "is the product of a system that tracks down any form of negativity and singularity, including of course death as the ultimate form of singularity. […] It is a violence that, in a sense, puts an end to violence itself and strives to establish a world where anything related to the natural must disappear […] Better than a global violence, we should call it a global virulence. This form of violence is indeed viral. It moves by contagion, produces by chain reaction, and little by little it destroys our immune systems and our capacities to resist" (2003; our italics).

#### Theory must wage war on the reality principle, ciphering instead of deciphering the Event so that it cannot be terrorized by the hegemony of the code. Our semiotic insurrection performatively enacts an intervention into the real that shatters what was once self-evidence into so many shards of confusion.

Strehle 14. Samuel Strehle, fellow in the DFG research training group “The Real and Modern Culture” at the University of Konstanz, Germany, MAs in sociology and philosophy from Albert-Ludwigs-Universitat Freiburg, Germany, researcher in the department of anthropology at the University of Trier, Germany, currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Basel, Switzerland, “A Poetic Anthropology of War: Jean Baudrillard and the 1991 Gulf War,” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014)

The production of war signs is linked to the issue of war not only in matters of content, but also in matters of form. Content-wise, war is just one of many fields in which reality signs are produced; regarding its form, however, it is the pure logic of war itself that works in this industry. The production of reality for Baudrillard is a kind of warfare itself: Not only is it a monologue of power, a “speech without response”, as he states in Requiem for the Media (1971: 172); even more, the “terrorism of the code” (ibid.: 179) is a war-like attack on our senses.

We, the viewers, are targets of a bombardment of signs and images. “Semiocracy”, Baudrillard (1976: 78) calls this terror in his writing on the New York Graffiti scene: we live under a dictatorship of signs (against which the Graffiti raise their anti-semiotic counterforce). The war sign industry is just one of many subdivisions of a society-wide ‘reality sign industry’ that floods our lives with all kinds of spectacular products and information. “We are all hostages of media intoxication, induced to believe in the war just as we were once led to believe in the revolution in Romania, and confined to the simulacrum of war as though confined to quarters. We are already all strategic hostages in situ; our site is the screen on which we are virtually bombarded day by day” (Baudrillard 1991b: 25).

Finally now, this is where Baudrillard’s genuine theoretical intervention takes place. Like the Graffiti writers, Baudrillard attempts to fight back against the terrorism of the code and its work of purification—somehow continuing Graffiti writing by other means. Baudrillard is leading his own war, his own counter-guerilla warfare against the reality principle. What are his spray cans? Which are the walls on which he puts his ‘mark on society’? It is the holy walls of theoretical discourse that Baudrillard defaces with a low tech weapon called “theoretical terrorism”, as he called it once (Baudrillard 1983a: 91, my translation)—a thinking made to oppose, to challenge the hegemony of reality.

The idea of ‘theoretical terrorism’ is strongly linked to his concept of “reversibility”[13](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote13) —a key term in Baudrillard’s thinking. The term may be characterized by two main aspects: At first, it refers to the reciprocity of gift exchange in which there is no closure of exchange but an endless changing and challenging of sides. In this regard, it is a name for the symbolic fluidity of power.[14](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote14)  At second, it refers to a principle of changing a situation by radically reversing its viewing angle—“poetic transference of the situation”, as Baudrillard calls it in Impossible Exchange (1999: 85).

Being a rather “phantastic principle” (Zapf 2010: 145, my translation), the concept of reversibility is linked with the most powerful and yet most clandestine subtext in Baudrillard’s oeuvre: ’Pataphysics. The idea behind this absurd science of “imaginary solutions” is as simple as it is mysterious: It is an attempt to create a different reality through imagination.[15](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote15)  Pataphysicians fight reality through the use of imaginary forces, through creating illusion and deceit.

It is easily overlooked how central this pataphysical approach has been for Baudrillard; even his most serious book, Symbolic Exchange and Death, is surprisingly full of pataphysical statements, especially in the dense, programmatic introductory pages: “The only strategy against the hyperrealist system is some form of pataphysics, ‘a science of imaginary solutions’; that is, a science-fiction of the system’s reversal against itself at the extreme limit of simulation, a reversible simulation in a hyperlogic of death and destruction” (Baudrillard 1976: 4 f.).

How can “science-fiction” shatter the system of reality? Baudrillard explains his strategy later in The Perfect Crime (1995), especially in the section on “Radical Thought”, and in Impossible Exchange (1999). Ideas, he claims, can create their own reality, since thinking is a performative act that builds its own ‘parallel world’: “Thought […] does not seek to penetrate some mystery of the world, nor to discover its hidden aspect—it is that hidden aspect. It does not discover that the world has a double life—it is that double life, that parallel life” (Baudrillard 1999: 149). In the performative “act of thinking” (ibid.: 115), reality is not so much depicted but challenged. The purpose of theory for Baudrillard is the exact opposite of what we normally would expect: It should not recognize and analyze reality, instead it must deny and contradict its hegemony. It has to create illusion and establish a power of seduction that makes one lose the path of reality. The “value of thought”, claims Baudrillard (1995: 94), “lies not so much in its inevitable convergences with truth as in the immeasurable divergences which separate it from truth.”

Only in awareness of those abstract ’Pataphysics can we distill any sense out of some of the oddest remarks in Baudrillard’s oeuvre, for example his “delirious self-criticism” from Cool Memories where he accuses himself of “having surreptitiously mixed my phantasies in with reality” and of “having systematically opposed the most obvious and well-founded notions” (Baudrillard 1987: 38). He even complains about readers taking his theories for actual facts and reading them in a “realist version”: “Simulacra are today accepted everywhere in their realist version: simulacra exist, simulation exists. It is the intellectual and fashionable version of this vulgarization which is the worst: all is sign, signs have abolished reality, etc.” (Ibid.: 227).

Instead of this “realist version”, Baudrillard suggests that even his most prominent terms can be regarded as pataphysical attempts to seduce his readers through fictitious ideas, for example when he admits to having “put forward the idea of simulacrum, without really believing in it, even hoping that the real will refute it” (Baudrillard 1995: 101). Apparently he understands his thinking to be something like a playful simulacrum itself, for also theory can precede—and thereby seduce—reality: “The theoretical ideal would be to set in place propositions in such a way that they could be disconfirmed by reality, in such a way that reality could only oppose them violently, and thereby unmask itself. For reality is an illusion, and all thought must seek first of all to unmask it. To do that, it must itself advance behind a mask and constitute itself as a decoy, without regard for its own truth. [...] Reality must be caught in the trap, we must move quicker than reality” (ibid.: 99).

In this sense, Baudrillard’s writing is “theory-fiction” (Baudrillard 1991c: 202) rather than theory, as he borrows a term from Jean-François Lyotard (1979: 92 f., cp. Blask, 2002: 133).  Like all ’Pataphysics, this notion of “theory-fiction” may be traced back to the surrealists and their “poetic anthropology”, as Dietmar Kamper (1981, my translation) has called it. Such an anthropology is “poetic” because it refers to the art of writing, but also because it touches the original notion of “poiesis”, meaning to create something. ‘Poetic anthropology’ does not seek to describe a reality that lies out there, instead it aims to autopoietically produce the subject it writes about through its own act of description.

Theory for Baudrillard is a “paradoxical political intervention” (Zapf 2010: 241, my translation). Thinking itself has to become the ambiguous kind of “singularity” (Baudrillard 1995: 96) and “event” (ibid.: 104) that is eliminated from almost any other sphere of the system: “Cipher, do not decipher. Work over the illusion. Create illusion to create an event. Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible what is only too intelligible, make the event itself unreadable. Accentuate the false transparency of the world to spread a terroristic confusion about it, or the germs or viruses of a radical illusion—in other words, a radical disillusioning of the real.” (Ibid.: 104).

Maybe this is the most unique aspect of Baudrillard’s thinking altogether. He is a thinker who tries to think the world different from what it actually is. He sees himself as something like a smuggler or drug dealer, pushing forbidden items on a “black market in thought” (Baudrillard 1999: 104), promoting “a clandestine trade in ideas, of all inadmissible ideas, of unassailable ideas, as the liquor trade had to be promoted in the 1930s” (Baudrillard 1995: 104 f.).

If Baudrillard is the drug dealer of sociology, what does this imply for his analysis of war and his reference to the principles of symbolic exchange and the duel form? If we want to believe Baudrillard that he is not interested in rehabilitating older wars, we should read his reference systematically rather than historically [16](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote16)—there might have never been any historical war as glamorous and honorable as portrayed by Clausewitz anyway. Hence, the introduction of symbolic exchange and the duel principle into the analysis of war might be more like a strategy to introduce a different view of things into the common perception of war. It delivers the necessary contrast against which the aestheticized, whitewashed reality of the war can be scrutinized and deconstructed as not the only possible reality of war. Only in the light of its radical other can the reality of war be denaturalized and revealed as a self-display of power and hegemony.

In this regard, Baudrillard has always remained a critical thinker who seeks to intervene into reality instead of just observing it. To the same degree he is neither a cynic nor a fatalist, that is—a resigned thinker. On the contrary, in an interview on the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center he even aligns himself with the ideas of the Enlightenment: “Fatalism offers an unpalatable interpretation of the world, for it leads to resignation. I don’t resign myself, I want clarity, a lucid consciousness. When we know the rules of the game, then we can change them. In this respect, I am a man of the Enlightenment” (Baudrillard 2002b). There is one major difference, though, between Baudrillard and the classical Enlightenment: He wishes for “clarity” and lucidity, he wants to “know the rules of the game”, but he does not seek the truth; he wants to “change” the rules of the game by diverting the game from its truth.

It does not seem to matter so much to Baudrillard if his instance of contrast—symbolic exchange and the duel principle—is more fictitious or real, illusionary or true; most possibly it has something of both sides, being undecidable like a simulacrum in the strongest sense. When Baudrillard writes about the Gulf War, he creates an odd mixture of lucid observations on the one hand and theoretical seductions on the other. If there could ever be something like ‘war studies’ in the spirit of Baudrillard, they would have to dare not to eliminate this undecidability, otherwise they would lose the spirit.

What matters the most for Baudrillard is the effort to break open the uniform process of reality production and shatter its seeming self-evidence into pieces. Theory according to Baudrillard is an attempt to reverse our view of the world—shifting our perspective by introducing something new and unsettling into the order of things. What seemed natural before, now starts to look artificial; what presented itself as a glorious triumph suddenly appears stale; what was evident becomes shady. Baudrillard’s theories are like evil ghosts: They haunt reality by staging its excluded other—no matter if this other really exists or if it has to be feigned.

## Process Warfare 1NC

#### **Traditional understandings of war as an antagonistic exchange between adversarial nations conceals the way war functions as an operational process. The perfection of this process produces a seamless economy of violence that liquidates all subjectivity and meaning.**

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 399-403) \*we don’t endorse ableist language

In Baudrillard’s notorious critique of the Gulf war he identifies traditional conceptions of war as involving the ontology we have seen in critical war studies and contemporary military doctrine: ‘war is born of an antagonistic, destructive but dual relation between two adversaries’.40 However, he argues, if this is war, then there is no war taking place in the Gulf. One important but hereto neglected reason for this argument is Baudrillard’s claim that war has disappeared into the processing of warfare. Baudrillard never fully developed this discussion, but he wrote extensively on the subject from a general perspective in his final works. Therein Baudrillard points to the way subjectivity disappears in operational processing as part of the attempt to fulfil and perfect potential.41 Baudrillard sees subjectivity becoming a subordinated part of technological media, ‘a perfectly operational molecule that is left to its own devices and doomed to ... reproduce, self-identically, to infinity’.42 In his view, we are faced with a situation in which subjectivity, social relations and will are essentially liquidated by operational practices. They are not supplanted by a higher will or a higher purpose. Rather, they vanish into processing entirely devoid of symbolic meaning.

This indicates that it is not physical disappearance Baudrillard discusses, but disappearance which strictly relates to the symbolic. Baudrillard on numerous occasions illustrated this idea through Alfred Jarry’s novel *The Supermale*, which tells a story of how automated processing dissolves limits between man and technology. The apex of the story is a 10,000-mile bicycle race – the perpetual motion race – which takes place between a five-man bicycle and an express train. In the race the cyclists function as a collaborative machine to challenge the train over long distance. The cyclists reach a speed that enables them to ride side by side with the locomotive – to become limitless automatons in the rhythm of the machine. This becoming comes at a price, since the cyclists gradually disappear as humans, as they reach the speed of the train. One of them disappears quite literally as he dies on his post. However, his decomposing corpse, strapped to the bicycle, pedals on. The corpse stands as a symbolic marker for how the rest of the bodies also disappear by being absorbed into the process itself. In the end, the five-man machine rides alongside the train with the living and dead corpses riding at maximum speed in order to keep up. This theme, of transformation of man into machine, is also evident in the rest of the novel, which ends with its key figure dying while transforming into a machine.43

As Rex Butler points out, the novel helps to draw up the:

[V]ision of a society in ... which humans are unnecessary. We see this vision coming true in those self-enclosed and self-perpetuating systems of simulation that Baudrillard analyses, which have no outside and no need to be explained by an other, and whose best model would be the bicycle proposed by Alfred Jarry, which still continues to pedal long after its riders have passed away with fatigue.44

The image Jarry paints in the novel illustrates the symbolic disappearance of subjectivity by emphasising the repetitive and inherently meaningless relationship we have with various media that surround us. The attempt to reach a perfect speed and efficiency by way of the mechanic process works back on subjectivity.

It is not far-fetched to see the recent conceptual inventions in military thought, such as the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO), Comprehensive Approach (CA), or Network Centric Warfare (NCW), as part of the characteristic that Baudrillard is concerned with and Jarry’s novel illustrates. The common denominator of these concepts is the way they attempt to synchronise, coordinate, and make warfare more efficient through staff procedures. They are all based on the idea that perfect operationalisation generates a war in which all means and capabilities are interconnected in ways that aim to create a seamless economy of violence. This in turn indicates that the subject of warfare dissolves into operationalised repetition. Such an argument does not entail that militaries, insurgents, weapon-systems, logistical capacities and so forth are disappearing on a material level. Rather, as part of a symbolic disappearance through the fulfilments of technological processes, warfare strives towards perfection and symbolic aspects disappear through a model which is being operationalised as if it is war. This should not be taken to mean that there is an end to violence or suffering. There is of course bodily violence and death in military operations despite the attempt to fulfil wars’ every potential through repeated calls for ‘high-precision munition’ and ‘zero-death warfare’. However, processing and repetition also participate in making the representation of bodies and subjects disappear in operationalisation.

The concern here is that focusing on the violence displayed in war-as-fighting might obscure a systemic violence which stems from the way in which war is operationalised. Baudrillard argues that the type of violence the military normally battles (such as terrorism) is far less lethal than the violence which replaces the subject with the will of an operational and technocratic structure.45 What we have, then, is a certain kind of disappearance which is obscured by (among other things) the focus on war as violent exchange between subjects.

How do we go from the ontology of war as generative to an ontology of war as disappearance? To understand the transition it is helpful to return to the idea that war is considered generative as it exceeds social orders. Albeit helpful in order to understand war’s excess in terms of productivity it is also possible to understand excess differently, as a force of disappearance. Baudrillard argues that social reality disappears not because of a lack, but rather because of excess, arguing precisely that wars fought by the US tend to be ‘wars of excess’.46 One under-analysed aspect of the ontology of war is therefore the way in which the excess it gives rise to is not simply generative of appearances, but in turn forces disappearances. If we complement the generative notion of war’s excess with Baudrillard’s argument that excess is in and of itself a cause of disappearance, we can appreciate that the ontology of war might at times be generative, and at times erase the preconditions for appearance. On one hand it is correct that bodies, experience or materiality frame our understanding of war by generating narratives. On the other it is important to acknowledge that subjectivity disappears through the excess of the processes themselves. Through such an acknowledgement we can see that warfare conditions the possibility of appearance as it ‘always, already’ works as a process of disappearance. Arguably targeting is a prime example of the latter.

Although Baudrillard highlights technology as integral to the effect of war’s disappearance into process, he does not dwell on the exact mechanisms it entails. This is a task that we therefore undertake here. The next part examines the military targeting process as one example of the attempt to create the perfect war. This process creates ‘an iterative logical methodology for development, planning, execution, and assessment of effective- ness’.47 In what follows, we examine how this methodology works to rid war of its underlying principles: subjectivity, antagonism and exchange.

Target Processing and the Disappearance of War

How are we to interpret targeting doctrines? As Josef Teboho Ansorge argues, military doctrine has a particular form of arrangement, which helps to ‘both describe and make the world’.48 Doctrinal text relies heavily on abbreviations and contains an impersonal and administrative language. It is as if the potential for symbolism – for the text to mean more than itself – has been subtracted from the paragraphs in favour of Orwellian ‘new- speak’. We might say that military doctrines not only make a world appear, but also dissolve meaning and are therefore acts of disappearance. We can also read the charts, appendices, images, power-point slides, meeting protocols and organisational routines as part of this disappearance. One amusing example is the well-known and extremely intricate ‘Afghanistan Stability/COIN dynamics’ slide (also called ‘the sprawling spaghetti diagram’) which went viral in 2010.49 This slide was supposed to convey meaning about how to ‘win’ the war in Afghanistan. The flow chart listed pretty much every targetable process relating to irregular warfare as part of this attempt. While it utterly failed to make the conflict meaningful (despite its excess of meaning) it succeeded, by virtue of becoming an overexposed internet joke, to obscure the fact that war-as-fighting, or war as such, had long since disappeared from Afghanistan.

A common conception of targeting processes is that they are related to the operational level of warfare (linking tactical with strategic and political aims). As such they are an integral part of how warfare aims to translate strategic aims into tactical effects (and *vice versa*). Military doctrine represents targeting as the process of selecting and prioritising targets and matching actions in order to achieve strategic objectives.50 The purpose of targeting is therefore to ‘provide the commander with a methodology’ and ‘a logical progression’.51 This is done by virtue of constructing targets, conceptualising them as a system, linking them to outcomes as part of synchronising other parts of military operations, and by creating organisational routines – all with the aim of supporting the ‘battle- rhythm’.52 Technically speaking, a battle-rhythm can be understood as ‘the combination ... of procedures, processes ... and ... actions’ which ‘facilitates extended-continuous operations’.53 Taken to its limit, this implies heeding the tempo of the operational process regardless of human subjectivity (just like the bike-train in Jarry’s novel). In the doctrines, effective targeting is measured by how well it facilitates operational planning and chosen objectives in an area of operations.54 Importantly, it is also measured by how well it enables a particular tempo during operations. Consequently, targeting ideally strives towards maximum efficiency according to the model constructed in operational planning, while agency disappears in the search for a perfect process.

If we look closely at the underlying principles of targeting we notice that they do not emphasise adversaries, exchange or antagonism, but focus on how to perfect the model of warfare. We read in *JP 3-60* that key principles are: coordination and synchronisation, rapid response, a minimal duplication of effort, expeditious assessments of executed operations, a common perspective on targeting efforts, and a full integration of capabilities of the process. This means that targeting provides a cycle to describe how warfare should be conducted.55 This cycle is on the one hand indicative of a methodology of contemporary warfare, and the actualisation of a model that makes war a type of processing ad infinitum. War gets its own (battle) rhythm, which territorialises a space (the area of operations) and the pace of the operation (into current time and future time). This creates a reality-principle which helps us appreciate that the war conducted is a modelled, repeatable war. It is dispersed into an enormous amount of operational meetings, power- points, steering groups and so forth.

On the other hand, we can read targeting as a subtraction of meaning which pulverises subjectivity through attempted perfection. On a symbolic level there is no ‘warrior’ in this warfare. Granted, the doctrines often invoke subjects such as ‘the warfighter’ or ‘the targeteer’ as those who are supposed to decide upon, detect, deliver effects of, and assess the targeting process.56 However, the ‘agent’ here is the medium itself which helps to reduce each aspect of subjectivity into fractal, self-identical molecules which merely mirror functions of the process. This is not to say that individuals are absent from targeting. The nomination and approval of potential targets is a process that involves not only the military but also politicians, lawyers, political advisors, gender advisors and environ- mental advisors, to mention but a few. It also involves a number of boards (such as the Joint Target Coordination Board, Joint Target Working Groups), lists (Target Nomination List, Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List), and support cells (Target Support Cell, Information Operation Cell), all involving complex meeting schedules. Not to mention what the doctrine aptly calls ‘the myriad processes, sub-processes, and cycles associated with joint targeting’.57 Through these, target-processing proclaims to be concerned with means and ends, thus linking tactics to politics and creating a seamless economy of violence. What it really accomplishes is to make subjectivity disappear in the excess of the process itself.

Judith Butler argues in *Frames of War* that:

Surely, common sense tells us that persons wage war, not the instruments they deploy. But what happens if the instruments acquire their own agency, such that persons become extensions of those instruments?... persons use technological instruments, but instruments surely also use persons (position them, endow them with perspective, and establish the trajectory of their action).58

We similarly ask what happens when the process of warfare as such acquires its own momentum, uses persons, and forms and erases subjectivity. In short, what happens when the process becomes not only the means but also the end-point of war? Importantly, if the subject is disappearing in repetitive excess, what happens to the enemy Other?

#### Operationalized war processing accelerates: everything becomes a target destined for annihilation.

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 403-406) \*we don’t endorse ableist language

As *JP 3-60* states no target is critical in and of itself. A target is measured only by how it is part of target-sets, target-systems or matrices.59 However, on a symbolic level, a target is nothing but a ‘target folder’. This folder contains mainly a classification code, a name, coordinates, photograph and information on which weapons are suitable for usage. Since a target in the doctrines is ‘an area, complex, installation, force, equipment, capability, function or behaviour identified for possible action’60 the process subsumes all possible things as targets: subjects, objects, ideas, emotions, networks.61 Therefore, although targeting involves violence it does so not as exchange, or as symbolic appearance, but rather as an inclusion of ‘targetable’ objects. Targets depend on the targeting procedure itself, as it processes objects through meetings, nominations, and documents into the end-point of a spreadsheet. In this sense the target is a result of a medium that erases the very conditions of its appearance and forces it symbolically and literally to disappear as object.

As targets are nominated by a number of organisational sub-components (such as tactical army, navy or air force staff) one integral aspect is to keep up with the pace of operations. Low-ranking commanders typically need to nominate targets in order to keep up with the battle-rhythm. Processing demands an excess of targets (which is also an excess of disappearances), enough so that the medium is saturated, which occurs at meetings when the spreadsheets are full and nothing more can be acted upon. In fact, the doctrines explicitly state that there will always be more targets in an area of operations than it is possible to destroy.62 As Peter Row puts it (with regards to the NATO bombings in Kosovo): ‘[t]he reality of the situation is that those objects which military commanders wished to attack, for whatever reason, were attacked’.63 The milieu of warfare is in this sense very much a derivative of its process as a military methodology. However, the methodology includes all manner of things as targets, and their disappearance has less to do with wishing destruction (as Row claims) and more to do with the way antagonistic exchange is supplanted for the repetition of war as a process.

How are we to understand the temporal aspects of such targeting processes? We have argued that subjects disappear in the ‘battle-rhythm’. If we look closely at the temporal aspects of targeting we find that it involves planned aspects and dynamic-real time aspects.64 What are we to make of this? Planned targeting is strictly speaking taking place from the future. The organisational routine projects a number of days into the future. Operational warfare does not take place merely in real-time but also in future time. In the processing of targets the meetings occur on ‘D+3’ or ‘D+6’. It is one aspect of what we might call operational time, where the present moment is appropriated by the vantage point of a modelled future. In this modelling the possibility of a human encounter in the here-now disappears, since ‘now’ has been pre-planned days earlier. Dynamic (or time-sensitive) targeting on the other hand is war in real-time from an instantaneous present. This process helps to follow and take out targets in real-time as a complement to pre-planned targeting. This is a costly and difficult part of targeting. The doctrines lament that so few targets can be followed in real-time: ‘not all targets can be tracked constantly due to limited resources’.65 This arguably complements an operational time that contains both an appropriated future and an instantaneous present. Finally, both aspects of targeting – pre-planned and dynamic – end up in delivery through a type of (weapon) system. This delivery needs to be extremely high paced – preferably immediate. Former United States Under-Secretary of Defence William Perry sums up this principle: ‘as soon as you can see the target, you can expect to destroy it’.66 And indeed, a missile is absent until it hits the target. It appears only to disappear and to make the world around it disappear in turn.

Thus, the temporal aspect of targeting can be understood as a disappearance of encounters. Operational warfare does not work as an antagonistic exchange between two opposing subjects, at least not from the perspective of the system generating these targeting strategies. Exchange and encounters disappear into the real-time of dynamic targeting and in the future instant of pre-planned targeting. The same happens to the experiences, bodies or narratives introduced as a basis for a different ontology of war. Targeting as a method and as part of war at a distance makes encounters impossible. In this type of predetermined battle-rhythm, where the military duty is to attend and facilitate this process, target nomination becomes repetitive and mandatory. This means that the battle-rhythm works as a ‘processor’ that grinds out targets and applies not so much means to ends, but rather the process itself as an end. It is a kind of war ‘so predicted, programmed, anticipated, prescribed and modelled that it has exhausted all its possibilities before even taking place’.67 Just like Jarry’s five-man machine had to keep pace with the rhythm of the machine, so does the tandem of soldiers need to keep pace with the battle-rhythm in operational planning. The repetitive procedures force a certain reality around war to disappear. This aspect of disappearance is evident in the way targeting involves a particular repetition, which develops target packages, nominates targets, and tasks and weaponeers against those targets.

What happens when we take this logic to its end-point? As we have seen, targeting implies that everything in an ‘area of operations’ is a possible target, and any area is a possible area of operations. Moreover, not all targets are possible to track due to limited resources – but ideally all targets are possible to track at all times. There is no agent left in this procedure, as it is replaced by the momentum of the targeting process itself. Subsequently, a target is not the Other of the pulverised subject or of the targeting process – but a folder corresponding to something which is destroyed as it appears. There will always be more targets than it is possible to destroy. The process aims to pre-plan them all into folders. Ideally they can all be destroyed. In short, symbolically, every subject, object or exchange is potentially gone from the (global) area of operations – lost in the rhythm and scope that appropriates them. When this is achievable in a seamless process – efficient, synchronised, integrated – by virtue of operational modelling, we have reached the perfect war.

#### **The understanding of war as ‘fighting’ allows NATO’s technical perfection of warfare as a process to continue unabated. Vote AFF to pull the chair out from under the policy maker/debater and compel an interrogation of processual warfare.**

Nordin and Öberg 15 (Astrid, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and Dan, Senior Lecturer of War Studies, Department of Military Science, Swedish Defense College, Stockholm, “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard” in Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43 (2): 406-409)

The War that Remains

We have argued to this point that critical war studies, in Clausewitz’s footsteps, is emerging as a field of study that is strongly attached to a particular ontology of ‘war’.

We have also argued, however, that contemporary warfare (particularly in NATO countries) can alternatively be understood, not through the type of ‘war’ their ontology implies (war-as-fighting), but rather through various operational procedures. Our point has been to suggest that there is little or no symbolism left in a warfare which processes targets as spreadsheets, target packages and tasking-orders, through a predetermined rhythm of meetings which leads it, not to a battlefield, but to an administrative model. This model finds its ontology in Baudrillard rather than in Clausewitz. Through military operations we move from war as antagonistic exchange between subjects, to war as technical realisation. The race between targeting process and battle-rhythm resolves subjectivity, the Other and symbolic exchange through the repetition of operational procedures. This is not an example of war-as-fighting, but the enactment of a pre-planned script. This characteristic is by no means exclusive to the targeting process; rather it is indicative of how military planning is conducted in most NATO countries. It is therefore crucial to think of disappearance – enabled and exacerbated by the way warfare is infinitely repeated – as an integral part of thinking about an ontology of war.

However, if target-processing and associated ways of operationalising warfare is making war in the Clausewitzean sense disappear, then why is warfare made to appear as fighting? We are constantly immersed in ‘war’ through television, art, computer games, military recruiting campaigns, and arms industry projects. They call forth ‘war’ as antagonistic and generative exchange. Consider the (simulated) fighting between warriors in the stream of screenings that includes Spartacus, 300, Troy, Braveheart, Apocalypto, or The Last Samurai. Computer games centred on war and politics – *Civilization, Hearts of Iron, Total War* – unfold through the idea that war is a struggle between antagonistic forms of political life. Andreas Behnke argues (correctly in our view) that the Western notion of war has lost its ontological grounding. He reads this as part of a paradox since despite its loss, warfare needs to be aestheticised and legitimised ‘beyond the purely instrumental’.68 The explanation for why this is the case often lies precisely in the way representation helps to reinforce and militarise society, as it justifies a liberal world order.69 Arguably, this explanation eschews the prior question of why the study of war needs to imagine an antagonistic and generative war in the first place. What does the idea that war is antagonistic and generative obscure? Or put more crudely, who gains from reifying war as ‘war’, or war-as-fighting?

As an attempt to answer this we complement the prior explanation by suggesting that recent theories of ‘war’ have underplayed the way in which operational warfare is also, in and of itself, an act of disappearance. In doing so, they over emphasise genesis at the expense of disappearance, and obscure the loss of exchange and subjectivity from the ‘war’ they claim to depict, at the same time as they feed from its reification as such. This ‘war’ allows NATO’s member countries to send out war correspondents in body armour and helmets; to give first person shooters like *Battlefield* enough status as reality; to give movies like Hurt-locker, television dramas like *Generation Kill*, and documentaries like *Armadillo* their necessary ontological back-drop. Moreover, it is there to allow for spending vertiginous amounts of money on recruitment, arms production, government transitions, advertising, aid, education and – last but not least – military operations and target-processing. Crucially, ‘war’ is there to allow the researcher to study war in peace. All of us who feed from this are part of an extreme reification of war – which hides not only that ‘war’ may have ceased to be a meaningful term which structures reality, but also that these renditions of war is the closest we have to ‘war’ as it is described by Clausewitz. The ontology of war debates in which we engage are therefore part of this reification of war.

In this way, the distinction between an act of warfare and the attempt to understand wars’ underlying principles is lost through the notion of war-as-fighting. Every attempt to wage war or think war in its own right (or to oppose or neglect war for that matter) refers back to this loss of meaning and distinction. Understood in this way, the focus of research on the ontology of war or on better understanding ‘war’ as an object (to make it appear as meaningful), also bestows a reality to the attempts to deal with war. The question of whether the notion of war as antagonistic and generative exchange is real is therefore not the issue, as any ontology of war risks this type of reification. Rather, we should ask why it might seem so costly to leave this particular ontology behind. Could it be because the various ways of grappling with war’s ontology are active parts of how this reality remains intact?

Should we (and could we) forget the reality of ‘war’? Moreover, is a world without referents like ‘war’ a world with less violence? No, says Baudrillard, it is not: ‘[t]he immanence of the death of all the great referents ... is expressed by exacerbating the forms of violence and representation that characterized them’.70 This helps us understand why, paradoxically, in an era in which war-as-fighting has disappeared, we all speak about it, analyse it, play it on our computers and experience it through books and films – and why a calling for war studies is a logical step in the disappearance of war- as-fighting. This argument could be directed against other disciplines too – ‘war’ is not a privileged object in any respect. Nonetheless, to call for a renewed discipline of ‘war studies’ – encouraging as it may be, especially to all of us who receive research funding based on the existence of such a discipline – is therefore not without problems. It is not so much a call for an understanding of war as it is a call to supplant the absence of war in International Relations with a particular categorical ~~blindness,~~ since strictly speaking war is never there. Rather, it provides a ‘simulation of perspective’ as Baudrillard would call it.71 The problem is that the organised violence to which we constantly refer has no other reality than that of the model.72 That is, it has no other reality than the reality provided by representations of war (which is not to say that they are one and the same). Through this simulation, war returns as an imperative to thought. It is an explanation or an understanding through a particular category (‘war’) and not of a state of things (actions, reactions, challenges, automatism, repetition, processing). ‘War’ works as an imperative:

‘You’ve got a military and you must learn how to use it well’  
‘You’ve got a weapon-system and you must learn how to operate it’  
‘You’ve got a target and you must learn how to task it’  
‘You’ve got an ontology of war and you must learn how to think through it.’

Conclusion

War is understood in recent debates on critical war studies as characterised by antagonistic and generative exchange. This amounts to a view in which ‘war’ helps provide a context in which acts of violence become meaningful. They receive a pattern, reciprocity and a ‘natural’ demarcation that can be named and criticised. This article has argued that contemporary understandings of war and warfare are well advised to find new ontolog*ies* complementing the notion that war is fighting. We have presented one such attempt, resonating with Baudrillard’s notion of war-processing, based on an analysis of the planning and conduct of military operations (in NATO countries). This attempt outlines how warfare strives towards its own ‘perfect’ and self-referential model. We illustrate this through an analysis of military targeting so as to point to how warfare becomes a reiterative and automated process which constructs a seamless economy of violence. We read targeting as a perpetual motion to keep up with the battle-rhythm of military operations and argue that it rids what is termed ‘war’ of its underlying principles: adversaries, antagonism and exchange.

An understanding of war which neglects this aspect risks missing that war (as processing) strictly speaking lacks an antagonistic engagement with ‘an enemy’ and in so doing calls into question many of the underlying principles that the notion of war- as-fighting rests upon. Doing so leaves the theorist of war and IR with a ~~blind~~ spot: the conception of ‘war’ that has become operational while being obscured by the reification of ‘war’ as fighting. Barkawi and Brighton associate the absence of a discipline of war studies with an ‘othering of violence from inquiry’.74 We again state explicitly, therefore, that we are not advocating the continuation of such othering. To say that war as processing lacks antagonism is not to say that it lacks violence. Warfare is a highly violent practice but it seems to occur amidst a breakdown of symbolic relations between a subject and an Other. This would point to acts of insurgency or terror being ways of acting out, rather than a response as such.75 The ‘perfect war’ we have described is highly violent indeed – but that does not make it ‘fighting’.

This is not to say that war should be reduced to an automated process between man and machine. Rather we want to point out that war-as-fighting neglects the way in which subjectivity, symbolism and exchange are often lacking in military targeting – something which needs to be considered if we are to better understand the relationship between the ontic realty of warfare and the ontology of war. In light of our argument, the ontology of war can be read not only as a way of thinking ‘war’ but also as an imperative to thought. We are aware that this imperative does not work through simple causality. The targeting doctrines we have looked at are not representative of all warfare. A task for future research would be to contrast it to, for example, the way ‘insurgents’ or ‘civilians’ subjected to military violence represent warfare. Another would be to examine disappearance in the wider contexts of counter-insurgency and network-centric warfare.

Nevertheless, there is a risk that (critical) war studies in invoking the ontology of war- as-fighting is led back to an antagonistic and generative exchange between subjects – whether this is actually taking place or not. Attempts to think of politics, ethics, security or gender risk being forced through the mould of this particular ontology of war. Following Baudrillard, an attempt to rethink and complement the ontology of war should challenge it in a way that forces its ‘truth to withdraw – just as if one were pulling the chair out from under someone about to sit down’.76 We therefore need to think war in a way that pulls the chair out from underneath the gamer, policy maker, military officer or theorist about to sit down to ‘do war’. What does this act of ‘pulling the chair’ from underneath thought leave us with? Our hope is that it opens up for the possibility of rethinking ontologies of war in a fashion that helps us better understand and challenge their relationship to various ontic realities. Taking this question seriously gives us a new vantage point on (critical) war studies for future debates.

# Answers/ Links

### Academy

#### Academic activities like policy debate deploy gatekeeping mechanisms and rankings that replicate social stratification. The research methods of policy debate contribute to global militarism by exporting neo-liberal and humanist ideals that seek to render everything transparent.

Hoofd 17, Ingrid M. Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Culture at the Humanities Faculty of Utrecht University, Higher Education and Technological Acceleration - The Disintegration of University Teaching and Research. (180 p.). London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 5-9

So to reiterate, the radical proposition of this book is that the prime mission or ideals of the university—namely those of total emancipation, freedom, and the goals of knowledge accumulation—are precisely what currently produce exceedingly unjust practices ‘outside’ and ‘within’ academia. These unjust practices that it produces on its ‘outside’ concern those of the ongoing social stratification via so-called meritocratic education and those of sociological, computational, and psychological objectification of ever more cultures and groups, while the unjust practices on its ‘inside’ concern those of internal hierarchies, rankings, divisions, gatekeeping mechanisms, and exclusions of all kinds. And because the reproduction of its practices at base involve modern techniques and technologies of knowing, this book suggests that rather than arguing for a return to the supposedly ‘walled’ university, however sympathetic, gaining a better understanding of the intersection of this problematic with especially modern technologies of communication, visibility, or calculation is crucial to really thinking the modern university project differently. The book therefore argues that the central problem of the university today consists of the acceleration of academia’s unfinishable ideals by way of an enmeshment with techniques and technologies of communication, calculation, and prediction. The quest for transcendence through technologically aided omniscience and universal connection—after all, the term ‘university’ comes from the Latin universitas or the ‘totality’ or ‘total community’—has resulted in the quest to render everything and everyone transparent and understandable. As I will discuss more in depth through the work of techno-pundit Paul Virilio, the current university and its new forms of violence are therefore an outflow or intensification of ‘outdated’ humanist ideals and techniques, whose internal contradictions have become usurped and constantly remobilised by neo-liberal capitalism and its machinery of acceleration. We see the auto-immune aspect returning here as well, since that contemporary machinery of the acceleration of omniscience in many of its aspects—one need only to think of early cybernetic research, innovations like the Arpanet, and engineering oriented models of communication as noise cancellation—has again also been carried out at least in large part by universities (disturbingly often with the help of military monies and establishments, about the significance of which more later). In other words, the hopeful academic project of ‘exposing the world and humanity to the light of truth and emancipation,’ together with its damaging ‘evil twins’ of oppressive universalism, social submission, surveillance, and colonialism, has caved in onto themselves and become a near-pervasive technologically ‘exposing-itself’ of a fundamentally Janus-faced academia. This is also to stress that the ways in which academic research has historically been part of Western imperialism should be considered more closely when critically examining the faux-nostalgic calls in many contemporary European universities for a ‘return’ to presumed ‘research autonomy,’ as well as when analysing the kinds of seemingly perverse ‘knowledge-as- capital’ arguments made by contemporary universities in the post-colonies. I will provide divergent examples from the Netherlands and Singapore of such tendencies in Chaps. 2 , 3 , and 4 . In light of the above, this book therefore also wants to discuss the relationship or interaction between academia and modern technology as consisting of a more fundamentally entangled apparatus than most critics of the neo-liberalisation of higher education, who see such technology as merely applied onto academia from the ‘outside’ or as mere tools for use on the ‘inside’ consider it to be. As an example, Ward in Neoliberalism and the Global Restructuring of Knowledge and Education certainly rightly claims that the digital knowledge economy, due to the translation of information into bits and bytes, has forced a quantifi cation of performance indicators in academia, leading to the erasure and transformation of certain kinds of knowledge in the ‘hard’ as well as the ‘soft’ sciences (2012, 126). Especially the humanities, says Ward, with their forms and media of knowledge (like the monograph) that cannot be reduced to sheer numbers, be disaggregated into sellable pieces, or be made to follow the impetus of fast-paced output, suffer from this quantifi cation (2012, 127). While I agree with Ward on this aspect of digitalisation, he does not seem to consider the fact that the origins of these technologies as such, as I mentioned earlier, not only stem from university research, but also that the supposedly empowering qualities of technologies of communication and visualisation have in fact always been part of the university setup from its inception in the late Medieval era and the early Enlightenment in Europe—one may here think, for example, of René Descartes’ mechanistic view of the material world, the crucial importance of inventions like the telescope and microscope, or the ways in which the dissemination of scientific ideas relied on book printing technology. It appears then that the basic imbrication of academia with media technologies is one of a continuous and ever-growing constitutional yet dialectical relationship, in which these technologies eventually turn out to be much more than simply a means through which research and teaching are carried out. Instead, due to their constitutive enmeshment with academia’s auto-immunity, they paradoxically expose themselves as facilitators as well as thwarters of the academic ideal of total knowledge. Rather, the ideal of exposition and omniscience, and the ways it is today carried out through modern datadriven technologies and visual media aids, is, this book argues, itself just as ambiguous and finally ungraspable (as their borders likewise cannot be pinned down) as the nature of academia as such. The book also hopes to demonstrate that in light of this, the central logic of the university today, as a logical yet paradoxical outfl ow of the ambiguity of such techniques of exposition and transparency, currently consists above all in a pervasive ‘stealth’ functionality or unknown quality. This is because especially the cybernetic technologies that constitute the core techniques of teaching and research today, as I will discuss later on in this chapter, fundamentally rely on obscuring their own operations. This in turn segues into the problem that the contemporary university ever more successfully hides its internally oppressive operations in favour of a false image of university ‘objectivity’ and of it ‘being at the forefront’ of knowledge, transparency, emancipation, and truth. This ‘stealth’ functionality is, moreover, intimately connected to the militaristic logic that inhabits contemporary digital technology, whose implications regarding the university this chapter will explore especially via the work of Virilio on science, technology, and vision. Due to this stealth logic of accelerated transparency, a stifling ‘productivist’ principle—a term coined by Jean Baudrillard, about whom more later too, in his The Mirror of Production that seeks to expose a highly ideological idea of the human as an essentially productive or creative agent—reigns in most contemporary universities, relegating everything or anyone that does not comply with this logic as not merely undesirable but also utterly incomprehensible, as some of us in the humanities or theoretical sciences can attest to. It is this situation that logically gives rise to aggravated tensions and schizoid experiences among university staff and students; but it is also this situation that fi nally allows this book to expose its hypocrisy. The irreducible unknown quality of the university, in the form of a sort of libidinal antagonism, then pops up with a vengeance in a time where one would least expect it. Such is the essence of managerialism after all; guided by a principle that resides inside itself, it will only strengthen this principle whenever it wants to banish it more forcefully. Eventually then, the book proposes that the instabilities, inconsistencies, and ambiguities generated through this technological acceleration also present an inappropriable possibility and a promise of a radically alternative future by way of tracing academia’s constitutive contradictions and injustices, which have led to it becoming its own fatality. The book thus wants to make an argument for academic writing and engagement that remains ‘fatally’ speculative, enigmatic, and opaque (perhaps especially in the hard sciences), so as to mount a polemical provocation that remains beyond the tyranny of a total transparency feared by Virilio. This strategy—if one could call it that—seeks to extend Baudrillard’s insistence of mobilising a much more ‘fatal’ radical theory in order to make a structural difference. But before we arrive there, we must first take a closer look at how this humanist aporia expresses itself in those texts that have theorised the transformation of the university in recent decades and that reside arguably closest to the ‘source’ of its crisis: the critical humanities. The value of looking at such critical work in detail, besides these works providing excellent descriptions of recent academic transformations, resides in the fact that they deal with the crises and paradoxes of the university also on the level of their own rhetoric, and thus tend to explicitly display the struggles, tensions, and contradictions at the heart of academic enquiry and writing. The exacerbation of the university’s auto-immunity can therefore, I suggest, be conceptually, geographically, paradigmatically, and historically located in and via these works.

#### Faith in the saving graces of the university papers over the conditions of violence that make this space possible. The only ethical act is scrambling the syntactic codes of the university through semiotic insurrection.

worker 10 (anon UC berkeley student, “The University, Social Death, and the Inside Joke” <https://web.archive.org/web/20160904174024/https://anarchistnews.org/content/university-social-death-and-inside-joke>, 2010, ‘er’)

* there is a little death K hidden in here at the bottom
* university is probably unethical

Universities may serve as progressive sites of inquiry in some cases, yet this does not detract from the great deal of military and corporate research, economic planning and, perhaps most importantly, social conditioning occurring within their walls. Furthermore, they serve as intense machines for the concentration of privilege; each university is increasingly staffed by overworked professors and adjuncts, poorly treated maintenance and service staff. This remains only the top of the pyramid, since a hyper educated, stable society along Western lines can only exist by the intense exploitation of labor and resources in the third world. Students are taught to be oblivious to this fact; liberal seminars only serve to obfuscate the fact that they are themselves complicit in the death and destruction waged on a daily basis. They sing the college fight song and wear hooded sweatshirts (in the case of hip liberal arts colleges, flannel serves the same purpose). As the Berkeley rebels observe, “Social death is our banal acceptance of an institution’s meaning for our own lack of meaning.”[43] Our conception of the social is as the death of everything sociality entails; it is the failure of communication, the refusal of empathy, the abandonment of autonomy. Baudrillard writes that “The cemetery no longer exists because modern cities have entirely taken over their function: they are ghost towns, cities of death. If the great operational metropolis is the final form of an entire culture, then, quite simply, ours is a culture of death.”[44] By attempting to excel in a university setting, we are resigning ourselves to enrolling in what Mark Yudoff so proudly calls a cemetery, a necropolis to rival no other. Yet herein lies the punch line. We are studying in the cemeteries of a nation which has a cultural fetish for things that refuse to stay dead; an absolute fixation with zombies. So perhaps the goal should not be to go “Beyond Zombie Politics” at all. Writes Baudrillard: “The event itself is counter-offensive and comes from a strange source: in every system at its apex, at its point of perfection, it reintroduces negativity and death.”[45] The University, by totalizing itself and perfecting its critiques, has spontaneously generated its own antithesis. Some element of sociality refuses to stay within the discourse of the social, the dead; it becomes undead, radically potent. According to Steven Shaviro’s The Cinematic Body, “zombies mark the dead end or zero degree of capitalism’s logic of endless consumption and ever expanding accumulation, precisely because they embody this logic so literally and to such excess.”[46] In that sense, they are almost identical to the mass, the silent majorities that Baudrillard describe as the ideal form of resistance to the social: “they know that there is no liberation, and that a system is abolished only by pushing it into hyperlogic, by forcing it into excessive practice which is equivalent to a brutal amortization.”[47] Zombies do not constitute a threat at first, they shamble about their environments in an almost comic manner and are easily dispatched by a shotgun blast to the face. Similarly, students emerge from the university in which they have been buried, engaging in random acts of symbolic hyperconsumption and overproduction; perhaps an overly enthusiastic usage of a classroom or cafeteria here and there, or a particularly moving piece of theatrical composition that is easily suppressed. “Disaster is consumed as cheesy spectacle, complete with incompetent reporting, useless information bulletins, and inane attempts at commentary:”[48] Shaviro is talking about Night of the Living Dead, but he might as well be referring to the press coverage of the first California occupations. Other students respond with horror to the encroachment of dissidents: “the living characters are concerned less about the prospect of being killed than they are about being swept away by mimesis – of returning to existence, after death, transformed into zombies themselves.”[49] Liberal student activists fear the incursions the most, as they are in many ways the most invested in the fate of the contemporary university; in many ways their role is similar to that of the survivalists in Night of the Living Dead, or the military officers in Day. Beyond Zombie Politics claims that defenders of the UC system are promoting a “Zombie Politics”; yet this is difficult to fathom. For they are insistent on saving the University, on staying ‘alive’, even when their version of life has been stripped of all that makes life worth living, when it is as good as social death. Shaviro notes that in many scenes in zombie films, our conceptions of protagonist and antagonist are reversed; in many scenes, human survivors act so repugnantly that we celebrate their infection or demise.[50] In reality, “Zombie Politics are something to be championed, because they are the politics of a multitude, an inclusive mass of political subjects, seeking to consume brains. Yet brains must be seen as a metaphor for what Marx calls “the General Intellect”; in his Fragment on Machines, he describes it as “the power of knowledge, objectified.”[51] Students and faculty have been alienated from their labor, and, angry and zombie-like, they seek to destroy the means of their alienation. Yet, for Shaviro, “the hardest thing to acknowledge is that the living dead are not radically Other so much as they serve to awaken a passion for otherness and for vertiginous disidentification that is already latent within our own selves.”[52] In other words, we have a widespread problem with aspiring to be this other, this powerless mass. We seek a clear protagonist, we cannot avoid associating with those we perceive as ‘still alive’. Yet for Baudrillard, this constitutes a fundamental flaw: "at the very core of the 'rationality' of our culture, however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death."[53] In Forget Foucault, we learn the sad reality about biopower: that power itself is fundamentally based on the separation and alienation of death from the reality of our existence. If we are to continue to use this conception, we risk failing to see that our very lives have been turned into a mechanism for perpetuation of social death: the banal simulation of existence. Whereas socialized death is a starting point for Foucault, in Baudrillard and in recent actions from California, we see a return to a reevaluation of society and of death; a possible return to zombie politics. Baudrillard distinguishes himself as a connoisseur of graffiti; in Forget Foucault, he quotes a piece that said “When Jesus arose from the dead, he became a zombie.”[54] Perhaps the reevaluation of zombie politics will serve as the messianic shift that blasts open the gates of hell, the cemetery-university. According to the Berkeley kids, “when we move without return to their tired meaning, to their tired configurations of the material, we are engaging in war.”[55] Baudrillard’s words about semiotic insurrectionaries might suffice: "They blasted their way out however, so as to burst into reality like a scream, an interjection, an anti-discourse, as the waste of all syntatic, poetic and political development, as the smallest radical element that cannot be caught by any organized discourse. Invincible due to their own poverty, they resist every interpretation and every connotation, no longer denoting anyone or anything."[56]

#### [this one is cut for negating so-called “kritikal” affirmatives]

Occupied UC Berkeley 09 (OUCB, anonymous author writing for Anti-Capital projects, “The Necrosocial: Civic Life, Social Death, and the UC”, 2009, ‘er’) \*we don’t endorse ableism

He and his look forward to a reproduction of the logic of representative governance, the release valve of the university plunges us into an abyss where ideas are wisps of ether—that is, meaning is ripped from action. Let’s talk about the fight endlessly, but always only in their managed form**:** to perpetually deliberate, the endless fleshing-out-of—when we push the boundaries of this form they are quick to reconfigure themselves to contain us: the chancellor’s congratulations, the reopening of the libraries, the managed general assembly—there is no fight against the administration here, only its own extension. Each day passes in this way, the administration on the look out to shape student discourse—it happens without pause, we don’t notice nor do we care to. It becomes banal, thoughtless. So much so that we see we are accumulating days: one semester, two, how close to being this or that, how far? This accumulation is our shared history. This accumulation—every once in a while interrupted, violated by a riot, a wild protest, unforgettable fucking, the overwhelming joy of love, life shattering heartbreak—is a muted, but desirous life. A dead but restless and desirous life. The university steals and homogenizes our time yes, our bank accounts also, but it also steals and homogenizes meaning. As much as capital is invested in building a killing apparatus abroad, an incarceration apparatus in California, it is equally invested here in an apparatus for managing social death. Social death is, of course, simply the power source, the generator, of civic life with its talk of reform, responsibility, unity. A ‘life,’ then, which serves merely as the public relations mechanism for death: its garrulous slogans of freedom and democracy designed to obscure the shit and decay in which our feet are planted. Yes, the university is a graveyard, but it is also a factory: a factory of meaning which produces civic life and at the same time produces social death. A factory which produces the illusion that meaning and reality can be separated; which everywhere reproduces the empty reactionary behavior of students based on the values of life (identity), liberty (electoral politics), and happiness (private property). Everywhere the same whimsical ideas of the future. Everywhere democracy. Everywhere discourse to shape our desires and distress in a way acceptable to the electoral state, discourse designed to make our very moments here together into a set of legible and fruitless demands. Totally managed death. A machine for administering death, for the proliferation of technologies of death. As elsewhere, things rule. Dead objects rule. In this sense, it matters little what face one puts on the university—whether Yudof or some other lackey. These are merely the personifications of the rule of the dead, the pools of investments, the buildings, the flows of materials into and out of the physical space of the university—each one the product of some exploitation—which seek to absorb more of our work, more tuition, more energy. The university is a machine which wants to grow, to accumulate, to expand, to absorb more and more of the living into its peculiar and perverse machinery: high-tech research centers, new stadiums and office complexes. And at this critical juncture the only way it can continue to grow is by more intense exploitation, higher tuition, austerity measures for the departments that fail to pass the test of ‘relevancy.’ But the ‘irrelevant’ departments also have their place. With their ‘pure’ motives of knowledge for its own sake, they perpetuate the ~~blind~~ inertia of meaning ostensibly detached from its social context. As the university cultivates its cozy relationship with capital, war and power, these discourses and research programs play their own role, co-opting and containing radical potential. And so we attend lecture after lecture about how ‘discourse’ produces ‘subjects,’ ignoring the most obvious fact that we ourselves are produced by this discourse about discourse which leaves us believing that it is only words which matter, words about words which matter. The university gladly permits the precautionary lectures on biopower; on the production of race and gender; on the reification and the fetishization of commodities. A taste of the poison serves well to inoculate us against any confrontational radicalism. And all the while power weaves the invisible nets which contain and neutralize all thought and action, that bind revolution inside books, lecture halls. There is no need to speak truth to power when power already speaks the truth. The university is a graveyard– así es. The graveyard of liberal good intentions, of meritocracy, opportunity, equality, democracy. Here the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. We graft our flesh, our labor, our debt to the skeletons of this or that social cliché. In seminars and lectures and essays, we pay tribute to the university’s ghosts, the ghosts of all those it has excluded—the immiserated, the incarcerated, the just-plain-fucked. They are summoned forth and banished by a few well-meaning phrases and research programs, given their book titles, their citations. This is our gothic—we are so morbidly aware, we are so practiced at stomaching horror that the horror is thoughtless.

#### Enshrining knowledge in the university serves only to strengthen late-capitalism’s spheres of acceleration and production.

Hoofd 10 (Ingrid, probably would laugh at you if you asked about quals, “Accelerated University: Activist-Academic Alliances and Simulation thought”, <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/accelerated-university-activist-academic-alliances-and-simulation-thought>, 2010)

But far from an ‘a-disciplinary self-constitution’ that supposedly overcomes any fictitious distinction, Investigacció for one relies heavily on the common fictitious distinction between activism and academia to validate their praxis. By contrasting their initiative to the false objectivity of academicism, they validate their own knowledge production by claiming to be in the margins as opposed to the ‘ivory tower’, as if the latter is a stable area from which one can detach oneself from the outside world and hence objectively analyse. Also, one could wonder to what extent one is actually speaking from the margins when one has the time, technologies, spaces and connections to organise an event like Investigacció. The desire to generate knowledge from ‘one’s own subjectivity, without limitations’ (2005: 3) is analogous to the mythical humanist narrative of breaking with and improving upon previous knowledge – a form of knowledge-innovation that the academic institution is also infused with. The university of excellence as well as its doublings into projects like Investigacció are therefore an effect of its repetitions (with a difference) into the neo-liberal mythical space of progress and acceleration. The creation of more and more ‘spaces and mechanisms of production, exchange and collective reflection’ (2005: 3) is indeed precisely what late-capitalism seeks to forge, as long as such reflection generates an intensification of production. The idea that subjectivities from social movements are in any way less produced by neo-liberal globalisation is highly problematic. In fact, such an idea suggests a rather positivist notion of the subject – similar to that supposedly objective academic individual Investigacció seeks to dethrone. Investigacció then somewhat nostalgically narrates a subject untainted by power structures and technologies. In fact, the Investigacció initiative displays how the subject of activist research empowers her- or himself through recreating the fictitious distinction between activism and academia. S/he does so by reproducing this opposition, which in turn co-creates and accelerates these ‘new spaces’ – spaces that were created with the goal of facilitating global capitalism and its speed-elite, and that allow for the perfection of military power through technologies of surveillance. The call for participants to become active and productive in co-organising the international event – of course, without any monetary remuneration – is also much present in Investigacció’s rhetoric. They suggest that participants should engage with one another not only at the meeting, but especially through the online spaces Investigacció has created for the purpose of generating activist research. ‘Take action!’ says their flyer, ‘[...] make it so the conference is yours!’ This seductive appeal to the subject-individual as the centre of creative production is very common to neo-liberal consumerism and its emphasis on cybernetic interactivity. But it is also false in that it gives the participants a sense of control over Investigacció that they actually do not have – eventually, the main organisers (have already) set the agenda and handed out the stakes. In short, the organisers fail to situate themselves by pretending everyone is on the same level of privilege – for example, not requiring monetary compensation – in this project, and this failure is strangely an effect of their attempt at reviving a more democratic academic structure. The non-validity of this collective or consumer-control becomes apparent in terms of the actual meeting and its website. This illusion of control is also apparent in terms of the activist-academic’s general influence on subverting technocratic globalisation; counter to the common notion that the masses dabble in individual escapism, I would argue that many individuals worldwide are in fact more and more politically active. Nonetheless, this activity seems less and less capable of reaching the desired effect of countering or subverting neo-liberal globalisation. This is, as Jean Baudrillard, whom I will discuss shortly, would have it in ‘The Implosion of Meaning in the Media’, because the desire to be politically active is in fact increasingly a function of acceleration under late-capitalism. Political activity in general becomes an important motor behind capitalist circulation, and the new technologies intensify this process with their quality of instantaneity and simulation. Investigacció thus fails to see that their call for activist action and their anti-academic stance implicitly upholds a particular theory of the politically energised subject that also underpins speed-elitism. The arguments from Investigacció that research should be done solely in the service and for the glory of liberatory social movements, in effect puts social movement activism on a pedestal that problematically results in a foreclosure of any critique of complicity of such activism in acceleration. Paradoxically though, it is this temporal foreclosure that allows for such activity – as for a theory of justice – to concern itself with and perform justice as if its praxis was ‘truly liberating’. A particularly vivid example of this strategy of foreclosure is ‘Activist Research’ by a group that calls itself Glocal Research Space. This group emerged out of the Infoespai (Infospace) project in Barcelona, which aims at empowering non-profit organisations and social movements through mass and new media solutions. Glocal Research Space’s name already suggests a problematic conflation of the global and the local, pointing towards an instantaneous connection of certain places and spaces and a technological extension of a specific sort of locality onto the global. The piece mentions that the growing enthusiasm for social mobilisation seems to be accompanied by a strong emergence of activist-research initiatives, in particular in Europe and one of its favourite others, Latin America. While such an insight might inform an analysis of how this emergence appears as a symptom of neo-liberalism, they nonetheless propose that this emergence is proof of a ‘new form of commitment and antagonistic subjectivity’ (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 18). Moreover, they claim that social research should be: Research that pursues the creation of a knowledge that is valued for its practical effectiveness ... as opposed to an objective and contemplative theoretical knowledge in the traditional academic fashion. That is, a knowledge that can then be added ... to social mobilization; a knowledge that generates and maximises action. (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 18, italics mine) The demonisation of contemplation, and the economist urge to ‘maximise action’, sounds eerily close to the speed-elitist discourse of accelerating production by seeking to obliterate any doubt, delay or ‘impractical’ critique that may complicate the opposition between doing and thinking. I would claim that to simply maximise action says nothing about the effects of such action, and the implication that actions are automatically subversive not only repeats the fantasy of the active subject as in control of the outcome of her actions, but also elides any critical reflection on the complicities of such actions. It is noteworthy also that this call for the intensification of activity is created through an opposition to a mythical academic space, again as if that university space is or has ever been purely objective and theoretical. Further on in the piece, Glocal Research Space argues that activist-research should also be ‘nomadic and travelling’ and that it should be conducted as ‘springing from the relation between subject-investigator and subject-investigated [...] without an object’ (2003: 18). They rightly note here that academic objectivity is an illusion. Nonetheless, they go on to validate activist-research through claiming that the people working in these projects are ‘open about their motives and opinions’ (2003: 19) unlike academic researchers. They even flip the narrative of objectivity in favour of activist-research by saying that the latter overcomes academic institutionalisation and hence ‘generates free, public, inclusive and non-discriminatory knowledge for universal use’ (2003: 19). This statement, as well as their previous argument that traditional academic knowledge is ‘objective’, effectively defeats their previous argument that objective knowledge is a fantasy. ‘Activist Research’ shows how the call for justice from Investigacció and Glocal Research Space falls prey to universalising its particularity by discursively repeating the action-thought dialectic and by eventually acting as if it has overcome this aporia by aligning itself to an ontological concept of action. But the justification of action still hinges on the particular humanist dialectic of action and thought. Therefore, their claim unwittingly erases how such activist-research is also always situated and limited to its techno-economic context, meanwhile silencing any type of research or experience that does not fit the humanist point of view. This claim thus makes the (false) idea of objectivity once more the overarching logic of social change. The idea that ‘knowledges generated by social movements’ (2003: 19) can in any way be transparently read as objective truths, as opposed to academic knowledge, not only discards the possibility that academic practice is culturally and historically contingent, but also employs the strategy of writing oneself into the margins as an empowering tool that obscures the privileges that allow such forms of empowerment. It is also interesting that ‘Activist Research’ asks for ‘subject-researchers’ and ‘subject-investigated’ to enter a ‘composition process’ (2003: 18), and even goes so far as to argue that ideally, the researcher is the activist s/he investigates. This suggested confusion of the boundary between researcher and researched appears to complicate the traditional academic scene, though I would argue that the indiscernible entanglement of subject and object is today always already the case. To argue however, as Glocal Research Space does, that subject and object should enter a composition process presupposes that they are initially discreet entities which then requires a sort of nomadic crossing-over. This implies again that the activist-research nexus is a highly productive one. Likewise, the emphasis on nomadism in, for instance, the Spanish Universidad Nómada (Nomadic University) invokes the humanist imperative of this online space of thought, which is really an effect of the imperative of various forms of border-crossing for acceleration – hence the stress on ‘hybridity’ and ‘trans-nationalism’ on its website (Universidad Nómada, 2010). The website also drums up a certain radicality of the Universidad through images of street-activists on its homepage, which is in fact hosted at the American company DreamHost in California. These new dispersed and online ‘spaces of thought’ like Edu-Factory, Facoltà di Fuga, Investigacció, and Glocal Research Space are therefore heavily implicated in the continuous flow of information that neo-liberal capital and its prime tools of colonisation require in their relentless craving for networked overproduction. The rhetoric of overcoming the contemporary constraints of the university from a supposed autonomous location is itself implicated in the duplication of Bill Readings’ ‘university of excellence’ into networked spaces through the myth of independent thought and transparent communication. As Armitage and Derrida suggest, thought indeed appears here as formally subsumed under neo-liberal capital. In other words, thought is limited as well as produced by the current horizon of techno-speed, which is itself grounded in the humanist promise of transcendence and transparency. In light of this, it is also no surprise that contemporary academic obsessions in the humanities and social sciences lie with analysing or locating subversive potential within those projects and peoples, like those who engage in networked activism and alliance, which validate academia’s own conditions of possibility within the hegemony of speed. But clearly, more can and should be said about the concurrent acceleration of capital by means of humanist thought and politics – after all, this article is itself also a symptom of the current university’s neoliberal-humanist mandate that demands that thought be productive. If humanism today has mostly mutated into speed-elitism, then the affirmation of acceleration also promises a change beyond neo-liberalism. To finally raise the stakes of this circular logic of acceleration, it is useful to turn to Jean Baudrillard’s ‘The Implosion of Meaning in the Media’ and ‘The Final Solution’ in The Vital Illusion in which the effects of such a circular logic and its relationship to the rhetoric of transcendence figures prominently. Initially, one could think that Baudrillard’s assessment confirms my analytical suspicion regarding activist-research projects. In ‘The Implosion’, Baudrillard starts from the premise that the increase of information in our media-saturated society results in a loss of meaning because it ‘exhausts itself in the act of staging communication’. New media technologies exacerbate the subject’s fantasy of transparent communication, while increasingly what are communicated are mere copies of the same, a ‘recycling in the negative of the traditional institution’ (Baudrillard, 1994: 80). New technologies are simply the materialisation of that fantasy of communication, and the ‘lure’ (1994: 81) of such a technocratic system resides in the requirement of active political engagement to uphold that fantasy. This translates in a call to subjectivise oneself – to be vocal, participate, and to ‘play the [...] liberating claim of subjecthood’ (1994: 85). The result of the intensifying circular logic of this system, he says, is that meaning not only implodes in the media, but also that the social implodes in the masses – the construction of a ‘hyperreal’ (1994: 81). Contra the claim of Glocal Research Space that such praxes of alliance are ‘without an object’ (Glocal Research Space, 2003: 19), this does not mean that objectification does not take place at all. Instead, and in line with Baudrillard’s argument, the urge to subjectivise oneself and the objectification of the individual go hand in hand under speed-elitism – a double bind that locks the individual firmly into her or his technocratic conditions. Indeed, the argument in ‘Activist Research’ that ‘research [should be] like an effective procedure [which is] in itself already a result’ (2003: 19) describes the conditions of Readings’ ‘university of excellence’ where any research activity, thanks to technological instantaneity, translates immediately into the capitalist result of increased information flow (Readings, 1996: 22). Active subjects and their others become the cybernetic objects of such a system of information flow. The insistence in ‘Activist Research’ on free, travelling and nomadic research simply makes sure that this logic of increased flow is repeated. Because of this desire for increased flow and connection, activist-research projects are paradoxically highly exclusivist in advocating the discourses and tools of the speed-elite. The problem with projects like Edu-Factory or the productive cross-over of activism and academia is therefore not only that their political counter-information means just more information (and loss of meaning) as well as more capitalist production, but that it puts its faith in precisely those technologies and fantasies of control, communication and of ‘being political’ that underlie the current logic of overproduction. It is at this point that John Armitage and Joanne Roberts in ‘Chronotopia’ contend that such a ‘cyclical repetition’ (Armitage and Roberts, 2002: 52) is particularly dangerous because the fantasy of control remains exactly that, a fantasy. At the same time, this increasingly forceful repetition can only eventually give way to ‘the accident’ because chronotopian speed-spaces are fundamentally and exponentially unstable. Armitage and Roberts’ idea of ‘cyclical repetition’ through chronotopianism does thus not mean an exact repetition of the speed-elite’s quest for mastery – instead, I would argue that it is this immanent quality of difference in repetition, of the ‘essential drifting due to [a technology’s] iterative structure cut off from […] consciousness as the authority of the last analysis’ as Derrida calls it in ‘Signature Event Context’ (Derrida, 1982: 316) that allows for the accident or true event to appear. The difference through technologically sped-up repetition appears then perhaps as a potential, but only precisely as a growing potential that cannot be willed – in this sense, it will be an unanticipated event indeed. One could then speak of an intensification of politics in what is perhaps too hastily called the neo-liberal university, opening up unexpected spaces for critique in the face of its neo-liberalisation, which in turn points to the fundamental instability of its enterprise. Activist-research projects add to this intensification by virtue of their techno-acceleration. This intensification of politics is no ground for univocal celebration, since it remains also the hallmark of the neo-liberal mode of production of knowledge through the new tele-technologies as excellent, regardless of its critical content. The current university’s instability mirrors and aggravates the volatility of a capitalism marked by non-sustainability, a growing feminisation of poverty, the rise of a new global upper class, and highly mediated illusions of cybernetic mastery. This nonetheless also opens up new forms of thought, if only appearing as ‘accidents’. Derrida hints at this, but also at the university’s elusiveness, in ‘Mochlos, or: the Conflict of the Faculties’, when he claims that he ‘would almost call [the university] the child of an inseparable couple, metaphysics and technology’ (Derrida, 1993: 5, emphasis mine). Almost, but never quite – here then emerges the possibility of truly subversive change. But this change will not be brought about by the mere content of the critique, but by the way it pushes acceleration to the point of systemic disintegration or implosion. In Fatal Strategies, Baudrillard calls this the ‘fatal strategy’ that contemporary theory must adopt: a sort of conceptual suicide attack which aims at pulling the rug out from under the speed-elitist mobilisation of semiotic oppositions, and which shows the paradox behind any attempt at structural predictions. In ‘The Final Solution’, Baudrillard relates this intensification of the humanist obsession with dialectics, mastery, and transparency – the quest for immortality that is at the basis of techno-scientific research – to destruction and the death drive through the metaphor of and actual research around cloning, which strangely resonates well with Derrida’s investigation of the tele-technological archive in Archive Fever. I read Baudrillard’s ‘Final Solution’ here as a metaphor for the duplication (cloning) of thought into virtual spaces outside the university walls proper. If contemporary research seeks to make human cloning possible, argues Baudrillard, then this endeavour is equivalent to cancer: after all, cancer is simply automatic cloning, a deadly form of multiplication. It is of interest here to note that the possibility of creating an army of clones has likewise garnered much military interest, just as academia today more and more serves military ends. As the logic of cloning as automatic multiplication is typical of all current technological and humanist advancements, the exacerbation of this logic can only mean more promise and death. At this point my argument mirrors the apocalyptic tone of the activist-research projects. In the final analysis, the problem with Edu-Factory, Facoltà di Fuga, Investigacció, Universidad Nómada, Ricercatori Precari, and Glocal Research Space is that these projects entail a very specific form of subjugation with dire consequences for the slower and less techno-genic classes. Techno-scientific progress entails a regress into immortality, epitomised by a nostalgia typical of the current socio-technical situation, for when we were ‘undivided’ (Baudrillard, 2000: 6). I contend that Baudrillard refers not only to the lifeless stage before humans became sexed life forms, but also makes an allusion to psycho-analytic readings of the ‘subject divided in language’ and its nostalgia for wholeness and transparent communication. The desire for immortality, like archive fever, is therefore the same as the Freudian death drive, and we ourselves ultimately become the object of our technologies of scrutiny and nostalgia. The humanist quest of totally transparency of oneself and of the world to oneself that grounds the idea of the modern techno-scientific university, is ultimately an attempt at (self-)destruction, or in any case an attempted destruction of (one’s) radical difference. The urgent political question, which Stiegler problematically avoided in Disorientation, then becomes: which selves are and will become caught up in the delusion of total self-transparency and self-justification, and which selves will be destroyed? And how may we conceive of an ‘ethic of intellectual inquiry or aesthetic contemplation’ that ‘resists the imperatives of speed’, as Jon Cook likewise wonders in ‘The Techno-University and the Future of Knowledge’ (Cook, 1999: 323)? It is of particular importance to note here that the very inception of this question and its possible analysis, like the conception of the speed-elite, is itself again a performative repetition of the grounding myth of the university of independent truth, justice and reason. Therefore, in carrying forward the humanist promise, this analysis is itself bound up in the intensification of the logic of acceleration and destruction, and that is then also equally tenuous. This complicity of thought in the violence of acceleration itself in turn quickens the machine of the humanist promise, and can only manifest itself in the prediction of a coming apocalypse – whether it concerns a narrative of the death of thought and the university, or of a technological acceleration engendering the Freudian death drive. We are then simply the next target in the technological realisation of complete γνωθι σαυτον (know thyself) – or so it seems. Because after all, a clone is never an exact copy, as Baudrillard very well knows; and therefore, the extent to which activist-research projects hopefully invite alterity can thankfully not yet be thought.

#### The move towards authentic radical theory within the cemetery walls of the Western university merely engenders a semiotic fantasy of radicalism paving over very real conditions of violence in order to make this space possible.

www.AnarchistNews.org 10. “The University, Social Death, and the Inside Joke,” <http://anarchistnews.org/content/university-social-death-and-inside->joke

Universities may serve as **progressive sites** of inquiry in some cases, yet this does not detract from the great deal of military and corporate research, economic planning and, perhaps most importantly, **social conditioning occurring within their walls**. Furthermore, they serve as intense **machines for the concentration of privilege**; each university is increasingly staffed by overworked professors and adjuncts, poorly treated maintenance and service staff. This remains only the top of the pyramid, since a hyper educated, stable society along Western lines **can only exist** by the **intense exploitation** of labor and resources in the third world. Students are taught to be **oblivious to this fact**; liberal seminars only serve to obfuscate the fact that they are themselves complicit in the death and destruction waged on a daily basis. They sing the college fight song and wear hooded sweatshirts (in the case of hip liberal arts colleges, flannel serves the same purpose). As the Berkeley rebels observe, “Social death is our **banal acceptance** of an institution’s meaning for **our own lack of meaning**.”[43] Our conception of the social is as the death of everything sociality entails; it is the failure of communication, the refusal of empathy, the abandonment of autonomy. Baudrillard writes that “The cemetery no longer exists because modern cities have entirely taken over their function: they are ghost towns, cities of death. If the great operational metropolis is the final form of an entire culture, then, quite simply, ours is a culture of death.”[44] By attempting to excel in a university setting, we are resigning ourselves to enrolling in what Mark Yudoff so proudly calls a cemetery, **a necropolis to rival no other**. Yet herein lies the punch line. We are studying in the cemeteries of a nation which has a cultural fetish for things that refuse to stay dead; **an absolute fixation with zombies**. So perhaps the goal should not be to go **“Beyond Zombie Politics”** at all. Writes Baudrillard: “The event itself is **counter-offensive** and comes from a strange source: in every system at its apex, at its point of perfection, it **reintroduces negativity and death**.”[45] The University, by totalizing itself and perfecting its critiques, has spontaneously **generated its own antithesis**. Some element of sociality refuses to stay within the discourse of the social, the dead; it **becomes undead**, **radically potent**. According to Steven Shaviro’s The Cinematic Body, “zombies mark the dead end or zero degree of capitalism’s logic of endless consumption and ever expanding accumulation, precisely because they embody this logic so literally and to such excess.”[46] In that sense, they are almost identical to the mass, the silent majorities that Baudrillard describe as the ideal form of resistance to the social: “they know that there is no liberation, and that a system is abolished only by pushing it into hyperlogic, by forcing it into excessive practice which is equivalent to a brutal amortization.”[47] Zombies do not constitute a threat at first, they shamble about their environments in an almost comic manner and are easily dispatched by a shotgun blast to the face. Similarly, students emerge from the university in which they have been buried, engaging in random acts of symbolic hyperconsumption and overproduction; perhaps an overly enthusiastic usage of a classroom or cafeteria here and there, or a particularly moving piece of theatrical composition that is easily suppressed. “Disaster is consumed as cheesy spectacle, complete with incompetent reporting, useless information bulletins, and inane attempts at commentary:”[48] Shaviro is talking about Night of the Living Dead, but he might as well be referring to the press coverage of the first California occupations. Other students respond with horror to the encroachment of dissidents: “the living characters are concerned less about the prospect of being killed than they are about being swept away by mimesis – of returning to existence, after death, transformed into zombies themselves.”[49] Liberal student activists fear the incursions the most, as they are in many ways the most invested in the fate of the contemporary university; in many ways their role is similar to that of the survivalists in Night of the Living Dead, or the military officers in Day. Beyond Zombie Politics claims that defenders of the UC system are promoting a “Zombie Politics”; yet this is difficult to fathom. For they are insistent on saving the University, on **staying ‘alive’**, even when their version of life has been **stripped of all that makes life worth living**, when it is **as good as social death**. Shaviro notes that in many scenes in zombie films, our conceptions of protagonist and antagonist are reversed; in many scenes, human survivors act so repugnantly that we celebrate their infection or demise.[50] In reality, “Zombie Politics are something to be championed, because they are the politics of a multitude, an inclusive mass of political subjects, seeking to consume brains. Yet brains must be seen as a metaphor for what Marx calls “the General Intellect”; in his Fragment on Machines, he describes it as “the power of knowledge, objectified.”[51] Students and faculty have been alienated from their labor, and, angry and zombie-like, they seek to destroy the means of their alienation. Yet, for Shaviro, “the hardest thing to acknowledge is that the living dead are **not radically Other** so much as they **serve to awaken a passion for otherness** and for **vertiginous disidentification** that is already latent within our own selves.”[52] In other words, we have a widespread problem with aspiring to be this other, **this powerless mass**. We seek a **clear protagonist**, we cannot avoid **associating** with those we perceive as ‘still **alive’**. Yet for Baudrillard, this constitutes a fundamental flaw: "at the very core of the 'rationality' of our culture, however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: **the exclusion of the dead and of death.**"[53] In Forget Foucault, we learn the sad reality about biopower: that power itself is fundamentally based on the separation and alienation of death from the reality of our existence. If we are to continue to use this conception, we risk failing to see that **our very lives** have been turned into a **mechanism for perpetuation of social death**: the banal **simulation of existence**. Whereas socialized death is a starting point for Foucault, in Baudrillard and in recent actions from California, we see a return to a reevaluation of society and of death; a possible return to zombie politics. Baudrillard distinguishes himself as a connoisseur of graffiti; in Forget Foucault, he quotes a piece that said “When Jesus **arose from the dead**, he became a **zombie**.”[54] Perhaps the reevaluation of zombie politics will serve as **the messianic shift** that **blasts open the gates of hell**, the **cemetery-university**. According to the Berkeley kids, “when we move without return to their tired meaning, to their tired configurations of the material, we are engaging in war.”[55] Baudrillard’s words about semiotic insurrectionaries might suffice: "They **blasted their way out** however, so as to **burst into reality like a scream**, an interjection, **an anti-discourse**, as the waste of all syntatic, poetic and political development, as **the smallest radical element** that **cannot be caught** by any organized discourse. Invincible due to their own poverty, they **resist every interpretation** and **every connotation**, no longer denoting anyone or anything."[56]

#### Academia de-fangs their radicalism—they preach to the choir and maintain interpassivity

Occupied UC Berkeley 9 (The Necrosocial: Civic Life, Social Death, and the UC; http://anticapitalprojects.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/the-necrosocial/, 11/19)

He and his look forward to a reproduction of the logic of representative governance, the release valve of the university plunges us into an abyss where ideas are wisps of ether—that is, meaning is ripped from action.  Let’s talk about the fight endlessly, but always only in their managed form: to perpetually deliberate, the endless fleshing-out-of—when we push the boundaries of this form they are quick to reconfigure themselves to contain us: the chancellor’s congratulations, the reopening of the libraries, the managed general assembly—there is no fight against the administration here, only its own extension. Each day passes in this way, the administration on the look out to shape student discourse—it happens without pause, we don’t notice nor do we care to. It becomes banal, thoughtless.  So much so that we see we are accumulating days: one semester, two, how close to being this or that, how far?  This accumulation is our shared history.  This accumulation—every once in a while interrupted, violated by a riot, a wild protest, unforgettable fucking, the overwhelming joy of love, life shattering heartbreak—is a muted, but desirous life.  A dead but restless and desirous life. The university steals and homogenizes our time yes, our bank accounts also, but it also steals and homogenizes meaning.  As much as capital is invested in building a killing apparatus abroad, an incarceration apparatus in California, it is equally invested here in an apparatus for managing social death.  Social death is, of course, simply the power source, the generator, of civic life with its talk of reform, responsibility, unity.  A ‘life,’ then, which serves merely as the public relations mechanism for death: its garrulous slogans of freedom and democracy designed to obscure the shit and decay in which our feet are planted. Yes, the university is a graveyard, but it is also a factory: a factory of meaning which produces civic life and at the same time produces social death.  A factory which produces the illusion that meaning and reality can be separated; which everywhere reproduces the empty reactionary behavior of students based on the values of life (identity), liberty (electoral politics), and happiness (private property).  Everywhere the same whimsical ideas of the future. Everywhere democracy. Everywhere discourse to shape our desires and distress in a way acceptable to the electoral state, discourse designed to make our very moments here together into a set of legible and fruitless demands. Totally managed death. A machine for administering death, for the proliferation of technologies of death. As elsewhere, things rule. Dead objects rule. In this sense, it matters little what face one puts on the university—whether Yudof or some other lackey. These are merely the personifications of the rule of the dead, the pools of investments, the buildings, the flows of materials into and out of the physical space of the university—each one the product of some exploitation—which seek to absorb more of our work, more tuition, more energy. The university is a machine which wants to grow, to accumulate, to expand, to absorb more and more of the living into its peculiar and perverse machinery: high-tech research centers, new stadiums and office complexes. And at this critical juncture the only way it can continue to grow is by more intense exploitation, higher tuition, austerity measures for the departments that fail to pass the test of ‘relevancy.’ But the ‘irrelevant’ departments also have their place.  With their ‘pure’ motives of knowledge for its own sake, they perpetuate the blind inertia of meaning ostensibly detached from its social context.  As the university cultivates its cozy relationship with capital, war and power, these discourses and research programs play their own role, co-opting and containing radical potential.  And so we attend lecture after lecture about how ‘discourse’ produces ‘subjects,’ ignoring the most obvious fact that we ourselves are produced by this discourse about discourse which leaves us believing that it is only words which matter, words about words which matter.  The university gladly permits the precautionary lectures on biopower; on the production of race and gender; on the reification and the fetishization of commodities.  A taste of the poison serves well to inoculate us against any confrontational radicalism.  And all the while power weaves the invisible nets which contain and neutralize all thought and action, that bind revolution inside books, lecture halls.

### Anti-Blackness (Kinda-ish?)

#### There is a recrimination DA – the attempt to redeem all history merely re-sutures the coherence of an empowered humanitarian cogito bent on humanitarian salvation. You should keep it on the books and refuse attempts at attonment as these pave the way for neocolonialism wars of human rights for the suffering other even if radical in content – this outweighs and turns their alternative on the level of practice: you *are* what you critique.

Baudrillard 03. Jean Baudrillard, Fragments, 106-111

On the necessity of Evil and Hell There is no longer any irrevocable damnation today. There is no longer any hell. We may concede that we are still within the mongrel concept of Purgatory, but virtually everything falls within the scope of redemption. It is clearly from such an evangelism that all the manifest, promotional signs of well-being and fulfilment derive that are offered us by a paradisaical society subject to the Eleventh Commandment ('Be happy and give all the signs of contentment!') - the one that cancels out all others. But we can also read this demand for salvation and universal atonement in the way that not only all current violence and injustices, but also, retrospectively, all the crimes and contradictory events of the past are now coming in for condemnation. The French Revolution is put in the dock and slavery is condemned, along with original sin and battered wives, the ozone layer and sexual harassment. In short, the pre-trial investigation for the Last Judgement is well under way. We are condemning, then pardoning and whitewashing, our entire history, exterminating the Evil from even the tiniest crevices in order to present the image of a radiant universe, ready to pass into the next world. A gigantic undertaking. One that is inhuman, superhuman, too human? As Stanislaw Lee says, 'We no doubt have too anthropomorphic a view of man.' And why feed this eternal repentance factory, this chain reaction of bad conscience? Because everything has to be saved. This is what we have come to today: everything will be redeemed, the entire past will be rehabilitated, polished to the point of transparency. As for the future, there's even better in store, and even worse: everything will be genetically modified to achieve biological perfection and the democratic perfection of the species. Salvation, which was defined by the equivalence of merit and grace, will, once the abscess of evil and hell has been drained, be defined by the equivalence between genes and performance. Actually, once happiness becomes purely and simply the general equivalent of salvation, there is no further reason for heaven. No heaven without hell, no light without darkness. No one can be saved if no one is damned (by definition, but we also know this intuitively: where would the elect find pleasure, except in the contemplation of God, were it not for the spectacle of the damned and their torment?). And once everyone is virtually saved, no one is. Salvation no longer has any meaning. This is the fate in store for our democratic enterprise: it is vitiated from the outset by the neglect of necessary discrimination, by the omission of evil. We therefore need an irrevocable presence of Evil, an Evil with no possible redemption, a definitive discrimination, a perpetual duality of Heaven and Hell, and even in a way a predestination to Evil, for no destiny can be without some predestination. There is nothing immoral in this. By the rules of the game there is nothing immoral in some losing and others winning, nor even in everyone losing. What would be immoral would be for everyone to win. Now, this is the contemporary ideal of our democracy: that everyone be saved. And this is possible only at the cost of a perpetual upping of the stakes, of endless inflation and speculation, since ultimately happiness is not so much an ideal relationship to the world as a rivalry with, and a victorious relation to, others. And this is good: it means that the hegemony of Good, of the individual state of grace, will always be thwarted by some challenge or passion, and that any kind of happiness, any kind of ecstatic state, can be sacrificed to something more vital, which may be of the order of the will, as Schopenhauer has it, or of power, or of the will to power in Nietzsche's conception, but something which, in any event, is of the order of Evil, of which there is no definition, but which may be summed up as follows: that which, against any happy intended purpose [destination heureuse}, is predestined to come to pass. Beneath its euphoric exaltation, this imperative of optimum performance, of ideal achievement, certainly bears evil and misfortune within it, then, in the form of a profound disavowal of such fine prospects, in the form of a secret, anticipated disillusion ment. Perhaps even this is again just a collective form of sacrifice - a human sacrifice, but a disembodied one, distilled into homeopathic doses. Wherever humans are condemned to total freedom or to ideal fulfilment, this subversion seeps in - this automatic abreaction to their own good and their own happiness. When they are ordered to get the maximum efficiency and pleasure out of themselves, they remain out of sorts and live a split existence. In this strange world, where everything is potentially available (the body, sex, space, money, pleasure) to be taken or rejected en bloc, everything is there; nothing has disappeared physically, but everything has disappeared metaphysically. 'As if by magic or enchantment', you might say. Only the fact is, it is more by disenchantment. Individuals, such as they are, are becoming exactly what they are. With no transcendence and no image, they pursue their lives like a function that is useless in respect of another world, irrelevant even in their own eyes. And they do what they do all the better for the fact that there is no other possibility. No instance, no essence, no personal substance worthy of singular expression. They have sacrificed their lives to their functional existences. They coincide with the exact numerical calculation of their lives and their performances. An existence fulfilled, then, but one at the same time denied, thwarted, disavowed. The culmination of a whole negative counter-transference. This imperative of optimum performance at the same time comes into internal contradiction with the democratic moral law which ordains that everyone be perpetually re-set to equality and everything re-set to zero, on the pretext of democracy and an equal sharing of opportunity and advantage. Given the prospect of salvation for all and universal redemption, no one has the right to distinguish himself, no one has the right to captivate [siduire}. For justice to be done, all privilege must disappear; it is for all to rid themselves voluntarily of any specific qualities, to become once again an elementary particle2 - collective happiness, based on levelling down and repentance, leading to the coming of the lowest common denominator and basic banalities. This is like a reverse potlatch, with everyone outdoing each other in minimalism and victimhood, while fiercely cultivating their tiniest differences and cobbling together their multiple identities. Repentance and recrimination are all part of the same movement: recrimination means going back over the crime to correct its course and effects. This is what we are doing in going back over the whole of our history, over the criminal history of the human race, to do penance here and now as we await the Last Judgement. For God is dead, but his judgement remains. Which explains the immense syndrome of resipiscence and (historical) rewriting (with the future genetic and biological rewriting of the species still to come) that has seized the twentieth century's end; with an eye, as ever, to deserving salvation and - with the prospect of the final accounting before us - to presenting the image of an ideal victim. Naturally, we are not speaking of a real trial or of genuine repentance. It is a matter of fully enjoying the spectacle of one's own misfortune: 'Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order' (Walter Benjamin).3 This is but the latest episode in a heart-rending process of revisionism - running down not just the history of the twentieth century, but all the violent events of past centuries, to subject them to the new jurisdiction of human rights and crimes against humanity (just as every action today is subjected to the jurisdiction of sexual, moral or political harassment). As part of the same trend by which all works of art (including the human genome) are listed as world heritage sites, everything is put on the list of crimes against humanity. The latest episode, then, of this revisionist madness has been the proposal to condemn slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity. An absurd proposal to rectify the past in terms of our Western humanitarian consciousness or, in other words, in terms of our own criteria, in the purest traditions of colonialism. This imperialism of repentance really is the limit! The idea is, in fact, to enable the 'peoples concerned' to put this tragedy behind them thanks to this official condemnation and, once their rights have been restored and they have been recognized and celebrated as victims, to complete their work of mourning and draw a line under this page of their history in order to become full participants in the course of modernity. It might be seen, then, as a kind of successful psychoanalysis. Perhaps the Africans will even be able to translate this moral acknowledgement into damage claims, using the same monstrous measure of equivalence from which the survivors of the Shoah have been able to benefit. So we shall go on compensating, atoning and rehabilitating ad infinitum, and we shall merely have added to raw exploitation the hypocritical absolution of mourning; we shall merely, by compassion, have transformed evil into misfortune. From the standpoint of our recycled humanism, the whole of history is pure crime - and, indeed, without all these crimes there quite simply would be no history: 'If we eliminated the evil in man,' wrote Montaigne, 'we would destroy the fundamental conditions of life.' But, on this basis, Cain killing Abel is already a crime against humanity - and almost a genocide (there were only two of them!), and isn't original sin already a crime against humanity? All this is absurd, all this humanitarian, retrospective fakery is absurd. And it all stems from the confusion between evil and misfortune. Evil is the world as it is and as it has been, and one may look upon this with lucidity. Misfortune is the world as it never should have been - but in the name of what? - in the name of what should be, in the name of God or a transcendent ideal, of a Good it would be difficult indeed to define. We may take a criminal view of crime - that is the tragic view - or we may take a recriminatory view - and that is the humanitarian view, the pathos-laden, sentimental view, the view which constantly calls for reparation. We have here all the ressentiment dredged up from the depths of a genealogy of morals, and requiring in us reparation for our own lives. This retrospective compassion, this conversion of evil into misfortune is the twentieth century's most flourishing industry. First as a mental blackmailing operation, to which we all fall victim, even in our actions, from which we can now hope only for the lesser evil (keep a low profile, do everything in such a way as anyone else could have done it - decriminalize your existence!). Then as a profitable operation with gigantic yields, since misfortune (in all its forms: from suffering to insecurity, oppression to depression) represents a symbolic capital, the exploitation of which - even more than the exploitation of happiness - is endlessly profitable from the economic standpoint. It's a gold-mine, as they say, and there is an inexhaustible source of ore, because the seam lies within each of us. Misfortune commands the highest prices, whereas evil cannot be traded. It is impossible to exchange. To transcribe evil into misfortune and then to transcribe misfortune into commercial, or spectacular, value - most often with the collusion or assent of the victim himself. But the victim's collusion with his own misfortune is part of the ironic essence of Evil. It is what brings it about that no one wants his own good, and nothing is for the best in the best of all worlds

#### Commodification – Only our AFF’s deconstruction of difference fetishism on the level of language avoids re-absorption.

hooks 99. bell hooks, famous author, social activist, and black feminist, currently Distinguished Professor in Residence at Barea College, “Eating the Other” in Black Looks: Race and Representation, South End Press, 1999: 21

This is theory’s acute dilemma: that desire expresses itself most fully where only those absorbed in its delights and torments are present, that it triumphs most completely over other human preoccupations in places sheltered from view. Thus it is paradoxically in hiding that the secrets of desire come to light, that hegemonic impositions and their reversals, evasions, and subversions are at their most honest and active, and that the identities and disjunctures between felt passion and established culture place themselves on most vivid display. – Joan Cocks, The Oppositional Imagination Within current debates about race and difference, mass culture is the contemporary location that both publicly declares and perpetuates the idea that there is pleasure to be found in the acknowledgment and enjoyment of racial difference. The commodiﬁcation of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture. Cultural taboos around sexuality and desire are transgressed and made explicit as the media bombards folks with a message of difference no longer based on the white supremacist assumption that “blondes have more fun.” The “real fun” is to be had by bringing to the surface all those “nasty” unconscious fantasies and longings about contact with the Other embedded in the secret (not so secret) deep structure of white supremacy. In many ways it is a contemporary revival of interest in the “primitive,” with a distinctly postmodern slant. As Marianna Torgovnick argues inGone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives: What is clear now is that the West’s fascination with the primitive has to do with its own crises in identity, with its own need to clearly demarcate subject and object even while ﬂirting with other ways of experiencing the universe. Certainly from the standpoint of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, the hope is that desires for the “primitive” or fantasies about the Other can be continually exploited, and that such exploitation will occur in a manner that reinscribes and maintains the status quo. Whether or not desire for contact with the Other, for connection rooted in the longing for pleasure, can act as a critical intervention challenging and subverting racist domination, inviting and enabling critical resistance, is an unrealized political possibility. Exploring how desire for the Other is expressed, manipulated, and transformed by encounters with difference and the different is a critical terrain that can indicate whether these potentially revolutionary longings are ever fulfilled. Contemporary working-class British slang playfully converges the discourse of desire, sexuality, and the Other, evoking the phrase getting “a bit of the Other” as a way to speak about sexual encounter. Fucking is the Other. Displacing the notion of Otherness from race, ethnicity, skin-color, the body emerges as a site of contestation where sexuality is the metaphoric Other that threatens to take over, consume, transform via the experience of pleasure. Desired and sought after, sexual pleasure alters the consenting subject, deconstructing notions of will, control, coercive domination. Commodity culture in the United States exploits conventional thinking about race, gender, and sexual desire by “working” both the idea that racial difference marks one as Other and the assumption that sexual agency expressed within the context of racialized sexual encounter is a conversion experience that alters one’s place and participation in contemporary cultural politics. The seductive promise of this encounter is that it will counter the terrorizing force of the status quo that makes identity ﬁxed, static, a condition of containment and death. And that it is this willingness to transgress racial boundaries within the realm of the sexual that eradicates the fear that one must always conform to the norm to remain “safe.” Difference can seduce precisely because the mainstream imposition of sameness is a provocation that terrorizes. And as Jean Baudrillard suggests in Fatal Strategies: Provocation – unlike seduction, which allows things to come into play and appear in secret, dual and ambiguous – does not leave you free to be; it calls on you to reveal yourself as you are. It is always blackmail by identity (and thus a symbolic murder, since you are never that, except precisely by being condemned to it).

#### Semiotic Mediation DA – Their focus on the damaged black body to be rehabilitated ignores that beyond Fanon’s ‘Look a Black’ towards ‘Look, I Overcame’ wherein narratives of oppressed overcoming function as semiotic capital to grease the wheels of racial neoliberalism.

James 15. Robin James, professor of philosophy at UNC Charlotte, Resilience & Melancholy: Pop Music, Feminism, Neoliberalism, Zero Books, 2015: 88

Resilience must be performed explicitly, legibly, and spectacularly. Overcoming is necessary, but insufficient; to count and function as resilience, this overcoming must be accomplished in a visible or otherwise legible and consumable manner. Overcoming is a type of "affective labor" which, as Steven Shaviro puts it, "is productive only to the extent that it is a public performance, it cannot unfold in the hidden depths; it must be visible and audible" (PCA 49n33). In order to tune into feminine resilience and feed it back into its power supply, MRWaSP has to perceive it as such. "Look, I Overcame!" is the resilient subject's maxim or mantra. Gender and race have always been "visible identities," to use philosopher Linda Martin Alcoff's term, identities strongly tied to one's outward physical appearance. However, gendered/ racialized resilience isn't visible in the same way that conventional gender and racial identities are visible. To clarify these differences, it's helpful to think of resilience in terms of a "Look, I Overcame!" imperative. "Look, I Overcame!" is easy to juxtapose to Frantz Fanon's "Look, a Negro!", which is the touchstone for his analysis of gendered racialization in "The Fact of Blackness." In both cases, looking is a means of crafting race/gender identities and distributing white patriarchal privilege. But, in the same way that resilience discourse "upgrades" traditional methods for crafting identities and distributing privilege, the "looking" in "Look, I Overcame!" is an upgrade on the "looking" in "Look, a Negro!" According to Fanon, the exclamation "Look, a Negro!" racializes him as a black man. To be "a Negro" is to be objectified by the white supremacist gaze. This gaze fixes him as an object, rather than an ambiguous transcendence (which is a more nuanced way of describing the existentialist concept of subjectivity). "The black man," as Fanon argues, "has no ontological resistance for the white man" (BSWM 110) because, as an object and not a mutually-recognized subject, he cannot return the white man's gaze ("The Look" that is so important to Sartre's theory of subjectivity in Being & Nothingness). The LIO narrative differs from Fanon's account in the same way it differs from Iris Young's account of feminine body comportment: in resilience discourse, objectification isn't an end but a means. Any impediment posed by the damage wrought by the white/male gaze is a necessary prerequisite for subjectivity, agency, and mutual recognition. In other words, being looked at isn't an impediment, but a resource. Resilience discourse turns objectification (being looked at) into a means of subjectification (overcoming). It also makes looking even more efficient and profitable than simple objectification could ever be. Recognizing and affirming the affective labor of the resilient performer, the spectator feeds the performer's individual overcoming into a second-order therapeutic narrative: our approbation of her overcoming is evidence of our own overcoming of our past prejudices. This spectator wants to be seen by a wider audience as someone who answers the resilient feminine subject's hail, "Look, I Overcame!". Just as individual feminine subjects use their resilience as proof of their own goodness, MRWaSP uses the resilience of its "good girls" as proof that they're the "good guys"—that its social and ethical practices are truly just, and that we really mean it this time when we say everyone is equal. For example, the "resilience" of "our" women is often contrasted with the supposed "fragility" of Third-World women of color. Or, in domestic US race-gender politics, the resilience of some African-American women (their bootstraps-style class ascendance) is contrasted to the continued fragility of other African-American women, and thus used to reinforce class distinctions among blacks. There are a million different versions of this general story: "our" women are already liberated—they saved themselves—but, to riff on Gayatri Spivak, "brown women need saving from brown men." Most mainstream conversations about Third-World women are versions of this story: discussions of "Muslim" veiling, female circumcision, sweatshops, poverty, "development," they're all white-saviorist narratives meant to display MRWaSP's own resilience. Look, I Overcame!" upgrades "Look, a Negro!" by (a) recycling objectification into overcoming .and (b) compounding looking, so that one can profit from others' resilience, treating their overcoming as one's own overcoming. This upgrade in white supremacist patriarchy requires a concomitant upgrade in "looking." This shift in looking practices parallels developments in film and media aesthetics. As Steven Shaviro has argued, the values, techniques, and compositional strategies most common in contemporary mainstream Western cinema—like Michael Bay's Transformers—are significantly different than the ones used in modernist and post-modernist cinema, and that these differences in media production correlate to broader shifts in the means of capitalist and ideological production. Neoliberalism's aesthetic is, he argues, "post-cinematic." This post-cinematic aesthetic applies not just to film and media, but to resilience discourse. Its performance practices and looking relations configured by the "Look, I Overcame!" imperative, resilience is, in a way, another type of post-cinematic medium. In the next section I use Shaviro's theory of post-cinematic media to identify some specific ways in which traditional patriarchal tools are updated to work compatibly with MRWaSP resilience discourse. The looking in the "Look, I Overcame!" narrative is not the same kind of looking described by concepts like "the male gaze" or "controlling images." This looking is a type of deregulated MRWaSP visualization.

#### Participation DA – The FORM of their argument – its objective diagnosis, penchant for positivist historical analysis, its will to truth – guarantees that they legitimate policy debate as an allegedly radical safety valve for the insulation of the liberal civil society they criticize. They maintain the semiotic fantasy of liberation in this activity while alienating the very real material exploitation necessary to make this space possible.

Galloway 07. Alexander Galloway, professor of media, culture, and communication at New York University, Radical Illusion (A Game Against), Games and Culture 2:4, pg. 385

There exist causes from whose nature some effect does not follow. There exist causes that preempt their own effects from coming to be. In an early text from 1969, “Play and the Police,” Baudrillard (2001a) speaks of a “principle of separation.” This principle is how he rethinks repression not through the notions of negation, aggression, or vital forces being blocked but through the concepts of ambiance, integration, and participation. The “unity of desire” is broken, he suggests, into a never ending series of private-sphere negotiations. The question becomes Am I liberated? not Are we? “The separative cause, which bursts through the unity of desire and establishes human activity across several zones . . . is most effective at neutralizing energies” (Baudrillard, 2001a, pp. 18-19). Thus, in what Deleuze would describe later as the distinction between discipline and control, Baudrillard here posits a model of repression through expression, a stunting of the drives through the very facilitation of those drives into new control spaces. A new ambiance permeates the social field. The masses are not repressed, no never, they are allowed to dream! With reference to Marcuse’s concept of “repressive desublimation,” Baudrillard (2001a) calls this “the repression of desire . . . through the emancipation of needs” (p. 20). Again, “they did it, but we wanted it.” The separative cause reveals how ideology and reification operate under neoliberalism. Summarize it like this: Exploitation is material, liberation is semiotic. The material is the realm of political failure; the social is the realm of utopian compromise. In Baudrillard, the principle of separation is the principle by which the two are segregated and divided into two distinct domains, the one to play the fool for the other. The separative cause has two steps. To achieve some semblance of pedagogical coherence, I will telescope them into a cause-and-effect narrative, but to be precise, Step 1 and Step 2 both happened at the same time. In Step 1, the given phenomenon, which exists primordially as an undivided prob- lematic containing both progressive and reactionary political impulses, is first separated into (a) a material modality and (b) a social modality. For example, with global warming, there is the material modality of carbon dioxide emissions, automobiles and roads, the oil industry, and so on, while at the same time there is the symbolic social modality of desiring clean air, “thinking green,” and the so-called awareness campaigns. The principle of separation occasions the phenomenon first through an alliance formed between the progressive political impulse and the domain of the social or public sphere. A progressive moral horizon of significant magnitude invests itself in the social sphere. This moral plane develops its own independent logic and will likely experience a flourishing cycle of achievement and resolution but always within the “symbolic” realm of the social or public sphere. From time to time, small material changes may be incorporated into the logic of moral resolution but only those minor enough not to impinge upon the superiority of the social. In Step 2, the progressive political impulse is negated and as negation finds its home in the domain of the material. Thus a reactionary political project blossoms within the realm of the physical world. This project realizes its ends, developing the necessary mechanisms and infrastructures required to continue and grow. In Baudrillard, the separative cause is this overall structure. What the separative cause occasions, or “makes present,” is the ability for both gratuitous exploitation and a heightened moral instinct to coexist within the same universe. It is perhaps seen best in Baudrillard’s controversial critique of sexual liberation in Part 1 of Seduction. A structure of both liberation and deferral, of dazzlement and insight, of both ignorance and realization, of both expression and silence—all sides unify together but only at the cost of a complete and incontrovertible segregation between the symbolic and the material. The progressive stance of the one allows for the reactionary stance of the other. The end result is the current state of affairs: an oil company that is nevertheless “green,” a world bathed in blood but devoted to peace, a global consumer product that is still tagged “fair trade.” The separative cause occasions. But it occasions a “presence,” a presence that must be crossed out or held in suspension with quotation marks. The presence occasioned by the separative cause is in fact an abatement of presence, a lessening of being. What it makes present is a structure of suspension. A “subject” is the name given to those entities able to flourish within such a structure of suspension. As Baudrillard was able to see, most all phenomena in contemporary life are occasioned through this “separative cause” or principle of separation. The environmental movement is a perfect example. In today’s world, it is structurally impractical if not outright impossible to be an environmentalist in any true sense. Imagine: An activist drives to a rally against global warming. The contradiction is clear. His actual spiritual liberation is undercut by the tailpipe fumes of his own expression. His intentions are good, but there is a physical base—that depraved automobile contraption—that creates conditions of impossibility that are symbolically if not practically insurmountable. Of course, many today refuse to participate in the global system of environmental exploita- tion by casting off all worldly possessions. But this comes at the cost of complete withdrawal from the world system, a price too high to pay for most. Like the computer at the heart of today’s planetary organization, the costs are thus binary in that they offer an all-or-nothing option, but only an “option” insofar as the nothing is reified into material reality and the all spins on into oblivion. This is how the separative cause operates. Other examples include the curious and no doubt tense axis of inaction forged between the United Nations and American foreign policy after the new millennium on issues such as Darfur peace: the symbolic assertion on the side of the United States that, in no uncertain terms, “this is genocide,” flanked only by a negation of that same claim in abandonment and blindness within the realm of real material commitment. Or consider the structural adjustment agreements of the International Monetary Fund, which travel on wings of hope to the so-called backward economies of the globe but carry enclosed the harshest austerity measures, leaving the infected country with a curse of legalized deterritorialization and fiscal and cultural subjugation for decades to come. Exploitation is material, liberation is semiotic. This is how the separative cause occasions, or brings to presence, certain phenomena in today’s global kingdom. The democratization of Iraq is realizable only through subjugation; clean air is realizable only through a futures market in “pollution credits”—and around and around. Might this separative cause be also known by a synonym twin, “civilization”? In Baudrillard, the term was simply the real. It occasions real human worlds by allowing them to come to be.

#### Use of suffering to advance a political agenda objectifies the oppressed and is a prophylactic preventing action

**Berlant 98** (Lauren – George M. Pullman Distinguished Service Professor of English at the University of Chicago, Ph.D. from Cornell University, “Poor Eliza,” in American Literature, Volume 70, Number 3, p. 635-668, <http://www2.law.columbia.edu/faculty_franke/Gay_Marriage/Poor%20Eliza.pdf>)

What distinguishes these critical texts are the startling ways they struggle to encounter the Uncle Tom form without reproducing it, declining to pay the inheritance tax. The postsentimental does not involve an aesthetic disruption to the contract sentimentality makes between its texts and readers -that proper reading will lead to better feeling and therefore to a better self. What changes is the place of repetition in this contract, a crisis frequently thematized in formal aesthetic and generational terms. In its traditional and political modalities, the sentimental promises that in a just world a consensus will already exist about what constitutes uplift, amelioration, and emancipation, those horizons toward which empathy powerfully directs itself. Identification with suffering, the ethical response to the sentimental plot, leads to its repetition in the audience and thus to a generally held view about what transformations would bring the good life into being. This presumption, that the terms of consent are transhistorical once true feeling is shared, explains in part why emotions, especially painful ones, are so central to the world-building aspects of sentimental alliance. Postsentimental texts withdraw from the contract that presumes consent to the conventionally desired outcomes of identification and empathy. The desire for unconflictedness might very well motivate the sacrifice of surprising ideas to the norms of the world against which this rhetoric is being deployed. What, if anything, then, can be built from the very different knowledge/experience of subaltern pain? What can memory do to create conditions for freedom and justice without reconfirming the terms of ordinary subordination? More than a critique of feeling as such, the postsentimental modality also challenges what literature and storytelling have come to stand for in the creation of sentimental national subjects across an almost two-century span. Three moments in this genealogy, which differ as much from each other as from the credulous citation of Uncle Tom's Cabin we saw in The King and I and Dimples, will mark here some potential within the arsenal that counters the repetition compulsions of sentimentality. This essay began with a famous passage from James Baldwin's "Everybody's Protest Novel," a much-cited essay about Uncle Tom's Cabin that is rarely read in the strong sense because its powerful language of rageful truth-telling would shame in advance any desire to make claims for the tactical efficacy of suffering and mourning in the struggle to transform the United States into a postracist nation. I cited Baldwin's text to open this piece not to endorse its absolute truth but to figure its frustrated opposition to the sentimental optimism that equates the formal achievement of empathy on a mass scale with the general project of democracy. Baldwin's special contribution to what sentimentality can mean has been lost in the social-problem machinery of mass society, in which the production of tears where anger or nothing might have been became more urgent with the coming to cultural dominance of the Holocaust and trauma as models for having and remembering collective social experience.20 Currently, as in traditional sentimentality, the authenticity of overwhelming pain that can be textually performed and shared is disseminated as a prophylactic against the reproduction of a shocking and numbing mass violence. Baldwin asserts that the overvaluation of such redemptive feeling is precisely a condition of that violence**.** Baldwin's encounter with Stowe in this essay comes amidst a general wave of protest novels, social-problem films, and film noir in the U.S. after World War Two: Gentleman's Agreement, The Postman Always Rings Twice, The Best Years of Our Lives. Films like these, he says, "emerge for what they are: a mirror of our confusion, dishonesty, panic, trapped and immobilized in the sunlit prison of the American dream." They cut the complexity of human motives and self-understanding "down to size" by preferring "a lie more palatable than the truth" about the social and material effects the liberal pedagogy of optimism has, or doesn't have, on "man's" capacity to produce a world of authentic truth, justice, and freedom.21 Indeed, "truth" is the keyword for Baldwin. He defines it as "a devotion to the human being, his freedom and fulfillment: freedom which cannot be legislated, fulfillment which cannot be charted."22 In contrast, Stowe's totalitarian religiosity, her insistence that subjects "bargain" for heavenly redemption with their own physical and spiritual mortification, merely and violently confirms the fundamental abjection of all persons, especially the black ones who wear the dark night of the soul out where all can see it. Additionally, Baldwin argues that Uncle Tom's Cabin instantiates a tradition of locating the destiny of the nation in a false model of the individual soul, one imagined as free of ambivalence, aggression, or contradiction. By "human being" Baldwin means to repudiate stock identities as such, arguing that their stark simplicity confirms the very fantasies and institutions against which the sentimental is ostensibly being mobilized. This national-liberal refusal of complexity is what he elsewhere calls "the price of the ticket" for membership in the American dream.23 As the Uncle Tom films suggest, whites need blacks to "dance" for them so that they might continue disavowing the costs or ghosts of whiteness, which involve religious traditions of self-loathing and cultural traditions confusing happiness with analgesia. The conventional reading of "Everybody's Protest Novel" sees it as a violent rejection of the sentimental.24 It is associated with the feminine (Little Women), with hollow and dishonest capacities of feeling, with an aversion to the real pain that real experience brings. "Causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty," he writes.25 The politico-sentimental novel uses suffering vampirically to simplify the subject, thereby making the injunction to empathy safe for the subject. Of course there is more to the story. Baldwin bewails the senti- mentality of Richard Wright's Native Son because Bigger Thomas is not the homeopathic Other to Uncle Tom after all, but one of his "children," the heir to his negative legacy.26 Both Tom and Thomas live in a simple relation to violence and die knowing only slightly more than they did before they were sacrificed to a white ideal of the soul's simple purity, its emptiness. This addiction to the formula of redemption through violent simplification persists with a "terrible power": it confirms that U.S. minorities are constituted as Others even to themselves through attachment to the most hateful, objectified, cartoon-like versions of their identities, and that the shamed subcultures of America really are, in some way, fully expressed by the overpresence of the stereotypical image.

#### Libidinal explanations of racism are wrong – they confuse habit with instinct

Hudis 15 (Peter Hudis – Professor of English and History @ Queens College, 2015, “Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades,” Pg. 35-37)

Fanon’s vantage point upon the world is his situated experience. He is trying to understand the inner psychic life of racism, not provide an account of the structure of human existence as a whole. Racism is not, of course, an integral part of the human psyche; it is a Social construct that has a psychic impact. Any effort to comprehend social distress that accompanies racism by reference to some a priori structure- be it the Oedipal Complex or the Collective Unconscious- is doomed to failure. Carl Jung sought to deepen and go beyond Freud's approach by arguing that the subconscious is grounded in a universal layer of the psyche- which he called "the collective unconscious:' This refers to inherited patterns of thought that exist in all human minds, regardless of specific culture or upbringing, and which manifest themselves in dreams, fairy tales, and myths. Jung referred to these universal patterns as "archetypes:' It may seem, on a superficial reading, that 1 Fanon is drawing from Jung, since he discusses how white people tend to unconsciously assimilate views of blacks that are based on negative stereotypes. Even the most "progressive" white tends to think of blacks a certain way (such as "emotional;' "physical," or / "aggressive"), even as they disavow any racist animus on their part. However, Fanon denies that such collective delusions are part of a psychic structure; they are not permanent features of the mind. They are habits acquired from a series of social and cultural impositions. While they constitute a kind a collective unconscious on the part of many white people, they are not grounded in any universal "archetype." The unconscious prejudices of whites do not derive from genes or nature, nor do they derive from some form independent of culture or upbringing. Fanon contends that Jung "confuses habit with instinct." Fanon objects to Jung's "collective unconscious" for the same reason that he rejects the notion of a black ontology. His phenomenological approach brackets out ontological claims on both a social and psychological level insofar as the examination of race and racism is concerned. He writes, "Neither Freud nor Adler nor even the cosmic Jung took the black man into consideration in the course of his research.” This does not mean that Fanon rejects their contributions tout court. He does not deny the existence of the unconscious. He only denies that the inferiority complex of blacks operates on an unconscious level. He does not reject the Oedipal Complex. He only denies that it explains (especially in the West Indies) the proclivity of the black "slave" to mimic the values of the white "master." And as seen from his positive remarks on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, he does not reject the idea of psychic structure. He only denies that it can substitute for an historical understanding of the origin of neuroses .23 Fanon adopts a socio-genetic approach to a study of the psyche because that is what is adequate for the object of his analysis. For Fanon, it is the relationship between the socio-economic and psychological that is of critical import. He makes it clear, insofar as the subject matter of his study is concerned, that the socio-economic is first of all responsible for affective disorders: "First, economic. Then, internalization or rather epidermalization of this inferiority."24 Fanon never misses an opportunity to remind us that racism owes its origin to specific economic relations of domination- such as slavery, colonialism, and the effort to coopt sections of the working class into serving the needs of capital. It is hard to mistake the Marxist influence here. It does not follow, however, that what comes first in the order of time has conceptual or strategic priority. The inferiority complex is originally born from economic subjugation, but it takes on a life of its own and expresses itself in terms that surpass the economic. Both sides of the problem-the socio-economic and psychological-must be combatted in tandem: "The black man must wage the struggle on two levels; whereas historically these levels are mutually dependent, any unilateral liberation is flawed, and the worst mistake would be to believe their mutual dependence automatic:''5 On these grounds he argues that the problem of racism cannot be solved on a psychological level. It is not an "individual" problem; it is a social one. But neither can it be solved on a social level that ores the psychological. It is small wonder that although his name never appears in the book, Fanon was enamored of the work of Wilhelm Reich. This important Freudian-Marxist would no doubt feel affinity with Fanon's comment, "Genuine disalienation will have been achieved only when things, in the most materialist sense, have resumed their rightful place:'27

#### Reducing black people to fungible bodies and reading their experiences through pain creates the worst form of depoliticization – not only do they disregard black agency and resistance, they further perpetuate a narrative of white domination

**Kelley 16,** Robin D.G. Kelley is one of the most distinguished experts on African American studies and a celebrated professor who has lectured at some of America’s highest learning institutions. He is currently Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. 3/22/16, “Black Study, Black Struggle,” <http://www.blackagendareport.com/black_study_black_struggle>,

Second only to a desire for increased diversity, better mental health services were a chief priority for student protesters. Activists framed their concerns and grievances in the language of personal trauma. We shouldn’t be surprised. While every generation of black Americans has experienced unrelenting violence, this is the first one compelled to witness virtually all of it, to endure the snuffing out of black lives in real time, looped over and over again, until the next murder knocks it off the news. **We are also talking about a generation that has lived through two of the longest wars in U.S. history, raised on a culture of spectacle where horrific acts of violence are readily available** on their smartphones. What Henry **Giroux insightfully identifies as an addiction does nothing to inure or desensitize young people to violence**. On the contrary, it anchors violence in their collective consciousness, produces fear and paranoia – wrapped elegantly in thrill – and shrouds the many ways capitalism, militarism, and racism are killing black and brown people. So **one can easily see why the language of trauma might appeal to black students. Trauma is real; it is no joke**. Mental health services and counseling are urgently needed. **But reading black experience through trauma can easily slip into thinking of ourselves as victims and objects rather than agents, subjected to centuries of gratuitous violence that have structured and overdetermined our very being**. In the argot of our day, “**bodies” – vulnerable and threatening bodies – increasingly stand in for actual people with names, experiences, dreams, and desires**. I suspect that the popularity of Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Between the World and Me (2015), especially among black college students, rests on his singular emphasis on fear, trauma, and the black body. He writes: “In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body—it is heritage. Enslavement was not merely the antiseptic borrowing of labor—it is not so easy to get a human being to commit their body against its own elemental interest. And so enslavement must be casual wrath and random manglings, the gashing of heads and brains blown out over the river as the body seeks to escape. It must be rape so regular as to be industrial. . . . The spirit and soul are the body and brain, which are destructible—that is precisely why they are so precious. And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings.” **Coates** implies that the person is the brain, and the brain just another organ to be crushed with the rest of the body’s parts. Earlier in the book, he **makes the startling declaration that enslaved people “knew nothing but chains.**” **I do not deny the violence Coates so eloquently describes** here, and I am sympathetic to his atheistic skepticism. **But what sustained enslaved African people was a memory of freedom, dreams of seizing it, and conspiracies to enact it** – fugitive planning, if you will. **If we reduce the enslaved to mere fungible bodies, we cannot possibly understand how they created families, communities, sociality; how they fled and loved and worshiped and defended themselves; how they created the world’s first social democracy.** “**Trauma is real. But reading black experience through trauma can lead to thinking of ourselves as victims rather than agents.”** Moreover, **to identify anti-black violence as heritage may be true in a general sense, but it obscures the dialectic that produced and reproduced the violence of a regime dependent on black life for its profitability**. **It was, after all, the resisting black body that needed “correction**.” Violence was used not only to break bodies but to discipline people who refused enslavement. And the impulse to resist is neither involuntary nor solitary. **It is a choice made in community, made possible by community, and informed by memory, tradition, and witness. If Africans were entirely compliant and docile, there would have been no need for vast expenditures on corrections, security, and violence. Resistance is our heritage.** And **resistance is our healing**. Through collective struggle, **we alter our circumstances; contain, escape, or possibly eviscerate the source of trauma; recover our bodies; reclaim and redeem our dead; and make ourselves whole.** It is difficult to see this in a world where words such as trauma, PTSD, micro-aggression, and triggers have virtually replaced oppression, repression, and subjugation. Naomi Wallace, a brilliant playwright whose work explores trauma in the context of race, sexuality, class, war, and empire, muses: “Mainstream America is less threatened by the ‘trauma’ theory because it doesn’t place economic justice at its core and takes the focus out of the realm of justice and into psychology; out of the streets, communities, into the singular experience (even if experienced in common) of the individual.” Similarly, George Lipsitz observes that **emphasizing “interiority,” personal pain, and feeling elevates “the cultivation of sympathy over the creation of social justice.” This is partly why demands for reparations to address historical and ongoing racism are so antithetical to modern liberalism.** “**Through collective struggle, we alter our circumstances; contain, escape, or possibly eviscerate the source of trauma**.” **Managing trauma does not require dismantling structural racism,** which is why university administrators focus on avoiding triggers rather than implementing zero-tolerance policies for racism or sexual assault. Buildings will be renamed and safe spaces for people of color will be created out of a sliver of university real estate, but proposals to eliminate tuition and forgive student debt for the descendants of the dispossessed and the enslaved will be derided as absurd. This is also why diversity and cultural-competency training are the most popular strategies for addressing campus racism. As if racism were a manifestation of our “incompetent” handling of “difference.” If we cannot love the other, we can at least learn to hear, respect, understand, and “tolerate” her. Cultural competency also means reckoning with white privilege, coming to terms with unconscious bias and the myriad ways white folks benefit from current racial arrangements. Powerful as this might be, the solution to racism still is shifted to the realm of self-help and human resources, resting on self-improvement or the hiring of a consultant or trainer to help us reach our goal. Cultural-competency training, greater diversity, and demands for multicultural curricula represent both a resistance to and manifestation of our current “postracial” moment. In Are We All Postracial Yet? (2015), David Theo Goldberg correctly sees postracialism as a neoliberal revision of multicultural discourse, whose proposed remedies to address racism would in fact resuscitate late-century multiculturalism. But why hold on to the policies and promises of multiculturalism and diversity, especially since they have done nothing to dislodge white supremacy? Indeed I want to suggest that the triumph of multiculturalism marked a defeat for a radical anti-racist vision. True, multiculturalism emerged in response to struggles waged by the Black Freedom movement and other oppressed groups in the 1960s and ’70s. But the programmatic adoption of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism vampirized the energy of a radical movement that began by demanding the complete transformation of the social order and the eradication of all forms of racial, gender, sexual, and class hierarchy. The point of liberal multiculturalism was not to address the historical legacies of racism, dispossession, and injustice but rather to bring some people into the fold of a “society no longer seen as racially unjust.” What did it bring us? Black elected officials and black CEOs who helped manage the greatest transfer of wealth to the rich and oversee the continued erosion of the welfare state; the displacement, deportation, and deterioration of black and brown communities; mass incarceration; and planetary war. We talk about breaking glass ceilings in corporate America while building more jail cells for the rest. The triumph of liberal multiculturalism also meant a shift from a radical anti-capitalist critique to a politics of recognition. This means, for example, that we now embrace the right of same-sex couples to marry so long as they do not challenge the institution itself, which is still modeled upon the exchanging of property; likewise we accept the right of people of color, women, and queer people to serve in the military, killing and torturing around the world. “I want to suggest that the triumph of multiculturalism marked a defeat for a radical anti-racist vision.” At the same time, contemporary calls for cultural competence and tolerance reflect neoliberal logic by emphasizing individual responsibility and suffering, shifting race from the public sphere to the psyche. The postracial, Goldberg writes, “renders individuals solely accountable for their own actions and expressions, not for their group’s.” Tolerance in its multicultural guise, as Wendy Brown taught us, is the liberal answer to managing difference but with no corresponding transformation in the conditions that, in the first place, marked certain bodies as suspicious, deviant, abject, or illegible. Tolerance, therefore, depoliticizes genuine struggles for justice and power: **Depoliticization involves construing inequality, subordination, marginalization, and social conflict, which all require political analysis and political solutions, as personal and individual, on the one hand, or as natural, religious, or cultural on the other.** Tolerance works along both vectors of depoliticization – it personalizes and it naturalizes or culturalizes – and sometimes it intertwines them. But **how can we embrace our students and acknowledge their pain while remaining wary of a culture that reduces structural oppression to misunderstanding and psychology**? Love, Study, Struggle Taped inside the top drawer of my desk is a small scrap of paper with three words scrawled across it: “**Love, Study, Struggle**.” It serves as a daily reminder of what I am supposed to be doing. **Black study and resistance must begin with love.** James Baldwin understood love-as-agency probably better than anyone. For him it meant to love ourselves as black people; it meant making love the motivation for making revolution; it meant **envisioning a society where everyone is embraced, where there is no oppression, where every life is valued – even those who may once have been our oppressors**. It did not mean seeking white people’s love and acceptance or seeking belonging in the world created by our oppressor. In The Fire Next Time (1963), he is unequivocal: “I do not know many Negroes who are eager to be ‘accepted’ by white people, still less to be loved by them; they, the blacks, simply don’t wish to be beaten over the head by the whites every instant of our brief passage on this planet.” But here is the catch: if we are committed to genuine freedom, we have no choice but to love all. To love all is to fight relentlessly to end exploitation and oppression everywhere, even on behalf of those who think they hate us. This was Baldwin’s point – perhaps his most misunderstood and reviled point. **To love this way requires relentless struggle, deep study, and critique**. **Limiting our ambit to suffering, resistance, and achievement is not enough**. **We must go to the root – the historical, political, social, cultural, ideological, material, economic root – of oppression in order to understand its negation, the prospect of our liberation**. Going to the root illuminates what is hidden from us, largely because most structures of oppression and all of their various entanglements are simply not visible and not felt. For example, **if we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of anti-blackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence in places such as Atlanta and Detroit, where most cops are black, unless we turn to some metaphysical explanation.** For my generation, the formal classroom was never the space for deep critique precisely because it was not a place of love. The classroom was – and still is – a performative space, where faculty and students compete with each other. Through study groups, we created our own intellectual communities held together by principle and love, though the specters of sectarianism, ego, and just-plain childishness blurred our vision and threatened our camaraderie. Still, the political study group was our lifeblood – both on and off campus. We lived by Karl Marx’s pithy 1844 statement: “But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present – I am speaking of a ruthless criticism of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.” “If we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of anti-blackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence.” Study groups introduced me to C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Chancellor Williams, George E. M. James, Shulamith Firestone, Kwame Nkrumah, Kwame Turé, Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Chinweizu Ibekwe, Amílcar Cabral, and others. These texts were our sources of social critique and weapons in our class war on the bourgeois canon. As self-styled activist-intellectuals, it never occurred to us to refuse to read a text simply because it validated the racism, sexism, free-market ideology, and bourgeois liberalism against which we railed. Nothing was off limits. On the contrary, delving into these works only sharpened our critical faculties. Love and study cannot exist without struggle, and struggle cannot occur solely inside the refuge we call the university. Being grounded in the world we wish to make is fundamental. As I argued in Freedom Dreams nearly fifteen years ago, “Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. **The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression.”** Ironically I wrote these words with my students in mind, many of whom were involved in campus struggles, feeling a bit rudderless but believing that the only way to make themselves into authentic activists was to leave the books and radical theories at home or in their dorms. The undercommons offers students a valuable model of study that takes for granted the indivisibility of thought and struggle, not unlike its antecedent, the Mississippi Freedom Schools.

#### Ontologizing blackness destroys alt solvency and homogenizes black bodies.

David KLINE, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religion at Rice University, 17 [“The Pragmatics of Resistance: Framing Anti-Blackness and the Limits of Political Ontology,” *Critical Philosophy of Race*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017, p. 51-69, Accessed Online through Emory Libraries]

Focusing on Wilderson, his absolute prioritization of a political onto-logical structure in which the law relegates Black being into the singular position of social death happens, I contend, at the expense of two significant things that I am hesitant to bracket for the sake of prioritizing political ontology as the sole frame of reference for both analyzing anti-Black racism and thinking resistance within the racialized world. First, it short-circuits an analysis of power that might reveal not only how the practices, forms, and apparatuses of anti-Black racism have historically developed, changed, and reassembled/reterritorialized in relation to state power, national identity, philosophical discourse, biological discourse, political discourse, and so on—changes that, despite Wilderson’s claim that focusing on these things only “mystify” the question of ontology (Wilderson 2010, 10), surely have implications for how racial positioning is both thought and resisted in differing historical and socio-political contexts. To the extent that Blackness equals a singular ontological position within a macropolitical structure of antagonism, there is almost no room to bring in the spectrum and flow of social difference and contingency that no doubt spans across Black identity as a legitimate issue of analysis and as a site/sight for the possibility of a range of resisting practices. This bracketing of difference leads him to make some rather sweeping and opaquely abstract claims. For example, discussing a main character’s abortion in a prison cell in the 1976 film Bush Mama, Wilderson says, “Dorothy will abort her baby at the clinic or on the floor of her prison cell, not because she fights for—and either wins [End Page 58] or loses—the right to do so, but because she is one of 35 million accumulated and fungible (owned and exchangeable) objects living among 230 million subjects—which is to say, her will is always already subsumed by the will of civil society” (Wilderson 2010, 128, italics mine). What I want to press here is how Wilderson’s statement, made in the sole frame of a totalizing political ontology overshadowing all other levels of sociality, flattens out the social difference within, and even the possibility of, a micropolitical social field of 35 million Black people living in the United States. Such a flattening reduces the optic of anti-Black racism as well as Black sociality to the frame of political ontology where Blackness remains stuck in a singular position of abjection. The result is a severe analytical limitation in terms of the way Blackness (as well as other racial positions) exists across an extremely wide field of sociality that is comprised of differing intensities of forces and relational modes between various institutional, political, socio-economic, religious, sexual, and other social conjunctures. Within Wilderson’s political ontological frame, it seems that these conjunctures are excluded—or at least bracketed—as having any bearing at all on how anti-Black power functions and is resisted across highly differentiated contexts. There is only the binary ontological distinction of Black and Human being; only a macropolitics of sedimented abjection.

#### Their psychoanalytic explanations of the libidinal drive to be anti-black is bad and false

Hudis 15 (Professor of English and History @ Queens College, 2015, “Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades,” p. 35)

Fanon’s vantage point upon the world is his situated experience. He is trying to understand the inner psychic life of racism, not provide an account of the structure of human existence as a whole. Racism is not, of course, an integral part of the human psyche; it is a Social construct that has a psychic impact. Any effort to comprehend social distress that accompanies racism by reference to some a priori structure- be it the Oedipal Complex or the Collective Unconscious- is doomed to failure.

Carl Jung sought to deepen and go beyond Freud's approach by arguing that the subconscious is grounded in a universal layer of the psyche- which he called "the collective unconscious:' This refers to inherited patterns of thought that exist in all human minds, regardless of specific culture or upbringing, and which manifest themselves in dreams, fairy tales, and myths. Jung referred to these universal patterns as "archetypes:' It may seem, on a superficial reading, that 1 Fanon is drawing from Jung, since he discusses how white people tend to unconsciously assimilate views of blacks that are based on negative stereotypes. Even the most "progressive" white tends to think of blacks a certain way (such as "emotional;' "physical," or / "aggressive"), even as they disavow any racist animus on their part. However, Fanon denies that such collective delusions are part of a psychic structure; they are not permanent features of the mind. They are habits acquired from a series of social and cultural impositions. While they constitute a kind a collective unconscious on the part of many white people, they are not grounded in any universal "archetype." The unconscious prejudices of whites do not derive from genes or nature, nor do they derive from some form independent of culture or upbringing. Fanon contends that Jung "confuses habit with instinct."

#### They need to prove why we specifically do is racist – we don’t have to defend the entirety of Baudrillard or his work – you can use someone’s work and not agree with them – the founders of the USFG were racists but using the USFG isn’t racist, if you buy any of their indicts, you’ll reject the 1ac

**Baudrillard 00**(Jean Baudrillard, French philosopher, former professor emeritus at the University de Paris X, “Passwords” page 23, 2000)//ICW

Yet I should make one thing clear: the term 'seduction' has been used everywhere and anywhere in a whole string of senses, such as 'power seduces the masses', the 'seduction of the media' or the 'great seducers' . . . I did not mean the term at that level which is, after all, extremely vulgar. It is true that it seemed to me that historically, women had a privileged position in the field of seduction. But some have taken the view that to link women and seduction was to consign them to the realm of appearances - and hence to frivolity. This is a total misunderstanding: the seduction I was referring to is really the symbolic mastery of forms, whereas the other is merely the material mastery of power by way of a stratagem.

### Asia Territory Disputes

#### The attempt to manage the territorial disputes of the North East Asia’s maritime conflicts is a writing of the Westphalian notion of territory onto space, engendering an attempt at total mapping, transcription, and integral reality. This is a violent imposition of Western identity onto the globe.

Reollinghoff 13. Michael Roellinghoff, MA in East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto, PhD candidate in history at the University of Toronto, “Insular Thinking: Ideology and Memory in the Japan-China/Japan-Korea Maritime Territorial Disputes” <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/35676/3/Roellinghoff_Michael_MR_201306_MA_thesis.pdf>, Roellinghoff received his MA in East Asian Studies from the University of Toronto.

The first ‘post-Cold War’ row occurred in 1996, two years after the ratification of UNCLOS, when Japanese Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko attacked the South Korean claim to the islands and demanding the South Korean ceased their development of Dokdo, and ‘reminding’ Korea that “Takeshima is [an integral] part of Japanese territory (waga kuni koyū no ryūdo) from the viewpoint of international law and history.”105 Ikeda’s statement, while certainly controversial — in fact, leading to his effigy burned in ensuing protests — is in fact using very similar, if not almost identical language to statements made during the 1980s by Ikeda’s predecessors and is almost identical to the wording currently used on the current Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: “Takeshima is according to history and from the viewpoint of international law clearly an integral part of Japanese territory.”106 Neither statement deviates a great deal from the position held by Japan since the post-war period, not to mention mirroring Korea’s own claims to Dokdo, such as a multilingual, flashy website run by the Gyeongsangbuk-do Province Dokdo Management Office, which states, “Historically and according to International Law, Dokdo is clearly Territory of Korea.” 107 This is also strikingly similar statements made by the governments of Japan 108 and China 109 regarding the Senkaku Islands. In both cases, there is an interesting contradiction between the phrase ‘integral territory’ (koyū no ryōdo) 110 and the invocation of international law, which is, the concept of an ‘integral’ or ‘inalienable’ territory is, according to Gavan McCormack, “unknown in international law and foreign to discourse on national territory in much, if not most, of the world.”111 Likewise, while East Asian states certainly knew how to be territorial before the introduction of the Westphalian system, far from the unalienable space of the Japanese, Korean, or Chinese national territories stretching back to times immemorial, the idea of delineated territory of the nation-state being sacrosanct is a quite recent development in the in East Asian history (or European history, for that matter) and further begs the question of which parts of these territorial spaces is unintegral? The very idea of a nation’s territory being integral brings to mind Jean Baudrillard’s famous opening illustration of Simulacra and Simulation where Baudrillard describes Jorge Luis Borges’ (very) short story “On Exactitude in Science” in which an Empire’s cartographers draw a map of the territory so detailed that it covers the entirety of the Empire, with the fraying of the map signalling the decline of the Empire. Baudrillard then attempts to reverse this analogy, saying, “the map … precedes the territory … [but now] it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map,” before conceding that “only the allegory of Empire, perhaps remains. Because it is with this same imperialism that present-day simulators attempt to make the real, all of the real, coincide with their models of simulations.”112 In this almost McLuhanian sense, the ‘Empire’ is the map, and the envisioned territory/map is in this sense the ‘nodal point’ which holds together the imagined community, as Benedict Anderson would have it, of the national-state. In the case of China where, like other communist countries, the Party, state, and society are synonymous, the issue of sovereignty “suggests the government’s inherently legitimate (highest, sublime and absolute) right and power to rule the country domestically and to act independently (including in the area of defence) internationally.”113 I would argue that irredentism is rooted in this phenomenon, where the ‘lost’ or defended territory essentially must be elevated to something of a sublime object to maintain illusion of the ‘integral’ territory of the nation-state, and perhaps of the contending nation-states themselves. This phenomenon can be seen unambiguously on the Gyeongsangbuk-do Province’s Dokdo website which declares, “We planted the spirit of Korea in Dokdo.” 114 While it’s easy to mock the rhetoric of politicians (such as the use of ‘integral’, or in China’s case, ‘sacred’), anything less would render these disputes absurd, bringing us back to the notion of vulgar ‘squabbling over rocks’, and in the process, exposing the ‘nakedness’ of the nation behind national ideologies. This is why, not just in China, but in South Korea and Japan, the legitimacy of the ruling party has come to rest precariously on the party’s ability to maintain these territorial disputes (which, if we’re being practical, simply won’t be solved when multiple claimants consider the same territories ‘integral’), and in the case of Taiwan, the survival of the Republic of China as an autonomous entity is at stake: if Taiwan were to break the status quo by renouncing its territorial claims, it would be a de facto declaration of independence from the mainland which, as mentioned above, would likely lead to a Chinese invasion. While, economically, détente is always preferable and proponents of the ‘liberal peace’ theory claim that it is growing economic interdependence which has restrained the claimant countries, as we have seen in both the Dokdo and Senkaku Islands disputes, maintaining the disputes can be a powerful tool for savvy politicians. This is likely a major reason these disputes have become more common in South Korea’s democratic era, flaring up every few years instead of every couple of decades, or for that matter, in China since the collapse of the communist bloc, and during the era of globalization where national borders are often thought to be disappearing.

### **Capitalism**

#### Neoliberal violence takes place on the level of semiotics and code, their critique of economic systems doesn’t account for the fluidity of communication and media.

**Allison 1** (Anne Allison @ In The News - Duke University, Published: May 2001, <IKS> "Cyborg Violence: Bursting Borders and Bodies with Queer Machines", DOA: 6-21-2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/656538?seq=1https://www.jstor.org/stable/656538?seq=1)

Today's world of global capitalism and proliferating technologies is often described in terms of flows. Flows—of people, goods, money, ideas, images— move between borders—of nations, economies, cultures—making this an age of deterritorialization as much as reterritorialization. Production has shifted from the Fordist model (Harvey 1989) of a rationalized labor force: of core workers who stay in one place and earn enough wages to consume what they produce—the mass produced goods that embed both the desires and discipline of a modern lifestyle. Today, production is based on "flexible accumulation" where, geared to quick turn-over and a constantly changing market, companies have downsized their core workers, diversified their holdings and product lines, and rely more on subcontractors, peripheral workers and out-sourcing. Increasingly there is a gap between those who produce and consume brand name goods—Nike or Adidas shoes, for instance—and continually, in the United States at least, the gap is rising between the so-called haves and havenots accompanied by a shrinkage of the middle class in-between. The condition of postmodernity in which we live is one of shifts and dispersals, instability and movement, speed and ephemerality. Ever more our world is being remade and redrawn through various technologies—image and information production, medical and genetic advances, military and star war networks. Our connections are quicker (whether by travel, phone, email, or CNN) to places and peoples further away; disconnections are quick too—ruptures of families, communities, workplaces, schools. David Harvey (1989) speaks of time-space compression and the increased attention placed on the immediate and instantaneous in postmodern lifestyle. Consumption is more important than ever in advanced capitalist economies and images not only sell commodities but are commodities themselves, operating in an economy that reifies the surfaces and impressions of things. Major consumer values are instantaneity—fast food and speedy services—and disposability—goods that can be easily and quickly thrown out. Reproductions or simulacra are valued over originals and the cultural logic of postmodernity, as theorized by Frederic Jameson (1984), is marked by an aesthetic of the pastiche—the jumbling of mixed genres and past and present time periods—and schizophrenia—the experience of life as disjointed, incoherent, and lacking linear continuity. It is against this backdrop that I want to read children's play and, in particular, a form of play in which the media in the United States has taken such a keen interest: violent entertainment. Within this category characterized by a prominence of attacks, shootings, ruptured body-parts, and hyper-weapons is a sub-set in which the explosiveness of violence is coupled with another, far less studied dimension, the making and remaking of a new kind of subject—the cyborg. Following Donna Haraway (1991), I take cyborg to be a fusion of artificial machinery and living (animal, human, or alien) organism that confuses prior identity borders. This confusion is marked by both a dislocation and reaggregation of bodies and body parts (of and between nature, nation, race, community, gender, commodity, and/or culture)—what I trace here through violence and queerness. The figure of the cyborg has become exceedingly popular in (and circulates between) two sites I pay attention to—mass produced play in Japan and the United States since the 1980s that spreads across the multimedia of comic books (manga in Japan), cartoons (anime), film, live action television, video (and gameboy) games, and merchandise such as action figures.6 Replicants, terminators, RoboCops, and power rangers are the figures of this play world. And all are identified as not only cyborgs but also fighting machines: beings whose bodies—amalgamations of weaponry, machinery, and powers— are programmed to fight, eradicate, disintegrate, splatter, shoot, mutilate, or kill. The stories, what there are of them, are orchestrated around the theme and staging of excessive destruction. In the RoboCop movies, for instance, scenes of slaughter or mutilation occur ritualistically about every 10 minutes and, in The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, based on a live action television series that has run continuously in Japan since 1973 and in the United States since 1993, the team of clean-scrubbed teenagers who morph into power-suited warrior rangers, battle and defeat at least one

#### Capitalism no longer exists in a material sense but rather an extra-material sense. Objects are not the locus of satisfaction, but of a symbolic labor, a production fabricated as proof – an uninterrupted representation – of status. The sign must be overcome to engage in effective praxis

**McWhinney 21** (Andrew McWhinney @ Negation Mag - Editor, writer, podcast producer for Negation Mag, MA from McMaster University, Published: March 2021, <IKS> "A Marxist Mission to Rescue Jean Baudrillard", DOA: 6-23-2022, <https://www.negationmag.com/articles/marxist-mission-rescue-baudrillard>)

\*Adapted for gendered language designated by {}

Post-leftists — a loose school of anarchist thinkers who generally believe that "[traditional] leftism always involves the reification and mediation of social revolt, while consistent anarchists reject this reification of revolt"1 — adore Jean Baudrillard. Post-leftist TikTok has breathed what seems to be a new vigour into his work, heavily promoting him for his conception of hyperreality and simulation. Post-leftist TikToks citing Baudrillard are generally bleak and obscure, filled with walls of text citing the impossibility of escaping capitalism due to the saturation of the social world with the norms of capital. All revolutionary actions are already co-opted, and no fertile ground is left to build truly revolutionary ideas. We are trapped in the desert of the real, with no way out. It appears that Baudrillard, the prince of postmodernism, has nothing to offer those thinking from a historical materialist perspective. But I would argue the opposite; we should not be so quick to dismiss some of Baudrillard's unique insights into the machinations of capital on the basis of his appropriation by the post-leftists. While scholars like Douglas Kellner have critiqued Baudrillard’s concepts of the simulation and hyperreality at length with the intention of rescuing them, I am not interested in salvaging his later work.2 Instead, my goal is to retrieve a lesser-known theorization from his earlier work — known as "sign value," which I believe is the key Baudrillardian concept that allows for the most fertile thinking through resistance to capitalism. If we are to take Baudrillard’s points about the proliferation of images and sign production under late capitalism seriously — and we should — rescuing the concept of sign value from obscurity is the best way to do so. A Brief Overview of Baudrillard's Thought Before delving into sign value, it is important to take a detour through the development of Baudrillard’s intellectual history. The most helpful way to think about the evolution of Baudrillard’s thought, in my mind, is in terms of an epistemological break, a la Louis Althusser. This break marks a split between a Baudrillard who embraced Marx and the tenets of historical materialism, and a Baudrillard who rejected Marxism. This break is not a fully complete one, nor is it a sudden one; it is a gradual shift that occurs over the course of Baudrillard’s corpus. Viewed in this way, only the first three texts from Baudrillard’s corpus become directly useful to the historical materialist project: The System of Objects (SO) [1968], The Consumer Society (CS) [1970], and For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (FCPES) [1972]. With these three texts, it is clear that Baudrillard is working from a Marxist position, albeit a heterodox one that attempts to build new systems of analysis onto historical materialism. SO takes a phenomenological look at the experience of consumption under late capitalism, infusing Marxism with semiotics and psychoanalysis to systematically explain the dominating power objects hold over consumers. CS follows similar themes, speaking more broadly about systems of leisure and consumption in relation to the development of the capitalist mode of production, arguing that production is "entangled... with an order of consumption, which is an order of the manipulation of signs."3 FCPES is a collection of essays tackling Marxist and classical analyses of commodities and consumption, focusing mostly on how their inadequacy in relation to the problematic of signs and signification in consumer societies. With the publication of his fourth book, The Mirror of Production (MoP) [1973], Baudrillard renounced the Marxist project, dismissing it as simply a "mirror" of capitalist political economy that merely re-inscribes productivism as the sole site of societal meaning. Marxism could not serve as a way out of capitalism because capitalism served as the limit of its horizon. Thus, "historical materialism, dialectics, modes of production, labor power — through these concepts Marxist theory has sought to shatter the abstract universality of the concepts of bourgeois thought (Nature and Progress, Man and Reason, formal Logic, Work, Exchange, etc.). Yet Marxism in turn universalizes them with a 'critical' imperialism as ferocious as the other’s."4 Though some of its critiques certainly land in terms of criticizing a dogmatic, reified Marxism-Leninism, the thrust of the book relies on a misreading of Marx and the critique of political economy. We will return to this strawmanning of Marx and Marxism later, as it becomes a central fulcrum in the more dodgy assertions Baudrillard makes. The Concept of Sign Value With the accelerating development of the capitalist mode of production, Baudrillard saw a correlated rise in the production of images and signs, as well as the more important role they began to play in late capitalist societies. This insight is very much linked to the work of the Situationists, who theorized the onset of the "society of the spectacle5" and the mediation of society through the proliferation of images.6 Other Marxist critics have also noted this shift in the importance and proliferation of images in late capitalism: Roland Barthes examined the importance of signs in the development of ideological myths that help to reproduce the system of capitalism,7 and Fredric Jameson linked the mass proliferation of images to postmodernity as the cultural logic of late capitalism.8 It is this shift in the importance of images and signs to capitalism’s reproduction that Baudrillard wishes to tackle. For Baudrillard, consumption is a form of production on the side of the consumer: Objects are not the locus of the satisfaction of needs, but of a symbolic labor, of a ‘production’ in both sense of the term pro-ducers – they are fabricated, but they are also produced as a proof. They are the locus of consecration of an effort, of an uninterrupted performance, of a stress for achievement, aiming always at providing the continual and tangible proof of social value.9 In contrast to the presentation of consumption as a passive activity where one is wholly interpellated or integrated into a social position through signs and images, Baudrillard’s model of consumption posits that "individuals and groups use it to their advantage, together with its imperative and distinctive repertory of objects, as is the case with any other institutional or moral code. That is to say, they use it in their own way: they play with it, they break its rules, they speak it with their class dialect."10 Such insights are remarkably similar to those of Raymond Williams, whose cultural materialist conceptions viewed culture and the means of communication as a central component to the means of production.11Consumption, then, is not simply premised on the maximization of utility, but as the only option available to individuals living under monopoly capitalism to distinguish themselves in the capitalist social order — one must embody the contradiction of fitting into an intelligible social position through sticking-out. According to Baudrillard, it is this being caught-up with the game of signification, the pressure to consume, organize, and present objects, that constitutes the dominant everyday experience of the individual under capitalism. It is through such movement that we can see some forms of resistance begin to show in Baudrillard’s model: Objects, their syntax, and their rhetoric refer to social objectives and to a social logic. They speak to us… of social pretension and resignation, of social mobility and inertia, of accumulation and enculturation, of stratification and of social classification. Through objects, each individual and each group searches out ~~his-her~~ {their} place in an order, all the while trying to jostle this order according to a personal trajectory.12 The central fulcrum point of Baudrillard’s insistence of the productive nature of consumption is sign value. Sign value is his addition to the Marxist triumvirate of use value, exchange value, and Value (abstract labour) of the commodity form. Sign value is the value a commodity (in Baudrillard’s terms, an object) holds in a hierarchical system of signs, which one can interpret as the prestige or meaning a commodity holds. Thus, alongside the political economy of the commodity, there is a political economy of the sign — which engenders its own critique. In this new, melded political economy, "[the] simplest component, [the] nuclear element — that which precisely the commodity was for Marx — is no longer today properly either commodity or sign, but indissolubly both."13 In his short theoretical sketch "For a General Theory," Baudrillard models the relations between all of these forms of value as such: UV[use value]-EcEV[economic exchange value]: The field of the process of exchange value, of the commodity form (forme merchandise) etc., described by political economy. Productive consumption. UV-SgEV[sign exchange value]: The field of the production of signs originating in the destruction of utility… here, the advertising process of conferring value transmutes use goods into sign values. Here technique and knowledge are divorced from their objective practice and recovered by the "cultural" system of differentiation. It is thus the extended field of consumption, in the sense we have given it of production, systems and interplay of signs… EcEV-UV: This is the process of "consumption" in the traditional economic sense of the term, that is, the reconversion of exchange value into use value… [UV-EcEV] and [EcEV-UV] are the two moments of the cycle of classical (and Marxist) political economy, which does not take into account the political economy of the sign… EcEV-SgEV: The process of consumption according to its redefinition in the political economy of the sign. It includes the act of spending as production of sign value… but here more accurately we have the ascension of the commodity form into the sign form, the transformation of the economic into sign systems and the transmutation of economic power into domination and social caste privilege. SgEV-UV: Signs, like commodities, are at once use value and exchange value. The social hierarchies, the invidious differences, the privileges of caste and culture which they support, are accounted as profit, as personal satisfaction, and lived as "need" (need of social value-generation to which correspond the "utility" of different signs and their “consumption”). SgEV-EcEV: This involves the reconversion of cultural privilege, of the monopoly of sign, etc., into economic privilege. Coupled with [EcEV-SgEV], this reconversion describes the total cycle of a political economy in which economic exploitation based on the monopoly of capital and "cultural" domination based on the monopoly of the code engender one another ceaselessly.14 With this model, we can begin to distinguish between different types of consumption, including that of ordinary consumption (EcEV-UV) and productive consumption (UV-EcEV), but also new forms of consumption related to the production of signs: what we might call conspicuous consumption (EcEV-SgEV), and sign consumption (SgEV-EcEV). Paying attention to these new consumptive relations, in tandem with the traditional consumptive relations of Marxian political economy, reveals a more complex political economy that does not merely see the production of ideology as a mere homogenous reflection of the base, but as a sort of semi-autonomous yet overdetermined practice and labour performed not just by ideological state apparatuses, but also by the individual consumer. Thus, the domineering and totalizing logic of the sign — of capitalist ideology — must, in tandem with generalized commodity production, be ruthlessly critiqued and overcome if one is to engage in effective praxis.

#### The internet proves that cyberspace and cybertime cannot be separated from capitalism – the perm is a world in which while <*NEG’s alt*> we also dismantle the overload of information inside media to solve best

**Bottini 20** (Eleonora Bottini @ Studies in the Maternal - Professor of Public Law at Caen-Normandy University, Co-Director of Caen Institute of Legal Research, Published: 12-8-2020, <IKS> "Reflections on Semiocapitalism and the Maternal from a Daughter’s Point of View", DOA: 6-23-2022, <https://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/article/id/4310/>)

In the book, Bifo articulates his thinking about semiocapitalism, the system whereby capitalism[1](https://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/article/id/4310/#n1) and the media are connected, arguing that today it is not possible to reflect on one without linking it to the other. His main argument is that today we are living through individual and community pathologies caused by semiocapitalism, and in particular by the specific relation between cyberspace and cybertime. Cyberspace is the totality of the information and stimuli that circulate via media systems. Cybertime is the organic bodily capacity to deal with and elaborate information, which therefore has bodily a limit. The dramatic relation between the two, what he calls “splitterkapitalism”, creates clashes that bring about a multitude of problems for people in spheres such as labour, mental health, sexuality and affective life. Bifo observes that the current semiocapitalist order started to take this direction in Western societies in 1977, when hope and ideas of changing the economic, social and political organisation of society which had characterised many of the political movements in the previous decades, started to fail. Bifo considers the 1990s to be a period of total identification, within the general Zeitgeist, with capital. Because of this identification, all technological changes were seen as forms of liberation and as creations of new spaces of freedom. The following decade, the 2000s, has for Bifo been characterised by a form of cultural depression resulting from the realisation that the mania of the ‘90s could not last. Monopolies emerged violently from the new world created by the internet and digital technologies. The potential for the internet and new digital technologies to allow people to live well, work less and have more time for affective and intellectual life were not realised. Indeed, the opposite occurred. The sphere of labour encroached on all aspects of individual and social life, and daily life became submerged under a continuous flux of information. Bifo discusses the end of previous social class divisions, and speaks about the ‘“cognitariat’”, the international group of workers involved in cognitive and emotional labour. He does not see any way for this form of spittlerkapitalism to end, but he proposes the creation of autonomous spaces in people’s lives as an antidote to some of the problems created by this wider context. Going back to that morning, I think that nobody helping my mother can be read as an instance in which semiocapitalism dictates that, simply put, appearance is more important than helping someone in need. Although it may be problematic to render an ethical and political question from this small event, what I want to stress is the framework through which I am making this claim. I am less interested here in discussing the subject of appearance versus the question of help, but more in showing how a single micro act can reflect a wider organization of relations that has to do with economic production, and the related symbolic sphere. I also want to open up a potential reflection on the maternal and semiocapitalism.

**Opening ourselves up repeatedly to the depressing representation of maudlin bodies suffering from capitalism is an affective investment in abjection that we do to feed our symbolic hunger through charity cannibalism – open the wound and let shame bring down the system.**

**Baudrillard 92** (Jean Baudrillard @ Stanford University Press - French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, Published: 1992, <IKS> "The illusion of the end", DOA: 6-21-2022, page 66-70)

The end of history, being itself a catastrophe can only be fuelled by catastrophe. Managing the end therefore becomes synonymous with the management of catastrophe. And, quite specifically, of that catastrophe which is the slow extermination of the rest of the world. We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [l'autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history- the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the waste-product of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d' Alliance, for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain. But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself, in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food. It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world. Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures. In short, there is such distortion between North and South, to the symbolic advantage of the South (a hundred thousand Iraqi dead against casualties numbered in tens on our side: in every case we are the losers), that one day everything will break down. One day, the West will break down if we are not soon washed clean of this shame, if an international congress of the poor countries does not very quickly decide to share out this symbolic privilege of misery and catastrophe. It is of course normal, since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons, that they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy – by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race. No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psychodrama of congestion, saturation, super abundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us - the drama of the excess of means over ends – calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. Artificial catastrophes, like the beneficial aspects of civilization, progress much more quickly than natural ones. The underdeveloped are still at the primary stage of the natural, unforeseeable catastrophe. We are already at the second stage, that of the manufactured catastrophe - imminent and foreseeable - and we shall soon be at that of the pre-programmed catastrophe, the catastrophe of the third kind, deliberate and experimental. And, paradoxically, it is our pursuit of the means for averting natural catastrophe - the unpredictable form of destiny - which will take us there. Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. Because it cannot accept being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species.

#### Alt fails without the AFF – justifies the perm – Media’s coverage of any movement stops it from growing by establishing a definition it – the movement can’t grow since the viewer already has a depiction – the movement begins to dissipate – coverage continues to rise, degrading the movement to an artificial representation.

**Oraldi 21** (Antonio Oraldi @ The Collector - MA in Philosophy and Public Affairs, BA in Philosophy and Sociology, Published: 8-9-2021, <IKS> "Baudrillard’s Philosophy: Simulacra and Simulation in the 21st Century", DOA: 6-23-2022, https://www.thecollector.com/baudrillard-philosophy-21st-century/)

In a world marked by the overflow of information, it is worryingly easy to feel confused and cognitively paralyzed. French philosopher and social theorist Jean Baudrillard can help us understand the universe of media. From politics to art to love, the hyperreality of the technological medium has reached every sphere of human life. His philosophy is one which argues just how signs and symbols permeate our existence in the age of media. Jean Baudrillard: The philosopher of the media age [Jean Baudrillard](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/) (1929-2007) is one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. Although he is most commonly associated with postmodernism, the roots of his philosophy are Marxist. In The System of objects (1968), he provides a critical analysis of consumer society, in which objects lose their intrinsic value at the expense of their exchange value. This leads to [commodity fetishism](https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110810104638104): the lay religion centered on the purchase and accumulation of goods regardless of their use. However, he introduces a third important category: sign value. This element leads the Frenchman to break from Marxism in 1973, with The Mirror of Production: in it, he declares the end of the modern era of material production and the coming of the postmodern age based on the production of signs. But it is Simulacra and Simulations (1981) that grants him a unique position in the history of philosophy. This seminal text outlines how the production of signs, narratives, and images in mass media leads to the inability to perceive what is real. We live in a world where signs and symbols assume an independent existence and exercise a great influence on our lives. The spread of television networks, cinema, and media reports creates a situation in which the narration becomes somewhat independent from the narrated event. Baudrillard warns us that media are not merely means of communication: they are a mode of representation and simulation of reality. In other words: the medium is the message. What does, however, the author mean by “simulacra and simulations?” He outlines four types of images: Reflection of a basic reality: what he calls the order of “good” appearance involves the faithful representation of a real object/event. Perversion of a basic reality: in the order of “evil” appearance, an object/event is portrayed falsely or misrepresented. Mask of the absence of a basic reality: in the order of “sorcery,” the image pretends to represent a real object/event, but it is a copy with no original. No relation to any basic reality: in the order of pure simulation, there is no relation to any original reality whatsoever. Signs merely connect to other signs without a material referent. They are pure simulacra. (Baudrillard, 1983) We can think of 1-2 as belonging to the order of representation, whereby an object can be depicted either accurately or falsely. For instance, a landscape can be portrayed in a clear photograph (1), or with the artificial addition of filters (2). Here lies the problem of ideology and political propaganda. In 3-4, on the other hand, the “sovereign difference” between the real and the simulation is under question. The simulacrum is a copy of a copy whose relation with the original has been so dissipated that it can barely be called a copy. Imagine, for example, photocopying a book ten successive times (photocopy, then photocopy of the photocopy, etc.). It will appear in such a different form at the tenth photocopy to the point of being unreadable. The simulacrum, therefore, has its own ontological autonomy as a copy without a model. The simulation bears a relation to the imitated thing, though only superficially. Its “sorcery” consists of masking the absence of an original: while there can be a resemblance with it, the simulation has its own independence. A videogame might well draw inspiration from some original reality (e.g. Medieval Europe, 20th century Japan, etc.), but the simulated world does not actually have such a reality as its referent. The simulation is nothing but a set of bits that appears to refer to an outside world, but it does not. Thus, it constitutes a world with its own independent reality: in Baudrillard’s words, a hyperreality.

#### Baudrillard’s thought can only be understood posthumously – all of their link offense is from decades ago which isn’t representative today

**Kroker and Maltsev 21** (Arthur Kroker and Oleg Maltsev @ International Academic Journal Baudrillard Now - Proffesor of University of Victoria, Historian, Published: 8-29-2021, <IKS> "Baudrillard’s Philosophy: Simulacra and Simulation in the 21st Century", DOA: 6-23-2022, <https://www.baudrillard-scijournal.com/baudrillard-as-the-skin-of-the-future/>)

Arthur Kroker: Jean Baudrillard was an immensely gracious, very warm and intellectually curious person. As a scholar, he was somebody who thinks about the world in social, cultural, political terms. He was acutely insightful, perceptive and deeply knowledgeable. Jean Baudrillard was a prophetic historian of the future. I always think that Baudrillard is a Nietzsche of our times in many ways. OM: Why Nietzsche? AK: For two reasons. Nietzsche said once that his thought would only be understood posthumously, that it will be only understood by future generations who would live in the reality he had prophesied. I think it’s really the same with Baudrillard. The reality that he was describing has appeared now and will really represent the structure of the 21st century. OM: If Nietzsche’s works were understood only posthumously, what was the case with Baudrillard’s works during his lifetime? How did people perceive his works? AK: During his lifetime he was immensely influential on a very broad level, in the arts community, in the popular press in North America, and certainly in the disciplines of sociology, politics, philosophy, cultural studies and information studies. Particularly in the artistic community, Baudrillard’s works were immensely and massively influential. OM: Could we say that Jean Baudrillard is the brightest figure when it comes to the philosophy of postmodernism? AK: The brightest figure? Sounds good, I think that’s very accurate. OM: What kind of an approach should people take to studying his works? AK: There are many different approaches which are appropriate. Jean Baudrillard intellectually influenced many different people in many different ways. Baudrillard was a ‘pataphysician in the tradition of Alfred Jarry, and Alfred Jarry invented the science of imaginary solutions. I always thought that all of Baudrillard’s writings were very much a ‘pataphysics of the contemporary era. I think that we are living today in a world which is like the scheme formulated by Jean Baudrillard in some ways. Let me be explicit about this in detail. Baudrillard’s thought provided a deeply prophetic survey of the present politics and culture but also of the future and the past. He identified four major tendencies in the future of our postmodern society. One of them appears at the level of political economy. He was definitely the first and best in describing the contemporary movement towards digital capitalism. His books, “The Mirror of Production” and “For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign” represented a significant break with Marxism in describing how we move beyond the binary exchanges between use-value and exchange value to the new era of symbolic exchange. The process of symbolic exchange with its diffusion of sign-values are a way of describing the appearance of the contemporary culture of simulation and, with that, the inauguration in the economic sphere of digital capitalism. The second principle, I think is the essence of Baudrillard’s thought: the entire existence of the mass society that we live in is driven by fatal death drives. Not a life principle but the death drives as the primal instinct motivating technological society. This is expressed in the accelerated hyper glittering, hyper seductive language of digital reality itself, For Baudrillard, the ‘perfect crime’ committed by digital technology is its murder of the reality-principle—the triumph of a technological society which in its hygienic logic, its technological perfectibility, replaces the ambiguity and uncertainties of material reality with the circulating illusions of the hyper-real. Here, the ecstasy of catastrophe drives society forward it represented the movement to a world, which has more than an illusion, it is perfectly accelerated, perfectly hygienic, technologically perfect. At the same time, it is continuously on the verge of imminent collapse and it does periodically collapse. That’s what Nietzsche described as a death drive, and what Freud described as a death instinct, and Baudrillard does the same. OM: Do I understand correctly that when we speak about the first prophecy of Baudrillard it is his insight that the economics and society totally depend on sign, that the language of sign-values becomes the overriding power? AK: Yes, definitely. OM: And could we paraphrase the second principle as “death drive is …” AK: the essence of the language of contemporary technology. OM: Do these two premises constitute the foundation of Jean Baudrillard’s thought? AK: I would add two more to these. The third principle I think is essential (especially reading the original contribution of JB) — his theory of simulation, the theory that reality has imploded into the era of the hyperreal, where things are more real than real. I think that’s a really profound insight and accurately describes the world in which we live in every dimension. Fourth, the principle of cultural seduction. Seduction is very important because for JB seduction means that everything has a moment of hidden reversibility within it. Imminent and hidden reversibility. Things can change to their opposite states immediately. And that accounts for their fascination, and their scandal, and their imaginary possibilities.

#### Only the aff can solve their impacts – successful movements are born in the rupture of the symbolic

**Baudrillard 73** (Jean Baudrillard @ Telos Press - French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, Published: 1973, <IKS> "The Mirror of Production", DOA: 6-21-2022, pg. 165)

\*Edited for gendered language (that language was most likely a translation issue) – indicated by []

The cursed poet, non-official art, and utopian writings in general, by giving a current and immediate content to ~~man's~~ [people’s] liberation, should be the very speech of communism, its direct prophecy. They are only its bad conscience precisely because in them something of ~~man~~ [humanity] is immediately realized, because they object without pity to the "political" dimension of the revolution, which is merely the dimension of its final postponement. They are the equivalent, at the level of discourse, of the savage social movements that were born in a symbolic situation of rupture (symbolic -- which means non-universalized, non-dialectical, non-rationalized in the mirror of an imaginary objective history). This is why poetry (not Art) was fundamentally connected only with the utopian socialist movements, with "revolutionary romanticism," and never with Marxism *as such.* It is because the content of liberated ~~man~~ [person] is, at bottom, of less importance than the abolition of the separation of the present and the future. The abolition of this form of time, the dimension of sublimation, makes it impossible to pardon the idealists of the dialectic, who are at the same time the realists of politics. For them the revolution must be distilled in history; it must come on time; it must ripen in the sun of the contradictions. That it could be there immediately is unthinkable and insufferable. Poetry and the utopian revolt have this radical presentness in common, this denegation of finalities; it is this actualization of desire no longer relegated to a future liberation, but demanded here, immediately, even in its death throes, in the extreme situation of life and death. Such is happiness; such is revolution. It has nothing to do with the political ledger book of the Revolution. Contrary to Marxist analysis which posits ~~man~~ [the person] as dispossessed, as alienated and relates ~~him~~ [them] to a total ~~man~~ [person], a total Other who is Reason and who is for the future (which is utopian, but in the bad sense of the term), which assigns to ~~man~~ [humanity] a project of totalization, utopia, for its part, would have nothing to do with the concept of alienation. It regards every man and every society as already totally there, at each social moment, in its symbolic exigency. Marxism never analyzes the revolt, or even the movement of society except as an intricate ornament of the revolution, as a reality on the way toward maturation. This is a racism of perfection, of the finished stage of reason. It throws everything else into a nothingness of things transcended. 115 Marxism is still profoundly a philosophy, even its "scientific" stage, through all that remains in it of a vision of alienation. In terms of "alienation," the other side of "critical" thought is always a total essence that haunts a divided existence. But this metaphysics of the totality is not at all opposed to the present reality of the division. It is complementary to it. For the subject, the prospect of recovering ~~his~~ [their] transparence or ~~his~~ [their] total "use value" at the end of history is just as religious a vision as the reintegration of essences. "Alienation" remains the imaginary of the subject, even of the subject of history. The subject will not become again a total ~~man~~ [person]; ~~he~~ [they] will not rediscover himself; today ~~he~~ [they] has lost himself. The totalization of the subject is still the end of the end of the political economy of consciousness, confirmed by the identity of the subject, just as political economy is confirmed by the principle of equivalence. Instead of deluding ~~men~~ [people] with a phantasm of their lost identity, of their future autonomy, this notion itself must be abolished. What an absurdity it is to pretend that ~~men~~ [people] are "other," to try to convince them that their deepest desire is to become "themselves" again! Each ~~man~~ [person] is totally there at each instant. Society also is totally there at each instant. Courderoy, the Luddites, Rimbaud, the Communards, the people of the savage strikes, those of May, 1968 -- in every case the revolution does not speak indirectly; they are the revolution, not concepts in transit. Their speech is symbolic and it does not aim at an essence. In these instances, there is speech before history, before politics, before truth, speech before the separation and the future totality. ~~He is~~ [They are] truly a revolutionary who speaks of the world as non-separated. There is no possible or impossible. The utopia is here in all the energies that are raised against political economy. But this utopian violence does not accumulate; it is lost. It does not try to accumulate itself as does economic value in order to abolish death. It does not grasp for power. To enclose the "exploited" within the single historical possibility of taking power has been the worst diversion the revolution has ever taken. One sees here to what depths the axioms of political economy have undermined, pervaded and distorted the revolutionary perspective. Utopia wants speech against power and against the reality principle which is only the phantasm of the system and its indefinite reproduction. It wants only the spoken word; and it wants to lose itself in it.

#### NFTs and Cryptocurrencies prove we no longer reside in the late stages of capitalism, but rather in the early stages of semiocapitalism – their alt will get co-opted.

**Kimathi 20** (Sharon Kits Kimathi @ Oxford Political Review - Editor of Fintech Futures and Banking Technology, was a Deputy Editor at the IFLR, capital markets Reporter at Global Capital and mtn-i. Paralegal for Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer; Legal Compliance Associate for Goldman Sachs; and Paralegal at Reed Smith LLP., Published: 5-11-2020, <IKS> "Hype, Hope, Repeat: Cryptocurrency and Symbolic Value", DOA: 6-23-2022, <https://oxfordpoliticalreview.com/amp/2020/05/11/hype-hope-repeat/>)

Cryptocurrencies and digital coins have a floating reliance on future prestige. Being an early investor in something that might acquire value in the future distils an air of status within the industry if and when the risk pays off. Cryptocurrencies wish to disavow or even transcend conventional currency but are utterly reliant on such currencies as a reference in order to describe how they work to prospective investors. Despite their libertarian rhetoric, in practice, the jackpot for a cryptocurrency is to demonstrate its popularity amongst a core base of early investors such that it may be considered a viable option for established financial houses: selling the glamour of revolution with the security of the state. The symbolic value of these products, rather than their immediate value, calls to mind the work of ‘father of postmodernism’, French sociologist and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard, who wrote in his essay ‘For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign’: Far from the primary status of the object being a pragmatic one which would subsequently come to overdetermine a social value of the sign, it is the sign exchange value (valeur d’echange signe) which is fundamental – use value is often no more than a practical guarantee (or even a rationalisation, pure and simple) […] An accurate theory of objects will not be established upon a theory of needs and their satisfaction, but upon a theory of social prestation and signification. Baudrillard’s intervention into the value debate between Marxist and liberal political economists added a sociological dimension to their competing theories of value. Per Baudrillard, objects are bought and displayed as much for their sign-value, i.e. prestige or status, as their use-value, and that the phenomenon of sign-value has become an essential constituent of commodification and consumption in contemporary consumer society. This can be witnessed from early collections of Fabergé eggs in 19th century Imperial Russia through to Gen-Z’s obsession with the intentionally underproduced Supreme brand – everyone wants to get in on “the next big thing”, and sometimes that next big thing has value based on hype rather than utility.

#### Signs don’t just determine the political economy – they are the dominant determinant of every sphere of life

**Marshall 20** (Colin Marshall @ Open Culture - Based in Seoul, writes and broadcasts on cities, language, and culture., Published: 7-9-2020, <IKS> "An Introduction to Jean Baudrillard, Who Predicted the Simulation-Like Reality in Which We Live", DOA: 6-23-2022, <https://www.openculture.com/2020/07/an-introduction-to-jean-baudrillard.html>)

Each and every morning, many of us wake up and immediately check on what’s happening in the world. Sometimes these events stir emotions within us, and occasionally we act on those emotions, which raise in us a desire to affect the world ourselves. But does this entire ritual involve anything real? While performing it we don’t experience the world, but only media; when we respond, we respond not with action in the world, but only with action in media. We have directly interacted, to put it bluntly, with nothing more than pixels on a screen. This condition has pitilessly intensified in our era of smartphones and social media, and though philosopher and sociologist [Jean Baudrillard](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/) died three months before the introduction of the iPhone, nothing about it would surprise him. Assembled in an ominous, vintage stock footage-heavy style reminiscent of Adam Curtis (he of The Century of the Self and HyperNormalisation), the [half-hour Then & Now video essay above](https://youtu.be/1Yxg2_6_YLs) provides an introduction to Baudrillard’s ideas, especially those that predicted the world in which we live today, a “hyperreal postmodern” one filled with signs referencing little that actually exists. “In the run-up to the 2008 crash,” the narrator reminds us, “the real value of mortgages was hidden under layers of sign value, under deceitful insurance policies and financial ratings based on nothing.” On the news, “it doesn’t matter what’s real. What matters is how it’s said, who says it — the perspective, whether it will be provocative enough, whether it will entertain.” We live, in sum, in a “postmodern carnival” where “things like reality TV, Disneyland, and Facebook define our lives.” Baudrillard saw this happening nearly 40 years ago: “People no longer look at each other, but there are institutes for that,” he writes in [Simulacra and Simulation](https://amzn.to/3fgiYOu). “They no longer touch each other, but there is contactotherapy. They no longer walk, but they go jogging, etc. Everywhere one recycles lost faculties, or lost bodies, or lost sociality, or the lost taste for food.” He credited Marshall McLuhan, fellow gnomic observer of late 20th-century society, with “one of the defining axioms of postmodern life.” When McLuhan declared that “the medium is the message,” says the narrator, he saw that “what mattered in this new world was not what was real and material, but what was represented as signs: in short, television, and now the computer screen, has come to dominate social life. Sign production has replaced material production as the organizing principle of political economy.” What would Baudrillard make of a production like HBO’s Chernobyl, whose painstaking reconstruction of historical events [we previously featured here on Open Culture](http://www.openculture.com/2019/06/scenes-from-hbos-chernobyl-v-real-footage-shot.html)? What made that show a spectacle, says the narrator, was that “the depiction was more real than the event itself: costumes, props, special effects, and the perfect angle, the Geiger counter mapped onto the score already overdetermined by signs.” And so, “in twenty years’ time we think of Chernobyl, will we think of the real event, or images conjured by TV studios?” But we need hardly look that far into the future. The very things our screens insist to us are happening in the world right now, far beyond the walls of the homes fewer and fewer of us leave these days — what do we truly know of their existence apart from this digital blizzard of signs? If Baudrillard were alive to hear our speculation about [the possibility that we live in another being’s simulation](http://www.openculture.com/2012/04/the_medium_is_the_message.html), he’d surely point out that we’ve already created the simulation ourselves.

#### All oppositional and dialectical strategies of resistance fight on a terrain demarcated in advance – the system solicits this critique to efface that we are all complicit

**Pawlett 14** (William Pawlett @ IJBS - University of Wolverhampton, Published: May 2014, <IKS><KB> "Society at War with Itself", DOA: 6-21-2022, <https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/society-at-war-with-itself/>)

While such attitudes of indifference may seem to accept that there is no meaningful alternative to capitalism: an attitude that has been called ‘capitalist nihilism’ (Davis in Milbank and Zizek, 2009) and ‘capitalist realism’ (Fisher 2008), Baudrillard’s notions of “integral reality”, duality and complicity may have significant advantages over those approaches. Unlike thinkers who remain anchored to critical thinking defined by determinate negation, Baudrillard’s approach emphasises ambivalence, reversal and both personal and collective modes of rejection more subtle than those envisioned by the increasingly exhausted mechanisms of critique. The critique of consumer capitalism – the consumption of junk food, junk entertainment and junk information – is now integral to the system; the critique of finance capitalism – banker’s bonuses, corporate tax avoidance – is integral to the system, yet it fails to bring about meaningful or determinate social transformation. Indeed, such critiques may do no more than provide the system with a fleeting sense of “reality” – real issues, real problems to deal with – around which the system can reproduce its simulacra, perhaps to reassure us that “something is being done”, “measures are being put into place” etc. “Reality” cannot be dialectically negated by critical concepts when both ‘reality’ and the critical concept disappear together, their fates clearly tied to each other (Baudrillard 2009b: 10-12). There is a sense then in which the production of critique is in complicity with the system, the unravel-able proliferation and excess of critical accounts of the system has the effect of protecting the system. Complicity consists in a sharing of the denigration of all values, all institutions, all ideas, all beliefs: so long as we believe in nothing – at least not passionately – then the system has us, at least superficially. For example, in recent decades we have seen the denigration of religious faiths – or their reduction to ‘cultural identity’ and ‘world heritage’ objects; the denigration of public services and welfare provision accompanied by their marketisation; the denigration of the poor, the young, immigrants and the unemployed. Yet this is not only the denigration of the powerless or disenfranchised, there is also the widespread denigration of those seen as powerful: politicians, corporations, celebrities. For Baudrillard, it is quite inadequate to focus only on the power of global neo-liberal policies such as marketisation in these processes of denigration. This is where Baudrillard’s position departs decisively from anti-globalists and from neo-Communists such as Negri, Zizek, and Badiou. Global power has deliberately sacrificed its values and ideologies, it presents no position, it takes no stand, it undermines even the illusion that “free markets” function and has made “capital” virtual; become orbital it is removed from a terrestrial, geo-political or subjective space. These are protective measures enabling power to become (almost) hegemonic (Baudrillard 2009a: 33-56; 2010: 35-40).

#### All of their evidence relies on an understanding of capitalism that has disappeared whereby the sign no longer designates anything at all – the age of the financial simulacram incorporates all materialist responses to the system – only our symbolic resistance can collapse the system

**Baldwin 15** (Jon Baldwin @ IJBS - School of Art and Film, London Metropolitan University, Published: No month 2015, <IKS><KB> "Baudrillard and Neoliberalism", DOA: 6-21-2022, https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/baudrillard-and-neoliberalism/)

The ending of the gold standard may not be the single cause of the current crisis but it is certainly an enabling factor. In 1973 dollar-gold convertibility was abandoned once and for all. Enter now the play of borrowing and lending: all monetary debt since has been “mere paper promises” (Kunkel, 2012: 23). Overall indebtedness has grown faster than most national economies: “In the last forty years, the world has been more successful at creating claims on wealth than it has at creating wealth itself” (Ibid.). Marx’s circuit M – C – Mˈ (Money – Commodity – Money) becomes, as he anticipated, M – Mˈ (Money – Money). In likewise, fashion pioneer of semiology, Ferdinand de Saussure’s formula S – R (signifier and signified comprise the (S) sign which refers to (R) a referent) become S – S (Sign – Sign). That is, it becomes what Baudrillard will term a simulation, a self-contained self-referential sign system. In the financial economy money - a ‘paper promise’, a ‘claim on wealth’ - becomes a sign free of any reference to real wealth or production: a financial simulacrum. Economic referents enter into a play of self-generated signs abstracted from real value. In The Mirror of Production, Baudrillard summarises: “The sign no longer designates anything at all. It approaches its true structural limit which is to refer back only to other signs. All reality then becomes the place of a semiurgical manipulation, of a structural simulation” (Baudrillard, 1975: 128). A financial bubble, viewed through a Baudrillardian lens, can be conceived as one such simulation. It is becoming routine in discussions of Baudrillard to note the uncanny nature of how his thought anticipates and seems to predict future developments: “the prefigurative qualities of Baudrillard’s writing are, now, self-evident” (Noys, 2012). Problems with the symbolism of the disentangling of the gold-standard are emblematic and the seeds of the current crash are planted in the early 1970s. Baudrillard notes, in 1973, that this process culminates in the ‘virtual international autonomy of finance capital’, in the uncontrollable ‘play of floating capital’. When financial capital is extracted from ‘all productive cautions’, and even from ‘all reference to the gold standard’, then ‘general equivalence’ becomes the strategic place of the manipulation: “Real production is everywhere subordinated to it. This apogee of the system corresponds to the triumph of the code” (Baudrillard, 1975: 129). Here, in a characteristic motif, the economic real(of production for instance) is subordinated to economic simulation: simulation becomes more real than the real (hyper-real). The code now becomes the greater political problem than alienation, exploitation, inequality, and so on. The financial simulacrum should not be taken as having no effect on everyday economic life: the code, the model, precedes the real.The economy is hence forth considered hyper-real. Elton McGoun uses Baudrillard's notion of hyper-reality in his study of intrinsic value. The simulation-model and virtual market comes to determine the real economy itself: “decisions affecting production and employment are made on the basis of stock prices, and not on the basis of production and employment” (Elton, 1997: 113) The following conclusion is reached: it is not the ‘real economy’ that shapes reality but activity in the financial economy. “The financial economy is thereby more real than the real economy itself**;** it is a hyper-real economy” (Ibid.). This results in a financial simulation which consists of an exchange sphere without any reference to economic reality. It is an internal (virtual) exchange with no referent. The sophistication of the financial simulacrum tends to reduce the degree of materiality of the financial reality. Schinckus explains the evolution from commercial fairs to financial markets, whereby “the goods were not exposed anymore and the transactions (on paper) became symbols” Schinckus, 2008: 1086. Finance has largely abandoned its role of raising capital or supporting entrepreneurial activity (with subsequent variants of exploitation) and is now almost totally dedicated to speculation. Orléan evokes the ‘virtual character’ of finance to describe this disconnection with the sphere of production (Orléan, 1999). Schinckus uses Baudrillard to tease out some of the consequences of the move to e-finance and the technological virtualization of the financial market. The emergence of automatic trading and the creation of electronic financial products have profoundly modified the organisation of the markets and financial exchanges themselves. The ‘Iowa Electronic Market’, created in 1988, was the first virtual market where all interactions took place online. Oral negotiation has been superseded by an abstract sociability whereby traders only interact via computer screens. Wolfe describes traders “trying to monitor six screens at once, six screens that fan out three over three, obscuring any connection we have to the real world” (Wolfe, 2013: 27). This leads to a 'screen sociability' which sees traders “personify their screen by giving them a hypothetical personality” (Schinckus, 2008: 1081). Often stock market transactions (or rather risks) concern minute quantities, which may be just fractions of a per cent. But when these are amplified into quantities of hundreds of millions of dollars of shares these fractions soon add up. One might buy a stock (any stock, it is immaterial – and herein lies one of the very problems) to hope to inflate the general share price and then sell immediately and attempt to make an instant profit. Or vice versa, sell then buy. Wolfe cites an early example from the pioneer Edward Thorp: “He bets $332.5m – virtually one third of a billion – on selling a stock short – and bets another third of a billion buying the same stock to make a profit of one one-hundredth of 1%. Think of risking a total of close to two thirds of a billion dollars to make $2.5m! Sheer madness” (Wolfe, 2013: 21). One effect of the emergence of quantitative trading is that “It had nothing to do with any stock’s or bond’s value. It was a purely mathematical way to game the markets” Ibid.). One issue with this creation of a virtual market is the ambition to reach the idea of the ‘perfect market’ model seen only in economic theory textbooks. In this case, “the finance reality has become a “hyper-reality” i.e. the image of the theoretical reality that we have in mind” (Schinckus, 2008: 1082). One trend of this desire to develop ‘hard models’ in finance has been the rise of econophysics, whereby economists, physicists, statisticians and computer specialists endeavour to apply models seen and developed in physics to the market. In these instance financial quotations are studied as if they behaved, for example, like gas molecules. These models then actually shape the market by being transformed into computational algorithms to price or hedge financial securities with the belief that returns will behave like physical entities. One prominent simulation model, certainly influential in derivatives, has been the Black-Scholes formula published in 1973. This was meant to cut risk and scientifically legitimate the activities of options markets around the world. However, over-reliance upon the model, and its incorrect axioms (e.g. the presupposition of negligible probability of extreme price change) was said, by the likes of NassimTaleb and Jean-Philippe Bouchaud, to spiral into the worldwide October 1987 crash. Capital freed from regulation has no obstacle to circulation and value radiates “endlessly in every direction” (Baudrillard, 1987: 25). Recently, trade in derivatives worldwide was one quadrillion US dollars, which is ten times the total production of goods on the planet over its entire history. This is one sense of what Baudrillard means by ‘floating capital’. There is no anchor in real production or wealth. Žižek has recently suggested that the stages in the predominant mode of money seem to obey the Lacanian triad of psychoanalytic concepts of the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary. Gold functions as the Real of money (what it is ‘really worth’); with paper money we enter the Symbolic register (paper is the symbol of its worth, worthless in itself); and, finally, the emerging mode is a purely ‘Imaginary’ one – money will increasingly exist as a purely virtual point of reference, of accounting, without any actual form, real or symbolic (the ‘cashless society’) (Zizek, 2012: 101). Financial speculation is “without reference to production or its real conditions...it plays now on its own orbital circulation and revolution alone” (Baudrillard, 1998:1). One result of this is the 'fictitious' nature of wealth, as Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy suggest in The Crisis of Neoliberalism. For instance, income is withdrawn against asset bubbles, and there are claims made on future wealth that neither can, nor will, be produced. The signs engendered by the financial simulation cannot fully be converted into real wealth, as the market is currently experiencing. Duménil and Lévy make the case that neoliberalism has less been an ideological programme on behalf of free markets than a quest for more high income on the part of the upper classes. This goes against the traditional legitimisation of neoliberalism by positing old fashion greed against liberty and free-flowing markets. In true ‘trickle-down’ fashion, however, this quest for wealth and property also appeals to the middle-class and the poor. Subprime lending was the attempt to extend to ordinary consumers “through rising home prices [consumer debt, student loans, credit, etc.], a fictitious income long enjoyed by the financial classes. The scheme could hardly last” (Kunkel, 2012: 28). This is congruent with the claim by Angela Mitropolous and Melinda Cooper that the crisis was generated by “usury from below that extended beyond the limits which were tolerable to capital” (Noys, 2010: 46). This is to say that the growth of the bubble accelerated and inflated into what The Economist has called “the biggest bubble in history.” For Baudrillard, the crisis was an always already coming implosion impacted upon by the hyper-real economy and trans-economics of speculation. This is a flouting of the ‘law’ of value, of the market, production, surplus-value, and the’ very logic of capital’. The trans-economic develops into “a game with floating, arbitrary rules, a jeu de catastrophe” (Baudrillard, 2001: 1). Interestingly here, the crisis has come and traditional political economy has come to an end, “but not at all as we expected it to – it will have ended by becoming exacerbated to the point of parody” (Ibid.). The financial crisis has emerged, the bubble has burst, and we witness one of the biggest threats to capitalism and neoliberalism thus far, through the exacerbation of simulation. This has not come about through radical politics and not - as much as it would have been desirable to be agents of change - through critique, or dialectics, or rational discussion, or insurrection, or event, or act, or the deconstruction of political concepts, or long-term revolution, or instant revolt, and so on. Baudrillard’s argument is that we need to follow this processand exacerbate further the contradictions of the hyper-real economy to ensure its demise. If capital is now floating capital, then let us let it float away. This is the parodic, ironic, and ecstatic play of the processes often analysed under the rubric of postmodern. Regarding the crisis there is no transcendent critique at play but immanent implosion. This resonates with the theoretical manoeuvre that Benjamin Noys (2012) has identified as ‘accelerationism.’ Noys notes that there are those who argue for the need to ‘radicalise and deepen the tendencies’ that led to the current crisis: “The tendency now becomes the immanent radicalisation of capital's own dynamic of deterritorialisation” (Noys, 2010: 51). For Baudrillard, this immanent implosion and exacerbation is “a way of putting an end to the economy that is the most singular in style, ultimately more original than our political utopias” (Baudrillard, 1998: 2). Ecstasy is the process in play rather than dialectics. The only revolution in things today is no longer in their dialectical transcendence (Aufhebung), but in “their potentialization, in their elevation to the second power, in their elevation to the Nth power, whether that of terrorism, irony, or simulation” (Baudrillard, 1990: 63). Baudrillard proposes that it is from the inside, by overreaching themselves, “that systems make bonfires of their own postulates, and fall into ruins” (Baudrillard, 2001: 6). This is the fate that arguably awaits the exacerbation of neoliberal capital. Rather than confront power, one must use power against itself. As Baudrillard cites as a preface in Forget Foucault, “As in judo, the best answer to an adversary manoeuvre is not to retreat, but to go along with it**,** turning it to one’s own advantage” (Baudrillard, 1987). In a methodological consideration Baudrillard writes that the only justification for thinking and writing is that it accelerates these terminal processes. “Here, beyond the discourse of truth, resides the poetic and enigmatic value of thinking” (Baudrillard, 2000: 83). Exacerbation is a radical form of Daoism, a going with the flow, not offering resistance but letting the power of the system destroy itself.This is certainly counter intuitive and a novel proposition but is perhaps better placed than the attempt to confront a vastly more powerful opponent head-on, or to attempt make an absurd system moral or regulated. Neoliberalism and its “democratic dictatorship is shaping up nicely,” Baudrillard claims(Baudrillard, 1997: 149). If this is the case then ultimately, for Baudrillard, we are to challenge this from the realm of the symbolic. The economic and semiotic system suppresses and is built upon the denial of the symbolic: one must “therefore displace everything into the sphere of the symbolic, where challenge, reversal and overbidding are the law “(Baudrillard, 1993: 136). Is this principle of exacerbation, which is witnessed in the escalation and overbidding of (‘primitive’) potlatch competition that Baudrillard frequently return to, going to be effective in the ruination of neoliberalism? It is at moments like the socio-economic present that we are most likely to find out.

#### Their class struggle alternative is reliant on a universalist rationalism demarcated on the terrain of the bourgeoisie

**Baudrillard 73** (Jean Baudrillard @ Telos Press - French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, Published: 1973, <IKS> "The Mirror of Production", DOA: 6-21-2022, pg. 157)

In the guise of historical materialism, the idealism of production ends by giving a positive definition to the revolutionary class. The class is then defined in the universal, according to the universality of labor power. It falls back upon an essence which in fact it was assigned by the bourgeois class and which defines it, in its historical being, by the universality of capital. Capital and labor power then encounter each other as respective values, equally founded in the universal. 108 In this encounter of classes where each has its objective, historical reference, the bourgeois class always prevails. For this concept of class belongs to it and when it succeeds in trapping the proletariat in it, it has already won the game. The concept of class is a universalist and rationalist concept, born in a society of rational production and of the calculation of productive forces. In a sense, there has always been and there will always be only one class, the bourgeoisie. This capitalist bourgeois class is defined not only by the ownership of the means of production, but by the rational finality of production. To make a class of the proletariat is hence to enclose it in an order of definition (characterized by "class consciousness" as "the subject of history") 109 in which the model remains that of the bourgeoisie. Accession to the status of class is equivalent to a rationalization of the "workers' movement" and its revolt, equivalent to aligning it in the general rationality of the industrial order. Thus "class against class" can well signify antagonism at the level of the relation to the means of production, but this in no way breaks the finality of productivity itself. On the contrary, but dialecticizing it from within, this schema serves only to extend the process of political economy to infinity. If the class struggle has a meaning, it is not in the encounter of one class with another. (When the structure is reversed and the proletarian class triumphs, as in the East, nothing changes profoundly, as we know, in social relations.) This meaning can only be the radical refusal of letting itself be enclosed in the being and consciousness of class. For the proletariat, it is to negate the bourgeoisie because the latter assigns it a class status. It must not negate itself insofar as it is deprived of the means of production (which is, unfortunately, the "objective" Marxist definition of class); it negates itself insofar as it is defined in terms of production and political economy. Can the proletariat have a meaning if it defines itself in terms of productive forces, labor, historical rationality, etc.? Evidently not. In this framework, the proletariat (or any other possible class) is pledged to enter into the rational dialectic of a form and a content (on the one hand, the structure of classes, on the other, its own class values, when these are not its class "interests"!). It is pledged to a finality of class that perfectly encloses it in the dialectical game of capitalist society. Better still, by reinforcing itself in its being, in proportion to the development of the class struggle, it reinforces the power of the ruling class, and its degraded opposition serves the reformist impulse of the capitalist system, when it does not reveal itself as even more conservative in the realm of values. This is where we are today. To what can we impute the historical blockage of the "revolutionary double negation" (the proletariat was well-born from the bourgeoisie, but it has not been born of itself as a class)? Lenin, even Stalin, the demise of the proletariat itself -- are these dialectical accidents? Quite simply, the problem is the conjuncture of a revolutioanry theory aiming at the abolition of classes, outlined by Marx, with a revolutionary subject (the real and historical class of salaried workers). One cannot even say that the proletariat has slowly turned against itself. It has logically produced the substantialization of the social revolt in a theoretically untranscendable class, which was soon fixed in its being by the organization. Starting from there, the proletarian class and Marxist theory began mutually to justify one another and hence to neutralize each other. And the project of transforming life, as much the demand of Marx as that of the actual revolt, has placidly become the victory of the proletariat.

#### Their attempt to map the reality of Western notions of industrialized production against the entire world reveals a violent ethnocentric racism that invalidates their theory, as it demonstrates the political economy only works as a diagnostic for a very short period of history and has no way of thinking that which is outside it

**Baudrillard 73** (Jean Baudrillard @ Telos Press - French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, Published: 1973, <IKS> "The Mirror of Production", DOA: 6-21-2022, pg. 107)

"The idea that in all societies the relations of production, and consequently, politics, law, religion, etc., presuppose that in all societies the same articulation of human activities exists, that technology, law, politics, and religion are always necessarily separated and separable; it is to extrapolate to the totality of history the structuration of our own society, which is inevitably meaningless outside of it." This summarizes the critique that we have made, in the sense that it aims less at the contents of the analysis than at the form, less at any particular conclusion than at the "scientific" tendency itself. 86 The dialectical structuring of categories which remain in a latent state, with its latent hierarchy placing the determinant instance at the heart of the process of development, as separated functions, as distinctive oppositions ruled by the code, whether traditional or Marxist, carries an incurable ethnocentrism of the code. It is at this price that "materialist" analysis aspires to be a science, to be intelligible; but this intelligibility is that of its own code. From the outset it labors in fact to reproduce it, while at the same time compressing its object, scotomizing it, arming itself against it with a whole system of defenses and miscomprehensions. It works in the imaginary like the man who, having lost his key in a dark alley, looks for it in a lighted area because, he says, that it is the only place where he could find it. Thus, historical materialism does not know how to grasp earlier societies in their symbolic articulation. It only finds in them what it could find under its own light, that is, its artificial mode of production. This miscomprehension is not a peripheral or secondary weakness. (The deepest racist avatar is to think that an error about earlier societies is politically or theoretically less serious than a misinterpretation of our own world. Just as a people that oppresses another cannot be free, so a culture that is mistaken about another must also be mistaken about itself. This is only another way of formulating Marx's equation between the level of the analysis of contradictions and the comprehension of the specificity of other societies.) In effect, the miscomprehension, moving from societies "without history" to archaic or feudal formations, nurtures a theoretical, political and strategic miscomprehension of capitalist formations themselves. It is a shortcoming of historical materialism in accounting for the strategic configuration of modern societies which echoes in its incapacity to account for the symbolic organization of earlier formations. And it does not help to say that "it has other fish to fry." That is, historical materialism has the critique of the capitalist economy and its relations of production as its object and primitive societies, kinship, language and the symbolic, are not its province. Historical materialism must be held responsible, by its own standards, for the carelessness and error that it perpetuates in all these domains for through these miscomprehensions, to which it is an accomplice, its own object then eludes it. It is the contradictions of this object, repressed and mystified, that become the basis for analyzing historical materialism rather than that which analyzes them. It therefore is not a matter of accidental or venal shortcomings: the repression of the symbolic nourishes all the rationalist political illusions, all the dreams of political voluntarism, that are born in the terrain of historical materialism. Along with Cardan one can offer the still more radical hypothesis that not only have the categories of historical materialism no meaning outside of our society, but that perhaps in a fundamental way they no longer have any meaning for us. To the extent that they function at the interior of our reality principle, which is the principle of separation (this is where its analytic -- indeed, "scientific" -- efficacy resides), they blind us along the line of separation itself, along this fracture of the symbolic, along this place (or non-place: utopia) beneath (or beyond) the economy and the internal contradictions of the mode of production. Materialist logic, seeing only the contradictions that are accessible to dialectical or structural schemas, perhaps sees only the symptoms, at the interior of the system, of that rupture which founds the system itself. The political significance of this critique is that the struggle at the level of these contradictions- symptoms does not touch their basis, which is separation. This struggle is only an accomodation that launches the well-known cycle of the extended reproduction of the contradictions and the system itself. The "dialectical" revolution in the order of the mode of production is only perhaps the symptomatic discourse of the separation. Historical materialism prohibits itself from seeing this. It is incapable of thinking the process of ideology, of culture, of language, of the symbolic in general. It misses the point not only with regard to primitive societies, but it also fails to account for the radicality of the separation in our societies, and therefore the radicality of the subversion that grows there.

**By releasing the forces of production to reveal humanity's true nature, the logic of the academy can’t be overcome – we must challenge the system at the level of semiotics and code, or we will not challenge it at all. The universal exchangeability of signifiers renders Marxist analysis invalid because they are dissociated from signifiers.**

**Poster 75** (Mark Poster @ Telos Press - professor of European intellectual history and media and cultural studies at the University of California at Irvine, Published: 1975, <IKS> "The Mirror of Production, Translator’s Introduction", DOA: 6-21-2022, page 4)

What is at stake in Baudrillard's critique of Marx is the gravitational center of the system of political economy. For Marx, the primary place (determinant instance) of capitalism is in the structure of the means of production and the relations of production. Over against political economy, which sought the deep structure of capitalism in the process of exchange value, in the determination of the price of the commodity through the "free" intercourse of demands and supplies, Marx shifted the center toward the "real" act of the production and the consumption of products. But for Baudrillard, in both cases the real logic is the same: it is the investment of things with value; it is the placing of a sign on a thing and the logic of this process of signification is the true essence of capital. The difference between Marx and political economy is not as great as their agreement. The Marxist critique unmasked the "abstractions" of exchange value in favor of the "concrete" processes of use value, of production and labor. But Marx's concepts were not at all radical; they did not reach the root of the matter. All Marx did was to set forth the repressed side of the equations of political economy. Instead of the shadows of the market place, we are sent to an equally obscure underside of the system: the place of production. Following this displacement of the center of the system to its "human side," Marx unravelled the threads of the entire social field through the "mirror of production," at the same time unmasking the exploitative nature of the system. Instead of the "justice" of exchange equivalence, we have the unjust extraction of surplus-value fom the laborer, or, alternatively, the alienation of his life energies. In the process of Marx's analysis, however, the social sphere is filtered, inexorably, through the concepts of production and labor which become the unquestioned metaphysical reference points of social reality. The problem is not that Marx is an economic determinist, that he does not value highly enough the "finer" aspects of human culture. It is not a question of replacing a "materialist" theory with an "idealist" one. Rather, the problem is that he did not penetrate the central logic of political economy, which is, to Baudrillard, its logic of signification. Marx theorized the origin of political economy as a transformation of the mode of production and relations of production. But there has been a second decisive change in political economy that Marx did not recognize and this involved a "process of social abstraction" that refers not to the commodity but to the sign. The chief merit of Baudrillard's thought is to articulate a critique of the political economy of the sign which he regards as the dominant social form of advanced capitalism. Political economy had generated its mode of signification from the outset, during the Renaissance, but Marx was unable to theorize this object because first, like Ricardo and the others, he was tied to the mirror of production, and, second, because his discourse, like theirs, was representational and hence incapable of seeing the radically new form of social exchanges. Baudrillard employs the concepts of contemporary structural linguistics to develop his critique. Structuralists break down the linguistic sign into a signifier (a language term), a signified (an intended meaning), and a referent (an object pointed to by the signifier). Structuralists merely theorize the signifier, in search of its systematic quality, relegating the signified and the referent to an obscure horizon of their science. What they have been able to do is to show that signifiers have become abstracted from the subject (the signified) and from the social world of objects (the referent). While they claim this situation is natural and inevitable, Baudrillard argues that the essence of political economy is precisely this separation; the increasing autonomization of the signifier not simply in the realm of language but in all aspects of social exchange. Marx foresaw that capitalism would corrupt all values, moral, cultural, sexual, etc., by the force of the exchange value of the commodity. Baudrillard asserts that the strategy of the capitalist system is to generate this abstract structure of signification of which the commodity is merely one example. What happens in political economy is this: "the signified and the referent are now abolished to the sole profit of the play of signifiers, of a generalized formalization where the code no longer refers back to any subjective or objective `reality,' but to its own logic. The signifier becomes its own referent and the use value of the sign disappears to the profit only of its commutation and exchange value. The sign no longer designates anything at all. It approaches in its truth its structural limit which is to refer back only to other signs. All reality then becomes the place of a semilogical manipulation, of a structural simulation. And whereas the traditional sign... is the object of a conscious investment, of a rational calculation of signifieds, here it is the code that becomes the instance of absolute reference." Here we are beyond the stable bourgeois world of the nineteenth century where the consumer carefully weighed his money against the value of the commodity, carefully estimated his need against his resources. This stable, comfortable, knowable world where words clearly referred to things, where ideas represented reality, where values corresponded to needs, where commodities had unquestioned value, was the world of Marx and his thought. There could simply not be articulated a "revolution" in underarm deodorants, the incorporation (imaginary or real) of personal qualities through the purchase of commodities, or a "clean bomb." Baudrillard's critique of the sign allows him to render the situation of advanced capitalism with much more concreteness than traditional Marxism. Whole realms of contemporary protest (Blacks, Women, Youth, etc.) and critique (consumption, sex, language, the media, etc.) can be seen better in relation to the repressiveness of the code than in relation to the mode of production. The dramatic tension in the system comes from its difficulty in reproducing the code, while production itself becomes merely an ideological support of the system. (It delivers the goods.)

#### Capitalism affects our politics and arts and culture which Marx doesn’t account for. Marxist movements fail - empirics - those revolts fail due to internal contradictions

**Gane 93** (Mike Gane @ Sage Publications - founder member of the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough when it was established in 1972. He took a BA in Sociology at Leicester University, 1968, and then a PhD at the London School of Economics., Published: 1993, <IKS> "Symbolic Exchange and Death Introduction", DOA: 6-22-2022, pages x to xi)

It became clear, however, that the critical base, the theoretical position, from which Baudrillard undertook his analyses was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand there is in this period a gesture to the importance of the proletarian position. There is also increasing reference to the significance of an order higher than that of the semiotic culture. He called this the 'symbolic order', a more radical if more primordial basis. At first the symbolic order is discussed with reference to the famous analysis of gift-exchange by Marcel Mauss (see Baudrillard, 1981, originally 1972: 64ff.). This is an initial study, the first of a long series of oppositions between the symbolic and the semiotic order. Thus it is essential to clarify the nature of these two concepts. Of course this cannot be done definitively since many of the concepts have been modified through the course of Baudrillard's subsequent evolution. It is Baudrillard's own account of the sacred culture defined by Durkheim in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1915), it is that defined by Max Weber as the enchanted world of traditional societies, it is the fatalistic culture of peasants. For Baudrillard Marx was not sufficiently radical in his analysis, it was not use-value which should have been contrasted with exchange-value, but symbolic exchange which should have been contrasted with commodity exchange. Baudrillard's reading of Marx suggests that his conception of communism was trapped within the matrix of the cultural order of rationalisation and therefore could not be other than its (bad) mirror-image. Like Mauss, Baudrillard suggests the superiority of the symbolic order over the semiotic order (the obligation of gift over the cash nexus) while witnessing the apparent destruction of the former by the latter. Against the Marxists, Baudrillard appears more radical, and more primitive. But there are surprises. Baudrillard does not simply document the course of the destruction of the symbolic order but analyses the ironic evolution of the semiotic order itself. If we turn to Symbolic Exchange and Death we can follow the analyses of the ideological process. Chapter 1, on capitalism and production, is perhaps a crucial analysis. It is curious in many respects. It is written in a highly rhetorical style, playful, wilfully malicious. Although the analyses of simulation, fashion, sexuality, death, are likely to be more celebrated, this first chapter in a sense is more fundamental yet the text is both assertive, dogmatic and at the same time illusive. The writing is in the main unsupported by any burden of evidence or any attempt at systematic argument, as if a highly perverse dialectical mania had grasped the writer. First of all Baudrillard presents the thesis that in order to grasp the nature of modern capitalism it must be thought of not as a mode of production but as a code dominated by the 'structural law of value'. This term is obviously developed from Marx's own law of value, but here it detaches itself from economics and becomes a mechanism which invades all cultural spheres. In other words all spheres can be analysed as the process of the political economy of the sign. Baudrillard insists in fact that the development of modern society is uneven, and like Weber argues that the process first attacks art, politics and culture and then the economy itself. The economy, after having passed through a specific phase of simulation known as the capitalist mode of production (the phase of the factory, etc.), undergoes an ironic logic since the mode of production inverts itself and begins to destroy the very separations it was built upon. Capital itself proceeds to destroy the hierarchy of base and superstructure, of production and reproduction, of labour and capital. There are two steps in the argument which must be examined. The first is the argument concerning the nature of the change of the terms within the capitalist mode of production. The second is the argument concerning the relation between the symbolic order and capitalism. The character of the former argument is perhaps best grasped as process occurring at an already advanced stage of the destruction of the natural economy of primitive symbolic exchange (the argument follows on from that presented in The Mirror of Production). For Baudrillard the primitive society has no 'mode of production', indeed perhaps industrial factory capitalism is the only 'mode of production' that has existed as such. However, once the structural law of value attacks the elements of the system the code becomes determinant, ending any order of causation between the spheres of production and consumption. Hence the historical dialectic between them comes to an end. Baudrillard produces the irony of the Althusserian version of Marx which suggested that reproduction (class struggle) was determinant in history, for Baudrillard suggests that when reproduction becomes dominant labour and production change their sense, they lose their finality, that is, they lose their rationality as purposeful work as they become reproduced for the sake of the reproduction of work itself. This idea reflects the great change that has occurred in Western societies in relation to the meaning of the term alienation. When this happens all elements in the system are affected as the proletariat is incorporated into the social order; trade unions, strikes, revolts such as May '68 lose their claim to justice and radicality. Indeed the organisations and theoreticians who mark time with insistence on the centrality of 'production' and 'labour' and those who believe in 'the use-value of their labour power the proletariat are virtually the most mystified and the least susceptible to this revolt' (p. 30 below). Baudrillard reorganises the theory of resistance and revolt from one based on internal system contradiction (Marx) to that of exclusion and excommunication (Durkheim and Mauss).

### **Cold War Framing of Emerging Tech**

#### **Cold War framing of emerging technology simulates a bygone, bipolar era of stability to conceal the indeterminacy of the postmodern condition. This seduces individuals to a mode of informatic governance and to technological theater which allows nation states to pretend they are solving an issue without actually doing anything. It also justifies populist and nationalist modes of violence as a corrective to the indeterminacy of meaning. It is thus imperative for policy makers to think through our postmodern condition and to reject Cold War framing of emerging technology.**

Csenkey 21 **(**Kristen Csenkey, Ph.D. Candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, Canada. Her research focuses on the management of emerging technologies, innovation, and cyber governance in Canada. She holds numerous fellowships, including with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) and North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN). She is a Women in International Security (WIIS) Emerging Thought Leader in Digital Security and was the 2020 Women in Defence and Security (WiDS)-CGAI Fellow. Kristen is a Junior Fellow with the Defence and Security Foresight Group (DSFG) and a member of the European NATO team, “Selling Simulations: The Seduction of Cold War Techno-Fetishism in a Postmodern Cyber Word, *Defence and Security Foresight Group,* [*https://uwaterloo.ca/defence-security-foresight-group/sites/ca.defence-security-foresight-group/files/uploads/files/csenkey\_dsfg\_wiis-c\_july26.pdf*](https://uwaterloo.ca/defence-security-foresight-group/sites/ca.defence-security-foresight-group/files/uploads/files/csenkey_dsfg_wiis-c_july26.pdf), last accessed 6/24/22)

It is hot to talk about a new Cold War, especially if you put cyber in front of it. The new cyber Cold War concept is prominent in discussions about geopolitics and Great Power competition1. Some2 have argued that the Cold War discourse frames competition and technological rivalry between states, mainly the US and China and the US and Russia, in a way that fails to reflect the complexities of current conflicts and dynamics of the original Cold War. This discourse comes through in policy and strategies, especially when referring to the governance of cyber and emerging technologies. This raises questions about the security community itself and the perceptions of policy and decision- makers in this field. Mainly, what exactly is so alluring about the Cold War that the security community keeps coming back to it as a way to understand the current state of conflict in the world? More so, why is it applied to cyber, including cyber operations, cyber-related technologies, cyberspace, etc., with such conviction? This paper frames the emphasis on a new Cold War as a hyperreality that is heavily focused on technologies and the perceptions of their alleged uses in future conflicts. By drawing on the works of Baudrillard and others, this paper argues that the current focus on Cold War discourse to frame the security environment, and especially cyber, is based on a comfortable imaginary reality that is knowable, ordered, and familiar. Yet, this reality is a simulation that is repeated again and again and perpetuated by a focus on emerging technologies in the discourse as embedded with geopolitics.

This paper aims to present a complex exploration into the postmodern framings of defence and security policy. This paper is structured as such: first, the rationale of this paper is presented, emphasizing its importance for policy and decision-makers and members of the security community. After this, the ‘postmodern condition’ is described as it relates to increasing uncertainty and disorder about the state of the world (via Bauman). This uncertain condition is then linked to a discussion about simulations of reality and hyperreality tied in with emerging technologies. Following this, the seductions of free-market capitalism are brought into discussion with the meaning-making discourse that mirrors the dichotomies of the Cold War. This serves to articulate further the linkages between seductions, capitalism, and the fetishization of technologies. Baudrillard’s (in)famous arguments in The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (1995), and The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers (2002) are used to show how hyperrealities become embedded in the discourse of the security community, especially through a focus on emerging technologies. Baudrillard’s arguments lead to a discussion highlighting how this perception fetishizes technologies and is perpetuated by myths based on capitalist and consumerist intents. The last section discusses the current understanding of emerging technologies and cyber in Canada from a military perspective in policy language in Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy (2017) (SSE). The paper concludes with a ‘translation’ of the discussion by describing three tangible considerations for policy and decision-makers.

**IMPORTANCE OF METAPHORS AND ANALOGIES**

A postmodern deep dive into cyber and emerging technologies might seem beyond the scope of a policy audience. Perhaps it may seem too complex and abstract for consideration in decision- making. However, it is not as abstract or removed from policy and decision-making as one would assume. This is because discourse can shape organization, practices, methods, and strategy, or the ‘reality’ of policymaking.

The discourse about cyber, including threats, security, and space, shapes and is shaped by the definition of ‘reality’. Dunn Cavelty (2013) shows that various actors, including state and non-state actors, seek to assert themselves within this definition process. Part of this process involves the use of metaphors and analogies. Metaphors shape ‘reality’, what is ‘known’, or imagined, about cyber. For example, imagining cyberspace as a ‘frontier’ associates the concepts of unruliness and lawlessness with the need for order within this domain (Dunn Cavelty 2013). Sulek and Moran (2009) show how analogies, such as a Cyber Pearl Harbour, cyber Cold War, and cyber 9/11, etc., can inform future cyber strategies. In their analysis of the cyber Cold War analogy, Sulek and Moran (2009) show that it is “primarily anchored in the idea that powerful nation-states are competing for influence and power without resorting to a direct conventional or nuclear war” (8). Nevertheless, their comparison of the similarities and differences between the ‘actual’ Cold War and a cyber Cold War does not adequately explore the underlying fixations, spectacle, and seductions of this period and how this shapes decision-making and strategy. What is needed is a more nuanced understanding of why this analogy exists, its context, and what it says about the security community’s goals, fears, and choices.

Although the threat environment has changed since the Cold War, narratives drawing on this period still permeate policy and influence decision-making. These narratives frequently imply a level of certainty, calculability, and relative stability of an apparently bipolar world. The intricacies of current conflicts and threats require a more nuanced understanding, and a postmodern approach may help the security community better understand these complexities (Dunn Cavelty and Mauer 2009). This means understanding and facing the ‘new’ ‘cyber’ Cold War discourse and its impact on cyber and defence strategy for policy and decision-makers. This process starts by delving into the postmodern condition and the search for meaning and stability.

**THE POSTMODERN CONDITION**

Modernity is characterized as a search for meaning, order, and stability. Prior to the influence of globalization and neoliberalism, this search was usually answered in the West by the state, church, and/ or family, whereby citizens found stability and identity. Large-scale globalization and neoliberalism starting in the 1990s opened up the world to the possibility of choice. It presented individuals with the freedom to make meaning through their own choices. The corresponding retreat of the state gave individuals a diversity of options to find meaning, yet this freedom resulted in instability. According to Bauman (1997), this instability results from a sense of insecurity, uncertainty, and the constant search for meaning outside of the traditional channels. This is the postmodern condition, specifically the power of other actors outside and including the state, to control individuals’ options for choice. As a result, individuals are without traditional criteria for ascribing identity or achieving meaning in life.

Thus, they search elsewhere for meaning and new lifestyles. These identity-making and consumer- oriented options are coloured with capitalism and aim to ‘seduce’ individuals into consumerism to ease the overwhelming sense of uncertainty. This uncertainty is fuelled by capitalistic dreams that can promise meaning and fulfillment.

In Liquid Life, Bauman (2005) characterizes postmodern life as a constant struggle of reinvention and a search for meaning. This search for meaning and purpose can be applied to any part of society whereby the state’s traditional role is in flux and new possibilities are sought. Globalization has changed the interactions and organization between people, and as a result, changed the constructs that traditionally bind people to a state. The subsequent uncertainty, or liquidity of meaning and belonging in the modern world, has led to many responses by diverse actors outside of the traditional state-focused approach. Responses to this liquidity must mould tangible meaning for individuals to choose; it must also provide structure, identity, meaning, and can be flavoured with capitalism, or as argued elsewhere (see Csenkey 2018), populism and nationalism. States can use these flavours to bolster state-serving practises, for example, by structuring fear of the ‘Other’ in border security and national security policies (Csenkey 2018; 2020; Bauman 2006). For Bauman, individuals are left with no strings to grasp from the past as they buy into these new capitalist dreams.

Unlike Bauman (2005), Baudrillard (1994) does not see globalization and neoliberalism as the end of history (Fukuyama 1992) or identity. New meanings and lifestyles are not necessarily new — they can be rebranded and sold in new ways with mixed flavours — the ‘old wine, new bottles’ approach. For Baudrillard, the postmodern condition includes all ideas from the past. These ideas, however, are now negotiable and are included in the mix of histories and simulations to be seduced by.

The postmodern condition is essential to understand because it is tied inextricably with the simulations that make postmodern life a reality. Uncertainty about order, meaning, and the search for identity and stability in a globalized world can be rebranded and sold as answers. These answers can be crafted as realities (vis-a-vis Baudrillard). However, as we shall see, these realities are simulations, and simulations of simulations, and simulations of the real.

**SIMULATIONS OF THE REAL**

Simulations are reality without reality. The postmodern condition is characterized by simulations and hyperrealities (recall Baudrillard). These simulations and hyperrealities guide perceptions of reality, including choices, identities, and governance practices.

Using Baudrillard’s (1983) example, imagine the creation of a map. The mapping of a territory, including drawing its borders, natural features, and parcelling out associated sovereignty claims, is based on a reality. This reality is based on geography, history, and the real world — yet it is only a simulation of the real. When the reality that the simulation is based on is removed, all following reproductions are based on the simulation itself. What is left is a ‘hyperreality’ or a simulacrum. Baudrillard describes this as a model of a real without the original reality. For Baudrillard:

“[t]he real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these, it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere.” (1983: 3).

Hyperrealities are not duplicates or imitations of reality, nor are they representations. Representations assume that the sign and the real are equivalent. Simulacrum, or hyperrealities, are simulations of reality, reflections that mask or in some way pervert reality. It masks it in such a way that it does not look like reality anymore and bears no relation. Cyber is a hyperreality — it is a simulation of the real.

**Inscribing Reality, or how to Govern Technologies**

Cyber is a hyperreal space; it has intangible and tangible pieces, is interacted by diverse users, technologies, and operates in different contexts. From a military perspective, this is problematic. The liquidity of the postmodern condition affects military frameworks because it creates uncertainty about structure, order, and rationale. This is further complicated by the plethora of actors, including new adversaries and their motives and strategies, operating in this space. Additionally, new technologies, especially those outside of a defence context, are challenging to govern. In combination, all of these factors result in instability. One such way is to stabilize the unstable, solidify the liquid uncertainty, and define reality through inscription.

The complexity and uncertainty associated with cyber and emerging technologies operating in this space can be made tangible, and therefore governable through inscription. For Latour (1987), part of this process is through inscription devices. Reality is made stable through the inscription of meaning onto things and concepts. When reality is made stable, it is comparable, combinable; it can be debated, calculated, and diagnosed. Part of this inscription process involves making and using information. In Seeing Like a State, Scott (1998) argues that states craft ways to imagine the world as easier to govern. States do this by making people, processes, things, regions, etc. quantifiable, or easier to govern through current systems. For example, assigning a person a SIN or giving areas of land postal codes. This, in turn, modifies the perception of these ‘things’ and feeds into the design, enforcement, and retention of governance through a specific lens. These are inscription devices enabling information to be created about concepts and things. This information is used and funnelled through ‘centres of calculation’ whereby it is understood in relation to other information (Latour 1987). In these centres of calculation, the information is manipulated for use, including understanding its effects on other information.

Inscriptions accumulate, and this makes them powerful. The more information is gathered, manipulated, computed, and used via centers of calculation, the more legitimate they become. This information is transformed into plans and strategies, whereby legitimacy, and therefore power, is ascribed to those who seek to govern. When cyber-related emerging technologies are inscribed with a reality through information about them from a specific context, it makes them governable. This paper focuses on understanding the realities cyber technologies are inscribed with and how and why they seduce the security community.

**SEDUCTION: MARKETING IDENTITY AND MEANING**

Although ‘free’ to choose meaning and lifestyles, there is a perpetual uncertainty about the world (Bauman 1997; 2005). Some of this uncertainty is nested in technologies, their uses, users, capabilities, contexts, etc. Globalization saw a decline in metanarratives and grand theories, especially those held and perpetuated by traditional actors like the state. Technologies can be seen as part of a regime of globalization. Although there is anxiety about technologies, the associated narratives provide some recentering and restoration of meaning and choice. For Baudrillard, this is power which he calls seduction, and it resides in the representation of the visible and invisible and making it consumable. Society is organized around the logic of consumption. Consumerism has brought some certainty and stability to the liquid uncertainty of the globalized world. One of the comforting aspects of consumerism is that it is limitless (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]). This means that there are never-ending promises and pleasures. Society’s appetites will constantly grow and seek new products as a consuming community. In other words, it is a society driven by consumerism (Bauman 1992) and a postmodern world of simulations and hyperrealities (vis-a-vis Baudrillard). The key to fulfilling and perpetuating these endless consumeristic needs is through seduction, primarily through the production of imagery and information.

According to Baudrillard (1990 [1979]), seduction is “the strategy of appearance” (7, 8), including over imagery. Seduction supposes an order of things based on something beyond reality, although it appears to offer it. The seduction of a reality that offers stability, including familiar imagery, meaning, and aesthetics, drives the desire to ‘buy-in’. The seduction of meaning through imagery was on display in a newly ‘experienced’ way during the technology theatre of the Gulf War.

**THE TECHNOLOGY THEATRE OF THE GULF WAR**

The Gulf War could be seen as a high-tech war, a ‘clean’ war — where technologies were used to engage in an efficient and modern conflict whereby the state with the most advanced technologies would win and suffer less casualties. This would act as a deterrent to other adversaries to engage in future conflicts. This high-tech war was seen and ‘experienced’ through new media, with new visuals and aesthetics. ‘Real’-time footage from US bombers in the air and from cameras on the ground allowed the ‘audience’ to ‘see’ the action. Nevertheless, this vision of a ‘virtual,’ high precision war was not real. Baudrillard argues in his 1995 piece, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place, that what the ‘audience’ or viewers saw through the media in 1990 -1991 was not the reality of the Gulf War. What was seen was, in fact, a simulation of a real war on television. What was seen and heard did not happen — that war was not real and did not occur. Baudrillard (1992) argues that the media provides a simulation because it is an imperfect representation of what happens in the world and the representations of the real world.

From this simulation of high-tech war, a new hyperreality was created — one that looks like the simulated reality without the original. This has altered the perception not only of what happened during the Gulf War but following conflicts. At the heart of this hyperreality is a fixation with technology. This fixation plays out as a ‘technology theatre.’

Technology theatre builds off Schneier’s (2003) original understanding of the ‘security theatre.’ Simply, the security theatre is doing ‘things’ to make reality feel secure without actually addressing the causes of insecurity or threats. Heightened airport security infrastructures after 9/11 are an often- cited example of the security theatre. The technology theatre is similar because it also attempts to build a sense of security through interventions that appear to solve a problem. McDonald (2020) defines technology theatre as “the use of technology interventions that make people feel as if a government — and, more often, a specific group of political leaders — is solving a problem, without it doing anything to actually solve that problem.” For McDonald, the technology theatre is a distraction, a political tactic used to make governments appear to be making progress in solving an issue. For example, this issue could be attempting to address the outbreak of COVID-19 through contact tracing applications. This paper sees the technology theatre a bit differently. Instead of a largely political tool, the technology theatre within the context of military operations is where the hyperreality of war takes stage, with high-tech weapons on show in a way that further reinforces the simulated reality of conflict. Both the technology and the security theatres build on the visible aspect of doing ‘things’ to address problems — even if these ‘things’ are performative instead of constructive.

**The Spectacle of the Hyperreal**

Unlike Baudrillard’s controversial statements in The Gulf War (1995), in The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers (2002), Baudrillard argues that 9/11 did happen. Yet, he argues that there were intangible unrealities that collapsed into each other as 9/11 became an exchange of symbolic violence presented through the media (ibid. 2002). This was different from what was ‘seen’ during the Gulf War. The terrorist attacks in 2001 on the World Trade Center destroyed the physical structures and the symbolic object. This occurred as a ‘spectacle,’ a ‘fascination’ with the image and its symbolism. More specifically, “[t]he image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption” (Baudrillard 2002: 21). This is different from McLuhan’s (1964) idea that ‘the medium is the message.’ Hyperreality does not distinguish between the medium or the message — the two can no longer be determined as distinct — they collapse into each other (Baudrillard 1994). Technologies and their content are not reality. Hyperreality, simulated imagery, and inscribed technologies and information are part of the technology theatre and are created by spectacles to be seduced by.

For Baudrillard, the Gulf War was a drama of a war whereby Western power and ideas of modernity, democracy, and order were fully displayed. This theatre performance was a hyperreality because the war appeared orderly, precise, ‘consensual,’ and certain. The viewers at home could ‘experience’ the visuals and an impression of war without the original at their leisure. The Gulf War was an “...unreal war in which the over-dimensioned technical power, in turn, over-evaluates the real forces of an enemy which it cannot see” (Baudrillard 1995: 80). The current perceptions of war were shaped by this simulation and are now hyperrealities. The consumer viewers’ experience of war is mundane and tied with leisure and the expectation that high tech will win wars. The consumer has many options to experience this hyperreality, including imagery and aesthetics imbued with meaning.

The technologies within this theatre were inscribed with information and meaning that feeds into and reinforces the performance itself. These inscription devices (recall Latour 1987) are then reinforced by hyperrealities seen in visuals on television and in ‘real’ time and played a role in the confusion of the real and the hyperreal, including a fetishization of technologies.

**FETISHIZING TECHNOLOGIES: THE PLEASURES OF THE REAL MYTHS**

In this context of this discussion, a fetish is a consumer object. It is something to be seduced by through consumption (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]). As previously discussed, consumerism is intertwined with the postmodern condition and hyperreality. Technologies can be fetishized and turned into objects of desire and fantasy-building. As argued by Baudrillard (1995), this was seen during the Gulf War, where an emphasis on technologies as winning hyperreal wars is pivotal to how we perceive the future of conflict. The technology theatre places technologies at the center of the stage to perform military solutions to problems.

Circling back to the focus of this paper, what is to be done about simulations, hyperrealities, theatres, and fetishisms? Why does the security community fixate on Cold War discourse, fetishize technologies, and become seduced by the hyperreality of a cyber Cold War? Ang’s (1989) work on melodramatic imaginations brings us towards some possible answers. Drawing on Ang (1989; 1996), ‘real’ ‘pleasures’ can be fulfilled by fantasies or myths. These are realities in themselves, albeit hyperrealities, and this is a place to look for some insight into the fixation with the new Cold War discourse.

Pleasures are not satisfactions; they are instead longing for a past that can include a perceived future. This future can also be a perceived past — or a hyperreality — it can be a present, but in all cases, it is connected to the fiction of positions, solutions, feelings, and structures (Ang 1989). In other words, there is pleasure in fictional representations of reality or the melodramatic imagination. Identity and meaning within these imaginations are fluid and are given meaning when performed. Recalling Butler’s (1990) arguments about the performativity and fluidity of gender, these identity performances occur within specific contexts. To situate this argument in this paper: technology theatres are where and how identities are performed, and this gives and reinforces its meaning. These performances and melodramatic imaginations are nested in nostalgia for the Cold War era, or more specifically, the order, meaning, and identity ascribed within the binary of bipolarity. This is the pleasure of the techno-fetish.

The nostalgia for the Cold War aesthetics as a melodramatic imagination of the security community is a search for meaning and order in a cyber hyperreality where everything seems uncertain and disordered. This includes the technologies, capabilities, adversaries, strategies, operations, and the changing nature of war itself. Nostalgia, myths, and simulations go hand-in- hand in this case:

“When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. And there is a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production. This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence.” (Baudrillard 1983: 12).

Drawing on Mosco’s (2005) description of the Digital Sublime, to contextualize myths about technologies, myths “offer entrance to another reality, a reality... characterized by the promise of the sublime” (3). The sublime and sublime icons are sources of “utopian visions” (ibid: 6) “mutually constituted ...out of the interconnected realities....” (ibid: 10). Myths are not just distortions of reality — they are a form of reality and give meaning to the incomprehensible, allow us to cope with overwhelming problems, and create comfortable and consensual visions.

Myths are central to understanding cyber hyperrealities and new Cold War discourse. Examining myths about technologies reveals the desires and the hidden configurations of power nested in neoliberal practises. Myths are enacted and continually contribute to constructing mythic ‘things,’ theatres, and performances. In the next section, we apply theory to practice.

**COLD WAR MYTHS TODAY**

The Cold War is over, yet the discourse on “Great Power” politics may say otherwise. This is especially prevalent in popular discussions about cyber and cyber-related emerging technologies and the future of conflict. The uncertainty of modernity and the postmodern condition is felt within the security community. The myths surrounding emerging technologies guide the community to believe that we are indeed experiencing a new Cold War. This is a melodramatic imagination to find pleasure and comfort in the knowable and a past real (or a perception of a past), where technologies were seen as tangible, and the wars’ happened.’ These pasts and futures are ideas and aesthetics for sale. Myths are seductive, and “[i]n the real world, the development and deployment of technologies have generated their own mythic structures, borrowing from much older ideas and bringing these together with new ideas have produced myths repacked for our time” (Burnett et al. 2009: 1-2). Myths support and sustain consumerism, creating identity, structures, institutions, and a complex interplay of understandings. This is important to understand because it shapes everyday lives, lived experiences, uses of technologies, and shapes world views and power relations.

In defence policy, these myths and pleasurable hyperrealities are reinforced. In SSE, for example, new Cold War nostalgia is visible and mixed with the hyperreality of cyber:

“The re-emergence of major power competition has reminded Canada and its allies of the importance of deterrence. At its core, deterrence is about discouraging a potential adversary from doing something harmful before they do it... Deterrence has traditionally focused on conventional and nuclear capabilities, but the concept is also increasingly relevant to the space and cyber domains.” (emphasis added, DND 2017: 50).

Discussions about major power competition, deterrence, and geopolitical technology races are new Cold War discourse. SSE describes the changing nature of warfare due to the proliferation of weapons, hybrid tactics, terrorism, among other factors. In the subsection, “The Re-Emergence of Deterrence,” the changing global security environment is described as a “return of major power rivalry, new threats from non-state actors, and challenges in the space and cyber domains have returned deterrence to the centre of defence thinking” (emphasis added, DND 2017: 55).

Linking these concepts back to Baudrillard’s arguments in The Gulf War (1995), war is a technology theatre whereby the heavy use and the public display of high-tech weaponry in a conflict fetishize technologies. For Baudrillard (1995), the Gulf War legitimized the logic of deterrence. One of the problems with deterrence is that it assumes that everyone is on the same strategy page with equal access to technology and weaponry. It assumes that there is a result of escalation and is seeded in assumptions about deterrence itself. For Baudrillard (1995), the Cold War was based on the realist logic of deterrence. This has become a hyperrealist logic of deterrence whereby the real is deterred by the virtual. This logic has fundamentally changed war — it has made war abstract, beyond the imaginary, so that it becomes an unreality that is the reality.

Uncertainty about the future is perceived as uncertainty about technological capabilities and their alignment with current understanding and conflict strategies. SSE states:

“Technological developments point to a future of defence that is expected to be vastly different than today, with a greater emphasis on information technologies, data analytics, deep learning, autonomous systems, advancements in the electromagnetic and cyber domains, as well as a range of transformative technologies, from quantum computing to synthetic biology. Any number of these advances has the potential to change the fundamental nature of military operations.” (55).

According to Baudrillard, the technology theatre and the conflict that followed the Gulf War are not about politics. Specifically, they are not the virtual version of the Clausewitzian concept of the ‘absence of war by other means.’ Cyber conflicts, or as Baudrillard refers to them as ‘electronic wars’, do not have political objectives because:

“It functions as a preventative electroshock against any future conflict. Just as in modern communication, there is no longer any interlocutor, so in this electronic war there is no longer any enemy, there is only a refractory element which must be neutralized and consensual.” (1995: 84).

In crafting policies to understand and strategize the future of conflict, it is crucial to recognize the role that information plays in inscription devices and the centres of calculation (Latour 1987). The manipulation and use of information about technologies ascribes legitimacy.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS: TRANSLATION, PLEASE**

To summarize the theoretical portion of this paper: the Cold War was a perfectly conformable simulated reality to build into a simulacrum. There was order in the Cold War: there was duality, dichotomies, bipolarity. Yet, this was not the lived reality of the Cold War, but a melodramatic imagination, where the imagery and perception of advanced technologies are fetishized as the answer to solving conflicts.

This paper has engaged in a complicated discussion about how technologies are framed within certain realities, used to craft hyperrealities, and perpetuate mutually constructed myths about conflict in the world. If the reader is skimming to the end of this paper to arrive at the ‘so-what’ value, or to find some translation for this postmodern-heavy content, then it is presented in this section. The answer to the question: what does this mean for decision-makers? is presented here as simply, proceed with caution and do it in three ways:

1) Be critical of narratives laden with Cold War commentaries, including Great Power rivalries, competition, and misguided dichotomies, especially when integrated into the cyber environment. Multiple actors exist and operate in the world, each with different strategies, linkages, and goals. Competition between actors may assume equal access to technology or similar strategies, but it is not always the case.

2) Be wary of technological hype and fixations on technologies without understanding their capabilities in multiple contexts and their ability to go between applications. Technologies can be sold for more than what they are, and they may also assume compatible uses across multiple contexts.

3) Uncertainty is ok. Facing disorder is challenging, especially from a military standpoint, but addressing uncertainty with flexible frameworks that do not seek to replicate an imaginary best practice that involves an adapted model of Cold War bipolarity.

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### China

#### China will never officially go to war. Rather, it will expand its influence through a violent and homogenizing assimilation of difference. Only an analysis of war as simulacra can hope to adequately address Chinese foreign policy.

Nordin 14 (Dr. Astrid Nordin, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, “Radical Exoticism: Baudrillard and Others’ Wars,” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, Volume 11, Number 2, Special Issue: Baudrillard and War, May, 2014, http://www2.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11\_2/v11-2-norden.html)//

(ii). Contemporary PRC rhetoric on pre-modern Chinese thought on war In contemporary China, the official rhetoric on war focuses on pre-emption and the claim that China will never be a ‘hegemonic’ or warmongering power – unlike the US. In this rhetoric, the Chinese war is by nature a non-war. Official documents emerging in the last decade repeatedly stress that China is by nature peaceful, which is why nobody needs to worry about its rise. In the 2005 government whitepaper China’s Peaceful Development Road, for example, we are told that: [i]t is an inevitable choice based on China’s historical and cultural tradition that China persists unswervingly in taking the road of peaceful development. The Chinese nation has always been a peace-loving one. Chinese culture is a pacific culture. The spirit of the Chinese people has always featured their longing for peace and pursuit of harmony (State Council of the PRC 2005b). The whitepaper (and numerous other official and unofficial publications) posit an essentialised Chinese culture of peacefulness as prior to any Chinese relations with the world. This rhetoric of an inherently non-bellicose Chinese way has also echoed in Chinese academic debates, where Chinese pre-modern philosophy has come back in fashion as a (selectively sampled) source of inspiration. The claims and logics that have come out of these debates are varied. One significant grouping of Chinese academics directly follow the government line and claim that ‘choosing “peaceful rise” is on the one hand China’s voluntary action, on the other hand it is an inevitable choice’ (Liu Jianfei 2006: 38). That peacefulness and harmony is something that ‘Chinese people’ have always valued is an implication, and often explicitly stated ‘fact’ in these literatures. Zhan Yunling, for example, claims that ‘from ancient times until today, China has possessed traditional thought and a culture of seeking harmony’ (Zhang Yunling 2008: 4). This claim to natural harmony is mutually supportive of the claim that ‘the Chinese nation’ has always been a peaceful nation, to authors such as Liu Jianfei (2006), or Yu Xiaofeng and Wang Jiangli (2006). A related set of commentators further stress the significance of militarily non-violent means to China getting its (naturally peaceful) way in international relations. For example, Ding Sheng draws on the Sunzi quote mentioned above: ‘to subjugate the enemy’s army without doing battle is the highest of excellence’ (Ding Sheng 2008: 197). This line of argument typically sees what some would call ‘soft power tools’ as a way of getting others to become more like yourself without any need for outright ‘war’ or other forms of physical violence. In a discussion of the official government rhetoric of ‘harmonious world’ under former president Hu Jintao, Shi Zhongwen accordingly stresses that the doctrine opposes going to extremes, and therefore contradicts what Shi calls ‘the philosophy of struggle’ (Shi Zhongwen 2008: 40, where ‘struggle’ implies Marxist ideology). Qin Zhiyong similarly argues that China needs to steer away from collisions and embrace the aim of ‘merging different cultures’ (Qin Zhiyong 2008: 73). At the same time, few Chinese academics question the direction of the ‘merging of cultures’ discussed above – clearly it is other cultures that should merge into China’s peaceful one. In a common line of thought that draws on the historical concept of Tianxia, or ‘All-under-heaven’, it is argued that the Chinese leadership can thus bring about a harmonious world through ‘voluntary submission [by others] rather than force’ simply through its superior morality and exemplary behaviour (Yan Xuetong 2008: 159). On this logic, the leadership will never need to use violence, because everybody will see its magnanimity and will want to emulate its behaviour (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 34. See Callahan 2008: 755 for a discussion). Much of these debates have come to pivot around this concept of Tianxia, an imaginary of the world that builds on a holistic notion of space, without radical self-other distinction or bordered difference. To some thinkers, this imagination is based on a notion of globalisation (for example Yu Xiaofeng and Wang Jiangli 2006: 59) or networked space (Ni Shixiong and Qian Xuming 2008: 124) where everything is always already connected to everything else in a borderless world. In these accounts, Tianxia thinking is ‘completely different from Western civilisation, since Chinese civilisation insists on its own subjectivity, and possesses inclusivity’ (Zhou Jianming and Jiao Shixin 2008: 28). Despite this apparent binary, it is claimed that Tianxiaism involves an identification with all of humankind, where there is no differentiation or distinction between people (Li Baojun and Li Zhiyong 2008: 82). A thinker whose deployment of the Tianxia concept has been particularly influential is Zhao Tingyang, who proposes the concept as a Chinese and better way of imagining world order (Zhao Tingyang 2005; 2006), where ‘better’ means better than the ‘Western’ inter-state system to which Tianxia is portrayed as the good opposite. In opposition to this ‘Western system’, he argues that Tianxia can offer ‘a view from nowhere’ or a view ‘from the world’, where ‘[w]orld-ness cannot be reduced to internationality, for it is of the wholeness or totality rather than the between-ness’ (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 39). However, as a consequence of a prioritisation of order over the preservation of alterity, ‘any inconsistency or contradiction in the system will be a disaster’ (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 33). As a corollary of this prioritisation, Zhao comes to insist on the homogeneity of his all-inclusive space, which aims at the uniformity of society (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 33, emphasis in original) where ‘all political levels … should be essentially homogenous or homological so as to create a harmonious system’ (2006: 33). The aim of the Tianxia system is thus to achieve one single homogeneous and uniform space. Clearly, for such homogeneity to be born from a heterogeneous world, someone must change. Zhao argues that: one of the principles of Chinese political philosophy is said ‘to turn the enemy into a friend’, and it would lose its meaning if it were not to remove conflicts and pacify social problems – in a word, to ‘transform’ (化) the bad into the good (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 34). Moreover, this conversion to a single ‘good’ homogeneity should happen through ‘volontariness’ rather than through expansive colonialism: ‘an empire of All-under-Heaven could only be an exemplar passively in situ, rather than positively become missionary’ (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 36, emphasis in original). However, when we are given clues as to how this idea of the ‘good’ to which everyone should conform would be determined, Zhao’s idea of self-other relations seems to rely on the possibility of some Archimedean point from which to judge this good, and/or the complete eradication of any otherness, so that the one space that exists is completely the space of self (Zhao Tingyang 2006: 33). Thus, Zhao confesses that ‘[t]he unspoken theory is that most people do not really know what is best for them, but that the elite do, so the elite ought genuinely to decide for the people’ (2006: 32). As explained by William A. Callahan: By thinking through the world with a view from everywhere, Zhao argues that we can have a ‘complete and perfect’ understanding of problems and solutions that is ‘all-inclusive’. With this all-inclusive notion of Tianxia, there is literally ‘no outside’.… Since all places and all problems are domestic, Zhao says that ‘this model guarantees the a priori completeness of the world’ (Callahan 2007: 7). This ‘complete and perfect’ understanding is hence attainable only to an elite, who will achieve homogeneity (convert others into self) through example. Eventually, then, there will be no other, the ‘many’ will have been transformed into ‘the one’ (Zhao Tingyang 2005: 13, see also 2006). It is through this transformation and submission to the ruling elite that the prevention of war is imagined. If Baudrillard had engaged with these contemporary Chinese redeployments of pre-modern thought on war (which, to my knowledge, he never did), I think he would have recognised many of the themes that interested him in Western approaches to the first Gulf war. Most strikingly, this is a way of talking about war that writes out war from its story. Like deterrence, it is an imagination of war that approaches it via prevention and pre-emption. What is more, we recognise an obsession with the self-image of the self to itself – in this case, a Chinese, undemocratic self rather than a Western, democratic one. In this Chinese war, like in the Persian Gulf of which Baudrillard wrote, there is no space for an Other that is Other. In the Tianxia imaginary, Others can only be imagined as something that will eventually assimilate into The System and become part of the Self, as the Self strives for all-inclusive perfection. There is no meeting with an Other in any form. Encounter only happens once the Other becomes like the Self, is assimilated into the One, and hence there is no encounter at all (for an analysis that reads Baudrillard and Tianxia to this effect in a Chinese non-war context, see Nordin 2012). (iii). Contemporary Chinese war and its various modes As was the case with the first Gulf War, the war that we are waiting for here in the Chinese case is thus a non-war. If by war we mean some form of (symbolic) exchange or some clash of forms, agons, or forces (as we tend to do even in the current ‘cutting edge research’ in ‘critical war studies’, see Nordin and Öberg 2013) – we cannot expect it to take place. In China, we see not only a participation in the Western system of (non)war through the war on terror, but also another system that precisely denies space for imagining an other as Other, which in turn makes the idea of exchange impossible. In this sense, the Ancient Chinese approach to war through the Tianxia concept – at least as it is reflected by current Chinese thinkers like Zhao Tingyang and Yan Xuetong – is not a Clausewitzean war continuing politics by other means, but precisely a continuation of the absence of politics by other means. It arguably shares this aspect with both the first and the second Gulf Wars. This, however, is certainly not to say that there are not those who fear a Chinese war or that we have no reason to fear it. In various guises, the war that is imagined through a Clausewitzean ontology of agonistic and reciprocal exchange returns and is reified also in China. It is not uncommon for authors discussing the Chinese traditions of thinking war that I describe above to begin their discussion by explicitly drawing on Clausewitz and take his war as their point of departure (for example Liu Tiewa 2014). For several Chinese writers, it is clear that this building of a ‘harmonious world’ is directed against others whose influence should be ‘smashed’ (Fang Xiaojiao 2008: 68). From this line of thinkers, the call to build a harmonious world has also been used to argue for increased Chinese military capacity, including its naval power (Deng Li 2009). Although Chinese policy documents stress that violence or threat of violence should be avoided, they similarly appear to leave room for means that would traditionally be understood as both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ in Joseph Nye’s dichotomisation (See for example State Council of the PRC 2005a). Indeed, many of Chinas neighbours have voiced concern with growing Chinese military capacity over the last few years, and a Chinese non-war is no less frightening to its neighbours than a war – be it labelled ‘just’ or ‘unjust’, ‘real’ or ‘virtual’. This Chinese war – past, present and future – is acted out in various different modes. Violent war is reified through the spectacle of computer games, art, online memes, cartoons and not least dramas on film and television (Diamant 2011, 433). The Chinese state claims success in all of its wars, and simultaneously claims that it has never behaved aggressively beyond its borders (which is also, of course, a convenient way of glossing over all the violence perpetrated by the Chinese state within those borders, the violence with which they are upheld and with which they were established in the first place, and the clear contradiction between the state’s fixation on territorial integrity and its borderless and holistic Tianxia rhetoric). Popular cultural renditions of war paint a more varied picture, but all contribute to a reification of war. Recent Chinese productions that reify war on the screen through what we may call ‘war porn’ are numerous – indeed, it has been claimed that China produces what is probably the highest number of dramas set in wartime in the world (Diamant 2011: 433). One example accessible to a non-Chinese audience is Feng Xiaogang’s Assembly (Jijiehao 集结号) from 2007, which recreates horrifically violent and ‘realistic’ battle scenes from the Civil War between Guomindang nationalists and Communist troops. The Second Sino-Japanese war is another popular setting for these reifications of war, providing the backdrop for another large budget film by Feng Xiaogang, the 2012 Back to 1942 (Yijiusier 一九四二), and international star-director Zhang Yimou’s The Flowers of War (Jinling shisan chai 金陵十三钗). Another example is Lu Chuan’s City of Life and Death (Nanjing! Nanjing! 南京！南京！) which became a box office hit in China in 2009, but was criticized for its portrayal of a Japanese soldier as a fully formed and sympathetic person in its narration of the Nanjing massacre. Off screen China has, in the reform era since Mao’s death, seen a new and related wave of commemorations of the Civil and Anti-Japanese wars in museums throughout China, which play a central role in national education campaigns to ‘never forget national humiliation’. Examples that house both permanent exhibitions and temporary special exhibits commemorating particular war events include the Rape of Nanjing Memorial/Nanjing Massacre museum in Nanjing; the Military Museum, the Museum of Revolutionary History and the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance to Japan in and outside Beijing; and the September 18th Incident Memorial and Museum of the Manchurian Crisis in Shenyang, to name but a few (these museums and their exhibits of war have been studied for example by Mitter 2000, 2003 and Waldron 1996). Many of these museums include vivid reconstructions, often as waxworks with sound and motion, of horrific battlefield scenes for its audience to consume. Reifications of war on screen and in museums moreover tie in with a ‘new remembering’ by academic and popular publications since the late 1980s, which commemorates and fetishizes China’s past experiences of war as well as projects that experience into the present and the future through the ever-present rhetoric of ‘National Humiliation’ (guochi.For articles tracing this ‘new remembering’, see Coble 2007 and Mitter 2003). Masses of propaganda are devoted to the commemoration of the Anti-Japanese war, particularly relating to various Campaigns to Support the People’s Liberation Army and Military Dependents, and in annually recurring celebrations of the Spring Festival, the Anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic, Army Day and the ‘National Humiliation Day’ which has received much academic attention in recent years (Callahan 2004, 2009; Wang Zheng 2008). Much of the state-led reification of war, and particularly its treatment in academic publications and governmental speeches, has centred on the ‘numbers game’ of claiming high death tolls and economic costs of the battle histories of the Anti-Japanese war, rather than fore-fronting the all-too-human element that may be found in for example memoir literature (Coble 2007, 406). Accordingly, other scholars have argued – and I agree with them here – that ‘[a]lthough Chinese movies and television often feature military-related themes, it is rare to find frank and politicized depictions of China’s military conflicts’ (Diamant 2011: 431). As in the Tianxia narrative discussed above, politics is paradoxically eradicated from these versions of war, together with an other understood as a human other. However, the literatures critiquing this de-politicization typically criticise the intellectual elites in various cultural and propaganda offices for producing an ‘artificial rendering of China’s wars’ denying veterans an ‘authentic military voice’ (Diamant 2011: 431, 461). My point here is different. It is not a question of creating an image of false representation, or what we may call a third order simulation, a masking of the reality of war. Rather, the point is that reality and illusion can no longer be distinguished, but have collapsed into one another. There is no longer a ‘real’ war behind these narratives which can be uncovered (cf. Nordin 2012). Through these other modes, the Chinese non-war is reified as war. Like the Gulf War of which Baudrillard wrote, it appears seamless, yet is riddled with contradictions. If what took place in the Persian Gulf was the spectacle of war, what is taking place in contemporary China is perhaps better understood as the spectacle of non-war. Like the spectacle of war it has a range of strategic and political purposes for everyone involved. Like the pre-emptive narratives of Tianxia, the reifications of war that hark back to a Clausewitzean ontology relay a war that is scripted or coded in advance, disallowing alterity. And to those who fear the possibility of the Chinese war, we might indeed see reasons to fear, but also provide a reminder that it is stupid to be for or against this war, if we do no for a moment question its probability, credibility or level of reality.

#### Their harmonious conception of Chinese rise to the global stage is nothing but the integration of China into the Westphalian order of integral reality – you should be skeptical of academic claims of this nature.

Nordin 12

(Astrid H.M. Nordin [Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University], “Time, Space and Multiplicity in China’s Harmonious World”, 2012, The University of Manchester Library, <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:186417>, pages 135-149)

We have seen how China’s rise is commonly described in terms of inevitable destiny because of history. Meanwhile, the PRC leadership is strictly managing the imagined form and significance of such a rise. Since 2008 China has placed new focus on using mega events to shape the expectations of domestic and international audiences, and thus to shape the future. Such mega events included the 2008 Olympic games, the 2009 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, as well as Expo 2010 Shanghai China. Expo 2010 was seen as an expression of and tool for the building of harmonious world by Chinese academics (for example Zou Keyuan, 2011: 11). Yan Xuetong’s Ancient4 Chinese4Thought4was adorned with an image of the Chinese national pavilion at the Expo on its book cover. The Expo was also associated with harmony by the party- state. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao stuck closely to the official articulation of “harmonious world” when he described the Shanghai Expo as: an encyclopedia lying open on the land and a magnificent painting showcasing the integration and harmony of diverse cultures … The World Expo is a vivid demonstration of the diversity of human civilizations. The Shanghai Expo has offered a broad stage for inter-cultural exchanges and integration, reminding us that we live in a divers and colorful world (Wen Jiabao, 2010a). He continued to argue that the Expo had fully demonstrated harmony to be the common aspiration of mankind, and that the Expo was above national, ethnic and religious boundaries. This, to Premier Wen, was why “[i]t is important that countries … work together to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity” (Wen Jiabao, 2010a). The Expo was made possible by China’s economic rise, but was also part of establishing the story of such a rise as true, and of narrating a future where China rises to be the benevolent leader of a new harmonious world order. In this chapter I examine the way ideas of China’s role as leader of a harmonious world proliferated at Expo 2010. I go about this examination in two parts. In the first part I trace the two cosmologies that I outlined in the academic literatures in the previous chapter, “unit- based” and “holistic” spatial imaginaries. I continue to argue, now in the context of Expo 2010, that the two cosmologies are not mutually exclusive. I show how they are deployed at the Expo in ways that reinforce one another by ordering spatial difference through teleological time. The two cosmologies are worked out in conjunction with one another at Expo 2010, in ways that support a particular discourse on China and the world, prescriptive of a particular future where China leads a new harmonious world order. Like some of the academic literatures examined in the previous chapter, the Expo worldview portrays itself as “from the world” or “from everywhere”, yet insists on “specifically Chinese” terms and experience, and on the singular China’s Future as the (harmonious) world’s Future. On this view, there is only one Future, and it does not welcome contestation. Having recognised this effect of harmony at the Expo, I argue in the second part that we need to move beyond the reading of mega events as simple representation and ideology and read it also as simulation and simulacra. Reading the Chinese world fair as a simulacrum of world order can provide different ways of relating “the West” to its “other country” China. I examine this relation through asking what it means to be the fair: Where is the world fair- When is the world fair- Who is the world fair- Reading the world/fair as simulacrum disrupts the fair’s notions of inside and outside, now and then, subject and object to the point where these terms are no longer workable. What we end up with is not the many turning into the one, with the convergence of others into the self. Instead, what remains is a fragmented plethora of truth, not the unreal but the hyper-real. My reading of Expo 2010 as simulacra examines some of the distinctions implied in the where,4when4and4who4of the world/fair, and shows that we may be better off not taking our distinctions so seriously. THE TWO COSMOLOGIES AND HARMONY AT EXPO 2010 Expo 2010 took place in the tradition of scientific and industrial world fairs following on from the Great4Exhibition4of4Industries4of4All4Nations that was held in London in 1851. Expo 2010 has been read in China to symbolise the greatness and international significance of China – indeed, it was the largest, most expensive, and most visited of its kind (Barboza, 2010; Xinhua, 2010d; 2010e). The 73 million visitors who passed through the Expo in Shanghai during the six months it was officially open as world fair would be even greater if one counted the subsequent visitors attracted to the site’s permanent monuments (the Chinese national pavilion for example has been turned into a permanent museum) and to the online version of Expo 2010, where one’s avatar can stroll through a virtual 3D replica of the site, visit pavilions and partake in numerous exhibitions as well as interact with other visitors. Unit-based spatial imaginaries are immediately obvious at the Expo. Space at the Expo is typically imagined in a modernist manner as a flat surface upon which humans act, as a “stage” or “platform”. As for the unit-based territorialisation of this surface, the Expo site is organised as an imagined state system, divided into bounded continents of national pavilions. At the online Expo, we can take guided tours of pavilions and exhibitions and get a virtual passport in which we can collect visa stamps from the various territories visited. Likewise, at the Expo visitors, who may never have been abroad and may not own a passport in the outside world, can get a multitude of visa stamps and “play” at being well-travelled. It is an enactment of the world that pretends such international life is readily available and unrestricted. It draws up borders and barriers in order to let them be crossed, but by no means erased or blurred. Through turning visa collection into a game, border controls appear innocent at the same time as their indisputable “natural existence” between states is reinforced. However, it becomes clear that partaking in this game of “open borders” is conditional. At the Expo, I met a young travel guide, who visited the Expo with 60 tourists from Beijing. While her group went into the Pavilion of Future (subtitled “Dream inspires the future”) and had their pretend passports stamped, she waited ticketless outside, stopped at the border because she did not have the right papers. Simultaneously, the “external” nation-state system echoed in citizenship regimes inside the Expo when producing a “real” passport meant one could jump pavilion queues for the pavilion of the country that had issued it. This way of conceiving of space in terms of bordered units was marked throughout the Expo. China’s own pavilion of regions was no exception, subdivided into regional containers of culture – many even look like boxes with essentialised culture exhibited inside, like the virtual version of the Tibetan pavilion below. Although obviously steeped in a unit-based spatial imaginary, these bounded units are also enveloped in the holistic celestial order of one-worldness. The key terms in holistic imaginaries are the “all-encompassing” or “all-inclusive”, that with “no outside” or “no exception”, “network”, and of course “Tianxia”. The holistic imagination of everything as always already connected to everything else appears in the room in Urbanian4Pavilion themed “Connection”(交往). This room is based on the “scientific theory called six degrees spatial theory”, which states that no two people are separated by more than 6 relationships (Xu Wei, 2010: 27). On the ceiling a film is projected showing selected people’s movements on a map. Portraits of people appear in circles connected by lines to more and more other people/circles until they form a web or network on the round screen, bringing your mind to the Earth and thus the idea that all people of the world are connected (Xu Wei, 2010: 27). There is no one outside the network. Moreover, this claim is backed up by science, and thus requires no further explanation. The Pavilion of City Being describes the city as a living being or organism, focusing on the theme of shengming (生命), meaning life, being or bios. The holistic imagination implied in this idea of the city as one body or life is clear from slogans such as “city being multiplies endlessly, held together by superseding cycles” and “the unceasing adjustment between people and city maintains city life harmonious, healthy city life requires our common protection” (Xu Wei, 2010: 40). The Pavilion4of4Urban4Planet moreover draws on a holistic spatial imaginary to tell us on the “Road of Solutions” how the resolution to the world’s problems can be found: “[t]he seasons change, settlement becomes cities and trading routes develop into a completely4networked4world … Only with open mind and allWinclusive4view can we bring the hope of sustainable growth to our planet Earth” (emphasis added). These references to the organically connected single organism or body, the web of connections with no outside and the completely networked world with an all inclusive view all provide the basis of a holistic spatial imaginary. Moreover, the comments above indicate that this holistic imaginary is taken to demand the harmonious balance of all and “our common protection”. Classification in time and space From the above we see that imaginations of China in the world at the Expo draw on both unit-based and holistic notions of space. This instance shows the two spatial imaginaries coexisting in contemporary China, and so refutes the idea that one would be superseding the other. I next look closer at how they work in tandem at the Expo. Throughout the Expo, classification of space is marked. We have seen it above in the unit-based form of mapping state units, as well as that of regions as containers of culture. The holistic Tianxia concept does not refer to the jigsaw-puzzled space of the unit-based imaginary, but nonetheless classifies and sequentialises through a centre/periphery, civilised/barbarian divide. Tianxia ordering is similar to the Expo site centred on the Chinese pavilion. Similarly, the comparison and contrasting of “East” and “West” is ever present. In a film screened at the Pavilion of City Being we are watched from the screen by “the eyes of Eastern people, the eyes of Western people” (Xu Wei, 2010: 49). Likewise, “Pre- show Hall” in the Pavilion4of4Footprint shows “ideal cities” as they have been imagined in the East and in the West. Dreaming of a better future is described as universal, or eternal (永恒), but similarities end there and juxtaposition takes over. The division of space into civilisational/regional/national units is aligned with division of time into eras, often in its ancient/modern guise. This is where, just as in much academic discourse, we see evidence of the alignment of dichotomized here/there, modern/ancient and subject/object (cf. Fabian, 1983). As a number of “developing” countries could not fund their own participation in Expo 2010, Chinese subsidies to these countries ensured there were more state and organisation pavilions, 246, than at any previous Expo (Xinhua, 2010e). The vastly different budgets and scales meant pavilions gave the impression of a developmental or aspirational classification, in a visual display of global inequality. As in global development, China financially supported “less-developed” states in a way that visually emphasised the impressive scale and central location of the Chinese pavilion and reaffirmed China as a “helper” and “developer” ahead of the “helped” and “developing” states at the Expo site periphery, such as the African Joint and Pacific Joint pavilions. This convening of others differentiated in space through time is crystallised in Urbanian4Pavilion, which shows the morning rituals of families taken to represent five continents. It shows the similarities of getting up, washing, brushing teeth and so on of people from these different spatial/cultural units. However, the sequentialisation in time is obvious. The man from Rotterdam has an electric toothbrush and the Chinese middleclass office worker wears new pyjamas in his modern bathroom, whereas the bathroom in Rio de Janeiro looks worn and dirty. In this way spatial difference is aligned in temporal sequence. We all do the same thing; it is just that some are a bit behind on the road to Modernisation and Development. Spatial division is thus not only conceived as classification of space, but also as classification in time. This classification is moreover conceived of in a time that runs towards a particular end. Clock time running out or towards the future is emphasised at the Shanghai train station’s Expo clock tower, as well as throughout the Expo itself by feature clocks, ticking pendula and hourglasses. The intertwining of temporal notions with strong assertions as to what Chinese identity is in world affairs is clear from an introduction to the Expo on its official website, ringing with familiarity with the official party-line: [w]ith a long civilisation, China favours international exchange and loves world peace. China owes its successful bid for the World Exposition in 2010 to the international community’s support for and confidence in its reform and opening-up. The Exposition will be the first registered World Exposition in a developing country, which gives expression to the expectations the world’s people place on China’s future development … We count on the continuing attention, support and participation of all the peace-loving countries (Expo 2010 Shanghai China, 2008). In this context, depicting China as original confers on it a status as fore-runner of developing countries, conveniently forgetting the 1949 Haiti Expo (Expo 2010 Shanghai China, 2006a; Bureau International des Expositions, 2011).4 China’s present and future direction is frequently depicted in terms of a return to an original or always intended state. The Expo itself is typically portrayed as the fulfilment (led by the PRC/CCP party-state) of an ancient Chinese dream. This portrayal appears in articles (Expo 2010 Shanghai China, 2006b), in books such as 1004 years4of4Expo4dream4(百年世博梦)4(Shanghai shibohui shiwu xietiaoju, 2009), and in the World Expo Museum that looks back at more than 150 years of historical preparation for the Shanghai Expo. Online commentators echo such narratives, and one commentator on the Expo online “Dream Wall” comments that “I believe in China’s actual strength, a country that has 5000 years of civilisation must be able to produce glory once more” (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010c). Finally, the feature film of the Xinjiang regional pavilion demonstrates how classification of time and space come together into a particular, goal-oriented progress under PRC leadership: [Xinjiang is] the communication land of four great civilisations of the world ... It once was the road of bonze Xuanzang, the silk road, the road of western expedition and the road of eastern return … The great transformation of 60 years is the evidence of our diligence and intelligence … Today, the assistance from the motherland also lights up the passion in Xinjiang (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010g).104 This quote brings together the numerous elements that make possible the problematic imagination of self-other relations that is under discussion in this thesis. A separation between civilisations is posited. Xinjiang is subsequently conceived of as a place where these separate civilisations meet. Progress is imagined as a return to a state that once was, and that is now returning through Chinese diligence in its (re)civilising mission. One can only wonder at the irony as the motherland’s assistance “lights up the passion” in Xinjiang after the brutal ethnic clashes in the years running up to the Expo (Xinhua, 2009d). 104 Bonze Xuan Zang is a Buddhist sage from Chinese literary classic Journey to the West. Metaphors of lines, circles, spirals and pendula may be used to describe this temporality, but may be misleading as they change significance in their combined use (cf. Gell, 1992). Analogue clock time, for instance, may be circular if used as for example a toy, but indicates linear time flow when allied with other concepts, such as civilisational progress and development. The point of China’s progress/return (to its rightful place as world leader) is not whether we describe it using the metaphor of the circle or the line. Of key importance is instead the way it operates through a classification of time and space: and there is no doubt as to where we are/should be heading. The point is that these temporalities support each other and lead towards the same ultimate endpoint. The Future is one where China leads a new harmonious world order Chinese discussions surrounding the Expo typically conferred on it one central meaning – it was a sign of China’s legitimate rise to world leadership. Wishes for Chinese superiority similarly appeared in the online Vanke-Pavilion, the corporate pavilion for a large Chinese property developer. One commentator wished that in 2049 “China is in leading position in the world” (中国处于世界领先) and another exclaimed that by then “China has really changed into a great cultural country, ten thousand countries come to pay tribute ” (万邦来朝)105 (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010f). A majority of participants in the Expo’s “Dream wall” expressed love for the motherland, the Expo and Shanghai, with one exclaiming, “Go Expo, China is invincible ” (Go Expo 中国无敌) (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010c). Key to justifying this Chinese world leadership is depicting such a world as “harmonious”, in accordance with the harmonious world discourse. The Expo is steeped in this language of harmony. China’s national pavilion begins with the film “Harmonious China” (hexie4Zhongguo4和谐中国) and concludes with telling us “the lotus flowers blossom, symbolising the harmonious and glorious future of Chinese cities” (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010a). The Xinjiang pavilion is labelled “Xinjiang – a 105 This set formulation is commonly used to indicate great power. - 146 - harmonious land”. We go to the Expo on a harmonious train, to visit Harmony Tower, and if we hurt ourselves we can have a band-aid from the harmonious first aid kit. Figure 5: Harmonious first aid kit (Source: Astrid Nordin) The language of harmony is also prevalent among the wishes of Vanke4Pavilion. One participant wishes: 2010: A life at ease A peaceful and stable job Wishing the great motherland is increasingly thriving and prosperous My family is increasingly harmonious and happy 2049: There is no war in any corner of the world There is no discrimination Peaceful getting along and also wish that when we reach that time people from every corner of the world can all profoundly understand China (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010f). We see here a mixing of ideas of harmony with notions of a good personal life, a thriving China, and an image of peacefully connected world citizens who comprehend China. Again, there is an emphasis on making foreigners understand “China”. A blurb for Pavilion4of4Future’s harmony sculpture similarly personalizes world harmony: “core concept of traditional Chinese culture: only the harmony of the world and all things constitute the harmony of human’s spirit”. Just as in Zhao’s Tianxia, we require the harmony of all things. There can be no outside to the system, or it will fail. All things must be incorporated. This, the claim is, is a distinctly Chinese idea of world order. Throughout all of these imaginings of China in the (harmonious) world, the two spatial imaginaries combine in ways that repeat the problems outlined with regards to academic discourse, making difficult the imagination of others as coeval. The unit- based spatial imaginary provides a condition of possibility of Chinese particularism. Throughout the Chinese pavilions at the Expo, China is the very origin of civilisation and of the world – it is where the first fire burnt, the first bird flew, and the superior values of Confucian harmony originated. The holistic spatial imaginary becomes key to imagining the need for spreading this civilisation, and for the Chinese civilising mission we currently observe around the world (Nyíri, 2006). The holistic idea of space is core to construing the rise of China to leadership of a harmonious world as peaceful and beneficial to all. In actuality, there is no outside, everything is always already connected to everything else, and the view of the Chinese party elite is a “view from nowhere”, or a view “from the world”. Many of these themes are echoed through non-Chinese pavilions at the Expo, including the two spatial imaginaries, the goal-oriented notion of time, East-West juxtaposition and a reliance on blurry notions of civilisation. Notably, many foreign states, organisations and enterprises used the Expo to exhibit their willingness to buy into the Chinese discourse on harmonious world, allowing it prominence of place in the way they name, speak of and write of their own pavilions. “Harmony” in particular is given legitimacy through frequent use in foreign pavilions, such as “Harmonious relations” (Pacific joint pavilion), “Feel the harmony” (Austria), “Harmony of the heart, harmony of the skills” (Japan), and so on. While some academic analyses of Chinese foreign policy argue that the PRC is being “socialised” into values and norms of “international society” (Johnston, 2008), the Expo showed the opposite: “outsiders” competing to be most attentive to and accommodating of China’s purported self- image. Non-Chinese corporate pavilions too helped reinforce and legitimate this particular version of “harmony” with reference to Chinese history. One example was the pavilion called “Tianxia yi4jia” (天下一家): “Tianxia one family”. This pavilion was German multinational Siemens’ corporate pavilion, showcasing its technology through the aspirational middle class future of interactive games and wine coolers that will apparently be available to Chinese people in 2015. Entering Siemens’ harmonious and commercialised rendition of Tianxia we are photographed. As in a miracle of scientific development our faces appear on a film screen at the exit, manipulated to sing together in harmony with the Expo theme tune. The simulation is explained at a sign at the pavillion entrance: [a]fter scanning and capturing the user’s facial features, the image will be recorded and transformed into an avatar allowing users to feel as if they are starring in a pre-programmed movie or video … How will this technology better our lives- Provides an entertaining experience for people to play a role in a movie or become a “star”. Everyone has the chance to stand in the spotlight. China’s Future, in this commercialised version as in its official one, provides the time and space for us all to be stars in the spotlight. It is worth recalling here the organisers’ own reading where the Expo took place because of “the international community’s support for and confidence in [China’s] reform and opening-up”, expressing “the expectations the world’s people place on China’s future development” with China sternly counting on “the continuing attention, support and participation of all the peace-loving countries” (Expo 2010 Shanghai China, 2008). In this version of the Future World we are allowed into the spotlight on the condition that we become avatars that sing simultaneously in one voice to the Chinese melody. Foreclosing futures at Expo 2010 In this part of the chapter I have argued that the holistic and unit-based cosmologies, or spatial imaginaries, were prominent at Expo 2010, aligning classified units of time/space in sequence. They are simultaneously deployed in ways that support a particular discourse on China and the World, prescriptive of a particular future where China leads a new harmonious world order. World fairs were from the outset an exercise where self/other relations were heavily tinted by imperialism (Rydell, 1984). Today, although the specific selves and others reproduced by the Expo may be somewhat different their fundamental manoeuvre is the same. The articulation of time/space with the narrative of harmony is problematic, again and despite itself, because it marginalises concepts of coeval multiplicities and difference. Others are not properly different, they are just behind. Just like Zhao’s Tianxia, the Expo worldview portrays itself as “from the world” or “from everywhere”, yet insists on “specifically Chinese” terms and experience. This is reinforced as the Expo shows an already nationalistic domestic audience a China that rightfully rises to the place of world leader and the folly of anyone imagining that such a rise would be less than beneficial to all. This is buttressed by readings of foreign involvement and investment in the Expo as endorsements of the Chinese model for its rise, and is taken as a showcase for how harmonious the world is under Chinese leadership. The Expo worldview portrays itself as “from the world”, yet insists on the singular China’s Future as the (Harmonious) World’s Future. On this view, there is only one Future, and it does not welcome contestation. I propose that we can refuse scripting our songs in the pre-programmed manner suggested by predominant imaginings at the Expo. It can indeed be possible to meet the challenge of coeval multiplicities that time and space should present us with. In the next section I begin to unsettle the dominant rendition of time, space and China in the world by way of reading it through the work of Jean Baudrillard.

**Politics of harmonization eradicates that which presents itself as an alternative option ordering the world into hierarchies of difference. The formulation of politics in this manner pits the insiders versus the outsiders promoting perpetual antagonism within the populous.**

Nordin 16 (Astrid, “Futures beyond ‘the West’? Autoimmunity in China’s harmonious world”, Review of International Studies, 42, pp 156-177, January 2016)

The party-state version of harmonious world has then been deployed to ‘do’ various concrete things in Chinese international politics. At the level of imagining difference, it appears to share our concern here with multiplicity and openness. However, groups and cultures are described in ways that correspond with David Kerr’s ‘blending diversity under universalism’, which tends towards an imagination of difference as hierarchically ordered, and sometimes as something that should be eliminated. The future harmonious world is envisaged as an ‘inevitable choice’, and China is imagined as having a privileged position in the construction of this future because of its purported harmonious nature based on history. It is inevitable, yet needs to be constructed and fostered. Against this background, ‘harmonious world’ is said by some to indicate ‘an increasingly confident China relinquishing its aloofness to participate and undertake greater responsibilities in international affairs’. Nonetheless, the term remains to a significant extent a ‘catch all’ phrase of friendly connotations. ‘Harmonious world’ may be useful precisely because of its vague and elusive implications, that nonetheless speak to both Chinese and non-Chinese sensibilities. Indeed, ‘who could argue against global peace and prosperity?’ Nonetheless, what emerges from accounts of harmony as articulated in China in the last decade is a tension in the harmony concept between its need for multiplicity on the one hand, and its presupposition of universalisability on the other. Bart Rockman has suggested that harmony may be a ‘necessary glue without which neither a society nor a polity are sustainable’, but that ‘complete social harmony is ultimately suffocating and illiberal’. Jacob Torfing has also taken issue with predominant understandings of harmony in Southeast Asia that he argues present a ‘post-political vision of politics and governance that tends to eliminate power and antagonism’. Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe, he understands such a post-political vision as both theoretically unsustainable and politically dangerous. It is unsustainable because power and antagonism are inevitable features of the political dimensions of politics. Therefore politics: cannot be reduced to a question of translating diverging interests into effective [win-win] policy solutions, since that can be done in an entirely de-politicized fashion, for example, by applying a particular decision-making rule, relying on a certain rationality or appealing to a set of undisputed virtues and values. Of course, politics always invokes particular rules, rationalities and values, but the political dimension of politics is precisely what escapes all this. Politics, then, unavoidably involves a choice that means eliminating alternative options. Moreover, although we base our decisions on reasons and may have strong motivations for choosing what we choose, we will never be able to provide an ultimate ground for any given choice – in Derridean terms, such grounds will always be indefinitely deferred. Therefore, ‘the ultimate decision will have to rely on a skillful combination of rhetorical strategies and the use of force’. The acts of exclusion that politics necessarily entails will produce antagonism between those who identify with the included options and those who do not. For this reason, the attempt by the promoters of harmony to dissociate harmonious politics from the exercise of power, force and the production of antagonism, claiming a harmony where everyone wins and no-one looses, is bound to fail. Moreover, the post-political vision of politics and harmony is dangerous because its denial of antagonism will tend to alienate those excluded from consideration. This, Torfing writes, will tend to displace antagonistic struggles from the realm of the political to the realm of morals, ‘where conflicts are based on non-negotiable values and the manifestation of “authentic” identities’. Such non-negotiable values would be the opposite of the cooperative harmony sought. To both Rockman and Torfing, then, complete or perfect harmony will defeat harmony and create disharmony. In this way, the excessive production of harmony is what produces the disharmonious elements that come to threaten it. We can see this happening in contemporary China, where the ‘harmonising’ policies enforced under the ‘harmonious society’ slogan have produced a range of oppositional movements, from Chinese youth mocking harmony online to the increasing number of selfimolations we currently witness in and around Tibet. Numerous scholars argue that in order to imagine harmony, we need to imagine heterogeneity and multiplicity. We can now add that the problematic organisation of difference that remains in imaginations of harmonious world eliminates the multiplicity in the here-now that is a prerequisite for harmony. What these renditions of harmony show, I believe, is that the tensions in and logics of harmony are very similar to the ones that are described by Derrida and others in terms of the autoimmune. What we see in these accounts is an irresolvable contradiction, which mirrors the autoimmune logic outlined at the beginning of this article. Harmony must by definition be universal, but its universalisation by definition makes harmony impossible. In this respect harmony works on a self-defeating and self-perpetuating logic that is very similar to what we saw described in the ‘modern West’ and in ‘democracy’.

#### The world no longer operates through the logic of nation building, but rather the over profusion of simulation - the expo was not isolated to Shanghai, the entire globe is a world fair – a harmonius simulation of international coherence where countries are isolated spatial and cultural totalities, where the distinctions between visiting the expo and being the expo are blurred until all notions of subject are rendered incoherent, copies of copies without originals, simulacra avatars in a virtual hyper-reality – This is the expo; have fun at the American pavilion!

Nordin 12

(Astrid H.M. Nordin [Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University], “Time, Space and Multiplicity in China’s Harmonious World”, 2012, The University of Manchester Library, <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:186417>, pages 149-168)

TAKING BAUDRILLARD TO THE FAIR Above, I have examined different ways in which China is imagined as ahead in the historical queue that is posited at Expo 2010. However, as explained in the introduction to this thesis, a most common way of imagining China elsewhere in discourse on the country’s relation to the world is as behind, or catching up. This way of understanding China’s role in international politics has its roots in an imagination of Chinese experience as radically different to that of Western modernity – as the “other country” (Chow, 1991: 81). In recent years a key Chinese strategy for negotiating both its claims to particularism and to being a modern great power has been through the public diplomacy of “mega events”, including Exp 2010. The success of Chinese mega events in altering international opinion is debatable (Manzenreiter, 2010: 29-48). As symbols of a changing Chinese identity and outlook they have nonetheless come to be understood as an important aspect of Chinese “image management” (Xin Xu, 2006; Brownell, 2008; Price and Dayan, 2008). In this section I argue that we need to take the next step and understand China’s mega events not only on the level of representation and ideology, but also on the level of simulation and simulacra.106 I moreover argue that a consequence of such a reading is that we need to stop imagining China as the “other country”. Mega event genres came about in Western industrialising capitalist countries engaged in nation building and imperial consolidation of the late 19th century (Rydell, 1984: 8, 236; Roche, 2003: 100). Maurice Roche has connected mega events as a phenomenon to “a temporal world view framed in terms of ‘progress,’ the assumed responsibility to build a diffuse western ‘civilisation,’ and the assumed capacity to do so by actively ‘making history’” (Roche, 2003: 103, see also Roche, 1999: 1-31). He has further suggested “mega-events are potentially memorable because they are a special-kind of time-structuring institution in modernity” (Roche, 2003: 102, emphasis in original). Like Roche, I examine how time and modernity are negotiated by a mega event, but rather than looking for this time-shaping capacity in the scale and cyclical occurrence of events I examine one particular event, that is Expo 2010. World fairs have been described as instrumental in creating the distinction between reality and representation, a dualism that has become central to the way we capture the modern world (Mitchell, 1988; Harvey, 1996). In the remainder of this chapter I 106 Penelope Harvey has begun the work of reading world fairs as simulacra in Hybrids4of4Modernity:4 Anthropology,4the4Nation4State4and4the4Universal4Exhibition (1996). Recent publications have hinted at the possibility of such a reading of Chinese mega events. Most notably, Price and Dayan’s Owning4the4 Olympics4takes off in an imaginary of the Beijing Olympics as “spectacle, festival, ritual, and finally as access to truth” and concludes: “Or should we rewrite MacAloon’s sequence in a style inspired by Baudrillard: ‘spectacle, festival, ritual, and finally… simulacrum-’” (Dayan, 2008: 400). To my knowledge none have followed through with an empirical analysis of what such a reading may look like in the Chinese case. explore what happens when we read the world fair – symbol of modernity – through the work of Jean Baudrillard – symbol of postmodernity. I suggest that we read Expo 2010 not only as an exercise of nation-building, but as shaping also the imaginary of the world as a holistic unit. Expo 2010 could easily be read as a representation of the world, as mimicry or a fake version of the real world beyond its gates. I read it instead as simulation. My key claim is that the world fair is everywhere, that in fact the world is a fair, and that this has serious consequences for the study thereof. The reading of the world fair as simulacrum shows how we may be mistaken to imagine Chinese experience as radically other to that of Western modernity, or postmodernity for that matter. It provides a different way of thinking about space, time and subjectivity. Importantly, I argue that Baudrillard, who is often accused of being intellectually uncritical or irresponsible (for example by Norris, 1992), can help us think differently about intellectual strategy in our study of such a simulacral harmonious world fair. I first outline Baudrillard’s discussions of the simulacrum and use this discussion to interrogate the “being” of the world fair. I argue that the fair is not a fake copy of a “real” world, but that as simulation it marks the breakdown of the distinction of the copy from the original, of the fair from the world. Having asked where the fair is, arguing that fairness is everywhere, anywhere and nowhere, I next ask when the fair is. I show that the fair works through recycling, revival and reuse. I thereafter ask who is the fair through an exploration of what happens to subjectivity in the interactive technologies of the fair. I examine how our simulation as subjects and objects of interactive technologies breaks both of these categories down. I argue that being in the world fair turns us into simulacral avatars, circulated in virtual hyper-reality. I finally conclude through asking how to be fair in such a simulacral world fair. I argue that thinking the world in terms of its simulacral fairness does not need to rob us of intellectual strategy, but that we can draw on Baudrillard to think of theory as challenge. To be simulacral, or where is the fair- Let us return to Baudrillard’s claim that the world we live in has passed into the hyper-real, “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 1). What has been lost, he argues, is metaphysics: “[n]o more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept” (1994 [1981]: 2). Crucially, this is not a question of imitation, duplication or even parody, but of substitution. As a consequence the real will never again have a chance to produce itself, but is replaced by a “hyper-real” where there is no distinction between the real and the imaginary, “leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences” (1994 [1981]: 3). What is at stake in Baudrillard’s analysis, then, is the reality principle: [t]o dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn’t have. One implies a presence, the other an absence. But it is more complicated than that because simulating is not pretending … Therefore, pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the ‘true’ and the ‘false,’ the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary’ (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 3). In few places is the question of the real and the imaginary, the true and the false, the original and the fake as pertinent and as sensitive as in contemporary China. The lack of respect in China for copyright is a frequent bone of contention in its foreign relations. Domestic relations have been shaken in recent years by the “tainted milk” scandal, where a number of infants were killed and hundreds of thousands fell ill from ingesting “fake” milk powder containing melamine (Barriaux, 2011). In IR, voices are raised that worry about Westerners underestimating the “China threat” because China may be faking it, “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (Gang Lin, 2005: 1). Expo 2010 was a highly controlled space, yet it too had its own associated scandals of fakery. Some suggested that Expo 2010’s mascot, Haibao, was a resurrection of American cartoon character Gumby, dubbing it “The Gumbygate scandal” (V Saxena, 2010). The Chinese national pavilion was exposed to similar allegations of plagiarism, facing claims that it looked a lot like the Japanese pavilion from the 1992 Seville Expo, and equally similar to the Canadians pavilion at Montreal in 1967. The biggest diplomatic scandal, nonetheless, surrounded the promotional tune Waiting for You which was officially written for Expo 2010, its video featuring all-Chinese superstars like Jackie Chan and Yao Ming. A scandal erupted as it was revealed to bear an uncanny resemblance to Mayo Okamoto’s 1997 Japanese hit Stay the Way You Are. The irony was not lost on foreign commentators, with one commentator noting: [i]f the Shanghai Expo is the ultimate showcase of an economy roaring to world dominance, then the organizers have selected a theme song that perfectly captures China on the cusp of the 21st century: strident, stirring – and ripped off (Lewis, 2010). The composer of the fair tune first strongly denied plagiarism allegations. Expo 2010 organisers thereafter suspended all use of the song citing “copyright reasons” and after “a flurry of face-saving efforts” Expo 2010 organisers, without admitting any problematic recycling, asked if they could please use Okamoto’s work. The songwriter, whose practically forgotten tune had suddenly returned to the top of Japanese charts, selflessly acquiesced (Lewis, 2010). These revelations of scandalous fakery, whether on the low level of song writing or the high level of lethal state violence, are typically understood as a form of resistance. They are taken to reveal the real4state of affairs. Some commentators extrapolate fakery to a “Chinese characteristic”, portraying resistance to elite-led fakery as a resistance to power. In a short film on Chinese netizens and state power, blogger Wang Xiaofeng comments on Chinese fakes, with video shots of the Expo interspersed: China is a country who likes to make fake things. Lying is a virtue (美德) of the Chinese. This is evident in all kind of matters. Statistical numbers are fake (假的) and whatever we create, even the good things, are fake. They [the PRC government] must say that some other countries are worse than China, to make common people (老百姓) think that China is the best place to live in (最好的国家). The existence of mainstream media is based on this process of the never-ending creation of fake. And the government itself is constantly creating this ‘fake’. If you go to remote places in China you discover very shocking realities, people can’t even find something to eat, but you still think this country is a great country. So when you want to know the facts and get information you are actually challenging power. They are afraid of this (Wang Xiaofeng in Marianini and Zdzarski, 2011). The claim of the denouncers of scandalous fakery is that reality is being masked, and the purpose of denunciation is to reveal this reality through exposing fakery. My claim in the reminder of this chapter, and in this thesis, is that the distinction between the real and the fake of the harmonious world is disappearing in a system of self- referential signs. Through this process: the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer itself anything but a gigantic simulacrum – not unreal, but a simulacrum, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 5-6). In this respect, simulation is very different from representation.107 The way the latter is often used implies an equivalence of the sign and the real – even if it is a utopian equivalence. Simulation, on the contrary: stems from the Utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 6). As outlined in chapter 2, Baudrillard explains this in terms of successive phases of the image that I reiterate here:108 [1] it is the reflection of a profound reality … [2] it masks and denatures a profound reality … [3] it masks the absence of a profound reality … [4] it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 6). The shift “from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing” is crucial because the real is no longer what it once was. This is the 107 Problematising the dichotomizing relationship between the sign and the real is, of course, by no means originary with Baudrillard, but has a long and varied tradition from Friedrich Nietzsche (1999 [1872]) to Derrida (1981 [1972]). 108 As explained in chapter 2, we need not read Baudrillard’s successive phases of the image as aligned in linear time. The “era of simulation” (1994 [1981]: 2) need not be understood as temporally fixed or discreet. significance of simulation, and its key effect is that in place of “the truth” we have a myriad of truths taking the shape of signs of reality and myths of origin (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 6). Baudrillard uses the example of Disneyland to model the “entangled orders of simulacra” because he sees it primarily as a play of illusions and fantasy (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 12). The adults’ parallel to Disneyland in the contemporary era is the world fair, the most recent, the biggest, the most expensive and the most visited of which, again, was Expo 2010.4Like Disneyland, Expo 2010 is built up of fantasm and as one of its feature books announces “100 years of Expo dream” (Shanghai shibohui shiwu xietiaoju, 2009). At the same time, as will be seen in this chapter, Expo 2010 involved truth claims in an explicit way that Disneyland never has, which makes it pertinent to examining both 1st and 2nd phase images and those of the 3rd and 4th phase. Expo 2010 was constructed as a simulacrum of the world in ways that mix dreams with truth claims (and, as I have argued above, the claims that the dreams are indeed the true dreams of humanity and that these dreams will come true). Just like Disneyland, the Expo is ideological: digest of the Chinese way of life, panegyric of Chinese values, idealised transposition of a contradictory reality. Nonetheless, the “Chineseness” of Expo 2010 can be overemphasised in a format that is all about recycling.109 As Penelope Harvey writes: [i]n many ways the form of the great exhibitions has been maintained despite the changing economic, social and political circumstances. Nation states displayed cultural artefacts and technological expertise in their individual pavilions, seeking to educate and entertain the visiting public. The obligations of the organizers of a fair with universal status are less concerned with the actual bringing together of exhibitors from all over the globe than with enacting a theme that simultaneously promotes the unity of mankind and the uniqueness of individual societies (Harvey, 1996: 35). The nation state has been the key cultural, political and economic unit through which both IR and world fairs have traditionally told the tale of global community, and Expo 109 Indeed, this paper, too, works through recycling (of Baudrillard, Harvey, Expo 2010) and intentionally so. 2010 recycles this conceptualisation. As I argue above, the spatial organisation of the Expo sites, in Shanghai and online, is a starkly visual simulacrum of the purported organisation of the international state system. Essentialised culture is encapsulated in the spatial containers that are Expo pavilions, which in turn are encapsulated in continents or regions, which in turn are a subdivision of the neatly bounded and mapped world fair. These mappings are presented as neutral and innocent, helpful and real – some lines on a surface, fair and square (Expo Shanghai Online, 2010d). This particular model depends on a metaphor of scale by which the international community reproduces the form of its constituent parts: “[b]oth part and whole function as self-contained, coherent, bounded entities which are mutual transformations of each other through simple principles of aggregation and disaggregation” (Harvey, 1996: 50). This imaginary reproduces units that differ from each other, but through a difference that is one of equivalence. Whether we think of these units as natural or culturally constructed, they are defined by precise boundaries in temporal, spatial and cultural terms, they are distinct but equivalent entities. This model of equivalence by difference was highly visible at Expo 2010 as at previous world fairs (Harvey, 1996: 51). The world fair appears as a taxonomisation of equivalent national units with their own pavilion, listing in official guidebooks and dedicated day of cultural display. The official Opening Celebration of Expo 2010 saw the parading of national flags, carried by Chinese youth made up to look as repetitions and copies of each other (CCTV Documentary, 2010). In this way Expo 2010 recycled the form of Expo 1992 in Seville on which Harvey writes: [t]he Expo provided a concrete instance of endless replication, a cultural artefact built as if to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of an entirely consumerist world. Thus there was the appearance of choice, of multiple perspectives, yet the cultural forms on show were nevertheless clearly reformulations and repetitions of each other and of previous events. Sameness and familiarity undermined the promise of difference (Harvey, 1996). What we learn from Baudrillard is that this second phase ideology moreover “functions as a cover for a simulation of the third order [or phase]: Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the ‘real’ country, all of ‘real’ America that is Disneyland” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 12). The world fair, in this vein, exists in order to hide that it is the “real” world, all of the “real” world that is the fair. The presentation of the Expo world as imaginary and as a dream functions to make us think that the rest is real. The world fair takes us further than Disneyland does, as it is not content with a country, but must simulate the world – always striving to be more inclusive, with Expo 2010 priding itself on including pavilions of more countries than ever before, an inclusion which cost the PRC government large sums in the form of subsidies (Xinhua, 2010e). In this way Expo 2010 marks a shift from ideological nation-building to worlding by simulation. Shanghai, China and the world that surround the Expo are no longer real, but hyper-real, belonging now to the order of simulation: “[i]t is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 12-13). The relation between Baudrillard’s different phases or orders – those that dissimulate something and those that dissimulate that there is nothing – comes to the fore in the hyper-awareness and self-reflexivity of Expo 2010, as it had begun to do in previous world fairs (Harvey, 1996). There were frequent references to the self- representations of previous world fairs, in TV programs, books and in the “Expo museum” at Expo 2010 (see for example Shanghai shibohui shiwu xietiaoju, 2009). In many instances of its replication, the world fair reflected on itself as the exhibition of the exhibition of the exhibition without end, as world fair exhibiting world fair. Key emblems, monuments and mascots of previous fairs were brought together with the effect of appearing as self-referential signs, as copies of copies, representations of representations without original, signifiers of signifiers without signifieds, ad4 infinitum. In this way: [t]he exhibition represents the world, provides contexts and connections for an understanding of external realities, but its reflexivity simultaneously confuses or confounds the distinction of insider/outsider, representation and reality” (Harvey, 1996: 37). The implication is one of implosion of the careful construct and of moving to the fourth phase: “it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 6). Therefore, we must take the step beyond understanding how the exhibition represents the world and grapple with how the harmonious exhibition is the world, and the harmonious world the exhibition. Reading the Expo through Baudrillard thus turns the world into fair and the fair into the world. As I will continue to show throughout this chapter, the distinction between one as real or original and the other as fake or copy can no longer be upheld. All4we4 have4are4versions4or4layers4of4the4harmonious4world/fair,4all4simulacra. This is why I argue with this chapter that we4need4to4take4the4step4and4study4it4as4such, rather than limit ourselves to reading China’s mega events purely on the level of representation and ideology, upholding the reality principle. The layers of simulacra are all world/fair, but cannot be4the fair in a fully present way because Baudrillard, and others with him, have upset the dichotomisation of presence and absence.110 For this reason, the relation between the layers of simulacra is not that of a coherent system, of stable exchange or of dialectics. The world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. To be recycled, or when is the fair- I have asked in the previous section where the fair is and argued that “fairness” is everywhere and anywhere – that the world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. I turn next to the temporality of simulacra in this formulation to ask when the fair is. Looking for the world/fair somewhere and sometime beyond the dichotomisation of presence and absence I argue that the fair works through recycling, revival and reuse, that as a rem(a)inder, it is not new. What better place to start than with beginnings and origins- “We require a visible past, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin, which reassures us about our end. 110 This problematique has been discussed among others by Jean-Luc Nancy (1991 [1983]), Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988 [1980]) and Derrida (1976 [1967]). - 159 - Because finally we have never believed in them” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 10). Beginnings were certainly important to displays of China at Expo 2010. Throughout the Chinese national pavilion and dozens of Chinese regional pavilions, China is described as the origin of the world, echoing wider media and academic discourse in China. Various Chinese regional pavilions also pride China for figuring as the origin of (Chinese) civilisation. I use brackets here because there is some discrepancy or ambiguity in terms of communicating such messages to Chinese speaking and English speaking audiences. In the Gansu province case, for example, which circles around its “long history” of more than 8000 years of civilisation, a sign that reads in English “Dadiwan Site in Qin’an County Believed to Start the Chinese Civilization” in Chinese language simply reads “Civilization begins – Qin’an Dadiwan” (文明肇启). This kind of slippage between these terms appears throughout Expo 2010 and makes Chinese civilisation appear coterminous with civilisation as such. This exhuming of “Chinese civilisation” functioned as a cover for a simulation of the second phase, as an ideological tool that served to make the “5000 years of uninterrupted Chinese civilisation” appear real. This uninterrupted history of harmony is part of the shift in legitimisation of CCP rule from socialism to nationalism and “Chinese characteristics” (Cheung, 2012; Billioud, 2011). Most importantly, however, this exhumation took pride of place because of a dream, “behind this defunct power that it tries to annex, of an order that would have had nothing to do with it, and it dreams of it because it exterminated it by exhuming it as its own past” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 10). IR scholars are performing this same exhuming ritual when we dream of the emerging “Chinese school” of IR theory as a radical alternative to “the West”.111 The fascination with this Chinese school resembles that which Baudrillard describes of Renaissance Christians with American Indians. At the beginning of the Christian colonising movement existed an instance of bewilderment at “the very possibility of escaping the universal law of the Gospel” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 10). In this 111 This “West”, on my understanding, is not real in the first place and the breakdown of any hard line between inside and outside makes such radical dichotomization fall apart. - 160 - bewilderment we could either admit to the lack of universality of the Law, or exterminate the evidence to the contrary. The conversion or simple discovery of these different beings is usually enough, for the Renaissance Christians as for scholars of IR, to slowly exterminate them. This tactic of discovery and conversion as a form of violent extermination of others has been acknowledged elsewhere in IR scholarship (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004) and it remains a tactic in PRC policy towards its “internal others” in areas like Tibet and Xinjiang.112 Chinese policy towards its ethnic minorities is presented as proof of the superiority of Chinese civilisation: it produces more ethnics than the ethnics themselves were able to do – since the PRC state provides modern healthcare and “scientific development” and exempts ethnic minorities from the one child policy. Moreover the PRC state produces more ethnic ethnics than they themselves had mustered. This promotion of Chinese ethnic minorities through their regional pavilions lies at the heart of Expo 2010, a base from which the Chinese national pavilion rises. Everywhere, the ethnic is exotically reproduced, recycled and rescreened. Everywhere happy, colourful and anachronistic “ethnics” sing, dance and rejoice in the greatness of the motherland, as in the Xinjiang pavilion (“a harmonious place”). This overproduction is a means of destruction, a “promotion” and “rescue” which forms another step to their symbolic extermination. Nonetheless, the Expo is highly self-aware in its use of time. As described above, it frequently uses clocks, hourglasses and pendula to mark the countdown to horror scenarios of planetary destruction in order to drum home its purported message of “Better city, Better life”. In places it moreover explicitly favours “recycling” over “linearity”. 112 This is particularly the case in current PRC policy towards the Western “Autonomous Regions” of Tibet and Xinjiang where “splittism” is considered a challenge to the integrity of the PRC state (Barabantseva, 2011). - 161 - Figure 6: “A linear model will result in excessive pollution and waste” (Source: Astrid Nordin) The theme pavilion City4being uses similar metaphors to Baudrillard to conceive of time, that of biological life cycles, metabolism, circulation and recycling. These are said to be key to the proper functioning of the system. This pavilion is evocatively constructed as a sewerage system interspersed with circulating billboard messages of interconnection. It is explicit about its rejection of linear models, as in a pair of diagrammatical signs of which the first reads “A linear model will result in excessive pollution and waste”, and the second reads “A cyclical model will feature greater recycling and less waste”. Figure 7: “A cyclical model will feature greater recycling and less waste” (Source: Astrid Nordin) In this way Expo 2010, like Baudrillard, engages directly with claims to the end of history: [h]istory will not come to an end – since the leftovers, all the leftovers – the Church, communism, ethnic groups, conflicts, ideologies – are indefinitely recyclable … History has only wrenched itself from cyclical time to fall into the order of the recyclable (Coulter, 2004). Through these examples we can see the world/fair engaged in different phases of simulation, which can be understood as dissimulating something, but also as dissimulating that there is nothing. In places, the world/fair appears unreflexive, as attempting to reinstate the reality of its teleological progress. In other aspects, however, its reflexive hyper-aware recycling seems to show how “it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 6). Not only, then, can the world no longer be represented by the fair, but more importantly it can no longer be fairly re-presented, it can no longer be made present in time and space as some full or complete presence. As such, it is not enough to remain within a simple framework of representation and ideology in our analyses thereof, but we need to take the next step and start analyzing China’s mega events also as simulacra. The world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. The world/fair is recycled. To be screened, or who is the fair- Having asked in previous sections where and when the fair is I turn to the question of who is the fair. What happens to subjectivity in the interactive technologies of the world/fair- I argue that in an order of recycling, the technologies that make us simultaneously subjects and objects make the distinction between subject and object untenable with the effect of making these categories unworkable. It is clear that our embodiment matters in the world fair as it differentiates between ways of being in the world/fair along lines of class, race, gender and so on. At the Shanghai Expo, where well over 90% of visitors were Chinese, the ability to identify me as a fair-skinned visitor from the outside made me an immediate part of the exhibited exotica (my being fair made me the fair, so to speak. And simultaneously the reverse was true, my fairness positioned me as though outside the fair, observing it/them). But Expo 2010 goes much further in making us part of the fair, through the layers of interactive technologies by which the fair itself emerges. In the first instance, we are an active part of this emergence, we can plan, steer and shape the world/fair, we are the subjects of its emergence. Visitors are often asked to actively participate in Expo 2010. Indeed, interactivity is a key feature of many pavilions and different layers of the world/fair, and one pavilion is expressly dedicated to displaying it. Here, photographs from Expo 2010 and its preparation, submitted via the Expo 2010 website, are circulated on screens. Participants can also send “blessings and wishes for Expo 2010” from various websites and have them screened in the pavilion, surrounded by cards with wishes and blessings written by its visitors. In a “wishing tree” we are encouraged to write wishes on colourful paper, fold it into airplanes and throw it into an artificial tree. In parallel, the Online Expo 2010 has many venues where one’s avatar can leave wishes, such as the Vanke pavilion or the Expo4dream4home discussed above. On a multimedia display stand visitors to Expo 2010 can arrange various building models and simultaneously a 3D image of its layout will appear on a background wall, surrounded by previous “excellent works”. In this way, a sign for the multimedia display tells us, “You could become one of the designers of a future city”. In Shanghai’s own pavilion at Expo 2010 the “Shanghai forever” image wall, consisting of revolving triangles and more than 15000 photographs featuring Shanghai, is a product of “mass participation and joint creation” (公众参与，共同创作) intended to expound the “design conception of ‘New horizons forever’” (or in Chinese “Shanghai eternally marches towards a new horizon”, 上海永远迈向新天地). Images of images are everywhere and we can be their creators. Nonetheless, in subjecting the world/fair to our gaze and our actions, we are simultaneously subjected by it. Our bodies are not only in the world/fair, they are the world fair, as the fair is our bodies, simultaneously watching and watched, displaying and displayed. Often our recognition as participants rests on our willingness to take on specific subject positions – tellingly, the English title of the pavilion for popular participation is “Citizens’ initiative pavilion”, interpellating us as citizens of the mapped state system on display. It is through such citizenship that we are allowed recognition in the world/fair. Indeed, the different layers of simulacra share citizenship regimes as a key feature, invoked through the passport. At previous world fairs, at the Shanghai Expo, and at the online version of Expo 2010 we can have a passport in which we collect “visa stamps” from the pavilions visited. At points, we have to actively change ourselves to make us acceptable as subjects in order to have our fair share. Passing through the world/fair we are screened and tested. This screening echoes for the subject/object dichotomy (the who) the collapse we saw in previous sections of the here/there (the where) and the now/then (the when). As Richard Lane has observed with regards to Baudrillard: there is an interpenetration of the screen metaphor with the notion of everything being on the surface here, including the ‘friendly’ surveillance which simultaneously shows the people under surveillance on television screens, which leads to a collapsing of perspectival space (the removal of the ‘gap’ or distance both spatially and temporally between the viewer and the viewed) (Lane, 2000: 42). Here interpenetration is total, including of architectural and geographical space. The layers of simulacra cannot be separated. All of Expo 2010, the Shanghai Expo and its virtual replica, Shanghai, China, all of the world/fair are indistinguishable “as a total functional screen of activities” (Baudrillard, 1994 [1981]: 76). In this way all of the world/fair operates through screening, in every sense of the word. The example above of the excluded travel guide moreover exemplifies how our participation in the citizenship regimes of the world/fair is conditional – she was stopped at the border because she had not paid the fare. Indeed, the world/fair is most helpful in persuading us that we can (and should) adjust our selves to pass its screening. In a book dedicated to Expo etiquette prospective visitors to the world/fair are most helpfully taught how to modify their behaviour and their bodies (Xu Bo, 2009). Chinese readers can learn amongst other things how to greet, walk, shake hands, sit, queue and care for their personal hygiene in a polite manner. They can read about how to go to karaoke, drink coffee with foreigners and host them in their home according to global decorum. In an appendix we find a taxonomy of etiquette, outlining customs country by country, from the US to Egypt (2009: 147-71). One drawn image, for example, shows one man (who we can assume, from the big nose in profile, is a Westerner) who sits nicely at his table with one glass and one plate on which he is attacking a square (perhaps a piece of toast) with his knife and fork. He looks with bewilderment and a hint of fear at another man or boy who smiles a big smile as he carries his second plate to the table, where he has already assembled two glasses, various fruits and one more plate overflowing with food (in the mish-mash of which we can identify various fruits, a whole fish, a crab and some shrimp). The picture’s caption instructs its Chinese readers the civilised manner of partaking of the fare of the fair through a rhyming slogan: “big eyes, small stomach, cannot finish the delicious fare” (yan4da4duzi4xiao,4meiwei4chi4bu4liao 眼大肚子小， 美味吃不了) (2009: 62). The concluding chapter of the book, on “how to be a refined and well mannered Expo person”, clearly conceives of such politeness in terms of the return to an original state. We are encouraged to “utilize the Shanghai Expo as a historical turning point, to make - 166 - every one of us change into politely speaking Expo people” and after being told about “the Expo’s demand on the etiquette of the people of the host country” to “through the Expo make elegant etiquette return to China” (2009: 141-6, emphasis added). Thus, being a civilised citizen of the world/fair is not about being more like somebody else, but about being more like your self; it is a question of recycling. At other points, moving through the world/fair our bodies are more explicitly hi- jacked by screening, made to do things potentially against our will (and indeed through or in advance thereof), proliferated, taken apart. The Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region case for example shows visitors’ images captured and repeatedly displayed on screens. As citizens of the world/fair our bodies are captured and displayed as copy upon copy throughout Expo 2010, media and academic work, including this thesis. Figure 8: Screened in Ningxia autonomous region case (Source: Astrid Nordin) This hijacking technology is not simply in the hands of states. Siemens powerfully commoditised Chinese cultural heritage and the Chinese national modernisation project in its Tianxia4yi4jia pavilion discussed above. To English language audiences the pavilion was marketed through the name We4are4the4world, a name which aptly brings out the recycling nature of the fair through reviving Michael Jackson’s old hit song, but which also showcases the ambiguity of the question “who is the world/fair”. The “we” is ambiguous and inside the pavilion the capacity in which “we” become the world/fair is telling – as described above, our faces pass through a computer program and are recycled on screen as avatars, transformed, singing along with the Expo 2010 theme tune. Our avatars in the virtual version of Expo 2010 are, to some extent at least, a consequence of our volition and choice, albeit screened and monitored with a mandatory Chinese ID number registration. In Siemens’ corporate version of “All- under-heaven” we are the world/fair without being told in what our stardom will consist. Our avatars are exposed as pre-programmed, as playing a pre-scribed role, and this play has only one script, one where we all sing along with the Chinese tune. From these examples we can see two kinds of technologies operating in the world/fair: ones that represent the world and ones that operate through simulation, “provoking a reflexive awareness of artificiality and simulacra”: [t]he first of these conceives of technology as enabler, and is the concept that lies behind the notion of the Expo as a technology of nationhood. Technology enables a perspective that can produce wholeness from fragmentation. Expo enables the appearance of the world as a whole, through the revelation of the fragments that are cut from it and the apparent celebration of their differences (Harvey, 1996: 123). Expo 2010’s use of interactive technologies moved away from “representations” of the world as we know it to be. It celebrated instead the possibility of producing a simulated world, copies of copies (dis)interested in an original: a world of images more real than the real, a fascination with the hyper-real, pretensions to realities that were never there in the first place or at least not in such perfect form, concrete manifestations of abstract possibilities [that] produce the essence of life itself as outcome not origin (Harvey, 1996: 123). The examples discussed here reaffirm a rather sinister side to simulation: “[w]e are living through a movement from an organic, industrial society to a polymorphous, information system – from all work to all play, a deadly game” (Haraway, 1991: 161). Through these technologies of the world/fair, not only our concepts of spatiality and temporality, but also our notions of subject and object, are displaced. Being in a simulacral world/fair is simulacral being. As such, we need to move beyond analyses of Chinese “mega events” through concepts of simple representation and reality, and work to understand how they operate through simulation and simulacra. We are copies of copies without original, simulacral avatars in virtual hyper-reality. The Expo is us: our bodies, our dreams, our future.

#### Debate is disappearing in the proliferation of harmony – the holistic spacitalization of the globe produces a domesticticated form of difference that eliminates the possibility for the truly Other– harmony is not meaningless, but imbued with “hyper-meaning” – more meaningful than meaningful, which paradoxically makes harmony terminate only its own disappearance – we should engage in onco-operative logic to make possible coeval multiplicies that undermine the perfectibility of debate in a process that pushes through to its disappearance – this is the only political act left – bet on the form of恶搞 (Ègǎo)

Nordin 12

(Astrid H.M. Nordin [Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University], “Time, Space and Multiplicity in China’s Harmonious World”, 2012, The University of Manchester Library, <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:186417>, pages 214-231)

Conclusion: Futures of harmony and coeval multiplicities Thinking about multiplicity has remained a key conundrum for those who want to think about global politics as truly political. One attempt at managing and grappling with the opportunities and challenges that multiplicity presents us with from “beyond the European imperium” has been recent Chinese thinking about harmony and the concept of “harmonious world” (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: ix). This thesis is to be read in the context of recently undertaken efforts to understand this and other normative challenges to the way we imagine the times, spaces and differences of the contemporary world. Its prime task has been to scrutinise the way assumptions about time, space and multiplicity play out in this challenge to what is perceived as Western ways of imagining world order. With such a challenge in mind, this thesis has embarked on a disruptive reading of the multiplicity problematique in the “harmonious world” concept. THE CONTINUED PROLIFERATION OF HARMONY Before moving on to discuss the findings of this thesis and their implications for thinking multiplicity, what for the immediate future of harmonious world- The term “harmonious world” has been written into the CCP constitution and numerous official strategy documents. Foreign envoys to the PRC have been taken on Confucius-themed trips by the Chinese state, accompanied by a number of the academic promoters of harmonious world through whom the envoys “acquired a deeper understanding of China’s traditional cultural philosophy such as ‘seeking for harmony but not uniformity’, ‘living in harmony with all other nations’” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2011a). The PRC establishment has also urged other countries to be harmonious, recently for example in relation to Vietnam (Xinhua, 2012d), the Maldives (Xinhua, 2012a) and India (Xinhua, 2012b). “Harmonious world” has moreover been well received by a number of foreign dignitaries, and spread into their own language use. Leaders who have recently used it in ways that resonate with the sinister side we have seen to harmony include Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad (CNTV, 2012). At the same time, it has not been given positive play only by alleged “rogues” of the international arena, but by more widely accepted players such as Kevin Rudd, Australia’s former minister of foreign affairs. He confidently declared, in a speech given to the Asia Society in New York in 2012: “there is something in China’s concept of a ‘harmonious world’; which the US, the rest of the region and the rest of the world can work with” (Rudd, 2012). UN officials, such as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, have also promoted harmony in official settings (Xinhua, 2012c). Such endorsement has been played up by Chinese officials, for example Li Baodong, Chinese permanent representative to the UN, who refers to “the spirit of cultural diversity and harmony in the world advocated by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations” (Xinhua, 2012e). “Harmonious world” and the traditional strategic culture with which it has been associated, then, has not only been deeply entrenched in PRC policy documents, but has also been given positive play by other influential individuals and organisations. This supports Joseph Cheng’s recent expectation that it will remain a major element of Chinaʼs public diplomacy in the foreseeable future: “[a]s China pursues an increasingly ambitious role in regional leadership and international institution-building, its publicity work on building a ʻharmonious worldʼ will likely be stepped up” (Cheng, 2012: 183). As explained at the outset of this thesis, every generation of Chinese leadership has used tifa to stamp their mark on Chinese politics. Xi Jinping, who is expected to take over leadership after Hu Jintao in 2012, is not known as a great friend of Hu (he was not Hu’s preferred candidate for succession). We can therefore expect that Xi will introduce other tifa during his time in leadership, and some may expect a decline of “harmonious world” after he comes to power. However, Xi has also made use of the language of harmony in the run-up to his take-over, for example when he headed a large Central Government delegation to the Tibet Autonomous Region Between 17 and 22 July 2011, for events to mark the 60th Anniversary of what the party-state calls the “peaceful liberation of Tibet”.155 Moreover, he was responsible for the inauguration ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where harmony played a central role. For these reasons, it seems reasonable to expect that Hu’s stepping down from the presidency is not the last we will hear of harmonious world in Chinese policy or academic discourse (see Nordin, 2011: 17). The cat-and-mouse game with online dissidents also continues. A search for banned terms on Sina Weibo on 2 November 2011 showed the term “蟹农场” (xienongchang) to be censored. The term refers to a series of political cartoons with the English name “Hexie farm”. This “hexie” refers to the double meaning of harmony and rivercrabs, with the Chinese title using the term for “crab” (xie 蟹) in this formulation. The cartoons focus on censorship and violent promotion of harmonious policies and have become widespread amongst other things through the China Digital Times project (Hernandez, 2011; Hexie Farm, 2011). New puns are constantly created, then censored, giving rise to further new terms. The rivercrabs have now morphed into new humorous “national treasure” words that are deployed in egao culture online. One such replacement word for harmony/rivercrabs is shuichan (水产), meaning “aquatic product”. Another is the evocative near-homonym hēxiě or hēxuè (喝血), which means to “drink blood”, an expression particularly popular in Taiwan. Through such terms, harmony/rivercrabs continue to morph, metastasise and proliferate. In my examination of what “harmonious world” does in terms of imagining time space and multiplicity, I set out in this thesis to answer three sub-questions. I will now return to each of these questions in turn, and will make three key claims with regards to the doings of harmony. 155 For examples of Xi promoting harmony during the celebration, see the full text (Xi Jinping, 2011a: 2, 3, 4) or a full length CCTV recording (Xi Jinping, 2011b: 12:27, 24:06, 33:24) of his speech at the anniversary ceremony . Xi’s speech was also preceded by others stressing civilizational harmony (wenming4hexie 文明和谐), and followed by a parade displaying ethnic harmony and unity under the theme “building harmony”, as can be seen in additional CCTV recordings of the ceremony. The broadcast ends by an assertion of the expected harmonious life of ethnic unity under the central government (CCTV, 2011: 19:19, 20:20, 138:50, 147:14). - 217 - “HARMONIOUS WORLD” REPEATS AN ALLOCHRONISING LOGIC The first question I asked in the introduction to this thesis was: what are the assumptions behind and political consequences of different ways of articulating “harmonious world”, particularly in terms of ordering time and space- With regards to this question, this thesis has found that much of the official and academic discourse on harmonious world deploys terms drawn from ancient Chinese thought. We have seen particular emphasis on concepts drawn from pre-Qin texts, such as “All-under heaven” (Tianxia4天下), “the kingly way” (wangdao4王道), “the hegemonic way” (badao 霸道), “harmonism” (hehe4zhuyi4和合主义), and so on. Yet, in the texts I have examined on “harmonious world”, these terms are aligned with concepts of traditional “Western” IR and fall back on the spatial categories of traditional IR theories. Through these spatial categories, the debates reflect different ways of imagining the space of a harmonious world. Some articulations rely on a unit-based political cosmology, including civilizations, regions and most of all bounded states. Others are based in holistic assumptions, deploying IR-terms such as “network space”, holistic globalisation (specifically quanqiu4yitihua4全球一体化) and an understanding of Tianxia that similarly conceives of a space where everything is already connected to everything else. Both of these ways of imagining space, however, marry their spatialisations with conventional notions of modernization and progress, or “turning the bad into the good”, that imply a linear or teleological time. Such imaginations organise difference in epochs, and binaries such as advanced/behind, modern/traditional, developed/developing and bad/good. Through these concepts multiplicity is aligned in a historical queue with Chinese elites at the head. I have shown these terms and spatio-temporal imaginings to reappear in party-state documents, academic writing and the visualisations of harmonious world at Expo In all these contexts, I have shown some of the things “harmonious world” does at the level of ideology, as a second order simulacrum. At this level, the key “doing” of harmonious world in the contexts I examined is the allochronic organisation of time, space and multiplicity. This is politically problematic because it reduces not only the challenge, but the opportunity that time and space could and should present us with: coeval multiplicities. This thesis thus presents a rebuttal of claims that “harmonious world” and associated concepts such as “All-under-heaven” and “the kingly way” present a better alternative to more conventional ideas of world order. Despite claims to the contrary, they fail to escape the problematic organisation of difference that they criticise in “Western thought”. Through examining the unit-based and holistic political cosmologies in academic discourse and at Expo 2010 I have moreover contributed to a rebuttal of the idea that these two imaginaries are mutually exclusive with one replacing the other. I have shown instead that they are both deployed together in contemporary China in ways that, although in certain tension, are mutually supportive in underpinning an allochronic world imaginary. Therefore, although there is some tension between different terms and spatialisations used to articulate harmonious world, the diversity of accounts is undermined in that they all fall back on allochronising assumptions. In that sense, what they all do is produce a domesticated form of difference that denies an open future. Through these findings this thesis intervenes in two fields. For students of China and its foreign policy, it provides a rebuttal of some important claims by Chinese scholars and policy makers. The most important implication is that scholars must stop treating China as the “other country”. China is not “behind” as some infant being socialised, as Johnston and others would have it. Nor is it a radical other to “the West” that naturally escapes the problems of allochronic thought, as in Chinese exceptionalist narratives. For scholars interested in time, space and multiplicity in IR, and in the allochrony problematique in particular, this thesis provides a detailed study of a concept from China, a context that has hitherto received less attention in these debates than it merits. For these debates, it cautions against the allure of China as an Other or alternative that escapes the traps of allochronic thinking. HARMONISATION WILL NOT TAKE PLACE The second question I asked in the introduction to this thesis was: what is the overall effect of the proliferation of “harmony” in contemporary Chinese society- After officially launching “harmonious world” in 2005, the PRC party-state has continued spurring the concept’s proliferation in Chinese and international contexts. Through the studies of this thesis we have seen “harmonious world” amass so much meaning that the possibility of using it as a meaningful concept has disappeared. Its meaning has been shown to designate total co-operation, total subjugation, total respect for difference, total control, totally moral leadership, and so on. Where other scholars have tried to find out its true meaning, I have shown instead how the illusion of this possibility has disappeared – not into meaninglessness, but into what we may by Baudrillardean analogy think of as transparent or obscene “hyper-meaning”, the more meaningful than the meaningful. As an effect of this mass proliferation the term has become overripe and collapsed under the weight of its own meaning to the point where it can no longer function as an ideal. The fantasy and the reality of harmonious world have collapsed into one another and the seduction of the concept has been lost. The proliferation of harmony has made it disappear as an imagined metaphysical possibility. Harmonization has not taken place, is not taking place and will not take place. This effect of the proliferation of harmony, as a third order simulacrum of simulation rather than second order ideology, is a key finding. Some scholars have called for caution with regards to the oppressive, homogenising and depoliticising aspect of Chinese harmonization. In the context of its “hyper- meaning”, resistance to harmony and harmonious world must be thought of differently. The threat posed by proliferating harmonisation is not only the policing of boundaries that I describe on the level of ideology: cracking down on dissidents, blocking words online, preventing people from tweeting. Indeed, we might want to reflect on why many of us are so obsessed with condemning the limitation of communication: will the revolution really be tweeted- Instead, a more spectacular threat to harmony comes from the excess of communicating harmony itself, which destroys the illusion of the real in the harmony concept. In that sense the mass- communication of harmony is dangerous on a larger metaphysical plane. The CCP is working towards a controlled hierarchical harmony, but it becomes something completely different. They are the ones robbing harmony of its illusion. Baudrillard writes concerning the Gulf War – which he famously declared was not taking place – that it is stupid to be for or against the war if you do not for one moment question its credibility or level of reality (Baudrillard, 1991). Therefore, those who promote the truth of it as a war and historical event are the warmongers, the accomplices (Baudrillard, 1991; Merrin, 1994: 440). On the same logic, it is misplaced to be for or against harmony. We have seen various aspects of the “hyper- meaning” of harmony and harmonisation (total co-operation, total subjugation, total respect for difference, totally moral leadership, total control). None of these things are taking place in contemporary China or its relations to the world. If something is taking place, it is not harmony or harmonisation. My task here has not been to promote or oppose this term, but rather to question its credibility and indeed level of reality. This insight and its implications for resistance is a key contribution of this thesis to both of the fields in which I intervene. Moreover, through reading “harmonious world” in terms of both its doing and its undoing this thesis suggests a novel way in which scholars of Chinese international relations may study foreign policy concepts in general and Chinese set phrases in particular. It thus contributes to the literatures on “doing things with words” in Chinese politics through emphasising ways of examining the undoings that doings necessarily imply. It moreover contributes to literatures on time, space and multiplicity in IR through showing how the thought of Derrida and Baudrillard may help us shake up the manner in which questions of multiplicity and politics can be formulated, and foreign policy concepts can be studied in terms of excess. That harmony is not taking place, I stress once more, does not mean it does not have effects. Two academic commentators claim with regards to its policy formulation that “it is implicit that a harmonious world is one where supposed ‘heresies’ are tolerated” (Guo Sujian and Blanchard, 2008b: 4). Based on the finding that harmonious world repeats an allochronising logic, I am less certain that such tolerance is implied in - 221 - harmonious world. Relegating “heresies” (or “others”) to a different time from our own means denying them coevalness in the here-now. The implication in the texts I have examined is that “they” will eventually come around to seeing the world as “we” do, which in turn has depoliticising effects.THERE IS AN APORIA AT THE HEART OF HARMONIOUS WORLD AND COEVAL MULTIPLICITIES The third and final question I asked in the introduction to this thesis was: are there contradictions in or between different articulations of “harmonious world”- How are these made visible- I have argued above that the diversity of more or less official accounts of a harmonious world is undermined in that they all fall back on allochronising assumptions. However, I have also shown how official language migrates and morphs in different contexts through which “harmonious world” is undone – resisted, deconstructed and changed – by its very own logic. A reading of China’s mega events as simulacra of both the second and third order (ideology and simulation) has revealed how notions of inside/outside, now/then and subject/object come apart. Moreover, dissident play with the concept of harmony makes visible certain contradictions, both between different articulations of harmonious world and within the concept itself. I began this thesis by outlining the two contradictory imperatives of multiplicity, the threat and the promise of difference. Throughout the examination of harmonious world, this term has revealed itself as mirroring the aporetic imperatives of coeval multiplicity. Harmony must by definition be universal, but its universalisation by definition makes harmony impossible. Bart Rockman has suggested that harmony may be a “necessary glue without which neither a society nor a polity are sustainable”, but that “complete social harmony is ultimately suffocating and illiberal” (Rockman, 2010: 207). Jacob Torfing has also taken issue with predominant understandings of harmony in Southeast Asia that he argues present a “post-political vision of politics and governance that tends to eliminate power and antagonism” (Torfing, 2010: 257). Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe, he understands such a post-political vision as both theoretically unsustainable and politically dangerous. It is theoretically unsustainable because power and antagonism are inevitable features of the political dimensions of politics, as I have described the political (cf. Baudrillard, 1990 [1983]: 162, 182). Therefore politics: cannot be reduced to a question of translating diverging interests into effective [win-win] policy solutions, since that can be done in an entirely de- politicized fashion, for example, by applying a particular decision-making rule, relying on a certain rationality or appealing to a set of undisputed virtues and values. Of course, politics always invokes particular rules, rationalities and values, but the political dimension of politics is precisely what escapes all this (Torfing, 2010: 257-8). Politics, then, unavoidably involves a choice that means eliminating alternative options. Moreover, although we base our decisions on reasons and may have strong motivations for choosing what we choose, we will never be able to provide an ultimate ground for any given choice – in Derridean terms, such grounds will always be indefinitely deferred. Therefore, “the ultimate decision will have to rely on a skilful combination of rhetorical strategies and the use of force” (Torfing, 2010: 258). The acts of exclusion that politics necessarily entails will produce antagonism between those who identify with the included options and those who do not. For this reason, the attempt by the promoters of harmony to dissociate harmonious politics from the exercise of power, force and the production of antagonism, claiming a harmony where everyone wins and no-one looses, is bound to fail. Moreover, the post-political vision of politics and harmony is politically dangerous because its denial of antagonism will tend to alienate those excluded from consideration – those who count as “no-one” when everyone wins and no-one loses. This, Torfing writes, will tend to displace antagonistic struggles from the realm of the political to the realm of morals, “where conflicts are based on non-negotiable values and the manifestation of ‘authentic’ identities” (Torfing, 2010: 258). Such non- negotiable values would be the opposite of the co-operative harmony sought. To both Rockman and Torfing, then, complete or perfect harmony will defeat harmony and create disharmony. We have seen how numerous scholars argue that in order to imagine harmony, we need to imagine heterogeneity and multiplicity. We can now add that the allochronic organisation of difference eliminates the multiplicity in the here-now that is a prerequisite for harmony. In order to imagine heterogeneity and multiplicity we need to delineate here and there, now and then in the fathomable aspect of différance that enables us to think spacing between multiple trajectories à la Massey. In other words, in order to imagine multiplicity we need borders and boundaries, or else all we have is the unitary One. Such is language. Rockman goes on to argue that although homogeneity of ascriptive identities like ethnicity, language or religion may enhance harmony, the more important factor for constructing harmony is “the capacity to assimilate, absorb and integrate perspectives to a common ground for accommodation of diversity” (Rockman, 2010: 207). But the point is that the idea of a “common ground” can only be built on exclusion, that such assimilation, absorption and integration is what reduces the otherness of the Other to only fathomable, definable and co-operative difference. To Baudrillard, it is the modern West’s refusal of such alterity that spawns nostalgia for the Other, who is now always already domesticated, a mass version of what we saw in presentations of “ethnics” at Expo 2010 (Baudrillard, 1990 [1987]: 145, 165). We have seen the same refusal of alterity in Chinese discourses on harmonious world, with its focus on proper understanding and the insistence on difference in order to make the world “colourful”. It is the same nostalgia and exhuming ritual that IR scholars perform when dreaming of an emerging “Chinese school” of IR theory as a radical alternative to “the West”. Despite this nostalgia, we must not try to “foster” difference. It is counterproductive to call for “respecting the difference” of “marginalized groups”, as this relies on a presumption that they need to have an Identity and makes the marginal valued as such, thus leaving the marginal where they are, “in place”. Difference must therefore be rejected, to some extent at least, in favour of greater otherness or alterity: “otherness [l’altérité] is not the same thing as difference. One might even say that difference is what destroys otherness” (Baudrillard, 1993 [1990]: 127, 131). Thus “the other must stay Other, separate, perhaps difficult to understand, uncontrollable” (Hegarty, 2004: 118). In this way, Baudrillard advocates more “exoticism”, an interest in the other as Other, and as beyond assimilation into “proper understanding” in the present. To Hutchings this absence of a “proper understanding” of the other in the present is no doubt disappointing, because other times are indeed identified with an unpresentable supplement and thus with that which cannot be known, but only hoped for. But the Other can only remain Other insofar as we resist the urge to attempt such assimilation. The alternative would be to fall back into “the One” and loose sight of the possibility of harmony and coeval multiplicities. What we have, then, is an aporia at the heart of both coeval multiplicities and of harmonious world, despite attempts to conceal it. I have aimed through this thesis to question little by little the attempts at harmonious organisation of time and space as belonging to the sovereign that this concealment has implied. I have examined different strategies of reading and using “harmony” in ways that reveal the excluded other of Hu’s harmony – discord and competition – to be always already there within the political and linguistic system of harmony itself. I have argued that the harmonious system is not based on co-operation or non co-operation, but works according to an onco-operative logic: the quasi-suicidal logic of cancer and the (auto)immune. Ultimately, the aim and most important contribution of this thesis has been to bring the onco-operative uncertainty of the political back into the harmonious world concept in order to elucidate the negotiation of danger and necessity of multiplicity. (IM)POSSIBLE COEVAL MULTIPLICITIES; (IM)POSSIBLE HARMONY With regards to the main question of this thesis, I thus make three interrelated claims about what “harmonious world” does. First, it repeats the allochronising logic that we recognise from “Western” discourses. Second, it disappears as an imagined metaphysical possibility as an effect of its excessive proliferation. Third, when the aporia at the heart of the harmony concept is recognised, it allows for a re- politicisation of “harmonious world” and China’s role in world politics. I have argued that these findings make an important contribution to both scholars of Chinese international politics and to theorists of time, space and multiplicity in IR. But where does this leave us- A key effect of the onco-operative logic that I have identified in “harmonious world” is undecidability. Harmony, as simulation, is paradoxically both totalising and violent, and impossible (cf. Grace, 2003). To begin, its fetishised perfectability is constantly undermined: [t]he perfect crime would be to build a world-machine without defect, and to leave it without traces. But it never succeeds. We leave traces everywhere – viruses, lapses, germs, catastrophes – signs of defect, or imperfection (Baudrillard, 1997: 24). Moreover, contemplating the illusion of the real reveals the object as neither the static, subordinated other of the subject, nor the simulated project of an idealist order: the object that is neither one thing nor the other is fundamentally illusory (Grace, 2003). In Baudrillard’s terms: [i]llusion is simply the fact that nothing is itself, nothing means what it appears to mean. There is a kind of inner absence of everything to itself. That is illusion. It is where we can never get hold of things as they are, where we can never know the truth about objects, or the other (Baudrillard in Baudrillard and Butler, 1997: 49). Undecidables, then, cannot be reduced to opposition but reside within opposition, in Derrida’s words “resisting and disorganising it, without4ever4constituting a third term” and thus without becoming dialectical (Derrida, 1987 [1972]: 43, emphasis in original). Such undecidables exist neither simply inside metaphysical discourse and its constitutive binaries, nor simply outside them. They work, instead, on their margins and limits, disrupting and displacing them, as we have seen rivercrabs do. This makes them “[n]either/nor, that is, simultaneously, either/or” (Derrida, 1987 [1972]: 43, emphasis in original). We can add to the previous discussion about the times and spaces of undecidable harmony, and the potential I have located in it for thinking coeval multiplicities, through drawing on Derrida’s discussion of auto-immunity in relation to the term renvoyer, which means re-sending, sending away, sending back (to the source) and/or sending on (Haddad, 2004: 37). Derrida explains that the autoimmune process: consists always in a renvoi, a referral or deferral, a sending or putting off. The figure of the renvoi belongs to the schema of space and time, to what I had thematized with such insistence long ago under the name spacing as the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space. The values of the trace or of the renvoi, like those of différance, are inseparable from it (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-a: 35, emphasis in original). Thus, in onco-operative harmony the (auto)immune topology in space demands that harmony be sent off elsewhere, excluded, rejected. It must be expelled under the pretext of protecting it, precisely by rejecting or sending off to the outside the disharmonious elements inside it (cf. Derrida, 2005 [2003]-a: 35-6). As we have seen, such exiling does not take place only in democracy, as Derrida implied, but also in harmony. It is the expulsion of internal ills that has been promoted by Hu’s harmony and by both Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and biomedical approaches to cancer. It has been criticised by theorists of time and space such as Fabian, Inayatullah and Blaney, Massey and Hutchings. Moreover, “since the renvoi operates in time as well, autoimmunity also calls for putting4off [renvoyer] until later elections and the advent of democracy” (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-a: 36). So too does it postpone the coming of harmony. Here, truly “harmonious” behaviour by the sovereign is postponed until later, until more harmonious times. China needs to become strong first, be in control of harmony on the inside first, use hard power first. This renvoi reinforces my claim that there is no essence to harmony, no self with which harmony can be self-same. To paraphrase Derrida, this double renvoi (sending off – or to – the other and putting off, adjournment) is an autoimmune fatality or necessity. It is inscribed directly in harmony, directly in or right onto the concept of a harmony without concept, directly in a harmony devoid of self-sameness. It is a harmony of which the concept remains free, out of gear, free-wheeling, in the free play of its indetermination. It is inscribed directly in this thing or this cause that, precisely under the name of harmony, is never properly what it is, never itself. For what is lacking in harmony is proper meaning, the very meaning of the selfsame, the it-self, the properly selfsame of the it-self. It defines harmony, and the very ideal of harmony, by this lack - 227 - of the proper and of the selfsame (cf. Derrida, 2003b: 61; 2005 [2003]-a: 36-7). Again, in a slightly different sense, harmony has not taken place, is not taking place and will not take place. The onco-operative Chinese system is not only a process by which harmony attacks a part of itself. This renvoi, moreover, consists in a deferral or referral to the other: as the undeniable, and I underscore undeniable, experience of the alterity of the other, of heterogeneity, of the singular, the not-same, the different, the dissymmetric, the heteronomous (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-a: 38, emphasis in original). By undeniable, here, Derrida also means that it is only deniable. The only way that it is possible to protect meaning is through a sending-off (renvoi) by way of denial. Harmony is differantial in both senses of différance. It is différance,4renvoi, and spacing. This is why spacing, “the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space” is so important. (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-a: 38). Harmony, like democracy, is what it is only in the différance by which it defers itself and differs from itself. Harmony can never achieve the indivisibility that it claims as its prerequisite. To the extent that it tries to do so, it must enforce its law with violence (disharmony). In this sense, it is impossible. But, the perceptive reader may ask, do the traces and cracks that make harmony come apart not also appear in the argument of this thesis- Could the same not be said about the argument that harmony is impossible- Indeed. A successful failure. And the same is true for “coeval multiplicities”. This thesis has questioned whether it is possible to imagine harmonious world in a way that allows for coeval multiplicities. The temptation set up by this question is to answer in terms of the dichotomy it implies: it is either possible, or impossible. However, the undoing of “harmonious world” I have examined exposes the need to think otherwise about the dichotomy of possibility/impossibility and to displace it. Following Derrida, both “harmonious world” and “coeval multiplicity” are best conceived as both possible and impossible, never simply one or the other. Any harmonious or coeval relation to otherness is also always a disharmonious and - 228 - allochronising relation. This deconstructive undecidability, as I have argued, is not negative (as Massey would have it). That harmony or coeval multiplicities are not simply4possible is not an excuse to treat them as simply4impossible. The aim of reading deconstruction or reversibility throughout this thesis has been to reveal the contradictions and complexity that reside within what we try to enact and make possible. The purpose has been to show that the post-political articulations of “harmonious world” do not hold up, and to bring the political back into the harmony concept. COEVAL MULTIPLICITIES AND HARMONY TO COME I have argued that harmonious world will not take place, I have argued against its possibility, I have used it against itself, and written an entire thesis with the express strategy to make it disappear. Are scholars then to resolutely reject harmony and harmonious world as viable concepts in IR- Are students to retreat back to the comfortable concepts and language that have a more established history in IR literatures- Although it may appear paradoxical, I want to answer these questions with a resolute “no”. Again: that harmony or coeval multiplicities are not simply possible is not an excuse to treat them as simply impossible. It calls, instead, for the opposite of abandoning harmony and coeval multiplicities. The point that harmonious world is not uniquely liberating, but repeats the politically problematic and allochronising logic of more established writing in what is referred to as “Western tradition”, simply means that it cannot escape the restraints and problems recognisable in other terms. Therefore, retreating to other (old, comfortable) terms is not a solution. There are, however, some good reasons to continue discussing harmony and harmonious world as important concepts of IR. First, although harmony has disappeared its proliferation has not. As explained above, I believe that harmonious world will remain a key concept to Chinese politics for some time yet. This in itself means we should keep engaging it. Second, I use it in acknowledgement of a tradition and aspiration to a way of doing things differently. Derrida’s “democracy to come” is chosen in acknowledgement of his debt to a historical and intellectual heritage. As he claims in an interview concerning autoimmunity: [o]f all the names grouped a bit too quickly under the category ‘political regimes’ (and I do not believe that ‘democracy’ ultimately designates a ‘political regime’), the inherited concept of democracy is the only one that welcomes the possibility of being contested, of contesting itself, of criticizing and indefinitely improving itself (Derrida, 2003a: 121). I have shown that Derrida’s claim that “democracy would be the name of the only ‘regime’ that presupposes its own perfectibility” is highly questionable (Derrida, 2003a: 121). There seems to be little impetus to call the processes and ideas that I have examined “democracy” (despite the CCP leadership’s insistence that China is democratic). Yet, they operate on the same (auto)immune or onco-operative logic that Derrida takes as giving “democracy” its future, its “to come”. I have argued that “harmony” is onco-operative in a similar manner, and its legacy should be recognised. Third, I want to retain the term “harmony” because of its universalist implications (cf. Pin-Fat, 2010: 119-20). Its universal claim that all conceivable elements of a situation need to be in harmony for the situation to be harmonious conjures up the question of exclusions and exceptions. Despite itself, it invites questions about what or who has been excluded, why and on what grounds. I therefore take it as an invitation to question and challenge the reality, precisely, of the divisions that deployments of harmony have made visible to us. In the party-state’s version of harmony, China’s future is an active programme, but importantly this future is described through the oxymoron of “inevitable choice” (State Council of the PRC, 2005b), legitimised as rational due to the application of China’s “scientific outlook on development” and prescriptive of a future where China will always stand for “fairness and justice” (Hu Jintao, 2007). I have questioned such prescriptive narratives, in order to open up to the undecidability of an unimaginable future for harmonious world. The reason that I have kept insisting on such openness (autoimmunity, undecidability, the Other, and so on) is because it makes the political, and indeed any futures at all, imaginable (albeit in ways I shall qualify below). To Derrida “[a] foreseen event is already present, already presentable; it has already arrived or happened and is thus neutralized in its irruption” (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-b: 143). Therefore, “[w]ithout the absolute singularity of the incalculable and the exceptional, no thing and no one, nothing other and thus nothing, arrives or happens” (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-b: 148, emphasis in original). And again, “[w]ithout autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, await or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event” (Derrida, 2005 [2003]-b: 152, see also 157). This is why Derrida insists on the future “to come” (avenir/à4venir). In accordance with my argument for (im)possible coeval multiplicities, this places focus on what comes, rather than that which begins from the self or the One. Chinese language has the same connotations of the future as that which comes, where the character lai 来, meaning precisely “to come”, is part of the term for future, weilai 未来. This places it in a chain of meanings of the “to come” as “future” (weilai4未来 or jianglai4 将来), “return” (huilai4回来), and “originally” (yuanlai4原来). This echoes with the spectral temporality discussed in this thesis, where the future is to come as a return of the other that is also its (non)origin. As we have seen weilai, the future, was itself harmonised in conjunction with Ai Weiwei’s detention, making it deferred in more than one sense. Through these ways of rethinking harmony, we see how the undecidability at work in the very concepts of harmony and coeval multiplicities leaves open the chance (or threat) of a future, for both the terms themselves and for responsibility and singular decisions to be taken beyond masterful sovereignty. This future is not just in the future, something we can hope for, but it imposes itself with absolute urgency in the form (or form-beyond-form) that the imperative of harmony takes here and now. Because of its onco-operative (im)possible character, “harmony” is structurally open to the other – an other that does not await us as the unified ideal of a programmable or predictable future, but that presses upon us (with all the force of its self-difference) in the “here-now” (cf. Wortham, 2010: 131-2; Derrida, 1994). My point of retaining the (im)possibility of a harmony to come is partly about retaining the term “harmony”, but it is also about opening up to the possibility of its continued destruction. By opening itself up to the other, harmony threatens to further destroy itself, but also gives it the chance to receive the other – in the here-now, in coeval multiplicity. The point of the “to come” is a future that cannot be identified in advance, since it would break with all the old names. Without countries, civilizations, progress, we may ask whether it would still make sense to speak of harmonious world under that name, or indeed of coeval multiplicities in world politics. As a term, then, “harmony” is not sacred, neither is “coeval multiplicity”. Some other context, some day, may demand that we use a different word in other sentences (cf. Derrida, 2002: 181). Just as the PRC state (or indeed any state) works on an onco-operative logic, so too does language attempt to remain immune to anything that may threaten its logical syntax. This is a necessity for language to make sense. The definition of a term, by definition, is a border and immune protection from what it is not, but we can read its simultaneous auto-immunity through reading deconstruction. Therefore, at the same time as the future is unpredictable, it is at work today, in onco-operative harmony and coeval multiplicities: it is what is coming, what is happening. The responsibility for what remains to be decided or done cannot consist in following rules, rites or proper conduct of harmony, nor in a prescriptive theory for how to think and write coeval multiplicities, but must remain within the realm of the political.

#### China and the world are no longer real, but hyperreal. We need to take the next step and start analyzing China’s Mega events as simulacra.

Nordin 12. Astrid Nordin, Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy, and Religion at Lancaster University, PhD in Chinese International Politics, “Taking Baudrillard to the Fair: Exhibiting China in the World at the Shanghai Expo”, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Volume 37, Number 2, May 2012, pg. 106-120

Expo 2010 was constructed as a simulacrum of the world in ways that mix dreams with truth claims (and the claims that the dreams are indeed the true dreams of humanity and that these dreams will come true).29 Just like Disneyland, the Expo is ideological: digest of the Chinese way of life, panegyric of Chinese values, idealized transposition of a contradictory reality. Nonetheless, the "Chineseness" of Expo 2010 can be overemphasized in a format which is all about recycling, 30 as Penelope Harvey writes: In many ways the form of the great exhibitions has been maintained despite the changing economic, social and political circumstances. Nation states displayed cultural artefacts and technological expertise in their individual pavilions, seeking to educate and entertain the visiting public. The obligations of the organizers of a fair with universal status are less concerned with the actual bringing together of exhibitors from all over the globe than with enacting a theme that simultaneously promotes the unity of mankind and the uniqueness of individual societies.31 The nation state has been the key cultural, political and economic unit through which both IR and world fairs have traditionally told the tale of global community, and Expo 2010 recycles this conceptualization. The spatial organization of the Expo sites, in Shanghai and online, is a starkly visual simulacrum of the purported organization of the international state system. Essentialised culture is encapsulated in the spatial containers that are Expo pavilions, which in turn are encapsulated in continents or regions, which in turn are a subdivision of the neatly bounded and mapped world fair. These mappings are presented as neutral and innocent, helpful and real – some lines on a surface, fair and square.32 This particular model depends on a metaphor of scale by which the international community reproduces the form of its constituent parts: "Both part and whole function as self-contained, coherent, bounded entities which are mutual transformations of each other through simple principles of aggregation and disaggregation."33 This imaginary reproduces units that differ from each other, but through a difference that is one of equivalence. Whether we think of these units as natural or culturally constructed, they are defined by precise boundaries in temporal, spatial and cultural terms, they are distinct but equivalent entities. This model of equivalence by difference was highly visible at Expo 2010 as at previous world fairs.34 The world fair appears as a taxonomisation of equivalent national units with their own pavilion, listing in official guidebooks and dedicated day of cultural display. The official Opening Celebration of Expo 2010 saw the parading of national flags, carried by Chinese youth made up to look as repetitions and copies of each other.35 In this way Expo 2010 recycled the form of Expo 1992 in Seville on which Penelope Harvey writes: The Expo provided a concrete instance of endless replication, a cultural artefact built as if to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of an entirely 7 consumerist world. Thus there was the appearance of choice, of multiple perspectives, yet the cultural forms on show were nevertheless clearly reformulations and repetitions of each other and of previous events. Sameness and familiarity undermined the promise of difference.36 What we learn from Baudrillard is that this second phase ideology moreover "functions as a cover for a simulation of the third order [or phase]: Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America that is Disneyland."37 The world fair, in this vein, exists in order to hide that it is the "real" world, all of the "real" world that is the fair. The presentation of the Expo world as imaginary and as a dream functions to make us think that the rest is real. The world fair takes us further than Disneyland does, as it is not content with a country, but must simulate the world – always striving to be more inclusive, with Expo 2010 priding itself on including pavilions of more countries than ever before, an inclusion which cost the PRC government large sums in the form of subsidies.38 In this way Expo 2010 marks a shift from ideological nation-building to worlding by simulation. Shanghai, China and the world that surround the Expo are no longer real, but hyperreal, belonging now to the order of simulation: "It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle."39 The relation between Baudrillard's different phases or orders – those that dissimulate something and those that dissimulate that there is nothing – comes to the fore in the hyper-awareness and self-reflexivity of Expo 2010, as it had begun to do in previous world fairs.40 There were frequent references to the self-representations of previous world fairs, in TV programs, books and in the "Expo museum" at Expo 2010.41 In many instances of its replication, the world fair reflected on itself as the exhibition of the exhibition of the exhibition without end, as world fair exhibiting world fair. Key emblems, monuments and mascots of previous fairs were brought together with the effect of appearing as self-referential signs, as copies of copies, representations of representations without original, signifiers of signifiers without signifieds. 42 In this way "[t]he exhibition represents the world, provides contexts and connections for an understanding of external realities, but its reflexivity simultaneously confuses or confounds the distinction of insider/outsider, representation and reality."43 The implication is one of implosion of the careful construct and of moving to the fourth phase: "it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum."44 Therefore, we must take the step beyond understanding how the exhibition represents the world and grapple with how the exhibition is the world, and the world the exhibition. Reading the Expo through Baudrillard turns the world into fair and the fair into the world. As I will continue to show throughout this paper, the distinction between one as real or original and the other as fake or copy can no longer be upheld. All we have are versions or layers of world/fair, all simulacra. This is why I argue with this paper that we need to take the step and study it as such, rather than limit ourselves to **reading China's mega events purely on the level of representation and ideology, upholding the reality principle**. The layers of simulacra are all world/fair, but cannot be the fair in a fully present way because Baudrillard, and others with him, have upset the dichotomization of presence and absence. 45 For this reason, the relation between 8 the layers of simulacra is not that of a coherent system, of stable exchange or of dialectics. The world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. TO BE RECYCLED, OR WHEN IS THE FAIR? I have asked in the previous section where the fair is and argued that "fairness" is everywhere and anywhere – that the world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. I turn next to the temporality of simulacra in this formulation to ask when the fair is. Looking for the world/fair somewhere and sometime beyond the dichotomization of presence and absence I argue that the fair works through recycling, revival and reuse, that as a rem(a)inder, it is not new. What better place to start than with beginnings and origins? "We require a visible past, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin, which reassures us about our end. Because finally we have never believed in them."46 Beginnings were certainly important to displays of China at Expo 2010. Throughout the Chinese national pavilion and dozens of Chinese regional pavilions, China is described as the origin of the world, echoing wider media and academic discourse in China. Various Chinese regional pavilions tell us that this is where the first bird flew and the first fire burnt. These pavilions also pride China for figuring as the origin of (Chinese) civilization. I use brackets here because there is some discrepancy or ambiguity in terms of communicating such messages to Chinese speaking and English speaking audiences. In the Gansu province case, for example, which circles around its "long history" of more than 8000 years of civilization, a sign that reads in English "Dadiwan Site in Qin'an County Believed to Start the Chinese Civilization" in Chinese language simply reads "Civilization begins – Qin'an Dadiwan" (wenming zhaoqi 文明肇启). This kind of slippage between these terms appears throughout Expo 2010 and make Chinese civilization appear coterminous with civilization as such. This exhuming of "Chinese civilization" functioned as a cover for a simulation of the second phase, as an ideological tool that served to make the "5000 years of uninterrupted Chinese civilization" appear real. This uninterrupted history is part of the shift in legitimization of communist party rule from socialism to nationalism and "Chinese characteristics."47 Most importantly, however, this exhumation took pride of place because of a dream, "behind this defunct power that it tries to annex, of an order that would have had nothing to do with it, and it dreams of it because it exterminated it by exhuming it as its own past."48 IR scholars are performing this same exhuming ritual when we dream of the emerging "Chinese school" of IR theory as a radical alternative to "the West."49 **The fascination with this Chinese school resembles that which Baudrillard describes of Renaissance Christians with American Indians**. At the beginning of the Christian colonizing movement existed an instance of bewilderment at "the very possibility of escaping the universal law of the Gospel."50 In this bewilderment we could either admit to the lack of universality of the Law, or exterminate the evidence to the contrary. The conversion or simple discovery of these different beings is usually enough, for the Renaissance Christians as for scholars of IR, to slowly exterminate them. 9 This tactic of discovery and conversion as a form of violent extermination of others has been acknowledged elsewhere in IR scholarship51 and it remains a tactic in PRC policy towards its "internal others" in areas like Tibet and Xinjiang.52 Chinese policy towards its ethnic minorities is presented as proof of the superiority of Chinese civilization: it produces more ethnics than the ethnics themselves were able to do – since the PRC state provides modern healthcare and "scientific development"53 and exempts ethnic minorities from the one child policy. Moreover the PRC state produces more ethnic ethnics than they themselves had mustered. This promotion of Chinese ethnic minorities through their regional pavilions lies at the heart of Expo 2010, a base from which the Chinese national pavilion rises. Everywhere, the ethnic is exotically reproduced, recycled and rescreened. Everywhere happy, colorful and anachronistic ethnics sing, dance and rejoice in the greatness of the motherland.54 This overproduction is a means of destruction, a "promotion" and "rescue" which forms another step to their symbolic extermination. Nonetheless, the Expo is highly self-aware in its use of time. It frequently uses clocks, hourglasses and pendula to mark the countdown to horror scenarios of planetary destruction in order to drum home its purported message of "Better city, Better life." In places it moreover explicitly favors "recycling" over "linearity." The theme pavilion "City being" uses similar metaphors to Baudrillard to conceive of time, that of biological life cycles, metabolism, circulation and recycling. These are said to be key to the proper functioning of the system. This pavilion is evocatively constructed as a sewerage system interspersed with circulating billboard messages of interconnection. It is explicit about its rejection of linear models, as in a pair of diagrammatical signs of which the first reads "A linear model will result in excessive pollution and waste," and the second reads "A cyclical model will feature greater recycling and less waste." In this way Expo 2010, like Baudrillard, engages directly with claims to the end of history: History will not come to an end – since the leftovers, all the leftovers – the Church, communism, ethnic groups, conflicts, ideologies – are indefinitely recyclable … History has only wrenched itself from cyclical time to fall into the order of the recyclable.55 Through these examples we can see the world/fair engaged in different phases of simulation, which can be understood as dissimulating something, but also as dissimulating that there is nothing. In places, the world/fair appears unreflexive, as attempting to reinstate the reality of its teleological progress. In other aspects, however, its reflexive hyper-aware recycling seems to show how "it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum."56 Not only, then, can the world no longer be represented (repriˈzentid) by the fair, but more importantly it can no longer be fairly re-presented (rē ˈprezəntid), it can no longer be made present in time and space as some full or complete presence. As such, it is not enough to remain in our analyses thereof within a simple framework of representation and ideology**, but we need to take the next step and start analyzing China's mega events also as simulacra**. The world/fair is simultaneously nowhere and now here. The world/fair is recycled. 10 TO BE SCREENED, OR WHO IS THE FAIR? Having asked in previous sections where and when the fair is I turn to the question of who is the fair. What happens to subjectivity in the interactive technologies of the world/fair? I argue that in an order of recycling, the technologies that make us simultaneously subjects and objects make the distinction between subject and object untenable with the effect of making these categories unworkable. It is clear that our embodiment matters in the world fair as it differentiates between ways of being in the world/fair along lines of class, race, gender and so on. At the Shanghai Expo, where well over 90% of visitors were Chinese, the ability to identify me as a fair-skinned visitor from the outside made me an immediate part of the exhibited exotica (my being fair made me the fair, so to speak. And simultaneously the reverse was true, my fairness positioned me as though outside the fair, observing it/them). But Expo 2010 goes much further in making us part of the fair, through the layers of interactive technologies by which the fair itself emerges. In the first instance, we are an active part of this emergence, we can plan, steer and shape the world/fair, we are the subjects of its emergence. Visitors are often asked to actively participate in Expo 2010. Indeed, interactivity is a key feature of many pavilions and different layers of the world/fair, and one pavilion is expressly dedicated to displaying it. Here, photographs from Expo 2010 and its preparation, submitted via the Expo 2010 website, are circulated on screens. Participants can also send "blessings and wishes for Expo 2010" from various websites and have them screened in the pavilion, surrounded by cards with wishes and blessings written by its visitors. In a "wishing tree" we are encouraged to write wishes on colorful paper, fold it into airplanes and throw it into a simulated tree. In parallel, the Online Expo 2010 has many venues where one's avatar can leave wishes, such as the commercial Vanke pavilion or the Expo dream home. On a multimedia display stand visitors to Expo 2010 can arrange various building models and simultaneously a 3D image of its layout will appear on a background wall, surrounded by previous "excellent works." In this way, a sign for the multimedia display tells us, "You could become one of the designers of a future city." In Shanghai's own pavilion at Expo 2010 the "Shanghai forever" image wall, consisting of revolving triangles and more than 15000 photographs featuring Shanghai, is a product of "mass participation and joint creation" (gongzhong canyu, gongtong chuangzuo 公众参与，共同创作) intended to expound the "design conception of 'New horizons forever'" (or in Chinese "Shanghai eternally marches towards new horizon" Shanghai yongyuan maixiang xin tiandi 上海永远迈向新天地). Images of images are everywhere and we can be their creators. **Nonetheless, in subjecting the world/fair to our gaze and our actions, we are simultaneously subjected by it.** Our bodies are not only in the world/fair, they are the world fair, simultaneously watching and watched, displaying and displayed. Often our recognition as participants rests on our willingness to take on specific subject positions – tellingly, the English title of the pavilion for popular participation is "Citizens' initiative pavilion," interpellating us as citizens of the mapped state system on display. It is through such citizenship that we are allowed recognition in the world/fair. Indeed, the different layers of simulacra share citizenship regimes as a key 11 feature, invoked through the passport. At previous world fairs, at the Shanghai Expo, and at the online version of Expo 2010 we can have a passport in which we collect "visa stamps" from the pavilions visited. At points, we have to actively change ourselves to make us acceptable as subjects in order to have our fair share. Passing through the world/fair we are screened and tested. This screening echoes for the subject/object dichotomy (the who) the collapse we saw in previous sections of the here/there (the where) and the now/then (the when). As Richard Lane has observed with regards to Baudrillard: [T]here is an interpenetration of the screen metaphor with the notion of everything being on the surface here, including the 'friendly' surveillance which simultaneously shows the people under surveillance on television screens, which leads to a collapsing of perspectival space (the removal of the 'gap' or distance both spatially and temporally between the viewer and the viewed).57 Here interpenetration is total, including of architectural and geographical space. The layers of simulacra cannot be separated. All of Expo 2010, the Shanghai Expo and its virtual replica, Shanghai, China, all of the world/fair are indistinguishable “as a total functional screen of activities.”58 In this way all of the world/fair operates through screening, in every sense of the word. Our participation in the citizenship regimes of the world/fair is conditional: at Expo 2010 I met a travel guide who was visiting the world/fair with 60 tourists from Beijing. While her group went into the Pavilion of future to get "visa stamps" in their Expo passports, she waited ticketless outside, stopped at the border because she had not paid the fare. Simultaneously, producing a "real" passport meant one could jump pavilion queues to certain pavilions at Expo 2010. Indeed, the world/fair is most helpful in persuading us that we can (and should) adjust our selves to pass its screening. In a book dedicated to Expo etiquette59 prospective visitors to the world/fair are most helpfully taught how to modify their behavior and their bodies. Chinese readers can learn amongst other things how to greet, walk, shake hands, sit, queue and care for their personal hygiene in a polite manner. They can read about how to go to karaoke, drink coffee with foreigners and host them in their home according to global decorum. In an appendix we find a taxonomy of etiquette, outlining customs country by country, from the US to Egypt.60 One drawn image, for example, shows one man (who we can assume, from the big nose in profile, represents a Westerner) who sits nicely at his table with one glass and one plate on which he is attacking a square (perhaps a piece of toast) with his knife and fork. He looks with bewilderment and a hint of fear at another man or boy who smiles a big smile as he carries his second plate to the table, where he has already assembled two glasses various fruits and one more plate overflowing with food (in the mish-mash of which we can identify various fruits, a whole fish, a crab and some shrimp). The picture's caption instructs its Chinese readers the civilized manner of partaking of the fare of the fair through a rhyming slogan: "Big eyes, small stomach, cannot finish the delicious fare" (yan da duzi xiao, meiwei chi bu liao 眼大肚子小， 美味吃不了).61 The concluding chapter of the book, on "how to be a refined and well mannered Expo person," clearly conceives of such politeness in terms of the return to an original 12 state. We are encouraged to "utilize the Shanghai Expo as a historical turning point, to make every one of us change into politely speaking Expo people" and after being told about "the Expo's demand on the etiquette of the people of the host country" to "through the Expo make elegant etiquette return to China."62 Thus, being a civilized citizen of the world/fair is not about being more like somebody else, but about being more like your self; it is a question of recycling. At other points, moving through the world/fair our bodies are more explicitly hijacked by screening, made to do things potentially against our will (and indeed through or in advance thereof), proliferated, taken apart. The Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region case for example shows visitors' images captured and repeatedly displayed on screens. As citizens of the world/fair our bodies are captured and displayed as copy upon copy throughout Expo 2010, media and academic work, including this article. This hijacking technology is not simply in the hands of states. The corporate pavilion of Siemens powerfully commoditized Chinese cultural heritage and the Chinese national modernization project. Its display was marketed to Chinese audiences under the name Tianxia yi jia (天下一家), meaning "All-under-heaven" is like a family, or the world is one. To English language audiences the same pavilion was marketed through the name We are the world, a name which aptly brings out the recycling nature of the fair through reviving Michael Jackson's old hit song, but which also showcases the ambiguity of the question "who is the world/fair." The "we" is ambiguous and inside the pavilion the capacity in which "we" become the world/fair is telling. At the pavilion entrance we are photographed and at the end of the guided tour, when we come full circle, we are shown a film that recycles our image. Having measured and analyzed our facial features, our faces pass through a computer program and appear as avatars, transformed, singing along with the Expo 2010 theme tune. A sign at the pavilion reads: After scanning and capturing the user’s facial features, the image will be recorded and transformed into an avatar allowing users to feel as if they are starring in a pre-programmed movie or video … How will this technology better our lives? Provides an entertaining experience for people to play a role in a movie or become a 'star'. Everyone has the chance to stand in the spotlight. Our avatars in the virtual version of Expo 2010 are, to some extent at least, a consequence of our volition and choice, albeit screened and monitored with a mandatory Chinese ID number registration. In Siemens's corporate version of "Allunder-heave"' we are the world/fair without being told in what our stardom will consist. Our avatars are exposed as pre-programmed, as playing a pre-scribed role, and this play has only one script, one where we all sing along with the Chinese tune. From these examples we can see two kinds of technologies operating in the world/fair: ones that represent the world and ones that operate through simulation, "provoking a reflexive awareness of artificiality and simulacra": The first of these conceives of technology as enabler, and is the concept that lies behind the notion of the Expo as a technology of nationhood. Technology enables a perspective that can produce wholeness from fragmentation. Expo 13 enables the appearance of the world as a whole, through the revelation of the fragments that are cut from it and the apparent celebration of their differences.63 Expo 2010's use of interactive technologies moved away from "representations" of the world as we know it to be. It celebrated instead the possibility of producing a simulated world, copies of copies (dis)interested in an original: [A] world of images more real than the real, a fascination with the hyper-real, pretensions to realities that were never there in the first place or at least not in such perfect form, concrete manifestations of abstract possibilities [that] produce the essence of life itself as outcome not origin.64 The examples discussed here reaffirm a rather sinister side to simulation: "We are living through a movement from an organic, industrial society to a polymorphous, information system – from all work to all play, a deadly game."65 Through these technologies of the world/fair, not only our concepts of spatiality and temporality, but also our notions of subject and object, are displaced. Being in a simulacral world/fair is simulacral being. As such, we need to move beyond analyses of Chinese "mega events" through concepts of simple representation and reality, and work to understand how they operate through simulation and simulacra. We are copies of copies without original, simulacral avatars in virtual hyper-reality. The Expo is us: our bodies, our dreams, our future. TO BE TACTICAL, OR HOW TO BE FAIR? This paper has asked what it means to be fair. I have argued that the fair is not a fake copy of a "real" world, but that as simulation it marks the breakdown of the distinctions of the copy from the original, of the fair from the world. The world/fair is everything and nothing, simultaneously nowhere and now here. I have shown that the world/fair works through recycling, revival and reuse that, as a rem(a)inder, is not new. I have further argued that being in the world fair turns us all into simulacral avatars without original, circulated in virtual hyper-reality. **All these claims have serious consequences for the study of China in the world.** My reading here shows **the problem of thinking of China as the "other country."**66 Baudrillardian simulacra have come to symbolize postmodernity, continental philosophy, late capitalism and an American way of life. All of these terms imply a where, when and who. A key finding of this paper is that the implied answers to those questions are not as straightforward as may at first glance appear. Reading Expo 2010 as **simulacra shows that we cannot locate "China" as an other, in another place and another time, than that of our purported late capitalism or postmodern condition**. Importantly, though, through Baudrillard's simulacra we can see how this is not a case of "catching up," of those behind (finally) becoming like us. The point is not that "the others" have now become "the same," so that we can happily apply our "Western theories" and ignore difference. The point is, rather, that reading the world/fair as simulation messes with its notions of inside and outside, now and then, subject and object to the point were these terms are no longer workable. What we end up with is not the many turning into the one, with the convergence of others into the self. Instead, what remains is a fragmented plethora of truth, not the unreal 14 but the hyper-real. The effect is our own disappearance. The object becomes us, sees us. We see ourselves through the Expo. The Expo is us. My reading here of Expo 2010 as simulacra has examined some of the distinctions implied in the where, when and who of the world/fair, and shows that we may be better off not taking our distinctions so seriously. But of course the study of the world/fair is serious. We all want to base our work on fair ground, but what happens to fair descriptions when that ground has turned out to be a fairground? In the simulacral world/fair, can we still retain strategy? Already in his earlier work, Baudrillard had come to the conclusion that in a "hyperrealist" system, "[s]trictly speaking, nothing remains for us to base anything on."67 In a hyperreal world of simulacra, the weight of information makes modernity (and its space) fall apart. This has shattering implications for meaning: "where we think that information produces meaning, the opposite occurs."68 Meaning, truth and the real are reversed, that is, they are divested of any universal meaning, which restricts them to local, partial objects.69 In this age of simulation we have surpassed old versions of uncertainty and made our problem permanent.70 Recycling and simulation, with what they do to reality, to time and space, demand something from us: we no longer have the choice of advancing, of preserving in the present destruction, or of retreating – but only of facing up to this radical illusion.71 In this manner, the uncertainty of the simulated world/fair is not necessarily a cause for pessimism. Coulter has claimed "Baudrillard has long found a radically uncertain and ultimately unknowable world a far more comfortable place to live than one which is predictable. Baudrillard lives, as well as do [sic], in a world in a permanent state of reversibility, and he prefers it to a world that is accomplished."72 I agree with Coulters sentiment, but think we are better off thinking of Baudrillard's (and our) being in this recycled world as profoundly uncomfortable. The question posed is most pertinent to the way we think about the world and our role in worlding: Does the world have to have meaning, then? That is the real problem. If we could accept this meaninglessness of the world, then we could play with forms, appearances and our impulses, without worrying about their ultimate destination ... Do we absolutely have to choose between meaning and non-meaning? But the point is precisely that we do not want to. The absence of meaning is no doubt intolerable, but it would be just as intolerable to see the world assume a definitive meaning.73 This implosion or disappearance of meaning, truth and the real, however, does not mean we cannot have strategy: "Theoretical violence, not truth, is the only resource we have left us."74 The strategy Baudrillard has developed is a "fatal strategy," one that values uncertainty and where, in contrast to banal theory, the subject is no longer under any illusion of being more cunning than the object.75 In contrast to the teleological narratives on China in the world – in common approaches of IR theory, in the PRC government's rendition of China's inevitable rise to world leadership, and in the conceptualizations of time and space at Expo 2010 – the world described by Baudrillard is not determined. In this world "everything is antagonistic" rather than harmonious and good will not necessarily triumph over evil.76 15 The strategy, then, is not for theory like in Enlightenment thought to reflect the real, but instead to work as a challenge. The world/fair is not compatible with the "real" that is imposed upon it. Importantly though: "the function of theory is certainly not to reconcile it, but on the contrary, to seduce, to wrest things from their condition, to force them into an over-existence which is incompatible with that of the real."77 The purpose then of theory is to s(t)imulate the (im)possible in the world/fair. My hope with this article is to take one small step in such a direction and provoke us into thinking of **China's "mega events" beyond representation, reality and ideology – to think of them in terms of simulacra**

### Cybersecurity

#### Cybersecurity materializes the boundary conflicts of peoples, territories, and orders-of-meaning into constitutive threats that are then installed at the center of security concerns

Kaiser, 15 (Robert, Professor of Geography @ Univ. Wisconsin-Madison, PhD (Geography) from Columbia University, recipient of a Visiting Fellowship on Estonia and the Birth of Cyberwar @ Aleksanteri Institute via the University of Helsinki; "The Birth of Cyberwar," *Political Geography*. 46 (2015) 11-20.)

It is not as if cyberwar had not been conceived of prior to 2007. It was imaginatively produced in science fiction novels and films, from Shockwave Rider in 1975 (Lesk 2007: 77), to War Games (1983) and Terminator (1984), capping the period off with the 2007 blockbuster Live Free or Die Hard, which was playing in theaters in Tallinn during the summer of the cyberattacks. The 2007 film is particularly important here, since it featured a disgruntled former cybersecurity military analyst who used a broad-based cyberassault to take down the critical infrastructure (CI) of the United States. In Tallinn, the movie fed into the affective intensity surrounding the riots and cyberattacks, firing the imagination of policymakers and publics alike. Cyberwar was also being discursively produced in political and military think tanks beginning in the early 1990s. One of the first examples of this is the 1993 publication “Cyberwar is coming!” which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary (Arquilla, 2013, Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1993). This work too sought to fire the imagination of its readers, spinning out anticipatory cyberwar scenarios and advocating a cyberwar doctrine to military and political analysts and other cyberwar “managers of unease” (Bigo 2002). Published at about the same time, and foreshadowing the proliferation of drone strikes in what Gregory, 2011, Gregory, 2014 has called “the everywhere war,” “Welcome to hyperwar” painted a more dystopian vision of smart weaponry and war machinery taking over the battlespaces of the future (Arnett 1992). Later in the 1990s, due in part to concerns surrounding Y2K and also to the rising number of denial of service (DoS) cyberattacks, increasing US governmental attention was devoted to computer security and the threat posed by cyberwarfare. In 1998, the Clinton White House issued Presidential Decision Directive 63 to assess the vulnerabilities of CI to cyberattack, and followed this up with the National Plan for Information Systems Protection in 2000. Titled Defending America's Cyberspace, this document presented cyberspace as a vulnerable dimension of the sovereign territory needing protection, largely due to the failure to build in adequate defenses when cyberspace first emerged. The authors of this document – including President Clinton and Richard Clarke, then National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism – billed it as “the first attempt by any national government to design a way to protect its cyberspace” (White House, 2000, iv), and also sought to fire the imaginations of their readership, conjuring up a whole host of cyber-villains meaning to do America harm. We are at risk. The United States depends more on computers today then ever before … We have created a gaping vulnerability in our national security and economic stability … We are vulnerable to mischief-making hackers, hardware and software failures, cyber criminals and, most alarmingly, to deliberate attack from nation states and terrorists (White House, 2000, 1). These efforts were paralleled by Congressional hearings on the threat of cyberwar and America's preparedness – or lack thereof – to counter it (e.g., US House of Representatives, 2000). The increasing academic, political and popular attention paid to cyberwar was matched by a growing number of high profile cyberattacks. In 1998, Tamil ‘hacktivists’ organized an email inundation campaign of Sri Lankan embassies. In 1999, Chinese hackers responded to the US bombardment of China's Embassy in Belgrade by attacking the American Embassy's webpage in Beijing. In 2000, Israeli and Palestinian hackers attacked the websites of Hezbollah and Israel's Foreign Ministry respectively, and American and Chinese hackers exchanged broad-based attacks against Chinese and US websites following the downing of an American spy plane over Chinese territorial waters in 2001 (Denning, 2001, Lesk, 2007). On the cusp of the new millennium, a rapid escalation and intensification of discursive practices were working to materialize cyberwar as a new policy object. The events of September 11, 2001 changed all that, as the “global war on terror” (GWOT) remade the security landscape. Initiatives begun to prepare for cyberwarfare were shelved, meetings were canceled, and “critical infrastructure protection” shifted from cyberspace to more conventional spaces of security. Although some policy documents and studies continued to be produced (e.g., Billo and Chang, 2004, Clarke and Knake, 2010, 120), cyberspace and cybersecurity themselves were re-imagined and re-purposed to combat global terrorist networks, and were folded into and made an integral part of the Patriot Act of 2001 and the Department of Homeland Security in 2002. If cyberwar's performative materialization had been preempted by the GWOT in the United States, in Europe it had not yet been taken up. Although the Council of Europe had passed a Convention on Cybercrime in 2001, cyberwar itself was not considered. And at NATO's 2002 Prague Summit, which went to great lengths in discussing the ways NATO needed to transform and adapt in the wake of 9/11, cybersecurity was barely mentioned (NATO, 2002). The birth of cyberwar would have to await both the declining importance of terror as a policy object and a catalyzing event. The birth of cyberwar On 26 April 2007, workers under orders from the Estonian government began the process of removing a bronze soldier statue and the bodies of Red Army soldiers from a public park in Tallinn. The monument, built to commemorate the Red Army's liberation of Tallinn during WWII, had become the site of intensifying contestation between self-identifying Russians and others who felt disenfranchised in independent Estonia, and Estonian nationalists who viewed the USSR, Russia, and Russians as unwanted occupiers of their national homeland (Bruggemann and Kasekamp, 2008, Kaiser, 2012, Lehti et al., 2008, LICHR., 2007, Paabo, 2008). Throughout April 26th, a crowd of protesters gathered, growing larger and angrier by nightfall. Rioting erupted at the site and spread to Old Town, continuing off and on for two days, in an event named the Bronze Night. Beginning on April 27 and lasting until mid-May, a series of cyberattacks were launched against governmental, media, banking and political party websites, in a politically motivated effort to participate in the Bronze Night and extend it into cyberspace. Estonia's political and military elite, as well as news media, blamed Russia and a disloyal fifth column of Russians living in Estonia for both the riots and the cyberattacks, “remediating” (Grusin 2004) the latter as a cyberwar launched by Russia against Estonia. A cyberwar resonance machine quickly developed throughout western security assemblages, and by the end of May 2007 the cyberattacks were being widely hailed as the world's first cyberwar (BBC, 2007, Kirk, 2007, Landler and Markoff, 2007, Mite, 2007, Tanner, 2007, Traynor, 2007). First, it is important to acknowledge that if this event had happened immediately after 9/11, its affective capacity would almost certainly not have been sufficient to actualize cyberwar. Coming at a time when public and political support for the GWOT had significantly waned provided the event with the temporal distance needed for cyberwar managers of unease to capture the imagination of western policymakers and publics. However, not just any cyberattack would do. Both the sociospatial context of the event, and also how it was managed, were critical for the production of resonance. The success of Estonia's cyberwarriors “in providing a compelling narrative for their analysis” (Salter, 2008, 237) may be attributed to their performative enactment of a familiar and believable set of Cold War place-identities featuring Russia and Russian-ness as enemy Other of Estonia, Europe and the US, and Estonia and Estonian-ness as small, vulnerable victim. Western imaginations, primed for such a threat scenario, were easily captured (Blank, 2008, Davis, 2007, Robert, 2012, Ruus, 2008, Weiss, 2007). Waking the World Up to Cyberwar World governments are trying to figure out how to defend themselves against cyber-warfare, and Estonia leads the way (Public Radio International, 2010). That cyberspace “makes us vulnerable” is a central characteristic of cybersecurity discourse, and the more technologically advanced, the more vulnerable one is imagined to be (Bernard-Wills and Ashenden 2012, 118). Since independence Estonia had become one of the most wired countries in the world, and in this regard at least is imagined to occupy a future timespace toward which the rest of the world is headed. This, coupled with Estonia's small size and location on the border of Europe's ‘Other’, was prominently featured in explanations of why the cyberattacks had occurred. This “architecture of enmity” (Amoore, 2009) displaced the internal place-identity conflicts between Russian-ness and Estonian-ness that produced the Bronze Night, even as it remediated the cyberattacks into the world's first cyberwar. Estonia as a small, modern, technology-savvy country was an ideal test-ground for cyberattackers with political motivations … Estonia happened to experience the first large-scale attacks, but … vulnerabilities are growing in both the developed and developing world (Tiirmaa-Klaar, 2011a, 1–2). The 2007 cyberattacks were universally described in media, in official documents and by cybersecurity specialists as a “wakeup call.” The first question confronting policymakers charged with defending against the cyberattacks was whether or not to issue the call, to go public. Given the widespread use of the sites that were targeted, the cyberattacks would have been difficult to deny. A debate within government circles occurred, and the decision to go public owed as much to international as to domestic considerations. This event seemed to be just what western cyberwar managers of unease were waiting for: Here we had this example of cyberattacks actually being part of a political campaign, affecting the whole of society … In the United States lots of agencies and lots of people recognized the problem (of cyberwar) but were not successful in communicating it. Or were unable because of classification reasons to communicate it. And now we have Estonia who is willing to communicate it and to use their country as an example of what may happen. And I think Estonia and the United States together sort of … I mean, the level of conferences I participated in after 2007 was just insane. We were in the Air Force national conference with thousands of very high-ranking officers, we were briefing Congress, we were briefing the White House, at the very highest level (Interview, former Estonian Defense Ministry official, Tallinn, October 2012). President Ilves took the lead in issuing the wakeup call, and in remediating the cyberattacks as a cyberwar launched by Russia – imagined as the constitutive outside of the civilized spaces of Estonia and Europe: “Finally, I turn to Russia, Estonia's neighbour, with a clear message – try to remain civilized! It is not customary in Europe to use computers belonging to public institutions for cyber-attacks against another country's public institutions” (Ilves, 2007a). Describing the Bronze Night as “the greatest challenge to the security” of Estonia since independence and the cyberattacks as “cyber-war” (Ilves, 2007b), Ilves proclaimed that “Estonia was attacked with a weapon and in a manner whose full significance is just beginning to dawn on the whole world in the 21st century” (Ilves, 2007c). Former Defense Minister Aaviksoo raised the issue of invoking Article 5 (common defense) with NATO while the event was still underway (Traynor, 2007), and asserted that “what took place was according to our interpretation cyber warfare and cyber terrorism. In essence, cyberattacks against Estonia demonstrated that the Internet already is a perfect battlefield of the 21st century” (Aaviksoo 2007a). Although “NATO's political leaders judged that the cyberattacks were not an act of war, NATO's Department of Public Diplomacy later created a short film about the episode entitled War in Cyberspace” (Singer and Friedman 2014, 122), allowing Estonia's cyberwarriors a NATO-sanctioned platform from which to present their ‘compelling narrative’. Following Derrida, Burke (2002, 4–5) defines an aporia as “an untotalizable problem at the heart of the concept, disrupting its trajectory, emptying out its fullness, opening out its closure.” He identifies two interlocking aporias of security: first, that claims to universal security for all humans are challenged by a foundational “aporetic distance between our ‘humanity’ and a secure identity bounded and defined by the state;” and second, that securing oneself “must be purchased at the expense of another” (Burke, 2002, 6). These aporias are central to the performative enactment of our sociospatial selves, which are bordered against a constitutive outside that is both totally excluded and at the same time occupies the very center of our place-identities (Butler, 1993, Kaiser, 2014, Kaiser and Nikiforova, 2008). The 2007 events that materialized cyberwar as a new policy object were created by these aporias of security, and at the same time embedded them at the very heart of cybersecurity. The Bronze Night and the accompanying cyberattacks were a ‘war event’ that ruptured the surface calm in Estonian society, exposing the ways in which Russia and Russian-ness performatively materialize as the constitutive outside of Estonia and Estonian-ness through a wide range of everyday discursive practices, and without which Estonia and Estonian-ness could not exist in their present form (Feldman, 2001, Kaiser, 2014, Kaiser and Nikiforova, 2008). Through these performative enactments, Estonia's and Estonians' security are purchased at the expense of Russia and Russians (Feldman, 2001, Kuus, 2004). Both the Bronze Night and the cyberattacks were remediated as acts of war, attacks on Estonia's sovereignty by Russia and a disloyal fifth column of Russian enemy Others within (Kaiser 2012). Cyberwar's materialization through this event carried this aporia of security into cyberspace, and helped to reconstitute a familiar geopolitical imaginary from the Cold War in cyberspace, now conceived as a battlespace where states – aligned into camps of western defenders and eastern attackers – wage cyberwar. “Of course, you know, when you look on the map, then it's very clear. Estonia's a small nation but we have to be concerned about our neighbors. Thank God we are now members of NATO and the EU, and we are not alone anymore. And in cyberwar we are not alone too” (Interview, Cyber Defense League, Tallinn, May 2011). Within this battlespace, Estonia is imagined as occupying a vulnerable border between East and West, where cyberwar is an ever-present threat. This danger is also seen as an opportunity: “We are still living between the East and the West – we are a playground for bad guys … We are looking to increase cooperation with the US. Why should the US cooperate with us? Because we are on the border. If something happens, we can give you a warning that something is coming” (Interview, Cyber Defense League, Tallinn, September 2012). Bigo argues that those acknowledged as security experts “transfer the legitimacy they gain from struggles against terrorists, criminals, spies, and counterfeiters toward other targets, most notably transnational political activists, people crossing borders, or people born in the country but with foreign parents” (Bigo 2002, 63). However, given the aporias of security, and the reiterative citationality of security practices, it seems more accurate to assert that the managers of unease derive their status as security experts from the boundary effects that performatively materialize such threatening Others, who in turn become embedded at the very core of the security discourse that such specialists claim expertise over. Securitization is thus a border performative, continually producing insecurity within the population and territory that must then be secured. Insecurity can never be banished and security finally procured, since insecurity occupies the very heart of securitization practices, with security itself always occupying the promised timespace of the future (Anderson, 2010a). The cyberattacks, re-imagined as a cyberwar launched against a small, technologically advanced state by a large and aggressive neighbor, displaced the problematic relationship between Estonian nationalists in power and self-identifying Russians who felt victimized in independent Estonia that produced the Bronze Night's actualization and the cyberattacks themselves. The remediation of the cyberattacks as Russia engaging in cyberwar against Estonia and the West also transposed a familiar geopolitical b/ordering onto cyberspace: Estonia/Estonian-ness – good guys, small but capable cyberdefenders of ‘the West’ vs. Russia/Russian-ness – bad guys, perpetrators of cyberwar, ‘the East’. At the same time, the event provided Estonian security professionals an important opportunity to reiterate to European and American audiences that Russia remains an ever-present threat, securing for themselves the role of “transactors” (Kuus, 2004) of cybersecurity.

### Cyberwar Link

#### Computational propaganda mystifies occupations and conflicts to make any coherent theory of warfare or alliances impossible. In the sea of misattribution, there is always another opinion, and the inescapably provisional and easily falsified nature of all accounts of cyberwar energizes the death of meaning itself. In the face of the opacity of cyberconflict, desire tends toward militarized paranoia, accepting the experts of Empire just as easily as fake news. The impact is a global civil war operating at every level that far surpasses any Russian threat.

Matviyenko et al. 19 (Svitlana Matviyenko, Assistant Professor of Critical Media Analysis in the School of Communication of Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Nick Dyer-Witheford, associate professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at University of Western Ontario. “Introduction,” *Cyberwar and Revolution, Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism,* University of Minnesota Press,Mar 12, 2019) \*modified for ableist language

Within cyberwar apparatuses, humans, for the moment, remain a necessary link or relay enlisted in multiple ways, voluntary and involuntary. Yet while humans remain in the loop, or on the loop (that is to say, with a veto on otherwise automatic processes), it is within a war-fighting system that increasingly decenters subjectivity as a “peripheral” (Gibson 2015). Because of this, the human subject of cyberwar is dazed and confused. This is in part a consequence of the intentional secrecy of cyberwar, but the possibilities of such stealth, and its intensification by contingency and accident, arise from the speed, scope, and complexity of the technology of cyberwar apparatuses. Deeply implicated as users are in the militarization of networks, their involvement is frequently unknowing or misrecognized. We are indeed “empowered” by technology—but not necessarily in the way we are told. Rather than acting as globally aware networked individuals, intervening purposefully in great political events with a few deft touches to an iPhone, our cyberwar involvement is as likely to be a misapprehending, deceived, or involuntary conduit for war whose outbreak has either passed by unnoticed or was only imagined (at least until this imagined onset provoked real counteraction), or whose combatants are drastically misidentified. In conflicts where a crucial action may be the opening of virally contaminated email, the retweeting of a message from a software agent mistaken for a human, or the invisible contribution of a hijacked computer (or digitalized refrigerator) to a massive botnet, we are in the realm of Marx’s “they do it, but they do not know it.” “Even if you do not see the war, the war sees you” is the logic of the ~~blind~~ [unknowing] gaze of cyberwar, a regime in which although “the subject does not see where [this regime] is leading, he follows” (Lacan 1998, 75). The obscurity inherent to cyberwar afflicts even those most expert in its prosecution. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the CIA and Saudi Arabia’s intelligence service set up a “fake” jihadi website to monitor Islamic extremist activity. In 2008, the U.S. Army and the NSA concluded that the “fake” site was actually serving as an operational planning hub for attacks by Saudi Arabian jihadists joining the Sunni insurgency. When they proposed the site be destroyed, the CIA objected, but Pentagon hackers proceeded with the “take-down.” They inadvertently disrupted more than three hundred servers in Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Texas. As a task force participant ruefully explained, “to take down a Web site that is up in Country X, because the cyber-world knows no boundaries, you may end up taking out a server that is located in Country Y.” The Saudi Arabian intelligence service, which regarded the “fake” site as a “boon,” was furious; mollification required “a lot of bowing and scraping.” The CIA, too, was resentful; the agency “understood that intelligence would be lost, and it was; that relationships with cooperating intelligence services would be damaged, and they were; and that the terrorists would migrate to other sites, and they did” (Nakashima 2010). A more serious example of unintended consequences is Stuxnet, the computer worm planted in the computers at the uranium enrichment plant outside Natanz to prevent Iran from building a nuclear bomb, an operation now widely attributed to a joint U.S.–Israeli intelligence operation. As we noted in chapter 1, the worm’s impeccable simulation of a mechanical failure apparently unrelated to software performance is considered a watershed in the development of cyberweaponry. What it is not so generally recognized, however, is that it went out of control. Stuxnet’s discovery by the security company VirusBlokAda in mid-June 2010 was the result of the virus accidentally spreading beyond its intended target due to a programming error introduced in an update. This allowed the worm to enter into an engineer’s computer connected to the centrifuges and thence travel to the internet. It then propagated to industrial sites far from Natanz, not only in Iran but in Indonesia and India, and beyond, reportedly infecting the systems of oil giant Chevron and a Russian nuclear plant. As one cybersecurity expert puts it, “By allowing Stuxnet to spread globally, its authors committed collateral damage worldwide” (Schneier 2010). Although in many of these cases, the virus did not activate, because of differences between the Natanz system it targeted and the others it accidentally infected, another consequence was that the Stuxnet code became widely available for use or adaptation by hackers other than those who developed it. Such probably inadvertent propagation can be considered what Paul Virilio (2000) terms an “integral accident,” a malfunction intrinsic to, and inevitable for, viral cyberweapons.15 Once one passes to the civilian perception of real or imagined cyberwar effects, the scope for misrecognition increases and potentially ranges from imagining wars where none exists to not noticing those that are actually raging. Zetter (2016b) reports a “misrecognized” attack on a power grid in Ukraine that occurred on December 23, 2015, when twenty-seven substations of the Prykarpattya Oblenergo, a Ukrainian power distributor that serves 538,000 customers, went dead after the company’s computers were infected by a version of a high-powered web-based malware BlackEnergy 3, in what is generally regarded as an act of Russian aggression, although the attribution, as always, is inconclusive. The cyberevent attracted the attention of cybersecurity and hacking communities: the blogosphere and specialized online channels and platforms competed for the most informed interpretation of the blackout. In Ukraine, however, where the cyberattack took place, it was unnoticed, despite successfully plunging hundreds of cities and villages into darkness. With the exception of security, administration, and technical personnel of the power station, the local population took the blackout for a common power shutdown, a nationally centralized procedure aimed at saving electricity in the country’s declining and war-afflicted economy. In a reverse example, in August 2008, cyberattacks took place in the midst of a broader armed conflict between Russia and Georgia over the disputed territory of South Ossetia. Although these attacks, allegedly coordinated or encouraged by the Russian state, did not significantly affect the ongoing kinetic action, distribution of malicious software; defacement of political, governmental, and financial websites; and multiple DoS and DDoS attacks on governmental, financial, news, and media websites generated confusion and panic among the population of the country at a time when “Georgia was the most dependent on the availability of information channels” (Tikk, Kaska, and Vihul 2010, 69–79, 72). Then, on March 28, 2011, the internet in Georgia and Armenia went down for nearly the entire day after a seventy-five- year- old Georgian woman named Hayastan Shakarian, while digging for scrap copper, accidentally cut a fiber-optic cable owned by Georgian Railway Telecom that runs through the two countries (Millar 2011). It would not have been too strange if, to a traumatized wartime population, this accident had signaled another kinetic offensive (Deibert 2013, 29). How many times would such suspicions need to be shared and commented on in social networks to become someone’s “knowledge”? To scale and speed up to the status of “fake news”? To serve as a useful context or leverage for a future cyberattack? To premediate an invasion? The cybernetic autopoiesis of unplanned and undesired incidents, unavoidable and unpreventable accidents, as well as the masterminded and preplanned operations constitute the ongoing production of events and semblances constitutive of cyberwar dynamics. Everything, even what did not have place, did not happen, or was misattributed, has a positive value in the cyberwar economy. This trompe l’oeil creates ~~blind~~ spots in the field of vision of all observers of cyberwar.16 It accelerates what Žižek (1999, 322) calls the “decline of symbolic efficiency” in digital capitalism. As Jodi Dean (2014, 213) explains, this develops the Lacanian idea that there is no longer a Master-Signifier that stabilizes meaning, that knits together the chain of signifiers and hinders their tendencies to float off into indeterminacy. While the absence of such a master might seem to produce a situation of complete openness and freedom—no authority is telling the subject what to do, what to desire, how to structure its choices—Žižek argues that in fact the result is unbearable, suffocating closure. A “setting of electronically mediated subjectivity [that] is one of infinite doubt and ultimate reflexifisation” intensifies “the fundamental uncertainty accompanying the impossibility of totalization” in a symbolic environment where “there is always another option, link, opinion, nuance or contingency that we haven’t taken into account” (Dean 2014, 212). Computational propaganda that aims to mystify invasions and occupations, or promote cynical disaffection from an adversary’s political system, actively weaponizes the “decline in symbolic efficiency,” but it is endemic to the whole field of cyberwar. The extreme uncertainty and opacity of cyberwar do not, however, inhibit the interpellative effects of contending cyberwar apparatuses as they summon up cybersoldiers, patriotic hackers, vigilante militias, and security-conscious digital citizens. On the contrary, the problems of verifying or disproving multiple alarms and accusations accelerates these processes and puts them into overdrive. To put this point in psychoanalytic terms, as we noted previously, commentators on Althusser have criticized the appropriation of Lacan’s theories of the subject in his account of ISAs. These critics point out that what Althusser misses in Lacan’s account is that the subject is always incomplete; it is precisely what can never be fixed by a specific subject position or identity. However, the implication of this incompletion is not that the subject remains some untouched and primordial haven of authenticity but rather that this lack drives to ever more compulsive (because unfulfillable) attempts to attain a definitive identity. Translating this into political terms, we would say that it is the inescapably incomplete, provisional, and easily falsified nature of all accounts of cyberwar that energizes the adoption of increasingly militarized, extreme, paranoid, and unshakable subject positions vis-à- vis its alleged events. For example, shortly after the outbreak of the rebellion that grew into the Syrian civil war, there was an abrupt but near-total shutdown of the Syrian internet. A common assumption, at least in the West, was that this was an attempt by the Assad regime to black out online dissent, as Mubarak had attempted in Egypt. But according to Edward Snowden, the event was caused by intrusion into the system conducted by the NSA—not intentionally, however, but by accident, in a botched hack of the Syrian state’s communication and electronic defense system (Ackerman 2014). Whereas the first attribution cast the Assad regime in the conventional role of despotic suppressor of civil rights, rightly opposed by liberal democracies, the second reversed the significance of the blackout, making it evidence of—once again—NSA cyberaggression against foreign states, and incompetent aggression at that. But those opposed to this characterization could point out that at the time Snowden made his diagnosis, he was reliant on Russia, a supporter of the Assad regime, for political asylum. The blackout of Syria’s internet connection thus also becomes an epistemological blackout about its cause, a blackout in which every initial position on the politics of Syria’s civil war could be preserved and reinforced. To provide a final example that is closer to home for many readers, as we suggested in chapter 1, there is now fairly convincing evidence that Russian intelligence agencies, whether directly or by proxy, attempted some intervention in the 2016 U.S. presidential election by way of “fake news.” It is also clear that some of the news reports claiming to substantiate or expand this claim, by claiming, for example, to detect Russian hackers in Vermont’s power grid or by broadly characterizing a sweepingly wide range of U.S. media outlets as accomplices of Russian cyberwar, are inaccurate and tendentious. The abyss of this double falsification—“ fake news” compounding “fake news”—becomes a zero-gravity free-fire zone within which contending factions within the U.S. political system trade charges of treason, producing a civil war effect possibly beyond the wildest dreams of the toilers at the dreary offices of St. Petersburg’s Internet Research Group.

#### Cyberwar reveals the collapse of meaning through informatic erasure, as all information becomes flooded with computational propaganda where militarized digital catastrophe shapes the present by its future possibility that mirrors and exceeds nuclear war.

Joque, 18 (Justin Joque, researcher and visualization librarian @ UMich, Master's of Science of Information at the UMich School of Information, PhD in Communications at the European Graduate School. *Deconstruction machines: Writing in the age of cyberwar*. University of Minnesota Press, 2018) \*modified for ableist language

The systems that are attacked through cyberwar are dual entities: on one hand, they are defined by a series of connections, and on the other hand, they are defined by the text of programs and messages that are sent through the network. The networked structure of the global Internet allows malicious programs to quickly propagate, but it is the insecurity of individual systems and the computer programs they run that are exploited to attack these networks. Without the insecurity of these programs and messages, cyberwar would never be a strategic possibility. While computer programs are often considered to be overly deterministic and simply a series of rules for a machine to follow, the very existence of cyberwar suggests that programs are not so straightforward. Programming is a textual and linguistic practice that is always carried out in languages and at levels of complexity that preclude complete mastery over what is written. Cyberwar infiltrates and subverts these programs, turning the text and logic of the program against itself. To fully grasp what is at stake in cyberwar, it is then critical to understand the logic of writing, especially the logic of writing at its most vulnerable. In this light, cyberwar is ultimately a process of deconstructing programs and undermining them from within their own logical and linguistic systems. As such, it is a form of writing itself, a writing that is aimed at both shoring up and deconstructing other texts. To understand cyberwar in this way, then, also requires a reconceptualization of deconstruction and its functioning. Admitting the textual nature of code and the machinic force of deconstruction overwhelms any attempt to maintain that deconstruction has ever been an exclusively theoretical matter or could ever be secured against its possible usage by the state and military. Cyberwar, in harnessing and exploiting the vulnerable and machinic nature of writing, is thus both a form of deconstruction and a deconstructive threat to deconstruction itself. Still, this threat to deconstruction and the logic of writing does not spell the end of deconstruction but rather guarantees its continued importance to the history of both writing and metaphysics. GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE CATASTROPHE One of the earliest glimpses of the possible impact of an all-­out cyberwar occurred in June 1997. A small team of hackers using publicly available tools and programs was supposedly able to gain access to the power grid in nine U.S. cities, those cities’ emergency response systems, and a number of critical Pentagon networks, including those that managed military supply chains and the command-­ and-­ control structure. According to James Adams, who has written at length about these attacks, the hackers also managed to infect the human command-­ and-­ control system with a ~~paralyzing~~ level of mistrust. Orders that appeared to come from a commanding general were fake, as were bogus news reports on the crisis and instructions from the civilian command authorities. As a result, nobody in the chain of command, from the president on down, could believe anything. This group of hackers using publicly available resources was able to prevent the United States from waging war effectively.1 Luckily, the series of attacks, which have been code-­ named Eligible Receiver, were carried out by the [NSA] National Security Agency as an unannounced test of military and civilian digital infrastructure. The attackers, who were working as part of a No-­Notice Interoperability Exercise Program, were asked only to prove what was possible and not actually to destroy anything. Though the military provided no substantial evidence about Eligible Receiver, aside from interviews with the media and vague congressional testimony, for a while, Eligible Receiver was repeatedly referenced as a brief glimpse of future war and the dark nature of our digital technologies.2 Of course, there were those who were sure it was merely the media-­ security complex displaying its newest boogeyman. In a hacking publication titled The Crypt Newsletter, whose provenance and history seem to have gone the way of dial-­ up modems but which still lingers in search-­engine-­indexed text files in various parts of the Internet, Joseph K refers to Eligible Receiver as “a Pentagon ghost story repeated ad nauseum to journalists and the easily frightened in which ludicrous or totally unsubstantiated claims about menaces from cyberspace are passed off as astonishing deeds of techno-­ legerdemain performed by cybersoldiers working within a highly classified wargame.” Although Joseph K meant to dismiss Eligible Receiver, the discourse surrounding it still tells an interesting ghost story, especially if it is treated as such and read not as baseless but as a myth that functions even without proof. John Arquilla summed up the state of the public relation to the event aptly when, in an interview with PBS, he said, “Eligible Receiver is a classified event about which I can’t speak. What I can say is that when people say there is no existence proof of the seriousness of the cyber threat, to my mind, Eligible Receiver provides a convincing existence proof of the nature of the threat that we face.”3 This Kafkaesque claim is telling: he cannot tell us what transpired, but its existence, despite being under classified erasure, proves his point. This event appears in this light not then as an attack against military information systems but instead as an attack against our belief in the digital systems that increasingly provide the fabric of our everyday lives. Perhaps in Adams’s claims that no one could believe anything from the president on down, we should read a warning that we, too, outside the wargame, can no longer believe anything— ­that, ultimately, the collapse of the entire system may already be upon us. It takes little extra imagination to suggest that the implied result is some catastrophic social collapse, which may already be under way. It is not merely our military communication technologies that are at stake in Eligible Receiver but the entirety of society. Computer systems, especially when seen as data storage devices, function to guarantee that past inscriptions persist into the future. Computer security is often discussed as being founded on the “CIA triad,” standing for confidentiality, integrity, and access. Confidentially requires that only authorized users have access to information. Integrity is the need that the information that is put into a system is the same information that is retrieved, and access suggests that if authorized users cannot retrieve information, no matter how secure that information is, the system is useless.4 All of these function not just in the present but as guarantees of past and future. For a system to be secure under these conditions, the system must assure that the data entered in the past extend into the future and avoid unauthorized compromise. Cyberattacks instantly call all three of these into question in the past, present, and future. The futurity of a “real” attack like Eligible Receiver infects our belief in these systems in the present. Garrett Schubert, of EMC’s Critical Incident Response Center, tasked with protecting EMC’s data centers from cyberattacks, describes his work directly in relation to a change in temporality: “When I started in my career, the idea was, we wanted to stop a bad thing from happening. Now, we assume that the bad thing has already happened. Every single day, we walk in and we assume there is an active attack going on.”5 The future catastrophe has become a part of the daily operations of our technologies. As Parikka claims, the inscription of information in media is the invention of the accident of information erasure.6 The database always contains within it the immanent possibility that the data are, or may be, corrupted. As much as this unannounced test exercise may have been a test of military security, it is also a test of our belief in the future of our digital world. Joseph K’s mocking dismissal then appears, like a pithy sermon by an unknown sage of our digital belief, to reassure us that these events are merely phantasms thought up to terrify the gullible and will never come to pass. At the same time, the complete dismissal of this ghost story bifurcates the future: on one hand, the possibility of utter collapse, and on the other, complete faith and resilience. Likewise, it doubles the structure of belief and skepticism. Are the believers those who put faith in our technological world or those who blindly take the military’s word that the catastrophe is around any corner? If we cannot believe “anyone from the president on down,” how can we believe those who call that belief into question? THE INFORMATIONAL UNCANNY We arrive at an impasse that mirrors the Cold War nuclear catastrophe, not in terms of the destruction of life but in terms of the destruction of meaning. Though the relationship between the digital and the symbolic is complex, if the material support of meaning— be it magnetic bits, flashes of light in a fiber optic cable, or paper writing— is destroyed, then so too is the possibility of meaning. If the bits that store our digital writing are effaced, so too is any message they may carry. A nuclear catastrophe destroys meaning by destroying potential readers and the material of writing, whereas a digital catastrophe destroys meaning and inscription by destroying the microscopic material support. As these digital communications are entrusted more and more, what is at stake is the whole system of believing in the integrity of one’s information, and with it the integrity of all systems. We arrive, then, at a similar situation to what Paul Saint-­Amour refers to as the nuclear uncanny: “Because it offers the possibility of a future without symptoms, without a symbolic order— ­ in other words, no future at all— the nuclear condition can, in a sense, only cause anticipatory symptoms.”7 Likewise, the militarized digital catastrophe shapes the present by its future possibility. Saint-­Amour’s argument is helpful in that it places the futurity of such events clearly in the present. He suggests that such a catastrophe, especially because it destroys the symbolic, must produce its effects in the present. If this future catastrophe undermines the symbolic in the present, we begin to enter a space of what we could call militarized deconstruction. The ability for any program, database, or text to control its meaning and intent is instantly destabilized. As Parikka argues, “apocalypses reveal new temporalities, new layers for a media archaeology of the present.”8 The possibility of a catastrophe places the full meaning of programs and networks always in the future but their symptomatic expression in the present. Their complete meaning can only be understood after their looming breakdown. In short, despite the linear and programmatic nature of a program’s execution, the deferral of meaning and the non-­ self-­ sameness opened by its potential insecurity guarantee that the relation between the text of the program and its action in the world is governed by play, différance, and the impending possibility of its deconstruction. This catastrophic threat to the future of databases suggests that they are ultimately shaped by the structure of what Derrida calls arche-­writing (the originary structure of non-­ self-­ presence and externalization that shapes all existence— the ­ violence of our being in the world). When Hägglund explains arche-­ writing, we could easily imagine that he is speaking about a computer rather than a human subject:

#### Cyberwarfare must be understood as fake wars and classified NSA cyberops turning nonwar into war - a conflict over meaning that erases and rewrites the very archives and epistemes that trace its existence

Joque, 18 (Justin Joque, researcher and visualization librarian @ UMich, Master's of Science of Information at the UMich School of Information, PhD in Communications at the European Graduate School. “INTRODUCTION: Root Kit,” Deconstruction machines: Writing in the age of cyberwar. University of Minnesota Press, 2018)

There is no easily agreed-upon definition of cyberwar. Even within closely related literatures, there exists an ongoing debate over what constitutes cyberwar. Some, such as Rid, who has written at length declaring there is no such thing as cyberwar, question whether such a concept is a helpful lens for thinking the present situation at all.1 The term cyberwar, in most invocations, refers to the notion of cyberspace and the possibility of a war carried out in this global networked space, wherein computer systems are taken over to disrupt and surveil an enemy’s communication and networked infrastructure either as part of a “kinetic” war or as a form of low-level conflict aimed at gaining geopolitical advantages. Though it is important to follow authors, strategists, legal scholars, and others wherever they happen to see “cyberwar” occurring, one particular etymological meaning will guide this inquiry. The prefix cyber- refers to the term cybernetics. Cybernetics, originating from the Greek kubernētēs (“steersman” or “governor”), is the science and study of systems, their structures, regulation, emergent properties, and possibilities, spanning disciplines from technology to biology to society. By explicitly thinking the cyber- in cyberwar as referring to systems, it will be fruitful to understand cyberwar as a war against systems: computer systems, state systems, systems of organization, and even systems of meaning. This etymological understanding of cyberwar closely mirrors some of the earliest deployments of this term. One of the first unclassified uses of the term cyberwar comes from a 1992 publication by Arnett.2 For him, the term means the replacement of human operators with machines that decide on targets, trajectories, movement, and so on—essentially the culmination of a long history of the insertion of “intelligent machines” into the arsenal of war fighting. That same year, Der Derian used the term “in the sense of a technologically generated, televisually linked, and strategically gamed form of violence.”3 Arquilla and Ronfeldt subsequently published a paper defining cyberwar as a tactical and strategic movement whereby communication, information, and the visibility of the battlespace become the central concern. They assert that while information technology brings cyberwar to the fore, it is not necessarily a technological phenomenon. In fact, the exemplary case of cyberwar they recount is a thirteenth-century Mongol offensive against Khwarizm, where the Mongols succeeded in defeating a significantly larger army by cutting off communications and disrupting the control of forces. These definitions complement each other. Der Derian and Arnett’s definitions focus on carrying out a kinetic war through the cybernetic organization of humans and technology, while Arquilla and Ronfeldt’s definition stresses disrupting all of the enemy’s cybernetic systems regardless of whether they are human, technological, or a combination. We are faced, then, with something much more expansive than war in cyberspace; rather, what these authors begin to explore in the early 1990s is an understanding of war in which one tries to construct and defend systems of communicating, knowing, controlling, and, ultimately, existing. Simultaneously, one attempts to disrupt, infiltrate, corrupt, and destroy these same systems belonging to the enemy. Arquilla and Ronfeldt state that such a strategy “may aim to confound people’s fundamental beliefs about the nature of their culture, society, and government, partly to foment fear but perhaps mainly to disorient people and unhinge their perceptions.”4 Clearly this is not completely new. Belligerents have always attempted to deceive their opponents and disrupt economies and governments. Furthermore, war has often had as a central objective the destruction of one critical system and the infiltration of another: the body and the territory of the opponent. Despite this, we can outline three critical factors that mark cyberwar as a historical shift. First, proponents of cyberwar, such as Arquilla and Ronfeldt, stress that in cyberwar, information and structures of knowing become central rather than peripheral to conflict. They say that cyberwar “means disrupting if not destroying the information and communications systems, broadly defined to include even military culture, on which an adversary relies in order to know itself.”5 Second, cyberwar attempts to disrupt not only the enemy’s knowledge but also the entire structure of knowledge. In short, cyberwar invests epistemology itself as a battlespace. Third, cyberwar seeps outside of “war” proper. In calling into question modes of knowing, cyberwar breaks down the limits of the time and space of war. Thus the term cyberwar describes two distinct but related phenomena. On one hand, it is a strategy for fighting war, and we will include whatever is named cyberwar by strategists, legal theorists, authors, and warriors. On the other hand, we will mean a historical shift—in a sense, a global cyberwar that marks a tendency whereby the critical element in war becomes the flow of information and the fortification and disruption of systems. In making this shift, cyberwar has opened an epistemological and cybernetic battlespace wherein notions of war, enmity, and knowing become directly contestable. While these concepts have always been unstable and problematic, cyberwar seizes them as systems of direct military intervention, turning what was once a question for philosophers into a domain of the global battlespace. In its most abstract sense, cyberwar has become an event that calls everything including itself into question at the moment it arrives. It is the historical possibility that all systems may break down—or, in their military occupation, be caused to break down—but it is also possible that cyberwar may undermine itself before anything actually “happens.” Cyberwar as historical event marks a moment of radical militarized unknowability. Many discussions of cyberwar, be they historical, strategic, or legal, begin not with the earliest examples or contemporary attacks but rather with a future catastrophe that demonstrates the danger of our overreliance on vast, connected, yet vulnerable systems. These catastrophes normally start with a nonstate actor or a “rogue” state hacking into key networks, destroying critical infrastructure in the United States or multiple European countries. Airplanes crash into each other, trains derail, communication channels shut down, and electrical systems are disabled. Not only are these systems forced to shut down but they are hijacked and made to spin out of control, sometimes destroying themselves so completely that they would take months to return to normal usage. These imagined scenarios often place the reader at the time immediately following the catastrophe. At this point in time, one can survey the wreckage of our technological hubris before the aftermath begins in earnest. It is the moment when the full scale of a possible collapse is revealed but not yet realized.6 Where a historical account begins in the past, it often starts with a CIA attempt to secretly destroy a Soviet gas pipeline.7 According to Thomas Reed, a National Security Council staffer, in 1982, the CIA was able to insert an intentionally faulty piece of code into a pump that the Soviet Union obtained from a Canadian company. According to Reed’s account, the pump was installed in the Trans-Siberian gas pipeline; varying pump speeds and valve settings produced extreme pressures that caused an explosion large enough to be detected by U.S. satellites. The secret introduction of a so-called logic bomb—a somewhat antiquated term for a malicious piece of code inserted into software—has been touted by a number of commentators as one of the earliest examples of cyberwar. Although Reed, who made this story public for the first time in a 2004 book, never referred to this attack as cyberwar, this story has become something of an origin myth for those who write about cyberwar more generally.8 The event prefigures a number of issues that arise again and again in the myriad discourses surrounding cyberwar. Most important, it becomes clear how vulnerable complex systems of computation have become. These systems aggregate code written across the globe and parts manufactured outside the purview of their owners into complex networks that belie attempts to control them. Computation is exposed to the exterior places in which it is produced. Furthermore, even if unintentionally, the use of this event as the first in a series of international cyberattacks offers an answer to a question that is often asked of theorists of cyberwar: how can such an event lay claim to being “war”? Is this merely sabotage? Placing the origin in the Cold War responds to those critics of cyberwar hype who believe it is nothing more than a collection of high-tech tools in service of the ancient techniques of spying, deception, and sabotage. For the Cold War proved that wars need not be explosive and could consist of decades of low-level conflict. As Virilio says of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, “the weapon’s serious danger is not that it could explode tomorrow. . . but that for thirty years it has been destroying society.”9 The bomb’s destructive power has been felt directly through its threat. Likewise, as can be seen in the futuristic scenarios described earlier, cyberwar seems always to threaten catastrophe. Placing cyberwar’s origins in the Cold War suggests the possibility of a nonwar that is as destructive as a kinetic war. The second half of the twentieth century has demonstrated that even in the absence of a hot war, conflict can destroy governments and societies. Furthermore, at least for those theorists and strategists of cyberwar in the United States, this origin story contextualizes contemporary cyberwar discourses in another way. Several military and political commentators writing about cyberwar as a strategic area of study were the same theorists who worked on nuclear deterrence strategy in the latter part of the Cold War. A number of authors—many of whom work for the RAND Corporation, a think tank that was created in 1948 to provide research and analysis to the U.S. military—even attempt to employ strategies learned from nuclear deterrence research to mitigate military hacking and offensive use of global networks.10 Tying the origin of cyberwar to Cold War global strategic thinking offers an opportunity for those making the transition from strategizing in a bipolar world defined by nuclear weapons to a multipolar, interconnected global economy. While the Siberian pipeline attack’s similarity to contemporary issues surrounding cyberwar is noteworthy, the most striking aspect of the whole affair is that it possibly never happened. Following the release of Reed’s book, an ex-KGB officer with direct knowledge of the region at the time disputes Reed’s account. He acknowledged there was an explosion but claims it was at a different, smaller pipeline and was caused by specific construction mistakes, not by faulty equipment.11 Moreover, no known media reports from the time confirm an explosion, which Reed claims was the size of a small nuclear blast. Other than Reed’s account, no other documentation has been found, and the CIA has never confirmed the event.12 The origins of cyberwar in this event are seemingly impossible to verify. Pipeline explosions were common at the time, and there would have been no way for the CIA to know for certain if it was caused by their purposefully faulty equipment or accidently faulty Soviet equipment. Given our current evidence, the event is completely unknowable. Moreover, even if there was an explosion, it is impossible to verify if it was the logic bomb or a mechanical failure. Depending on one’s perspective, either the fake event or fake refutations seep into the historical record like a computer virus corrupting the system’s memory. Thus, in a largely unrecognized way, this event is archetypal for cyberwar. Cyberwar and cybersecurity weave a complicated relationship between the knowable and the unknowable. Our networked world has become so complex in sheer technical terms that the system as a whole cannot be known from the outside. Mapping even just the public Web has become a scholarly pursuit in its own right. Computers and networks represent information as tiny bits on a magnetic disk or pulses of light across a cable that, owing to their size, speed, and complexity, are on their own essentially meaningless and impenetrable to human observers. One always interacts with abstractions and complex representations of the material reality of computing. Cyberwar, in attacking these systems, is always on the verge of being meaningless itself. Moreover, in attacking systems of knowing that guarantee information, a successful attack impairs even our ability to know if something has happened. Cyberwar is fought precisely in this space between the possible catastrophe and the possibility of nothing happening at all. The event itself is ambiguous and our public historical record is already compromised. It could of course be argued that all history is ambiguous, constructed, and selective. What is unique in the case of cyberwar is that the whole structure of knowing and observing is opened as a site of direct military intervention. It is not only a question of interpretation and selective archives. The entire archive and our ability to comprehend the archive may be attacked at any moment. In a sense, we are dealing with a limit case of historical unknowability—not just ambiguity but a military attack on the data of history itself. Now, even if the victors write history, it may no longer be written from data they control. Thus an effective understanding of cyberwar will only be possible by not prematurely deciding in favor of an event happening or not happening. Cyberwar operates both as a strategy and as a mediatized cultural phenomenon directly in the space between happening and not happening. It succeeds as a military strategy by never succeeding too much. It always seems to be leading us to the verge of catastrophe and at the same time to an interminable boredom where nothing will ever actually happen. Cyberwar could easily be dismissed as not really being war or violent, but what is so virulent and dangerous about cyberwar is its ability to atomize and distribute warfare into everyday life. Cyberwar succeeds so much more effectively for being either overhyped or dismissed. Ultimately, we must resist deciding in favor of catastrophe or boredom, for in doing so, the entirety of cyberwar will certainly escape us. Instead, we must attempt to interrogate the history and discourses of cyberwar by following its vacillations between these two poles as it hides in the theoretical space between war and nonwar.

### Datafication

#### The escalation of turning the human into data produces a process where human and technology are merged to become an efficient information processor – a dystopian endpoint.

Steuer 19 (Daniel, is research fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics,

and Ethics (CAPPE) at the University of Brighton, UK, “*War and Algorithm*,” Chapter 2: Prolegomena to Any Future Attempt at Understanding Our Emerging World of War (9/24/19), 6/22/22 – FI)

It is not at all inconceivable that it will soon be possible to mortgage your body (to promise your organs or tissue for donation, for instance, in order to raise capital or service your debts), in particular if—in line with the fundamental contradiction of universal monoculture—the very body of the neoliberal (in)dividual will be seen as nothing but data. The Visible Human Project, the translation of an entire human corpse into data sets, which began in the early 1990s, rests on “an equation of digital code with vitality” and on the “desire for bodies to behave as closed mechanical systems with reversible temporalities, rather than as non-reversible, chaotic systems which necessarily move towards death.”183 Whether or not the project is medically useful, it bears all the hallmarks of our universal monoculture. In particular, the changes that the body undergoes in the process of being translated into data are considered a technical problem that can be solved. The categorical difference between life and death is slowly erased by technological improvements until flesh-andblood bodies and digital revenants become indistinguishable.184 Foucault’s lectures from 1977/78 and 1978/79 have been read as “a coherent argument for the positive force of globalization.”185 And, in fact, one might go further and suggest that, in his notions of power and the dispositif, one can observe a mimetic approval of neoliberalism (and universal monoculture). Then there are Jean-Luc Nancy’s reflections on “struction,” on a world in which Being has been replaced by “being with” and in which it is “truly not a question of order or organization that is implied by con- and instruction.” Aimed against extraction and hierarchy, they end with “the heap, the non-assembled ensemble. Surely it is contiguity and co-presence, but without a principle of coordination.”186 Again there arises the question of how to distinguish between the Manichean alternatives, between the liberated (and liberating?) nonassembled ensemble and an all-pervasive, invisible coordination that favors partial interests. Another example is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s nomadic war machine.187 Its form corresponds to global partisan warfare; it turns the planet into a “smooth space” onto which “striated spaces” are projected (see the discussion of flow markets, the global frontierland, and drone targeting above). Nomadism is not the opposite of hierarchical or state power; rather, state power contains nomadism and vice versa. In the field of sociology, we find Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam’s strategic action fields (SAFs), “the basic structural building block of modern political/organizational life in the economy, civil society, and the state.”188 SAFs form a fleeting world of metastable “socially constructed arenas” in which “actors with varying resource endowments vie for advantage:”189 “All the meanings in a field can break down including what the purpose of the field is. . . . [T]he process of contention is ongoing and the threats to an order always present to some degree.”190 But perhaps the most perfect example of theoretical mimesis is Jean Baudrillard’s “ultimate reality of impossible exchange,” the “Impossible Exchange Barrier.”191 Here, universal exchange is turned on its head. Setting out from the observation that “there is no equivalent to the world,”192 Baudrillard argues that there are no equivalences in the world, that a “continuity of the Nothing . . . grounds the possibility of the Great Game of Exchange,”193 and he concludes that the “whole problem is one of abandoning critical thought” as it is now anachronistic.194 Instead, the “task of thought” is to make the world “even more enigmatic and unintelligible.”195 This, despite the perceptive qualities of the text, is the ultimate confirmation of universal monoculture through its seeming reversal.196 CONCLUSION The dystopian endpoint is not a world that has been taken over by machines and programs that develop and follow their own agenda—the singularity nightmare. The real dystopian endpoint is a world in which the process of mutual formation between humanity and its technological inventions has produced a state in which both the human and the nonhuman worlds are modeled on just one, in its foundational principles very limited, invention—the information processor—and there is no longer any imaginative space in which alternatives might be created. The danger is neither technology destroying the world—this is also a danger but a different one—nor the reduction of the social to the technological but the social becoming locked into the technological to the point of indistinction. If this happens within a capitalist economic framework, then the result will be a kind of dysfunctional stasis, a lingering apocalypse, life as continual warfare, with techno-economic partisans permanently being engaged in instantaneous value extraction.197 The indistinctions that today make themselves felt empirically and in attempts at theoretical explanation will have become a complete homogeneity that may no longer even deserve the adjective “social.” We have moved from conceptual indistinctions in the description of the emerging world of war to the mimetic escalation that drives it forward and produces the “security paradigm,” which is applied to the world as system, the “world” (or the world seen under the spell of universal convertibility). If Sohn-Rethel’s exchange abstraction is a plausible framework for looking at this development, then partisan escalation (at the level of practice) and theoretical escalation (at the conceptual level) are two codependent factors in the overall process of mimetic escalation. The world is more and more organized as the “world;” individual actors conceive of themselves more and more as reflex (in-)dividuals seeking instantaneous advantage, and any perspective outside the self-referential universal monoculture is more and more difficult to achieve. Thus, my reflections must admit that they, too, end with a Manichean alternative: that between a world of blind practice and a world in which Selbstbesinnung is still possible.198

### Death

#### Their conception and projection of death as a biological end to life denies the value of death as a reversible and subjective transformation, creating a securitization against death from which social control is made possible and life is reduced to a capitalist prolongation and prohibition of death. This lays the foundation for all exclusions against what is deemed “abnormal,” and makes war, genocide, and discrimination inevitable.

Robinson 12. Andrew Robinson, political theorist and activist based in the UK, “An A to Z of Theory | Jean Baudrillard: The Rise of Capitalism & the Exclusion of Death” Ceasefire Magazine, March 30, 2012, <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-2/>

The passage to capitalism: Symbolic exchange – or rather, its suppression – plays a central role in the emergence of capitalism. Baudrillard sees a change happening over time. Regimes based on symbolic exchange (differences are exchangeable and related) are replaced by regimes based on equivalence (everything is, or means, the same). Ceremony gives way to spectacle, immanence to transcendence. Baudrillard’s view of capitalism is derived from Marx’s analysis of value. Baudrillard accepts Marx’s view that capitalism is based on a general equivalent. Money is the general equivalent because it can be exchanged for any commodity. In turn, it expresses the value of abstract labour-time. Abstract labour-time is itself an effect of the regimenting of processes of life, so that different kinds of labour can be compared. Capitalism is derived from the autonomisation or separation of economics from the rest of life. It turns economics into the ‘reality-principle’. It is a kind of sorcery, connected in some way to the disavowed symbolic level. It subtly shifts the social world from an exchange of death with the Other to an eternal return of the Same. Capitalism functions by reducing everything to a regime based on value and the production of value. To be accepted by capital, something must contribute value. This creates an immense regime of social exchange. However, this social exchange has little in common with symbolic exchange. It ultimately depends on the mark of value itself being unexchangeable. Capital must be endlessly accumulated. States must not collapse. Capitalism thus introduces the irreversible into social life, by means of accumulation. According to Baudrillard, capitalism rests on an obsession with the abolition of death. Capitalism tries to abolish death through accumulation. It tries to ward off ambivalence (associated with death) through value (associated with life. But this is bound to fail. General equivalence – the basis of capitalism – is itself the ever-presence of death. The more the system runs from death, the more it places everyone in solitude, facing their own death. Life itself is fundamentally ambivalent. The attempt to abolish death through fixed value is itself deathly. Accumulation also spreads to other fields. The idea of progress, and linear time, comes from the accumulation of time, and of stockpiles of the past. The idea of truth comes from the accumulation of scientific knowledge. Biology rests on the separation of living and non-living. According to Baudrillard, such accumulations are now in crisis. For instance, the accumulation of the past is undermined, because historical objects now have to be concealed to be preserved – otherwise they will be destroyed by excessive consumption. Value is produced from the residue or remainder of an incomplete symbolic exchange. The repressed, market value, and sign-value all come from this remainder. To destroy the remainder would be to destroy value. Capitalist exchange is always based on negotiation, even when it is violent. The symbolic order does not know this kind of equivalential exchange or calculation. And capitalist extraction is always one-way. It amounts to a non-reversible aggression in which one act (of dominating or killing) cannot be returned by the other. It is also this regime which produces scarcity – Baudrillard here endorses Sahlins’ argument. Capitalism produces the Freudian “death drive”, which is actually an effect of the capitalist culture of death. For Baudrillard, the limit to both Marx and Freud is that they fail to theorise the separation of the domains they study – the economy and the unconscious. It is the separation which grounds their functioning, which therefore only occurs under the regime of the code. Baudrillard also criticises theories of desire, including those of Deleuze, Foucault, Freud and Lacan. He believes desire comes into existence based on repression. It is an effect of the denial of the symbolic. Liberated energies always leave a new remainder; they do not escape the basis of the unconscious in the remainder. Baudrillard argues that indigenous groups do not claim to live naturally or by their desires – they simply claim to live in societies. This social life is an effect of the symbolic. Baudrillard therefore criticises the view that human liberation can come about through the liberation of desire. He thinks that such a liberation will keep certain elements of the repression of desire active. Baudrillard argues that the processes which operate collectively in indigenous groups are repressed into the unconscious in metropolitan societies. This leads to the autonomy of the psyche as a separate sphere. It is only after this repression has occurred that a politics of desire becomes conceivable. He professes broad agreement with the Deleuzian project of unbinding energies from fixed categories and encouraging flows and intensities. However, he is concerned that capitalism can recuperate such releases of energy, disconnecting them so they can eventually reconnect to it. Unbinding and drifting are not fatal to capitalism, because capitalism itself unbinds things, and re-binds things which are unbound. What is fatal to it is, rather, reversibility. Capitalism continues to be haunted by the forces it has repressed. Separation does not destroy the remainder. Quite the opposite. The remainder continues to exist, and gains power from its repression. This turns the double or shadow into something unquiet, vampiric, and threatening. It becomes an image of the forgotten dead. Anything which reminds us of the repressed aspects excluded from the subject is experienced as uncanny and threatening. It becomes the ‘obscene’, which is present in excess over the ‘scene’ of what is imagined. This is different from theories of lack, such as the Lacanian Real. Baudrillard’s remainder is an excess rather than a lack. It is the carrier of the force of symbolic exchange. Modern culture dreams of radical difference. The reason for this is that it exterminated radical difference by simulating it. The energy of production, the unconscious, and signification all in fact come from the repressed remainder. Our culture is dead from having broken the pact with monstrosity, with radical difference. The West continues to perpetrate genocide on indigenous groups. But for Baudrillard, it did the same thing to itself first – destroying its own indigenous logics of symbolic exchange. Indigenous groups have also increasingly lost the symbolic dimension, as modern forms of life have been imported or imposed. This according to Baudrillard produces chronic confusion and instability. Gift-exchange is radically subversive of the system. This is not because it is rebellious. Baudrillard thinks the system can survive defections or exodus. It is because it counterposes a different ‘principle of sociality’ to that of the dominant system. According to Baudrillard, the mediations of capitalism exist so that nobody has the opportunity to offer a symbolic challenge or an irreversible gift. They exist to keep the symbolic at bay. The affective charge of death remains present among the oppressed, but not with the ‘properly symbolic rhythm’ of immediate retaliation. The Church and State also exist based on the elimination of symbolic exchange. Baudrillard is highly critical of Christianity for what he takes to be a cult of suffering, solitude and death. He sees the Church as central to the destruction of earlier forms of community based on symbolic exchange. Baudrillard seems to think that earlier forms of the state and capitalism retained some degree of symbolic exchange, but in an alienated, partially repressed form. For instance, the imaginary of the ‘social contract’ was based on the idea of a sacrifice – this time of liberty for the common good. In psychoanalysis, symbolic exchange is displaced onto the relationship to the master-signifier. I haven’t seen Baudrillard say it directly, but the impression he gives is that this is a distorted, authoritarian imitation of the original symbolic exchange. Nonetheless, it retains some of its intensity and energy. Art, theatre and language have worked to maintain a minimum of ceremonial power. It is the reason older orders did not suffer the particular malaise of the present. It is easy to read certain passages in Baudrillard as if he is bemoaning the loss of these kinds of strong significations. This is initially how I read Baudrillard’s work. But on closer inspection, this seems to be a misreading. Baudrillard is nostalgic for repression only to the extent that the repressed continued to carry symbolic force as a referential. He is nostalgic for the return of symbolic exchange, as an aspect of diffuse, autonomous, dis-alienated social groups. Death: Death plays a central role in Baudrillard’s theory, and is closely related to symbolic exchange. According to Baudrillard, what we have lost above all in the transition to alienated society is the ability to engage in exchanges with death. Death should not be seen here in purely literal terms. Baudrillard specifies early on that he does not mean an event affecting a body, but rather, a form which destroys the determinacy of the subject and of value – which returns things to a state of indeterminacy. Baudrillard certainly discusses actual deaths, risk-taking, suicide and so on. But he also sees death figuratively, in relation to the decomposition of existing relations, the “death” of the self-image or ego, the interchangeability of processes of life across different categories. For instance, eroticism or sexuality is related to death, because it leads to fusion and communication between bodies. Sexual reproduction carries shades of death because one generation replaces another. Baudrillard’s concept of death is thus quite similar to Bakhtin’s concept of the grotesque. Death refers to metamorphosis, reversibility, unexpected mutations, social change, subjective transformation, as well as physical death. According to Baudrillard, indigenous groups see death as social, not natural or biological. They see it as an effect of an adversarial will, which they must absorb. And they mark it with feasting and rituals. This is a way of preventing death from becoming an event which does not signify. Such a non-signifying event is absolute disorder from the standpoint of symbolic exchange. For Baudrillard, the west’s idea of a biological, material death is actually an idealist illusion, ignoring the sociality of death. Poststructuralists generally maintain that the problems of the present are rooted in the splitting of life into binary oppositions. For Baudrillard, the division between life and death is the original, founding opposition on which the others are founded. After this first split, a whole series of others have been created, confining particular groups – the “mad”, prisoners, children, the old, sexual minorities, women and so on – to particular segregated situations. The definition of the ‘normal human’ has been narrowed over time. Today, nearly everyone belongs to one or another marked or deviant category. The original exclusion was of the dead – it is defined as abnormal to be dead. “You livies hate us deadies”. This first split and exclusion forms the basis, or archetype, for all the other splits and exclusions – along lines of gender, disability, species, class, and so on. This discrimination against the dead brings into being the modern experience of death. Baudrillard suggests that death as we know it does not exist outside of this separation between living and dead. The modern view of death is constructed on the model of the machine and the function. A machine either functions or it does not. The human body is treated as a machine which similarly, either functions or does not. For Baudrillard, this misunderstands the nature of life and death. The modern view of death is also necessitated by the rise of subjectivity. The subject needs a beginning and an end, so as to be reducible to the story it tells. This requires an idea of death as an end. It is counterposed to the immortality of social institutions. In relation to individuals, ideas of religious immortality is simply an ideological cover for the real exclusion of the dead. But institutions try to remain truly immortal. Modern systems, especially bureaucracies, no longer know how to die – or how to do anything but keep reproducing themselves. The internalisation of the idea of the subject or the soul alienates us from our bodies, voices and so on. It creates a split, as Stirner would say, between the category of ‘man’ and the ‘un-man’, the real self irreducible to such categories. It also individualises people, by destroying their actual connections to others. The symbolic haunts the code as the threat of its own death. The society of the code works constantly to ward off the danger of irruptions of the symbolic. The mortal body is actually an effect of the split introduced by the foreclosure of death. The split never actually stops exchanges across the categories. In the case of death, we still ‘exchange’ with the dead through our own deaths and our anxiety about death. We no longer have living, mortal relationships with objects either. They are reduced to the instrumental. It is as if we have a transparent veil between us. Symbolic exchange is based on a game, with game-like rules. When this disappears, laws and the state are invented to take their place. It is the process of excluding, marking, or barring which allows concentrated or transcendental power to come into existence. Through splits, people turn the other into their ‘imaginary’. For instance, westerners invest the “Third World” with racist fantasies and revolutionary aspirations; the “Third World” invests the west with aspirational fantasies of development. In separation, the other exists only as an imaginary object. Yet the resultant purity is illusory. For Baudrillard, any such marking or barring of the other brings the other to the core of society. “We all” become dead, or mad, or prisoners, and so on, through their exclusion. The goal of ‘survival’ is fundamental to the birth of power. Social control emerges when the union of the living and the dead is shattered, and the dead become prohibited. The social repression of death grounds the repressive socialisation of life. People are compelled to survive so as to become useful. For Baudrillard, capitalism’s original relationship to death has historically been concealed by the system of production, and its ends. It only becomes fully visible now this system is collapsing, and production is reduced to operation. In modern societies, death is made invisible, denied, and placed outside society. For example, elderly people are excluded from society. People no longer expect their own death. As a result, it becomes unintelligible. It keeps returning as ‘nature which will not abide by objective laws’. It can no longer be absorbed through ritual. Western society is arranged so death is never done by someone else, but always attributable to ‘nature’. This creates a bureaucratic, judicial regime of death, of which the concentration camp is the ultimate symbol. The system now commands that we must not die – at least not in any old way. We may only die if law and medicine allow it. Hence for instance the spread of health and safety regulations. On the other hand, murder and violence are legalised, provided they can be re-converted into economic value. Baudrillard sees this as a regressive redistribution of death. It is wrested from the circuit of social exchanges and vested in centralised agencies. For Baudrillard, there is not a social improvement here. People are effectively being killed, or left to die, by a process which never treats them as having value. On the other hand, even when capitalism becomes permissive, inclusive and tolerant, it still creates an underlying anxiety about being reduced to the status of an object or a marionette. This appears as a constant fear of being manipulated. The slave remains within the master’s dialectic for as long as ‘his’ life or death serves the reproduction of domination. A fatal ontology?: In Fatal Strategies, Baudrillard suggests an ontology which backs up his analysis of death. The world itself is committed to extremes and to radical antagonism. It is bored of meaning. There is an ‘evil genie’, a principle of Evil which constantly returns in the form of seduction. Historical processes are really pushed forward by this principle. All energy comes from fission and rupture. These cannot be replaced by production or mechanical processes. There is no possibility of a collective project or a coherent society, only the operation of such forces. Every order exists only to be transgressed and dismantled. The world is fundamentally unreal. This leads to a necessity of irony, which is to say, the slippage of meaning. Historically, the symbolic was confined to the metaphysical. It did not affect the physical world. But with the rise of models, with the physical world derived increasingly from the code, the physical world is brought within the symbolic. It becomes reversible. The rational principle of linear causality collapses. The world is, and always remains, enigmatic. People will give for seduction or for simulation what they would never give for quality of life. Advertising, fashion, gambling and so on liberate ‘immoral energies’ which hark back to the magical or archaic gamble on the power of thought against the power of reality. Neoliberalism is in some ways an ultimate release of such diabolical forces. People will look for an ecstatic excess of anything – even boredom or oppression. In this account, the principle of evil becomes the only fixed point. Desire is not inescapable. What is inescapable is the object and its seduction, its ‘principle of evil’. The object at once submits to law and breaks it in practice, mocking it. Its own “game” cannot be discerned. It is a poor conductor of the symbolic order but a good conductor of signs. The drive towards spectacles, illusions and scenes is stronger than the desire for survival.

#### The separation of life and death is the primary force of social control.

Baudrillard 76 (Jean, the hyperreal slim shady, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, pp. 129-132) //

Death Power The emergence of survival can therefore be analysed as the fundamental operation in the birth of power. Not only because this set-up will permit the necessity of the sacrifice of this life and the threat of recompense in the next (this is exactly the priest-caste's strategy), but more profoundly by instituting the prohibition of death and, at the same time, the agency that oversees this prohibition of death: power. Shattering the union of the living and the dead, and slapping a prohibition on death and the dead: the primary source of social control. Power is possible only if death is no longer free, only if the dead are put under surveillance, in anticipation of the future confinement of life in its entirety. This is the fundamental Law, and power is the guardian at the gates of this Law. It is not the repression of unconscious pulsions, libido, or whatever other energy that is fundamental, and it is not anthropological; it is the repression of death, the social repression of death in the sense that this is what facilitates the shift towards the repressive socialisation of life. Historically, we know that sacerdotal power is based on a monopoly over death and exclusive control over relations with the dead. 4 The dead are the first restricted area, the exchange of whom is restored by an obligatory mediation by the priests. Power is established on death's borders. It will subsequently be sustained by further separations (the soul and the body, the male and the female, good and evil, etc.) that have infinite ramifications, but the principal separation is between life and death.5 When the French say that power 'holds the bar',6 it is no metaphor: it is the bar between life and death, the decree that suspends exchange between life and death, the tollgate and border control between the two banks. This is precisely the way in which power will later be instituted between the subject separated from its body, between the individual separated from its social body, between man separated from his labour: the agency of mediation and representation flourishes in this rupture. We must take note, however, that the archetype of this operation is the separation between a group and its dead, or between each of us today and our own deaths. Every form of power will have something of this smell about it, because it is on the manipulation and administration of death that power, in the final analysis, is based. All the agencies of repression and control are installed in this divided space, in the suspense between a life and its proper end, that is, in the production of a literally fantastic and artificial temporality (since at every instant every life has its proper death there already, that is to say, in this same instant lies the finality it attains). The first abstract social time is installed in this rupture of the indivisible unity of life and death (well before abstract social labour time!). All the future forms of alienation that Marx denounces, the separations and abstractions of political economy, take root in this separation of death. The economic operation consists in life taking death hostage. This is a residual life which can from now on be read in the operational terms of calculation and value. For example, in Chamisso's The Man who Lost his Shadow, Peter Schlemil becomes a rich and powerful capitalist once his shadow has been lost (once death is taken hostage: the pact with the Devil is only ever a political-economic pact). Life given over to death: the very operation of the symbolic. The Exchange of Death in the Primitive Order Savages have no biological concept of death. Or rather, the biological fact, that is, death, birth or disease, everything that comes from nature and that we accord the privilege of necessity and objectivity, quite simply has no meaning for them. This is absolute disorder, since it cannot be symbolically exchanged, and what cannot be symbolically exchanged constitutes a mortal danger for the group. 7 They are unreconciled, unexpiated, sorcerous and hostile forces that prowl around the soul and the body, that stalk the living and the dead; defunct, cosmic energies that the group was unable to bring under control through exchange. We have de-socialised death by overturning bio-anthropological laws, by according it the immunity of science and by making it autonomous, as individual fatality. But the physical materiality of death, which paralyses us through the 'objective' credence we give it, does not stop the primitives. They have never 'naturalised' death, they know that death (like the body, like the natural event) is a social relation, that its definition is social. In this they are much more 'materialist' than we are, since for them the real materiality of death, like that of the commodity for Marx, lies in its form, which is always the form of a social relation. Instead, all our idealism converges on the illusion of a biological materiality of death: our discourse of 'reality', which is in fact the discourse of the imaginary, surpasses the primitives in the intervention of the symbolic. Initiation is the accented beat of the operation of the symbolic. It aims neither to conjure death away, nor to 'overcome' it, but to articulate it socially. As R. Jaulin describes in La Mort Sara [Paris: Plon, 1967], the ancestral group 'swallows the koys' (young initiation candidates), who die 'symbolically' in order to be reborn. Above all, we must avoid understanding this according to the degraded meaning we attach to it, but in the sense that their death becomes the stakes of a reciprocal-antagonistic exchange between the ancestors and the living. Further, instead of a break, a social relation between the partners is established, a circulation of gifts and counter-gifts as intense as the circulation of precious goods and women: an incessant play of responses where death can no longer establish itself as end or agency. By offering her a piece of flesh, the brother gives his wife to a dead member of the family, in order to bring him back to life. By nourishing her, this dead man is included in the life of the group. But the exchange is reciprocal. The dead man gives his wife, the clan's land, to a living member of the family in order to come back to life by assimilating himself to her and to bring her back to life by assimilating her to himself. The important moment is when the moh (the grand priests) put the koy (the initiates) to death, so that the latter are then consumed by their ancestors, then the earth gives birth to them as their mother had given birth to them. After having been 'killed', the initiates are left in the hands of their initiatory, 'cultural' parents, who instruct them, care for them and train them (initiatory birth).

#### The abolition of death is based on the humanistic flight from death that perpetuates anxiety and alienation

Perniola 11 (Mario, University of Turin, “Being-Towards-Death and the Simulacrum of Death: Heidegger and Baudrillard”, translated by Chris Turner, Duke University Press, Cultural Politics, Volume 7, Issue 3, November 2011, pp. 345-358)

One of the essential achievements of Being and Time is the setting-aside of the metaphysical conception of death. Within that conception lie not merely the theological idea of death, understood as entry into another life, but also its humanist conception, which regards death as an alien simple-presence, or as being linked in a purely extrinsic way with human life. Heidegger writes, “Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is.”1 What the naturalistic definition signifies, understanding death as decease, is not only extremely reductive, but also of a piece with a conception of existence grasped as simple-presence – that is to say, as excluding any being-possible, and hence metaphysical in its derivation. The theological conception of death as entry into eternity is based on a metaphysical theory of man conceived in the image of God;2 similarly, the humanistic conception of death understood as decease (that is to say, analyzed from the anthropological, psychological, or biological standpoint) is based on an equally metaphysical theory of man – of man conceived as constant permanence or as constant simple-presence.3 Death cannot be wrested away from metaphysics unless man is too or, in other words, unless possibility is implicit in the concept of being-there (Dasein). According to Heidegger, it is in this way that death becomes the most proper, most authentic possibility of Dasein.¶ Like Heidegger, Baudrillard brings out the basic solidarity between the theological and humanist viewpoints, their common concern being to keep life and death tidily separated: “Life is life, and death is always death.”4 Theology and humanism both conceive life as an identity entirely unrelated to death, as an absolute positivity that must at all costs be distinguished from nothingness: both aspire to abolish death, the one through the eternity of the spirit, the other through the indefinite development of the scientific process. Underlying each is a concept of time linked to political economy and modeled on the idea of unlimited accumulation.¶ Theology and humanism may be regarded as the theoretical formulation of an extremely common form of everyday behavior which consists in not thinking about death, in acting as though it did not exist, and in providing a “constant tranquillization” (ständige Beruhigung) about it.5 For Heidegger, alienation (Entfremdung) consists precisely in this flight from death which pushes Dasein into a fallacious self-confusion that is sometimes misinterpreted as “perfection” or “concrete life.” The parading of an indifferent tranquility in the face of the fact (Tatsache) that one dies constitutes “evasive concealment” (verhüllendes Ausweichen) towards Dasein’s being-towards-the-end. It obliterates the fact (Faktum) “that each person’s Dasein has effectively always been dying.” Dasein’s fleeing from the encounter with itself, with its most specific potentiality – that is to say, the encounter with death – is strictly linked to the affective condition of anxiety. Unlike fear, anxiety does not involve a threat from some determinate entity in the world, but remains totally undetermined: “That in the face of which anxiety is anxious is Being-in-the-world itself,”6 namely “the nothing and nowhere” that characterize it phenomenally. Anxiety is linked to the fact of feeling estranged or uncanny (unheimlich), of “not-being-at-home” (Nichtzuhause-sein). This Unheimlichkeit or uncanniness harasses Dasein and threatens it, if only implicitly: everydayness is constantly engaged in acts of diversion in the attempt to eliminate it. But that flight turns out to be futile: “Anxiety can arise in the most innocuous Situations”;7 it constitutes the basic affective situation of everyday life.¶ Baudrillard in turn discovers that a rejection of death lies at the basis of Western everydayness: “little by little, the dead cease to exist. They are thrown out of the group’s symbolic circulation.”8 Contemporary daily life rigorously proscribes death: the fact of being dead “is not normal”; it is an inconceivable anomaly. Unlike primitive cultures, which are established on the basis of an intense relation of symbolic reversibility between life and death, modern Western civilization pronounces a virtual prohibition on death, excluding it from the sphere of its experience. This pretension to eradicate the experience of death is linked to the effort of material production and accumulation on the part of the capitalist economy. This is why it is in modern society that death becomes death drive insofar, precisely, as it is repressed, rejected, and kept in the Unconscious. Baudrillard thus provides a historical-social interpretation of the Freudian concept of the death drive, which removes this from the metaphysical context in which psychoanalysis locates it. Death becomes this repressed drive which returns everywhere in daily life, doing so in the form of anxiety about death: the absence of channels to enable symbolic exchange with death and its acknowledgment within society considerably amplifies death’s force by transforming it into a hidden, subterranean psychological power that is all the more obsessive for being the less evident: “If the cemetery no longer exists, that is because modern cities have entirely taken over its function: they are dead cities and cities of death,”9 precisely because death is symbolically absent from them, but subterraneanly sovereign.

#### The otherization of death creates a violent duality.

Smith 16 (Laura Katherine, PhD candidate in Literature and Culture at KU Leuven, Belgium, “Trans-Baudrillard: Towards a Seductive Immunity”, Parallax, 22:3, 330-346, DOI: 10.1080/13534645.2016.1201923)

A rhetoric of division underpins what Baudrillard calls modernity’s ‘production of the other’. 24 This is Baudrillard’s critique of the production/consumption of difference. The production of difference ironically perpetuates a society of sameness because such false categorical division masks the problematic suppression of what Baudrillard calls ‘the symbolic reproduction of the other’. 25 Here, the reader is confronted with Baudrillard’s employment of concepts as particularly two-fold. In opposition to modernity’s ‘production of the other’, Baudrillard’s ‘other’ is defined as ‘illness, death, negativity, violence [and] strangeness’ and is characterized as ‘absent, enigmatic [and] antagonistic’. 26 This other, Baudrillard argues, is continually symbolically repressed in a socio-political sphere that perpetuates the ‘virus of difference’. 27 Baudrillard’s ‘radical other’ is always an irreducible singularity.¶ The production of difference as strategy to attain extinction of the symbolic reproduction of this other may seem counter-intuitive, however, this production of difference promotes a narrative of Progress, which masks the condition of fatal sameness that characterizes the general state of transindifference; that is, the state of the contemporary – the wake of Simulation, which Sylvère Lotringer defined as an ‘anthropological diagnostic’. 28 Baudrillard explains this in the following way: ‘What we ourselves have fallen victim to […] is a virus destructive of otherness […] (That is) the symbolic reproduction of the other, favouring, rather, a cloned, asexual reproduction of the species-less individual’. 29 Sameness is more troubling to Baudrillard than (his) ‘other’ of ‘illness, death, negativity, violence (and) strangeness’. This sameness, born out of a story of difference, is the ‘other’ that Baudrillard identifies as the ‘negotiable other, the other of difference [that] has to be promoted’. 30 It is this other, a repeated reproduction in a social of promoted immunity, towards which Baudrillard is critical.31¶ The terms we are used to setting in opposition to each other are quite simply incompatible, which means that the concept of difference has no meaning’. 32 This passage identifies the superfluity of oppositional difference that is central to modernity’s ‘production of the other’. Good versus Evil, for example, has the reputation of fundamental opposing forces yet the relation turns out to be two sides of the same coin. William Pawlett notes that, for both Bataille and Baudrillard,¶ Evil must be recognised and affirmed, without Evil there can be no challenge to the social and political order, no defiance, no creative renewal and, since Good and Evil are never found in isolation, without Evil there can be no Good.33¶ Baudrillard’s writing suggests that the production of incompatible binary opposites sparks a sense of antagonism, which provokes a superfluous fixation on defensive immunity across all bodies (physical and political). This results, Baudrillard warns, in the ‘[elimination of] ourselves’. 34 To contrast this divisive categorical other with Baudrillard’s definition of other underscores that, for him, an appreciation of oneself always already implies such internal ‘otherness’. Such an otherness complicates a simplistic definition of immunity as defence and protection. Against whom is one fighting when Baudrillard’s other is always already bound to oneself?¶ A promotion of divisiveness is absorbed and incorporated in the culturally constructed idea of immunity – a promoted immunity is protection, defence and exemption at all cost. Baudrillard exposes and critiques an ideology of linear Progress or the innate goodness of Progress, understood as division and conquest, by underscoring that such a system operates in conflict with the world’s fundamental condition of duality/reversibility wherein ‘Good’ is always shadowed and bound to ‘Evil’ and vice-versa. For Baudrillard, the idea of Progress that presupposes division is imagined yet enacted. Baudrillard identifies immunity as conceived and performed in cyclical consumption as ideal and repeatedly internalized. Two areas are explored wherein the question of immunity arises: that of war and that of the body, both of which hinge upon the technological and political, albeit in their simulated state of trans-beyond.

#### Stigmatization of death applies meaning to a meaningless event.

Baudrillard 76 (Jean, the hyperreal slim shady, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, pp. 158-163) /

Punctual Death, Biological Death The irreversibility of biological death, its objective and punctual character, is a modern fact of science. It is specific to our culture. Every other culture says that death begins before death, that life goes on after life, and that it is impossible to distinguish life from death. Against the representation which sees in one the term of the other, we must try to see the radical indeterminacy of life and death, and the impossibility of their autonomy in the symbolic order. Death is not a due payment [échéance], it is a nuance of life; or, life is a nuance of death. But our modern idea of death is controlled by a very different system of representations: that of the machine and the function. A machine either works or it does not. Thus the biological machine is either dead or alive. The symbolic order is ignorant of this digital abstraction. And even biology acknowledges that we start dying at birth, but this remains with the category of a functional definition. 25 It is quite another thing to say that death articulates life, is exchanged with life and is the apogee of life: for then it becomes absurd to make life a process which expires with death, and more absurd still to make death equivalent to a deficit and, an accelerated repayment. Neither life nor death can any longer be assigned a given end: there is therefore no punctuality nor any possible definition of death. We are living entirely within evolutionist thought, which states that we go from life to death: this is the illusion of the subject that sustains both biology and metaphysics (biology wishes to reverse metaphysics, but merely prolongs it). But there is no longer even a subject who dies at a given moment. It is more real to say that whole parts of 'ourselves' (of our bodies, our language) fall from life to death, while the living are subjected to the work of mourning. In this way, a few of the living manage to forget them gradually, as God managed to forget the drowned girl who was carried away by the stream of water in Brecht's song: Und es geschah, dass Gott sie allmählich vergass, zuerst das Gesicht, dann die Hände, und zuletzt das Haar . . . [It happened (very slowly) that it gently slid from God's thoughts: First her face, then her hands, and right at the end her hair.] ['The Drowned Girl' in Bertolt Brecht: Poems and Songs, ed and tr. John Willett, London: Methuen, 1990, p. 14] The subject's identity is continually falling apart, falling into God's forgetting. But this death is not at all biological. At one pole, biochemistry, asexual protozoa are not affected by death, they divide and branch out (nor is the genetic code, for its part, ever affected by death: it is transmitted unchanged beyond individual fates). At the other, symbolic, pole, death and nothingness no longer exist, since in the symbolic, life and death are reversible. Only in the infinitesimal space of the individual conscious subject does death take on an irreversible meaning. Even here, death is not an event, but a myth experienced as anticipation. The subject needs a myth of its end, as of its origin, to form its identity. In reality, the subject is never there: like the face, the hands and the hair, and even before no doubt, it is always already somewhere else, trapped in a senseless distribution, an endless cycle impelled by death. This death, everywhere in life, must be conjured up and localised in a precise point of time and a precise place: the body. In biological death, death and the body neutralise instead of stimulating each other. The mindbody duality is biology's fundamental presupposition. In a certain sense, this duality is death itself, since it objectifies the body as residual, as a bad object which takes its revenge by dying. It is according to the mind that the body becomes the brute, objective fact, fated for sex, anguish and death. It is according to the mind, this imaginary schizz, that the body becomes the 'reality' that exists only in being condemned to death. Therefore the mortal body is no more 'real' than the immortal soul: both result simultaneously from the same abstraction, and with them the two great complementary metaphysics: the idealism of the soul (with all its moral metamorphoses) and the 'materialist' idealism of the body, prolonged in biology. Biology lives on as much by the separation of mind and body as from any other Christian or Cartesian metaphysics, but it no longer declares this. The mind or soul is not mentioned any more: as an ideal principle, it has entirely passed into the moral discipline of science; into the legitimating principle of technical operations on the real and on the world; into the principles of an 'objective' materialism. In the Middle Ages, those who practised the discourse of the mind or soul were closer to the 'bodily signs' (Octavio Paz, Conjunctions and Disjunctions [tr. Helen Lane, New York: Arcade, 1990] ) than biological science, which, techniques and axioms, has passed entirely over to the side of the 'non-body'. The Accident and the Catastrophe There is a paradox of modern bourgeois rationality concerning death. To conceive of it as natural, profane and irreversible constitutes the sign of the 'Enlightenment' and Reason, but enters into sharp contradiction with the principles of bourgeois rationality, with its individual values, the unlimited progress of science, and its mastery of nature in all things. Death, neutralised as a 'natural fact', gradually becomes a scandal. Octavio Paz has analysed this brilliantly in his theory of the Accident: Modern science has eliminated epidemics and has given us plausible explanations of other natural catastrophes: nature has ceased to be the depository of our guilt feelings; at the same time, technology has extended and widened the notion of accident and, what is more, it has given it an absolutely different character. . . . Accidents are part of our daily life and their shadow peoples our dreams. . . . The uncertainty principle in contemporary physics and Gödel's proof in logic are the equivalent of the Accident in the historical world. . . . Axiomatic and deterministic systems have lost their consistency and revealed an inherent defect. But it is not really a defect: it is a property of the system, something that belongs to it as a system. The Accident is not an exception or a sickness of our political regimes; nor is it a correctable defect of our civilisation: it is the natural consequence of our science, our politics and our morality. The Accident is part of our idea of progress. . . . The Accident has become a paradox of necessity: it possesses the fatality of necessity and at the same time the uncertainty of freedom. The non-body, transformed into a materialist science, is a synonym for terror: the Accident is one of the attributes of reason that we adore. . . . Christian morality has given its powers of repression over to it, but at the same time this superhuman power has lost any pretension to morality. It is the return of the anguish of the Aztecs, without any celestial signs or presages. Catastrophe has become banal and laughable because in the final analysis the Accident is only an accident. (Conjunctions and Disjunctions, pp. 11113) Just as society gives rise to madmen and anomalies at its peripheries in the process of normalisation so reason and the technical mastery of nature, as they become more entrenched, become surrounded by the catastrophic breakdown of the 'inorganic body of nature' they give rise to as unreason. This unreason is intolerable, since reason wants to be sovereign and can no longer even think of what escapes it; it is unresolvable since for us there are no longer any propitiating or reconciling rituals: the accident, like death, is absurd, that's all there is to it. It is a piece of sabotage. An evil demon is there to make this beautiful machine always break down. Hence this rationalist culture suffers, like no other, from a collective paranoia. Something or someone must have been responsible for the least accident, the slightest irregularity, the least catastrophe, an earth tremor, a house in ruins, bad weather; everything is an assassination attempt. Thus the new wave of sabotage, terrorism and banditism is less interesting than the fact that what happens is interpreted this way. Accident or not? Undecidable. Nor is it important, since the category of the Accident analysed by Octavio Paz has fallen under that of the assassination attempt. And this is normal in a rational system: since chance can only be left to a human will, every breakdown is interpreted as a curse, an evil spell, or, politically, as a breach of the social order. 26 And it is true that a natural catastrophe is a danger to the established order, not only because of the real disorder it provokes, but by the blow it strikes to every sovereign 'rationality', politics included. Hence the state of siege for the earth tremor (Nicaragua), hence the police presence at the scenes of catastrophes (which, at the time of the Ermenonville DC-10 catastrophe, is more important than at a demonstration). For no-one knows to what extent the 'death drive', primed by the accident or the catastrophe, may be unleashed on this occasion and turn against the political order. It is remarkable that we have returned, in the heyday of the rational system and as a full logical consequence of this system, to the 'primitive' vision where we impute a hostile will to every event, and particularly to death. But it is ourselves and ourselves alone who are full primitives (which nickname we attach to the primitives in order to exorcise it). For the 'primitives' themselves, this conception corresponded to the logic of their reciprocal and ambivalent exchanges involving everything around them; even natural catastrophes and death were easily intelligible through the categories of their social structures, whereas for us it is plainly paralogical. This is arational paranoia, the axioms of which give rise to an increasingly ubiquitous and absolute unintelligibility: death as unacceptable and insoluble, the Accident as persecution, as the absurd and spiteful resistance of a matter or a nature that will not abide by the 'objective' laws with which we have pursued it. Hence the ever increasing fascination with the catastrophe, the accident and the assassination attempt: reason itself is pursued by the hope of a universal revolt against its own norms and privileges. 'Natural' Death An ideal or standard form of death, 'natural' death, corresponds to the biological definition of death and the rational logical will. This death is 'normal' since it comes 'at life's proper term'. Its very concept issues from the possibility of pushing back the limits of life: living becomes a process of accumulation, and science and technology start to play a role in this quantitative strategy. Science and technology do not manage to fulfil an original desire to live as long as possible; through the symbolic disintrication of death, life passes into life-capital (into a quantitative evaluation), which alone gives rise to a biomedical science and technology of prolonging life. Natural death therefore signifies not the acceptance of death within 'the order of things', but a systematic denegation of death. Natural death is subject to science, and death's call is to be exterminated by science. This clearly signifies that death is inhuman, irrational and senseless, like untamed nature (the Western concept of 'nature' is always the concept of a repressed or domesticated nature). The only good death is a death that has been defeated and subjected to the law: this is the ideal of natural death. It should be possible for everyone to reach the term of their biological 'capital', to enjoy life 'to the end' without violence or premature death. As if everyone had their own little print-out of a life-plan, their 'normal expectation' of life, basically a 'contract of life'; hence the social demand for a quality of life that makes up part of a natural death. The new social contract: society as a whole, with its science and technology, becomes collectively responsible for the death of each individual. 27 This demand could moreover involve calling the existing order into question, as do quantitative (wage) demands: to demand a just lifespan just as one demands just rewards for one's labour power. Essentially, this right, like every other, conceals a repressive jurisdiction. Everyone has a right, but also a duty, to a natural death, for this death is characteristic of the system of political economy, its typical obligation to die: 1. As a system of maximalisation of the forces of production (in an 'extensive' system of manpower, slaves have no natural death, they are made to work themselves to death); 2. More importantly, that everyone should have a right to their life (habeas corpus habeas vitam) extends social jurisdiction over death. Death is socialised like everything else, and can no longer be anything but natural, since every other death is a social scandal: we have not done what is necessary. Is this social progress? No, it is rather the progress of the social, which even annexes death to itself. Everyone is dispossessed of their death, and will no longer be able to die as it is now understood. One will no longer be free to live as long as possible. Amongst other things, this signifies the ban on consuming one's life without taking limits into account. In short, the principle of natural death is equivalent to the neutralisation of life. 28 The same goes for the question of equality in death: life must be reduced to quantity (and death therefore to nothing) in order to adjust it to democracy and the law of equivalences.

#### Capitalism uses death as a tool to leverage other its subjects.

Baudrillard 76 (Jean, alternate universe Brett Bricker, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, pp. 39-43)

Labour power is instituted on death. A man must die to become labour power. He converts this death into a wage. But the economic violence capital inflicted on him in the equivalence of the wage and labour power is nothing next to the symbolic violence inflicted on him by his definition as a productive force. Faking this equivalence is nothing next to the equivalence, qua signs, of wages and death. The very possibility of quantitative equivalence presupposes death. The equivalence of wages and labour power presupposes the death of the worker, while that of any commodity and any other presupposes the symbolic extermination of objects. Death makes the calculation of equivalence, and regulation by indifference, possible in general. This death is not violent and physical, it is the indifferent consumption of life and death, the mutual neutralisation of life and death in sur-vival, or death deferred. Labour is slow death. This is generally understood in the sense of physical exhaustion. But it must be understood in another sense. Labour is not opposed, like a sort of death, to the 'fulfilment of life', which is the idealist view; labour is opposed as a slow death to a violent death. That is the symbolic reality. Labour is opposed as deferred death to the immediate death of sacrifice. Against every pious and 'revolutionary' view of the 'labour (or culture) is the opposite of life' type, we must maintain that the only alternative to labour is not free time, or non-labour, it is sacrifice. All this becomes clear in the genealogy of the slave. First, the prisoner of war is purely and simply put to death (one does him an honour in this way). Then he is 'spared' [épargné] and conserved [conservé] (=servus), under the category of spoils of war and a prestige good: he becomes a slave and passes into sumptuary domesticity. It is only later that he passes into servile labour. However, he is no longer a 'labourer', since labour only appears in the phase of the serf or the emancipated slave, finally relieved of the mortgage of being put to death. Why is he freed? Precisely in order to work. Labour therefore everywhere draws its inspiration from deferred death. It comes from deferred death. Slow or violent, immediate or deferred, the scansion of death is decisive: it is what radically distinguishes two types of organisation, the economic and the sacrificial. We live irreversibly in the first of these, which has inexorably taken root in the différance of death. The scenario has never changed. Whoever works has not been put to death, he is refused this honour. And labour is first of all the sign of being judged worthy only of life. Does capital exploit the workers to death? Paradoxically, the worst it inflicts on them is refusing them death. It is by deferring their death that they are made into slaves and condemned to the indefinite abjection of a life of labour. The substance of labour and exploitation is indifferent in this symbolic relation. The power of the master always primarily derives from this suspension of death. Power is therefore never, contrary to what we might imagine, the power of putting to death, but exactly the opposite, that of allowing to live a life that the slave lacks the power to give. The master confiscates the death of the other while retaining the right to risk his own. The slave is refused this, and is condemned to a life without return, and therefore without possible expiation. By removing death, the master removes the slave from the circulation of symbolic goods. This is the violence the master does to the slave, condemning him to labour power. There lies the secret of power (in the dialectic of the master and the slave, Hegel also derives the domination of the master from the deferred threat of death hanging over the slave). Labour, production and exploitation would only be one of the possible avatars of this power structure, which is a structure of death. This changes every revolutionary perspective on the abolition of power. If power is death deferred, it will not be removed insofar as the suspension of this death will not be removed. And if power, of which this is always and everywhere the definition, resides in the act of giving without being given, it is clear that the power the master has to unilaterally grant life will only be abolished if this life can be given to him in a non-deferred death. There is no other alternative; you will never abolish this power by staying alive, since there will have been no reversal of what has been given. Only the surrender of this life, retaliating against a deferred death with an immediate death, constitutes a radical response, and the only possibility of abolishing power. No revolutionary strategy can begin without the slave putting his own death back at stake, since this is what the master puts off in the différance from which he profits by securing his power. Refuse to be put to death, refuse to live in the mortal reprieve of power, refuse the duty of this life and never be quits with living, in effect be under obligation to settle this long-term credit through the slow death of labour, since this slow death does not alter the future of this abject dimension, in the fatality of power. Violent death changes everything, slow death changes nothing, for there is a rhythm, a scansion necessary to symbolic exchange: something has to be given in the same movement and following the same rhythm, otherwise there is no reciprocity and it is quite simply not given. The strategy of the system of power is to displace the time of the exchange, substituting continuity and mortal linearity for the immediate retaliation of death. It is thus futile for the slave (the worker) to give little by little, in infinitesimal doses, to the rope of labour on which he is hung to death, to give his life to the master or to capital, for this 'sacrifice' in small doses is no longer a sacrifice it doesn't touch the most important thing, the différance of death, and merely distils a process whose structure remains the same. We could in fact advance the hypothesis that in labour the exploited renders his life to the exploiter and thereby regains, by means of this very exploitation, a power of symbolic response. There was counter-power in the labour process as the exploited put their own (slow) death at stake. Here we agree with Lyotard's hypothesis on the level of libidinal economics: the intensity of the exploited's enjoyment [jouissance] in their very abjection. And Lyotard is right. Libidinal intensity, the charge of desire and the surrendering of death are always there in the exploited, 26 but no longer on the properly symbolic rhythm of the immediate retaliation, and therefore total resolution. The enjoyment of powerlessness (on sole condition that this is not a phantasy aimed at reinstating the triumph of desire at the level of the proletariat) will never abolish power. The very modality of the response to the slow death of labour leaves the master the possibility of, once again, repeatedly, giving the slave life through labour. The accounts are never settled, it always profits power, the dialectic of power which plays on the splitting of the poles of death, the poles of exchange. The slave remains the prisoner of the master's dialectic, while his death, or his distilled life, serves the indefinite repetition of domination. This domination increases as the system is charged with neutralising the symbolic retaliation by buying it back through wages. If, through labour, the exploited attempts to give his life to the exploiter, the latter wards off this restitution by means of wages. Here again we must take a symbolic radiograph. Contrary to all appearances and experience (capital buys its labour power from the worker and extorts surplus labour), capital gives labour to the worker (and the worker himself gives capital to the capitalist). In German this is Arbeitgeber: the entrepreneur is a 'provider of labour'; and Arbeitnehmer: it is the capitalist who gives, who has the initiative of the gift, which secures him, as in every social order, a pre-eminence and a power far beyond the economic. The refusal of labour, in its radical form, is the refusal of this symbolic domination and the humiliation of being bestowed upon. The gift and the taking of labour function directly as the code of the dominant social relation, as the code of discrimination. Wages are the mark of this poisonous gift, the sign which epitomises the whole code. They sanction this unilateral gift of labour, or rather wages symbolically buy back the domination exercised by capital through the gift of labour. At the same time, they furnish capital with the possibility of confining the operation to a contractual dimension, thus stabilising confrontation on economic ground. Furthermore, wages turn the wage-earner into a 'consumer of goods', reiterating his status as a 'consumer of labour' and reinforcing his symbolic deficit. To refuse labour, to dispute wages is thus to put the process of the gift, expiation and economic compensation back into question, and therefore to expose the fundamental symbolic process. Wages are no longer 'grabbed' today. You too are given a wage, not in exchange for labour, but so that you spend it, which is itself another kind of labour. In the consumption or use of objects, the wage-consumer finds herself reproducing exactly the same symbolic relation of slow death as she undergoes in labour. The user experiences exactly the same deferred death in the object (she does not sacrifice it, she 'uses' it and 'uses' it functionally) as the worker does in capital. And just as wages buy back this unilateral gift of labour, the price paid for the object is only the user buying back the object's deferred death. The proof of this lies in the symbolic rule which states that what falls to you without charge (lotteries, presents, gambling wins) must not be devoted to use, but spent as pure loss. Every domination must be bought back, redeemed. This was formerly done through sacrificial death (the ritual death of the king or the leader), or even by ritual inversion (feasts and other social rites: but these are still forms of sacrifice). This social game of reversal comes to an end with the dialectic of the master and the slave, where the reversibility of power cedes its place to a dialectic of the reproduction of power. The redemption of power must always, however, be simulated, and this is done by the apparatus of capital where formal redemption takes place throughout the immense machine of labour, wages and consumption. Economics is the sphere of redemption par excellence, where the domination of capital manages to redeem itself without ever really putting itself at stake. On the contrary, it diverts the process of redemption into its own infinite reproduction. This is perhaps where we find the necessity of economics and its historical appearance, at the level of societies so much more vast and mobile than primitive groups, where the urgency of a system of redemption which could be measured, controlled and infinitely extended (which rituals cannot be) all at the same time, and which above all would not put the exercise and heredity of power back into question. Production and consumption are an original and unprecedented solution to this problem. By simulating redemption in this new form, the slide from the symbolic into the economic allows the definitive hegemony of political force over society to be secured. Economics miraculously succeeds in masking the real structure of power by reversing the terms of its definition. While power consists in unilateral giving (of life in particular, see above), a contrary interpretation has been successfully imposed: power would consist in a unilateral taking and appropriation. Under cover of this ingenious retraction, real symbolic domination can continue to do as it will, since all the efforts of those under this domination will rush into the trap of taking back from power what it has taken from them, even 'taking power' themselves, thus blindly pushing on along the lines of their domination. In fact, labour, wages, power and revolution must all be read against the grain: labour is not exploitation, it is given by capital; wages are not grabbed, capital gives them too it does not buy a labour power, it buys back the power of capital; 27 the slow death of labour is not endured, it is a desperate attempt, a challenge to capital's unilateral gift of labour; the only effective reply to power is to give it back what it gives you, and this is only symbolically possible by means of death. However, if, as we have seen, the system itself deposes economics, removes its substance and its credibility, then, in this perspective, doesn't it put its own symbolic domination back into question? No, since the system brings about the overall reign of its power strategy, the gift without counter-gift, which becomes fused with deferred death. The same social relations are set up in the media and in consumption, where we have seen ('Requiem pour les Media' [Utopie, 4, 1971]) that there is no possible response or counter-gift to the unilateral delivery of messages. We were able to interpret. (CERFI's project concerning automobile accidents) auto-slaughter as the price that the collective pays to its institutions . . . : the State's gifts inscribe a 'debt' in the collective accounts book. Gratuitous death is then merely an attempt to absorb this deficit. The blood on the roads is a desperate form 'of compensation for the State's tarmac gifts. The accident thus takes its place in the space that institutes a symbolic debt towards the State. It is likely that the more this debt grows, the more marked will be the tendency towards the accident. Every 'rational' strategy for curbing this phenomenon (prevention, speed limits, rescue services, repression) is effectively negligible. They simulate the possibility of integrating the accident into a rational system, and are therefore incapable of grasping the root of the problem: balancing a symbolic debt which founds, legitimates and reinforces the collective dependency on the State. On the contrary, these 'rational' strategies accentuate the phenomenon. In order to avert the effects of accidents, they propose to institute more mechanisms, more state institutions, supplementary 'gifts', which are simply means of aggravating the symbolic debt. In this way the struggle is everywhere opposed to a political authority (cf. Pierre Clastres, Society against the State [tr. R. Hurley and A. Stein, New York: Zone Books, 1990]), which sets all the power it can draw from its showers of gifts the survival it maintains and the death it withdraws above the struggle in order to stockpile and then distil it for its own ends. Nobody really accepts this bonus forever, you give what you can, 28 but power always gives more so as to serve better, and an entire society or a few individuals can go to great lengths, even their own destruction, to put an end to it. This is the only absolute weapon, and the mere collective threat of it can make power collapse. Power, faced with this symbolic 'blackmail' (the barricades of '68, hostage-taking), loses its footing: since it thrives on my slow death, I will oppose it with my violent death. And it is because we are living with slow death that we dream of a violent death. Even this dream is unbearable to power.

#### The desire to abolish death clouds political decision making.

Baudrillard 76 (Jean, the hyperreal slim shady, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, pp. 146-148) //

With the disintegration of traditional Christian and feudal communities through bourgeois Reason and the nascent system of political economy, death is no longer divided. It is cast in the image of the material goods which, as in previous exchanges, begin to circulate less between inseparable partners (it is always more or less a community or a clan who exchange), and increasingly under the sign of a general equivalent. In the capitalist mode, everyone is alone before the general equivalent. It is no coincidence that, in the same way, everyone finds themselves alone before death, since death is general equivalence. From this point on the obsession with death and the will to abolish death through accumulation become the fundamental motor of the rationality of political economy. Value, in particular time as value, is accumulated in the phantasm of death deferred, pending the term of a linear infinity of value. Even those who no longer believe in a personal eternity believe in the infinity of time as they do in a species-capital of double-compound interests. The infinity of capital passes into the infinity of time, the eternity of a productive system no longer familiar with the reversibility of gift-exchange, but instead with the irreversibility of quantitative growth. The accumulation of time imposes the idea of progress, as the accumulation of science imposes the idea of truth: in each case, what is accumulated is no longer symbolically exchanged, but becomes an objective dimension. Ultimately, the total objectivity of time, like total accumulation, is the total impossibility of symbolic exchange, that is, death. Hence the absolute impasse of political economy, which intends to eliminate death through accumulation: the time of accumulation is the time of death itself. We cannot hope for a dialectical revolution at the end of this process of spiralling hoarding. We already know that the economic rationalisation of exchange (the market) is the social form which produces scarcity (Marshall Sahlins, 'The original affluent society', in Stone Age Economics [Chicago: Aldine and Atherton, 1972]). Similarly, the infinite accumulation of time as value under the sign of general equivalence entails the absolute scarcity of time that is death. A contradiction in capitalism? No, communism in this instance is in solidarity with political economy, since, in accordance with the same fantastic schema of an eternal accumulation of productive forces, communism too aims for the abolition of death. Only its total ignorance of death (save perhaps as a hostile horizon to be conquered by science and technics) has protected it up to now from the worst contradictions. For nothing can will the abolition of the law of value if you want to abolish death, that is, to preserve life as absolute value, at the same time. Life itself must leave the law of value and achieve a successful exchange against death. The materialists, with their idealistic life expurgated of death, a life 'free' at last of all ambivalence, hardly trouble themselves with this. 21 Our whole culture is just one huge effort to dissociate life and death, to ward off the ambivalence of death in the interests of life as value, and time as the general equivalent. The elimination of death is our phantasm, and ramifies in every direction: for religion, the afterlife and immortality; for science, truth; and for economics, productivity and accumulation. No other culture had this distinctive opposition of life and death in the interests of life as positivity: life as accumulation, death as due payment. No other culture had this impasse: as soon as the ambivalence of life and death and the symbolic reversibility of death comes to an end, we enter into a process of accumulation of life as value; but by the same token, we also enter the field of the equivalent production of death. So life-become-value is constantly perverted by the equivalent death. Death, at the same instant, becomes the object of a perverse desire. Desire invests the very separation of life and death. This is the only way that we can speak of a death-drive. This is the only way we can speak of the unconscious, for the unconscious is only the accumulation of equivalent death, the death that is no longer exchanged and can only be cashed out in the phantasm. The symbolic is the inverse dream of an end of accumulation and a possible reversibility of death in exchange. Symbolic death, which has not undergone the imaginary disjunction of life and death which is at the origin of the reality of death, is exchanged in a social ritual of feasting. Imaginary-real death (our own) can only be redeemed through the individual work of mourning, which the subject carries out over the death of others and over himself from the start of his own life. This work of mourning has fuelled Western metaphysics of death since Christianity, even in the metaphysical concept of the death drive.

### Emerging Tech

#### The integration of emerging technology into the human body homogenizes the human subject.

Baudrillard 90 (Jean, French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, “*The Transparency of Evil,*” Xerox and Infinity, 1990, 6/24/22 - FI)

**Am I a man or a machine**? This anthropological question no longer has an answer. We are thus in some sense witness to the end of anthropology, now being conjured away by the most recent machines and technologies. The uncertainty here is born of the perfecting of machine networks, just as sexual uncertainty (Am I a man or a woman? What has the difference between the sexes become?) is born of increasingly sophisticated manipulation of the unconscious and of the body, and just as science's uncertainty about the status of its object is born of the sophistication of analysis in the microsciences. Am I a man or a machine? There is no ambiguity in the traditional relationship between man and machine: the worker is always, in a way, a stranger to the machine he operates, and alienated by it. But at least he retains the precious status of alienated man. The new technologies, with their new machines, new images and interactive screens, do not alienate me. Rather, they form an integrated circuit with me. Video screens, televisions, computers and Minitels resemble nothing so much as contact lenses in that they are so many transparent prostheses, **integrated into the body** to the point of being almost part of its genetic make-up: they are like pacemakers - or like Philip K. Dick's 'papula', a tiny implant, grafted onto the body at birth as a 'free gift', which serves the organism as an alarm signal. All our relationships with networks and screens, whether willed or not, are of this order. Their structure is one of subordination, not of alienation - the structure of the **integrated circuit.** Man or machine? Impossible to tell. Surely the extraordinary **success of artificial intelligence** is attributable to the fact that it **frees us from real intelligence**, that by hypertrophying thought as an operational process it **frees us from thought's ambiguity** and from the insoluble puzzle of its relationship to the world. Surely the success of all these technologies is a result of the way in which they make it impossible even to raise the timeless question of liberty. What a relief! Thanks to the machinery of the virtual, all your problems are over! You are **no longer either subject or object**, no longer either free or alienated - and no longer either one or the other: you are the same, and enraptured by the commutations of that sameness. We have left the hell of other people for the ecstasy of the same, the purgatory of otherness for the artificial paradises of identity. Some might call this an even worse servitude, but Telecomputer Man, having no will of his own, knows nothing of serfdom. Alienation of man by man is a thing of the past: now man is plunged into homeostasis by machines.

#### The use of emerging technology to enhance the human body only makes it weaker – like the dependent boy in the bubble, we die once we touch the outside.

Baudrillard 90 (Jean, French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, “*The Transparency of Evil,*” Xerox and Infinity, 1990, 6/24/22 - FI)

The growing cerebrality of machines must logically be expected to occasion a technological purification of bodies. Inasmuch as bodies are less and less able to count on their own antibodies, they are more and more in need of protection from outside. An artificial sterilization of all environments must compensate for faltering internal immunological defences. And if these are indeed faltering, it is because the irreversible process often referred to as progress tends to strip the human body and mind of their systems of initiative and defence, reassigning these functions to technical artifacts. Once dispossessed of their defences, human beings become eminently vulnerable to science and technology; dispossessed of their passions, they likewise become eminently vulnerable to psychology and its attendant therapies; similarly, too, once relieved of emotions and illnesses, they become eminently vulnerable to medicine. Consider the 'Boy in the Bubble', surrounded, in his NASA-donated tent, by an atmospheric distillate of medical knowledge, protected from any conceivable infection by an artificial immune system, 'cuddled' by his mother through the glass, laughing and growing up in an extraterrestrial ambiance under the vigilant eye of science. Here we have the experimental version of the wolf-child, the 'wild child' raised by wolves. The parenting in this case, however, is done by computers. The Boy in the Bubble is a prefigurement of the future - of that total asepsis, that total extirpation of germs, which is the biological form of transparency. He epitomizes the kind of vacuum-sealed existence hitherto reserved for bacteria and particles in laboratories but now destined for us as, more and more, we are vacuum-pressed like records, vacuum-packed like deep-frozen foods and vacuum-enclosed for death as victims of fanatical therapeutic measures. That we think and reflect in a vacuum is demonstrated by the ubiquitousness of artificial intelligence. It is not absurd to suppose that the extermination of man begins with the extermination of man's germs. One has only to consider the human being himself, complete with his emotions, his passions, his laughter, his sex and his secretions, to conclude that man is nothing but a dirty little germ - an irrational virus marring a universe of transparency. Once he has been purged, once everything has been cleaned up and all infection - whether of a social or a bacillary kind - has been driven out, then only the virus of sadness will remain in a mortally clean and mortally sophisticated world. Thought, itself a sort of network of antibodies and natural immune defences, is also highly vulnerable. It is in acute danger of being conveniently replaced by an electronic cerebrospinal bubble from which any animal or metaphysical reflex has been expunged. Even without all the technological advantages of the Boy in the Bubble, we are already living in the bubble ourselves - already, like those characters in Bosch paintings, enclosed in a crystal sphere: a transparent envelope in which we have taken refuge and where we remain, bereft of everything yet overprotected, doomed to artificial immunity, continual transfusions and, at the slightest contact with the world outside, instant death. This is why we are all losing our defences - why we are all potentially immunodeficient. All integrated and hyperintegrated systems - the technological system, the social system, even thought itself in artificial intelligence and its derivatives - tend towards the extreme constituted by immunodeficiency. Seeking to eliminate all external aggression, they secrete their own internal virulence, their own malignant reversibility. When a certain saturation point is reached, such systems effect this reversal and undergo this alteration willy-nilly - and thus tend to self-destruct. Their very transparency becomes a threat to them, and the crystal has its revenge. In a hyperprotected space the body loses all its defences. So sterile are operating rooms that no germ or bacterium can survive there. Yet this is the very place where mysterious, anomalous viral diseases make their appearance. The fact is that viruses proliferate as soon as they find a free space. A world purged of the old forms of infection, a world 'ideal' from the clinical point of view, offers a perfect field of operations for the impalpable and implacable pathology which arises from the sterilization itself. This is a third-level pathology. Just as our societies are confronting a new kind of violence, born of the paradoxical fact that they are simultaneously both permissive and pacified, so too we face new illnesses, those illnesses which beset bodies overprotected by their artificial, medical or computer-generated shield. This pathology is produced not by accident, nor by anomie, but rather by anomaly. The very same thing happens with the social body, where the same causes bring about the same perverse effects, the same unforeseeable dysfunctions - a situation comparable to the genetic disorder that occurs at the cellular level, again occasioned by overprotection, overcoding, overmanagement. The social system, just like the biological body, loses its natural defences in precise proportion to the growing sophistication of its prostheses. Moreover, this unprecedented pathology is unlikely to be effectively conjured away by medicine, because medicine is itself part of the system of overprotection, and contributes to the fanatical protective and preventive measures lavished upon the body. Just as there seems to be no political solution to the problem of terrorism, so there seems to be no biological solution at present to the problems of AIDS and cancer. Indeed, the causes are identical: anomalous symptoms generated at the most fundamental level by the system itself represent a reactive virulence designed to counter, in the first case, a political overmanagement of the social body, and in the second case, a biological overmanagement of the body tout court.

#### The human is wiped away in the manipulation and application of emerging technology, and destroyed along with it: ethics, morality, and symbolic rules.

Baudrillard 92 (Jean, French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, “*The Illusion of the End,*” Immortality, 1992, 6/25/22 - FI)

The original, Enlightenment humanism was based on man's qualities, his virtues, his natural gifts, his essence, together with his right to freedom and to the exercise of that freedom. Current humanism, which finds its highest expression in the new extension of human rights, is more concerned with the conservation of the individual and of man as a species (in the one case, immortality is a virtue; in the other, it is merely a right to conservation). But human rights immediately become problematic, since the question arises of the potential rights of other species, of nature, etc., in respect of which they have tb be defined. Now, does humanity even have rights over its own genome? What does it mean for a species to have the right to its own genetic definition, and thus to its potential genetic transformation? We share 98 per cent of our genes with the apes, 90 per cent with mice. What rights attach to this common heritage? On the other hand, it seems that 90 per cent of the human genome is of no account. Are we going to claim this obscure part which has no apparent purpose? As soon as the hum**an is no longer defined in terms of freedom and transcendence but in terms of genes**, the **definition of** man [**humans**] - and hence, also, that of humanism - **is wiped away**. The **demarcation line** of the human becomes increasingly **elusive** as we press on into the biological realm, into the molecular arcana of the biosphere. While Western humanism has felt threatened since the sixteenth century by other cultures bursting in upon it, the bolt currently giving way is no longer merely that of a culture, but of a species. Anthropological deregulation. And a simultaneous **deregulation of ethics, of all the moral, juridical, symbolic rules which were those of humanism**. The virtual transcendence of man [humans], as distinct from his [their] mortal body, evaporates with the advance of genetic engineering. Determination (or rather indeterminacy) becomes immanent in the **mapping of the genome, and its manipulation.** Can we still speak of souls and consciousness in referring to the automata, chimeras and clones we envisage carrying on the human species? Can we even speak of the unconscious, given the prospect of man [humans] coming to be defined genetically? Even the immortality of the unconscious, so dear to Freud, is seriously under threat. Not only the individual, ontogenetic capital, but the phylogenetic capital of the species is threatened by the **evaporation of the limits of the human,** which is no longer an evaporation into the divine, but into the inhuman and, indeed, not even into the inhuman but into something falling short both of the human and the inhuman - the genetic simulation of living beings. The gods, the soul and immortality, all those things which have been termed superstitions or fetishism, were still a spiritual, metaphorical extrapolation of man's faculties, including the body as a metaphor of resurrection. They were, admittedly, artifacts, but immaterial ones, and ones which retained a projective force, along with the power and play of illusion. Whereas, with biology and genetics, we are in pure materiality, in the material simulation of objectively immortal beings, since they are made up of nuclear elements and a timeless genetic code. The artificiality is no longer that of a deferred end, but of a prosthesis - a literal fetishism, in the sense that it is the fetishism of the literalness of the same and its reproduction. We are no longer dealing with an imaginary prosthesis, with the superstition of a supra-temporal soul, but with a material prosthesis - a simulation much more destructive than the illusion of the soul. Moreover, the very **illusion of the body,** the play of appearances of the body, is **destroyed in the simulation** of the functions of life; appearances are volatilized by genetic transcription. Another vital illusion disappears: that of **thought**, which is **abolished** in the instrumentalization of mental faculties, in the fetishism of **artificial intelligence.**

### Environment

#### Concern with the “scientific truth” of environmental destruction colludes with the project of transparent communication that seeks to map a humanist reality upon the enigma of the natural world – this produces environmental crises as the Human constructs itself as master of the biosphere.

Hoofd, 12 [Ingrid, Professor in the Communications at the National University of Singapore, “*The Climate Change Issue: Beyond the ‘True’ or ‘Not True’,*” //]

This paper argues that the current division within the scientific and popular debate into ‘for’ or ‘against’ the truth or reality of anthropogenic climate change silences more comprehensive analyses of the problems facing humanity today. It suggests that climate change activism, as well as the scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate change, in their opposition to climate change denialism, are the paroxysmal outgrowths of what the paper identifies as the techno-capitalist acceleration of the humanist aporia. The paper also argues that as an outflow of the humanist fantasy of the mastery of nature through technological and economic production, climate science and activism are in many ways the hypermodern or simulated enactments of earlier 1990s environmentalist activism. This is due to the fact that this enactment runs through the ambiguous reproduction and recuperation of an idealized ‘nature,’ which conceptualization itself is already a product of the capitalist-humanist social order. The division between the truth and falsehood of anthropogenic climate change is then a false opposition in that it remains complicit in the humanist and productivist techno-scientific ordering of the world in which the human is supposedly the central actor or producer. What is more, the incessant jumbling over one another of this debate in the media is a simulation of climate politics insofar this debate itself becomes an ingredient for economic acceleration. This also means that this paper and its delivery constitute an instant of this economy’s deconstruction in climate change science and activism, because this paper is compelled to take the side of the veracity of climate change so as to point to the limits of this productivist-humanist economy, while simultaneously being fully implicated in this economy. Since the current activism and debate on the environment fails to deepen its critique sufficiently in light of the exponentially raised stakes under economic techno-acceleration, a more radical critique of the climate conundrum must also generate an alternative reading of climate change as a quintessentially politicotechnological apparition. Note though that calling climate change an ‘apparition’ does not imply that the occurrence of climate change is simply false. Rather, I suggest that the accusations hurled at those who are even modestly sceptical of climate change by immediately branding such sceptics as immoral right-wing capitalists, are missing a central point: namely that many such sceptics are fellow travellers in the larger critique of modern science and technology that climate activists just as much seek to mount. Since at issue is then the truth of science and its method of empiricist validation through modern technologies, a more radical analysis should reconsider the very division between reality and representation, if only because technological acceleration has made the representation of science (in the media, for instance) into the dominant reality. This complication of the division between reality and representation hence suggests that if climate change exists, then climate change is actually a simulation that dissimulates or obscures another more urgent catastrophe or problem. This in turn might mean that popular climate change activism and thought is implicated in its mobilization for the productivist neoliberal order due to the present-day enmeshment of simulation and acceleration by way of modern technologies. Paradoxically then, this paper must start from the premise that the occurrence of anthropogenic climate change is true, as this would be the responsible and productive position; but it also acknowledges that responsibilities are always constituted in historical and socio-economical imperatives like the humanistic and economistic ones. To overlay the duty of humanism to critique its own duty with the way responsible climate science and activism finds its limitations in the truth-value of the scientific and activist climate change model is then crucial in terms of understanding how a truly radical alternative may emerge from the ambiguous ethics of accelerated humanism. This paper’s performance of this moral imperative hence points to the sheer force of neoliberal globalization; or, one could say that the humanist argument in climate activism that criticizes the inherent limitations of accelerated capitalistic expansion’s non-sustainability directly constitutes this paper’s fundamental ‘ecological’ limitation and argumentative logic. This paper will then mobilize this aporia of contemporary climate activism, which we find accelerated today into the simulation of its veracity, by analysing some exemplary debates around the preservation of ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’ in traditional environmentalism. Environmentalism, which took off in terms of a wider scientific and public concern with the publication of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring in 1962, provides a good starting point in order to discern which paradoxical tropes and calls for action inform ‘green’ political engagement in general. In its incessant compulsion to cover over its own internal contradictions namely, environmentalism has mutated into climate change activism due to the latter’s heavy indebtedness to scientific and technological attempts at modelling ‘reality’ and making predictions. This analysis agrees with Ulrich Beck’s thesis on risk society in World at Risk, although it does not see the cosmopolitan impetus that arises from risk’s global spread as necessarily positive in terms of political mobilisation. The problem is namely that climate change as a techno-political apparition which is ‘more real than reality itself’ emerges out of the ambiguous representation of ‘nature’ that marked environmentalism, and is as such implicated in the acceleration and magnification of risk through its global political mobilisation. It is in turn out of this ambiguous status of ‘nature’ that the utter force of technological reproduction and acceleration brings about the in-discernability of reality and representation. Under the new conditions of acceleration then, the artificial split between image and truth that has made possible modern science and philosophy since the onset of humanism finally implodes onto itself. Analyses of the relationship between environmentalism and the media should therefore likewise go beyond common descriptions in the social sciences of how the media influence popular opinion around climate change, although such analyses are certainly not without merit. Rather, these analyses should also consider how the illusion of the neutral or transparent communication and representation of ‘nature’ in early environmentalist texts allows for the possibility of climate science’s truth-claims about ‘nature,’ even if such technological acceleration engenders increasing doubt and confusion regarding the truth of climate change and its causes, as well as to the appropriate moral response.

### Feminism

#### We don’t have a proscriptive strategy so there is no threshold for a link argument to their position – our offense comes from maintaining the possibility of trickery and seduction as part of a larger strategy of revolt is an option we should be willing to include. The demonization of the women who engage in such strategies proves there is nothing radical about their feminist stance. Bet on radical illusion.

Grace 08. Victoria Grace, professor of sociology at the University of Canterbury (UK), “Baudrillard’s Illusions: The Seduction of Feminism”, 2008, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, French Cultural Studies 349–351

In feminist discourse, action and theorising since the mid-twentieth century, the woman who does not revolt, analyse or go beyond, but who rather employs her position to entrap and seduce the world into her own domain of limitation, is a particularly galling figure. She is the butt of the patriarchy as much as the scorn of feminism: she is the joke of the music hall, she is the demonic angel who knows her place and uses it to diminish others in her own narcissistic grandstanding. By making herself ‘prey’, according to Beauvoir, ‘she arouses and entraps men through submissively making herself into a thing’ (Beauvoir, 1953 [1949]: 727). This passive position of entrapment invariably incites the declaration that woman desires her position – witness her delight, her cunning and her satisfaction. As I discuss below, the perception of such a desire can lead to her being a victim of sacrifice. Although feminist theory has been transformed since Beauvoir and the second wave through a poststructuralist critique and its aftermath, even though the object of feminist concern is now the phallo-centrism of the binary structure itself and not solely the position of women within it, I think it is reasonable to suggest that feminist theorising still wants to steer a course that is well clear of the figure of the feminine depicted above. This archetypal feminine (of the fall) cannot be revisited in any incarnation.

This is where the ideas and provocations of Jean Baudrillard appear to contain their danger, their conservatism, indeed their anti-feminism, and are therefore discouraging of feminist interest. The very word ‘seduction’ (used frequently by Baudrillard, and the title of one of his early books) acts as a formidable deterrent. I want to argue that consideration of what Baudrillard is doing with seduction and similar concepts reveals why feminists should not reject them; my intention is to suggest they are not only ‘useful’ but central to a feminist critique. And simultaneously the argument must be made for where Baudrillard’s elaboration of these conceptual foundations of his work needs to be critically reviewed for what is possibly its departure from its own terms.

Baudrillard for illusion

At the ‘Baudrillard West of the Dateline’ conference in Auckland, New Zealand in 2001, Jean Baudrillard concluded his response to a question from Nicholas Zurbrugg in a roundtable discussion with the statement that ‘Look, I am not above reality, but I am not for hyperreality. I am for illusion’ (Baudrillard, 2003: 183). Baudrillard is for illusion, seduction, reversion, singularity, challenge. He seeks a world in which a radical otherness, an exquisite alterity, flourishes. This vigorously critical ontology of absence and the nothing is pitted against the positivity of production, identity, power and the universal – a logic of positivity I argue elsewhere is that of phallo-centrism (Grace, 2000). A philosophy of the object as illusion is one that refuses a valorising of identity and authority; it cannot abide a politics of yearning for the position of subject in a subject/object dialectic (or in accordance with Beauvoir a world in which all humans are subjects). To produce, is to make visible; to seduce is to remove from the visible order. To produce, within a code of language and economic exchange is to make, or perform, reality as the thingness of things, to accumulate reality, to have more and more of it. To seduce is the movement, or principle, that ensures that ‘things’ circulate, and in their circulation they cancel each other out. They do not remain, they do not accumulate, they circulate; they appear and disappear.

This appearance and disappearance is sometimes referred to by Baudrillard as reversion – the inevitable reversibility of the world. In the early years of his work, Baudrillard’s unique and profoundly important theorisations circled around the fundamental problem of the social constitution of forms of generalised exchange. Any form of generalised exchange attempts (it can never succeed) to obliterate the singular and incorporate it into a system whereby a generalised standard of exchange becomes the benchmark against which value or identity is determined. As soon as the value of an object is determined relative to another for the purpose of an economic exchange, it takes on its identity within that relation of value: one hen is equal in value to a sack of manure.

How do we know this? By reference to a generalised scale of value that creates abstract quantities as units that can be added together. The meaning of words in linguistic exchange can be ascertained through a system of signification that generalises a method to establish that a word means this and not that. The systemisation of generalised exchange in the domains of value and meaning liberates all exchange into the realm of the possible: only possible because the ontology of objects and language is locatable within that broader system. It is here relative to there; it has this value relative to that; it means this relative to (not) that. Such an order of economic and semiological exchange attempts to reduce the singularity of the illusion of things and beings into the order of reality on a universal scale of difference and comparability. As soon as such a scale is instituted, the binary constitution of the world is established, the universal is possible, singularity no longer features. Since this early work Baudrillard has theorised a shift in the political economy of the sign and its parallel economic form, a shift from the universal to the global as the hyperreal morphs into the integral reality of the virtual. Before explaining this in more detail, a word on Baudrillard’s notion of duality. There is frequent confusion with Baudrillard’s reference to the significance of duality. With irreducible otherness, with the impossible exchange 351 of singularities, we confront the dual relation. As Baudrillard said at the roundtable discussion in 2001: Duality, duel, dopplegänger. All that is beyond the individuality [sic], the other. Duality doesn’t at all mean two, two things, two beings. There may be multiple ones but with duality there is a sort of symbolic challenge, and for challenging you must be opposite, you must be antagonistic, you must not be in a dialectical relation between subjects and objects, between individual and other, the social. That is our system of values but we must break with it ... We must restore the secret of duality, of the dualistic, in the core of our situation, of our actual system. (Baudrillard, 2003: 187) Following Nietzsche, this intervention of Baudrillard’s (only very briefly sketched here) represents, I think, the most radical critique of the structure of identity/difference and its ontological commitments that we (in our occidental philosophy) have. Its seduction not only reverses the universal and its truth, but also the investments in generalised economic and semiological exchange on which this structure relies. Through this critique, identity/difference as a system of equivalence/non-equivalence confronts the alterity of duality; its terms become that of the duel, a relation of the agon, and they cannot be exchanged. This has to be consistent with a feminist project to transform specifically the phallo-centric investments in this very structure of identity/difference.

#### Their version of feminism is still complicit with the dominant logic of capitalistic production: we must produce ourselves as feminist subjects with identity. Against this, the 1AC maintains the possibility of a thinking of the figure of the female beyond identity, beyond the injunction towards producing oneself as an entirely intelligible subject in late capitalist modernity.

--and Baudrillard’s reappropriation link turns all of their discursive-style critiques of it

**Grace 00.** Victoria Grace, Victoria Grace, professor of sociology at the University of Canterbury (UK), Baudrillard's Challenge: A Feminist Reading, 2000, pg. 141-143

The word ‘seduction’ has appeared a number of times in this volume, usually in conjunction with other terms such as ‘symbolic exchange’, ‘reversion’, ‘otherness’; always in association with that which, in Baudrillard’s terms, is structurally eradicated or barred by the ideological institutions of semiology and axiology. In Chapter 1, I referred, in note 18, to ‘seduction’ as that which is counter to production. Where production is literally making something appear, bringing into the realm of the visible or perceivable (or even performing, as in a theatre on a stage), seduction is that movement that removes from the realm of the visible, that vaporises ‘identity’, and is marked by ambivalence. Seduction is about reversion and disappearance, neither of which is recognisable within a productivist logic. In Chapter 2, I discussed the concern of feminists to articulate an ‘otherness which is not the otherness of sameness’, an ‘otherness’ which is not always and inevitably caught up in the oppositional logic of the binary form where the feminine is always opposed to, or different from, the masculine. Given this concern, Baudrillard’s writing on ‘seduction’ is pertinent for consideration by feminists, and engagement by feminist theory. The word ‘seduction’, in the Anglo-American context, is resolutely associated with a kind of predatory male behaviour bent on conquest (typically sexual), usually followed by abandonment of the seduced, or alternatively a female behaviour designed to turn the male on a path towards evil and his downfall. ‘Seduction’ is taken overwhelmingly to be an abuse and manipulation for selfish ends that aim purely to satisfy the seducer (subject), with no concern for the seduced (object or victim). When a male ‘seduces’ a female (especially a ‘young and beautiful’ one) for his ‘pleasure’, we have the ingredients for the objectification, domination, oppression, and manipulation of women by men, or of the feminine by a masculine order, ingredients which, of course, feminists revile. Alternatively, ‘seduction’, in its association with the feminine, is cast as the feminine resolution of the oedipal complex (see Grosz 1989: 137), and hence inevitably situated within the parameters of the Law. Given the intransigence of these meanings of ‘seduction’, it is exceedingly hard to release the notion of seduction from these associations in the process of considering Baudrillard’s use of the term. It is crucial to acknowledge, however, that Baudrillard’s use of the word ‘seduction’ is precisely in opposition to, and a process of critique of, these accepted readings; in fact, as will become apparent, his usage of the word problematises the very terms of these interpretations. In this chapter I will introduce Baudrillard’s analysis of ‘seduction’, and consider its challenge to feminist theory. It is ‘seduction’s’ quality of reversion, or reversibility, that points towards an important insight for feminist critique and understanding. Seduction Seduction lies in the transformation of things into pure appearances. (SEDN: 117) Baudrillard’s theoretical works critique the productivist logic common to the major discourses of modernity: production itself, power, economic value, meaning, representation, the subject, identity, nature, desire, sex, sexuality, knowledge, the real. In other words, these constructs are, in different ways, relentlessly predicated on the ineluctability of presence, of increase, on the inalienability of existence in the positive, against the negative, the destructive, the absent. Foucault, whose work has been so eagerly embraced by feminist theorists, has even formalised the transformation of the seemingly negative into the positive, reflecting the fact that the binary scansion of 1/0 registers absence as another positivity, so that all discourses are now understood as ‘productive’. Accordingly, the exercise of power, rather than being understood as a prohibition, is a force that produces the social; it has effects. Contrary to those feminist writers who claim or assume that there is, or can be, no position outside the Law, Baudrillard’s notion of seduction is precisely about that which challenges the Law. Seduction does not oppose production, but rather transforms it, annuls its singular and transcendent positivity, and reverses its assumption of unilinear accumulation. ‘Seduction’ is not about negation, it is about neither presence nor absence, but about a process whereby absence ‘eclipses presence’, or where absence ‘seduces’ presence rather than opposing it. Its strategy is both to be there and not be there, hence its ambivalence. Seduction is an inverse power; in itself it has no power; its power is to annul the power of production (the positive, non-reversible assumption of identity) through reversion. The logic of production is one of accrual; seduction is not that which negates or opposes that accrual, but that which transforms it. Baudrillard insists that ‘everything demands to be exchanged, reversed, and abolished within a cycle’ (SEDN: 45), hence the illusory nature of production, or of any non-reversible ontology. Seduction is precisely not of the order of representation; the distance between sign and referent, discourse and world, which marks an order of representation is abolished. In Baudrillard’s writing, the whole edifice of representation, of a semiological structure that codifies ‘reality’, is deemed to be an ideological process that reduces the symbolic, in other words, that obscures or bars the inevitable cyclical process of presence, seducing absence, seducing presence: of creation and destruction, life and death, appearance and disappearance, truth and illusion. A poststructuralist ontology, postulating the social construction of reality through a critical rendition of the idea that meaning obtains through language and not through its relation to an extradiscursive world, only goes part of the way. It still posits the inevitability of this linguistic structuration, of the Law, of the binary structuring of meaning where deconstruction remains in the realm of the semiotic, and is of uncertain import. Baudrillard’s notion of seduction is not only critical of the assumptions of reference, but, through a critique of the conditions under which reference becomes possible, develops a critique of the entire process of codification. Materialising the world through a representational linguistics (reference or no reference) works against the seductive interplay of signs. Seduction is therefore also about the annulment of signs, their reversion, and the transformation of their meaning into ‘pure appearance’.

#### White feminism DA

#### Feminist criticisms reinforce the identarian limits that contribute to inequalities predicated on difference

Grace 2000 (Victoria Grace, Senior Lecturer in Feminist Studies and currently serving a term as Dean of Arts at the University of Canterbury at Christchurch, “Baudrillard’s Challenge: A Feminist Reading”, Routledge Press, pg 79-83)

The dichotomous coupling of identity/difference means the focus on the ‘one’ brings with it the inevitability of the ‘other’. As noted by Edward Said (1989), anthropological reflections on ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’ invariably invoke that ‘secret sharer’, identity and identarian thought; one could say in parallel that feminist reflections on identity implicate their twin concern, that of ‘difference’. Feminist inquiry into the logic of ‘sexual difference’ has witnessed considerable attention paid in the Anglo-American context to the dilemma of advocating a politics of equality, or a politics of difference. Intractable contradictions are evident whichever way it goes, when the male is the norm against which both sameness and difference are registered. Equality for women with men (sameness) where men remain the standard of reference does not resolve the problem, and nor does women’s ‘difference’ from men when men remain the standard of reference against which the different feminine is rendered inferior or otherwise. Hence the theoretical endeavour to critique the structural bar that creates the dichotomous construction. This theoretical critique, however, has revolved more consistently around a feminist concern to articulate ‘difference’ differently, as discussed in Chapter 2, and in doing so tends to return to identarian thinking with its essentialist underpinnings and insistence on the importance of the ‘female subject’. Baudrillard’s challenge is to push this critique of the structural bar further. Feminist attempts to reconceptualise ‘alterity’ and ‘otherness’ will continue to fall on barren ground without a more fully developed theoretical critique of the structural conditions of their erasure. In fact Baudrillard’s analysis makes the case that the ground has shifted. As introduced in earlier chapters, the advent of the structural law of value, sign value, at heart hyperreal and simulated, is propelled by a logic of difference. Identity/difference, where ‘difference’ is the negative (-) of identity, is no longer the structuring polarity; our attention must turn to the proliferation of differences structured in accordance with the precession of the model. In other words, the contradictions accompanying the form man/woman (politics of identity or difference) can no longer be considered the key drivers of sexual politics. The need now is to rethink the stakes of a gender politics configured in accordance with a logic of simulation. This is also the case for the other ‘axes of difference’ which have become central to feminist inquiry and activism since the late 1980s. As (‘white, western, middle-class’) feminist concerns with the political positioning of the feminine as ‘other’ matured during the 1970s and 1980s, problems with the exclusions performed through positing a unitary category of ‘women’ came increasingly into focus. These problems were palpable in the form of active opposition from those groups of ‘women’ who did not recognise themselves in the abstraction of ‘women’ articulated by ‘white, western, middle-class’ feminism. Numerous feminist texts published in the late 1980s and early 1990s claim the importance of responding to this challenge and addressing the issues involved in the fact that ‘women’ do not form a homogeneous group. By 1996 Zinn and Dill were able to state that ‘[m]any feminists now contend that difference occupies centre stage as the project of women’s studies today’ (1996: 322). Lennon and Whitford (1994) introduce their edited book on feminist epistemology, Knowing the Difference, with a similar acknowledgement that the problem of differences within the category ‘women’ has come to occupy the ‘centre stage’ of feminist theorising. They claim that feminists who were committed to the articulation of what was ‘other’ in relation to masculine thought have ‘had to confront the challenge of other “others” for whom they constituted a new hegemony and in relation to whom they themselves stood in positions of power and domination’ (1994: 3). They refer to the different experiences and perspectives of women ‘depending on variables such as class, country, age, colour or sexuality’ and also to their differing positioning within power relationships (p. 3). Lennon and Whitford go on to discuss the way this critique of the unitary term ‘women’ has also led to the notion of a lack of unity within each individual ‘woman’. This concept accompanied the poststructuralist turn in feminist theorising and has led authors like Fuss (1989) and Weir (1996) to write of ‘differences within identity’. Gunew and Yeatman (1993) begin the introduction to their edited book, Feminism and the Politics of Difference, with the statement that ‘[i]n its third decade, a dominant area of debate in second-wave feminism concerns being able to deal with differences among women without losing the impetus that derives from being a coherent movement for social change’ (p. xiii). Fraser and Nicholson (1990) refer to the ‘growing interest among feminists in modes of theorizing which are attentive to differences’ (p. 33); Braidotti talks about the ‘shift in feminist theory towards difference’ (1989: 91). Di Stephano (1990) refers to the view that ‘the totalising fiction of “woman” . . . runs roughshod over multiple differences among women’ (p. 65). Susan Bordo (1990) provides a good example of the impetus in the turn to ‘difference’ in feminism; she begins her chapter: Recently I heard a feminist historian claim that there were absolutely no common areas of experience between the wife of a plantation owner in the pre-Civil War South and the female slaves her husband owned. Gender, she argued, is so thoroughly fragmented by race, class, historical particularity, and individual difference, as to self-destruct as an analytical category. The ‘bonds of womanhood,’ she insisted, is a feminist fantasy, born out of the ethnocentrism of white, middle-class academics. (Bordo 1990: 133) In 1987 Teresa de Lauretis was concerned that one of the limits of ‘sexual differences’ is that they universalise sex opposition, which ‘makes it very difficult . . . to articulate the differences of women from Woman, that is the differences among women, or perhaps more exactly the differences within women’ (1987: 2). And again in 1990, de Lauretis refers to the ‘third moment in feminist theory’, its current, whereby the subject is reconceptualised as ‘shifting and multiply organized across variable axes of difference’ (1990: 116). Eisenstein and Jardine published an edited book in 1990 with the title The Future of Difference, and Eisenstein’s introduction briefly summarises the history of American feminism with respect to ‘difference’, claiming that a shift in emphasis from one on equality (eliminating gender differences) to one on valuing the difference of women from men (woman-centred or gynocentric feminism) was an important backdrop to the development of new views on differences among women (1990: xix). Charles (1996) charts a similar history. Nancy Fraser (1992) also tracks the trajectory of debates on ‘difference’ in the Anglo-American context as a prelude to ‘revaluing’ French feminist theories on ‘difference, agency and culture’. She refers to the issues that have emerged from these debates as ‘an explosive mix of contested concepts and practical conundrums’ (p. 6), where every attempt to grapple with one problem seems to spawn numerous others (for example, ‘difference’ in the singular being potentially hegemonic and exclusive, yet the plural ‘differences’ glossing over the power relations constituting differences differently). Feminist analyses of the philosophical and political issues inherent in responding to the ‘shattering’ of the illusion of a universalist sisterhood of mainly North American, British, and Australasian feminism have been diverse and comprehensive. At the same time, many of these feminist analyses raise varied critical questions relentlessly in response to an unease with any uncritical embracing of ‘difference’ or ‘differences’, questions and concerns that are consistent with the critique of ‘difference’ developed by Baudrillard (discussed below). To cite Donna Haraway: We risk lapsing into boundless difference and giving up on the confusing task of making partial, real connection. Some differences are playful; some are poles of world historical systems of domination. Epistemology is about knowing the difference. (Haraway 1991: 160–1) Susan Strickland (1994) develops a critique of a ‘postmodern’ version of difference, paying close attention to the way difference reduced to a form of depoliticised diversity is ‘consumerist’ in its logic. Butler and Scott (1992) ask ‘how can “colour,” “ethnicity,” “gender,” and “class,” be read as more than attributes that must be added to a subject in order to complete its description?’ and ‘to what extent does the theorization of the subject and its epistemic postures through the categories of race, postcolonialism, gender, class compel a full critique of identity politics and/or the situated or encumbered subject?’ (p. xv). Spivak (1989) wants to critique and reject universalism, but finds ‘multiplicity’ to be a problematic alternative. Kirby (1997) worries that ‘postmodern concessions to cultural diversity’ are sustained through an inclusive logic that recognises ‘difference’ but within an homogenising framework (p. 153). De Lauretis (1990) is concerned that the articulation of differences as parallel axes seemingly on co-equal terms does not provide the conceptual tools necessary to grasp the constant intersection of these different axes, and how they are mutually implicated in one another. While Gunew and Yeatman (1993) claim that poststructuralist theory offers a means to do precisely this, they are alert to what they perceive as ‘the dangers inherent in certain methods of accommodating differences’ (p. xxiv). Bordo (1990) is cautious that any incitement to attend to difference might become a dogma, with its implications for a ‘correct’ perspective on ‘race, class and gender’ (p. 139); Di Stephano is concerned to distinguish between an ‘imposed myth of difference’ and ‘crucial and as yet subjugated arenas of difference’ (1990: 65). Di Stephano goes on to argue that ‘difference’ appeals to essentialised identities as much as ‘identity’ does, and that this critique seems to be stuck in a ‘vicious discursive circle’ (1990: 73). Crosby (1992) also questions whether ‘feminisms which “deal with the differences between us” break out of this vicious circle in which women are selfevident and history mirrors the present’ (p. 133). Robyn Wiegman (1995), particularly interested in the project of theorising race and gender, attempts a reframing of questions of ‘difference’, suggesting that the contemporary cultural moment is one of resistance to political organisation based too rigidly in identity claims. This very fact, she argues, is leading to a diversification of critical positions concerned to ‘deessentialize identity’ (p. 5). Most importantly, Wiegman’s intention is to situate ‘difference’, that is, to understand how differences are specifically produced contextually and contingently. These kinds of critical question point to a frustration with the limits of the debate as it is currently framed. Generally, authors are emphatic about the importance of the ‘irreducibility’ of ‘difference’, of absolute alterity, or ‘otherness’, and yet there appears to be a relationship between the problematics revealed through the critical questions raised, and the unsatisfactory quality of an emphasis on alterity that fails to materialise on its discursive articulation. In terms of Baudrillard’s analysis, it is structurally occluded. This occlusion is apparent in the following paragraph by Braidotti (1991), which, in my view, reveals a number of the points where Baudrillard’s critique becomes salient to this discussion. Braidotti is introducing her approach to her topic of analysis for her book Patterns of Dissonance: It will indeed be a question of differences: differences between men and women, differences among women, differences within the woman that ‘I’ is. The difference that is thus marked and enacted is such that it would disqualify any attempt at synthesising the referents. Like weaving parallel lines which will never meet as one; like the contours of two bodies in a film by Marguerite Duras, hermetically empathic; like ‘pure’, that is, irreducible and fertile difference. A sign of infinite possibilities of difference. (Braidotti 1991: 13)

#### White feminism DA

#### Traditional modes of feminist resistance re-assert the identity/difference binary – allowing white, western, middle class women to stand in for woman as such. This generates additional conflicts on the social periphery via a war on difference carried out in the political.

Grace 2000 (Victoria Grace, Senior Lecturer in Feminist Studies and currently serving a term as Dean of Arts at the University of Canterbury at Christchurch, “Baudrillard’s Challenge: A Feminist Reading”, Routledge Press, pg 83-88)

Turning to the consideration of ‘difference(s)’, the first point of importance, foregrounded through a reading of Baudrillard’s work, is that ‘difference’ cannot be understood to transcend history and culture. The analysis of the structural interweaving of political economy and signification that is so central to Baudrillard’s insights enables a number of distinctions to be made. ‘Difference’ in the context of symbolic exchange is closer to the irreducibility sought by a number of feminist authors. Baudrillard refers to this as ‘otherness’, where that which is ‘other’ is neither opposed nor comparable. ‘Difference’ within the coded form of identity/ difference instantiating the (linguistic) ‘subject’ and the (economic) ‘object’ is of an entirely different order. In this case, comparability, that imperative of the economic, is central to the construct ‘difference’. As outlined in Chapter 2 (see n. 15 there), the ‘identity/difference’ formula is premised on an abstract mathematical concept reliant on the notion of criteria. Accordingly, an element, any element, is ‘identified’ and is then used to construct the criterion for identity across a set. In the note mentioned, I used the example of apples. To continue with this example, if an apple has identity ‘apple’ modulo2 its genetic belonging to the apple genus, apples may have a whole range of ‘differences’ in terms of other criteria of size, shape, taste, crispness, and so on. To extrapolate to the issues at hand in this discussion, women have the identity ‘woman’ modulo some defining characteristic abstracted to form a set, but some are black, white, Asian, Arabic, Jewish, and so on. Thus the ‘identity’ that includes ‘differences’ inevitably postulates some kind of ‘essence’ (even albeit a ‘performative’ essence), and in accordance with this formulation excludes or bars ‘otherness’. In the hyperreal mode, the signifier, released from its anchoring in the referent, becomes the sign, in Baudrillard’s terms. As the ‘natural’ status of the real that precedes its representation is no longer the reference point for ‘reality’, the sign itself becomes the real. The implosion of the Sr and Sd, or referent, discussed in Chapter 1, is paralleled by the eradication of use value as the underpinning motif of value, and the installing of sign value, where, in axiological terms, value is not anchored to any prior standard of equivalence. The sign is real. The value of the sign (as object of consumption) is accomplished through its differentiation from other signs. The logic of difference that structures the spheres of value and meaning in the hyperreal mode is still coded in terms of identity/difference. But dislocated from the referent, reality follows the model of value and meaning instigated by the logic of the sign. ‘Difference’ in this formulation is thus still predicated on the mathematical relation of identity modulo criteria, but the differences that inevitably result from the criterion of identity lose their negativity and become fully positivised as signs. From another angle, differences are no longer subordinate to equivalence; being the same isn’t better! Being ‘different’ is just as good! In fact the more value associated with difference, the better. Hyperreality could indeed be perfectly characterised as ‘a sign of infinite possibilities of difference’, to pick up Braidotti’s words, quoted above. And the notion of parallel lines that weave but ‘never meet as one’ is evocative of an image used by Baudrillard to conjure precisely the exclusion of the ‘otherness’ of symbolic exchange with the advent of economic value, especially in its form of sign value: freeways on an American landscape where motorists travel at speed criss-crossing and interweaving, but never meeting (except catastrophically). Nothing is exchanged or transformed, difference is fully recognised and valued, in fact it is paradigmatic. Identities and differences all remain intact, ‘hermetically empathic’. Baudrillard begins Simulations with a citation from Ecclesiastes: ‘The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth – it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true’ (Ecclesiastes, cited in SIM: 1). Within the order of a semiology of representation, reality is deemed to have an ontological priority of some sort, definitely antecedent. Within the order of simulation, signs are the real, concealing the truth that there is none – no real, no truth. Reality and truth emanate from signs. The precession of the model figures the real; identities and differences are modulated in accordance with the model and proliferate indefinitely. This precession of the model is at the heart of Baudrillard’s notion of simulation. The hyperreal overturns any distinction between the real and the imaginary, and leaves ‘room only for the orbital recurrence of models and the simulated generation of difference’ (SIM: 4). ‘Orbital’ is a spatial metaphor that conveys a sense of floating in a vacuous space with no other gravitational point of reference than the preceding model, and ‘simulated generation of difference’ refers to the modelled (modulo, modulated, modal) quality of the resulting difference. Baudrillard describes how simulation is not about feigning. Understood as feigning, or as a form of pretence, simulation maintains the principle of representation and the distinction between truth and falsity: ‘the reality principle’. To evoke the difference, Baudrillard uses the example of illness. If one simulates paralysis (in the sense of feigning) there is the appearance or pretence of paralysis, but the ‘reality’ of normality. If, however, paralysis is simulated – i.e. actually produced – then the relation of truth and falsity, real and appearance, implodes (and the limit of a medicine reliant on such a distinction is revealed). It is in this sense that simulation as an order of the real obliterates the ‘relation’: the sign is the reality, and there is no falsity to be unmasked. There is no simulation versus truth: the simulated and the true are one and the same thing. Referring to the status of the image, Baudrillard argues that reality configured in terms of a relation of truth and appearance means the image can be a reflection of a basic reality, can mask, pervert, or distort a basic reality, or it can mask the absence of a basic reality. But when reality is configured in terms of simulation, the image bears no relation whatsoever to any reality: it is its own pure simulation (SIM: 11). Thus Baudrillard makes it clear that within an order of representation, simulation is interpreted as false representation, whereas within an order of simulation ‘the whole edifice of representation (is) itself a simulacrum’ (SIM: 11). Clearly this implosion has serious implications for those social forms predicated on the salience of an unalienable distinction between truth and falsity, reality and appearance. In the western context, the social forms Baudrillard discusses include, among others, science, medicine, the law, and the authenticity of ‘culture’ (I will extrapolate to consider the simulation of sex/gender and the parodic transgender challenge to its ‘truth’ in Chapter 4). In addressing the question of why it might be that we see the ‘panic-stricken’ production of ‘realness’ at precisely the moment of its demise, Baudrillard analyses the sustaining of power in the ‘strategy of the real’. Hopefully this will become clearer as I discuss his examples. In brief, the forms of power which are invested in the social institutions of modernity require the binary distinctions of truth and falsity, reality and appearance; these forms of power are predicated on reality staying where it was. This provides considerable momentum for the continued staging of the signs of the natural, the true, the real, the authentic, albeit in simulated form. Furthermore, ‘when the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning’ (SIM: 12), and the ‘truth’ of (the memory of) ‘lived experience’ takes on a renewed intensity. Baudrillard incites his readers to organise a fake hold-up of a bank: Be sure to check that your weapons are harmless, and take the most trustworthy hostage, so that no life is in danger (otherwise you risk committing an offence). Demand ransom, and arrange it so that the operation creates the most commotion possible – in brief, stay close to the ‘truth’, so as to test the reaction of the apparatus to a perfect simulation. (SIM: 39) But the reaction will be such that the simulation cannot succeed. In the same way as it becomes impossible to discover some absolute real, so too it is impossible to stage an illusion. In the case of the fake hold-up, the matrix of signs will combine the artificial and the real to such an extent (a police officer will really shoot someone on sight, a bank customer will really have a heart attack) that the illusory is absorbed into the real – ‘you will unwittingly find yourself immediately in the real’ (SIM: 39) The point here is that the established order on which the law is built trends towards reducing everything to some reality; in this way attempts at simulation are ‘devoured’. Transgression is much less threatening to the established order, where obedience and transgression are opposed. Simulation of an offence, Baudrillard observes, will either receive some light form of punishment because it had ‘no consequences’ or be punished as an offence wasting police time. Both of these retain the distinction of the simulated and the real, albeit in a relation of equivalence. His point is that such an offence will never be recognised and punished as simulation. To do so is to recognise the abolition of this relation, which power cannot respond to, and which in turn reveals the law itself as a simulation. For power to circulate between the poles of policing obedience and sanctioning wrong-doing, the law has to be based on the difference between the truth of identifiable transgression and identifiable obedience. This rejection of simulation is evident in the medical sphere. It seems to me that this is most clearly apparent with conditions such as chronic pain and fatigue, where alleged symptoms defy the medical production of their evidence in the tissues or systems of the organism. Medical diagnosis is reliant on the identification of the diseased organ or damaged system within the body, as this is revealed through tests, scans, laparoscopes, and so on. Where no such evidence is revealed, the symptoms must be feigned in the sense of not real: ‘there’s nothing wrong’. To allow the simulation of symptoms throws the epistemology and ontology of the medical paradigm into turmoil. It effectively disables the distinction on which medicine rests: between real, identifiable disease as causative of symptoms, and wellness where there is an absence of such disease. It is important to note that such conditions are experienced by women in far greater numbers than by men, suggesting such challenges to the medical mode of representation are gendered. The master-narrative of ‘science’ (biomedical, physical, or social) traditionally assumes a syntax of ‘subject knows object’, science ‘ostensibly masters the object’ (SIM: 17), and again, simulation threatens the poles through which power secures its stakes. Baudrillard points out that even with the critique of objectivity, even when the singularity of objectivity is broken (he uses the metaphor of breaking a mirror into many pieces), and science ‘effaces itself before its object’ now dispersed into multiple fragments, nothing in fact changes. To ‘bow down before “differences”’ (SIM: 17) and to institute a shift from mastery by the subject of science to the sovereignty of the object, now challenged to ‘speak’ in its ‘own voice’, be a ‘subject’, is simply a symptom of a different form of the confinement of the scientific object. It merely means, in a way, that we have all become scientific objects; along with all events and phenomena. Baudrillard uses the example of ethnology, which could possibly more broadly be referred to as anthropology, claiming that as soon as it collapses in its traditional form, its place is taken by an ‘anti-ethnology’, ‘whose task is to reinject fictional difference and Savagery everywhere’ (SIM: 18). Again, there is not only a retention of and nostalgia for, but indeed a frenzied proliferation of, signs of the real and of ‘difference’: ‘reality’ and ‘difference’ in simulation. Thus Baudrillard is analysing a social dynamic where power is no longer reliant on an ideological masking of the truth of social relations, but rather on concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, of ‘saving the reality principle’ (SIM: 25). This process of concealment he calls a strategy of deterrence. Before discussing in more detail the question of ‘cultural difference’ in the hyperreal mode, I will continue with examining this ‘strategy of deterrence’ and the displacement of causality by the principle of manipulation, as these are central to an understanding of simulation. ‘Deterrence’ is the term Baudrillard uses to connote a process ensuring that the fiction of political stakes continues to animate the social. Unlike surveillance, or ideology, deterrence is void of any notion of agent, class, manipulator, interest; it operates precisely to activate these concepts in simulated form to conjure their (apparent) reality (who can say they are not real when they are simulated?). Referring to power, Baudrillard writes: When it is threatened today by simulation (the threat of vanishing in the play of signs), power risks the real, risks crisis, it gambles on remanufacturing artificial, social, economic, political stakes. (SIM: 44) In Baudrillard’s analysis, power ‘for some time now produces nothing but signs of its resemblance’ (SIM: 45). The political dynamic as a stake is empty, finished, appearing in simulated form in a logic of social demand. Here Baudrillard is referring to a demand for signs of power, signs of meaningful political social relations. ‘True’ power was a relation of force with stakes and strategy, but Baudrillard argues that these things are now nothing more than an object of social demand, and so, like anything else in the logic of consumption, are subject to the law of supply and demand rather than to violence and death (which doesn’t mean there is no violence and death!). ‘Power is no longer present except to conceal that there is none’ (SIM: 46). Simulated power, simulated political stakes, ‘deter’ the collapse of power. Baudrillard suggests that the only strategy against this collapse or ‘defection’ is to ‘reinject realness and referentiality everywhere’ (SIM: 42). It is this analysis that enables Baudrillard to refer elsewhere (FS: 57–8) to the apparent discovery by those on the political ‘left’ of the subversive nature of the claim that ‘everything is political’, that the political was not confined to the level of governance of nationstates but that sport, fashion, household arrangements were all to be affirmed as ‘political’. Again, at precisely the moment when the ‘political’ implodes, it is ‘found’ everywhere. As discussed in Chapter 1, Baudrillard argues that the hyperreal world of simulation is an order of totalitarian control far greater than any social form previously known. The implosion of dialectical polarity with the ascendancy of sign value addition to annihilating political stakes, reconstitutes the operational construct of ‘causality’ in a simulated mode. The notion of cause and effect is similarly reliant on the poles of subject/object, active/ passive, positivity/negativity. The notion of one thing/element/force causing/ impacting on/transforming another relies on the prior separation of that affected, or changed, from its changing agent. Such separation implies a distance, in turn implying contingency: some thing, or act, may intervene and change the course of events, since there is a ‘causal relationship’. In social terms there can even be struggle and resistance. With the collapse of the poles sustaining this causal structure, Baudrillard argues that its fundamental dimensions have shifted. Rather than a relation of cause and effect, the precession of simulacra ensures that the real is generalised from the model; the real proliferates from the modulation of differences in accordance with the model. Reality is coded. The best example is perhaps found in the dominant discourses about genetics. ‘The operation of simulation is nuclear and genetic’ (SIM: 3). DNA cannot be described as ‘causal’; rather it codes, or programmes. The shape of things to come is encoded in the form itself. There is no ‘causal relationship’, no determination, but rather an informing. The significance of this concept of ‘information’ will become clearer when we consider Baudrillard’s analysis of the media, but first, I will discuss ‘cultural difference’.

#### Essentialism DA

#### Feminism is caught up in a play of signs that have destabilized their purpose and make their critique ubiquitous. We can no longer distinguish empowerment from subjugation – there is nothing keeping a third wave feminist from being a sex worker. Within the postmodern play of signs without referents, it is impossible to determine if we are feminist or not – any argument to the contrary relies on an implicit standard of authenticity testing that should be rejected for harming women.

Toffoletti 14 (Kim Toffoletti, a senior lecturer in sociology and gender studies at Deakin University in Australia, “Baudrillard, Postfeminism, and the Image Makeover”, The Disappearance of Feminism, Cultural Politics, Volume 10, Issue 1, March 2014, pp. 109-111)

With its emphasis on celebrating real female bodies, boosting women’s confidence, and encouraging individuals to make the most of what they have, How to Look Good Naked positions itself against popular media representations accused of depicting unrealistic feminine beauty ideals, thereby seemingly aligning itself with a pro-woman agenda. In effect, the social change impetus grounding a feminist politic is recast as a narrative of individual female transformation. In particular, the rhetoric of self-love and finding one’s authentic self (sexually and socially) that typifies How to Look Good Naked echoes feminist consciousness-raising efforts of the second wave that opposed “false” male-determined standards of female attractiveness (Genz 2011: 123). Yet many of the features that characterize the program, such as the sexualization of the subject, an emphasis on heteronormative femininity, and a focus on appearances, are the subject of ongoing feminist interrogation and critique. How to Look Good Naked thus demonstrates a key feature of a postfeminist sensibility, described by Gill as emphasizing “the contradictory nature of postfeminist discourses and the entanglement of both feminist and anti-feminist themes within them” (2007: 149). In this statement Gill alludes to the difficulty of judging which images might count as feminist (and accordingly which fall into the antifeminist camp) within a postfeminist media landscape. The issue at stake, it would appear, hinges on whether it is possible to clearly delineate between a “feminist” and an “antifeminist” theme, image, or action. How might feminist media studies scholars approach a program like How to Look Good Naked, which does not label itself as feminist but replicates the promotion of feminist values such as bodily autonomy and selfdetermined sexual subjectivity? In observing that actions considered by some feminists to be oppressive to women (like gratuitous displays of the naked female body) become celebrated as signs of women’s agency, I’m not suggesting that the media construct an “illusion” of women’s empowerment that masks a quantifiable or absolute “truth” about gender inequality. Taking this stance would be to misunderstand the present cultural condition as described by Baudrillard where signs hide nothing but become our reality. This comes about, he argues, when signs can no longer be distinguished from the reality they are supposed to represent (Baudrillard 1994: 6). Liberated from material referents, signs can only reference themselves, resulting in “the absorption of one pole into another, the short circuit between poles of every differential system of meaning, the effacement of terms and of distinct oppositions, and thus that of the medium and the real” (Baudrillard 2007: 104). In a world that is increasingly virtualized, it is the play of signs that influences the nature of social experience, including gender relations, over and above the reality once understood to precede representation. This insight is central to contemplating the current predicament of feminist theory and activism—how to speak about feminist agendas or values when “the effacement of terms and of distinct oppositions” leads to anything being potentially labeled feminist? In a postfeminist media climate where sexual objectification is recast as a form of female agency and the “right to choose” (regardless of whether this choice is breast-feeding or breast implants) equates to women’s empowerment, differentiating with any confidence between feminist and antifeminist themes becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. Baudrillard (2005a: 18) has spoken about art in this way, observing that contemporary art references past styles and other aesthetic forms to the point where it has come to look like everything else, making it impossible to determine what art is. Massculture texts like graffiti, advertising, and comic strips are now part of the art canon. Everyday objects like cars and beds, even urinals (as per Marcel Duchamp), have been labeled “art.” Cows in formaldehyde, garbage bags full of waste, people snoring—all are examples of art that destabilizes the system of value through which to discern the art object from the biological organism, consumer detritus, or daily life. When art becomes indistinguishable from the world it inhabits, Baudrillard claims, it ceases to be art in the way we once knew it. While art, it seems, is everywhere and anything potentially can be art, at the same time its liberation from a narrow field of meaning fosters its erasure. We might extend this proposition to say that feminism, too, has become ubiquitous to the point where it is both everywhere and nowhere. When anything can be considered feminist, the term becomes emptied of meaning and, accordingly, disappears. That is, feminism evades being neatly defined or classified according to traditional political, economic, or cultural categorizations. Let me be clear that feminism “disappears” not because people don’t believe in it (certainly, there are many people who do, myself included), or because gender equality has been achieved, but because its excessive proliferation under postfeminism results in there being too much of it. Or more specifically, the fundamental feminist principle of female emancipation, as articulated through discourses of gender rights, freedoms, and choices, has become the overarching rhetoric of postfeminist culture: it contaminates all images, actions, signs, and discourses. In making this observation, I am in no way asserting that there is no need for feminist theorizing and politics or that it is redundant. Rather, the erasure I am talking about, following Baudrillard, refers to our collective inability to coherently define or confidently determine the parameters of feminism within a political and cultural economy that has become virtualized. In other words, feminism becomes caught up in the play of signs and appearances characteristic of “immanent reversal” whereby, in a society of simulation, things become their opposite. Douglas Kellner explains it as follows: “The liberation championed in the 1960s was to become a form of voluntary servitude; sovereignty had passed from the side of the subject to the object; and revolution and emancipation had turned into their opposites, snaring one more and more in the logic of the system, thus trapping individuals in an order of simulation and virtuality” (2009: 23–24). Under these conditions, how might we understand what feminism is, what female emancipation looks like, how women’s rights might be characterized? The remainder of this essay is devoted to further considering these questions through an examination of the makeover show How to Look Good Naked. I demonstrate how, in coming to resemble, if not naturalize, a feminist critique that opposes beauty ideals, How to Look Good Naked exemplifies the illusory character of emancipatory politics. This is the state of affairs that contemporary feminism must contend with in the postfeminist era

#### Postmodern Consumerism DA

#### Their advocacy only reinforces capitalist imperatives and gender inequalities since their change is still rooted in the proliferation of signs

Toffoletti 14 (Kim Toffoletti, a senior lecturer in sociology and gender studies at Deakin University in Australia, “Baudrillard, Postfeminism, and the Image Makeover”, The Disappearance of Feminism, Cultural Politics, Volume 10, Issue 1, March 2014, pp. 114-115)

A giant billboard of a woman in her underwear occupies a prominent place atop the buildings of a nondescript English town center. This display is not, as one might expect, the latest Victoria’s Secret ad campaign but an unglamorous depiction of an “everywoman” in an old pair of underpants and ill-fitting bra. She is, of course, a participant in How to Look Good Naked, and this public revelation is one of the challenges she must face on her quest to becoming a better self. Each wrinkle, stretch mark, lump, and bump that the woman despises is amplified and available for public consumption. Host Wan, who is accompanied by the mortified participant, proceeds to ask passers-by their thoughts on her figure and receives affirming replies. This activity is meant to convince the participant that she is attractive and desirable, despite her misgivings about her body. While intended to encourage the woman to see her body positively in the way others do, the process involves a degree of public humiliation for the woman, problematizing the premise of the program to foster female empowerment. McRobbie (2009: 140) in her analysis of the makeover genre views this kind of female ritual humiliation as a form of symbolic violence against women, whereby the management and critique of women’s bodies functions as a mechanism of social control that relies on the co-opting of its victims, who she claims are predominantly working-class women seeking the help of experts. Via the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Judith Butler, McRobbie illuminates how the shaming tactics and personal insults upon which such programs rely extend beyond the individual to become an acceptable form of humiliation on the basis of class. She argues that it is through the makeover genre that a particular “movement of women” is produced—namely, lower- and working-class women whom the hosts deem outdated, unkempt, and inadequate and who “show themselves willing to undergo change, so that they more confidently and efficiently take up their places in the emergent labour markets which need their participation, and which will also then provide them with disposable incomes so that they can consume more products and services over a lifetime” (McRobbie 2009: 145). The purported aim of makeover television to empower women via self-improvement, McRobbie claims, instead reinforces capitalist imperatives, class stratification, and gender inequalities. McRobbie does not use the word symbolic in the way Baudrillard would to characterize the period prior to universal or generalized value systems. She understands it in the Lacanian sense, as part of the order of signification through which cultural meaning is produced. Thus McRobbie employs the term symbolic violence to describe the mechanism by which class distinction is maintained (after Bourdieu) when abuses directed at women undergoing television makeovers (abuses that she believes are commonly dismissed as ironic or harmless) become accepted and used in wider societal discourse to slur working-class women. By understanding symbolic violence to occur at the level of signification, McRobbie forecloses on the possibility that this violence may be of another register. To what extent might the violence of makeover culture McRobbie identifies be suggestive of the obscenity of visual representation itself? A “violence of the degree zero” that results from an excess of signification that attempts to secure meaning and consolidate our reality (Baudrillard 1990: 27)? Just as Baudrillard deems pornography obscene because its telescopic rendering of genitals and sexual activities obliterate any sense of mystery associated with the sex act, makeover TV can be said to function along the same lines. In the case of pornography, it is not the gratuitous representation of naked bodies that Baudrillard finds obscene—rather, “what is obscene about this world is that nothing is left to appearances, or to chance. Everything is a visible, necessary sign” (1990: 34). The billboard featuring a female participant in her underwear, as mentioned above, gives us the body up close. It does not matter that the woman is not fully naked—the intimacy of the body is displayed in the hyperreal illumination of every curve, hair, wrinkle, fold of skin— seemingly every pore is enlarged and able to be scrutinized. This excess of reality generates the semblance of authenticity associated with reality TV. Regardless of whether the bodies in question are undergoing plastic surgery or appear “au natural,” makeover TV simulates an authentic femininity in the form of women striving to realize their true self through personal and physical transformation and betterment. Baudrillard provokes us to consider postfeminist media artifacts in different terms to McRobbie’s critical logic. In contrast to McRobbie’s usage, the symbolic violence Baudrillard speaks about is a consequence of excluding the symbolic register—the violation occurs because we attempt to secure reality through the actualization of the gendered, raced, classed subject/body. The proliferation of “authentic” or “real” female bodies in How to Look Good Naked operates as a form of violence, in that women’s social and personal liberation has no coherent meaning when any action performed by the female body can be potentially rendered emancipatory within the specter of simulation. Baudrillard alerts us to the possibility that, in a culture of integral reality or fourthorder simulation, images do something other than produce meaning about class norms and gender expectations in the way McRobbie’s critique of makeover TV suggests. Through Baudrillard, McRobbie’s proposition can be extended to acknowledge that the symbolic violence of the postfeminist text is tied to the changing purpose of the image and its value—it can no longer represent authentic femininity, real bodies, or pro-feminist attitudes but can only play at communicating meaning around these terms. Any message about women’s empowerment, autonomy, or choice that How to Look Good Naked seeks to promote through the makeover process is made meaningless when seemingly anything (in this case, appearing seminaked on a billboard) becomes a sign of female empowerment.

#### Their over-proliferation of signs further imposes meaning onto the world – this turns their criticism as it only reinforces the attempt to determine what is/isn’t “feminist”

Toffoletti 14 (Kim Toffoletti, a senior lecturer in sociology and gender studies at Deakin University in Australia, “Baudrillard, Postfeminism, and the Image Makeover”, The Disappearance of Feminism, Cultural Politics, Volume 10, Issue 1, March 2014, pp. 115-117)

In discussions of makeover reality TV, image not only refers to a representational form but can be understood in terms of the presentation of the self. How to Look Good Naked alludes to the fractal nature of gendered identity when one’s self-image is in a process of ongoing transformation. This process of self-fashioning is hardly new (see Greenblatt 2005), yet it increasingly involves the consumption of an ephemeral configuration of signs and practices. While creating a new image is the aim of the makeover transformation, what this new image should be is not clearly defined in How to Look Good Naked. Despite the formulaic nature of the show, surprisingly little emphasis is placed on participants to meet a socially desirable body type or fashion style. The women involved are not expected to lose weight, wear hair extensions, or get breast augmentations. Instead of transforming the physical self to look younger and skinnier, the emphasis in How to Look Good Naked is on feeling more confident and sexy through changing one’s attitude. The point to be made here is not that How to Look Good Naked offers a better or more progressive alternative to other makeover shows. As is the case throughout the self-improvement genre, looking fabulous is directly connected to feeling fabulous, even if, in the case of How to Look Good Naked, there is no standardized feminine type to be emulated. Rather, this promotion of all styles, figures, ages, and sizes gestures toward the phenomenon that Baudrillard identifies as a “trans” state, when “everything aestheticizes itself” (1992: 10). For Baudrillard (1993b: 5), a “trans” state of affairs signals the obliteration of categories brought about by the saturation of the world by signs and images with no definitive point of reference from which their value or meaning can be easily mapped. In this context, valuation of any kind is impossible—the abolition of the coordinates through which we once determined the beautiful from the ugly, the true from the false, and the good from the bad now frees these concepts from their origins. No longer can we speak with any authority about feminine beauty ideals or desirable female bodies when the distinguishing features to which these ideas were once tethered have been replaced by the ethos that “everyone can be beautiful.” Under this regime, any body can be fashionable, beautiful, and sexy, not just those of women who are slender, youthful, and have flawless faces. The notion that all bodies have become aestheticized is apparent in the range of reality TV shows fixated on a variety of bodies—fat bodies and anorexic bodies (Supersize vs Superskinny), elderly bodies (Sunset Daze), children’s bodies (Toddlers and Tiaras), and maternal bodies (Sixteen and Pregnant). Indeed, the latest series of How to Look Good Naked (subtitled With a Difference) draws the disabled body into the transaesthetic sphere, giving these women the “right” to circulate within the inexorable circuits of media and communication. This potentiality for all bodies to be made into signs for consumption is also strikingly apparent in the catwalk show that concludes each episode of How to Look Good Naked. As a way of testing whether the participant has taken on board the lessons of body confidence taught over the course of the program she is asked to model in a runway parade and appear in lingerie. Despite the initial reservations expressed by nearly all of the show’s participants, invariably the women agree to partake in the exercise, hence proving to the audience, the presenter, and themselves that they have successfully learned “how to look good naked.” It would appear that regardless of whether the participant is fat, short, old, thin, ugly, plain, or tall, she can achieve model status. Baudrillard’s notion of the transaesthetic should not be construed as offering some sort of liberation for women from the confines of a patriarchal beauty ideal. The transaesthetic instead generates a situation whereby the potentiality of being “on show” cannot be escaped or opted out of. This generalized aestheticization, Baudrillard tell us, leads to a situation whereby “all forms of culture—not excluding anti-cultural ones—are promoted and all models of representation and anti-representation are taken on board” (1993b: 16). There is an extent to which Baudrillard’s proclamations intersect with feminist critiques of makeover culture, which identify the all-encompassing reach of self-improvement rhetoric. Baudrillard (1993b: 15) goes even further, however, in observing that there is no site from which to resist, reject, or counter the accumulated positivity of value that cannot be exchanged or reversed. Even though How to Look Good Naked repeatedly denounces conformity to a standardized female body type, it is not to imply that the women who participate in the series (and its viewers) are somehow liberated from the sphere of beauty and appearances. Rather, more than ever, all bodies are co-opted into this scheme. Regardless of whether a participant deliberately or unwittingly challenges familiar parameters of feminine attractiveness, we can no longer say with any certainty that, for example, the tattooed, overweight, or old are exempt from being or becoming beautiful. The project of self-betterment, coupled with the transaestheticization of beauty, shifts the stakes of the game—beauty isn’t measured by a narrow standard only few can meet but has become something that is found everywhere and in everyone. Certainly, we can point to women who appear to reject the stereotypical look associated with heterosexual femininity and the ongoing maintenance it requires. Yet nonparticipation quickly becomes absorbed into a sign itself. Take, for example, women who do not remove their body hair. While sporting hairy legs might seem a radical act of resistance against the culturally desirable smooth and hairless female body (certainly, there is no ambivalence in Wan’s assertion that “waxing is essential if you want to look good in the buff”), this anticultural sentiment is another modality in the fashion system, where signs play off against each other (Baudrillard 1993a: 98). Hairy legs have even entered the style realm, as witnessed in 2010 when American fashion retailer J. Crew included in its collection a pair of tights that made wearers look as though their legs were covered in a fine black fuzz. While this look was perhaps inadvertent, it nonetheless gestures toward hairy-leggedness being made over into a fashion item.

#### We support feminism insofar as it is aimed at the code, however the affirmative has set aim at the content of the code without challenging the form – this kills any solvency and breeds ressentiment.

Grace 2k “Baudrillard’s Challenge: A Feminist Reading” (Victoria, Senior Lecturer in Feminist Studies and currently serving a term as Dean of Arts at the University of Canterbury at Christchurch.)/

Baudrillard is clear in his support for feminism when feminist critique and activism are aimed at the code, at the fundamental problem of the dichotomous logic that creates the split of male/female and makes the female the unmarked term (see MOP: 134–5). In the opening to this chapter I indicated that Baudrillard’s objection to feminism stems from his critique of a movement of those on the ‘other’ side of the bar who articulate their desire to instantiate a subjectivity, a positive identity. Such a desire fails to oppose the binary logic instituting an essentialist and phallocentric ontology. In Irigaray’s work we have seen an ambiguity with respect to this desire, but certainly the desire is articulated: a desire for women’s subjecthood, and relatedly, a desire for the representation of women’s desire. This is particularly evident in her insistence to carve out a positive (+) space for women, for the feminine, in the face of Lacan’s assertion that ‘woman does not exist’ and that she, ‘woman’, cannot know or speak of her desire (see Irigaray 1977, trans. 1985: 86–105). This seems to arouse a degree of ressentiment; a form of indignation that compels opposition. However, to reiterate, the attempt to demand a subjecthood, to insist on a subjectivity as presence, fully positivised without a concept of reversion, will only succeed in reasserting an essentialist premise, in semiologically reducing the symbolic, and Lacan would probably still only see himself reflected back in the mirror.

### Framework

#### Policy debate succumbs to simulation resignation. Apathetic information consumption short circuits all of their policy debate good arguments while leaving all of our offense in tact. We must attack the rules and procedures of policy debate as a simulation of politics to reveal its complicity in technological and capitalist modes of exploitation. Steal what you can from the game by tolling rather than participating in the game seriously.

Jansen, 20—M.A., Media, Art, and Performance Studies, Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University (Dennis, *Ludic Materialism: Critical Interventions in Game Studies’ Material Turn*, pg 166-176, dml)

Throughout his recent work in game studies, Raessens himself has mostly attended to the “political-ideological tendencies in serious games” (Raessens 2009, 24), a genre exemplified for him by titles like Food Force (United Nations World Food Programme 2005) and Darfur Is Dying (Take Action Games 2006). 3 Following the work of Sherry Turkle (cf. Turkle 1996), but apparently echoing Baudrillard, Raessens argues that “players can either surrender to the seduction[!] of Food Force and Darfur is Dying by interpreting the game more or less according to the encoded […] ideological frames (simulation resignation),” or they can “understand these frames […] by deconstructing the assumptions or frames that are built into the simulation (simulation understanding)” (Raessens 2015, 254). Raessens rightly indicates that the ideal scenario here is ‘simulation understanding’, when players experience a “moment of disavowal—or distancing—that is specific to games” (Raessens 2009, 28), and thus become able to identify and question the underlying assumptions of serious games like the aforementioned examples. This would allow for a mutually constructive (and, Baudrillard would object, fully instrumentalized) relationship between a game, which conveys its ideological message through its procedural rhetoric, and its players, who accept that message but also engage with it to find its procedural limitations. However, throughout his preliminary research he consistently finds game critics and scholars—precisely the demographics one should expect a measure of critical distance from—overwhelmingly falling into simulation resignation when playing and then reviewing both Food Force and Darfur Is Dying (cf. Raessens 2009, 29; 2015, 254–55). His later research on the interactive multimedia production Collapsus: The Energy Risk Conspiracy (Palotta 2010) repeats this finding—resignation remains the dominant reaction among critics (Raessens 2019a, 99–100).

At this junction, the goalposts for serious games appear to be moving away from understanding to resignation; effectively, from critical deconstructive engagement to cold seduction. For instance, when first confronted with these findings, Raessens carefully questions whether “critical distance needs to exist in the first place” because, he writes, “It is of course a legitimate aspiration to teach children about hunger as Food Force intends to do” (Raessens 2009, 32). Later, he praises Food Force and Darfur Is Dying solely for their “clear political agenda,” which he states “can be considered an emancipating and liberating aspect” in itself (Raessens 2015, 256). Yet, having a clear political agenda on a representational level is hardly specific to videogames, and simply discussing political issues is certainly not the same as actually advocating for and effecting liberation. By the time the research has shifted to ecogames like Collapsus, we are speaking only in terms of a potential for the instrumentalization of play: the game “might contribute to […] making people reflect on the global and political implications of the energy transition and act accordingly” (Raessens 2019, 93; emphasis mine). To be sure, Raessens points to promising evidence that serious or “persuasive” games are able to effect attitude changes in their players better than other, less ‘interactive’ media (e.g. Jacobs 2018; Neys and Jansz 2019). I would certainly not deny that there are ways in which ‘ludic’ simulations can affect attitudes and behaviours in both general and medium-specific ways. But again, to point merely to attitude change, when the initial desire was for serious games to be ‘emancipating and liberating’, feels like a moving of the goalpost for what they are supposed to be able to do.

It appears to be the case that Raessens resigns himself to resignation without admitting it openly, when simulation understanding is clearly the more ambitious and preferable option. This makes some sense from an academicinstitutional view: pointing to ‘potential’ and ‘promising evidence’ invites further required research into one’s topic of choice—and I should clarify that I fully support the continuation of that research. That said, we could also say that this unstated resignation to the ‘seductive’ power of simulation was a foregone conclusion from the very beginning. Raessens has identified four possible implications of cybernetic technologies, such as videogames, for their users’ relation to reality and the symbolic order. According to this model, games may be experienced either as completely immersive virtual realities that can in turn be utopian or dystopian, as “replicas of non-virtual life,” or as “dramatic stages for reality construction” (Raessens 2009, 24). Following this model are explicitly politicized and undeniably progressive analyses of the contents of serious games at their representational, procedural, and paratextual levels. In fact, the emancipatory angle throughout Raessens’ work on videogames is generally a welcome one, especially compared to the consistently depoliticized work of ludology as discussed in the previous chapter. However, in the conclusion to one of the texts I have been reading here, where Raessens effectively concedes that the merit of Food Force lies mostly in its willingness to even discuss the topic of world hunger at all, he writes: “Which of the ‘virtual’ tendencies become actualized is not directly inscribed in the game’s technical properties” (Raessens 2009, 33; emphasis mine). The troubling implication is that a politicization of the very technologies that underlie serious games is off-limits, because said technologies have no direct influence over their political or ideological properties, nor over the way that any individual serious game constructs its own relationship to ‘actual reality’.

Apparently as a consequence, throughout the rest of his work Raessens never implicates serious games themselves in the problems they are addressing. Food Force and Darfur Is Dying, both arguably dealing with the violent consequences of global capitalism, are never criticized for their use of simulation technologies that “promise the containment and control of such supposedly accidental violence, while in fact exacerbating these forms of violence” (Hoofd 2007, 7). Collapsus, superficially so concerned with solving the climate crisis, is never confronted with the contribution of videogame consoles and home computers to ecological destruction and global warming (cf. Mayers et al. 2015; Mejia 2016). At no point does the question arise of the relation between digital play and the cybernetic-capitalistic systems in which it takes place. At no point is the observation that simulation resignation occurs so frequently, even among critics and scholars, investigated as an issue that is bound to be structural in a technology that has historically aimed for precisely that effect—to envelop its users in a ‘ludic’ simulation, to draw them further into the web of cybernetic capitalism, to ‘seduce’ them with diffuse feedback loops in order to prevent seduction from taking place. Furthermore, Raessens makes some allusions to the “medium-specificity of computer games” (Raessens 2015, 251), but that specificity begins and ends with games as rule-based systems. The medium-specific materiality of videogames is left unquestioned, and material conditions are only made relevant when relating their simulational parameters to the complex scenarios they claim to model. All this fits unsurprisingly well with the narrative of the ludification of culture: there, too, the ways that capital operates through and within capitalistically produced media are left out of the big picture. With the same brush, the necessity for interrogating the complicity of scholarship itself in perpetuating that system is obviated.

This is shame, because a specifically humanistic and critical-materialist game studies, with its knowledge of both procedurality and materialism, should be adequately competent to heed Derrida’s call for the Humanities to reflect on their relationship with information and communications technologies (cf. Derrida 1984). From studying videogames, we know better than anyone that the nuclear apocalypse those technologies may help bring about is, after all, not only ‘fabulously textual’ but also possesses a “fabulously procedural dimension” (Jagoda 2013a, 765; original emphasis). It has not only been talked and written about; it has been played out as well. The videogame medium was, in a sense, built for this, and in our production of game scholarship we cannot ignore that. Interestingly, Raessens does implicate game scholars in this history when he writes: “Professional serious game designers as well as serious game theorists […] have an ethico-political responsibility when they make decisions about the ways in which they want to design serious games and construct theories about them” (Raessens 2009, 33; emphasis mine). I find myself unconditionally agreeing with this sentiment, but it is also clear to me that there is a difference of opinion about exactly how deep this responsibility goes. If we follow the narrative of ludification, it is all too easy to place ourselves outside of the processes we seek to describe and understand. Truly accepting the ethico-political responsibility that comes with the construction of theory should, from a critical-materialist perspective at least, instead entail a reckoning with the links between (serious) videogames, cybernetic capitalism, and the technological acceleration of Euro-American academia—or perhaps I should say, its ludification—as well as with our position as scholars operating within those structures.

A Politics of Complicity

How, then, can scholars play the game of Euro-American academia and the ‘ludified university’ differently? There is, for me, no question of whether we should play differently—and, with some hesitation still, that we should play seductively. The institution can be changed, and this change can be performed through every aspect of scholarship. Derrida writes that, in every seminar, publication, or whatever other manifestation of the University, “an institutional concept is at play, a type of contract signed, an image of the ideal seminar constructed, a socius implied, repeated, or displaced, invented, threatened, transformed, or destroyed” (Derrida 2004, 102; emphasis mine). In that play, we are inevitably complicit in the continuation of the institution’s current form, and with that complicity comes another layer of responsibility. Gayatri Spivak argues that the ‘response’ in responsibility “involves not only ‘respond to,’ […] but also the related situations of ‘answering to,’ as in being responsible for a name,” and, “when it is possible for the other to be face-to-face, the task and lesson of attending to her response so that it can draw forth one’s own” (Spivak 1994, 22). There is, for Derrida and Spivak alike, a certain accountability that comes with scholarship that often goes unrecognized.4 The institutional concept implicit in Raessens’ work, as discussed above, is one form of this misrecognition: a positioning of scholars as largely ‘outside’ the phenomena they purport to study and a disavowal of crucial areas where scholarly politicization is long overdue—an avoidance of complicity and thus of accountability and responsibility.

Consider, in contrast, the work of Phillips with the #TransformDH Collective (e.g. Bailey et al. 2016; Boyles et al. 2018; Lothian and Phillips 2013), which she describes as “a loosely affiliated group of early-career academics working to bring social justice to the forefront of digital humanities” (Phillips 2018, 125). This collective does not merely address issues of diversity and representation within an overwhelmingly white and masculine field, but also engages with the consequences of digital methods for the Humanities in other ways. The envisioned transformations are therefore quite radical:

[…] instead of smoothing out the bugs in the digital academy, we wonder how digital practices and projects might participate in more radical processes of transformation—might rattle the poles of the big tent rather than slip seamlessly into it. To that end, we are interested in digital scholarship that takes aim at the more deeply rooted traditions of the academy: its commitment to the works of white men, living and dead; its overvaluation of Western and colonial perspectives on (and in) culture; its reproduction of heteropatriarchal generational structures. Perhaps we should inhabit, rather than eradicate, the status of bugs—even of viruses—in the system. Perhaps there are different systems and antisystems to be found: DIY projects, projects that don’t only belong to the academy, projects that still matter even if they aren’t funded, even if they fail. (Lothian and Phillips 2013, n.p.; emphases mine)

To not be ‘paracritical’ but parasitical, to acknowledge an irreducible complicity and to accept what Haraway calls a “viral response-ability” (Haraway 2016, 114). That is what a critical-materialist game studies must do, it seems to me. For such a field, a healthy disloyalty to the University ‘within’ the walls of academia is preferable over a smooth incorporation into its corporate, cybernetic structure. Wellmeaning experiments like Jerreat-Poole’s Nonbinary and hybrid publications like First Person Scholar quite naturally embody the tensions that come with this position. They are undoubtedly in the business of questioning exactly what aspects ‘belong to the academy’ and which ones do not; their democratizing intentions are evidence of this, and there are certainly ways in which they allow for a different institutional concept than both the neoliberal university and white supremacist cisheteropatriarchy tend to prefer. However, this questioning is already inherent to the University’s aporetic situation, and the technologies that facilitate this process are all too easily co-opted by cybernetic capital—the aforementioned ‘democratization dispositif’ in ‘free’ game development engines like Twine and Unity being but one example of this (cf. Nicoll and Keogh 2019). An academic politics of complicity should therefore be constantly aware of the risks that complicity brings; for capitalists, vectoralists, and for academics themselves.

Ludic Materialism, a New Paradigm?

I’ve argued, in a series of theoretical duels with Huizinga and some of his followers (in order of appearance: Caillois, Sicart, Aarseth, and Raessens), that there’s no such thing as ‘pure’ play, a play entirely distinct from the seriousness of ordinary life, informatic control, and imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. In doing so, I have aligned myself with French post-structuralism (Baudrillard, Derrida), left-wing critical theory (Galloway, Hall, Hoofd, Wark), feminist game studies (Chess, Gray, Phillips, Shaw), and game studies’ material turn (Apperley, Ash, Dyer-Witheford, Keogh, Kerr, Kocurek). I conclude that there is a version of (digital) play that game scholars can and should be advocating for—a version that’s seductive in the way that Baudrillard imagines it, simultaneously inherent to and opposed to the cybernetic systems that seek to contain its unrelenting potential for inciting the latter’s reversion. An anti-capitalist theory of digital play, play-as-seduction, must acknowledge that even seduction itself, in issuing its reciprocal challenge to ‘ludic’ simulation, the principle of production, and the logics of capital, can be the subject of détournement and recuperation. Digital play, even in its most explicitly liberatory forms, still needs to contend with the fact that capital will not voluntarily accept a truly agonistic relation. When met with such a challenge, cybernetic capitalism either integrates or it destroys; often both at the same time, but never neither. The spectral figure of the Gamer™ exemplifies this perfectly: created by the military-entertainment complex to control the audience of videogames, he determines the ‘rules of engagement’ for the medium to such an extent that even those nominally opposed to his oppressive regime may end up serving his interests. It is the responsibility of game scholars, located as we often are in a University that itself obeys the laws of cybernetic capital, to unflinchingly question this dire situation and its root causes—and, lest we forget, our own complicity in its perpetuation.1

How will this critical-materialist paradigm fit into the current canon of concepts known to game studies? Will it even fit at all? Might it take its place among those that draw on the etymology of ludus and ludere: ludology, ludocapitalism, ludopolitics, ludosity, ludic economies, the ludic turn, ludification…ludic materialism? Perhaps this could be a synonym for critical-materialist game studies, although ‘ludomaterialism’ would have been more grammatically correct—materialism as relates to games, instead of a ‘game-like’ materialism. Ludic materialism could, of course, be both. It might, for example, take the videogame medium as its subject and then follow Haraway’s optimistic, world-building line of materialist thought:

We need to develop practices for thinking about those forms of activity that are not caught by functionality, those which propose the possible-but-not-yet, or that which is not-yet but still open. It seems to me that our politics these days require us to give each other the heart to do just that. To figure out how, with each other, we can open up possibilities for what can still be. And we can’t do that in in a negative mood. […] Through playful engagement with each other, we get a hint about what can still be and learn how to make it stronger. (Haraway 2019, n.p.; original emphasis)

Play might break the possible-impossible. It might also not. The ‘ludic’ in ludic materialism should be met with suspicion even—or especially—among game scholars, because, as Baudrillard rightly observes, “Modern repression […] operates in play (combinatory liberty) as it flourishes in the mass-media […] and as it culminates in the critical play of the intelligentsia; it operates in the play to which desire definitively resigns itself” (Baudrillard 2001, 66; emphasis mine). If academia is a game and what scholars do is play, are we content with our play being cold seduction, a ‘combinatory liberty’? Do we resign ourselves and our desires for a better future to the ‘ludic’ simulation that is the contemporary University? Or can we envision a ‘critical play’, like digital play, that is more than a diffuse/defused intellectual agonism?

What’s more, with the ongoing expansion of gamespace in view, do we give in to the neoliberal illusion that we have a choice not to do so, and that we can escape our responsibility to fight it? Teresa L. Ebert notes that “theory is not simply a cognitivism but a historical site of social struggle over how we represent reality, that is, over how we construct reality and the ways to change it” (Ebert 1992, 13). Theory and concepts matter, and will always do so, but with that recognition comes political obligation. In the same way that feminism relies on patriarchy as its core “struggle concept” (Ebert 1992, 20), maybe concepts like gamespace, military-entertainment complex, and Gamer™ can serve as theoretical matrices that allow critical-materialist game scholars “to perceive the way experience is produced and thus empower us to change the social relations and produce new non-exploitative experiences and collective subjectivities” (Ebert 1992, 32). For that to happen, we don’t need a ‘ludic’ materialism that resigns itself to the constraints of the University or the rules of the level playing field that masks cybernetic capitalism. We need a critical materialism that knows the potentials and the limits of (digital) play as a vector for liberation.

I cannot claim to have completed this line of thought by any means, nor even to have provided a ‘closed’ argument in its favour. While some of my writing zooms in quite closely on certain authors, frameworks, and topics, much of it also paints in broad strokes, draws from many different and disparate sources, and briefly employs concepts for a paragraph or two only to discard them immediately afterwards. The large number of direct citations make the text dense, but also provide its reader with many avenues for further inquiry. This all might be seen as a lack of coherence or depth, or it might be taken for what it aspires to be: a sequence of provocations, suggestions, and speculations that answer the call of scholarly responsibility. Thought that aims towards liberation and social justice, in my view, “must know that it is playing without any possible conclusion, in a definitive form of illusion, and hence of putting-into-play—including putting its own status in play” (Baudrillard 2003, 93 emphasis mine). Yes, this deconstructive/seductive form of scholarship emphasizes playfulness in its engagement with theory and praxis, but this theoretical play does not need to be a mere “affirmation of that which already exists” (Ebert 1992, 11) if one realizes that the stakes can be as high in play as in any other mode of being. Especially now, when the ludified university is being further integrated into gamespace with each passing semester, and a great number of highly educated graduate students and disenfranchised temporary staff leave the institution for better-paid and slightly less precarious jobs in other sectors, we ought to wonder more often what the stakes are in the game called academia.

Sylvère Lotringer once named one of Virilio’s first monographs on speed a “theoretical accident” (Virilio and Lotringer 2008, 54). Of course, I don’t want to claim that my work is comparable to Virilio’s start-stop style of writing; I engage with similar issues, but currently I find some measure of continuity and flow in my own thought preferable to short aphorisms and endless implication. (More importantly, lengthy theoretical development and analysis remains the only accepted mode of humanistic media scholarship, especially at the graduate level.) I would, however, suggest that there is a sense in which all critical thought might strive to be such an accident, an “interruption” of the status quo wherein “something else can happen and a space can appear” (Virilio and Lotringer 2008, 53). This suggestion comes with the important caveat that theoretical accidents can also become “accidents of theory” (Bratton 2006, 21), whose interruptions are immediately used to reify existing systems rather than dismantle them. They could even be said to necessarily always be both. Even the most critical work is bound up with the subject of its critique, and in cybernetic capitalism we constantly risk both destruction and recuperation. The three videogames I’ve most extensively analysed here are examples of this, but so is this text as a whole: my deconstruction of game studies inevitably also wants to be a work in game studies, and my critique of the contemporary University is written (hopefully) in accordance with the University’s demands. It seeks approval from those same institutions it ostensibly distances itself from, never quite leaving their orbit in its endeavour to reach beyond the horizon.

We have yet to see whether the University is, or can be, or could ever be anything else than, as Hoofd suggests, “fatally wounded” (Hoofd 2017, 137). What is at least more certain is that, like cybernetic capitalism, the University is fatally wounding us. We are building this post-discipline in an environment that pushes the vast majority of its most critical workers—especially its Black, queer, disabled, and feminine workers—into financial debt and general precarity; and really, we seem quite unwilling to talk about that openly. This is less surprising when one considers that the inherent goals of the University are in fact, for better and for worse, partially aligned with those of cybernetic capitalism. It isn’t so strange, then, to suggest that “critical academics are the professionals par excellence” (Moten and Harney 2004, 111) if our critiques of the University don’t take into account the potency of its ‘outside’, its parasites, its Undercommons as Moten and Harney call this class. A politics of complicity requires us to traverse that parasitical universe, to step into things betwixt. Better yet: we should join the Undercommons in class solidarity, if we weren’t already among them to begin with. Ultimately, our only choice is to “sneak into the university and steal what [we] can” (Moten and Harney 2004, 101), and to be prepared to leave at any time. Is it imaginable at all, nowadays, for us to actually leave the University behind? For game scholars, most pertinently, but eventually for all critical pursuers of knowledge and justice? Can we still imagine the end of capitalism and join “the prophetic organization that works for the red and black abolition” (Moten and Harney 2004, 115)? What of patriarchy, white supremacy, liberal democracy, the prison-industrial complex, the State, the fossil-fuel industry, and any other remaining orders of production? The admittedly fraught but apparently quite potent alliance between seduction and intersectionality may be of use in these matters, although it will undoubtedly require further elaboration. What of the systems that ought to potentially replace the aforementioned—communism, to name just one? To be sure, there’s a place for digital play in the struggle for communism: hackers and modders are still reversing hierarchies within the cultural field of videogames even as they are constantly being recuperated by capital, and digital art has all but lost its ability to use cybernetic infrastructures for purposes beyond capital’s usual profit motive. Steal from the Gamers™, give to the Undercommons.

#### We defend debate a meaningless game. This allows debate to escape neoliberal imperatives of production and cybernetic social conditioning by making debate an arbitrary symbolic pact without justification. It also erodes hyperconnectivity and information saturation from within by making the world more enigmatic.

Coulter 9 (Gerry teaches sociology at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, Canada. He is the founding editor of the International Journal of Baudrillard Studies. “Jean Baudrillard and the Definitive Ambivalence of Gaming” <http://insomnia.ac/essays/baudrillard_on_gaming/>) \*edited for language

Some detractors treat electronic games as if they were a hard drug, but for Baudrillard (1979),1 the games are merely the equivalent of soft drugs. Like drugs, games fascinate us as much as they repel, and from the standpoint of Western reason, they arouse intellectual ambivalence (Baudrillard, 2002b). The game does this by leading us into an environment dominated by a mental surgery of performance -- a kind of "plastic surgery of perception" (Baudrillard, 1993c, p. 49). Yet when we are in the game, we are also protected from "the brutalizing effects of rationality, normative socialization, and universal conditioning" taking place in the social (Baudrillard, 1993c, p. 67). This is a very important aspect of the ambivalence of digital games for Baudrillard -- they originate in a society that is increasingly ambivalent about its future. The pleasure of the game is at best an uncertain and cool pleasure (Baudrillard, 1988). Baudrillard (1979) pointed to the artificial intensity surrounding the playing of digital games, but he found this to be not unlike that surrounding a person watching sports on television -- and every bit as unhealthy. But we are too concerned with health; the gamer worries about boredom far more than obesity and death. It is better to be a gamer than a jogger in Baudrillard's world! The jogger -- contrary to the delusional state he or she may be in -- struggles only to exhaust and destroy the body (Baudrillard, 1993c). Joggers disappear in Baudrillard's world. The gamer, too, longs to disappear, but in an ecstatic disappearance from which he or she is eternally reborn in the next game (Baudrillard, 1990). The gamer fears only the dizziness induced by the connections -- the lassitude of network man (Baudrillard, 1987). Gamers are viewed as immoral in the eyes of those who work to engage all of society in the production game. But the gamer is seduced by other possibilities and attempts to turn away from the order of production to an order of reversibility (Baudrillard, 1979). Reversibility for Baudrillard is the opposite of production, and gamers may be understood as an exemplary form of it. Ambivalence, however, is a two-way street: Ironically, the gamer is worked very hard by the game into a frenzied state of a will to mastery -- mastery of what amounts to nothing as the game he or she masters becomes instantly obsolete (and soon "upgraded" or replaced by another new game). Games, too, are victims of fashion, and there is no greater game than fashion (Baudrillard, 1993a). The gamer exists on the margins of political economy and is understood by some to be an example of the élan of the system in capturing everyone. The gamer, however, attempts to gain an escape velocity from the system of political economy. Some gamers feel their virtual worlds are the opposite of political economy and its hard currencies on which they frown. The currency of the gamer is simulacra, and simulacra now exist in abundance (Baudrillard, 1990). So with a nod to the political economist, we must recognize that the game should not take so long to master that it would interfere with the next round of the production of games. Like a drug that kills too many users, such a game would be against the interest of the system. The flow of games, like the flow of drugs, must not stop; the effects may be profitable and brutal but not fatal. Baudrillard forces us to wonder, though, are gamers actually onto something critics from outside of their realm miss? It seems a little too easy now for the political economist -- and some players of that productivist game have survived into the 21st century -- to see the social relations of the world outside of the game encompassing the world of the gamer. But as much as society reaches inside the game (attempting to capture the gamer), the world of the game infects society outside the game. Two Harvard researchers have recently released a study on how the "gaming generation" is changing the workplace as much as the places of play (Beck & Wade, 2006). Games infect all forms of entertainment today. The latest James Bond film (Casino Royale, a film stuffed with special effects; Campbell, 2006) contains a chase scene of several minutes' duration. It takes place high above the ground, between boom cranes, in a fantastic realm where the actors are placed in a field not unlike a Super Mario Brothers game. Only an audience that grew up in the realm of games could truly appreciate such a scene. Here the game seeps out into other areas of life. Perhaps it is by incorporating game logic that the system now attempts to pull some people out of the game and into the movie theatre. Attendance at films is in decline whereas game sales soar. At Casino Royale, the young people in the audience appeared to take great perverse delight in seeing the world of the game infuse the cinematic screen. Our tenuous grasp on the real (or in this case, what we will accept as "realistic" in a film) is challenged to the core by gamers. With so many people today gripped by the virtual, it is not surprising to see so much cinema devoted to the idea. Baudrillard (2000) has written about several films that fall into this obsession: The Truman Show, Total Recall, Existenz, and The Matrix. Baudrillard, who did not like The Matrix (he said it was "the kind of film about the matrix that the matrix would have been able to produce"; Baudrillard, 2004, p. 1), must have smiled wryly at the release of The Matrix Online (a role-playing game where players are required to protect "the matrix"). We may wonder if this is some sort of cinematic revenge on gamers or even an attempt by cinema to regain some of its lost confidence (Baudrillard, 1998). Gaming may also be, Baudrillard (1996) tells us, the only democracy we still know. Those who might have become political players in earlier times may well be the gamers of today -- virtual exiles of politics circulating the networks of a muted world. Gamers are among the contemporary inhabitants of the transpolitical -- "politically indifferent and undifferentiated beings" (Baudrillard, 1993c, pp. 24-25). Unlike reality, which incessantly demands we believe in it, the illusion of the game (which the gamer never really believes in) does not hold such a requirement. For Baudrillard, it is precisely because the gamer does not believe in the game that (they) ~~he or she~~ enters into a more necessary relationship with the rules of the game. Here society and the law are replaced by a symbolic pact with the rules -- a series of ritual obligations (Baudrillard, 1979) -- that are, for Baudrillard, an order of fate. All are equal before the arbitrary rules of the game in a way we are not equal before the law in society (Baudrillard, 1996). The game is a very severe place of rules where wealth and social standing have no purchase. If games attract us, for Baudrillard (1979), the reason is clear: "Games are serious, more serious than life" (p. 133). The game is a challenge and the dark sphere inhabited by its players involves a strong passion for rules (Baudrillard, 1979). Baudrillard (1979) understands the gamer to exist in a kind of hyperfreedom where the arbitrariness of the program is exchanged for society and the law. The game is perhaps the most poetic way we have yet discovered to "rid ourselves," he says, "of social conceptions of freedom" (Baudrillard, 2005b, p. 55). The spirit of gaming extends, for Baudrillard, back to well before the arrival of the virtual and technological gamer of today. We have long been avid devotees of games -- of a kind of rules-bound uncertainty and unpredictability we enjoy in our simulated absence from society while engaged in any game (Baudrillard, 1990). For Baudrillard (2001), the rules of the game "seem to come from some other sphere, with nothing to justify them -- just like chance, that eternal unjustified principle" (p. 90). Ambivalence reappears here as he considers that our submission to chance in the game is, at the same time, a way of parodying the ethics of work, value and economy (Baudrillard, 1979). The game contains the passion of illusion and appearances, and who is more passionate today than the gamer? (Baudrillard, 1990) For Baudrillard (2005a), "the fundamental passion is that of the game" (p. 149). This passion, in our transpolitical era, is replacing political passions from earlier times. Today, Baudrillard (1993a) says, even "hope bringing movements" (green or feminist) become part of the promotional machine of American and Western culture (p. 152). The cool passion of the game, an important aspect of its cool ambivalence, works to replace the former hot passions of politics or the body. When we play a game, we are impassioned, says Baudrillard, by the stakes -- not necessarily a positive or negative passion but a passion just the same -- the "passion of battle," he calls it (Baudrillard, 2005a, p. 149). We play the game, we make progress through its network, we lose, and we lose again; eventually we may even win -- it is the passion of this experience. In the place of liberty in today's society, Baudrillard (1979) finds instead the game and reminds us that our very passion for games and rules parodies all ideologies of liberty. The gamer thus plays for the charm of the game, its seductiveness, and as such embraces repeatedly the catastrophe of losing the game. The gamer accepts the arbitrary rules of the game for what Baudrillard (1990) calls "ceremonial purposes" -- for the ambivalent pleasure of play and of playing in a realm away from the contractual and regulated legal exchanges of society (p. 153). For Baudrillard, what we desire most in the game is that the "inexorable procession of rational connections" of the social cease for a while (p. 153). The purpose of playing the game, or of gambling for Baudrillard, is not in believing one can win but in escaping the system of rationality outside of the game. The old sites of gaming, such as the casino, are now contaminated with leverless push-button electronic games. In the loud and monotonous corners of casino machine gaming today, the almost lifeless human prosthetic of the game plays for money, whereas the virtual gamer at his or her computer plays for passion. Gamers seek passion in one of its last discernable places -- even the passion of the virtual sex gamer is poured into the networks in a world where sex, like politics, has been divested of passion. "From the virtual perspective the real is only a vestige, so too are sex, work, and the body" (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 42). And it is from the vantage points of the virtual that the gamer plays himself or herself into Baudrillard's lens. Our passion for games arises, to a good extent, from our lack of passion for anything else. Politics itself has always been a game, but now it is one that "continues in secret indifference to its own stakes**"** (Baudrillard, 1993c, p. 6). Is the gamer the true citizen of the postmodern? For Baudrillard (1993a), the postmodern is itself a kind of game -- a game with the vestiges of what has been destroyed. 2. The Gamer and the Obsession of Our Age The master gamer is a wizard in virtuality; Baudrillard was a wizard of virtuality. Some of his ambivalence about games and gamers no doubt has much to do with the role of the gamer as one vital part of a system that he felt is seeking to become increasingly virtualized. As astronauts (the explorers of a previous age) were the white mice of a world learning to live with less gravity, the gamer is the experimental creature who teaches us about life in the virtual. The gamer, for Baudrillard, is an experimental explorer in virtuality who participates in a kind of test humanity is putting itself through in the contemporary. Baudrillard (1997) says that when he or she is playing the game, the gamer ceases to be an agent of the real and becomes a double agent of the virtual. Today, the limits of virtual reality are pushed greatly by the demands of gamers. In the game, we pass over into the extreme of technology and become extreme phenomena (Baudrillard, 1996). Baudrillard has long understood that we learn a great deal from the study of extreme phenomena. Among the lessons of thinking about gamers is that any power we possess in the virtual is merely a virtual power (Baudrillard,1998). In a most ambivalent way, this virtual power mirrors the world outside of the game, where genuine power no longer exists (Baudrillard,1994). There are no masters of a virtual universe where power is fragile (Baudrillard, 2002b). We can certainly understand what Baudrillard means by the fragility of power, even global power in our so-called real world, following September 11, 2001. For Baudrillard (2002a), the gamer is a traveler into our future of total immersion in virtuality -- as yet a kind of techno-tourist basking in the sickly artificial light of the virtual. Here, as a visitor to what may come after the end, the gamer enters the "horizon of programmed reality" in which, for Baudrillard (2000), our human functions -- emotions or sexuality -- become progressively useless (p. 37). The world of the gamer is both an escape from the social and a passage into a clone of the so-called real world (Baudrillard, 2002b). In the game, we adhere to our sticky monitors (a good game "glues" us to the screen). With or without our condom-like data suits (Baudrillard, 2005b), we enter the world of the digitized and operationalized (Baudrillard, 2003), the highest stage of simulation (Baudrillard, 2005b). But with Baudrillard, it is never long before the ambivalence returns and he encourages us to wonder why, if our "real world" is so magnificent, we would seek to build its virtual double, including our own doubles to inhabit it? Baudrillard (1995) forces us to wonder if we prefer the "exile of the virtual" to the "catastrophe of the real" (p. 28). It is one of the sublime qualities of Baudrillard's writing that he forces us to see ourselves as occupants of an uncertain world where the real hides behind appearances (Baudrillard, 1998). Ours is an existence of unceasing illusion. Against notions of an artificial paradise of "technicity and virtuality," Baudrillard (2000) also urges us to preserve traces of our illusory world's definitive opacity and mystery (p. 74). Before the digital and virtual, we were full-fledged citizens of a world not of the real but of appearances, behind which the real hides (Baudrillard, 2006). Our passage into the screens of virtuality is merely one step farther away from our world of appearances -- already one step farther away from a world we never "really" know. So Baudrillard understands the efforts of the gamer to be a kind of experimental existence in a world that we can never actually inhabit. At some future point, our "immersion in the machinery of the virtual, the man/machine distinction may no longer exist," but at present, the failures of the gamer to remain in the game are a hopeful sign for Baudrillard (2005b) of the insuperability of the barriers to a virtual existence (pp. 80, 192). As he wrote near the end, "It is one thing to note the vanishing of the real into the virtual; another to deny it so as to pass beyond the real and the virtual as Nietzsche passed beyond good and evil" (p. 162). To the question, "What if Baudrillard were a gamer?" the answer is Baudrillard was not a gamer and he could never be a digital gamer -- they held no personal fascination for him. The only interest the cool universe of digitality held for him was as a writer (Baudrillard, 1993b). Like television, once he had broken its code, so too for games, the interest was lost (Lotringer, 2007). Baudrillard, it seems, wished to pass beyond both the real and the virtual, and his ambivalence rests on the fact that he had little interest in participating in either. Writing, of course, was another matter. The world of gaming and all forms of virtuality were, by the end, merely things he wished to pass beyond, and writing is how we get to the next horizon. Games enter Baudrillard's writing so often because of their important role in writing about our contemporary -- a period during which, Baudrillard felt, we are undertaking a grand experiment (perhaps the greatest game of all) to see if anything human can truly survive. The realm of the game is a highly artificial realm, but it is merely one such realm in our contemporary that is a time of cloning, simulation, modeling and programming, and genetic ordeals: Perhaps we may see this as a kind of adventure, a heroic test: to take the artificialization of living beings as far as possible in order to see, finally, what part of human nature survives the greatest ordeal. If we discover that not everything can be cloned, simulated, programmed, genetically and neurologically managed, then whatever survives could be truly called 'human': some inalienable and indestructible human quality could finally be identified. Of course, there is always the risk, in this experimental adventure, that nothing will pass the test -- that the human will be permanently eradicated. (Baudrillard, 2000, pp. 15-16) Conclusion And so for Baudrillard, the time of this experiment is an uncertain one. The other side of our possible eradication is that the virtual -- the game -- may save us from the perfect crime, of what Baudrillard (2000) calls the "extermination by technology and virtuality of all reality" (p. 55). Here Baudrillard wonders if the digital game participates merely in the ironic game of technology, of what he calls "an ironic destiny of all science and all knowledge by which the world, and the illusion of the world, are saved and perpetuated" (p. 55). Here Baudrillard was decidedly undecided as gamers and games aroused in him a definitive ambivalence. Baudrillard matched the ambivalence of games with an equal or greater ambivalence of his own. Baudrillard was a writer and the game of the writer, from Baudrillard's (1993a) point of view, was the game of indifference and ambivalence. For Baudrillard, notions such as truth, meaning, or the real can be known only locally, as partial objects, along restricted horizons. The point of writing about a world that is enigmatic and unintelligible is not to add meaning to it but to make it even more enigmatic and more unintelligible. As he put it, Here... lies the task of philosophical thought: to go to the limit of hypotheses and processes, even if they are catastrophic. The only justification for thinking and writing is that it accelerates these terminal processes. Here, beyond the discourse of truth, resides the poetic and enigmatic value of thinking. For, facing a world that is unintelligible and enigmatic, our task is clear: we must make that world even more unintelligible, even more enigmatic. (Baudrillard, 2000, p. 83) The gamer is the ambivalent explorer of an age experiencing first-hand the immersion, immanence, and immediacy of the virtual. Baudrillard (2005b) wonders if the gamer may even be the cusp of a new evolutionary form: homo fractalis. If the gamer is not such a form in the long run, then he or she may be remembered simply as someone who became caught up in the obsession of our age, "the lack of distinction between the real and the virtual" (Baudrillard, 2006, p. 92). Today, few are more ambivalent about our contemporary than the gamer surrounded, as he or she is, by virtual technologies that propagate undecidability (Baudrillard, 1998). Given that none of us really knows the rules of the "game" today, indifference and ambivalence become very strategic terrains for a writer (Baudrillard, 1993a). Baudrillard was not a gamer but he shared with them a definitive ambivalence.

#### Frameworks underlying assumptions of efficiency, maximizing resource use, and technical progression engender a hyper-productive ethos that serves as a policy of self-exploitation and requires us to desire control over the Other.

Baudrillard, 94 [Jean Baudrillard, detestable and ingenious, “The Illusion of the End,” 1994, Polity Press]

This compulsive desire for immortality, for a definitive immortality, revolves around a strange madness - the mania for what has achieved its goal. The mania for identity - for saturation, completion, repletion. For perfection too. The lethal illusion of perfection: hence these objects from which wear-and-tear, death or ageing have been eradicated by technology. The compact disc. It doesn't wear out, even if you use it. Terrifying, this. It's as though you'd never used it. It's as though you didn't exist. If objects no longer grow old when you touch them, you must be dead. There is no better way of illustrating this madness than ironically, by the story of ~~the man~~ walking in the rain with ~~his~~ umbrella under ~~his~~ arm. When asked why he doesn't open it, he replies: 'I don't like to feel I've called on all my resources. This says it all. Calling on all your resources is completely wrongheaded. To do so is to achieve immortality, but the immortality of the totalization, addition and repetition of yourself. Paradoxically, calling on all your resources is the opposite of knowing how to come to an end. To reach your own limits is no longer to have the end at your command. It means the abolition of death as vital horizon. It means losing your shadow. And so it means the impossibility of jumping over that shadow - how can you jump over your shadow when you no longer have one? In other words, if you want to live, you must not call on all your resources. Yet this is the ideal everywhere set before us today, by way of the techniques of self-maximization, of performance blackmailing, of absolute realization of the human being as programme. The programming of all the genetic, biological, professional, existential variants of the individual. Going to the end of the programme, to the end of the tape! This way you arrive at a de facto immortality merely by forgetting the formula for stopping. Horizontal immortality, by acceleration and inertia, by exhaustion of possibilities, with the vertical cut-off of death no longer intervening. Even more illusory than all the transcendent forms of immortality, since it exhibits all the signs of material efficacy. Yet nature provides us with an opposite example by leaving twothirds of the human genome to lie fallow. One wonders what purpose these useless genes might serve, and why they should be forcibly decoded. What if they were only there to meet a requirement for a degree of leeway? If all the genes were functional, nothing would be wasted and we should be close to a total definition. It is perhaps to avert such a catastrophe that nature has provided this shadowy area. The same goes for language: the mass of floating signifier is what preserves language from calling on all its resources, which in turn preserves human beings from expressing everything and the world from signifying everything, from signifying in its totality. Yet this is precisely the aim today with computer technology, artificial intelligence, etc. : mobilizing all the neurons, all possible senses, and simultaneously reducing all margins, all the interstitial spaces. The trend in physics itself is towards the reduction of this interstitial void. It is the dream of that science to render matter totally concrete, to wrest all its energy from it by impelling it to limit-densities, densities artificial and monstrous. What is it all about, then, this business of going as far as you can, exploiting all your resources, reaching your limits? It is a fantasy of death which leaves only the alternative of downfall and collapse. It is a strategy for wretches, for those who have so few means they are forced to exploit them to the full. It is a policy of self-exploitation one would never accept if it· were imposed by semeone else. It means cultivating servitude without the presence of the other, since each person substitutes ~~himself~~ for the other in the role of oppressor. The pinnacle of self-inflicted servitude. What will preserve us from this unlimited frenzy, this desire to abolish the horizon as perpetual line of flight, as virtual line of flight, which must remain virtual, but which we are precisely crossing today - towards that 'event horizon' beyond which nothing happens, nothing has meaning any longer and whence not even light escapes? The intellectual field also functions like a system of crop rotation, with ground left untilled, fallow. It has a mortal dread of developing all its faculties. Thought is precisely what puts a brake on ideas, which, left to themselves, tend to spread out uncontrolled and occupy the whole of space. Ideas proliferate like polyps or seaweed and perish by suffocating in their own luxuriant vegetation. There is an idea horizon just as there is an event horizon: the horizon of their death-dealing accomplishment, their absolute realization. Thought, for its part, leaks out into the void. History too has called on all its resources. That is why it can now only turn around or repeat itself. It has not managed to leak out into the void. That is why it has become interminable, leaving scope only for a negative immortality. The same goes for the social: we have attempted to mine the entire social sphere, to express it all, extort it all - we have tried to realize it by stripping it of any metaphorical dimension. This was to kill it by effusion, by diluting it into the real, by snuffing out its idea in the real.

#### Fairness is bad and motivates violence.

Pinker 13

Steven Pinker, Prof of Psychology at Harvard, "The Decline of War and Conceptions of Human Nature", International Studies Review, 2013, 15, pp. 396-419

The moral sense: A system of norms and taboos centered on intuitions of fairness to individuals, loyalty to a community, deference to legitimate authority, and the safeguarding of purity and sanctity. The moral sense can motivate the imposition of standards of fairness and can render certain courses of harmful action unthinkable. (Unfortunately, it can also be a cause of violence, because it can rationalize militant ideologies based on tribalism, puritanism, and authoritarianism.)

#### Participation DA – The will to rigorous justification and testing acts as a liberal safety valve that maintains the hegemony of symbolic values. Their model of debate produces passivity and social consensus – this should mean all their impacts are DAs to their own communicative model. This communicative fantasy makes them complicit with the worse unethical violence.

Galloway 07. Alexander Galloway, professor of media, culture, and communication at New York University, Radical Illusion (A Game Against), Games and Culture 2:4, 385-6

There exist causes from whose nature some effect does not follow. There exist causes that preempt their own effects from coming to be. In an early text from 1969, “Play and the Police,” Baudrillard (2001a) speaks of a “principle of separation.” This principle is how he rethinks repression not through the notions of negation, aggression, or vital forces being blocked but through the concepts of ambiance, integration, and participation. The “unity of desire” is broken, he suggests, into a never ending series of private-sphere negotiations. The question becomes Am I liberated? not Are we? “The separative cause, which bursts through the unity of desire and establishes human activity across several zones . . . is most effective at neutralizing energies” (Baudrillard, 2001a, pp. 18-19). Thus, in what Deleuze would describe later as the distinction between discipline and control, Baudrillard here posits a model of repression through expression, a stunting of the drives through the very facilitation of those drives into new control spaces. A new ambiance permeates the social field. The masses are not repressed, no never, they are allowed to dream! With reference to Marcuse’s concept of “repressive desublimation,” Baudrillard (2001a) calls this “the repression of desire . . . through the emancipation of needs” (p. 20). Again, “they did it, but we wanted it.” The separative cause reveals how ideology and reification operate under neoliberalism. Summarize it like this: Exploitation is material, liberation is semiotic. The material is the realm of political failure; the social is the realm of utopian compromise. In Baudrillard, the principle of separation is the principle by which the two are segregated and divided into two distinct domains, the one to play the fool for the other. The separative cause has two steps. To achieve some semblance of pedagogical coherence, I will telescope them into a cause-and-effect narrative, but to be precise, Step 1 and Step 2 both happened at the same time. In Step 1, the given phenomenon, which exists primordially as an undivided prob- lematic containing both progressive and reactionary political impulses, is first separated into (a) a material modality and (b) a social modality. For example, with global warming, there is the material modality of carbon dioxide emissions, automobiles and roads, the oil industry, and so on, while at the same time there is the symbolic social modality of desiring clean air, “thinking green,” and the so-called awareness campaigns. The principle of separation occasions the phenomenon first through an alliance formed between the progressive political impulse and the domain of the social or public sphere. A progressive moral horizon of significant magnitude invests itself in the social sphere. This moral plane develops its own independent logic and will likely experience a flourishing cycle of achievement and resolution but always within the “symbolic” realm of the social or public sphere. From time to time, small material changes may be incorporated into the logic of moral resolution but only those minor enough not to impinge upon the superiority of the social. In Step 2, the progressive political impulse is negated and as negation finds its home in the domain of the material. Thus a reactionary political project blossoms within the realm of the physical world. This project realizes its ends, developing the necessary mechanisms and infrastructures required to continue and grow. In Baudrillard, the separative cause is this overall structure. What the separative cause occasions, or “makes present,” is the ability for both gratuitous exploitation and a heightened moral instinct to coexist within the same universe. It is perhaps seen best in Baudrillard’s controversial critique of sexual liberation in Part 1 of Seduction. A structure of both liberation and deferral, of dazzlement and insight, of both ignorance and realization, of both expression and silence—all sides unify together but only at the cost of a complete and incontrovertible segregation between the symbolic and the material. The progressive stance of the one allows for the reactionary stance of the other. The end result is the current state of affairs: an oil company that is nevertheless “green,” a world bathed in blood but devoted to peace, a global consumer product that is still tagged “fair trade.” The separative cause occasions. But it occasions a “presence,” a presence that must be crossed out or held in suspension with quotation marks. The presence occasioned by the separative cause is in fact an abatement of presence, a lessening of being. What it makes present is a structure of suspension. A “subject” is the name given to those entities able to flourish within such a structure of suspension. As Baudrillard was able to see, most all phenomena in contemporary life are occasioned through this “separative cause” or principle of separation. The environmental movement is a perfect example. In today’s world, it is structurally impractical if not outright impossible to be an environmentalist in any true sense. Imagine: An activist drives to a rally against global warming. The contradiction is clear. His actual spiritual liberation is undercut by the tailpipe fumes of his own expression. His intentions are good, but there is a physical base—that depraved automobile contraption—that creates conditions of impossibility that are symbolically if not practically insurmountable. Of course, many today refuse to participate in the global system of environmental exploita- tion by casting off all worldly possessions. But this comes at the cost of complete withdrawal from the world system, a price too high to pay for most. Like the computer at the heart of today’s planetary organization, the costs are thus binary in that they offer an all-or-nothing option, but only an “option” insofar as the nothing is reified into material reality and the all spins on into oblivion. This is how the separative cause operates. Other examples include the curious and no doubt tense axis of inaction forged between the United Nations and American foreign policy after the new millennium on issues such as Darfur peace: the symbolic assertion on the side of the United States that, in no uncertain terms, “this is genocide,” flanked only by a negation of that same claim in abandonment and blindness within the realm of real material commitment. Or consider the structural adjustment agreements of the International Monetary Fund, which travel on wings of hope to the so-called backward economies of the globe but carry enclosed the harshest austerity measures, leaving the infected country with a curse of legalized deterritorialization and fiscal and cultural subjugation for decades to come. Exploitation is material, liberation is semiotic. This is how the separative cause occasions, or brings to presence, certain phenomena in today’s global kingdom. The democratization of Iraq is realizable only through subjugation; clean air is realizable only through a futures market in “pollution credits”—and around and around. Might this separative cause be also known by a synonym twin, “civilization”? In Baudrillard, the term was simply the real. It occasions real human worlds by allowing them to come to be.

#### Bombarding debates with rules and information turns fairness because it makes everyone cheaters.

DeCoster 20(Brendan DeCoster, Academic Advisor University of Maryland, Janurary 7th 2020, 2020 Conference Preview: “Back to reality: Writing assigments, hyperreality, and the ‘problem of plagiarism’”, ICAI, https://academicintegrity.org/resources/blog/50-2020/january-2020/136-2020-conference-preview-back-to-reality-writing-assigments-hyperreality-and-the-problem-of-plagiarism)

Recent advances in **cheating detection have made it possible to detect** a great many more **academic integrity violations** in higher education than in past times (see here; here; and here). **However**, one thing has persistently failed to advance, and that is the type of assignment and grading used in higher education. In a multitude of courses, regardless of topic or content, students are told to write “papers” using something like the following actual set of directions (see here and here): ***Please submit your 10-page paper by the deadline. It must address the main themes of our course. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, SINGLE spaced, with 1” x 1”margins, and checked for spelling, grammatical errors, and appropriate language. All material referenced in the assignment must be properly cited in APA format. Headers, pictures, graphs, and extra spacing. do not count in content length requirements. Papers that do not meet the formatting criteria will be downgraded significantly. It is impossible to say what course this assignment is for.*** Only one sentence actually focuses on content, while every other one is about form and formatting. **Just looking at these specifications, it seems like the content doesn’t really matter as long as formatting is good! And this is exactly where the problem lies. As many psychologists and sociologists have found, when we feel like there is little connection between what we are being asked to do and what we think we need to be doing, we tend to feel that breaking rules and engaging in dishonest behavior is much more acceptable** (see here, here, and here). No matter what cheating detection techniques we use, we will still find students cheating under such conditions, because **the assignments themselves make it more likely to happen**. It is here that a particular set of concepts from the postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard have practical implications. Baudrillard, in his book Simulacra and Simulation (1981), spoke about the **situation of hyperreality-** a situation when a representation or symbol that is no longer linked to reality is indistinguishable from reality, or when a simulation has become more real and important than reality**. In such a situation, reality fades into the background and no longer matters. What an apt description of a passing, plagiarized paper! When the assignment which claims to represent learning no longer has to do with learning, we have entered the realm of hyperreality.** Baudrillard provides four stages through which a representation goes on the road to hyperreality as follows: a direct correspondence between a representation and reality, the representation becoming more important than what it still represents, the representation no longer being linked to reality, the representation becoming all that exists.

### Hegemony

#### They have misrepresented hegemony – American power sustains itself through the constant spectacle of war and destruction, a sadistic attachment to ruination that can only ever lead to suicidal implosion

Baudrillard, 05 [Jean, “*Pornography of War,*” Cultural Politics, vol. 1 no. 1, pg. 23-25,]

In the case of 9/11, the thrilling images of a major event; in the other, the shaming images of something that is the opposite of an event, a non-event of obscene banality, the atrocious but banal degradation not merely of the victims but also of the amateur stage managers of this parody of violence. For the worst thing about this is that here we have a parody of violence, a parody of war itself, pornography becoming the ultimate form of abjection of a war that is incapable of being merely war, of merely killing, and that is being drawn out into an infantile, Ubuesque “reality show,” a desperate simulacrum of power. These scenes are the illustration of a power that, having reached its extreme point, no longer knows what to do with itself, of a power now aimless and purposeless since it has no plausible enemy and acts with total impunity. All it can do now is inflict gratuitous humiliation, and, as we know, the violence we inflict on others is only ever the expression of the violence we do to ourselves. And it can only humiliate itself in the process, demean and deny itself in a kind of perverse relentlessness. Ignominy and sleaze are the last symptoms of a power that no longer knows what to do with itself. September 11th was like a global reaction of all those who no longer know what to do with – and can no longer bear – this world power. In the case of the abuse inflicted on the Iraqis, it is worse still: it is power itself that no longer knows what to do with itself and can no longer bear itself, other than in inhuman self-parody. These images are as lethal for America as the pictures of the World Trade Center in flames. Yet it is not America in itself that stands accused, and there is no point laying all this at the Americans’ door: the infernal machine generates its own impetus, freewheeling out of control in literally suicidal acts. The Americans’ power has in fact become too much for them. They no longer have the means to exorcize it. And we are party to that power. It is the whole of the West whose bad conscience crystallizes in these images; it is the whole of the West that is present in the American soldiers’ sadistic outburst of laughter; just as it is the whole of the West that is behind the building of the Israeli wall. This is the truth of these images; this is their burden: the excess of a potency designating itself as abject and pornographic. The truth of the images, not their veracity, since, in this situation, whether they are true or false is beside the point. We are henceforth – and forever – in a state of uncertainty where images are concerned. Only their impact counts, precisely insofar as they are embedded in war. There isn’t even a need for “embedded” journalists any more; it’s the military itself that is embedded in the image; thanks to digital technology, images are definitively integrated into warfare. They no longer represent; they no longer imply either distance or perception or judgement. They are no longer of the order of representation, or of information in the strict sense and, as a result, the question of whether they should be produced, reproduced, broadcast or banned, and even the “essential” question of whether they are true or false, is “irrelevant.” For images to constitute genuine information they would have to be different from war. But they have become precisely as virtual as war today and hence their own specific violence is now superadded to the specific violence of war. Moreover, by their omnipresence, by the rule that everything must be made visible, which now applies the world over, images – our present images – have become in substance pornographic; they therefore cleave spontaneously to the pornographic dimension of war. There is in all this, and particularly in the last Iraqi episode, a justice immanent in the image: he who stakes his all on the spectacle will die by the spectacle. If you want power through the image, be prepared to die by the image playback. The Americans are learning this, and will continue to learn it, by bitter experience. And this despite all the “democratic” subterfuge and despite a despairing simulacrum of transparency commensurate with the despairing simulacrum of military power. Who committed these acts and who is really responsible for them? The military higher-ups? Or human nature, which is, as we know, brutish – “even in a democracy”? The real scandal lies not in the torture but in the perfidy of those who knew and remained silent (or of those who revealed it?). At any rate, the whole of the real violence is diverted on to the question of openness, democracy finding a way to restore its virtue by publicizing its vices.

#### The West sustains itself through the cannibalization of the misery of those in the Global South, recreating this suffering until the point of its own symbolic collapse.

Baudrillard 94 (Jean Baudrillard, greatest living philosopher, 1994, *The Illusion of the End*, pg. 66-70)

The end of history, being itself a catastrophe, can only be fuelled by catastrophe. Managing the end therefore becomes synonymous with the management of catastrophe. And, quite specifically, of that catastrophe which is the slow extermination of the rest of the world. We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [l'autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history - the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the waste-product of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d'Alliance\* for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain; But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself, in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food. It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world. Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures. In short, there is such distortion between North and South, to the symbolic advantage of the South (a hundred thousand Iraqi dead against casualties numbered in tens on our side: in every case we are the losers), that one day everything will break down. One day, the West will break down if we are not soon washed clean of this shame, if an international congress of the poor countries does not very quickly decide to share out this symbolic privilege of misery and catastrophe. It is of course normal, since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons, that they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are ·being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy - by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race.

#### American power is in a suicidal frenzy, inflicting symbolic terror on itself both internally and externally

Baudrillard 06 (Jean Baudrillard, greatest living philosopher, 2006, “War Porn”)

World Trade Center: shock treatment of power, humiliation inflicted on power, but from outside. With the images of the Baghdad prisons, it is worse, it is the humiliation, symbolic and completely fatal, which the world power inflicts on itself – the Americans in this particular case – the shock treatment of shame and bad conscience. This is what binds together the two events. Before both a worldwide violent reaction: in the first case a feeling of wonder; in the second, a feeling of abjection. For September 11th, the exhilarating images of a major event; in the other, the degrading images of something that is the opposite of an event, a nonevent of an obscene banality, the degradation, atrocious but banal, not only of the victims, but of the amateur scriptwriters of this parody of violence. The worst is that it all becomes a parody of violence, a parody of the war itself, pornography becoming the ultimate form of the abjection of war which is unable to be simply war, to be simply about killing, and instead turns itself into a grotesque infantile reality-show, in a desperate simulacrum of power. These scenes are the illustration of a power which, reaching its extreme point, no longer knows what to do with itself – a power henceforth without aim, without purpose, without a plausible enemy, and in total impunity. It is only capable of inflicting gratuitous humiliation and, as one knows, violence inflicted on others is after all only an expression of the violence inflicted on oneself. It only manages to humiliate itself, degrade itself and go back on its own word in a sort of unremitting perversity. The ignominy, the vileness is the ultimate symptom of a power that no longer knows what to do with itself. September 11th was a global reaction from all those who no longer knew what to make of this world power and who no longer supported it. In the case of the abuse inflicted on the Iraqis, it is worse yet: power no longer knows what to do with itself and cannot stand itself, unless it engages in self-parody in an inhuman manner. These images are as murderous for America as those of the World Trade Center in flames. Nevertheless, America in itself is not on trial, and it is useless to charge the Americans: the infernal machine exploded in literally suicidal acts. In fact, the Americans have been overtaken by their own power. They do not have the means to control it. And now we are part of this power. The bad conscience of the entire West is crystallized in these images. The whole West is contained in the burst of the sadistic laughter of the American soldiers, as it is behind the construction of the Israeli wall. This is where the truth of these images lies; this is what they are full of: the excessiveness of a power designating itself as abject and pornographic. Truth but not veracity: it does not help to know whether the images are true or false. From now on and forever we will be uncertain about these images. Only their impact counts in the way in which they are immersed in the war. There is no longer the need for ‘embedded’ journalists because soldiers themselves are immersed in the image – thanks to digital technology, the images are definitively integrated into the war. They don’t represent it anymore; they involve neither distance, nor perception, nor judgment. They no longer belong to the order of representation, nor of information in a strict sense. And, suddenly, the question of whether it is necessary to produce, reproduce, broadcast, or prohibit them, or even the ‘essential’ question of how to know if they are true or false, is ‘irrelevant’. For the images to become a source of true information, they would have to be distinct from the war. They have become today as virtual as the war itself, and for this reason their specific violence adds to the specific violence of the war. In addition, due to their omnipresence, due to the prevailing rule of the world of making everything visible, the images, our present-day images, have become substantially pornographic. Spontaneously, they embrace the pornographic face of the war. There exists in all this, in particular in the last Iraqi episode, an immanent justice of the image: those who live by the spectacle will die by the spectacle. Do you want to acquire power through the image? Then you will perish by the return of the image. The Americans are having and will make of it a bitter experience. And this in spite of all the ‘democratic’ subterfuges and the hopeless simulacrum of transparency which corresponds to the hopeless simulacrum of military power. Who committed these acts and who is really responsible for them? Military superiors? Human nature, bestial as one knows, ‘even in democracy’? The true scandal is no longer in the torture, it is in the treachery of those who knew and who said nothing (or of those who revealed it?). In any event, all real violence is diverted by the question of transparency – democracy trying to make a virtue out of the disclosure of its vices. But apart from all this, what is the secret of these abject scenographies? Once again, they are an answer, beyond all the strategic and political adventures, to the humiliation of September 11th, and they want to answer to it by even worse humiliation – even worse than death. Without counting the hoods which are already a form of decapitation (to which the decapitation of the American [Nick Berg] corresponds obscurely), without counting the piling-up of bodies, and the dogs, forced nudity is in itself a rape. One saw the GIs walking the naked and chained Iraqis through the city and, in the short story Allah Akhbar by Patrick Dekaerke, one sees Franck, the CIA agent, making an Arab strip, forcing him into a girdle and net stockings, and then making him sodomize a pig, all that while taking photographs that he will send to his village and all his close relations. Thus the other will be exterminated symbolically. One sees that the goal of the war is not to kill or to win, but abolish the enemy, extinguish (according to Canetti, I believe) the light of his sky. And, in fact, what does one want these men to acknowledge? What is the secret one wants to extort from them? It is quite simply the name in virtue of which they have no fear of death. Here is the profound jealousy and the revenge of ‘zero death’ on those men who are not afraid – it is in that name that they are inflicted with something worse than death....Radical shamelessness, the dishonor of nudity, the tearing of any veil. It is always the same problem of transparency: to tear off the veil of women or abuse men to make them appear more naked, more obscene.... This masquerade crowns the ignominy of the war – until this travesty, it was present in this most ferocious image (the most ferocious for America), because it was most ghostly and most ‘reversible’: the prisoner threatened with electrocution and, completely hooded, like a member of the Ku Klux Klan, crucified by its ilk. It is really America that has electrocuted itself.

### Information

#### We flood ourselves with news, info, communication, anything to give us a window into the world around us. But status quo journalism conspires with the commodity form of capitalist advertising producing an overload of information that drowns out meaning. The resulting echo chambers destroy the possibility of a shared social and political reality that can be debated about – making it impossible to fight climate change, pandemics, or generate shared values.

Morris 21 (James, Department of Journalism, City University, London, “Simulacra in the Age of Social Media: Baudrillard as the Prophet of Fake News,” journal of communication inquiry vol 45 (3): 319-336)

Politics (and its portrayal particularly in Western English-speaking media) has felt like it underwent a sea change in 2016. The “normal rules” no longer seemed to apply after the UK voted for Brexit and Donald Trump was elected President in the USA. The prominent phrase in this disruption, already a cliche a few months after its emergence, was “fake news” (also known as “alternative facts” by some on the right-hand side of the political spectrum). Pundits and academics were soon describing the new era as “post-truth” (Ball, 2017; d’Ancona, 2017; Davis, 2017; Fuller, 2018; McIntyre, 2018), arguing that we have entered a phase where facts are radically devalued in favour of shallow appearances and confirmation bias, fuelled by the meteoric rise in our usage of online social media over the last decade. Some have even argued that truth itself has been weaponised (Merrin, 2019). Social media is new technology that didn’t exist at all before the mid-1990s, and not in its contemporary form until Facebook went beyond universities and Twitter was launched, both in 2006. But are the phenomena of “fake news” and “post-truth” that are allegedly the side-effect of social media really so revolutionary? This paper argues that Jean Baudrillard was already recognising these trends in the 1980s, based on the media in existence back then, and so what has occurred in the 21st Century should be viewed as a continuation of the same phenomenon. It then asks if there is anything that journalism can do about that situation. Social Media and the Transcendence of Reality It cannot be denied that culture has changed with the advent of online digital media. Go back ten years and you would not have found people entranced by their smartphone screens as they spend increasing amounts of time on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other social networks that come and go with bewildering rapidity. It’s also evident that traditional news media in its multiple forms—particularly print and broadcast—have seen revenues decimated by the arrival of digital online systems. This has impacted the abilities of news organisations to perform their traditional role of telling truth to power. However, the cultural trends of online and social media were already evident in electronic broadcast media throughout the 20th century. Baudrillard argued that these technologies of communication engendered a media world that exists in parallel to reality, breaking the traditional linguistic relationship of sign and meaning. He talks about the image having gone through successive phases in its evolution into 20th century media: it is the reflection of a profound reality; it masks and denatures a profound reality; it masks the absence of a profound reality; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6) We will address the potential causes of this situation, and whether the hypothesis is valid, later in this paper. However, assuming it is the case, this separation of the image from reality would pose a profound problem when media plays such an important role in contemporary political life. Chadwick et al. (2018) have argued that “The healthy functioning of liberal democracies has long been said to rely upon citizens whose role is to learn about the social and political world, exchange information and opinions with fellow citizens, arrive at considered judgements about public affairs, and put these judgments into action as political behaviour.” But it’s clear that this civic information process is not what has been happening when citizens engage with news via social media. According to Buzzfeed’s analysis of Facebook data, by the time of the US election, Facebook users were more engaged with fake stories than real ones. Measuring the totals for the top 20 election stories on Facebook (this includes shares, reactions and comments), “fake news” stories received 8.7 million engagements whilst “true” mainstream news stories only received 7.3 million engagements (Silverman, 2016). Here, “engagement” refers to an aggregate of clicks through, likes, shares, comments and other interactions on the Facebook platform. This phenomenon has been cynically manipulated by political movements on both sides of the ideological divide, but apparently more so by the right (or “alt- right” as it has been come to be known), judging by the successes achieved. The infamous “£350 million a week for the NHS” advertisement on the side of a bus promoting a Leave vote during the UK Brexit campaign was clearly aimed at those who share for emotional reasons without considering the facts properly. US Republican politicians similarly aimed to harness this phenomenon for the Trump campaign. During a CNN TV interview in 2016, US Republican politician New Gingrich argued: “The current view is that liberals have a whole set of statistics that theoretically may be right, but it’s not where human beings are. . . I’ll go with how people feel, and I’ll let you go with the theoreticians.”1 Trump’s personal lawyer Rudi Giuliani went even further on August 19th, 2018, claiming that “Truth isn’t truth.”2 In terms of Baudrillard’s progression of the image, this is the final phase where the image bears no direct relation to reality and has become its own pure simulacrum. The logic of political messaging via news media is no longer about “the economy, stupid,” i.e. actual material wealth, or whether crime really is worse than it used to be. It’s about how those messages fit with a pre-existing idealised world view, or how they provoke an emotional response from those who engage with them. This is the only way human beings have found that they can cope with the deluge of information they are met with every day—by focusing on what fits with how they imagine the world to be, or how they want it to be. Baudrillard (1994) argues that: “We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning” (p. 79). He suggests three hypotheses as to why this has occurred. The first is that meaning can’t keep up with the supply of information; the second that meaning is a separate system to information; and the third that information actually destroys meaning. For example, science takes away the meaning people find in religious belief, which explains why the Christian right in the USA has an ongoing war with scientific discoveries. Further than this, since human beings are required for meaning, the heavily auto- mated production of information in the computer age devoid of human involvement works in parallel, with knock-on effects we will be discussing shortly. “Fake News” and the Tabloid Press In their insightful and thorough empirical analysis of UK news-sharing habits, Chadwick et al. (2018) have argued that “democratically dysfunctional news- sharing behaviour is a potential systemic outcome of the tabloidization of the social media environment.” Their research has shown that there is a correlation between sharing tabloid news of questionable value and dysfunctional online behaviour such as trolling. Indeed, just as “fake news” was more popular on Facebook than “real” mainstream news in the run-up to the 2016 US election, the most popular story on Facebook during the UK Brexit campaign of the same year was a factually incorrect one from the Daily Express about the European Union planning to kill off the National Health Service (Waterson, 2017). However, what this implies is that the kind of tabloid news stories that promote the separation of meaning from reality, which Baudrillard discusses, existed well before the advent of online culture. In the UK, and the USA, tabloids already had a long history of publishing journalism of questionable factual quality, a tradition that merely continued into tabloid-like TV news channels such as Fox News. In the UK, the tabloid press has since then made the transition to digital online audiences very successfully, with three of the top five sites in terms of visitor numbers being tabloids (Chadwick et al., 2018). Sharing these kinds of stories follows a different logic to civic duty. Chadwick et al. (2018) argue that: “The goals that comprise this motivational cluster—to entertain, please or upset others—are all focused on eliciting emotional responses. For these users, news sharing is not about seeking to inform others; the quality of the news they share appears to be unimportant. Indeed, perhaps the more sensational, ludicrous, or exaggerated the news is, the better it fits with the motivation to disrupt the rationality and veracity upon which political discussion must, in the final reckoning, depend.” The logic of online sharing appears to diverge from the need to inform, or debate with the intention of finding a shared consensus. This was predicted by Baudrillard for media in general. The social media conversation is aimed not so much in the direction of trying to uncover the way the world is, but at promoting the way participants want it to be or find the most entertaining. Confirmation bias reinforces itself as social media users turn away from any messages that challenge them. Chadwick et al.’s (2018) research illustrates that: “The more users engage with politically like-minded others online, the less likely it is that they will be challenged for dysfunctional behaviour. Over the longer term, these people are less likely to encounter the kind of opposition that might make a difference to the quality of the news they share.” The Simulacra of Confirmation Political controversies accentuate this separation of a simulated world view from its connection to a more fact-based conception of reality. Baudrillard discusses Watergate as not so much a re-establishment of profound reality, but part of the simulacrum of reality. This is because truth suffocates under the plethora of possible explanations for global events, such as the shooting down of a Malaysian airliner, the poisoning of Russian political refugees, or the destruction of two tall buildings in New York City. All of these events are surrounded by competing conspiracy theories. Baudrillard (1994) asks, “Is any given bombing in Italy the work of leftist extremists, or extreme-right provocation, or a centrist mise-en-scene to discredit all extreme terrorists and to shore up its own failing power, or again, is it a police-inspired scenario and a form of blackmail to public security? All of this is simultaneously true, and the search for proof, indeed the objectivity of the facts does not put an end to this vertigo of interpretation” (p. 16). This scenario echoes Deleuze’s concept of the fold, where the same reality is seen in different ways depending on alternative perspectives, none of which fully represents an underlying reality that can never be known in its entirety (Deleuze, 1992). Most people are convinced that their perspective is the “true” one, and it is nearly impossible to convince someone with an opposing perspective to change their beliefs, since these now revolve around a system of meaning that reinforces itself and is not directly connected to reality. There is no common ground of information during online discussions from which to build a shared perspective, since arguments stem from beliefs and faith, not facts. The controversy over climate change denial is a case in point. Even when 97 per cent of scientists believe that climate change is a real phenomenon,3 many still refute its human causation. In most cases, they don’t want to listen, because believing in climate change would force them to fundamentally alter their way of life, and those companies that rely on this way of life for their income encourage this situation, such as those in the fossil fuel business. Similarly, “anti-vaxers” continue to cling to long-discredited research linking the MMR vaccine to cases of autism. Baudrillard (1994) argues that this is how we deal with the effect of rampant simulation, where we can no longer tell whether anything we hear about in media is true: “‘Take your desires for reality!’ can be understood as the ultimate slogan of power since in a non-referential world, even the confusion of the reality principle and the principle of desire is less dangerous than contagious hyperreality” (p. 22). The emergence of “deep fake” technology has further accentuated this situation. This is artificial-intelligence-powered software that can make famous people (or, indeed, anyone) appear to say anything you want on video, ready to share online via social media. Even video evidence can no longer be trusted, no matter how real it looks. Brett Nicholls (2017) has confirmed these arguments, saying that “in the post-truth situation objective facts about the world are less influential than feelings, beliefs and personal opinions.” He also points out that the social media detractors against Trump confidently assert “that there is a clear difference between objective knowledge and speculative constructions.” However, Nichols sees in this a fascination with naıve realism, arguing: “Both Trump and his detractors make precisely this claim. Both claim they are the real America!” He then goes on to discuss four critiques of how reality is produced: “the critique of the commodity form, the rise of objective reality, hyperreality and integral reality,” with the latter two venturing into the world as theorised by Baudrillard. This reads like a recent socio-political history of reality formation, starting with Marx’s view about how commodities are created from their exchange value, which is then abstracted into monetary representation, in oppo- sition to the use value of those items. “In this way of thinking, capitalist exchange is less real than the materiality of utility and social conditions of the working class” (Nicholls, 2017). However, while “there is no doubt at all that the objective and discoverable world exists outside systems of representation,” the real question is how we get past those systems of representation. Most of the controversies revolving around post-structuralist and postmodernist thinking such as Baudrillard’s comes from the fact that these theorists argue that you can never wholly escape linguistic representation. Because, as Gadamer (2014) has argued, “Being that can be understood is language.” Nicholls understands the implications of this, arguing that Baudrillard’s concept of simulation “is not pretending” (Baudrillard, 1994), but actually “threatens the difference between the ‘true’ and the ‘false’, the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary’” (Baudrillard, 1994). He then goes on to explain that: “The problem of Trumpism, from Baudrillard’s perspective as I see it, is thus not is Trump correct or incorrect on established matters of fact (a banal problem), it is what does this phenomenon tell us about the contemporary principle or concept of reality itself” (Nicholls, 2017). He then ventures onto the third mode of reality creation: hyperreality, which is not an imaginary fake but “more real than real.” The spectacle of the US presidency—and the UK Brexit controversy—becomes the key feature. This means that Trumpism’s rebellion against the “deep state,” “MSM” and “Washington elites” is a commodified spectacle in the mode of the Frankfurt School’s culture industry. Nicholls then goes on to quote Baudrillard’s famous statement from Simulacra and Simulation that he reiterated in later work in a slightly updated form: “it is not illusion which conceals reality. It is reality which conceals the fact that there is none” (Baudrillard, 1997). This destruction of the previous notions of the real, finally, leads to the fourth mode of reality creation: integral reality. Nicholls (2017) argues that “Trumpism exposes the ungrounded nature of the political system itself.” This is “inseparable from media spectacle,” where “instead of standing in for an outside object, as in reality and hyperreality, the sign itself ends up becoming the object.” This certainly rings true when you look at the cultish belief of MAGA hat-wearing Trump supporters, or slavish followers of “Get Brexit Done” in the UK. For Trump: “His pronouncements do not refer to a referent, they are the thing itself. He is convinced that there is no distinction between what is pronounced and reality.” However, this is also the logic of advertising, a realm that it will later be argued (with Baudrillard) has become the mode of media in general and therefore journalism as part of that media system. Nicholls argues that: “Branding works without irony via signs with no referent, signs that no longer simulate.” The Nike swoosh is filled with meaning, even if it doesn’t refer to anything specifically real. Similarly, neither Trump nor Brexit have clear real referents, yet they mean so much to their adherents. Before we return to this theme, we need to take a trip back into history to see how journalism cemented its status as part of the advertising-driven entertainment industry. The Rise of Partisan Media In the US, a key stage in the demise of news media’s direct relation to reality could be argued to be when the Fairness Doctrine of 1949 was abolished under Ronald Reagan in 1987. This paved the way for the totally partisan news commentators that arose at the end of the 1980s in the USA, followed by the success of Fox News, which ironically described itself as “Fair and Balanced,” in complete contrast to the right-wing pro-Republican stance that the news channel actually promoted. This was exposed in detail in the 2004 Robert Greenwald documentary Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism. Greenwald shows clearly how Fox simulates the right to reply by bringing on a commentator with an opposing view, while ensuring that the representative of that view is weak, outnumbered and portrays the alternative perspective in a way that is easily challenged and defeated by the Republican-friendly guests and Fox presenters. Chadwick et al. argue that UK tabloid news media have been partisan in this way for decades and have merely translated this style into digital media. However far Fox News has diverged from traditional standards of journalistic integrity, the results have fared well with viewing figures. Fox News had beaten its rivals in this respect for 66 quarters in a row by the second quarter of 2018.4 This has pressurised other news networks to follow its model of promoting entertainment value and “giving viewers what they want” over presenting information the audience may not wish to hear but is closer to “the truth.” This is in surprising contrast to the ability of modern communications technology to provide a bewildering level of access to information, which common sense might suggest should lead to a better-informed population, not a more ignorant one. But there are systemic reasons why the opposite is the case, which we will turn to in the next section. Before we get to this, however, we should ask the question whether the loss of neutrality in news media necessarily leads to the end of objective truth. Richmond and Porpora (2018) have argued that this comes from poststructuralist theory based in positivism, because “positivism equates objectivity with neutrality, and since there is no neutrality, it has been argued conversely by poststructuralist theorists that there is no objectivity.” They go on to define this as the basis for a political dialogue where “without a shared commitment to truth, rival factions lose their ability to say anything persuasive to each other.” They cite Donald Trump’s promise to “Make America Great Again” as a reference to a non-existent past golden era that is pure simulacrum, and “Where simulacra dominate, there is no validity in epistemological and ontological claims as there is no real against which to compare them” (Richmond & Porpora, 2018). They then claim that for Baudrillard this kind of situation leads to his conclusion that “there is no way to establish what is real.” Against this, Richmond and Porpora contrast modernist journalism, characterised by objectivity, value neutrality and “cool style.” The basis of objectivity is a trust in ontological realism, “the belief in an ontologically objective world outside of and independent of the analyst’s perceptions or our ideas about it.” This is arrived at via epistemological realism, which claims that “when the objective world corresponds to our thoughts about it, we have truth.” This ends up in social science and the journalism allied to it with a foundationalism that asserts “strict adherence to their canonical research methods will in principle generate the epistemic certainty that gets equated with truth.” This is based on the age-old fact-value distinction, where facts can be neutral, if only they can be separated from biased values. However, one of the main themes of poststructuralist thought is to question whether this is possible, due to our inability to escape our own prejudices and biases completely. The “cool style” reporting Richmond and Porpora discuss is related to this need to maintain a semblance of objectivity. They explain that “cool style” is a journalistic approach “which tries to separate opinion reporting from straight news.” As we have seen from the news examples so far, the era of social media has shown that “cool style” reporting is not what is most likely to gain popularity in this engagement-driven media landscape. Richmond and Porpora admit that there is “no escape from value judgement. An absolute fact-value distinction is a myth.” They then go on to cite Kuhn’s work on paradigm shifts in the world of science to show that even in this supposedly neutral and fact-based realm, experimental results “can always be and generally are rhetorically contested.” However, they misunderstand Foucault’s related critique of how knowledge and power are interconnected via discourse systems as implying that these are regimes of truth that are “various, equally arbitrary, cultural constructions.” They argue that “rhetoric can also be understood following Aristotle as a way to evaluate what is truthful in contexts where proofs or other algorithmic procedures are lacking.” But rhetoric is still the underlying form of politics even in the post-truth era, and it can be argued that this has transferred well into the social media age, because good rhetoric makes for engaging entertainment. Rhetoric can be spectacle too. When Trump promises to “Make America Great Again,” this is a spectacularly powerful rhetoric, and it drowns out any truth about whether America was great in the first place or whether Trump will be able to re-establish this even if it was. But it doesn’t necessarily negate the possibility of truth. Before we return to this notion, we must further delineate the current status of journalism in the digital era. Promoting the News One of the biggest problems for news is that it is part of a spectrum of media forms that includes entertainment and news thereby competes with those forms for attention as an impoverished relative. Where audiovisual news formats started life as the newsreels that were an integral part of a cinema programme including A and B movies as well as cartoons, on commercial TV news has had to vie for ratings alongside entertainment formats. In August 2018, for example, only 12 per cent of the TV-watching population were consuming programming in the News or Current Affairs categories, with the rest viewing more entertainment-focused content.5 Printed newspapers have also generally been a commercial enterprise, even in the era of “free sheets,” so have had to market themselves to an audience that has a range of choices about which publications to buy and read. In the current digital era, individual stories now fight online for clicks and shares from social media against many other types of content. Media, including news, has been subsumed under what can be most successfully promoted with viewers. This means that the truth of news has been downplayed in favour of its popularity. This has been the way tabloid newspapers in the UK have built and maintained their circulation for years. Social media has merely provided a new platform to amplify what they already did. In the US, the end result of the removal of any central governmental oversight over news organisations’ requirement to provide both sides of a story is epitomised by the success of Alex Jones’s Infowars. This quasi-news organisation promotes conspiracy theories as if they were journalism, with a rapacity that seems unbelievable to those outside its core readership. It does this with some considerable commercial success. Right-wing sites like Infowars and Breitbart, or the left-wing The Canary, owe their success in large part to their knowledge of how to promote themselves in the contemporary digital context. More “mainstream” news sources that have arrived successfully in the last decade, such as Buzzfeed, Huffington Post and Quartz, also demonstrate the same trend. This should be seen in a more general media context where Hollywood blockbuster movies have tended towards the spectacular rather than complex plot formations, in a quest to lure the biggest possible audiences for each individual release. The ability of news to be promoted comes first over its truthfulness, and journalism finds itself having to consider how it can be advertised as much as whether the stories are in the public interest. Baudrillard (1994) argues that: “All current forms of activity tend towards advertising and most exhaust themselves therein. Not necessarily advertising, the kind that is produced as such—but the form of advertising, that of a simplified operational mode, vaguely seductive, vaguely consensual (all the modalities are confused therein, but in an attenuated, agitated mode)” (p. 87). Politics has also been subsumed to the same logic, since our experience of it is primarily via news media. It has been this way for most of the 20th century, with populations controlled via propaganda, which is essentially a political form of advertising that is generated by the same companies, such as Saatchi and Saatchi’s involvement with promoting the government of Margaret Thatcher. In Baudrillard’s (1994) words: “Propaganda becomes the marketing and merchandising of idea-forces, of political men and parties with their ‘trade-mark image’” (p. 88). With so many news organisations espousing political bias unashamedly, and successfully building audiences as a result, politics and journalism have been conflated into one promotional whole. Data-Driven News An integral factor in the rise of websites and social media has been the use of data analytics to optimise online media usage. If the age of electronic media tended towards content that lent itself to being advertised, the shift to net- worked digital distribution has foregrounded the power of data to influence success. This has resulted in some very strange phenomena, where “fake news farms” in Macedonia chase right-wing eyeballs not because they care about promoting right-wing politics, but purely to maximise profit from Google advertising (Sabramanian, 2017). Essentially, the Google algorithm is calling the shots, and it doesn’t care who wins an election, just how many people click through. Again, Baudrillard (1994) saw this coming, arguing that traditional advertising was losing its power as digital technology developed: “today this power is stolen from it by another type of language that is even more simplified and thus more functional: the languages of computer science” (p. 89). Data processing is taking over as advertising moves from the creatively conceptual explosion of the 1950s advertising—the Mad Men era—towards a method based on behavioural analysis and data matching (Maex & Brown, 2012). Baudrillard argued: “It is information, in the sense of data processing, that will put an end to, that is already putting an end to the reign of advertising.” Essentially, it no longer matters what advertising messages mean, only how people respond to them, and this can be user-tested and mapped in fine detail. If a blue logo provokes a better response than an orange one, it’s not important why. Only the user reaction statistics are important. However, this doesn’t mean the end of advertising per se, merely its transformation into a data-driven activity, with a knock-on effect on all media forms that have been influenced by advertising, including political messages and news. Propaganda is still advertising; “fake news” is still advertising. Cambridge Analytica is (or was) an advertising company. But instead of using seductive modes derived purely from creative artistry, the seduction is based on what the data shows is proven to work. The content and meaning of that seduction is irrelevant, so long as its numbers are better. Try a range of ideas and run with the one that works. This is a trend that Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has analysed in particular detail down to its most nefarious depths, arguing that the attention economy propagated by companies such as Google and Facebook promotes user participation so that behavioural data can be collected in order to optimise advertising messages and nudge activity. This is why trying to analyse the social media popularity of a given news story purely at the level of the information it imparts has become so problematic. As the research of Chadwick et al. shows, many people do not share “fake news” because they think it’s true information, but because it conforms to the logic of the social media context they inhabit. That logic revolves around grabbing attention and status within the user’s social network, and posts are primarily shared that will achieve this result. It becomes part of a dynamic of self- promotion and personal advertising. This is not a language in the traditional informational sense of signs referring to phenomena in the real world. A popular Instagram user posts images to present the appearance of a certain lifestyle. They may or may not have that lifestyle, but it only matters that their followers believe they do. This is very much an advertising business, and they will adjust their activities based on analysis of what has and hasn’t been successful in the past. Although services like Instagram were not even a twinkle in the technological eye when Baudrillard wrote these words, his description of advertising as a mockery of language fits the contemporary context perfectly: “It is useless to analyse advertising as language, because something else is happening there: a doubling of language (and also of images), to which neither linguistics nor semiology correspond, because they function on the veritable operation of meaning, without the slightest suspicion of this caricatural exorbitance of all the functions of language, this opening onto an immense field of the mockery of signs, ‘consumed’ as one says in their mockery, for their mockery and the collective spectacle of their game without stakes—just as porno is a hypertrophied fiction of sex consumed in its mockery, for its mockery, a collective spectacle of the inanity of sex in its baroque assumption” (Baudrillard, 1994). Can We Get Beyond the Journalism Simulation Servers? One of the most prominent messages from evangelists of the Internet and its concomitant digital systems has been that they democratise both production and distribution. In this view, everyone potentially has access to the tools for blogging, producing videos for YouTube, and viral promotion via Facebook. New genres have arisen as a result. The young gaming video producers of YouTube epitomise this conceptualisation, and the hundreds of millions of monthly viewers that some of their channels receive are testament to the impact of what they do. However, Anita Elberse (2014) argues that while the Internet may have given everyone the chance to distribute their material, which fulfils the promise of digital media software tools that allow anyone to create their own content, this doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone can now make a living creating media online. On the contrary, Elberse argues that a few big media franchises and block- buster stars are using the facilities of social media and online distribution to aggregate bigger audiences than ever before. YouTube celebrities like PewDiePie (the most subscribed-to YouTuber at time of writing) are few and far between, and should be set against the literally millions of wannabes that achieve only limited success, or none at all. Even YouTube channels with tens of thousands of subscribers will most probably only provide enough revenue to remain a hobby or side-line income source, not a living. Marisol Sandoval has argued that social media organisations are no different from the traditional media organisations that preceded them, because they are still driven by the same monetary profit motive and drive to build shareholder value (Sandoval, 2014). The ability of traditional UK newspaper tabloids to become some of the most successful brands online as well exemplifies this. Their track record for generating profit was already proven during the print era. For most people, the experience of the brave new consumer-producer world is primarily from a much more passive engagement with social media than becoming a YouTube star. Although it is possible to build considerable influence via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and their ilk, the owners of the networks used to distribute this content are the real winners, as Jaron Lanier (2014) argues in Who Owns the Future? He explains how the companies set up to provide information or a service essentially for free (or at least more efficiently and cheaply than what went before) are in fact repositories for the collection of data about user behaviour. “The primary business of digital networking has come to be the creation of ultrasecret mega-dossiers about what others are doing, and using this information to concentrate money and power. It doesn’t matter whether the concentration is called a social network, an insurance com- pany, a derivatives fund, a search engine, or an online store. It’s all fundamentally the same” (Lanier, 2014). Lanier calls these mega-dossiers “siren servers” and cites retail giant Walmart as an early example of the genre. Certainly, Twitter in particular, due to its openly viewable nature (unlike Facebook), is providing marketers with an unparalleled level of real-time intelligence on public taste and reactions to events, which can be analysed via expensive software tools such as Salesforce’s Radian6 or Meltwater Buzz. This can then be fed back into how new marketing strategies and content are shaped. The most successful content brands of the last few years, for example Buzzfeed, owe their success to precisely this strategy of shaping what they produce through user behaviour data, while “Google can individually target ads, and document the click-throughs that follow” (Lanier, 2014). Despite the fact that participation in these siren servers locks users into their systems, with data contributed often being lost when an attempt is made to move from one company’s system to another, people are still expending huge amounts of time and energy using these services to be creative and formulate their opinions about the world. Zuboff has gone even further than Lanier in her analysis of this, arguing that we are willingly participating in our own enslavement to an algorithm-driven hoarding of behavioural data, about which we know very little. Although it would be very satisfying to see a global conspiracy behind the rise of “fake news,” there could well be no evil wizard behind this frustrating phe-nomenon. Instead, it could represent the latest phase in the separation of media imagery from the traditional informative function we have given to language, which was discussed earlier in this paper. Analysing trends in social sharing so that you can take advantage of them creates a massive feedback loop where the representational content of what is being shared takes a distant second place to the popularity figures that have been discovered analytically. As has already been argued, journalism, because it is a mode of communication competing for entertainment attention like fiction film productions or TV drama, has also shaped itself around what can be marketed. Now that this marketing is being dominated by the real-time analysis of user-behaviour data, so journalism is finding itself influenced by data processing as well, such as search engine opti- misation and social media analytics. Simulated news can potentially be even more successful than “real” news in this context, because the factuality of a story is secondary to users’ engagement with it. This has serious consequences for civic life. The current failure of news organisations to cope with the increased drive towards simulation in media poses an important question regarding political power and our ability to do effective journalism about it. David Ryfe of The University of Iowa argues that, thanks to the circumstances described above, we have moved from an information-centred model of journalism to a group-centred model, where news performs a role within a particular community of interest. He recognises that news now does less to inform than affirm, following emotional and affective motivations, arguing that: “On a group-centered perspective, new terms like representation, voice, power, and equality come to the fore. In a group-centered world, journalists may have less interest in providing impartial information (which members of different groups may interpret in vastly different ways) and more in ensuring that all relevant social groups are represented in the political process” (Ryfe, in press). However, whilst it has become clear that relentlessly fact-checking Donald Trump’s statements on Twitter hasn’t convinced many, or even any, of his supporters to turn away from him towards more “rational” political stances, Ryfe’s suggestions don’t promise a return to traditional journalistic values of telling truth to power. Trying to frame news so that it appeals to a tabloid-level online audience risks that news turning into the same clickbait-chasing vacuity that it hopes to combat. Richmond and Porpora, in contrast, propose a “critical realism” approach to finding a truth that doesn’t have to be certain. They argue: “Without proofs in the mathematical or logical sense, we must follow Aristotle’s Rhetoric and turn to the best argument” (Richmond & Porpora, 2018). They eventually go on to suggest that late night comedians and satirists re-establish a more savvy, critical form of truth that can act as an antidote to what they call “Entertainment Politics” (Richmond & Porpora, 2018). They hope as a result that: “Truth will be recaptured as the pivotal theoretical premise behind critical theory and journalism itself.” However, this still fits within the hypothesis of Baudrillard’s simulacra. Satire isn’t necessarily effective due to it being true, but because it’s funnier than what it critiques, or shows the absurdity of its subject matter in an amusing way. Satire may be a rhetoric that appeals to a more “liberal” audience but it still works at the entertainment level like the form of politics it attempts to critique. Nicholls (2017), on the other hand, argues that “Trump’s non-dual relation- ship with the world could be disrupted by rediscovering what Baudrillard calls the vital illusion.” This aims to take “the world for the world and not for its model” (Baudrillard, 2008), but again pushes us back to the problem of how we can escape the fact that we can only perceive the world through our linguistic representation of it. This doesn’t appear to provide an obvious antidote to the popularity of “integral reality” or the spectacle of politics and its consumption through journalism and social media. As the third decade of the 21st century approaches, the situation seems grave for traditional civic-minded journalism that aims to convey information honestly to promote healthy debate in the public interest. But realising how we got into this situation is the essential first step towards building a way forward. Baudrillard recognised almost 40 years ago that media no longer perform the classic linguistic function of meaningful reference to the real world. Instead, they point towards an idealised simulacrum, an advertising-driven aspirational utopia, but with dire implications for political life. Baudrillard continued to argue this even in his last published work, The Agony of Power: “The most serious of all forms of self-denial—not only economically or politically but metaphysically—is the denial of reality. This immense enterprise of deterrence from every historical reference, this strategy of discrediting, of divesting from reality in the form of parody, mockery, or masquerade, becomes the very principle of government. The new strategy—and it truly is a mutation— is the self-immolation of value, of every system of value, of self-denial, indifferentiation, rejection and nullity as the triumphant command” (Baudrillard, 2010). This excerpt could very accurately describe Donald Trump’s approach to political campaigning and government, even though it was written more than a decade before his rise to power. It’s clear that the current political turmoil is not a new phenomenon, but the current stage of a much longer trend that predated digital media and social networks. For decades, tabloid news in the UK has fed its readers the “world as people want it to be.” The sharing of “fake news” via social media is merely the latest incarnation of this phenomenon. The process may now have become dominated by the analysis of data on user behaviour, and harnessed by populist political movements, but it’s part of the same nihilistic drive inherent in media for over a century, where truth and meaning become subsumed to entertainment success for economic benefit. The new element is that behavioural analytics has potentially become a law unto itself as algorithms act in a semi-autonomous way to maximise income for the companies with the most influential “siren servers”—the digital technology giants.

#### The proliferation of meaning and consciousness raising rely on a fantasy of communication which implodes under its own weight. More knowledge does not change reality.

Baudrillard 2000 /http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/simulacra-and-simulations-viii-the-implosion-of-meaning-in-the-media/

We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning. Consider three hypotheses.

Either information produces meaning (a negentropic factor), but cannot make up for the brutal loss of signification in every domain. **Despite efforts to reinject message and content, meaning is lost and devoured faster than it can be reinjected**. In this case, one must appeal to a base productivity to replace failing media. This is the whole ideology of free speech, of media broken down into innumerable individual cells of transmission, that is, into "antimedia" (pirate radio, etc.).

Or information has nothing to do with signification. It is something else, an operational model of another order, outside meaning and of the circulation of meaning strictly speaking. This is Shannon's hypothesis: a sphere of information that is purely functional, a technical medium that does not imply any finality of meaning, and thus should also not be implicated in a value judgment. A kind of code, like the genetic code: it is what it is, it functions as it does, meaning is something else that in a sense comes after the fact, as it does for Monod in Chance and Necessity. In this case, there would simply be no significant relation between the inflation of information and the deflation of meaning. Or, very much on the contrary, there is a rigorous and necessary correlation between the two, to the extent that information is directly destructive of meaning and signification, or that it neutralizes them. **The loss of meaning is directly linked to the dissolving, dissuasive action of information, the media, and the mass media**.

The third hypothesis is the most interesting but flies in the face of every commonly held opinion. **Everywhere socialization is measured by the exposure to media messages.** **Whoever is underexposed to the media is desocialized** or virtually asocial. **Everywhere information is thought to produce an accelerated circulation of meaning, a plus value of meaning homologous to the economic one that results from the accelerated rotation of capital. Information is thought to create communicatio**n, and even if the waste is enormous, a general consensus would have it that nevertheless, as a whole, there be an excess of meaning, which is redistributed in all the interstices of the social - just as consensus would have it that material production, despite its dysfunctions and irrationalities, opens onto an excess of wealth and social purpose. **We are all complicitous in this myth. It is the alpha and omega of our modernity, without which the credibility of our social organization would collapse. Well, the fact is that it is collapsing, and for this very reason: because where we think that information produces meaning, the opposite occurs.**

I**nformation devours its own content. It devours communication and the social**. And for two reasons.

1**. Rather than creating communication, it exhausts itself in the act of staging communication. Rather than producing meaning, it exhausts itself in the staging of meaning**. A gigantic process of simulation that is very familiar. The nondirective interview, **speech, listeners who call in, participation at every level, blackmail through speech: "You are concerned, you are the event**, etc." **More and more information is invaded by this kind of phantom content, this homeopathic grafting, this awakening dream of communication. A circular arrangement through which one stages the desire of the audience, the antitheater of communication, which**, as one knows, **is never anything but the recycling in the negative of the traditional institution, the integrated circuit of the negative. Immense energies are deployed to hold this simulacrum at bay, to avoid the brutal desimulation that would confront us in the face of the obvious reality of a radical loss of meaning**.

It is useless to ask if it is the loss of communication that produces this escalation in the simulacrum, or whether it is the simulacrum that is there first for dissuasive ends, to short-circuit in advance any possibility of communication (precession of the model that calls an end to the real). Useless to ask which is the first term, there is none, **it is a circular process** - that of simulation, that of the hyperreal. **The hyperreality of communication and of meaning. More real than the real, that is how the real is abolished**. **Thus not only communication but the social functions in a closed circuit, as a lure - to which the force of myth is attached. Belief, faith in information attach themselves to this tautological proof that the system gives of itself by doubling the signs of an unlocatable reality.**

But one can believe that this belief is as ambiguous as that which was attached to myths in ancient societies. One both believes and doesn't. One does not ask oneself, "I know very well, but still." A sort of inverse simulation in the masses, in each one of us, corresponds to this simulation of meaning and of communication in which this system encloses us. To this tautology of the system the masses respond with ambivalence, to deterrence they respond with disaffection, or with an always enigmatic belief. Myth exists, but one must guard against thinking that people believe in it: this is the trap of critical thinking that can only be exercised if it presupposes the naivete and stupidity of the masses.

2. Behind this exacerbated mise-en-scène of communication, the mass media, **the pressure of information pursues an irresistible destructuration of the social. Thus information dissolves meaning and dissolves the social, in a sort of nebulous state dedicated not to a surplus of innovation**, but, on the contrary, **to total entropy.**\*1 Thus the media are producers not of socialization, but of exactly the opposite, of the implosion of the social in the masses. And this is only the macroscopic extension of the implosion of meaning at the microscopic level of the sign. **This implosion should be analyzed according to** McLuhan's formula, **the medium is the message**, the consequences of which have yet to be exhausted.

That means that **all contents of meaning are absorbed in the only dominant form of the medium. Only the medium can make an event** - whatever the contents, **whether they are conformist or subversive. A serious problem for all counterinformation, pirate radios, antimedia**, etc. But there is something even more serious, which McLuhan himself did not see. Because beyond this neutralization of all content, one could still expect to manipulate the medium in its form and to transform the real by using the impact of the medium as form. If all the content is wiped out, there is perhaps still a subversive, revolutionary use value of the medium as such. That is - and this is where McLuhan's formula leads, pushed to its limit - there is not only an implosion of the message in the medium, there is, in the same movement, the implosion of the medium itself in the real, the implosion of the medium and of the real in a sort of hyperreal nebula, in which even the definition and distinct action of the medium can no longer be determined.

Even the "traditional" status of the media themselves, characteristic of modernity, is put in question. McLuhan's formula, the medium is the message, which is the key formula of the era of simulation (the medium is the message - the sender is the receiver - the circularity of all poles - the end of panoptic and perspectival space - such is the alpha and omega of our modernity), this very formula must be imagined at its limit where, after all the contents and messages have been volatilized in the medium, it is the medium itself that is volatilized as such. Fundamentally, it is still the message that lends credibility to the medium, that gives the medium its determined, distinct status as the intermediary of communication. Without a message, the medium also falls into the indefinite state characteristic of all our great systems of judgment and value. A single model, whose efficacy is immediate, simultaneously generates the message, the medium, and the "real." Finally, **the medium is the message not only signifies the end of the message, but also the end of the medium. There are no more media in the literal sense of the word** (I'm speaking particularly of electronic mass media) - that is, of a mediating power between one reality and another, between one state of the real and another. Neither in content, nor in form. Strictly, this is what implosion signifies. The absorption of one pole into another, the short-circuiting between poles of every differential system of meaning, the erasure of distinct terms and oppositions, including that of the medium and of the real - thus the impossibility of any mediation, of any dialectical intervention between the two or from one to the other. Circularity of all media effects. Hence the impossibility of meaning in the literal sense of a unilateral vector that goes from one pole to another. One must envisage this critical but original situation at its very limit: it is the only one left us. **It is useless to dream of revolution through content, useless to dream of a revelation through form, because the medium and the real are now in a single nebula whose truth is indecipherable.**

The fact of this implosion of contents, of the absorption of meaning, of the evanescence of the medium itself, of the reabsorption of every dialectic of communication in a total circularity of the model, of the implosion of the social in the masses, may seem catastrophic and desperate. But this is only the case in light of the idealism that dominates our whole view of information**. We all live by a passionate idealism of meaning and of communication, by an idealism of communication through meaning, and, from this perspective, it is truly the catastrophe of meaning that lies in wait for us**. But one must realize that "catastrophe" has this "catastrophic" meaning of end and annihilation only in relation to a linear vision of accumulation, of productive finality, imposed on us by the system. Etymologically, the term itself only signifies the curvature, the winding down to the bottom of a cycle that leads to what one could call the "horizon of the event," to an impassable horizon of meaning: beyond that nothing takes place that has meaning for us - but it suffices to get out of this ultimatum of meaning in order for the catastrophe itself to no longer seem like a final and nihilistic day of reckoning, such as it functions in our contemporary imaginary.

Beyond meaning, there is the fascination that results from the neutralization and the implosion of meaning. Beyond the horizon of the social, there are the masses, which result from the neutralization and the implosion of the social.

What is essential today is to evaluate this double challenge the challenge of the masses to meaning and their silence (which is not at all a passive resistance) - the challenge to meaning that comes from the media and its fascination. All the marginal, alternative efforts to revive meaning are secondary in relation to that challenge.

Evidently, there is a paradox in this inextricable conjunction of the masses and the media: do the media neutralize meaning and produce unformed [informe] or informed [informée] masses, or is it the masses who victoriously resist the media by directing or absorbing all the messages that the media produce without responding to them? Sometime ago, in "Requiem for the Media," I analyzed and condemned the media as the institution of an irreversible model of communication without a response. But today? This absence of a response can no longer be understood at all as a strategy of power, but as a counterstrategy of the masses themselves when they encounter power. What then? Are the mass media on the side of power in the manipulation of the masses, or are they on the side of the masses in the liquidation of meaning, in the violence perpetrated on meaning, and in fascination? Is it the media that induce fascination in the masses, or is it the masses who direct the media into the spectacle? Mogadishu-Stammheim: the media make themselves into the vehicle of the moral condemnation of terrorism and of the exploitation of fear for political ends, but simultaneously, in the most complete ambiguity, they propagate the brutal charm of the terrorist act, they are themselves terrorists, insofar as they themselves march to the tune of seduction (cf. Umberto Eco on this eternal moral dilemma: how can one not speak of terrorism, how can one find a good use of the media - there is none). **The media carry meaning and countermeaning, they manipulate in all directions at once, nothing can control this process,** they are the vehicle for the simulation internal to the system and the simulation that destroys the system, according to an absolutely Mobian and circular logic - and it is exactly like this. There is no alternative to this, no logical resolution. Only a logical exacerbation and a catastrophic resolution.

With one caution. We are face to face with this system in a double situation and insoluble double bind - exactly like children faced with the demands of the adult world. Children are simultaneously required to constitute themselves as autonomous subjects, responsible, free and conscious, and to constitute themselves as submissive, inert, obedient, conforming objects. The child resists on all levels, and to a contradictory demand he responds with a double strategy. To the demand of being an object, he opposes all the practices of disobedience, of revolt, of emancipation; in short, a total claim to subjecthood. To the demand of being a subject he opposes, just as obstinately and efficaciously, an object's resistance, that is to say, exactly the opposite: childishness, hyperconformism, total dependence, passivity, idiocy. Neither strategy has more objective value than the other. The subject-resistance is today unilaterally valorized and viewed as positive - just as **in the political sphere only the practices of freedom, emancipation, expression, and the constitution of a political subject are seen as valuable and subversive. But this is to ignore the equal, and without a doubt superior, impact of all the object practices, of the renunciation of the subject position and of meaning - precisely the practices of the masses - that we bury under the derisory terms of alienation and passivity. The liberating practices respond to one of the aspects of the system, to the constant ultimatum we are given to constitute ourselves as pure objects, but they do not respond at all to the other demand, that of constituting ourselves as subjects, of liberating ourselves, expressing ourselves at whatever cost, of voting, producing, deciding, speaking, participating, playing the game - a form of blackmail and ultimatum just as serious as the other, even more serious today**. **To a system whose argument is oppression and repression, the strategic resistance is the liberating claim of subjecthood. But this strategy is more reflective of the earlier phase of the system, and even if we are still confronted with it, it is no longer the strategic terrain: the current argument of the system is to maximize speech, the maximum production of meaning. Thus the strategic resistance is that of the refusal of meaning** and of the spoken word - or of the hyperconformist simulation of the very mechanisms of the system, which is a form of refusal and of non-reception. It is the strategy of the masses: it is equivalent to returning to the system its own logic by doubling it, to reflecting meaning, like a mirror, without absorbing it. This strategy (if one can still speak of strategy) prevails today, because it was ushered in by that phase of the system which prevails.

To choose the wrong strategy is a serious matter**. All the movements that only play on liberation, emancipation, on the resurrection of a subject of history, of the group, of the word based on "consciousness raising," indeed a "raising of the unconscious" of subjects and of the masses, do not see that they are going in the direction of the system, whose imperative today is precisely the overproduction and regeneration of meaning and of speech.**

#### Their method’s uncritical embrace of information processing and critical media literacy fails – there is no outside of information and their unwitting embrace of the form of media overproliferation swamps their attempt at radical content.

Kline 16. Kip Kline, professor of the philosophy of education at Lewis University, “Jean Baudrillard and the Limits of Critical Media Literacy,” Education Theory, Volume 66, Issue 5, October 2016, *online via Wiley*

Understanding Baudrillard's media theory begins with an examination of some of the most well-known ideas from his work: hyperreality and the orders of simulacra.[3](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0003) In the beginning of the essay “The Precession of Simulacra,” his positing of the possible disappearance of structural reality references the Jorge Luis Borges short story “On Exactitude in Science.”[4](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0004) Here the map of an entire empire becomes so exact as to replicate precisely the actual territory. But Baudrillard claims that in our contemporary moment the Borges fable is reversed. That is, what we have now is “the map that precedes the territory,” and instead of the real we have “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality.”[5](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0005) We have hyperreality — the more real than real. Hyperreality is complicit in the disappearance of reality, that is, reality is displaced by the hyperreal. In his introduction to the second edition of Fatal Strategies, Dominic Pettman describes it by saying, “Today, reality has been swallowed up and disappears in its own hyperbole, just as sex disappears in porn and events in the news.”[6](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0006) The later Baudrillard announced that the real had disappeared, was murdered, and we were left with only the hyperreal or the virtual. He suggested that the world was accelerating toward a fourth order of simulacra — the fractal order — in which the virtual would completely colonize the real. This description should not be confused with other, more traditional accounts of the distinction between the apparent and the real. Baudrillard famously said of the 1999 film The Matrix, written and directed by the Wachowski siblings, that it is the sort of film the Matrix would have made about the Matrix.[7](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0007) In a subsequent interview he explained in more detail, “The most embarrassing part of the film is that the new problem posed by simulation is confused with its classical, Platonic treatment. This is a serious flaw.”[8](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0008) His point here was that the world of the perfect crime in which there is no trace of the real is decidedly not the world of Plato's Cave or The Matrix. It is still possible to locate the distinction between the apparent world of the images on the wall and the real world outside of the cave or between the Matrix and the real world. Baudrillard's provocative claims are not meant to describe a complete fall into illusion. On the contrary, in the simulated world there is no more illusion. Everything is transparent. Everything is actualized. And in the specific context of the development of mass media, this kind of transparency amounts to a proliferation of the screen in which nothing is hidden; a kind of “pornography of the image,” Baudrillard said.[9](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0009) The disappearance of reality is the result of the ways in which meaning has become increasingly unstable through the orders of simulacra and shifts in the relationship between the sign and the referent. In “The Precession of Simulacra” Baudrillard understands the image to have gone through four phases. In the first, “it is the reflection of a basic reality.” In the second, “it masks and perverts a basic reality.” “It masks the absence of a basic reality” in the third phase, and in the fourth “it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.”[10](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0010) He describes these phases in more detail in his essay “The Orders of Simulacra.”[11](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0011) The first order is referred to as “the counterfeit” and it marks onset of conspicuous consumption and fashion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here we have the play of arbitrary signs that “have the ‘appearance’ of being ‘bound to the world’ but are abstract, referential (re)presentations of it.”[12](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0012) In this order there is considerable distance between the real and the counterfeit, leaving the reality principle intact. The second order is associated with the onset of industrialization. Baudrillard said that the signs characteristic of it are “crude, dull, industrial, repetitive, echoless, functional and efficient,”[13](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0013) whereas signs in the first order “were magical, diabolical, illusory … enchanting.”[14](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0014) In this second order, industrial production begets repetitive signs that begin to only refer to the difference between signifieds and not to any external reality. Baudrillard suggested that the time period of the second order of simulacra is much shorter than the third.[15](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0015) That is, we quickly move from the serial production of second order simulacra to the hyperreality that characterizes the third order, in which the model is understood as the real. In the third order, according to Baudrillard, “[t]he very definition of the real becomes: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction.”[16](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0016) Here the sign is transformed again as representation is fully replaced by simulation. William Pawlett puts it this way: Simulation is distinct from representation because signifiers lose their attachment to signifieds (the mental “construction” of meaning inside our heads) as meaning is generated by relations between signifiers (“models”) rather than in our reflective or “inner” dialectical thought processes. Further signs (or rather pre-modelled signifiers) are disarticulated from referents because models do not have referents.[17](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0017) In the fourth order, the virtual completely displaces the real, leaving no trace of its disappearance. If it seems fair to consider some of Baudrillard's writing to be polemical, it would be far too hasty to, in turn, dismiss his descriptive arguments about the world and the loss of the real. To begin with, the value of polemics in academic writing is a matter of debate in a variety of academic fields.[18](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0018) Perhaps more important and particular to Baudrillard's work, we should understand polemics as necessary to his philosophical system and constitutive of a consistency between his arguments and method. That is, the later Baudrillard understood that the only possibility left for theory after the third order of simulacra was the ironic, anagramic, pataphysical, and poetic. America and the Cool Memories series exemplified this.[19](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0019) Both employ an aphoristic style that is part journal, part travelogue, and arguably hyperbolic as well as entirely polemical. The same stylistic elements inform Baudrillard's writing method in his other works throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. This particular set of stylistic or methodological commitments has contributed to misreadings and dismissals. Yet, Mike Gane has noted, they are “undoubtedly profoundly systematic and even highly rationalistic.”[20](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0020) Baudrillard repeatedly argued that the late capitalist code is adept at subsuming critique and offering it back as a set of signs to be consumed. Indeed, this code actually encourages a certain level of critique. All that is left is fatal theory or fatal strategies, which are ironic strategies. As Dominic Pettman says, the “strategy of opposition is now so corrupt and paralyzed, so that it has become necessary … to deepen negative conditions until they flip.”[21](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0021) Baudrillard's methods, then, are consistent with his arguments about the limited possibilities for theory in a world where signs no longer refer to the real, resulting in its “murder.” Unlike the conventional theorist who attempts to master her or his object, the fatal theorist seeks to anticipate the irony of the object. The Problem of Underestimation in Critical Media Literacy Several critical pedagogy and Marxist education scholars have been architects and/or champions of critical media literacy as a means of educating toward the end of resisting problematic media representations, with specific emphasis on representations of youth. Critical media literacy's foundational understanding of contemporary media as a problem to reflect upon and critique is aligned well with Baudrillard's work on media. That being said, the methods of critical media literacy are rather specious because they are not sufficiently animated by the problem of form in media. Critical media literacy promotes teaching both teachers and youth to “deconstruct” media and to recognize the “distortions” in its representations. For example, an online lesson plan on critical media literacy sponsored by the International Literacy Association claims, “By looking at the media critically, students develop an awareness of the messages that are portrayed through the media.”[22](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0022) Yet, that approach seems to be caught in the stage of Baudrillard's second order of simulacra with regard to signs. Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share state that critical media literacy is meant “to help students distinguish between connotation and denotation and signifier and signified.”[23](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0023) But such an approach to media pedagogy does not work in the context of Baudrillard's understanding of media, that is, in one that includes the third and fourth orders of simulacra where signs have no real-world referents and images no longer function dialectically. This is a world in which the real/unreal distinction has imploded. Simulations are not “distortions,” nor can they be “deconstructed” through drawing a clear distinction between signifier and signified.

#### Their naïve portrayal of receptive and critical audience reactions to the hulking media apparatus that structures modern life fails – the form of media production overdetermines its content, and faith in the agency of the audience merely mystifies the situation further.

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Audiences, (In)Activity, (Non)Communication Baudrillard's entire oeuvre is informed by his concern regarding the loss of symbolic exchange in modernity and after. Here “the symbolic” refers to that which is outside of the capitalist code and outside of representation. Baudrillard's use of symbolic exchange borrows from ideas about the gift in indigenous societies as discussed by Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille.[37](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0037) It refers to a kind of “privileging of an immediately actualized, collective mode of relations and its transformative experience and communication.”[38](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0038) For Baudrillard this means that the world is increasingly replacing proximal, “hot” forms of interaction with those that are “cool” and detached, free from the potential violence of symbolic exchange but also without the inherent rewards and meaning of actual face-to-face human interaction. As William Merrin has put it, “our media operates today to simulate in a safe form that lost sociality and shared meaning functioning, along with consumption, as a means of social control.”[39](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0039) In place of more risky symbolic, unmediated interactions, we are now “connected” and also socially conditioned via our interactions with morning television talk show hosts, sports spectacles, and hyperreal celebrities from reality television. Communication is a modern invention, according to Baudrillard. “Whoever had the idea of ‘communicating’ in ancient societies, in tribes, in villages, in families?” he asked. “People don't need to communicate because they just speak to one another.”[40](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0040) He stridently critiqued technological developments in communications, particularly the cell phone.[41](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0041) He insisted that contemporary media, for all of its purported interactivity, effectively still communicates unilaterally. Does this suggest that he was nostalgic for symbolic cultures (though he had never experienced them)? Doesn't this new technology provide more interactivity and participation? Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green offer a compelling history of participatory culture in media in Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture.[42](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0042) Their argument locates an adumbration of social networks in the mid-nineteenth-century's Amateur Press Association, in which young people set their own type and distributed their thoughts on politics and culture. Starting with that early precursor, Jenkins, Ford, and Green argue that a number of cultural phenomena have contributed to laying the groundwork for the participatory media culture of the twenty-first century. More specifically, they connect Bertolt Brecht's vision of the radio creating a shift from passive to active audiences in the 1930s and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's prediction in 1970 that media production would shift into the hands of the masses and this change would result in greater participation, sharing, and mobilization. However, in the essay “Requiem for the Media,” Baudrillard used the media's role in the 1968 student revolt in Paris to illustrate that the kind of reorganization Enzensberger and Brecht imagined is impossible in mass media. Because the form is fundamentally connected to a simulation model of communication, there is no way to use electronic media to initiate or recapture some type of symbolic interaction. Thus, Baudrillard argued, the media's coverage of the action and dissemination of the story to a mass audience did not assist the cause of the protesters in Paris but instead denied the students' and workers' revolt its own trajectory. “By broadcasting the events in the abstract universality of public opinion, they imposed a sudden and inordinate development on the movement of events; and through this forced and anticipated extension, they deprived the original movement of its own rhythm and of its meaning. In a word: they short-circuited it.”[43](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0043) So perhaps Baudrillard's point about media's unilaterality survives the rise of so-called interactive media. His critique of interactivity in media is rooted in the notion that the “interactivity” is simply a guise. It could be that the newer forms of communication technology offer only the appearance of more communication that in the end turns out to be an efficient, convenient form of noncommunication. William Merrin puts it succinctly: Even when our media appear to exponentially increase communication, this is predicated, as Baudrillard suggests, on a separation from one's proximate environment and finds fulfillment only in so far as it simulates or promises that symbolic relationship they claim to promote but which their use actually replaces.[44](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0044) As Merrin goes on to point out, even the telephone was a technological development that in some sense assisted us in avoiding contact with others, and so with eluding communication.[45](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0045) Baudrillard is not necessarily being nostalgic; rather, he is unveiling a paradox. We live in a world in which the confluence of technology and communication are certainly on the rise, resulting in new levels of a particular kind of interactivity (that is, the simulated kind). However, proximal human relations are largely replaced by such simulated interactivity. Of course, we do not always choose mediated forms of interaction. The cool, detached forms of (non)communication have not completely colonized the human face-to-face experience. Merrin suggests, however, that this shift presents a serious enough problem when we lack cognizance of the paradox discussed above.[46](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/10.1111/edth.12203/full#edth12203-note-0046) Baudrillard's death in 2007 limited his experience with ostensibly increased media interactivity to call-in radio and television shows that seem to allow the audience to participate and respond to media messages. He understood this to be no kind of interactivity at all because audience responses in cases such as these are always precoded. They are not openly interactive because only certain kinds of responses are considered for airing and even then the audience's participation is completely screened and/or edited. Thus these “interactions,” in form, shape, and content, are effectively determined ahead of time. But what should we make of the fact that Baudrillard's ideas about precoded responses to media seem to be less informed by the rise of Internet technologies in which interactivity can take on a more private or sometimes bilateral form? First, Baudrillard was rather prescient with regard to the trajectory of such technologies, as the discussion of “Telemorphosis” in the next section will establish. Second, and perhaps more important, the same argument that Baudrillard used against technological developments in media with which he had firsthand experience applies equally to the ostensibly more interactive communication technologies currently available. They may seem to increase communication and interactivity but are instead increasing a simulation of proximal relations. All of this reveals the first shortcoming of critical media literacy related to underestimating the problem of form. Pedagogy based on critical media literacy operates with a commitment to active audience theories that Baudrillard's media theory calls into question.

### NATO

#### NATO’s battle-rhythm can target anything and make it into a folder forcing it to disappear from the real because the folder lives in the future- the planned targeting of militaries deem that this target will no longer be existent in the future as they envelop the entire realm of the real. War is not dynamic- it is a constantly occurring yet pre-planned script.

**Akehurst 21** (Nathan Akehurst @ Natowatch - writer and campaigner working in political communications and advocacy., Published: 8-24-2021, <IKS> "After the Afghanistan Disaster, NATO Is Already Planning the Next War | NATO Watch", DOA: 6-25-2022, <https://natowatch.org/default/2021/after-afghanistan-disaster-nato-already-planning-next-war>)

After the Afghanistan Disaster, NATO Is Already Planning the Next War The occupation of Afghanistan was a disaster — but the US’s failure is already being used to justify even longer “humanitarian interventions.” As after Vietnam, military men are using scenes of disorderly departure to prepare the ground for the next war. In Tim O’Brien’s celebrated anti–Vietnam War novel Going After Cacciato, a deserter is pursued by the narrator and his squadmates in a fever dream. The chase breaks out of the southeast Asian country, taking the war on tour around the world. Indeed, after the last helicopter left Saigon, the Vietnam War’s legacy did pursue the United States across multiple continents. Defeat in Vietnam haunted the military and security establishment — but they bounced back stronger. The United States’ conventional war machine was overhauled, as the Cold War entered a new phase. The inflexible Pentagon buckled enough for theories of maneuver warfare to take root that tried to learn from insurgents. This was combined with a new technological plan for aerial supremacy, realized in Vietnam through blunt instruments like mass defoliation and carpet bombing. In the 1991 Gulf War, this finally produced a devastatingly effective war machine involving satellite technology, fast-moving armored columns with close air support, more destructive and accurate munitions, and the ability to manipulate the broadcast media (e.g. through providing weapon camera footage) to present an idealized version of the war. This gap between image and reality led sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard to declare that “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.” Military innovation following the defeat in Vietnam was combined with geopolitical responses. Struggling in Asia, the United States ramped up attempts to retain control in its own backyard. This meant embarking on a renewed decade of sponsoring right-wing terror in South America, adapting and deploying the lessons from torture and murder projects in Vietnam like the infamous Phoenix Program. At the same time, the United States took steps to safeguard its post-1975 position in the rest of Asia. As communists began to tip the balance of power in Afghanistan during 1978’s Saur Revolution, the US intervened to undermine the Afghan state and support the reactionaries’ insurgency before the full-scale Soviet intervention arrived. Taking a more hands-off approach, it attempted to remotely turn the country into the Soviets’ own Vietnam, empowering local proxies, many of whom later fought for the Taliban, working with and through regional powers like Pakistan, and developing key tactical headaches for opponents like providing anti-air missiles. (Some scholarship argues that the impact of the latter is overrated — attributing the insurgents’ success primarily to their organizational form, a reading supported by recent events.) Albeit with some trepidation, liberal screenwriter Aaron Sorkin still treated this as an essentially heroic episode in his 2007 Charlie Wilson’s War. NATO’s defeat in Afghanistan will have similar long-range implications. Vietnam comparisons like the Wall Street Journal breathlessly describing Kabul as “Saigon on steroids” are overwrought, but there are some broader similarities. As in Vietnam, the spectacle of departure is being made into a case for developing the power to never experience defeat again. As in Vietnam, refugees leaving the country in droves are seized on by “humanitarian interventionists” as an argument for more muscular policy, even if the great powers are doing almost nothing about refugees beyond trying to stop them, or creating more of them. And as in Vietnam, defeat in Afghanistan will contribute to a reassessment of how best to wield military power. In short, they are already preparing for the next war. Explaining Failure The stated motives for the Afghan War — catching Osama Bin Laden, then defeating the Taliban, then building a stable country with Western-style institutions — were in constant flux. But with political direction confused, a similar choose-your-own-adventure approach took place in warfighting as well. Military traditionalists who believed that the army was there to kill “bad guys” and little more often found themselves arguing for a less expensive and less protracted war than liberal militarists who wanted to use an expanded army to enforce their conception of the good. These contradictions persisted. The 2010 troop surge escalated and expanded the war, supposedly to bring it to a swifter end. Units in some areas would focus on battlefield aggression, others on “hearts and minds.” Field Manual 3-24, the counterinsurgency (COIN) document circulated by David Petraeus and James Mattis became gospel. The Commanders’ Emergency Response Program involved an unprecedented militarization of aid, with $2.6 billion disbursed between 2004 and 2011 through US field commanders identifying and funding schemes designed to win over local populations. Such approaches squared poorly with the torture regime at Bagram Air Base and beyond (extensively documented by Human Rights Watch [HRW]). They were also belied by the routine drone strikes on civilian targets including a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in 2015, and a number of incidents of individual or unit-level criminality from the Panjwai massacre to recent revelations about Australian special forces. The military utterly failed to build sustainable partners. Between strategic confusion about which Afghan groups to support; stories of Afghan rivals accusing each other of Taliban links; unpleasant or unreliable figures backed by US forces through various supposed lesser-evilism strategies; and even reports of farmers making pretend Taliban camps to collect the scrap metal from US airstrikes, identifying friend from foe became impossible. From combat troops to Donald Rumsfeld, the same exasperation was repeatedly voiced; “we have no idea who the bad guys are.” Joe Biden’s story of Afghan National Army (ANA) recalcitrance is unfair — Afghan troops fought and died in huge numbers and miserable circumstances, comprising the overwhelming majority of overall allied military death figures. But it was incapable of even paying its troops and collapsed instantly without its American umbrella. Finally, Taliban forces advanced into Kabul with hundreds of captured US military vehicles and even stolen biometric tools that could provide access to data the military collected on its Afghan staff and contractors. The civilian operation didn’t go much better. Veteran war reporter Rajiv Chandrasekaran provides an enlightening account of how billions in public money were pumped into farming to discourage opium growth and reduce farmers’ dependence on the Taliban with little to show for it. In one case, a seed distribution program was derailed swiftly by United States Agency for International Development (USAID)’s strange ideological obsession with forcing farmers to grow melons rather than the cotton they were used to. This obsession arose in part from a capitalist aversion to the state-run cotton gin (which conveniently ignored the involvement of vast quantities of US state money and power in shaping outcomes.) USAID’s analysis claimed the gin was inefficient and unproductive. Unfortunately, the analysis was based on figures which accidentally substituted kilos for pounds and confused refined and unrefined cotton. Andrew Mackay, the British officer who directed an effective 2007 offensive in Musa Qala but resigned after just months as a divisional commander, would brand the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) “institutionally incapable” of warfighting and influence-wielding. US three-star general and Bush/Obama adviser Doug Lute meanwhile privately posed a question which would never be answered: “What are we trying to do here?” Simon Akam’s The Changing of the Guard — a forthcoming book fiercely critical of military leadership in Afghanistan and Iraq — has prompted frightening intervention in the publishing process, with Penguin Random House canceling Akam’s contract and removing his advance after he refused to be subject to MoD sign-off. There was a period when it was widely accepted in military circles that the chaos of Iraq and Afghanistan was an inevitable result of maintaining an unpopular long-term occupation without viable local partners, outside the usual sphere of influence, and with few cultural ties. But it is easy to pick targets for blame, whether it’s coalition partners blaming each other (as in the 2009 row over allegations of Italian troops bribing the Taliban), blaming the ANA (who can’t really fight back in Western media), hawks blaming doves (who had no actual control over anything), or the Atlantic’s op-ed pages blaming you. If some group or individual’s ineptitude or malice is to blame, then things could have gone differently. And for some commentators, if things could have gone differently, then one last heavily armed heave in Afghanistan could work. If things could have gone differently, then the onus is on the military to adapt, à la Vietnam. The United States’ post-2014 army shakeup and the UK’s current Defence Review both engage with new concepts such as regionally aligned forces — in other words, maintaining a permanent military presence in countries across the globe so armies have the cultural and geographical know-how to start and scale warfare anywhere. The British document explicitly calls for more, longer, and bigger deployments. The drone warfare machinery and tactics developed in Afghanistan remain at the heart of strategic thinking — the contemporary answer to the massive “strategic bomber” wings of the first Cold War. Various other “new toy” strategies from space domination to new air combat systems are also floated as means of avoiding future defeat. In sum, there is a growing implicit account of the Afghan defeat that focuses on correcting past “mistakes” through hybrid tactics, cultural depth, leaner use of force, and technology to aid both intelligence-gathering and offensive action. But weapons are little but inert objects until they are wielded in a specific way in the pursuit of specific aims. And the broad political and strategic conclusions drawn from the Afghan War are even more concerning than the straightforwardly military ones. Blackout “Technically, this isn’t a war, boss.” “No? Soldiers. Bombs. It does feel quite warry.” Around the time this exchange was aired in Bluestone 42, the British comedy about a bomb disposal unit in Afghanistan which this exchange comes from, American and British operations were formally ending. But sixteen thousand NATO personnel were to remain deployed across Afghanistan, and there is enough material on Green Beret operations alone since 2014 to fill war reporter Jessica Donati’s recently-released book. Most viewers in the West who are not directly imbricated in the war have largely experienced it as a background hum. It has conferred upon us a siege mentality, a vague sense of unease and threat, but never the sense of a full-blown war. It has even generated surprisingly little war fiction even of the propagandistic kind, and what does exist has tended to zero in on vignettes, whether the kitchen-sink British grit of Kajaki or Hollywood’s Zero Dark Thirty, rather than trying to define the war in the sense that post-Vietnam cultural output did. In short, despite more access to detailed and constant information than at any point in history, viewing publics in the West have either been told that the war is not happening or been given a deeply disingenuous account of it. As Baudrillard’s Gulf War essay put it, “no one will hold this expert or general or that intellectual for hire to account for the idiocies or absurdities proffered the day before, since these will be erased by those of the following day.” Politicians remain ill-informed; a British MP this week raised concerns about the Taliban potentially making Afghanistan a safe haven for ISIS — a group they have been shooting at for several years. If nothing else this lack of good information is because throughout the Afghan War, the powers-that-be lied consistently, unabashedly, and industrially. From the 2010 WikiLeaks documents, which revealed the cover-up of hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries, to the 2019 Afghanistan Papers in which successive figures across the military and civilian hierarchies frankly and repeatedly admit they have no idea what they are doing while reporting boundless progress to the public. But deception aside, the disastrous nature of the conflict was always clear. Too few journalists took those responsible to task, and those who did found it hard to make their stories stick. And of course, more efficient procedures for controlling the media are another legacy of the post-Vietnam learning period. This con was as efficient off the battlefield as on it. Routinely, wells would be built and torn down a day later so the contractors could get themselves hired to repair it, schools would be opened with no teachers to staff them, and a great many press releases about progress would be churned out from these events. Insofar as the war was presented at all, portrayals often took the form of an aid mission in uniform. Undoubtedly huge sums of aid money were spent — but Afghanistan remains among the world’s poorest countries, with poverty having risen. The combination of lying and downplaying represent a clear strategy. Invisible wars do not generate protests or scrutiny. This will inform future policy too. The use of small special forces operations not subject to public scrutiny or parliamentary accountability has been rising and will continue to. The British government are openly preparing for a series of “permanent” conflicts operating “just below the level of war.” The millennium’s first Forever War seems over, but many of its children have yet to be born. War Forever and Everywhere Vietnam was a test bed for technologies of force and power that would shape future conflict. Afghanistan has been a test bed for redefining war itself. A recent account by a former Pentagon analyst during the Afghan War period paints an unsettling portrait of collapsing legal distinctions between war and nonwar. For the first time, the state maintained specific kill lists of individuals presumed but not proven guilty, marked for extrajudicial assassination even in states with which the United States is not at war. The White House’s lawfare documented by HRW and brought frighteningly to life in Adam McKay’s Dick Cheney biopic Vice provides blueprints and strategies for authorizing torture and tearing through laws, rules, and norms. These days, much commentary talks about the rules-based order having changed, and Western powers needing to catch up lest China and Russia exploit such confusion. Of course rules are now more contested in a more multipolar world, but such commentary tends to ignore how US-led powers ripped up the rules in Afghanistan, and granted themselves both the political and legal space and technical capability to strike at any time and in any place without accountability either to other countries or their own voters. Conventional warfare, information warfare, and economic rivalry now exists in a continuum without boundaries, and an increasing multidisciplinary school of thought is beginning to regard essentially everything as warfare. There was always a military-industrial complex, but in Afghanistan it struck gold, with a war that cost $300 million-a-day in public money delivering 1,200 percent returns on stocks to the biggest arms conglomerates. (Meanwhile the outsourcing of the war is now being used an excuse not to settle refugees employed by contractors.) After Afghanistan there is now military involvement in everything from producing games and fiction to training judges. The Afghan War locked aid and force tighter together than ever before, and the UK government now talks more openly than ever about aid as a geopolitical tool in general terms. States always had the ability to trade at gunpoint — but not to use counterterrorism rubric to access all internet traffic coming in and out of the United States, or to block access to global financial systems like the SWIFT interbank loan system not only from hostile states but from any of their trading partners. Every power always attempted strategic dominance, but not the development of a global technological panopticon capable of identifying and weaponizing almost anything. Afghanistan and Iraq have not only defined the foreign wars of the future, but have also defined the transformation of Western cities and borders into battle spaces. The “war on terror” understood the enemy as essentially the same everywhere, meaning a continual exchange of ideas between the battlefield and the home front. Surveillance technology used to filter supposed combatants from supposed civilians in war is now an everyday feature of domestic policing. The contractors that made tens of billions from the Afghanistan war now sell their battle-tested wares, from AI and biometrics to drones and straightforward killing machines, to police and border forces. In The New Military Urbanism, Stephen Graham has reproduced an advert for thermal sensors from the mid-2000s which claims that their products would “have your back whether in Baghdad or Baton Rouge.” On one side of the image is an Army gunship, on the other a police helicopter. The forever war has followed us home.

### Nuclear War

#### Concern over nuclear weapons reduces life to a state of mere survival without value and increases the likelihood of nuclear war. Prefer the silent majority’s indifference to nuclear weapons.

Baudrillard 10 (Jean, Ph.D. in sociology, *America*, trans. Chris Turner, Verso, pp. 42-44)

Everywhere survival has become a burning issue, perhaps by some obscure weariness of life or a collective desire for catastrophe (though we should not take all this too seriously: it is also a playing at catastrophe). Certainly, this whole panoply of survival issues - dieting, ecology, saving the sequoias, seals or the human race - tends to prove that we are very much alive (just as all imaginary fairy-tales tend to prove that the real world is very real). But this is not so certain, for not only is the fact of living not really well-attested, but the paradox of this society is that you cannot even die in it any more since you are already dead. . . This is real suspense. And it is not simply an effect of living in the nuclear age, but derives from the ease with which we now live, which makes survivors of us all. If the bomb drops, we shall neither have the time to die nor any awareness of dying. But already in our hyper-protected society we no longer have any awareness of death, since we have subtly passed over into a state where life is excessively easy. The holocaust created an anticipatory form of such a condition. What the inmates of the concentration camps were deprived of was the very possibility of having control of their own deaths, of playing, even gambling with their own deaths, making their deaths a sacrifice: they were robbed of power over their own deaths. And this is what is happening to all of us, in slow, homeopathic doses, by virtue of the very development of our systems. The explosions and the extermination (Auschwitz and Hiroshima) still go on, though they have simply taken on a purulent, endemic form. The chain reaction continues nonetheless, the contagion, the unfolding of the viral and bacteriological process. The end of history was precisely the inauguration of this chain reaction. The obsessive desire for survival (and not for life) is a symptom of this state of affairs and doubtless also the most worrying sign of the degradation of the species. If you think about the forms that desire currently takes -antinuclear shelters, cryogenization, high-pressure therapy - you see that they are exactly the forms of extermination. To avoid dying, one chooses to withdraw into some protective bubble or other. In this light, **we should take it as a reassuring sign that people lost interest in antinuclear protection so quickly** (the shelter market has become a mere prestige market, like the market for artworks or luxury yachts). It seems that **people have become tired of nuclear blackmail and decided not to give in to it, leaving the threat of destruction hanging in mid-air over them**, perhaps with an obscure sense of how unreal it is. A fine example of a vital reaction disguised as resignation. ‘If we have to die, better to die in the open air than in an underground sarcophagus.’ At a stroke an end is put to survival blackmail and life can go on. Everyone is weary of these apocalyptic visions - the great scenario of the nuclear threat, the theatrical negotiations, ‘Star Wars’. In the end, they defend themselves with a lack of imagination. Even attempts to stimulate that imagination in films like The Last Day have not worked. Nothing has ever been able to make this nuclear scene - or obscenity - credible. With delicate matters like this (as with cancer), imagining death has the effect of bringing the fatal event closer. The masses’ silent indifference to nuclear pathos (whether it comes from the nuclear powers or from antinuclear campaigners) is therefore a great sign of hope and a political fact of the utmost importance.

#### Nuclear war doesn’t exist, no actor with nuclear weapons will ever use them, but their threat locks in worldwide securitization of the real or the event. Every action and inaction has to be calculated as to not start war, which locks sterilizes politics, unable to make any real change, deterred by the nuclear.

Baudrillard 81(Jean Baudrillard – French Postmodern Philosopher, “Simulacra and Simulation” https://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/144970/Simulacra\_and\_Simulation.pdf)

The apotheosis of simulation: the nuclear. However, the balance of terror is never anything but the spectacular slope of a system of deterrence that has insinuated itself from the inside into all the cracks of daily life. Nuclear suspension only serves to seal the trivialized system of deterrence that is at the heart of the media, of the violence without consequences that reigns throughout the world, of the aleatory apparatus of all the choices that are made for us. The most insignificant of our behaviors is regulated by neutralized, indifferent, equivalent signs, by zero-sum signs like those that regulate the "strategy of games" (but the true equation is elsewhere, and the unknown is precisely that variable of simulation which makes of the atomic arsenal itself a hyperreal form, a simulacrum that dominates everything and reduces all "ground-level" events to being nothing but ephemeral scenarios, transforming the life left us into survival, into a stake without stakes - not even into a life insurance policy: into a policy that already has no value). It is not the direct threat of atomic destruction that paralyzes our lives, it is deterrence that gives them leukemia. And this deterrence comes from that fact that even the real atomic clash is precluded - precluded like the eventuality of the real in a system of signs. The whole world pretends to believe in the reality of this threat (this is understandable on the part of the military, the gravity of their exercise and the discourse of their "strategy" are at stake), but it is precisely at this level that there are no strategic stakes. The whole originality of the situation lies in the improbability of destruction. Deterrence precludes war - the archaic violence of expanding systems. Deterrence itself is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable systems or systems in involution. There is no longer a subject of deterrence, nor an adversary nor a strategy - it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes. Atomic war, like the Trojan War, will not take place. The risk of nuclear annihilation only serves as a pretext, through the sophistication of weapons (a sophistication that surpasses any possible objective to such an extent that it is itself a symptom of nullity), for installing a universal security system, a universal lockup and control system whose deterrent effect is not at all aimed at an atomic clash (which was never in question, except without a doubt in the very initial stages of the cold war, when one still confused the nuclear apparatus with conventional war) but, rather, at the much greater probability of any real event, of anything that would be an event in the general system and upset its balance. The balance of terror is the terror of balance. Deterrence is not a strategy, it circulates and is exchanged between nuclear protagonists exactly as is international capital in the orbital zone of monetary speculation whose fluctuations suffice to control all global exchanges. Thus the money of destruction (without any reference to real destruction, any more than floating capital has a real referent of production) that circulates in nuclear orbit suffices to control all the violence and potential conflicts around the world. What is hatched in the shadow of this mechanism with the pretext of a maximal, "objective," threat, and thanks to Damocles' nuclear sword, is the perfection of the best system of control that has ever existed. And the progressive satellization of the whole planet through this hypermodel of security. The same goes for peaceful nuclear power stations. Pacification does not distinguish between the civil and the military: everywhere where irreversible apparatuses of control are elaborated, everywhere where the notion of security becomes omnipotent, everywhere where the norm replaces the old arsenal of laws and violence (including war), it is the system of deterrence that grows, and around it grows the historical, social, and political desert. A gigantic involution that makes every conflict, every finality, every confrontation contract in proportion to this blackmail that interrupts, neutralizes, freezes them all. No longer can any revolt, any story be deployed according to its own logic because it risks annihilation. No strategy is possible any longer, and escalation is only a puerile game given over to the military. The political stake is dead, only simulacra of conflicts and carefully circumscribed stakes remain

The "space race" played exactly the same role as nuclear escalation. This is why the space program was so easily able to replace it in the 1960s (Kennedy/Khrushchev), or to develop concurrently as a form of "peaceful coexistence." Because what, ultimately, is the function of the space program, of the conquest of the moon, of the launching of satellites if not the institution of a model of universal gravitation, of satellization of which the lunar module is the perfect embryo? Programmed microcosm, where nothing can be left to chance. Trajectory, energy, calculation, physiology, psychology, environment-nothing can be left to contingencies, this is the total universe of the norm-the Law no longer exists, it is the operational immanence of every detail that is law. A universe purged of all threat of meaning, in a state of asepsis and weightlessness-it is this very perfection that is fascinating. The exaltation of the crowds was not a response to the event of land­ ing on the moon or of sending a man into space (this would be, rather, the fulfillment of an earlier dream) , rather, we are dumb­ founded by the perfection of the programming and the technical manipulation, by the immanent wonder of the programmed un­ folding of events. Fascination with the maximal norm and the mastery of probability: Vertigo of the model, which unites with the model of death, but without fear or drive. Because if the law, with its aura of transgression, if order, with its aura of violence, still taps a perverse imaginary, the norm fixes, fascinates, stu­ pefies, and makes every imaginary involute. One no longer fan­ tasizes about the minutiae of a program. just watching it pro­ duces vertigo. The vertigo of a world without flaws. Now, it is the same model of programmatic infallibility, of maximum security and deterrence that today controls the spread of the social. There lies the true nuclear fallout: the meticulous operation of technology serves as a model for the meticulous operation of the social. Here as well, nothing will be left to chance, more­ over this is the essence of socialization, which began centuries ago, but which has now entered its accelerated phase, toward a limit that one believed would be explosive (revolution), but which for the moment is tran,slated by an inverse, implosive, irre­ versible process: the generalized deterrence of chance, of acci­ dent, of transversality, of finality, of contradiction, rupture, or complexity in a sociality illuminated by the norm, doomed to the descriptive transparency of mechanisms of information. In fact, the spatial and nuclear models do not have their own ends: nei­ ther the discovery of the moon, nor military and strategic superi­ ority. Their truth is to be the models of simulation, the model vectors of a system of planetary control (where even the super­ powers of this scenario are not free-the whole world is satellized).9 Resist the evidence: in satellization, he who is satellized is not who one might think. Through the orbital inscription of a spatial object, it is the planet earth that becomes a satellite, it is the ter­ restrial principle of reality that becomes eccentric, hyperreal, and insignificant. Through the orbital instantiation of a system of control like peaceful coexistence, all the terrestrial microsystems are satellized and lose their autonomy. All energy, all events are absorbed by this eccentric gravitation, everything condenses and implodes toward the only micromodel of control (the orbital sat­ ellite), as conversely, in the other, biological, dimension, every­ thing converges and implodes on the molecular micromodel of the genetic code. Between the two, in this forking of the nuclear and the genetic, in the simultaneous assumption of the two fun­ damental codes of deterrence, every principle of meaning is ab­ sorbed, every deployment of the real is impossible. The simultaneity of two events in the month of July 1975 illustrated this in a striking manner: the linkup in space of the two American and Soviet supersatellites, apotheosis of peaceful coexistence-the suppression by the Chinese of ideogrammatic writing and conversion to the Roman alphabet. The latter signifies the "orbital'' instantiation of an abstract and modelized system of signs, into whose orbit all the once unique forms of style and writing will be reabsorbed. The satellization of language: the means for the Chinese to enter the system of peaceful coexistence, which is inscribed in their heavens at precisely the same time by the linkup of the two satellites. Orbital flight of the Big Two, neutralization and homogenization of everyone else on earth. Yet, despite this deterrence by the orbital power-the nuclear or molecular code-events continue at ground level, misfortunes are even more numerous, given the global process of the contiguity and simultaneity of data. But, subtly, they no longer have any meaning, they are no longer anything but the duplex effect of simulation at the summit. The best example can only be that of the war in Vietnam, because it took place at the intersection of a maximum historical and "revolutionary" stake, and of the installation of this deterrent authority. What meaning did this war have, and wasn't its unfolding a means of sealing the end of history in the decisive and culminating historic event of our era? Why did this war, so hard, so long, so ferocious, vanish from one day to the next as if by magic? Why did this American defeat (the largest reversal in the his­ tory of the USA) have no internal repercussions in America? If it had really signified the failure of the planetary strategy of the United States, it would necessarily have completely disrupted its internal balance and the American political system. Nothing of the sort occurred. Something else, then, took place. This war, at bottom, was nothing but a crucial episode of peaceful coexistence. It marked the arrival of China to peaceful coexistence. The nonintervention of China obtained and secured after many years, China's apprenticeship to a global modus vivendi, the shift from a global strategy of revolution to one of shared forces and empires, the transition from a radical alternative to political alternation in a system now essentially regulated (the normalization of Peking-Washington relations): this was what was at stake in the war in Vietnam, and in this sense, the USA pulled out of Vietnam but won the war. And the war ended "spontaneously" when this objective was achieved. That is why it was deescalated, demobilized so easily. This same reduction of forces can be seen on the field. The war lasted as long as elements irreducible to a healthy politics and discipline of power, even a Communist one, remained unliquidated. When at last the war had passed into the hands of regular troops in the North and escaped that of the resistance, the war could stop : it had attained its objective. The stake is thus that of a political relay. As soon as the Vietnamese had proved that they were no longer the carriers of an unpredictable subversion, one could let them take over. That theirs is a Communist order is not serious in the end: it had proved itself, it could be trusted. It is even more effective than capitalism in the liquidation of "savage" and archaic precapitalist structures. Same scenario in the Algerian war. The other aspect of this war and of all wars today: behind the armed violence, the murderous antagonism of the adversaries­ which seems a matter of life and death, which is played out as such (or else one could never send people to get themselves killed in this kind of thing) , behind this simulacrum of fighting to the death and of ruthless global stakes, the two adversaries are fundamentally in solidarity against something else, unnamed, never spoken, but whose objective outcome in war, with the equal complicity of the two adversaries, is total liquidation. Tribal, communitarian, precapitalist structures, every form of ex­ change, of language, of symbolic organization, that is what must be abolished, that is the object of murder in war-and war itself, in its immense, spectacular death apparatus, is nothing but the medium of this process of the terrorist rationalization of the social-the murder on which sociality will be founded, whatever its allegiance, Communist or capitalist. Total complicity, or division of labor between two adversaries (who may even consent to enormous sacrifices for it) for the very end of reshaping and domesticating social relations. 'The North Vietnamese were advised to countenance a scenario for liquidating the American presence in the course of which, of course, one must save face." This scenario: the extremely harsh bombardments of Hanoi. Their untenable character must not conceal the fact that they were nothing but a simulacrum to enable the Vietnamese to seem to countenance a compromise and for Nixon to make the Ameri­ cans swallow the withdrawal of their troops. The game was al­ ready won, nothing was objectively at stake but the verisimilitude of the final montage. The moralists of war, the holders of high wartime values should not be too discouraged: the war is no less atrocious for being only a simulacrum-the flesh suffers just the same, and the dead and former combatants are worth the same as in other wars. This objective is always fulfilled, just like that of the charting of territories and of disciplinary sociality. What no longer exists is the adversity of t4e adversaries, the reality of antagonistic causes, the ideological seriousness of war. And also the reality of victory or defeat, war being a process that triumphs well beyond these appearances. In any case, the pacification (or the deterrence) that dominates us today is beyond war and peace, it is that at every moment war and peace are equivalent. "War is peace," said Orwell. There also, the two differential poles implode into each other, or recycle one another-a simultaneity of contradictions that is at once the par­ ody and the end of every dialectic. Thus one can completely miss the truth of a war: namely, that it was finished well before it started, that there was an end to war at the heart of the war itself, and that perhaps it never started. Many other events (the oil cri­ sis, etc.) never started, never existed, except as artificial occurrences-abstract, ersatz, and as artifacts of history, catastrophes and crises destined to maintain a historical investment under hypnosis. The media and the official news service are only there to maintain the illusion of an actuality, of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of facts. All the events are to be read backward, or one becomes aware (as with the Communists "in power" in Italy, the retro, posthumous rediscovery of the gulags and Soviet dissi­ dents like the almost contemporary discovery, by a moribund ethnology, of the lost "difference" of Savages) that all these things arrived too late, with a history of delay, a spiral of delay, that they long ago exhausted their meaning and only live from an artificial effervescence of signs, that all these events succeed each other without logic, in the most contradictory, complete equivalence, in a profound indifference to their consequences (but this is be­ cause there are none: they exhaust themselves in their spectacular promotion)-all "newsreel" footage thus gives the sinister impression of kitsch, of retro and porno at the same time­ doubtless everyone knows this, and no one really accepts it. The reality of simulation is unbearable-crueler than Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, which was still an attempt to create a dramaturgy of life, the last gasp of an ideality of the body, of blood , of violence in a system that was already taking it away, toward a reabsorption of all the stakes without a trace of blood. For us the trick has been played. All dramaturgy, and even all real writing of cruelty has disappeared. Simulation is the master, and we only have a right to the retro, to the phantom, parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials. Everything still unfolds around us, in the cold light of deterrence (including Artaud, who has the right like everything else to his revival, to a second existence as the referential of cru­ elty). This is why nuclear proliferation does not increase the risk of either an atomic clash or an accident-save in the interval when the "young" powers could be tempted to make a nondeterrent, "real" use of it (as the Americans did in Hiroshima-but precisely only they had a right to this "use value" of the bomb, all of those who have acquired it since will be deterred from using it by the very fact of possessing it) . Entry into the atomic club, so prettily named, very quickly effaces (as unionization does in the working world) any inclination toward violent intervention. Responsibility, control, censure, self-deterrence always grow more rapidly than the forces or the weapons at our disposal: this is the secret of the social order. Thus the very possibility of ~~paralyzing~~ [freezing] a whole country by flicking a switch makes it so that the electrical engi­ neers will never use this weapon: the whole myth of the total and revolutionary strike crumbles at the very moment when the means are available-but alas precisely because those means are available. Therein lies the whole process of deterrence. It is thus perfectly probable that one day we will see nuclear powers export atomic reactors, weapons, and bombs to every lat­ itude. Control by threat will be replaced by the more effective strategy of pacification through the bomb and through the pos­ session of the bomb. The "little" powers, believing that they are buying their independent striking force, will buy the virus of deterrence, of their own deterrence. The same goes for the atomic reactors that we have already sent them: so many neutron bombs knocking out all historical virulence, all risk of explosion. In this sense, the nuclear everywhere inaugurates an accelerated process of implosion, it freezes everything around it, it absorbs all living energy. The nuclear is at once the culminating point of available energy and the maximization of energy control systems. Lockdown and control increase in direct proportion to (and undoubtedly even faster than) liberating potentialities. This was already the aporia of the modern revolution. It is still the absolute paradox of the nuclear. Energies freeze in their own fire, they deter them­ selves. One can no longer imagine what project, what power, what strategy, what subject could exist behind this enclosure, this vast saturation of a system by its own forces, now neutralized, unusable, unintelligible, nonexplosive-except for the possibility of an explosion toward the center, of an implosion where all these energies would be abolished in a catastrophic process (in the literal sense, that is to say in the sense of a reversion of the whole cycle toward a minimal point, of a reversion of energies toward a minimal threshold) .

#### Nuclear war is impossible - the symbolic value of the bomb precedes its utility value

Robinson 12 (Andy McLaverty-Robinson, political theorist and activist based in the UK, A to Z articles; “Jean Baudrillard: aleatory power and deterrence” Ceasefire ,  June 8, 2012, <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-8/> ) // *EM*

Jean Bau­drillard Was Here’ inscribed on the front of a mil­i­tary bunker in Bandier, Kuwait (Artist: Alia Farid) Reality is destroyed, or subordinated to the code, in several ways. It can be generated from blueprints provided by [the code](https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-5/) (as discussed in earlier sections). It can be ‘deterred’, such that real events are not able to happen. Or it can be recuperated through aleatory mechanisms of power. Let us start with the third possibility. The system is aleatory. This means that it operates through the management of chance. It is determined in its broad outlines, but relies on chance for its details. It rests on probabilities. Because the system determines outcomes ‘genetically’ – generating the different options through the code – only certain things are possible. The variation by chance and probability allows the system to control phenomena at an aggregate level. An aleatory system also brings in and incorporates resistances as they occur. It assigns them a place in the code, as niche markets, questionnaire options, political parties, categories of deviance. It is a machine of total recuperation which doesn’t wait for movements to emerge before it assigns them a category – it catches them in their early stages and pre-empts them. For instance, a new social critique might rapidly give rise to a new party or NGO which is quickly recuperated. Or it might be articulated by corporations themselves, as a new niche market. Although this process is often effective, it also contains problems for the system, because ultimately, it means that the system is governed by chance. We are plunged into an [abnormal uncertainty](https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-precarity/). In response, the system creates an excess of causality and finality. But this compounds the problem. Determined responses become hyper telic – they exceed their end. They become ends in themselves, pass the limits of their functions or use-values, and colonize the entire system. This process is also referred to as excrescence. It is similar to the proliferation of cancer cells in the body. For Baudrillard, this arrangement depends on a particular religious ontology. An accidental world implies an infinite will and energy, to keep all determinate connections from forming. According to Baudrillard, reason seeks to break the necessary connections among things which arise within cycles of symbolic exchange and conceptions of fate. Chance – the possibility of indeterminate, mutually indifferent elements relating ‘freely’ – is an effect of this decomposition of connections. It is an idea invented in modernity, along with the idea of a formless, unbonded world. It can only exist in a world without symbolic exchange. And it depends on the continued suppression of symbolic exchange. The idea of chance or the aleatory can be related to the elimination of symbolic exchange in various ways. Chance is actually impossible on a certain level. It is the perception we are left with after the destruction of causality. It is a world in which one wanders like a dead soul, with little chance of intense connections. Chance, and also statistical causality, remove both responsibility and seduction (or destiny). The dual rule of chance and necessity expresses a human desire for control over the metamorphosis of things. This control destroys the initiatory or ceremonial field. It thus paradoxically destroys any sense of mastery over our destiny. The order of production exists to make the order of metamorphosis impossible – to control flow and becoming. Simulation is also associated with a process Baudrillard terms deterrence. This term is a play on nuclear deterrence between the superpowers (before 1991), which Baudrillard saw as a telling case of deterrence in general, a simulated conflict which exists to preclude a real clash, a form of manipulation rather than destruction. Deterrence is not so much a power relation as a mindset. It holds people in check by making them feel powerless, disappointed, neutralised – deterred. When it is strong enough, it no longer needs violent repression or war – it precludes conflict in advance. In nuclear deterrence for instance, life is reduced to survival and conflicts become pointless, as they can’t reach the ultimate stakes. Simulation feigns reality and thereby deters or prevents reality. But this feigned reality is not entirely unreal, because it produces effects of reality – it is like a faked illness which produces real symptoms. Think for instance of punishments applied in response to acts: they’re neither an objectively real consequence, since they’re invented, nor an imagined consequence, since they actually happen. They’re a simulated consequence, an artificially created hyper-reality. According to Baudrillard, there is no true reality against which simulation can be compared. It is therefore more subversive of reality than a simple appearance or falsehood. It controls people in a different way – through persuasion or modelling. Instead of demanding that people submit to a prior model or norm, it interpellated people as already being the model or the majority. It thereby destroys the distance between the self and the norm, making transgression more difficult. It creates a doubled self from which it is hard to extract oneself. The question “from where do you speak, how do you know?” is silenced by the response, “but it is from your position that I speak”. Everything appears to come from and return to the people. The doubled self is portrayed and displayed in forms such as CCTV images, without a gap between representation and what is represented. This same doubling happens across different spheres – the model is truer than the true, fashion is more beautiful than the beautiful, hyperreality is more real than the real, and so on. The effect of excess comes from the lack of depth (of the imaginary, but also perhaps of relations and of context). Doubles are inherently fascinating. They’re very different from the seduction of effective images and illusions, such as trompe l’oeil (a type of art which can be mistaken for a real object). The double allows a kind of manipulation or blackmail in which the system takes hostage a part of the self – affect, desire, a secret – and uses it for control. Baudrillard thinks we are stalked by our doubles, like in the film [The Student of Prague](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLDfWjDxpn4). Yet doubles are also insufficient. People don’t like being ‘verified’ and predicted in advance. People prefer ideas of destiny to random probability. Deterrence is a barrier between ourselves and our drive for the symbolic. Deterrence also has an effect of deterring thought, of ‘mental deterrence’. It discourages people from thinking critically, hence feeding unreality. Disempowerment feeds into this deterrence of thought, as do the media, and the promotion of superficial sociality. At the same time, the system also creates a kind of generalised social lockdown or universal security system. This ‘lockup and control system’ is designed to prevent any real event from happening. **This system, based on norms, replaces older systems of violence, war and law, creating a social desert around itself. It tries to pre-plan everything, to leave nothing to contingencies or chance. It tries to make everything manageable through statistics and predetermined responses. The system tries to prevent accidental death through systematic, organised death.** For Baudrillard, this is the culmination of years of civilizing process and socialization. It is the culmination of the evolution of the dominant system. The failure of progressive teleologies has occurred because powers to lock-down and control have increased faster than powers to emancipate. The result is a kind of generalised nihilism. Deterrence induces general mobilisation, pacification and dissuasion – a death or incorporation of active energies. The state dreams of dissuading and annihilating all terrorism pre-emptively, through a generalized terror on every level. This is the price of the security of which people now dream, as Baudrillard already observed in 1983 – eighteen years before the state’s dream was realized. Overt and selective repression transmutes over time into generalized preventive repression. For instance, the police according to Baudrillard do not reduce violence – they simply take it over from crime and and become even more dangerous. The code deters every real process by means of its operational double. For instance, it prevents real revolutions by means of simulated revolutions, real wars by means of **simulated wars**, and so on. This leaves no space for the real to unfold of its own accord or for events to happen. Baudrillard thinks prisons and death are being replaced by a more subtle regime of control based on therapy, reform and normalization. The right and left are now represented mainly by the split between direct repression and indirect pacification. Baudrillard sees these options corresponding to the early, violent phase of capitalism, with its emphasis on conscious psychology and responsibility, and its more advanced, ‘neo-capitalist’ form, which draws on psychoanalysis and offers tolerance and reform. A therapeutic model of society, promoted by advertisers, politicians, and modern experts, actually covers up real conflicts and contradictions. It seeks to solve social problems by re-injecting simulations such as controlled smiles and regulated communication. He also refers to a regime of social control through security and safety, blackmailing people into conformity with the threat of their own death. He sees this as surrounding people with a sarcophagus to prevent them from dying – a kind of living death. Deterrence functions by an anxiety to act because action brings about massive destruction. Nuclear states can’t go to war because of mutually assured destruction. Workers won’t strike because the entire economy would be shut down. Small powers which get nuclear weapons actually buy into their own deterrence. Memory of the Holocaust is neutralised by its constant repetition on television. While this shuts down resistance, it also makes the system’s power unusable. Power becomes frozen and self-deterred. It creates a ‘protective zone’ of ‘maximum security’ which radiates through the territory held by the system. It is a kind of ‘glacis’, a zone where any assailant is constantly under fire from the system’s defenders. In a simulated world, events are prevented because no social logic or story can be deployed according to its own logic. A social force risks annihilation if it tries this. This leads to an evacuation of any historical stake from society. We are now living through the death pangs of strong referentials, including of the sense of being in the march of history or in hope/at risk of a pending revolution. It might actually be better to think of it as incapacitation rather than deterrence. People become unable or afraid to act because the capacity to fight and win has been taken away. This means that everything is neutralised, and reinscribed in the system. This ‘absolute model of security’ is according to Baudrillard elaborated from nuclear war. **The nuclear battle station is the point from which the model of deterrence radiates out through social life.** Deterrence is directed against a range of phenomena such as complexity, finality, contradiction, accident, rupture, chance, and transversality. Yet paradoxically, events continue to happen ‘at ground level’, below the level of data-control. Misfortunes and personal crises multiply. The social becomes organised like a disaster-movie script, with constant struggles to survive, states of exception, discourses of risk-avoidance and risk-management – a situation of [everyday precarity](https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-precarity/). The function of deterrence is not to prevent this permanent crisis. It is rather to prevent it from having system-level effects. Phenomena such as the Gulf War, Watergate, and other political/media events are treated by Baudrillard as instances of deterrence. They are based on a simulation of a situation where the old stakes still matter, keeping old antagonisms and lost phenomena artificially alive as simulacra. They thus exude ‘operational negativity’ – preventing the emergence of real antagonisms. Non-war in the Gulf The theory of deterrence is exemplified in Baudrillard’s analysis of what happened in 1991, when according to him, the Gulf War ‘did not take place’. What took place, instead, was a ‘non-war’. This is a type of conflict specific to the third order of simulation. A non-war is a simulated war. It reproduces exactly the elements of a real war, down to its destruction, death, propaganda, and so on. But it is not a situation which arises between adversaries, which is a real, unpredictable event. A true war is a strategic conflict over an absent centre of power which no-one can occupy. Both sides believe in a cause; the outcome is unpredictable. This is why a non-war is not a true war. Real power, according to Baudrillard, is a strategy, a relation of force, and a stake. It is subject to death and the symbolic. On the other hand, power exercised to conceal its own absence is no longer subject to death and the symbolic. It can persist indefinitely, as an object of consumer demand. For Baudrillard, war is pointless and impossible to wage in the nuclear era. There is no proportion between means (total annihilation) and ends (strategic objectives). Hence, the ‘scene’ of war – the scenario of total conflict to the death, or of adversity over stakes between combatants – will never again take place. War becomes ‘impossible to exchange’; it escapes symbolic exchange. The distillation of war in everyday fear prevents the final apocalyptic clash. Arguably, non-war is to war as hyperreality is to reality. A non-war is a simulation in the sense of derivation from a prior model. Western powers fight non-wars based on models, and go to war based on models. The non-war, at least on the western side, is an operational unfolding of models and signs already planned in advance. The symbolic dimension, the exchange with the enemy, the reversibility of actions, are absent. This is why, for Baudrillard, it is not a war, even though all the other characteristics of war are very much present. He emphasizes repeatedly that non-war is still as deadly as war ever was. What it has lost is ‘the adversity of the adversaries’, the ‘ideological seriousness’ of a war between two counterposed possibilities, the reality of victory or defeat as systemic changes. For Baudrillard, western non-wars are now simulations in that there isn’t really a fight to the death between two adversaries. Rather, the purpose of western power, and usually of both adversaries, is to prevent the liquidation of the system’s deterrence. This requires the destruction of symbolic exchange, and hence of ‘pre-capitalist’ societies and groups. Non-war is missing the symbolic dimension a true war might have – the possibility of reversibility, or conflictual dialogue with an enemy so to speak. Contact between America and Iraq did not happen during the Gulf War. America can only imagine an adversary in their own image. They are invulnerable to symbolic violence, due to their pragmatism and masochism. America has been caught in a spiral of unconditional repression by the aspiration to be a global police force. They try to humiliate by defeating the enemy impersonally – “nothing personal” – and avoid seeing or meeting the adversary. They seek to show the infallibility of their machine, displaying signs of relentlessness. They seek to avoid any reaction or living impulse. In electronic war, the enemy no longer exists – there is only refractory data to be neutralized and brought into the consensus.

#### The world has been taken hostage by the logics of deterrence - Their conceptualization of nuclear war erases the principles of reality that allow entities to unfold according to their own logic

Oberg 14 (Dan Öberg , Associate Professor of War Studies at the Swedish Defence University, Internatinoal Journal of Baudrillard Studies; “Baudrillard and War” Volume 11, Number 2, May, 2014, https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/baudrillard-and-war/ ) EM  
As many have noted Baudrillard is first and foremost a ‘critic’ (Ranciere 2006, Grace 2000: 1). To Baudrillard it is not so much a theory of war that is lacking but a proper critique of war’s ontology. So what does his critique imply? Arguably he was well ahead of his time with regards to understanding how war related to advertisement, mass media, and the television. More than three decades before Ignatieff wrote about ‘virtual wars’, Baudrillard had already noticed how the virtual leaked into the real with regards to the Vietnam War. For example, in 1967 he claimed that the TV images of the war takes us away from human reality (and classical conceptions of war) towards a world of advertising (2001: 42). This was a time when, for Baudrillard, as for Marxism in general, war was mostly seen as an integrated part of the capitalist system (1975: 145 and 1998b: 55, 57, 121). In the beginning of the 1970’s, particularly after the book The Mirror of Production and his definitive break with Marxism, Baudrillard’s view on war changed. So what does this change imply? It might be easy to associate his thinking on war with what took place (or did not take place) in the Gulf in 1991, but to Baudrillard this was merely a symptom of other more complex underlying logics. Perhaps we might say that the most intriguing aspect about the Gulf War was not its build up, conduct, or media-coverage, but what this illustrated about war as such.[3](https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/baudrillard-and-war/#3) He starts his essay ‘The Gulf War will not take place’, written before ‘the war started’ by stating that: ‘(f)rom the beginning we knew that this war would never happen’ (Baudrillard 1995: 23). It is therefore not a matter of whether the US starts bombing en masse or not (after a build-up phase of seven months) but something quite different: the Gulf War is about the ontological status of war itself (Baudrillard 1995: 32). Therefore, the impact of his thinking on war goes well beyond the Gulf. To grasp these logics we need to go back to his writings on the Cold War and particularly the notion of deterrence. Long before the Gulf War, Baudrillard had already identified deterrence as a key factor to understanding war. As he argues, ever since the end of World War II – when politics was still dependent on the distinction between war and peace – the world had been taken hostage to the logic of deterrence. This means that he sees deterrence, not as simply dictating behavior (through for example coercion or intimidation, as in Schelling 1966) but as something which makes the underlying principles of reality disappear. While traditional theory around military strategy would think of deterrence as something to manage through bargaining or rational behavior, Baudrillard sees it as something which puts an end to the possibility of military strategy and has severe consequences for our understanding of events, history, and politics: Deterrence precludes war – the archaic violence of expanding systems. Deterrence itself is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable systems or systems in involution. There is no longer a subject of deterrence, nor an adversary nor a strategy – it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes (Baudrillard, 1994a: 32-33, my emphasis)…/…Everywhere where irreversible apparatuses of control are elaborated, everywhere where the notion of security becomes omnipotent, everywhere where the norm replaces the old arsenal of laws and violence (including war), it is the system of deterrence that grows, and around it grows the historical, social, and political desert. A gigantic involution that makes every conflict, every finality, every confrontation contract in proportion to this blackmail that interrupts, neutralizes, freezes them all. No longer can any revolt, any story be deployed according to its own logic because it risks annihilation. No strategy is possible any longer, and **escalation is only a puerile game given over to the military.** The political stake is dead, only simulacra of conflicts and carefully circumscribed stakes remain (Ibid.: 33-34). The consequences for war’s being are therefore severe. These consequences are perhaps best illustrated ‘in reality’ through the way the excess of high-tech weapon systems, so characteristic for the Cold War, participate in making war lose its character (Baudrillard 1989). During the Cold War countries like the US and the Soviet Union had enough nuclear warheads to destroy the human civilization many times over. With the introduction of intercontinental ballistic missiles (increasing range and effect) and atomic submarines (giving second strike capability), nuclear warfare reached a ‘hyperefficiency’ which also made it useless for waging war. Baudrillard sees this uselessness as part of a larger social context which indicates a: ‘disgust for a world that is growing, accumulating, sprawling, sliding into hypertrophy, a world that cannot manage to give birth’ (Baudrillard 1989: 31). The Cold war thereby helps to produce a ‘stillborn’ world with an excess of memories, archives, documentation, sophisticated weapon-systems, plans, programs, and decisions that does not lead to either wars or events (1989: 31). Therefore any war that is being waged as real is always circumscribed by the overkill-capacity of nuclear war, in turn becoming less and less warlike and more and more a simulation of war. As Baudrillard concludes in Cool Memories V: ‘(w)ar is impossible, and yet it takes place. But the fact that it takes place in no way detracts from its impossibility. The system is absurd and yet it functions. But the fact that it functions in no way detracts from its absurdity’ (2006b: 25). War has become absurd, but no less deadly for that matter. To Baudrillard the notion of war has therefore entered into a definitive crisis, best illustrated by how deterrence erases political stakes and supplant them with virtual stakes precluding events of war. The end of the Cold War does not put an end to deterrence but rather continues through new means such as drug wars, debt wars, or soft wars (1996: 87): The powerful of this world are gathered in Rome to sign a treaty ‘that puts a final end to the Cold War’. In fact they do not know they are starting a new war, of which they are the first victims: they remained parked on the tarmac, surrounded by armoured cars, barbed wire and helicopters – the whole panoply of this new cold war, the cold war of armed security, of perpetual deterrence and faceless terrorism (2006b: 45-46). Much of Baudrillard’s writings on war after the end of the Cold war grapple with these ‘new characteristics of war’ and its relation to history, politics, events, media, or economy (see for example Baudrillard 1995: 24-26, 65-68). If seen through the prism of real and virtual war we can appreciate the difference between Baudrillard’s account and Marxism. As stated in the previous part Marxism tends to consider war an integrated part of the capitalist system. Baudrillard on the other hand illustrates how war is the victim of a separation in kind as it is turned into an object without use-value but with simulation-value (1990:56) something which became all the more obvious during the build up for the war in Iraq 2003 and the WMD debate which was used as a rationale for invasion. If we accept that real war has disintegrated and lost its principles under the virtual catastrophe of total nuclear and orbital war (Baudrillard 1993: 29; 2002b: 21-22) – we are forced to reconsider what a theory of war implies: Traditional theorists of war must be…at a loss before the explosion of their object of study. For, paradoxically, it isn’t the bomb which has exploded, but the war-object, which has exploded into two separate parts – a total, virtual war in orbit and multiple real wars on the ground. The two have neither the same dimensions nor the same rules…(2002b: 22-23). Hence, to Baudrillard, war consists of two inseparable but incompatible forms with two kinds of logic. Moreover, through this virtual, simulated version of war, the ‘real’ war (just like ‘real’ production or ‘real’ economy) is also dislocated (Baudrillard 1993: 31, 1994a). The referent changes from being one of battles between armies to one of the simulation of this battle. Uncertainty seeps into war (‘is this really a war?’) and what used to be at stake in a war of violence (such as conquest or domination) are no longer the underlying principles of war’s ontology. This uncertainty spawns wars of ‘pure speculation’ waged as advertisement campaigns (Baudrillard 1995: 28-29).

#### Deterrence precludes nuclear war however threats of nuclear annihilation serve to reify a universal security apparatus. The balance of terror is nothing more than the terror of balance

**Baudrillard 81** (Jean, Simulacra and Simulation: The Orbital and the Nuclear, 1981, CP) *EM*

The apotheosis of simulation: the nuclear. However, the balance of terror is never anything but the spectacular slope of a system of deterrence that has insinuated itself from the inside into all the cracks of daily life. Nuclear suspension only serves to seal the trivialized system of deterrence that is at the heart of the media, of the violence without consequences that reigns throughout the world, of the aleatory apparatus of all the choices that are made for us. The most insignificant of our behaviors is regulated by neutralized, indifferent, equivalent signs, by zero-sum signs like those that regulate the "strategy of games" (but the true equation is elsewhere, and the unknown is precisely that variable of simulation which makes of the atomic arsenal itself a hyperreal form, a simulacrum that dominates everything and reduces all "ground-level" events to being nothing but ephemeral scenarios, transforming the life left us into survival, into a stake without stakes - not even into a life insurance policy: into a policy that already has no value). It is not the direct threat of atomic destruction that paralyzes our lives, it is deterrence that gives them leukemia. And this deterrence comes from that fact that even the real atomic clash is precluded - precluded like the eventuality of the real in a system of signs. The whole world pretends to believe in the reality of this threat (this is understandable on the part of the military, the gravity of their exercise and the discourse of their "strategy" are at stake), but it is precisely at this level that there are no strategic stakes. The whole originality of the situation lies in the improbability of destruction. Deterrence precludes war - the archaic violence of expanding systems. Deterrence itself is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable systems or systems in involution. There is no longer a subject of deterrence, nor an adversary nor a strategy - it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes. Atomic war, like the Trojan War, will not take place. The risk of nuclear annihilation only serves as a pretext, through the sophistication of weapons (a sophistication that surpasses any possible objective to such an extent that it is itself a symptom of nullity), for installing a universal security system, a universal lockup and control system whose deterrent effect is not at all aimed at an atomic clash (which was never in question, except without a doubt in the very initial stages of the cold war, when one still confused the nuclear apparatus with conventional war) but, rather, at the much greater probability of any real event, of anything that would be an event in the general system and upset its balance. The balance of terror is the terror of balance. Deterrence is not a strategy, it circulates and is exchanged between nuclear protagonists exactly as is international capital in the orbital zone of monetary speculation whose fluctuations suffice to control all global exchanges. Thus the money of destruction (without any reference to real destruction, any more than floating capital has a real referent of production) that circulates in nuclear orbit suffices to control all the violence and potential conflicts around the world. What is hatched in the shadow of this mechanism with the pretext of a maximal, "objective," threat, and thanks to Damocles' nuclear sword, is the perfection of the best system of control that has ever existed. And the progressive satellization of the whole planet through this hypermodel of security.

### Politics

#### Politics is dead. Politics has entered the stage of Simulacra since the dawn of Neo-Liberal democracy, the only thing that exists is the hologram of its existence, there’s simply nothing inside, contentless. Resistance through confrontation of the system achieves nothing, but rather revives the haunting ghost of the political. We must reimagine power itself, the fact that politics is already dead.

**Baudrillard 94** (Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulation: Hyper Market and Hyper Commodity, pg24-27)SY

These staged presidential assassinations are revealing because they signal the status of all negativity in the West: political opposition, the "Left," critical discourse, etc. - a simulacral contrast through which power attempts to break the vicious circle of its nonexistence, of its fundamental irresponsibility, of its "suspension." Power floats like money, like language, like theory. Criticism and negativity alone still secrete a phantom of the reality of power. If they become weak for one reason or another, **power has no other recourse but to artificially revive and hallucinate them. I**t **is in this way that the Spanish executions still serve as a stimulant to Western liberal democracy, to a dying system of democratic values. Fresh blood, but for how much longer?** The deterioration of all power is irresistibly pursued: it is not so much the "revolutionary forces" that accelerate this process (often it is quite the opposite), it is the system itself that deploys against its own structures this violence that annuls all substance and all finality. **One must not resist this process by trying to confront the system and destroy it, because this system that is dying from being dispossessed of its death expects nothing but that from us: that we give the system back its death, that we revive it through the negative. End of revolutionary praxis, end of the dialectic**. Curiously, Nixon, who was not even found worthy of dying at the hands of the most insignificant, chance, unbalanced person (and though it is perhaps true that presidents are assassinated by unbalanced types, this changes nothing: the leftist penchant for detecting a rightist conspiracy beneath this brings out a false problem - the function of bringing death to, or the prophecy, etc., against power has always been fulfilled, from primitive societies to the present, by demented people, crazy people, or neurotics, who nonetheless carry out a social function as fundamental as that of presidents), was nevertheless ritually put to death by Watergate. Watergate is still a mechanism for the ritual murder of power (the American institution of the presidency is much more thrilling in this regard than the European: it surrounds itself with all the violence and vicissitudes of primitive powers, of savage rituals). But already impeachment is no longer assassination: it happens via the Constitution. **Nixon has nevertheless arrived at the goal of which all power dreams: to be taken seriously enough, to constitute a mortal enough danger to the group to be one day relieved of his duties, denounced, and liquidated. Ford doesn't even have this opportunity anymore: a simulacrum of an already dead power, he can only accumulate against himself the signs of reversion through murder - in fact, he is immunized by his impotence, which infuriates him.** In contrast to the primitive rite, which foresees the official and sacrificial death of the king (the king or the chief is nothing without the promise of his sacrifice), the modern political imaginary goes increasingly in the direction of delaying, of concealing for as long as possible, the death of the head of state. This obsession has accumulated since the era of revolutions and of charismatic leaders: Hitler, Franco, Mao, having no "legitimate" heirs, no filiation of power, see themselves forced to perpetuate themselves indefinitely - popular myth never wishes to believe them dead. The pharaohs already did this: it was always one and the same person who incarnated the successive pharaohs. Everything happens as if Mao or Franco had already died several times and had been replaced by his double. From a political point of view, that a head of state remains the same or is someone else doesn't strictly change anything, so long as they resemble each other. For a long time now a head of state - no matter which one - is nothing but the simulacrum of himself, and only that gives him the power and the quality to govern. No one would grant the least consent, the least devotion to a real person. It is to his double, he being always already dead, to which allegiance is given. This myth does nothing but translate the persistence, and at the same time the deception, of the necessity of the king's sacrificial death. W**e are still in the same boat: no society knows how to mourn the real, power, the social itself, which is implicated in the same loss. And it is through an artificial revitalization of all this that we try to escape this fact.** This situation will no doubt end up giving rise to socialism. Through an unforeseen turn of events and via an irony that is no longer that of history, it is from the death of the social that socialism will emerge, as it is from the death of God that religions emerge. A twisted advent, a perverse event, an unintelligible reversion to the logic of reason. **As is the fact that power is in essence no longer present except to conceal that there is no more power.** A simulation that can last indefinitely, because, as distinct from "true" power - which is, or was, a structure, a strategy, a relation of force, a stake - it is nothing but the object of a social demand, and thus as the object of the law of supply and demand, it is no longer subject to violence and death. **Completely purged of a political dimension, it, like any other commodity, is dependent on mass production and consumption.** Its spark has disappeared, only the fiction of a political universe remains. The same holds true for work. The spark of production, the violence of its stakes no longer exist. The whole world still produces, and increasingly, but subtly work has become something else: a need (as Marx ideally envisioned it but not in the same sense), the object of a social "demand," like leisure, to which it is equivalent in the course of everyday life. A demand exactly proportional to the loss of a stake in the work process.\*6 Same change in fortune as for power: the scenario of work is there to conceal that the real of work, the real of production, has disappeared. And the real of the strike as well, which is no longer a work stoppage, but its alternate pole in the ritual scansion of the social calendar. Everything occurs as if each person had, after declaring a strike, "occupied" his place and work station and recommenced production, as is the norm in a "self-managed" occupation, exactly in the same terms as before, all while declaring himself (and in virtually being) permanently on strike. This is not a dream out of science fiction: everywhere it is a question of doubling the process of work. And of a doubling of the process of going on strike - striking incorporated just as obsolescence is in objects, just as crisis is in production. So, there is no longer striking, nor work, but both simultaneously, that is to say something else: a magic of work, a trompel'oeil, a scenodrama (so as not to say a melodrama) of production, a collective dramaturgy on the empty stage of the social. **It is no longer a question of the ideology of work** - the traditional ethic that would obscure the "real" process of work and the "objective" process of exploitation - **but of the scenario of work. In the same way, it is no longer a question of the ideology of power, but of the scenario of power**(. **Ideology only corresponds to a corruption of reality through signs; simulation corresponds to a short circuit of reality and to its duplication through signs.** It is always the goal of the ideological analysis to restore the objective process, **it is always a false problem to wish to restore the truth beneath the simulacrum.** **This is why in the end power is so much in tune with ideological discourses and discourses on ideology, that is they are discourses of truth - always good for countering the mortal blows of simulation, even and especially if they are revolutionary.**

#### Politics is, like, definitely dead. Probably.

Shapiro, 20 (Alan Shapiro, baudrillard genius, “Is Trump a Fascist or is He the Parody of Fascism?” 10/31/2020, http://www.alan-shapiro.com/is-trump-a-fascist-or-is-he-the-parody-of-fascism/)//Townes

Epistemology of True and False The kind of media theory or media analysis which has been prevalent on the American political left for the past several decades operates essentially with an epistemology of true and false. Noam Chomsky has always been subtle and nuanced in describing the moral complicity of the intellectual class (and his own personal struggle to overcome that complicity) with abhorrent U.S. government policies such as the destruction of Vietnam in the 1960s or of Iraq in 1991. Yet Chomsky’s commentaries on what the corporate liberal media reports on politics, current events, and world affairs are largely about exposing the lies that the news media tells and recounting the contextual and factual realities on the ground which they conceal. Chomsky only analyzes the entity called the news media. He does not analyze the media as a whole – for example, entertainment TV shows, advertising, celebrity culture, or blockbuster movies. He assumes that an understanding of the news media or of the domain called politics or the public sphere can be accomplished without connecting the news media to the media in general in the overall situation of advanced capitalism. In classic works such as Manufacturing Consent (co-authored with Edward S. Herman and published in 1992) and Media Control (2002), Chomsky argues that the mass communications news media carries out the propaganda function of lying.1 Powerful business interests which have a profit motive manipulate the media, which in turn manipulates and controls the citizenry. The truth that American foreign policy has the essential function of establishing governments around the world which are politically controlled by us and are friendly to big companies is concealed by the dissemination of falsehoods. The role of the leftist activist or journalist is to tell the truth about any given political conjuncture. Chomsky’s work is extremely valuable, yet what is Chomsky’s perspective missing? In their war against Trump, the liberal political media – CNN and the New York Times, for example – take the same tack as Noam Chomsky in epistemologically framing their struggle with the fake billionaire as a battle between true and false, between facts and lies. Trump is constantly telling lies and the Washington Post is unmasking them every day, keeping a list of them, setting the record straight. As of July 2020, Trump had told twenty thousand lies. It is no surprise that Chomsky and the liberal media share this same epistemology – they both believe in the philosophy and the historical project of the modernist Enlightenment: facts, science, truth, communication, rationality – these are allegedly the great achievements of the democratic West. Never mind that it was this same liberal media that helped Trump win the Republican nomination for President in the first place against sixteen other candidates in 2016. Trump merged the sphere of politics with shock jock Reality TV World Wrestling Federation media entertainment. He provided those liberal TV stations, newspapers, and websites with a new sensationalistic headline every day for many months. Since making money is their highest priority – and astonishment, titillation, and breakdown are the commodities they sell – the media loved it and made Trump their absolute focus of attention. Society of the Spectacle and Hyperreality An alternative to the epistemology of true and false as a media theory – which is derivative of the assumption that Enlightenment rationality and the civilized discussion advocated by John Stuart Mill in On Liberty are going to save us – was offered by the French Situationist Guy Debord in his 1967 book Society of the Spectacle.2 Let me state that my position is that we should seek a balance between the modernist commitment to truth and the post-modernist placing into question of that assumption. I do not want to reject rationality and truth, but I believe that new strategies are urgently required as well. Guy Debord was a neo-Marxist thinker attempting to comprehend how control over the lives of workers by capitalists expanded from the sphere of production to consumerism, everyday life, and the media culture of images and rhetoric in the historical progression to advanced capitalism. With his concept of the spectacle, Debord understood that the omnipresence of visual images institutes a world of both abstraction and passivity, a diminishing of what is “directly lived” and an increase in the autonomy and power of the images themselves.3 Something becomes true – or more true than true – by virtue of having been said, or said charismatically, in the media. In the spectacle, “the liar has lied to himself.” “In a world which is topsy-turvy,” writes Debord, “the true is a moment of the false.”4 Social life goes beyond the shift from being to having to appearing and the reign of appearances. The media theorist and semiotician Jean Baudrillard developed Guy Debord’s notion of the society of the spectacle even further into his theory of simulation, simulacra, and hyper-reality.5 Baudrillard’s most celebrated book is his 1981 volume Simulacra and Simulation, where he famously wrote about the map preceding the territory, and about Disneyland existing to conceal the fact that all of America is Disneyland.6 Simulacra are copies without originals. Semiotics (linguistics applied to culture) teaches us about the signifier and the signified, which together constitute the linguistic-cultural sign. In post-modernism, the signifiers (images and discourses) come to replace the signifieds (facts and references) of which the visuals and words are supposed to be the reliable and verifiable representations. Representation is surpassed by simulation. Words and images stand on their own and have no reference.7 The spectacle itself has become the main thing that the contemporary society and economy produce. Consumer objects, architectural ambiences, and media artefacts all primarily have an abstract semiotic function. In the system of objects (Baudrillard’s first book of 1968 was The System of Objects), the physicality and definite location of objects gets subordinated to their participation in the “perfect circulation of messages.”8 The intercommunication and relationality of sign-objects to each other takes precedence over the specificity of each. All objects and media content enter into an equivalence through their common belonging to the universal self-congratulatory communication system. Each product ad refers not only to the individual product that it is informing us about – it also refers to itself as ad, endorsing the wonder of advertising per se. Through the spectacular celebration or radical visibility of a single object or brand, it is the totality of objects and a universe made complete by brands that is promoted. In speaking of one single consumer object, advertising virtually glorifies all spectacle objects and media images. Consumer society (Baudrillard’s second book of 1970 was The Consumer Society) does not satisfy needs but is rather a manipulation of signs.9 To become a consumer object or media message, the entity must first enter into the universal sign-system. Baudrillard’s third book of 1972 was For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.10 Karl Marx’s political-economic theory of the commodity-form of exchange value in production capitalism gets merged – and in a critical way – with a radicalization of Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic semiotics in an original fusion critique of the sign-form in consumer capitalism.11 Baudrillard articulates the homology between Saussure’s linguistic sign and Marx’s commodity form. This unified political economy of the sign or analysis of the commodity-slash-sign form equals the code. The real, the lived, the myth of an objective reality – they all become alibis for the simulation models. The signifier of the greatness of America’s prosperity is standing in for concrete singularities of objects. The code of signifiers substitutes for references in the immense process of simulation. We live in the formal democracy of standards of living and signs of affluence – the republic of the automobile, the cheeseburger, and the home entertainment system. Affluence is the accumulation of signs of happiness. The media in general have cut us off from real access to historical events. Everything that I know about the Holocaust, the Second World War, and the Vietnam War comes from Hollywood films about those events which I have seen. Baudrillard cites many times an aphorism by Jewish German-language philosopher Elias Canetti from 1945, speaking about a certain point in history, when exactly this point was is unknowable, when history itself disappeared. Canetti writes: “As of a certain point, history was no longer real. Without noticing it, all mankind suddenly left reality, everything happening since then was not true; but we didn’t notice.”12 In his essay on Francis Ford Coppola’s 1979 blockbuster Vietnam War movie Apocalypse Now, Baudrillard writes that Coppola’s masterpiece is the continuation of the Vietnam War by other means. “Nothing else in the world smells like that,” says Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore (Robert Duvall). “I love the smell of napalm in the morning… It smells like victory.”13 The high-budget extravaganza was produced the same way that America fought in Vietnam. “War became film,” writes Baudrillard. “Film becomes war, the two are joined by their common hermorrhage into technology.”14 There is implosion or mutual contamination between film becoming Virtual Reality and War. Donald Trump the Empty Signifier Donald Trump is a product of this culture of postmodern anything goes images and rhetoric. The mythology of Trump was born during the New York City gilded 1980s, the era of Ivan Boesky and Gordon Gecko greed and Wall Street insider trading. Donald Trump plastered the name Donald Trump everywhere he could. He of the golden toilet, he the playboy ladies’ man, the casino owner, the entrepreneur of the opulence of the billion-dollar Atlantic City Taj Majal gambling and entertainment paradise-complex. He was a failed businessman and a gangster, but on Reality TV he played the ultimate glamorous billionaire whom many Americans admired and dreamed of themselves becoming. President Trump lies and his supporters believe it. For them, his charismatic speech has become more powerful than the democratic and scientific systems of true and false. In two of his final texts – Carnival and Cannibal and The Agony of Power – written shortly before his death in 2007, Jean Baudrillard describes a newer “order of simulacra” which is the phase of irony, parody and the carnivalesque.15 Baudrillard upgrades his concepts of simulacra, simulation, and hyper-reality into a cogent diagnosis of the self-parodistic stage of Western society. Simulation or hyper-reality is no longer the artificial staging of a so-called reality by the models and codes which precede it. Simulation is now a farce, an immense irony, a masquerade, a funhouse-mirror distortion of the previous values and ideals of modernism: freedom, culture, truth, humanitarianism. “Every signification is eliminated in its own sign,” writes Baudrillard in The Agony of Power, “and the profusion of signs parodies a by now unobtainable reality… Power is only the parody of the signs of power – the cannibalization of reality by signs.”16 The values of the West and of America degenerate into a caricature of themselves and devour themselves. This is Donald Trump. We have experienced these past four years – in the masterful showmanship of Donald Trump and his fanatic deplorable followers, in the full-scale replacement of politics by Reality TV, in the tele-morphosis of the merger between Reality TV and everyday life – the disappearance of political substance into the fascination with the banality of insults (see Hannah Arendt’s banality of evil) that is now the hallmark of the media-celebrity-gossip culture of obscenity which dominates American life and the online monopoly social media platforms.17 Donald Trump is a successful empty signifier. “The bigger he got as a name, the smaller he got as a person,” said recently the former Trump Organization executive Barbara A. Res.18 Trump is the ultimate simulacrum, the living demonstration of the rule of the signifiers over the signifieds. Fake is not a betrayal of authenticity. Trump is the most talented fake in the world. Lies are exciting. They set in motion their own forceful narrative. When Trump says something, it becomes true because Trump says it, and there is little that the New York Times or the Washington Post can do about it. The institutional bases for consensus and legitimation of the truth have disappeared beneath the mountains of information and the virtualization of discourse. The media culture in general paved the way for Trump. All of America is responsible for the disastrous situation in which we now find ourselves. From Simulation to the Grotesque and the Self-Parody A not so well-known aspect of Baudrillard’s theory of simulation and hyper-reality is the way that he links the postmodern culture of media images to the motif of the grotesque in art, literature and performance, as a cultural expression moves from parody to self-parody, as something becoming a parody or caricature of itself. We are living the historical phase of the self-parody of the revered values of Western civilization. Simulation takes a major step forward from merely “the hyper-real replacing the real” to the grotesque. We are on the fast track to what Baudrillard calls carnivalization and cannibalization. Carnivals were historically very political – they were parodies made of the powerful by the oppressed. At festivals, the black African colonized dressed up monkeys in admiral suits and hats to parody the white colonizers.19 In Cologne and in the Rhineland region of Germany, parody and mockery of the French and Prussian occupiers were at the center of the carnival tradition that began in the nineteenth century. But self-parody is something different. It occurs without conscious intention. It is like what Karl Marx wrote in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, writing about the French coup d’état of 1851, when Marx famously said: “Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.”20 To avoid having to give up the Presidency, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte staged a self-coup to stay in power. He carried out Operation Rubicon on the anniversary of his uncle Napoleon’s triumph at Austerlitz in 1805. Self-parody sinks its unaware performer into debasement or abjection. America sank into abjection with the 2004 Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse scandal (Baudrillard wrote about Abu Ghraib in his 2004 essay “War Porn”).21 U.S. Army and Central Intelligence Agency personnel sent selfies to their friends and relatives from Saddam Hussein’s infamous prison, now taken over by the occupying American power, smiling and saying cheese while standing next to prisoners whom they had just sodomized and tortured. Disneyland and the Americana culture of universal total simulation seem like harmless fun. Radical simulation is how America came to achieve hegemony over the world. America had no peers in its fabrication of fantasies and spectacles. Yet at what point does that become seriously perverse? Donald Trump is the embodied metaphor of that turning point. You want to be the world’s only superpower through the image? Then you will bring yourself down by the endlessly looping video image and the image-playback.22 After the tragic event of September 11, 2001, the video footage of the implosion of the World Trade Center twin towers was played back thousands of times over and over again on TV in an endless loop, the eyes of the tele-spectators fixed to the screen in perverse fascination. Baudrillard detected a symbolism in the way that the two tallest buildings of the Manhattan skyline collapsed or imploded in a visually suicidal motion, seemingly responding in turn as a counter-gesture to the murder-suicides of the 19 terrorists.23 The carnival of the image is also the self-cannibalization by the image.24 An important precursor of Trump playing the President on television and on Twitter was the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California in 2003. The elevation to a powerful political post of the Mr. Olympia bodybuilder and star of the Terminator series of science fiction films was a not-so-surprising caricature of democracy. Reagan the Hollywood actor and TV host of General Electric Theater had already been governor and President. Politics has been fully banalized into a game of idols and fans, the triumph of the celebrity culture.25 Schwarzenegger would have certainly become President if not for the bad luck of an antiquated clause in the Constitution which disqualified him a priori on xenophobic grounds. As we are now witnessing the probable end of the Trump presidency – and thinking with Baudrillard – I contemplate the contempt for the rest of the world which the Trump supporters feel and express through their allegiance to him. Those who identify the most with the simulacrum of America take revenge symbolically for the envy and scorn which the rest of the world feels for the American simulacrum. America exercises its power in the world through its mastery of images. Yet a certain desperation seems to have now set in. The Trump phenomenon is the marriage of that showman grifter narcissist and the desperation of the MAGA throngs worried about losing their standing. Springtime for Hitler For a long time, some Jewish theologians thought that showing images of the Holocaust should be taboo, since the event was the ultimate unrepresentable evil. Humanities theorists of photography have sometimes argued generally that historical truth cannot be depicted through visual images. Similarly, it was thought that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in the 1930s were so morally reprehensible that parody or comedy or jokes about them should be taboo. In the 1967 film The Producers made by Mel Brooks, bankrupt Broadway producer Max Bialystock, played by Zero Mostel, needs to stage a musical that is guaranteed to be a flop in order to carry out a complex scam to save himself from financial ruin. Bialystock hits upon the apparently ingenious idea of producing a musical comedy about Hitler and the Nazis. It will be in such bad taste that the show is guaranteed to be panned by the public and the theatre critics and to close in disgrace on opening night. Yet to Bialystock’s astonishment, the show is a smashing success. The Broadway public finds Springtime for Hitler to be the funniest thing in the world. Adolf Hitler is unintentionally brilliantly parodied by deranged ex-Nazi Franz Liebkind. Due to the unexpected triumph, Bialystock now paradoxically faces financial ruin and even prison.26 Is Trump a fascist or is he the parody of fascism? Here is my answer: he is the parody of fascism. Yet he is also the self-parody of America and, at one step removed, of the celebrated values of the West. Trump is the self-parody of the most hyper-mediatized culture in the world: the culture of consumerism and shopping mall no-place ambient spaces; television and advertising; the media- and image-saturated society of the spectacle; and the hyper-real fantasy aesthetics of Disneyland. As both the parody of fascism and the self-parody of the post-World War II so-called American way of life, as the synthesis of both (self-)parodies, Donald Trump has brought us to the precipice, to the edge of the cliff, to the spot from where we are now standing and staring down into the abyss. Classical fascism works according to the Führer principle and a strong and stable set of beliefs. There are territorial claims, hard nationalism, and theories of race. For Trump, these aspects become variable and anything goes. He changes his mind every day and has no goals or agenda other than greatness and freedom. The energetic force of fascism persists, but without the fixed ideological reference points. This parodies fascism since absolute truth is transferred to the double-system of the empty self-referential signifiers and the arbitrary signifieds.27

#### **The real is dead. #Awkward.**

Baudrillard 81 (Jean, hates maps and mirror-people, “Simulacra and Simulation”, “The Precession of Simulacra”, 1981)

If once we were able to view the Borges fable in which the cartographers of the Empire draw up a map so detailed that it ends up covering the territory exactly (the decline of the Empire witnesses the fraying of this map, little by little, and its fall into ruins, though some shreds are still discernible in the deserts - the metaphysical beauty of this ruined abstraction testifying to a pride equal to the Empire and rotting like a carcass, returning to the substance of the soil, a bit as the double ends by being confused with the real through aging) - as the most beautiful allegory of simulation, this fable has now come full circle for us, and possesses nothing but the discrete charm of second-order simulacra.\*1 Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory - precession of simulacra - that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself. In fact, even inverted, Borges's fable is unusable. Only the allegory of the Empire, perhaps, remains. Because it is with this same imperialism that present-day simulators attempt to make the real, all of the real, coincide with their models of simulation. But it is no longer a question of either maps or territories. Something has disappeared: the sovereign difference, between one and the other, that constituted the charm of abstraction. Because it is difference that constitutes the poetry of the map and the charm of the territory, the magic of the concept and the charm of the real. This imaginary of representation, which simultaneously culminates in and is engulfed by the cartographers mad project of the ideal coextensivity of map and territory, disappears in the simulation whose operation is nuclear and genetic, no longer at all specular or discursive. It is all of metaphysics that is lost. No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept. No more imaginary coextensivity: it is genetic miniaturization that is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control - and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these. It no longer needs to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. It is no longer anything but operational. In fact, it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is a hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere. By crossing into a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials - worse: with their artificial resurrection in the systems of signs, a material more malleable than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalences, to all binary oppositions, to all combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short- circuits all its vicissitudes. Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself - such is the vital function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection, that no longer even gives the event of death a chance. A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.

#### Power is dead. #Awkward.

Baudrillard 81 (Jean, hates theatre and psychiatry, “Simulacra and Simulation”, 1981)

It would take too long to traverse the entire range of the operational negativity of all those scenarios of deterrence, which, like Watergate, try to regenerate a moribund principle through simulated scandal, phantasm, and murder - a sort of hormonal treatment through negativity and crisis. It is always a question of proving the real through the imaginary, proving truth through scandal, proving the law through transgression, proving work through striking, proving the system through crisis, and capital through revolution, as it is elsewhere (the Tasaday) of proving ethnology through the dispossession of its object - without taking into account: the proof of theater through antitheater; the proof of art through antiart; the proof of pedagogy through antipedagogy; the proof of psychiatry through antipsychiatry, etc. Everything is metamorphosed into its opposite to perpetuate itself in its expurgated form. All the powers, all the institutions speak of themselves through denial, in order to attempt, by simulating death, to escape their real death throes. Power can stage its own murder to rediscover a glimmer of existence and legitimacy. Such was the case with some American presidents: the Kennedys were murdered because they still had a political dimension. The others, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, only had the right to phantom attempts, to simulated murders. But this aura of an artificial menace was still necessary to conceal that they were no longer anything but the mannequins of power. Formerly, the king (also the god) had to die, therein lay his power. Today, he is miserably forced to feign death, in order to preserve the blessing of power. But it is lost. To seek new blood in its own death, to renew the cycle through the mirror of crisis, negativity, and antipower: this is the only solution - alibi of every power, of every institution attempting to break the vicious circle of its irresponsibility and of its fundamental nonexistence, of its already seen and of its already dead.

#### Political activism is ubiquitous – and thus meaningless.

Baudrillard 93 (Jean, I’m not doing the hates joke for this one, “The Transparency of Evil”, 1993)\*baudrillard doesn’t mean what you think he means by “transsexual”

* transsexuality means that signs of sexuality are proliferated beyond coherence and meaning, not related to transgender stuff

The possibility of metaphor is disappearing in every sphere. This is an aspect of a general tendency towards ~~transsexuality~~ which extends well beyond sex, affecting all disciplines as they lose their specificity and partake of a process of confusion and contagion — a viral loss of determinacy which is the prime event among all the new events that assail us. Economics becomes transeconomics, aesthetics becomes transaesthetics, ~~sex becomes transsexuality~~ — all converge in a transversal and universal process wherein no discourse may have a metaphorical relationship to another, because for there to be metaphor, differential fields and distinct objects must exist. But they cannot exist where contamination is possible between any discipline and any other. Total metonymy, then — viral by definition (or lack of definition). The viral analogy is not an importation from biology, for everything is affected simultaneously and under the same terms by the virulence in question, by the chain -reaction we have been discussing, by haphazard and senseless proliferation and metastasis. Perhaps our melancholy stems from this, for metaphor still had its beauty; it was aesthetic, playing as it did upon difference, and upon the illusion of difference. Today, metonymy .~ replacing the whole as well as the components, and occasioning a general commutability of terms — has built its -house upon the disillusion of metaphor. Thus every individual category is subject to contamination, substitution is possible between any sphere and any other: there is a total confusion of types. Sex is no longer located in sex itself, but elsewhere — everywhere else, in fact. Politics is no longer restricted to the political sphere, but infects every sphere —economics, science, art, sport... Sport itself, meanwhile, is no longer located in sport as such, but instead in business, in sex, in politics, in the general style of performance. All these domains are affected by sport’s criteria of ‘excellence’, effort and record-breaking, as by its childish notion of self-transcendence. Each category thus passes through a phase transition during which its essence is diluted in homeopathic doses, infinitesimal relative to the total solution, until it finally disappears, leaving a trace so small as to be indiscernible, like the ‘memory of water’. AIDS is the reflection not so much of an excess of sex or sexual pleasure as of sex’s decompensation through its general spread into all areas of life, its venting through all the trivial variants of sexual incantation. The real loss of immunity concerns sex as a whole, with the disappearance of sexual difference and hence of sexuality per se. It is in this diffraction of the sexual reality principle, at the fractal, micrological and non-human level, that the essential confusion of the epidemic takes hold. Perhaps we still have a memory of sex, rather as water ‘remembers’ molecules no matter how diluted. But that is the whole point: this is only a molecular memory, the corpuscular memory of an earlier life, and not a memory of forms or singularities (water, after all, can hardly retain the features of a face, or the colour of someone’s eyes). So what we are left with is the simple imprint of a faceless sexuality infinitely watered down in a broth of politics, media and communications, and eventually manifested in the viral explosion of AIDS. The law that is imposed on us is the law of the confusion of categories. Everything is sexual. Everything is political. Everything is aesthetic. All at once. Everything has acquired a political meaning, especially since 1968; and it is not just everyday life but also madness, language, the media, even desire, that are politicized as they enter the sphere of liberation, the sphere of mass processes. Likewise everything has become sexual, anything can be an object of desire: power, knowledge — everything is interpreted in terms of phantasies, in terms of repression, and sexual stereotypy reigns in every last corner. Likewise, too, everything is now aestheticized: politics is aestheticized in the spectacle, sex in advertising and porn, and all kinds of activity in what is conventionally referred to as culture — a sort of all-pervasive media- and advertising-led semiologization: ‘culture degree Xerox’. Each category is generalized to the greatest possible extent, so that it eventually loses all specificity and is reabsorbed by all the other categories. When everything is political, nothing is political any more, the word itself is meaningless. When everything is sexual, nothing is sexual any more, and sex loses its determinants. When everything is aesthetic, nothing is beautiful or ugly any more, and art itself disappears. This paradoxical state of affairs, which is simultaneously the complete actualization of an idea, the perfect realization of the whole tendency of modernity, and the negation of that idea and that tendency, their annihilation by virtue of their very success, by virtue of their extension beyond their own bounds — this state of affairs is epitomized by a single figure: the transpolitical, the ~~transsexual~~, the transaesthetic.

### ‘Real’ Countries/Soverignty

#### **Insistence that some countries are “real” is a knee-jerk reaction to a hyperreal condition of globalization that destabilizes the nation-state. Viewing the nation-state as the antidote to hyperreality and ontological uncertainty culminates in the worst modes of nationalist and colonialist violence.**

Richardson 19 (Paul B. Prof. in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, “Sovereignty, the Hyperreal, and “Taking Back Control,” Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 109:6, 1999-2003; 2006-2009)

In a world of enhanced ontological insecurity— and the ever more rapid and dramatic destabilization of identities, economies, and political communities—sovereignty has emerged seemingly unscathed, unshakeable, and immutable in the imaginaries of populist politicians (e.g., Hall 2016; May 2016a; Haldevang 2017; Ocampo 2018; Trump 2018; on ontological insecurity, see Giddens 1991; Rumelili 2014). Sovereignty remains absolute in a world of inversions, where borders have become the center of spatial imaginaries; “tradition,” imperial legacies, and origin myths are the future; and “taking back control” masks a disconcerting sense of insignificance and irrelevance. This article presents possibilities for an exit from the illusionary idyll of absolute sovereignty by drawing on Baudrillard’s notion of hyperreality to open up new terrains of thinking and practice. It suggests that through a condition of hyperreality we can explore alternative ways of approaching sovereignty and perhaps reach beyond its enduring presence as an irreducible principle of the world system.

Notions of sovereignty in crisis are not particularly new to the literature (Sidaway 2003). Many have already noted that a sovereign-spatial order premised on a “claim to final and ultimate authority over a political community” has long been undercut by multiple factors, such as “national” currency values and interest rates being determined by the decisions of inter- national markets, political citizenship reconfigured through calls for nonterritorial forms of citizenship, and the granting of sovereignty to institutions that transcend states (Flint 2009, 707; Russell 2005). The European Union (EU), for example, has been indicative of what Agnew (2005) termed an integrative sovereignty regime, whereby many of the founding states of the Westphalian system have “thrown in their lot with one another” to create a larger entity that “challenges existing state sovereignty in functionally complex and oftentimes nonterritorial ways” (445).

Jones and Johnson (2016, 194) highlight how Sassen (2006) has charted the “partial ‘unbundling’ of the key constitutive ties between territory, authority, and rights that made up modern nation-states” whereby the “unitary character of nation-states” has eroded due to the “rise of various cross-border regimes, instantaneous and difficult-to-regulate capital flows, and new assemblages of decision making power.” Sovereignty is itself a term that has evolved to accommodate new entities, with Krasner (1999) arguing that international system norms, “including those associated with Westphalian sovereignty and international legal sovereignty, have always been characterized by organized hypocrisy” (220), while others, such as Luke (1996), have outlined a decentering of sovereign authorities and a post–Cold War world made up of “unfixed ‘sovran’ authorities against fixed ‘sovereign’ rule” (500).

Why, then, if sovereignty can no longer be seen as the exclusive domain of the state—and in many regards never was (Agnew 1998)—has there not been a corresponding shift in the way in which the political-territorial order is imagined (Agnew 2005, 2009; Murphy 2013)? Even as sovereignty’s material and functional relevance has been destabilized, deconstructed, and dislocated in academic debates, it has at the same moment become imagined by political classes as ever more precise and perfect. This article interprets this disjuncture as [is] a shift to the hyperreal—a condition that denies all of sovereignty’s contradictions and inconsistencies and one that prevents politicians, political actors, and populations from acknowledging and negotiating disconcerting transformations in the sociospatial order. What follows is a theoretical engagement with notions of the hyperreal and sovereignty, which are then explored through the case studies of Brexit and the “America First” presidency of Donald Trump.

Sovereignty and the Hyperreal

Drawing on the body of work associated with Baudrillard (1976, 1978, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1994, 2004, 2006), and multiple interpretations of this work (e.g., Luke 1991a, 1991b; Merrin 1994; Weber 1995, 2017; Debrix 1999; Gane 2003; Hussey 2003; Rubenstein 2008; Lane 2009; Hehir 2011; Lundborg 2016; Lalonde 2018), the hyperreal is broadly understood in this article as a simulated world coming to replace reality; where a consciousness of things has become corrupted by a perception of something that never existed; and where the image of this world becomes imbued with characteristics it has never had and could not possess (see Hehir 2011). A hyperreal interpretation of sovereignty emphasizes its idealized image and the ways in which this distracts and conceals inherent contradictions and hypocrisies. In the realm of the hyperreal, sovereignty demands increasing attention, iteration, and visibility, yet all the while its disintegration and deterritorialization accelerate.

To date, surprisingly few studies have attempted to relate the state of the hyperreal to sovereignty (although on hyppereality’s wider applicability to international politics see, e.g., Der Derian 1990; Luke 1991a, 1996; Merrin 1994; Hehir 2011; Lundborg 2016). What follows in this article is an explanation of how, in terms of sovereignty, citizens of advanced mediacracies have “lost the ability to distinguish between the model and the real” (Der Derian 1990, 299). To illustrate our condition of the hyperreal, this article turns to an analysis of recent declarations and speeches on sovereignty by populist politicians and political elites, as well as media commentary and opinion reflecting on these pronouncements and policies. Using examples drawn from the United States and the United Kingdom, the aim is to analyze and interpret the ways in which the distinction between the real and its representation begin to be effaced (Gane 2003). Or, in Baudrillard’s terms, when it becomes a Simulacra: “a copy of a copy which has been so repeatedly acknowledged, referred to and disseminated, that it has come to be accepted as more real than the original” (Baudrillard 1994, 2).

Baudrillard (1985, 11, cited in Bleiker 2002) traces the annihilation of reality in stages, whereby “the distinctions between reality and virtuality, political practice and simulation are blurred to the extent that they are no longer recognisable.” In a world of media saturation and obsession, “electronic mediations of experience and meaning substitute the imaginary for the real” (Luke 1991b, 358). For Baudrillard, this occurs over four successive phases of the image: First as a reflection of a basic reality; second, the image masking and perverting of a basic reality; third, masking the absence of a basic reality; and, in its fourth and final stage, it “bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (Baudrillard 1985, as cited in Bleiker 2002). In this final stage, in a condition of the hyperreal, “no adequate analysis of systems of representation can simply refer to the ‘real’ world, as if this was unproblematic,” because “in each phase of representation a former, dominant conception of the ‘real’ is taken as the reference model of ‘current’ reality” (Gane 2003, 95). It is through these successive phases of the image that “the model takes the place of the ‘real’” (Baudrillard 1976, 100, cited in Gane 2003, 97).

To illustrate the point, Baudrillard drew on Jorge Luis Borges’s fable of imperial cartographers who create a map of such perfection that it overlays the entire territory of the empire, only to be left by sub- sequent generations to ruin by the elements until all that remains are frayed and tattered fragments in the empire’s distant deserts. For Baudrillard ([1981] 1988) the lesson is this:

The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the real itself. (166, italics in original)

The map’s precedence to territory has not escaped the attention of geographers, with Elden (2005) noting how we find ourselves in circumstances where “the abstract space we have imposed over the world is taken more and more as real in itself, rather than as a reflection of something below it, something that it seeks to represent” (15–16). For Baudrillard ([1981] 1988), “It is no longer a question of either maps or territory. ... It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself” (166–67).

This article suggests that the sovereign image and imaginary is increasingly taken for the real, as the distinction between the real and the imaginary— between truth and untruth—is annihilated. In response to this world of hyperreality and hyper- space, Baudrillard ([1981] 1988) suggested that

where the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. ... It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (171–72)

To chart the demise of the real, Baudrillard ([1981] 1988) drew on the examples of Disneyland—and its presentation of an “imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real”—and the Watergate affair—“a scandal-effect” concealing the fact that the scandal is not the aberration but the norm (171–73). In the case of sovereignty, its invocation as absolute conceals a reality principle in distress, a striving “to revive a moribund principle” through simulation by “proving the real by the imaginary” (176–77). Attempts to reanimate sovereignty with realness and relevance abound. The spell of sovereignty becomes a trick demonstrating how “simulation corresponds to a short-circuit of reality and to its reduplication by signs”; a false promise “to restore the truth beneath the simulacrum” (182). If institutions like parliaments, governments, and their bureaucracies were once the representatives of the sovereignty of the people (see Debrix [1999] on Rousseau 1973; and Locke 1982), then, in the sovereignty of the hyperreal—under conditions of simulation—“it is no longer possible to distinguish between a good and a bad representation, a correct or an erroneous interpretation, a truth or a falsehood. ... The simulacrum, the real of/in simulation, is no longer the product of interpretive mechanisms, but, rather, the outcome of operative media” (Debrix 1999, 12).

For Debrix (1999), such a shift in our ways of perceiving the “objective” world (reality) is revolutionary: “The Cartesian cogito has truly been superseded. New relations of perception and knowledge have arisen. ... [I]n simulation, visual signs lie. Or, they may tell the truth. ... What is real is what, as Baudrillard puts it, is hyperreal” (210). In this sense the binary of hyperreal (appearance or falsehood) versus real (actuality or truth) collapses. The state of the hyperreal is no longer the illusion, and the real no longer affirms the truth. Appearance and actuality are no longer poles apart but instead fused together. In such conditions, and drawing on Baudrillard, Lundborg (2016) suggested, “Only when simulation is the master does the desire for total sovereignty become possible; only then can all ambivalence be removed; and only then does the world as such become ‘perfectly impossible’” (264; see also Baudrillard and Noailles 2007; Lalonde 2018).

The conditions for total, absolute sovereignty emerge in the proliferation of hyperreal environments, in the form of geographical information systems, war game simulations, global television emissions, and cinematic sign systems (O Tuathail 1996), all of which constitute a virtual world in which the absolute becomes possible. Hehir (2011) explored such “a simulated world” whereby our perception of things is “corrupted by a perception of a reality that never existed. Thus entities and phenomena are imbued with characteristics they do not and cannot have, yet are treated as though they do” (1073). Hehir (2011) focused on the desire of the West to create “liberal” and “democratic” political communities in the developing world which mirror idealized, unreal and unrealized visions of the Western state. Within this conceit of perfection, sovereignty becomes presented as an ever more “idealized composite image” (1074), a simulated form and “a virtual universe from which everything dangerous and negative has been expelled” (Baudrillard 2004, as cited in Hehir 2011, 1078). All threats and challenges are externalized beyond the unity and inviolable ideal of absolute sovereignty, which has become “an almost uncontestable article of faith despite the evidence to the contrary,” a universal good “legitimised as progressive and emancipatory” (Hehir 2011, 1078).1

Ince and Barrera de la Torre (2016) reflected more broadly on such articles of faith, suggesting that much to the detriment of equality and social justice, statism—which in their terms is “an integrated set of socially-embedded organisational logics establishing the state as the dominant model of governing society”—has shaped, and continues to shape, “geographical epistemologies, producing structures of knowing that can generate epistemic distance between representations of the world and immanent experiences of it” (17). The examples of hyperreality and sovereignty that follow speak to this broader aspiration of freeing geographical epistemologies from statism’s restrictive patterns of thought and reflection. They seek to move beyond the “double- move” of state making and its tendency to illuminate “ontological uncertainty (about identity, space, time and meaning) [while] positing the sovereign state as the solution to that uncertainty” (Dunn 2010, 86).

To progress beyond such a double move means first recognizing the state of the hyperreal and the condition of postmodernity that paradoxically maintains and sustains an illusionary territoriality of the modern. It is a state whereby sovereignty becomes ever more absurd and delusional, an ever more vivid and valorized image no matter what shifts and reconfigurations take place in the political-territorial order. Brown (2017) noted such a process in the case of border walls, suggesting that they “function as symbolic and semiotic responses to crises produced by eroded sovereign state capacities to secure territory, citizens and economies against growing transnational flows of power, people, capital, religions, ideas or terror” (2). Yet, for Brown, these “walls do not merely index but accelerate waning state sovereignty” (2). They represent “a last vestige of a dying system of territorially bounded sovereignty (Brown 2010)” (Jones and Johnson 2017, 2), “a political-theatrical response to eroding nation-state sovereignty (Brown 2010)” (Brown 2017, 2)—a territory of the real “whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map” (Baudrillard [1981] 1988, 166).

Over the following pages, two case studies are explored, which highlight the (il)logic of sovereignty and how the evocative imaginings and invocations of a pure and absolute sovereignty belie an impossible and fantastical fiction. In the case of Britain’s decision to leave the EU and the election of Donald Trump, this article highlights the significance of Baudrillard’s work for guiding research about “national” sovereignty and democratic decisions driven by false hopes, resentments, and unrealizable promises. In two of the world’s leading liberal capital- ist democracies, voters cast their ballots to affirm a hyperreal sense of the absolute sovereignty of imag- ined national communities. Leaving the EU or electing a billionaire reality TV star appeared to equate to “taking back control” and somehow a recovery of full sovereignty. In the realm of Brexit and Trump, the scale, scope, and speed of simulation generation is all- immersive and all-pervasive. Through leading the TV news day after day, front-page coverage, nocturnal tweets, and never-ending live feeds, all audiences are consumed and subsumed as the hyperreality of taking back control inundates the empirical.2

[…]

America First

The sovereignty delusion is by no means restricted to Brexit as the blurring of fact and fiction, and of eality and illusion, has been accelerated in the United States with the ascendency to the presidency of reality TV star, Donald Trump (for examples beyond Brexit, see Dunn 2010; Backman 2011; Cocks 2014; Juss 2017). In our age of the hyperreal, Trump has been called a “sovereign father” for our times (Connelly 2016), a leader who has risen on the tide of a sovereignty myth. It was a myth outlined by Trump at some length during his maiden speech to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017 in which sovereignty dominated and defined his address, with the words sovereign and sovereignty men- tioned twenty-one times (Tatar 2017). In the speech, Trump repeatedly equated sovereignty with global harmony, declaring, “Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty, to promote security, prosperity, and peace, for themselves and for the world” (Haldevang 2017). He declared that “strong, sovereign nations allow individuals to flourish in the fullness of the life intended by God” (Miller 2018) and talked of a “great reawakening of nations, for the revival of their spirits, their pride, their people, and their patriotism.” That this has historically not been a recipe for “harmony and friendship” went unnoted in the speech (Chhabra 2017).

In the Washington Post, Jaffe and DeYoung (2017) suggested that in his appearance at the United Nations, Trump had “cast his presidency as an avatar of international renewal,” a catalyst for a renewed patriotic spirit, national self-interest and cooperation among sovereign nations, which are posited as the solution for all international ills. Trump asked in his speech, “Are we still patriots? Do we love our nations enough to protect their sovereignty and take ownership of their future?” He also invoked sovereignty to attack the “mammoth multinational trade deals” that have supposedly empowered faceless global bureaucracies over nation-states, sent factory jobs overseas, and hollowed out the middle class (Jaffe and De Young 2017). Trump railed against the “unaccountable international tribunals and powerful global bureaucracies” that sap the sovereignty of nations (Jaffe and De Young 2017) and as a counter offered a passionate and populist defense of the principles of sovereignty and patriotism, which in his words could spark a “rebirth of devotion” across the world (Jaffe and De Young 2017). It is a devotion to a sovereign idyll and illusion through a missionary zeal anchored in the ether of hyperreality.

As Nasr pointed out, Trump’s definition of sovereignty in the speech is derived “from a very narrow domestic prism” (cited in Landler 2017) out of which the United States emerges as the first among equals. It is a foreign policy doctrine that has been interpreted by some as the fusion of sovereigntism with “a style of big-power nationalism” and, in an echo of earlier presidencies, one that has been labeled by the president and his advisors as “principled realism” and “America first” (Bierman and Lauter 2017). For Patrick (2017a) it represents an invocation of sovereignty to “assert universal truths and to deflect messy realities.” Patrick suggested that Trump’s speech should be seen as part of a broader “sovereigntist” critique of the global order, which has been evident in policy stances from leaving the Paris Climate Agreement, to renouncing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the criticism of alliances like NATO, through to threats to ignore the World Trade Organization, and moratoriums on any new multilateral treaties (Patrick 2017b).

It is in Trump’s sovereigntist agenda that we glimpse a mourning for the waning of U.S. hegemony in the face of “messy realities,” a lament for the absence of power, which “for some time now produces nothing but signs of its resemblance ...; an obsession with its death; an obsession with its survival which becomes greater the more it disappears” (Baudrillard [1981] 1988, 180). Baudrillard ([1981] 1988) wrote of a “[m]elancholy for societies without power,” whereby “power is no longer present except to conceal that there is none” (180–81). It is out of this melancholy for power, and a rage against its loss, that the sovereigntist agenda can materialize in ever more disturbing ways. One such moment occurred on 4 April 2018, with the release of a memo by Trump titled, “Securing the Southern Border of the United States,” in which National Guard troops were ordered to the U.S.–Mexico bor- der in response to a “caravan” of refugees traveling to the United States from Central America (Jacobs 2018). The first paragraph sets the scene of a sovereignty principle in crisis:

1) The security of the United States is imperiled by a drastic surge of illegal activity on the southern border. Large quantities of fentanyl, other opioids, and other dangerous and illicit drugs are flowing across our southern border and into our country at unprecedented levels, destroying the lives of our families and loved ones. ... Deadly transnational gangs are systematically exploiting our unsecured southern border to enter our country and develop operational capacity in American communities throughout the country. The anticipated rapid rise in illegal crossings as we head into the spring and summer months threatens to overwhelm our Nation’s law enforcement capacities. (Trump 2018, italics added)

The memo stresses a border regime where the ability to ensure the sovereignty of the nation is in doubt (see Miller [2018] on Trump’s preference for the term nation), with it suggesting that “our American way of life hinges on our ability as a Nation to adequately and effectively enforce our laws and protect our borders. A key and undeniable attribute of a sovereign nation is the ability to control who and what enters its territory” (Trump 2018). Throughout the memo a sovereignty principle in crisis is invoked, with paragraphs 4 and 5 warning, “The lawlessness that continues at our southern border is fundamentally incompatible with the safety, security, and sovereignty of the American people. ... the highest sovereign duty of the President is to defend this Nation, which includes the defense of our borders” (Trump 2018). The memo’s unsubtle generation of an existential threat to “our American way of life” works to regenerate the sovereign nation; it strives to revive a moribund “moral and political principle ... in distress” (Baudrillard [1981] 1988, 172–73). From it emerges a pure and perfect U.S. sovereignty that contrasts with the disorder and chaos beyond, “a simulated real, which henceforth supplants the real and is its final solution, a virtual universe from which everything dangerous and negative has been expelled” (Baudrillard 2004).

To maintain the illusion of sovereign perfection, in June 2018 children of asylum seekers were separated from their parents at the U.S. border, as Trump declared, “The United States will not be a migrant camp ... You look at what’s happening in other places—we can’t allow that to happen to the United States. Not on my watch” (Gambino and Lartey 2018). In the simulated sovereignty of Trump’s America First, the “circulation of hyperreal signs of his ability and often his ability alone ... deliver what he defines as truly in the US national interest” (Weber 2017, S-137, italics added; on Trump scripting himself as the superhero, see Dittmer 2018). In one sense, Trump is a continuation of U.S. presidents since Ronald Reagan who have each told us “a meta-theoretical story about Baudrillardian sign theory where presidents ... mark different moments of the simulacrum” (Rubenstein 2008, 11). For example, on George W. Bush’s presidency, Suskind (2004) outlined a faith-based administration with a disdain for “the reality-based community.” A senior advisor to Bush at the time, stated to Suskind: “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out.” Suskind described a presidency of “unflinching confidence [that] has an almost mystical power. It can all but create reality.”3

Trump is also a continuation and confirmation of the practice of “statecraft as mancraft” (Weber 2016, 4; see also Ashley 1989), whereby the sovereign foundation of the modern state is presented as a “phantastical yet presumed-to-be-factual ‘sovereign man’—as if it were the singular, preexisting, ahistorical ground that authorizes all sovereign decisions in its political community” (Weber 2016, 4–5). Applied to our own phantastical times, Trump as sovereign man could claim on 5 April 2018—without any corroborating evidence—that in the caravan of refugees “women are raped at levels that nobody has ever seen before” (cited in Z. B. Wolf 2018). Then, in October 2018, as a group of mainly Honduran asylum seekers moved through Mexico toward the U.S. border, Trump called it an “onslaught of illegal aliens” (Darrah 2018). On 31 October he tweeted, “We will NOT let these Caravans, which are also made up of some very bad thugs and gang members, into the U.S. Our Border is sacred” (Evans 2018). In a speech at the White House on the same day, Trump added that if “they want to throw rocks at our military, our military fights back. I told them to consider it a rifle” (Weaver and Manson 2018). In such hypermasculine declarations and denunciations, a state of crisis and threat becomes the norm—a form of “banal geopolitics,” whereby crises and extreme remedy become “nothing out of the ordinary,” “routine,” “normal, taken-for-granted geopolitics” (Sidaway 2001, 606–7).

These episodes also recall Brown’s interpretation of border walls and their paraphernalia and performance “as symbolic and semiotic responses to crises” (R. Jones et al. 2017, 2). For against Trump’s refrain that “a secure border is a sovereign right” (Swoyer 2016), Anderson (2018) noted in The San Diego Union- Tribune that the immense efforts at securitizing the U.S.–Mexico border have had the counterfunction of

jeopardizing U.S. sovereignty and human security as “[s]trong, militarized enforcement has resulted in a stronger militarized response by well-financed drug cartels and increased corruption, violence and death, but not a decrease in the flow of drugs.”

Extreme violence and discipline were anticipated by Baudrillard ([1981] 1988), who noted that power threatened by simulation “risks the real, risks crisis, it gambles on remanufacturing artificial, social, economic, political stakes. This is a question of life or death for it” (180). It also becomes a question of life and death for those caught in the “collective demand for signs of power—a holy union which forms around the disappearance of power” (180). In the desert of “Making America Great Again” are the drowned of the Rio Grande and the missing of the arid U.S.–Mexico borderlands—victims of a melancholy for a society without power. While hyperreality’s scenario of power conceals the fact that the real power has disappeared (Baudrillard [1981] 1988), simulation does not exclude the violent counterconvulsions of a sovereign tormented by the ebb of its power. As Baudrillard (1983) insisted, the simulacrum of war does not make it “any less heinous for being a mere simulacrum—the flesh suffers just the same, and the dead ex-combatants count as much there as in other wars” (70, cited in Merrin 1994, 444). A condition of the hyperreal makes possible absolute sovereign authority and with it the full realization of sovereignty’s devastating foundational logic—the operation of a binary of those who are protected and those who could legitimately die (Agamben 1998).

For Weber (2017), the Trump “campaign and presidency are part and parcel of earlier historical ‘experiments’—in white, Western, heteropatriarchal authoritarian leadership, in neoliberalism and the specific modalities of citizenship, governance and reason” (S-134; see also Adorno et al. 1950; Brown 2003; Bauman 2016; Connelly 2016). Weber saw Trump’s simulated form as president as akin to Badiou’s (2001) description of the function of the simulacrum under Nazism:

in which a hyperreal national allegiance to the self- referential simulacrum as heteropatriarchal leader piles specific fictions upon fictions. It does so not only to mask ... the absence of the reality principle but to generate a dangerous, materializable, national fantasy that depends upon particularizing, identifying and regulating abstract allies and enemies. (74; see also Weber 2017, S-135)

For Weber, Trump “opposes the ‘righteous’ to the ‘unrighteous’, who he variously named during the campaign as all or many of ‘the blacks’, ‘the gays’, ‘the Mexican rapists’ and the ‘radical Islamic terrorists’” (Weber 2017, S-136). In her polemic, Weber highlighted how simulation and dissimulation “re-code sovereignty ... in the name of that particular abstract set of sovereign US subjects on whose behalf the administration (pretends to) claim(s) its authority to rule—‘righteous Americans’” (Weber 2017, S-138). In a haze of “fake news” and “alternative facts” (which are read by some as “real news”) the administration’s strategy is one “that attempts to overwhelm US democracy with ... representations, simulations and dissimulations of facts and fictions, so all that remains intact is the authority of Trump and Trump as our authoritarian leader” (Weber 2017, S-137–39). These hyperreal simulations and dissimulations of sovereignty are far from intangible, unreal, or benign but effectively maintain violent exclusionary hierarchies through privileging “righteous Americans” and the elevation of “a particular people and its mode of life above those marked as alien” (Cocks 2014, 3; Weber 2017, 136). It is out of the sovereignty of the hyperreal that there emerge new terrains and possibilities for the “violent reactivation of a form of power that despairs of its rational foundations” (Baudrillard 1980, 110, cited in Kroker 1984, 58).

### Russia

#### The 1AC’s presentation of Russia is a social construction of westernized political interest that creates endless war

Anton Agafonov 10, Political Science MA Program at the University of Ottawa, “Western ‘Security Community’ and Russia: Mutual Construction of Insecurities”, Masters Thesis, July, 2010 🐸

The neo-liberal institutionalist approach seems to be insufficient in explaining the failure of creating a common "greater European cultural and humanitarian space" exceeding the institutional framework of the EU or NATO. Nor does it fully explain the generally negative dynamics of the Russia-West relations during the past two decades, despite Russia's growing and relatively strong functional participation in both inclusive international mechanisms (e.g. OSCE, PACE) and exclusive ones (e.g. NATO), as well as cooperation at the non-state level (cf Keohane et al. 1995). It is possible to suggest that "othering" is the key to the explaining the negative dynamics, which neo-liberal institutionalists tend not to focus on. Scholars representing the constructivist school, stressing the social construction of knowledge, and political interest, identities, norms, values as its derivatives, in my view, furnish a better explanation of how the decades' (if not centuries') old pattern of relations has been sustained despite the multitude of political developments with global repercussions that changed both the global and domestic politics. This argument can be substantiated by the growing role of the discursive in the domain of international relations. Discourses can produce and reproduce a particular reality in the international relations rendering certain political options possible or impossible at both international and domestic levels. The discourses of "othering" or 4 Master's Thesis Anton Agafonov "integration" represent an obvious practical value and may be instrumental in explaining dynamics of international relations. For example, as applied to the Russian-Western relations, it is quite evident that the ideological conflicts of the Cold War period have been largely replaced by discursive clashes over identities and histories between Russia and the West involving recourse to such vague terms as "cultural and civilizational choice," or "Europeanness." National historiographies often serve as tools employed in debates over state (national) and collective identities, which suggests that history is often more of a political instrument, rather than a science. Histories, just like current political developments (or a very recent history) are often "known as they were narrated, not as they were in reality." Outcomes of such "virtual space wars" resulting in "virtual and declaratory" victories or debacles are quite comparable to those caused by real wars: tangible spatial and cultural lines of separation akin to the Berlin Wall. In short, discourses, historicized narratives and mythologies associated with national identities and histories have become as strong a weapon for attaining domestic and international political objectives as "hard power" capabilities. National discourses on Russia are abundant with examples of broadcasting historical narratives varying from the statements expressing the historical resentments of the East-European and Baltic leadership to the statements of the US and West European political and expert community.2 The promotion of particular historical narratives by national professional and foreign policy communities can be considered instrumental in achieving goals that pragmatic interests dictate. For example, the timing of re-emergence of debates over histories and identities 2 The recent example thereto is drawing historical parallels of Russia's "aggression" against Georgia and Soviet suppression of uprisings in the Eastern and Central Europe (e.g. Condoleezza Rice's 2008 statement on RussoGeorgian conflict http://www.bild.de/BrLD/news/bild-english/world-news/2008/08/14/condoleezza-rice/givesrassia-ominous-warning-over-georgia.html##; also a 2009 statement by several Republicans linking the NMD to the history of Russo-Polish relations (in Russian) http://echo.msk.ru/news/620886-echo.phtml'). 5 Master's Thesis Anton Agafonov triggered by the nationalistic elites in the FSU was clearly linked to the need of statehood legitimization and national identity construction by dismantling common identity with Russia and (re-)producing a "civilizational divide" portraying themselves as "front line" defenders of civilized and democratic Europe (West) facing the aggressive non-democratic and uncivilized Outside. The logic of citing historical narratives of "othering" in foreign policy-making is extremely dubious and almost always counter-productive in international relations. It exemplifies the very dynamics of how discourses of "othering" based on narrated historical resentments and memories tangibly shape international politics by sustaining "othering" and making inclusion or improvement of bilateral relations unacceptable. In these narratives, prior historical events are often used to predict and project future behaviour of an actor along the primordial "they have always been like this, and will always be" paradigm. Applying this logic, practically all historically significant nations that can be accused of various crimes under the international law, including multiple acts of genocide, pose existential threat to one another. Reference to historical path dependencies advances the idea of primordial propensity of the Other to a certain type of international behaviour, which comes close to racist agendas (see Campbell 1998a citing Butler on "defiling" the Otherness below). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that references to histories in the process of discursive construction of the Other promotes largely an essentialist "othering" treating Other's historical record as an indicator of its inherent primordial features that remain fixed and unchanged. The discourse samples selected for this paper may suggest that the explicit broadcasting of historical resentment narratives representing an essentialist construction of the Other is much less likely to occur in the discourse of international organizations where various national 6 Master's Thesis Anton Agafonov positions are blended and smoothed to produce a diplomatically more neutral narrative, than in the discourse of national governments and epistemic communities. At the level of the general public, being the key target audience for an official discourse, where speakers do not bear responsibility of governance, face little personal risks, and have far fewer incentives for self-restraint in their narratives, the essentialist view of the Other, often combined with chauvinistic nationalism and aggressive racism, is much likelier to be manifested in a discourse of "othering." Thus it is possible to suggest the presence of a "continuum" of a top-down increase, from the international level down to individual level, in the presence of essentialist views of the Other and the discursive "othering" drawing on primordial attributes. Apparently, this phenomenon of assigning essentialist features to the Other perceived as a threat and denying it features shared by the Self a rooted in human psychology that urges for clear, stable and incontestable delineations between the Self and Other, in a somewhat similar way like states strive to attain clear, fixed and incontestable borders separating them from other states

#### Framing Russia as a threat fuels a global drive to eliminate danger

Jaeger 2k [Norwegian Institute of International Affairs] Jæger, Øyvind. “Securitizing Russia: Discursive Practices of the Baltic States.” (2000) // Accessed 7/12/19

The Russian war on Chechnya is one event that was widely interpreted in the Baltic as a ominous sign of what Russia has in store for the Baltic states (see Rebas 1996: 27; Nekrasas 1996: 58; Tarand 1996: 24; cf. Haab 1997). The constitutional ban in all three states on any kind of association with post-Soviet political structures is indicative of a threat perception that confuses Soviet and post-Soviet, conflating Russia with the USSR and casting everything Russian as a threat through what Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) call a discursive "chain of equivalence". In this the value of one side in a binary opposition is reiterated in other denotations of the same binary opposition. Thus, the value "Russia" in a Russia/Europe-opposition is also denoted by "instability", "Asia", "invasion", "chaos", "incitement of ethnic minorities", "unpredictability", "imperialism", "slander campaign", "migration", and so forth. The opposite value of these markers ("stability", "Europe", "defence", "order", and so on) would then denote the Self and thus conjure up an identity. When identity is precarious, this discursive practice intensifies by shifting onto a security mode, treating the oppositions as if they were questions of political existence, sovereignty, and survival. Identity is (re)produced more effectively when the oppositions are employed in a discourse of insecurity and danger, that is, made into questions of national security and thus securitised in the W�verian sense. In the Baltic cases, especially the Lithuanian National Security Concept is knitting a chain of equivalence in a ferocious discourse of danger. Not only does it establish "[t]hat the defence of Lithuania is total and unconditional," and that "[s]hould there be no higher command, self-controlled combat actions of armed units and citizens shall be considered legal." (National Security Concept, Lithuania, Ch. 7, Sc. 1, 2) It also posits that [t]he power of civic resistance is constituted of the Nation’s Will and self-determination to fight for own freedom, of everyone citizen�s resolution to resist to [an] assailant or invader by all possible ways, despite citizens age and [or] profession, of taking part in Lithuania’s defense (National Security Concept, Lithuania, Ch. 7, Sc. 4). When this is added to the identifying of the objects of national security as "human and citizen rights, fundamental freedoms and personal security; state sovereignty; rights of the nation, prerequisites for a free development; the state independence; the constitutional order; state territory and its integrity, and; cultural heritage," and the subjects as "the state, the armed forces and other institutions thereof; the citizens and their associations, and; non governmental organisations,"(National Security Concept, Lithuania, Ch. 2, Sc. 1, 2) one approaches a conception of security in which the distinction between state and nation has disappeared in all-encompassing securitisation. Everyone is expected to defend everything with every possible means. And when the list of identified threats to national security that follows range from "overt (military) aggression", via "personal insecurity", to "ignoring of national values,"(National Security Concept, Lithuania, Ch. 10) the National Security Concept of Lithuania has become a totalising one taking everything to be a question of national security. The chain of equivalence is established when the very introduction of the National Security Concept is devoted to a denotation of Lithuania�s century-old sameness to "Europe" and resistance to "occupation and subjugation" (see quotation below), whereby Russia is depicted and installed as the first link in the discursive chain that follows. In much the same way the "enemy within" came about in Estonia and Latvia. As the independence-memory was ritualised and added to the sense of insecurity � already fed by confusion in state administration, legislation and government policy grappling not only with what to do but also how to do it given the inexperience of state institutions or their absence � unity behind the overarching objective of independence receded for partial politics and the construction of the enemy within. This is what David Campbell (1992) points out when he sees the practices of security as being about securing a precarious state identity. One way of going about it is to cast elements on the state inside resisting the privileged identity as the subversive errand boys of the prime external enemy. An example of exclusionary practices of this kind is found in the Latvian National Security Concept (p. 2) in which it is stated explicitly that [s]ince the external threat of [to] Latvia can be related to efforts of neighbouring countries to destabilise internal situation in Latvia, it is impossible to shift external threat from internal one clearly. And the Lithuanian National Security Concept (Ch. 1, Sc. 1) cites under a rubric labelled "Specific", "incitement of ethnic groups to disloyal behaviour or disintegration" as "[p]otential risks and foreign threats to Lithuania�s security". The document Guidelines of the National Defence Policy of Estonia busies itself strictly with military threats, but Mare Haab (1997), an Estonian International Relations (IR) scholar involved in counselling on the drafting of a National Security Concept, notes that "[f]earing a "fifth column" is a distinct part of Estonia�s threat perception". And indeed, a recent proposal by the Estonian Defence Ministry to draft residents-yet-not-citizens for alternative, non-military national service provoked an outcry in the Estonian Parliament casting the proposal as tantamount to creating a "fifth column" within Estonian Armed Forces (Clemmesen 1997). In neither Estonia nor Latvia are Russian speakers (or others) in citizenship limbo allowed to serve even in the volunteer Home Guards (Clemmesen 1997).

#### Russia declared the invasion of Ukraine as a special military operation NOT war

ALEXANDER **WARD et al.**  **02/23/2022** “Russia Attacks Ukraine.” *POLITICO*, https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/23/russia-invasion-ukraine-00011238.  🐸

Russian missiles struck airports, military positions and cities across Ukraine, including the capital of Kyiv, early Thursday as Vladimir Putin launched the most dangerous phase of his eight-year war. Witnesses and reporters heard blasts from Kharkiv in the east to Kyiv in the north to Odessa in the south, signaling Russian’s sights are set far beyond the Donbas region. In a statement, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his nation suffered “strikes on military and other important defense facilities,” adding that “border units are under attack, the situation in the Donbas has degraded.” “This is an unjustified, deceitful and cynical invasion,” he said. Separately, Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov added that the “enemy began intense shelling of our units in the east, as well as military control centers and airfields in other regions.” CNN quoted a Ukrainian government official who said the attack has already led to hundreds of casualties, a figure POLITICO could not immediately verify. Zelenskyy spoke with Biden early Thursday morning local time. In a [statement about the call](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/02/24/statement-by-president-joe-biden-on-phone-call-with-president-volodymyr-zelenskyy-of-ukraine/), Biden said “the United States and our Allies and partners will be imposing severe sanctions on Russia.” **The strikes on Ukraine followed Putin’s announcement of a “special military operation” against Ukraine**, during which he falsely claimed that two Moscow-backed breakaway regions inside Ukraine were under attack by Kyiv’s forces**. Putin declared: “I have declared a special military operation” for the “demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine.**”“This is the red line that I have spoken of many times,” he continued, apparently [wearing the same red tie and speaking from the same office](https://twitter.com/DAlperovitch/status/1496678956879204358?s=20&t=euSgl4X5ijQdnNKV7x2xoQ) from which he gave an address on Monday. “They have crossed it.” Putin vowed not to occupy the country, but demanded that Ukrainian forces lay down their arms or bear responsibility for “bloodshed.”And in a clear message to the United States and its allies, Putin warned foreign powers not to interfere in his operation: “If you do, you will face consequences greater than any you have faced in history. All relevant decisions have been taken. I hope you hear me.”His pronouncement at 5:45 a.m. Moscow time — during a simultaneous U.N. Security Council meeting in New York, at which Western nations pleaded for Putin to exercise restraint and de-escalate — could spark the largest land war in Europe since World War II, one that could result in the deaths of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian troops and civilians, and spark a refugee crisis.Putin rebuked months of Western diplomatic entreaties to end the crisis sparked by the amassing of Moscow’s nearly 200,000 troops on Ukraine’s border. Instead of shaking American and European hands, the Russian president slapped them away, pointing his forces toward the Ukrainian lands he has directed them to seize.Zelenskyy made an impassioned speech in the early hours of Thursday morning local time, rallying his country in the national tongue before switching to Russian in an appeal not to the Kremlin, but to Russian citizens. “Lots of you have relatives in Ukraine, you studied in Ukrainian universities, you have Ukrainian friends,” he said. “You know our character, our principles, what matters to us. Listen to yourselves, to the voice of reason. The people of Ukraine want peace.”Shortly thereafter, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Gen. Mark Milley, the Joint Chiefs chair, told different outlets the Russian assault could begin before the sun rose in Kyiv on Thursday. They were right. “The prayers of the entire world are with the people of Ukraine tonight as they suffer an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces,” President Joe Biden said in a statement released by the White House. “President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering. Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its Allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable.”

### Scenario Planning

#### The era of digital technology allows for the overabundance of instant, images of war that fuel constant speculation in search of meaning. Global, immeasurable, implosive violence is done to the violated when one tries to make sense of the senseless.

Artrip and Debrix 14 (François, Director of the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) and Professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech, Ryan E., doctoral candidate in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) at Virginia Tech, “*The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation*,” Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014), SPECIAL ISSUE: BAUDRILLARD AND WAR, 6/21/22 - FI)

Behind the widespread “global” celebration of digitalized technologies for their newly found representational capabilities and accuracies, there lies the idea that, perhaps following a collective disgust with the dealings of Western media outlets as more or less uncritical props for the social/economic/ethical status quo in the past several decades, disseminated and “democratized” media technologies can de-mystify the world, lift its aura in a way, or perhaps “**dig deeper” into the “truth”** than, say, what the media networks involved in reporting news (including war news) in the 1980s and 1990’s (the famous CNN effect) ever could do. Because these technologies are far **more in real-time** than news networks, they are also generally thought to be able to evade oppressive/repressive censorship of particular corporate/class/state/ideology interests. But even more than escaping filters, digital representations today are often thought to be able to eliminate all of the ambiguities born of time. Thus, we (members of the public/demos) **want to believe that mediation can be removed**. And we want to subscribe to the view that any **distortion** occurring between an event and its perception/memory, or between the “actual” and its account, can **evaporate**. By reducing to the virtually infinitesimal or invisible the filter/screen between the image that represents and the real that is and, furthermore, by placing the productive responsibilities for the image into the hands of the user (literally into the digits), the digital establishes itself as something capable of demolishing the “malicious” surface of appearances to **reveal a meaningful** density of **truth** through the quasi-immediate interface. This is the dream of immediacy rediscovered and perhaps finally realized. At a most basic level of analysis, the **risk** involved in pointing to this desire for mediatized or digitalized immediacy would be to **undermine the visual evidence of** the violent/virulent occurrence of the omnipresence of **war**. For example, could we have deployed a critique of the US military’s and the US government’s use of torture in the War on Terror were it not for the seemingly unfiltered “shock and awe” of the Abu Ghraib photos? Again, from the point of view of the ethos of virtual/virulent war, the lure of digitalized immediacy has its uses (and, possibly, benefits, too, even for the demos). But, from the perspective of war’s mythos, it must be said that the “truth” about war and war operations cannot be fully revealed because representation, no matter how immediate or seemingly unmediated, always works by imposing some meaning onto things/events that are made visible/representable. Consider the role played by digital media in the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013. Within a matter of minutes of the blasts, even before the smoke could clear the scene, images and videos of terror taken from spectators’ mobile devices circulated through cyberspace. Everything was seemingly **captured in that instant**. The **horror** that drew so many people to capture images through their smart phones seems to **speak on its own**; it needs no commentary, **no meaning to be given** to it. In fact, it appears to have no mediation, no appropriation or narrativizing, no contextualizing either. That is precisely why smart phones are so apt at giving us such images, such representations, such “**pure” meanings about things**. Especially, such a horrifying violence, it is said, needs no commentary, no sense to be made of it. An **immeasurable violence is done to the violated when one tries to make sense of the senseless** (Agamben, 1999). Yet, as Baudrillard had already pointed out in his remarks on the Gulf War, “everything which is turned into information becomes the object of endless speculation, the site of total uncertainty. We are left with the symptomatic reading on our screens of the effects of the war, or the effects of discourse about the war, or completely speculative strategic evaluations” (Baudrillard, 1995: 41). In their digital representation, **images of war and images of terror** are dissolved into their own **information**. Information (what the image/event wants to tell us, to reveal, allegedly) already infiltrates the tweeted or texted image/scene (of horror, of war) with an urgency of signification and meaning. Images of horror cannot make sense, perhaps must not be made sense of, and yet they somehow beg for meaning, for circulation, or for propagation, in the hope that they may reveal something to someone. Thus, the digitalized mediation of the image, even in its instantaneity, still takes place. Images—or whatever event might have been “caught”—must succumb to a will to information, to a will to meaning, even if it is falsely affirmed that what is digitally rendered needs no commentary. Put differently, the **image levels the event** it represents by entering into a mass/global indifferent **exchange**, into a virulent global (representational) circulation that murders singularity or, indeed, the moment of trauma (on this question of the erasure of trauma, see Debrix, 2008: 4-5; Edkins, 2003: 37-38). The **enigmatic singularity of the event**—which, for Baudrillard, was once a precondition for any sort of historical transition—**gives way to an endlessness of representation**, whether such representation appears to have a clear ethical or political purpose/signification or not. It is in this always operative tendency of rendered appearances to yield meaning (even if their meaning is to be information-worthy), not in the image or event itself, that we situate the conditions of possibility and reproducibility for the ever-thickening representational fog and for the violence/virulence of images, or better yet, of appearances. To **make war** or, as the case may be, the terror event **mean something**—even in some of the most immediate reactions often designed to evoke injustice or, indeed, incomprehension—**is the generative point of violence**, the source of representation as a virulent/virtual code and mode of signification. Baudrillard writes, “Everywhere one seeks to produce meaning, to make the world signify, to render it visible.” He adds, “We are **not**, however, **in danger of lacking meaning**; […] **we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us**” (Baudrillard, 1988: 63). Indeed, the Western world—increasingly, the global—has found itself with a proliferation of meanings and significations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It is as if the so-called crisis of nihilism (thought to be characteristic of much critique and philosophical suspicion throughout the 20th century) later on produced something of the opposite order. The mass violence of the 20th century inaugurated not a complete void of despair or meaninglessness, but instead a flood of meaning, if not an overproduction of it. Baudrillard refers to this frantic explosion of meaning/signification as “a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production […]” (Baudrillard, 1983: 7). Here, Baudrillard describes a mode of production of a different kind, not motivated by class interests or exploitation of value, but by an automated, perhaps viral, abreaction to the empty core or disenchantment of things and the world: that is to say, the degree to which things seem to lack a singular center of gravity or have lost a justifiable reference to the real world, and yet **each thing that “matters”** is also an **attempt to get at reality as a question of** accumulation (of **meaning**), circulation (of signs), and filling up of all interstitial spaces of communication and value. The **end result is an over-abundance of signs** and images of reality, something that **culminates in** what Baudrillard calls **hyperreality**—things appear more real than reality itself. The story that needs to be told is thus not about the undoubtedly deplorable “truth” or fact of explosive and warlike violence, but about a violence of another sort. In the radical digital transparency of the global scene, we (members of the demos) often have full or direct exposure to explosivity, as we saw above with the image of terror. But what still needs to be thought and problematized is implosivity or what may be called **implosive violence**. Implosive violence is a violence for **which we do not**, and perhaps will never, **have much of a language** (Rancière, 2007: 123). Although, not having a language for it or, rather, as we saw above, seeking to find a language to talk about it and, perhaps, to make sense of it is still sought after. This is, perhaps, what digital pictures of war/terror violence seek to capture or want to force through. Implosive violence, often digitally rendered these days, is in close contact with media technologies and representational devices and techniques because it **seeks representation and meaning**. This is **why implosive violence insists on calling in wars** (against terror, for example) and on **mobilizing war machines** (against terrorist others, against vague enemy figures), **but wars and war machines** that **no longer have**—to the extent that they ever had—**a clearly identifiable** object and subject, or a clear **mission/purpose**. As such, this implosive violence and its wars (the new Western/global way of war, perhaps) **must remain** uncertain, unclear, **foggy**, inwardly driven, representational, and indeed virulent. They must remain uncertain and confused even as they are digitally operative and desperately capture events/images to give the impression that meanings/significations can and will be found. Yet, as we saw above, **it is not meanings exactly that must be found, but information** and the endless guarantee of its immediate circulation. As **information occupies** the empty place of **meaning**, certainty, or truth, **images must be instantaneously turned into appearances** that search for meanings that will never be discovered because, instead, a proliferation of information-worthy facts and beliefs will take over (perhaps this is what US fake pundit and comedian Stephen Colbert famously referred to as “truthiness”). Or, as Baudrillard puts it, “free from its former enemies, humanity now has to create enemies from within, which in fact produces a wide variety of inhuman metastases” (Baudrillard, 2003). Thus, this **implosive violence is** destined to be a **global violence** since it "is the **product of a system that tracks down** any form of **negativity and singularity,** including of course death as the ultimate form of singularity. […] It is a **violence** **that**, in a sense, **puts an end to violence itself and strives to establish a world where anything related to the natural must disappear** […] Better than a global violence, we should call it a global virulence. This form of violence is indeed viral. It moves by contagion, produces by chain reaction, and little by little it destroys our immune systems and our capacities to resist" (2003; our italics).

### Security

#### Championing security above all else expresses a fear of nature as anarchic and unpredictable, culminating in a nationalist politics motivated by a hatred of all that is different or unknown, in endless crises, preemptive wars, and total fear. We ask a prior question: why value security at all? Only by finding joy in the unpredictable, the unknown, and the different can we resist the global homogeneity that makes life unbearable.

Der Derian 8 (James, “The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard,” in Critical Practices in International Theory: Selected Essays, Taylor and Francis, 149-59)

**The rapidity of change** in the international system, **as well as the inability of international theory to make sense of that change, raises this question: Of what value is security?** More specifically, just how secure is this preeminent concept of international relations? **This evaluation of security invokes interpretive strategies to ask epistemological, ontological, and political questions – questions that all too often are ignored, subordinated, or displaced by the technically biased, narrowly framed question of *what* it takes to achieve security.** The goal, then, of this inquiry is to make philosophically problematic that which has been practically axiomatic in international relations. The first step is to ask whether **the paramount value of security lies in its abnegation of the insecurity of all values. No other concept in international relations packs the metaphysical punch, nor commands the disciplinary power of “security.” In its name, peoples have alienated their fears, rights and powers to gods, emperors, and most recently, sovereign states, all to protect themselves from the vicissitudes of nature** – as well as from other gods, emperors, and sovereign states**. In its name, weapons of mass destruction have been developed which have transfigured national interest into a security dilemma based on a suicide pact.** And, less often noted in international relations, **in its name billions have been made and millions killed while scientific knowledge has been furthered and intellectual dissent muted. We have inherited an *ontotheology* of security**, that is, **an *a priori* argument that proves the existence and necessity of only one form of security because there currently happens to be a widespread, metaphysical belief in it. Indeed, within the concept of security lurks the entire history of western metaphysics**, which was best described by Derrida “as a series of substitutions of center for center” in a perpetual search for the “transcendental signified.”1 From God to Rational Man, from Empire to Republic, from King to the People – and on occasion in the reverse direction as well, for history is never so linear, never so neat as we would write it **– the security of the center has been the shifting site from which the forces of authority, order, and identity philosophically defined and physically kept at bay anarchy, chaos, and difference. Yet the center**, as modern poets and postmodern critics tell us, **no longer holds**. The demise of a bipolar system, **the diffusion of power into new political, national, and economic constellations, the decline of civil society and the rise of the shopping mall, the acceleration of *everything***– transportation, capital and information flows, change itself–have induced a new anxiety. As George Bush repeatedly said – that is, until the 1992 Presidential election went into full swing – “**The enemy is unpredictability. The enemy is instability.”**2 **One immediate response, the unthinking reaction, is to master this anxiety and to resecure the center by remapping the peripheral threats. In this vein, the Pentagon prepares seven military scenarios for future conflict,** ranging from *latino* small-fry to an IdentiKit super-enemy that goes by the generic acronym of REGT (“Reemergent Global Threat”). In the heartlands of America, Toyota sledge-hammering returns as a popular know-nothing distraction. And **within the Washington beltway, rogue powers such as North Korea, Iraq, and Libya take on the status of pariah-state and potential video bomb-site for a permanently electioneering elite**. There are also prodromal efforts to shore up the center of the International Relations discipline. In a newly instituted series in the *International Studies Quarterly*, the state of security studies is surveyed so as to refortify its borders.3 After acknowledging that “the boundaries of intellectual disciplines are permeable,” the author proceeds not only to raise the drawbridge but also to caulk every chink in the moat.4 Recent attempts to broaden the concept of “security” to include such issues as global environmental dangers, disease, and economic and natural disasters endanger the field by threatening “to destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems.”5 The field is surveyed in the most narrow and parochial way: out of 200-plus works cited, esteemed Third World scholars of strategic studies receive no mention, British and French scholars receive short shrift, and Soviet writers do not make it into the Pantheon at all. The author of the essay, Stephen Walt, has written one of the better books on alliance systems;6 here he seems intent on constructing a new alliance within the discipline against “foreign” others, with the “postmodernist” as arch-alien. The tactic is familiar: like many of the neoconservatives who have launched the recent attacks on “political correctness,” the “liberals” of international relations make it a habit to base their criticisms on secondary accounts of a category of thinking rather than on a primary engagement with the specific (and often differing) views of the thinkers themselves.7 In this case, Walt cites IR scholar Robert Keohane on the hazards of “reflectivism,” to warn off anyone who by inclination or error might wander into the foreign camp: “As Robert Keohane has noted, until these writers ‘have delineated ... a research program and shown ... that it can illuminate important issues in world politics, they will remain on the margins of the field.’ ”8 By the end of the essay, one is left with the suspicion that the rapid changes in world politics have triggered a “security crisis” in security studies that requires extensive theoretical damage control. What if we leave the desire for mastery to the insecure and instead imagine a new dialogue of security, not in the pursuit of a utopian end but in recognition of the world as it is, other than us? What might such a dialogue sound like? **Any attempt at an answer requires a genealogy: to understand the discursive power of the concept, to remember its forgotten meanings, to assess its economy of use in the present, to reinterpret – and possibly construct through the reinterpretation – a late modern security comfortable with a plurality of centers, multiple meanings, and fluid identities.** The steps I take here in this direction are tentative and preliminary. I first undertake a brief history of the concept itself. Second, I present the “originary” form of security that has so dominated our conception of international relations, the Hobbesian episteme of realism. Third, I consider the impact of two major challenges to the Hobbesian episteme, that of Marx and Nietzsche. And finally, I suggest that Baudrillard provides the best, if most nullifying, analysis of security in late modernity. In short, I retell the story of realism as an historic encounter of fear and danger with power and order that produced four realist forms of security: epistemic, social, interpretive, and hyperreal. To preempt a predictable criticism, I wish to make it clear that I am not in search of an “alternative security.” An easy defense is to invoke Heidegger, who declared that “questioning is the piety of thought.”9 Foucault, however, gives the more powerful reason for a genealogy of security: I am not looking for an alternative; you can’t find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people. You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions, and that’s the reason why I don’t accept the word *alternative*. My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do.10 The hope is that in the interpretation of the most pressing dangers of late modernity we might be able to construct a form of security based on the appreciation and articulation rather than the normalization or extirpation of difference. **A genealogy of the concept In traditional realist representations of world politics as the struggle for power among states, the will to security is born out of a primal fear, a natural estrangement and a condition of anarchy which diplomacy, international law and the balance of power seek, yet ultimately fail, to mediate**.11 By considering some historical meanings of security that exceed this prevailing view, I wish to suggest “new” possibilities and intelligibilities for security. Admittedly, this brief genealogy is thin on analysis and thick on description. But my intention is to provoke discussion, and to suggest that there is more than a speculative basis for the acceptance of a concept of security that is less coherent and dogmatic, and more open to the historical complexity and contingent nature of international relations. In its earlier use, “security” traveled down a double-track and, then, somewhere at the turn of the nineteenth century, one track went underground. **Conventionally understood, security refers to a condition of being protected, free from danger, safety.** This meaning prevailed in the great power diplomacy of the modern states- system. In 1704, the *Act of Security* was passed by the Scottish Parliament, which forbade the ascension of Queen Anne’s successor to the throne of Scotland unless the independence of the Scottish kingdom was “secured.”12 In 1781, Gibbon conveyed a specifically geopolitical meaning when he wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that “the emperor and his court enjoyed ... the security of the marshes and fortifications of Ravenna.”13 **Coeval, however, with the evolution of security as a preferred condition of safety was a different connotation, of security as a condition of false or misplaced confidence in one’s position.** In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare wrote that “Security is Mortals cheefest Enemie.”14 In a 1774 letter, Edmund Burke impugned “The supineness, neglect, and blind security of my friend, in that, and every thing that concerns him.”15 And, as late as 1858, the *Saturday Review* reported that “Every government knew exactly when there was reason for alarm, and when there was excuse for security.”16 Clearly, the unproblematical essence that is often attached to the term today does not stand up to even a cursory investigation. **From its origins, security has had contested meanings, indeed, even contradictory ones**. Certainly, the tension of definition is inherent in the elusiveness of the phenomenon it seeks to describe, as well as in the efforts of various users to fix and attach meanings for their own ends. Yet there is something else operating at the discursive level: I believe there is a talismanic *sign* to security that seeks to provide what the *property* of security cannot. The clue is in the numerous citations from sermons found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. They all use **security** to convey the second sense, that **is, a careless, hubristic, even damnable overconfidence**. The excerpts range in dates from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century: “They ... were drowned in sinneful security” (1575); “This is a Reflection which ... should strike Terror and Amazement into the securest Sinner” (1729); one, claiming that “It is an imaginary immortality which encloses him in sevenfold security, even while he stands upon its very last edge” (1876).17 Mediating between these two senses of security lies a third. In the face of a danger, a debt, or an obligation of some kind, one seeks a security, in the form of a pledge, a bond, a surety. From the 1828 *Webster*: “Violent and dangerous men are obliged to give security for their good behavior, or for keeping the peace.”18 In Markby’s *Elementary Law* (1874), the word is given a precise financial meaning: “I shall also use the word security to express any transaction between the debtor and creditor by which the performance of such a service (one capable of being represented in money) is secured.”19 A security could also be “represented” in person. Shakespeare again, from *Henry IV* : “He said, sir, you should procure him better Assurance, the Bardole: he wold not take his Bond and yours, he lik’d not the Security.”20 **Hobbes and epistemic realism** Nor is it enough for the security, which men desire should last all the time of their life, that they be governed, and directed by one judgement, for a limited time; as in one Battle, or one War. For though they obtain a Victory by their unanimous endeavour against a foreign enemy; yet afterwards when either they have no common enemy, or he that by one part is held for an enemy, is by another part held for a friend, they must needs by the difference of their interests dissolve, and fall again into a War amongst themselves. –Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* **For** his representation of security**, Hobbes** preferred the axiomatic style of Euclid and the historical reasoning of Thucydides to the poetic excess of Shakespeare. Both Hobbes and Shakespeare contributed interpretations that exceeded and out- lived their contemporary political contexts and historical emulations.21 However (and unfortunately), since Hobbes rather than Shakespeare enjoys a paradigmatic status in international relations, a short overview of his foundational ideas on realism and security is needed. In chapter 10 of the *Leviathan*, Hobbes opens with the proposition that “The Power of a Man ... is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good.”22 Harmless enough, it would seem, until this power is put into relation with other men seeking future goods. Conflict inevitably follows, “because the power of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of another: power simply is no more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another.”23 A man’s power comes to rest on his *eminence*, the margin of power that he is able to exercise over others. The classic formulation follows in chapter 11: “So that in the first place, I put a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death.”24 The implications for interpersonal and interstate relations are obvious. Without a common power to constrain this perpetual struggle there can be no common law: “And Convenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.”25 In the state of nature there exists a fundamental imbalance between man’s needs and his capacity to satisfy them – with the most basic need being security from a violent and sudden death. To avoid injury from one another and from foreign invasion, men “confer all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that man reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, into one Will.”26 The constitution of the Leviathan, the sovereign state, provides for a domestic peace, but at a price. Hobbes’s solution for civil war displaces the disposition for a “warre of every man against every man” to the international arena.27 Out of fear, for gain, or in the pursuit of glory, states will go to war because they can. Like men in the precontractual state of nature, they seek the margin of power that will secure their right of self-preservation – and run up against states acting out of similar needs and desires. In these passages **we can discern** **the ontotheological foundations of an epistemic realism, in the sense of an ethico-political imperative embedded in the nature of things**.28 **The sovereign state and territoriality become the necessary effects of anarchy, contingency, disorder that are assumed to exist *independent* of and *prior* to any rational or linguistic conception of them. In epistemic realism, the search for security through sovereignty is not a political choice but the necessary reaction to an anarchical condition**: Order is man-made and good; chaos is natural and evil. Out of self-interest, men must pursue this good and constrain the evil of excessive will through an alienation of individual powers to a superior, indeed supreme, collective power. In short, **the security of epistemic realism is ontological, theological and teleological**: that is, metaphysical. We shall see, from Marx’s and Nietzsche’s critiques, the extent to which **Hobbesian security and epistemic realism rely on social constructions posing as apodictic truths for their power effects. There is not and never was a “state of nature” or a purely “self-interested man”; there is, however, clearly an abiding fear of violent and premature death that compels men to seek the security found in solidarity. The irony, perhaps even tragedy, is that by constituting the first science of security, Hobbes made a singular contribution to the eventual subversion of the metaphysical foundations of solidarity. Marx and social realism** Of course, the measure of the power that I gain for my object over yours needs your recognition in order to become a real power. But our mutual recognition of the mutual power of our objects is a battle in which he conquers who has the more energy, strength, insight and dexterity. If I have enough physical strength I plunder you directly. If the kingdom of physical strength no longer holds sway then we seek to deceive each other, the more dextrous beats the less. –Karl Marx, Notes on James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy* Marx took probably the most devastating – and certainly the most politically influential – shot at the metaphysics of Hobbesian security. I will avoid the obvious gesture of recounting how Marx put Hegel – and with him the state – back on material footing, and instead focus on Marx’s early polemic against the universalist guise of the state, “On the Jewish Question.”29 In the essay, Marx traces the split between civil society and the state to the spread of secularized traditions of Judaism and Christianity. In an essentialist if not racialist manner, Marx locates the earliest “spirit of capitalism” in the Judaic practices of usury and the “chimerical nationality of the Jew ... of the trader and above all the financier.”30 He attributes to it a powerfully corrosive effect that sunders Christianity’s universalist spirit into the “spirit of *civil society*, of the sphere of egoism, of the *bellum omnium contra omes*.” The “war of all against all” is not the residue of an imagined state of nature, but the universalization of the “capitalist spirit” of Judaism “under the reign of Christianity,” which “dissolves the human world into a world of atomistic, mutually hostile individuals.” Like Hobbes, Marx is a realist in that he acknowledges a universal struggle for power; and he is clearly indebted to Hobbes for his nominalist demythologization of power. But Marx goes one step further, identifying the source of the Leviathan’s power not in a free association of alienated power, but in “the separation of man from man ... the practical application of the right of liberty is the right of private property.” The desire for security, then, does not emerge from some external state of nature: “rather, security is the guarantee of the egoism of civil society.” It is not a Hobbesian fear or self-interest that gives rise to security; it is money, as “the alienated essence of man’s labour and life, this alien essence dominates him as he worships it.” This elevation of the egoistic partiality to a metaphysical universality conceals the real divisions created by alienated labor. Not the Leviathan but Mammon binds together society: “The god of the Jews has been secularized and has become the god of the world.” The state takes on this universalist identity, becoming the “mediator to which man transfers all his unholiness and all his *human freedom*.” In Marx, alienation gives rise to a struggle for power which necessitates the security of a state, whereas, in Hobbes, alienation is a consequence of the struggle for power. Moreover, in Marx the power struggle is not a permanent condition: it is historically and class specific, and once the contradiction between a social production of wealth and the private exercise of power comes to its dialectical resolution, the state would become obsolescent – and with it the security dilemma. For Hobbes, the struggle for power is permanent and universal; hence the state is unlikely to wither away. Moreover, it is improbable that a supra-state Leviathan could be constructed: “In states and commonwealths not dependent on one another, every commonwealth has an absolute liberty to do what it shall judge most conducive to their benefits.”31 Marx sees this extra-territorial liberty to be as chimerical as Hobbes’s domestic version. Just as the power of partial economic interests dominates the whole of civil society through the abstract universality of the state, Marx considered interstate politics to be the “serf” of a “universal” financial power hiding a narrow class interest.32 **Nietzsche and interpretive realism** In the last analysis, “love of the neighbor” is always something secondary, partly conventional and arbitrary – illusory in relation to *fear of the neighbor.* After the structure of society is fixed on the whole and seems secure against external dangers, it is this fear of the neighbor that again creates new perspectives of moral valuation. –Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* **Nietzsche** transvalues both Hobbes’s and Marx’s interpretations of security through a genealogy of modes of being. His **method is** not to uncover some deep meaning or value for security, but **to destabilize the intolerable fictional identities of the past which have been created out of fear, and to affirm the creative differences which might yield new values for the future.33** Originating in the paradoxical relationship of a contingent life and a certain death, **the history of security reads** for Nietzsche **as an abnegation, a resentment** and, finally, a transcendence of this paradox. In brief, **the history is one of individuals seeking an impossible security from the most radical “other” of life, the terror of death which, once generalized and nationalized, triggers a futile cycle of collective identities seeking security from alien others–who are seeking similarly impossible guarantees.** It is a story of **differences taking on the otherness of death, and identities calcifying into a fearful sameness**. Since Nietzsche has suffered the greatest neglect in international theory, his reinterpretation of security will receive a more extensive treatment here. One must begin with Nietzsche’s idea of the will to power, which he clearly believed to be prior to and generative of all considerations of security. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he emphatically establishes the primacy of the will to power: “Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the most frequent results.”34 **The will to power**, then, **should not be confused with a Hobbesian perpetual *desire* for power. It can**, in its negative form, **produce a reactive and resentful longing for *only* power, leading, in Nietzsche’s view, to a triumph of nihilism. But Nietzsche refers to a *positive* will to power, an active and effective force of becoming, from which values and meanings** – including self-preservation – **are produced which affirm life. Conventions of security act to suppress rather than con- front the fears endemic to life,** for “... life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation – but why should one always use those words in which slanderous intent has been imprinted for ages.”35 Elsewhere Nietzsche establishes the pervasiveness of agonism in life: **“life is a consequence of war, society itself a means to war**.”36 But **the denial of this permanent condition, the effort to disguise it with a consensual rationality or to hide from it with a fictional sovereignty, are all effects of this suppression of fear. The desire for security is manifested as a collective resentment of difference– that which is not us, not certain, not predictable. Complicit with a negative will to power is the fear-driven desire for protection from the unknown.** Unlike the positive will to power, which produces an aesthetic affirmation of difference**, the search for truth produces a truncated life which conforms to the rationally knowable,** to the causally sustainable. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche asks of the reader: “Look, isn’t our need for knowledge precisely this need for the familiar, the will to uncover everything strange, unusual, and questionable, something that no longer disturbs us? Is it not the *instinct of fear* that bids us to know? And is the jubilation of those who obtain knowledge not the jubilation over the restoration of a sense of security?”37 **The fear of the unknown and the desire for certainty combine to produce a domesticated life, in which causality and rationality become the highest sign of a sovereign self, the surest protection against contingent forces. The fear of fate assures a belief that everything reasonable is true, and everything true, reasonable. In short, the security imperative produces, and is sustained by, the strategies of knowledge which seek to explain it**. Nietzsche elucidates the nature of this generative relationship in *The Twilight of the Idols*: The causal instinct is thus conditional upon, and excited by, the feeling of fear. The “why?” shall, if at all possible, not give the cause for its own sake so much as for a *particular kind of cause*–a cause that is comforting, liberating and relieving. ... That which is new and strange and has not been experienced before, is excluded as a cause. Thus one not only searches for some kind of explanation, to serve as a cause, but for a particularly selected and preferred kind of explanation–that which most quickly and frequently abolished the feeling of the strange, new and hitherto unexperienced: the most *habitual* explanations.38 **A safe life requires safe truths. The strange and the alien remain unexamined, the unknown becomes identified as evil, and evil provokes hostility–recycling the desire for security. The “influence of timidity,”** as Nietzsche puts it, **creates a people who are willing to subordinate affirmative values to the “necessities” of security:** “they fear change, transitoriness: this expresses a straitened soul, full of mistrust and evil experiences.”39 **The unknowable which cannot be contained by force or explained by reason is relegated to the off-world.** “Trust,” the “good,” and other common values come to rely upon an “artificial strength”: “the feeling of *security* such as the Christian possesses; he feels strong in being able to trust, to be patient and composed: he owes this artificial strength to the illusion of being protected by a god.”40 For Nietzsche, of course, only a false sense of security can come from false gods: “Morality and religion belong altogether to the *psychology of error*: in every single case, cause and effect are confused; or truth is confused with the effects of *believing* something to be true; or a state of consciousness is confused with its causes.”41 Nietzsche’s interpretation of the origins of religion can shed some light on this paradoxical origin and transvaluation of security. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche sees religion arising from a sense of fear and indebtedness to one’s ancestors: The conviction reigns that it is only through the sacrifices and accomplishments of the ancestors that the tribe *exists*–and that one has to *pay them back* with sacrifices and accomplishments: one thus recognizes a *debt* that constantly grows greater, since these forebears never cease, in their continued existence as powerful spirits, to accord the tribe new advantages and new strength.42 Sacrifices, honors, obedience are given but it is never enough, for the ancestors of the *most powerful* tribes are bound eventually to grow to monstrous dimensions through the imagination of growing fear and to recede into the darkness of the divinely uncanny and unimaginable: in the end the ancestor must necessarily be transfigured into a *god*.43 As the ancestor’s debt becomes embedded in institutions, the community takes on the role of creditor. Nietzsche mocks this originary, Hobbesian moment: to rely upon an “artificial strength”: “the feeling one lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of communality (oh what advantages! we sometimes underrate them today), one dwells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man *outside*, the “man without peace,” is exposed ... since one has bound and pledged oneself to the community precisely with a view to injury and hostile acts.44 **The establishment of the community is dependent upon, indeed it feeds upon, this fear of being left outside. As the castle wall is replaced by written treaty, however, and distant gods by temporal sovereigns, the martial skills and spiritual virtues of the noble warrior are slowly debased and dissimulated. The subject of the individual will to power becomes the object of a collective resentment.** The result? **The fear of the external other is transvalued into the “love of the neighbor”** quoted in the opening of this section, and **the perpetuation of community is assured through the internalization and legitimation of a fear that lost its original source long ago. This powerful nexus of fear, of external and internal otherness, generates the values which uphold the security imperative**. Indeed, Nietzsche locates the genealogy of even individual rights, such as freedom, in the calculus of maintaining security: My rights are that part of my power which others not merely conceded me, but which they wish me to preserve. How do these others arrive at that? First: through their prudence and fear and caution: whether in that they expect something similar from us in return (protection of their rights); or in that they consider that a struggle with us would be perilous or to no purpose; or in that they see in any diminution of our force a disadvantage to themselves, since we would then be unsuited to forming an alliance with them in opposition to a hostile third power. *Then*: by donation and cession.45 The point of Nietzsche’s critical genealogy is to show that the perilous conditions that created the security imperative – and the western metaphysics that perpetuate it – have diminished if not disappeared; yet, the fear of life persists: “Our century denies this perilousness, and does so with a good conscience: and yet it continues to drag along with it the old habits of Christian security, Christian enjoyment, recreation and evaluation.”46 Nietzsche’s worry is that **the collective reaction against older, more primal fears has created an even worse danger: the tyranny of the herd, the lowering of man, the apathy of the last man which controls through conformity and rules through passivity. The security of the sovereign, rational self and state comes at the cost of ambiguity, uncertainty, paradox – all that makes a free life worthwhile.** Nietzsche’s lament for this lost life is captured at the end of *Daybreak* in a series of rhetorical questions: Of future virtues – How comes it that the more comprehensible the world has grown the more solemnities of every kind have decreased? Is it that fear was so much the basic element of that reverence which overcame us in the presence of everything unknown and mysterious and taught us to fall down before the incomprehensible and plead for mercy? And has the world not lost some of its charm for us because we have grown less fearful? With the diminution of our fearfulness has our own dignity and solemnity, our own *fearsomeness*, not also diminished?47 It is of course in Nietzsche’s lament, in his deepest pessimism for the last man, that one finds the celebration of the overman as both symptom and harbinger of a more free-spirited yet fearsome age. Dismissive of utopian engineering, **Nietzsche** never suggests how he would restructure society; he **looks forward** only so far as **to** sight **the emergence of** “new philosophers” (such as himself?) who would restore a reverence for fear and reevaluate the security imperative. Nietzsche does, however, go back to a pre-Christian, pre-Socratic era to find the exemplars for a new kind of security. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, he holds up Pericles as an example, for lauding the Athenians for their “*rhathymia*” – a term that incorporates the notion of “indifference to and contempt for security.”48 It is perhaps too much to expect Nietzsche’s message to resonate in late modern times, to expect, at the very time when conditions seem most uncertain and unpredictable, that **people would treat fear as a stimulus for improvement rather than cause for retrenchment. Yet Nietzsche would clearly see these as opportune times, when fear could be willfully asserted as a force for the affirmation of difference, rather than canalized into a cautious identity constructed from the calculation of risks and benefits.** Baudrillard and hyperrealism Like the real, warfare will no longer have any place – except precisely if the nuclear powers are successful in de-escalation and manage to define new spaces for warfare. If military power, at the cost of de-escalating this marvelously practical madness to the second power, reestablishes a setting for warfare, a confined space that is in fact human, then weapons will regain their use value and their exchange value: it will again be possible to exchange warfare. –Jean Baudrillard, Fatal Strategies Fine allegories, Baudrillard would say of Marx and Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s efforts to represent the deeper impulses behind the will to security, as well as Marx’s effort to chart the origins of the struggle for power, to pierce the veil of false consciousness that has postponed revolution, to scientifically represent the world-to-be, are just examples of a representational mirroring, a doubling of late-modernity’s cartography of the world-as-it-is. “For it is with the same Imperialism,” says Baudrillard, “that present-day simulators try to make the real, all the real coincide with their simulation models.”49 Baudrillard goes beyond Nietzsche in his interpretation of the death of god and the inability of rational man or the proletariat to fill the resulting value-void with stable distinctions between the real and the apparent, idea and referent, good and evil. In the hyperbolic, often nihilistic, vision of Baudrillard, the task of modernity is no longer to demystify or disenchant illusion – as Nietzsche realized, “with the real world we have also abolished the apparent” – but to save the reality principle, which in this case means, above all else, the sovereign state acting in an anarchical order to maintain and if possible expand its security and power in the face of penetrating, de-centering forces, like the ICBM, global capital, military (and now civilian) surveillance satellites, the international or domestic terrorist, the telecommunications web, environmental movements and transnational human rights conventions, to name a few of the more obvious forces. In his now familiar words: “It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real.”51 The idea that reality is blurring, or has already disappeared into its representational form, has a long lineage. It can be traced from Siegfried Kracauer’s chronicling of the emergence of a “cult of distraction” in the Weimar Republic,52 to Walter Benjamin’s incisive warning of the loss of authenticity, aura, and uniqueness in the technical reproduction of reality,53 to Guy Debord’s claim that, in modern conditions, spectacles accumulate and representations proliferate54 and, finally, to Jean Baudrillard’s own notification that the simulated now precedes and engenders a hyperreality where origins are forgotten and historical references lost.55 In his post-Marxist work, Baudrillard describes how the class struggle and the commodity form dissolved into a universal play of signs, simulacra, and the inertia of mass culture – and the revolution went missing along with the rest of reality. We are at end-times: but where Marx saw a relentless, dialectical linearity in capitalism leading to social revolution, Baudrillard sees only a passive population depending on the virtuality of technology to save a defunct reality principle. War serves as the ultima ratio of all four thinkers. The Gulf War, and the postwar attempt to set up a “new world order,” provides rich material for Baudrillard’s thesis that security has now entered the realm of hyperreality. Back in 1983, when Baudrillard wrote of the renewed possibility of an “exchange of warfare,” he had already spotted the dark side to a possible end of the ultimate simulation of the Cold War, nuclear deterrence. And if ever a war was “engendered and preceded by simulation,” it was the Gulf War. We were primed for this war. Simulations had infiltrated every area of our lives, in the form of news (re)creations, video games, flight simulators, police interrogations, crime reenactments and, of course, media war games.56 From the initial deployment of troops to the daily order of battle, from the highest reaches of policymaking to the lowest levels of field tactics and supply, a series of simulations made the killing more efficient, more unreal, more acceptable.57 Computer-simulated by private contractors, flight-tested at the Nellis Air Force Base, field-exercised at Fort Irwin in the Mojave Desert, and re-played and fine-tuned everyday in the Persian Gulf, real-time war games took on a life of their own as the real war took the lives of more than 100,000 Iraqis. But there is also evidence that simulations played a critical role in the decision to go to war. In an interview, General Norman Schwarzkopf revealed that, two years before the war, U.S. intelligence discovered, in his words, that Iraq “had run computer simulations and war games for the invasion of Kuwait.”58 In my own research, I learned that Iraq had previously purchased a wargame from the Washington military-consulting firm BDM International to use in its war against Iran; and almost as an aside, it was reported in September 1990, on ABC Nightline, that the software for the Kuwait invasion simulation was also purchased from a U.S. firm.59 Moreover, Schwarzkopf stated that he programmed “possible conflicts with Iraq on computers almost daily.” Having previously served in Tampa, Florida as head of the U.S. Central Command – at the time a “paper” army without troops, tanks, or aircraft of its own – his affinity for simulations was and is unsurprising. In fact, Schwarzkopf sponsored a highly significant computer-simulated command-post exercise that was played, in late July 1990, under the code-name of “Exercise Internal Look, ’90.” According to a Central Command news release issued at the time, “command and control elements from all branches of the military will be responding to real-world scenarios similar to those they might be expected to confront within the Central Command AOR consisting of the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Southwest Asia.” The war game specialist who put Exercise Internal Look together, Lt. General Yeosock, moved from fighting “real-world scenarios” in Florida to command of all ground troops – except for the special forces under Schwarzkopf – in Saudi Arabia. Perhaps it is too absurd to believe that the Gulf War was the product of one U.S. wargame designed to fight another wargame bought by Iraq from an American company. Perhaps not. My purpose is not to conduct an internal critique of the simulation industry, nor to claim some privileged grounds for ascertaining the causes of the war.60 Rather, my intent is to ask whether, in the construction of a realm of meaning that had minimal contact with historically specific events or actors, simulations demonstrated the power to construct the reality they purport to represent–and international security suffered for it. The question is whether simulations can create a new world order where actors act, things happen, and the consequences have no origins except the artificial cyberspace of the simulations themselves.61 Indeed, over the last decade there has been a profusion of signs that a simulation syndrome has taken hold in international politics. According to Oleg Gordievsky, former KGB station chief in London, the Soviet leadership became convinced in November 1983 that a NATO command-post simulation called “Able Archer ‘83” was, in fact, the first step toward a nuclear surprise attack.62 Relations were already tense after the September shootdown of KAL 007 – a flight that the Soviets considered part of an intelligence-gathering mission – and since the Warsaw Pact had its own wargame, which used a training exercise as cover for a surprise attack, the Soviets assumed the West to have one as well. No NATO nuclear forces went on actual alert, yet the KGB reported the opposite to Moscow. On November 8 or 9, flash messages were sent to all Soviet embassies in Europe, warning them of NATO preparations for a nuclear first strike. Things calmed down when the Able Archer exercise ended without the feared nuclear strike, but Gordievsky still maintains that only the Cuban missile crisis brought the world closer to the brink of nuclear war. On a smaller, more conventional scale, the mistaking of war for its simulation was repeated in July 1988, when the radar operator and the tactical information coordinator of the U.S.S. Vincennes misidentified an Iranian Airbus as an attacking Iranian F-14, even though the ship’s highly sophisticated Aegis radar system registered an unknown airplane flying level at 12,000 feet. The nine months of simulation training with computer tapes that preceded the encounter proved more real than the reality of the moment. In effect, the Airbus disap- peared before the surface-to-air missile struck, transmuted from an airplane with 290 civilians into an electronic representation on a radar screen and, then, into a simulated target. The Gulf War is the preeminent, but probably not the last, case of a simulation syndrome manifesting itself in the discourse of national security. Baudrillard was right, in the sense that simulations would rule not only in the war without warring of nuclear deterrence, but also in the postwar warring of the present.63 It was never in question that the coalition forces would win the military conflict. But they did not win a “war,” in the conventional sense of a destroying a reciprocating enemy. What “war,” then, did the U.S. win? A cyberwar of simulations. First, the prewar simulation, Operation Internal Look ‘90, which defeated the “Made in America” Iraqi simulation for the invasion of Kuwait. Second, the war game of AirLand Battle, which defeated an Iraqi army that resembled the game’s intended enemy, the Warsaw Pact, in hyperreality only. Third, the war of spectacle, which defeated the spectacle of war on the battlefield of videographic reproduction. And fourth, the postwar after-simulation of Vietnam, which defeated an earlier defeat by assimilating Vietnam’s history and lessons into the victory of the Gulf War. Perhaps Baudrillard’s and Marx’s worst scenarios have come true: the post-Cold War security state now has the technology of simulation as well as the ideological advantage of unipolarity to regenerate, at relatively low cost to itself, an ailing national economy and identity through foreign adventures. We should expect, then, endo- as well as exo-colonial wars, trade wars and simulated wars to figure in the new world order. Iraq served its purpose well as the enemy “other” that helped to redefine the Western identity: but it was the other enemy, the more pervasive and elusive threat posed by the de-territorialization of the state and the disintegration of a bipolar order that has left us with a “Gulf War Syndrome,” in which the construction and destruction of the enemy other is measured in time, not territory; prosecuted in the field of perception, not politics; authenticated by technical reproduction, not material referents; and played out in the method and metaphor of gaming, not the history and horror of warring. Not a conclusion but a provocation People in the newly sovereign republics of the former Soviet Union report greater fear and insecurity than they felt before they became independent. ... Indeed, the data show that the greatest perceived threats are closest to home, with most of those asked more fearful of their neighbors than anyone else, reflecting the lingering unease among ethnic groups living side by side in the former republics. –“Many in the Former Soviet Lands Say They Feel Even More Insecure Now,” Bruce Weber, New York Times, April 23, 1992. If security is to have any significance for the future, it must find a home in the new disorder through a commensurate deterritorialization of theory. We can no longer reconstitute a single Hobbesian site of meaning or reconstruct some Marxist or even neo-Kantian cosmopolitan community; that would require a moment of enlightened universal certainty that crumbled long before the Berlin Wall fell. Nor can we depend on or believe in some spiritual, dialectical or scientific process to overcome or transcend the domestic and international divisions, ambiguities, and uncertainties that mark the age of speed, surveillance and simulation. This is why I believe the philosophical depth of Nietzsche has more to offer than the hyperbolic flash of Baudrillard. Can we not interpret our own foreign policy in the light of Nietzsche’s critique of security? As was the case with the origins of an ontotheological security, did not our debt to the Founding Fathers grow “to monstrous dimensions” with our “sacrifices” – many noble, some not – in two World Wars? Did not our collective identity, once isolationist, neutralist and patriotic, become transfigured into a new god, that was born and fearful of a nuclear, internationalist, interventionist power? The evidence is in the reconceptualization: as distance, oceans and borders became less of a protective barrier to alien identities, and a new international economy required penetration into other worlds, national interest became too weak a semantic guide. We found a stronger one in national security, as embodied and institutionalized in the National Security Act of 1947, as protected by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, and as recon- structed by the first, and subsequent National Security Council meetings of the second cold war. Nietzsche speaks a credible truth to increasingly incredible regimes. He points toward a way in which we might live with and recognize the very necessity of difference. He recognizes the need to assert heterogeneity against the homogenizing and often brutalizing forces of progress. And he eschews all utopian schemes to take us out of the “real” world for a practical strategy to celebrate, rather than exacerbate, the anxiety, insecurity and fear of a new world order where radical otherness is ubiquitous and indomitable.

#### Rhetoric of deterrence covers the global extension of absolute securitization

Baudrillard ‘81 (Jean, Simulacra and Simulation: The Orbital and the Nuclear, 1981)

The apotheosis of simulation: the nuclear. However, the balance of terror is never anything but the spectacular slope of a system of deterrence that has insinuated itself from the inside into all the cracks of daily life. Nuclear suspension only serves to seal the trivialized system of deterrence that is at the heart of the media, of the violence without consequences that reigns throughout the world, of the aleatory apparatus of all the choices that are made for us. The most insignificant of our behaviors is regulated by neutralized, indifferent, equivalent signs, by zero-sum signs like those that regulate the "strategy of games" (but the true equation is elsewhere, and the unknown is precisely that variable of simulation which makes of the atomic arsenal itself a hyperreal form, a simulacrum that dominates everything and reduces all "ground-level" events to being nothing but ephemeral scenarios, transforming the life left us into survival, into a stake without stakes - not even into a life insurance policy: into a policy that already has no value). It is not the direct threat of atomic destruction that paralyzes our lives, it is deterrence that gives them leukemia. And this deterrence comes from that fact that even the real atomic clash is precluded - precluded like the eventuality of the real in a system of signs. The whole world pretends to believe in the reality of this threat (this is understandable on the part of the military, the gravity of their exercise and the discourse of their "strategy" are at stake), but it is precisely at this level that there are no strategic stakes. The whole originality of the situation lies in the improbability of destruction.Deterrence precludes war - the archaic violence of expanding systems. Deterrence itself is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable systems or systems in involution. There is no longer a subject of deterrence, nor an adversary nor a strategy - it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes. Atomic war, like the Trojan War, will not take place. The risk of nuclear annihilation only serves as a pretext, through the sophistication of weapons (a sophistication that surpasses any possible objective to such an extent that it is itself a symptom of nullity), for installing a universal security system, a universal lockup and control system whose deterrent effect is not at all aimed at an atomic clash (which was never in question, except without a doubt in the very initial stages of the cold war, when one still confused the nuclear apparatus with conventional war) but, rather, at the much greater probability of any real event, of anything that would be an event in the general system and upset its balance. The balance of terror is the terror of balance. Deterrence is not a strategy, it circulates and is exchanged between nuclear protagonists exactly as is international capital in the orbital zone of monetary speculation whose fluctuations suffice to control all global exchanges. Thus the money of destruction (without any reference to real destruction, any more than floating capital has a real referent of production) that circulates in nuclear orbit suffices to control all the violence and potential conflicts around the world. What is hatched in the shadow of this mechanism with the pretext of a maximal, "objective," threat, and thanks to Damocles' nuclear sword, is the perfection of the best system of control that has ever existed. And the progressive satellization of the whole planet through this hypermodel of security.

#### The attempt to ensure survival terminates in a life denying politics

Baudrillard 88. Jean Baudrillard, America, pg. 42

Everywhere survival has become a burning issue, perhaps by some obscure weariness of life or a collective desire for catastrophe (though we should not take all this too seriously: it is also a playing at catastrophe). Certainly, this whole panoply of survival issues - dieting, ecology, saving the sequoias, seals or the human race - tends to prove that we are very much alive (just as all imaginary fairy-tales tend to prove that the real world is very real). But this is not so certain, for not only is the fact of living not really well-attested, but the paradox of this society is that you cannot even die in it any more since you are already dead. . . This is real suspense. And it is not simply an effect of living in the nuclear age, but derives from the ease with which we now live, which makes survivors of us all. If the bomb drops, we shall [not] neither have the time to die nor any awareness of dying. But already in our hyper-protected society we no longer have any awareness of death, since we have subtly passed over into a state where life is excessively easy.

The holocaust created an anticipatory form of such a condition. What the inmates of the concentration camps were deprived of was the very possibility of having control of their own deaths, of playing, even gambling with their own deaths, making their deaths a sacrifice: they were robbed of power over their own deaths. And this is what is happening to all of us, in slow, homeopathic doses, by virtue of the very development of our systems. The explosions and the extermination (Auschwitz and Hiroshima) still go on, though they have simply taken on a purulent, endemic form. The chain reaction continues nonetheless, the contagion, the unfolding of the viral and bacteriological process. The end of history was precisely the inauguration of this chain reaction.

The obsessive desire for survival (and not for life) is a symptom of this state of affairs and doubtless also the most worrying sign of the degradation of the species. If you think about the forms that desire currently takes -antinuclear shelters, cryogenization, high-pressure therapy - you see that they are exactly the forms of extermination. To avoid dying, one chooses to withdraw into some protective bubble or other. In this light, we should take it as a reassuring sign that people lost interest in antinuclear protection so quickly (the shelter market has become a mere prestige market, like the market for artworks or luxury yachts). It seems that people have become tired of nuclear blackmail and decided not to give in to it, leaving the threat of destruction hanging in mid-air over them, perhaps with an obscure sense of how unreal it is. A fine example of a vital reaction disguised as resignation. ‘If we have to die, better to die in the open air than in an underground sarcophagus.’ At a stroke an end is put to survival blackmail and life can go on.

Everyone is weary of these apocalyptic visions - the great scenario of the nuclear threat, the theatrical negotiations, ‘Star Wars’. In the end, they defend themselves with a lack of imagination. Even attempts to stimulate that imagination in films like The Last Day have not worked. Nothing has ever been able to make this nuclear scene - or obscenity - credible. With delicate matters like this (as with cancer), imagining death has the effect of bringing the fatal event closer. The masses’ silent indifference to nuclear pathos (whether it comes from the nuclear powers or from antinuclear campaigners) is therefore a great sign of hope and a political fact of the utmost importancse.

### Set Col

#### The spectacle allows the policy debate community to re-perform the journey from the ‘savage frontier’ to ‘civilization.’ This commodification of indigeneity erases native perspectives, reducing them to a shadow behind societal improvement, and allows whiteness to consolidate itself.

Grande 18 Sandy, Associate professor and Chair of the Education Department at Connecticut College. “Refusing the Settler Society of the Spectacle.” Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018. E.A. McKinley, L.T. Smith (eds.), Handbook of Indigenous Education,

Debord’s central thesis or provocation is that life in a “commodity-saturated, mass mediated, image-dominated and corporate-constructed world” engenders an increasingly isolated, alienated, and passive citizenry that unwittingly relents to a groupthink of market consciousness disguised as individual agency (Kaplan 2012, p. 458). His analysis illuminates the inherent paradox of spectacle; despite (or because of) its intention to illicit emotion and (re)action, spectacle produces alienation and passivity. Particularly in a mass-mediated, hi-tech society, the sheer volume of content alone can produce a deadening effect. But spectacle is both dialectical and self-perpetuating. Meaning, the resulting (individual and social) ennui searches for relief from the deadening effect and, in so doing, activates the production of ever more spectacular imagery, generating an endless and alienating cycle of (simulated) life in search of the “real.” As the search intensifies, so does the desire for anything perceived as “authentic” – authenticity is the antidote (For early and consistently excellent discussions of the desire for “authentic” nature and culture see the work of Dean MacCannell 1976.). It is this cycle – the positioning of spectacularity against “authenticity” and authenticity as the antidote to the (post)modernist condition – that compels this analysis, particularly in the wake of #NoDAPL. For as long as “Indians” have been situated as the (authentic) anti-modern subject, “Indian-ness” has perennially served as a favored foil (antidote) for whiteness. While many Indigenous studies scholars have examined the ways in which Native identity is appropriated in the service of white identity formation (e.g., Berkhofer 1987; Deloria 1969, 1998; Huhndorf 2001), my interest is cast more broadly. That is, beyond questions of white identity formation: How does the expressed desire for the imagined Indian serve the propertied interests of whiteness, which is to say settler statecraft? To explore this question, I begin with more mundane expressions of Indian-as-spectacle and move toward their deeper implications. Currently, there are 20 reality shows in circulation that stage interventions (read: provide antidotes) for the normative hegemony of white-middle-class life by depicting life on the “frontier” or “the wild.” (Among the current shows are: Survivor, Colonial House, Alaska Bush People, Frontier House, and Man vs. Wild.) Through their ubiquity and popularity, such shows evidence the extent of settler-desire for the imperialist fantasy of “pre-modernist” times at the same time they appease settler supremacy. They refract what McLintock (McClintock and Robertson 1994) refers to as “panoptical time,” (More specifically, McLintock (1994) defines panoptical time as “the image of global history consumed – at a glance – in a single spectacle from the point of privileged invisibility” (p. 128).) a key component of imperialist discourse that situates progress as fundamentally contingent upon on a “shadow other,” which is, of course, the savage (Pardy 2010). Indeed, as noted by Rosaldo (1989) “In this ideologically constructed world of ongoing progressive change, putatively static savage societies become a stable reference point for defining...civilized identity” (p. 70). Native peoples are so much “a shadow” that with the exception of one show (Frontier House) they are not even present – literally eliminated from settler view. In this sense, progress is the central character, so critical to settler mythology that it drives a deep-seeded need to continually perform the fabled journey from savage to civilized over and over again; settler-subjects playing out fantasies of the colonial encounter as theater. There was one reality show about Native peoples – Escaping Alaska – which, depicted five Alaska Native youth (identified as “Eskimos”) “secretly” plotting to leave their families and homeland in order to experience life in the lower 48. True to Debord’s thesis, the society of the spectacle can only produce grotesque caricatures. In this instance, Inuit youth are depicted as members of a virtual cult that apparently holds their members’ captive and in complete ignorance of the “outside” world. Baloy (2016) theorizes the oscillation between the complete erasure and hyperreality of Indigenous peoples in terms of “spectrality” (i.e., a state of haunting). She deploys the term “holographic Indigeneity” to describe the phenomena of Native peoples hyper-visibility “from some angles” and invisibility from others – always a constant presence even in moments of apparent absence (p. 209).

#### They will claim that their advocacy is a radical reconning. But settlers enjoy being called out so they can honor the Native victims and register their feelings of offense, rinsing themselves of guilt without enacting any real changes.

Grande 18 Sandy, Associate professor and Chair of the Education Department at Connecticut College. “Refusing the Settler Society of the Spectacle.” Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018. E.A. McKinley, L.T. Smith (eds.), Handbook of Indigenous Education

Lakota scholar Phil Deloria (1999) documents how the oscillation between settler desire and repulsion for Indian-ness has manifested through the long-standing practice of “playing Indian.” Dating back at least as far as the Boston Tea Party (1773) when the “Sons of Liberty” staged their protest wearing headdresses and war paint, Deloria demonstrates how the spectacle of “playing Indian” has been a persistent feature of the search for “authentic” American identity. The advent of digital technology and social media has only enabled the speed and scope of this cultural spectacle, producing an abundant archive of Indians of the settler imagination. Baloy’s (Baloy 2016) research demonstrates that, indeed, the main source of people’s information on and experience with Indigeneity comes through media. Thus, from Victoria’s Secret models in full headdress to grotesque sports mascots and fans in red-face, settlers play out their “uneasiness” with the violence of the settler project in full, spectacular display. In theorizing the space between spectacle, cultural politics and neoliberalism, Giroux (2009) draws upon the insights of British media theorist Nick Couldry (2008) who discerns, “every system of cruelty requires its own theatre” (p. 3). As noted by Couldry, while some forms of cruelty depend on secrecy, systems of cruelty require legitimation via public and “ritualized performance” (p. 3). Using settler colonialism as an illustrative example, his reasoning would go something like this: (a) Settler colonialism is a system of cruelty. (b) The “truths” of which are unacceptable to democratic society if stated openly. (c) Those truths must be “translated into ritual that enacts, as ‘play’, an acceptable version of the values and compulsions on which that cruelty depends” (p. 3). Reality television is one example of the “theater of cruelty” wherein the rituals of everyday life under settler colonialism are “enacted as play” in order to “legitimate its norms, values, institutions, and social practices” (Giroux 2008, p. 224). Though often dismissed as innocent fun, mediated performances that erase or perpetuate gross caricatures of Native peoples have systemic impact. Unfortunately, this impact is typically framed in psychological terms, playing out something like this: (1) Offending settlers are called out on their racism; (2) they attest to their good intentions and express desire to honor and respect the lifeways of Native peoples as well as regret for hurt feelings; (3) Native “victims” of said “honoring” (re)register their feelings of offense and outrage, often citing harm to their self-esteem and identity formation; and (4) Rinse. Repeat. While I ultimately urge moving beyond this psychologizing discourse, I want to be clear that research evidencing the latent, direct, and collateral damage of racial stereotyping is both chilling and definitive (see Pewewardy 1991, 2004; Fryberg and Markus 2004; Fryberg et al. 2008). The bullying, harassment, and discrimination that occur as a result of the regular and persistent misrepresentation of Native peoples are an affront to their dignity and to the democratic aspirations of the nation. That said, I argue that an exclusive focus on the psychological is deeply insufficient and perhaps complicit in maintaining imperialist relations and discourses. The preoccupation with psychological trauma draws attention away from the material conditions of Indigenous peoples and violent strategies of the settler state (i.e., dispossession). The violence of this erasure is captured in Rosaldo’s (1989) notion of “imperialist nostalgia,” which links settler desire for an imagined past to a politics of death and mourning (p. 107). As Rosaldo (1993) writes: ...someone deliberately alters a form of life, and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to the intervention...people destroy their environment, and then they worship nature. In any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture people’s imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination. (pp. 69–70) As theorized by Baloy (2016), the dialectical relationship between spectacle and imperialist nostalgia provides the conceptual frame through which settlers imagine Native peoples. That is, as mediated, spectacularized versions of “the Indian” dominate the collective consciousness of settler society, it functions to erase the lived experience of Indigenous peoples: hypervisibility = invisibility. In other words, spectacle facilitates “imperialist nostalgia” and the passive consumption of Indigenous performance at the expense of actual Indigenous voices and histories. In terms of Standing Rock, Baloy’s work also helps explain the relative invisibility of the Sioux peoples and Indigenous water protectors as well as the hypervisibility of the more spectacular “#NoDAPL “warrior.” Indeed, from the beginning of the encampment (April 1, 2016) to the moment that the Army Corps of Engineers announced the (temporary) denial of the easement, mainstream media as a whole, essentially covered three (spectacular) events: (1) the police use of water cannons on protectors in subfreezing temperatures (November 21, 2016); (2) the arrival of thousands of veterans (December 2, 2016); and, (3) the “victory” celebrations following the Army Corps of Engineers announcement (December 4, 2016). While spectacle clearly drew their attention, FAIR reports that more often than not, the coverage was “limited, biased, and/or inaccurate” (For example, FAIR condemned the New York Times headline that read, “16 Arrested at North Dakota Pipeline Protest as Tensions Continue,” noting that there had been more than 470 arrests. They also called out the framing of events as a “clash” between protesters and police by NPR, CBS, and ABC writing: “This ‘clash’ framing – also utilized in headlines on CBS (11/20/16) and CNN (11/20/16) – implies a parity between police in military vehicles, employing water cannons, tear gas, pepper spray, rubber-coated bullets, and concussion grenades (one of which may have cost an activist her arm), on the one hand, and basically unarmed civilians on the other (Police say one officer was hit in the head by a thrown rock.).” And finally, FAIR took issue with the Washington Post headline (11/21/16) framing the attack from a police perspective: “Police Defend Use of Water Cannons on Dakota Access Protesters in Freezing Weather”) Water protectors were consistently misrepresented as protestors (not protectors), agitators, and trespassers engaged in a “clash” with Morton County officials and Energy Transfer Partners; such false equivalences between unarmed peaceful protectors and heavily armed officers and their billionaire corporate backers can only be drawn through erasures of history and power. The gestalt of such coverage serves to perpetuate the myths of the settler project: the vanishing Indian, the benevolent colonizer, justified conquest, and the liberal (settler) state as the epitome of progress.

#### Spectacularization feeds the image of the benevolent colonizer. This normalizes settler colonialism and encourages the colonizer to ‘double-down’ on colonialism, making it more extreme.

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The intensification of cruelty under neoliberalism has brought with it a renewed press to draw the liberal subject (i.e., “benevolent colonizer”) into its theater, raising the bar for even more spectacular productions of American exceptionalism, which is to say settler supremacy. As observed by Giroux (2008), “What is often ignored by many theorists who analyze the rise of neoliberalism is that it isn’t only a system of economic power relations, but also a political project of governing and persuasion intent on producing new forms of subjectivity and particular modes of conduct” (p. 224). Indeed, the construction of the settler state has, at every stage, relied on identity and cultural politics for its reconsolidation, requiring and soliciting certain ways of being, desiring, and knowing at the same time it destroys others (Agathangelou 2008; Duggan 2012). Productions in its theater of cruelty rely on spectacle to obscure and “smuggle” past the violent rituals of settler colonialism as normative. For example, it is not difficult to see how Trump rallies set the stage for the normativization of white supremacy as “alt-right” or even “white nationalism” expressed in slogans such as “Make America Great Again.” The consequences of which gave rise to one of the most brazen, public displays of white supremacy and consolidation in a long time: the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, North Carolina. Despite the fact that the rally resulted in the death of Heather Heyer and injury of 19 other rally protestors, Trump has continually insisted that there was violence and culpability on “both sides.” Such false equivalences are issued as code to his white supremacist base to draw back and inward, to circle the wagons once again, around who is what counts as white, as superior, as manifest destined colonizer. Ultimately, however, as Memmi (1991) argues, “colonization can only disfigure the colonizer” (p. 147). As he sees it, the settler subject has only two choices, both of which are equally “disastrous”: the acceptance of “daily injustice” for one’s own benefit on the one hand or a “never consummated self-sacrifice” on the other (pp. 147–148). And, since a life of guilt, shame, and anguish is virtually “unlivable,” Memmi surmises that the colonizer will typically choose to “confirm and defend the colonial system in every way” (p. 147). That said, he also wonders, “but what privileges, what advantages, are worth the loss of his soul?” (p. 148). And therein lies the essence of settler “uneasiness.” The apparent hopelessness of the settler problem raises important questions about the structure and potential of social movements, coalition building, and the possibility of transformation. Questions asked with even greater urgency as the United States joins the global, right-wing turn toward authoritarian populism.

#### The colonialist project must be refused as a whole as a means of life. Spectacular images of resistance only produce exhibitionist thrills for colonists to enjoy, preventing solvency. We must resist the politics of representation.

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#NoDAPL anti-colonial struggle is profoundly anti-capitalist. It is the Frontline. It is the future (Estes 2016) I used to tell people when I was young who asked, ‘what do you Indians want?’ ‘the right to be left alone to live’...now I don’t see that as an option. Now we must do our best to live and show the rest of the world how to live. (Ladonna Brave Bull 2016) Water Is Life This simple but profound refrain became the rallying cry for the #NoDAPL movement (At its height, #NoDAPL was a global movement, drawing Indigenous peoples and allies from across the world; from New Zealand, Canada Australia, Ecuador, Peru, Hawaii, Mexico, and Belize among other nations.). The Lakota peoples and their allies gathered along the Mni Sose (Missouri River) and on the lands of the Oceti Sakowin (The Great Sioux Nation) to defend water and life. Led by Native youth and women, water protectors put their bodies on the frontlines of a 241-year war (and counting) against the ever-encroaching settler state. In this most recent battle, the objective was to block the Dakota Access Pipeline (re)routed by the Energy Transfer corporation to pass under Lake Oahe (the tribes water source) and across the Treaty lands and burial grounds of the Lakota peoples. Indigenous struggles to defend water, land and other relations operate well beyond the left-right continuum of American politics. It’s always been “Indians” vs. settler, regardless of political party (Consider, for example, that under President Obama – often viewed as the #NoDAPL savior – US oil production grew to reach 9.4 million bpd in 2015; the largest domestic oil production increase during any presidency in US history.). This is why the colonialist project is about elimination. Not assimilation. Not incorporation. Not accommodation. It is also why, for Indigenous peoples, the struggle is not grounded in claims for recognition or reconciliation. It is about refusal. Refusal equals life. Introduction This chapter examines the relationship between spectacle (Among the various theorizations of spectacle (e.g., Barthes, Crary, McLuhan), this chapter draws heavily upon the work of Foucault and Debord. Specifically, Foucault’s understanding of spectacle in terms of surveillance and Debord’s notion of spectacle as ideological, more broadly linked to capitalism, market consciousness, and a “society of the spectacle” figure prominently.) and settler colonialism. I am particularly interested in the role that spectacle plays in the solidification of the settler state and the consolidation of whiteness, particularly as intensified under neoliberalism. Moreover, while the implications of settler colonialism for Native peoples are or, should be, self-evident, I also consider the implications for the nonindigenous settler subject. As Memmi posits, “the benevolent colonizer (To be clear, Memmi’s notion of the “benevolent colonizer” is a referent to the self-effacing colonizer who refuses the ideology of colonialism but still lives within its confines (Memmi, p. 64). In contemporary parlance, they might be considered white allies.) can never attain the good, for his only choice is not between good and evil, but between evil and uneasiness” (Crary 1989, p. 87). Throughout this chapter, the spectacular portrayal of Indigenous peoples generally and of the #NoDAPL prayer camps more specifically, serves as a site in which to explore the contours of this “uneasiness.” Writing in the late 1960s, French theorist Guy Debord penned his cautionary text the Society of the Spectacle (1967), wherein he laments the displacement of “authentic” social relations with their false representations under advanced capitalism. He writes, “In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into representation” (#1). Bracketing his modernist discourse, the deeper salience of Debord’s analysis is its marking of the move from life in a market economy to life in a market society and the shifts that engender the “degradation of being into having” and from having to appearing (#17). He writes: ...(Spectacle) is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this real society’s unreality. In all of its particular manifestations – news, propaganda, advertising, entertainment – the spectacle represents the dominant model of life...In both form and content (it) serves as a total justification of the conditions and goals of the existing system (#6). Considering that his treatise was written well before the digital age and hyperrealtity of the twenty-first century, the corpus of Debord’s argument remains remarkably prescient. Under neoliberalism, the speed, scope, and power of spectacle has only intensified, reconfiguring the very character of life as not only conditioned by consumerism and commercialization but largely replaced by, exchanged for, and even rejected in favor of its more spectacular simulations. Think, for example, of the blurring lines between “real” and fake news and “real” and digital lives. Under spectacle-capitalism virtually every institution, every mode of being has been commodified to the point where it isn’t only that everything is for sale but that life itself is monetized and only worth living if it is on display (Consider for example the ways in which sex (e.g., Grinder, Tinder), love, and intimacy (e.g., eHarmony, cuddle businesses) and even marriage (e.g., Married at First Sight, the Bachelor) have not only been commodified but also put on display.). As Gamson (Gamson 2011) observes, we have moved beyond the notion that “everyone gets fifteen minutes of fame” into a time when “everyone already is a star” (p. 1068). Consider, for example, the rapid proliferation of social media celebrities (Consider, for example, the phenomena of the YouTube celebrity with personalities such as PewDiePie amassing 54.1 million “followers” and a net worth of $15 million for being a “foul mouthed” video-game commentator. Such “celebrities” are beginning to surpass the wealth and popularity of “traditional” Hollywood stars. See, for example, https:// www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/feb/03/why-youtube-stars-popular-zoella) who generate large fandoms, millions of followers and dollars, from simply “sharing” curated and staged slices of their lives. While life in the infinite public raises a variety of important questions about what it means to be human, my central concern remains with how the culture industry (re) produces exhibitions of self and other that works to consolidate whiteness and secure settler futurity (I understand the motif of “futurity” – with an intellectual genealogy that traces back to John L. O’Sullivan’s, treatise on manifest destiny – as an exclusively settler construct that is incommensurable with Indigeneity.). That is, insofar as spectacle is contingent upon the radical reification of self, an overvaluing of the present, and rupturing of relationality, it becomes the perfect theater for producing anchorless (neoliberal) subjects whose every desire is increasingly structured by capital. As it forecloses relationality by normalizing disconnection, it effects an erasure of Indigenous peoples who continue to define themselves through relationship – to land, to history, to ancestors, to all our relations. Consider, for example, how the water protectors at Standing Rock were only rendered visible through spectacle (According to Fairness and Accuracy in Media (FAIR), by September of 2016, of the three major broadcast news networks, only CBS filed a story on Standing Rock. Moreover, that story aired at 4 a.m. and was actually a re-reporting of a 48-word NPR story. FAIR also noted that while NPR’s original version featured Amy Goodman’s footage of the unprovoked attack on the protectors, CBS chose to exclude it.). That is, until and outside of the widelycirculated images of armored vehicles, riot police, water cannons, war bonnets, tee pees and painted ponies, the Lakota peoples hardly existed, virtually erased from public consciousness (It should be noted that the few articles published in the press on this history were written by Native American scholars. For example, see: Nick Estes, “Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context” (The Red Nation 2016) and Julian Brave NoiseCat and Anne Spice, “A History and Future of Resistance” (Jacobin Magazine 2016). Also, while independent media (e.g., Unicorn Riot, Anti-Media, AJ+) provided coverage, they also deployed spectacle as a means of drawing attention. As reported by Anti-Media, “Where the mainstream media failed, the independent media relentlessly covered the protests.” Livestream coverage of the spectacular attacks was indeed relentlessly posted, often creating confusion about the level of violence at the camps. The nonspectacular reality was that the overwhelming majority of time at the Oceti Sakowin encampment was spent in prayer, cooking, training, eating, laughing, building, teaching, working, washing, cleaning, singing, listening, reading, and tending.). That is, except when needed as stand-ins for the “shame” of America. The reality, however, is that Standing Rock, from the Ghost Dances (1800s) to the occupation of Wounded Knee (1973), has long served as a site of collective, anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist Indigenous resistance and, that time and again, the Oceti Sakowin have stood on the front lines, protecting against the forces of US imperialism. Lost to the compressed space of spectacular time is the architecture of settler violence – Red Cloud’s War (1866–1868); the War for the Black Hills (1876); the Indian Appropriations Act (1877); Wounded Knee (1890); the Dawes Allotment Act (1887); the Flood Control Act (1944); the Indian Relocation Act (1956) – and the multi-layered history that provides the context for what should have been the one and only #NoDAPL headline – “Unceasing Settler Violence Masquerading as Democracy Continues to Dispossess Native peoples.”

#### Their research method colludes with the form of semiotic capitalism. Their pro-indigenous pedagogy orients affect and imagination into the colonial machine to bolster global capitalism while appealing to indigenous knowledge as a solution to its own ecological crises. This not only makes capitalism worse; it creates a mode of cruel optimism that abstracts from indigenous knowledge so that we can reduce the Other to an object of consumption.

Cubitt 14

(Sean Cubitt is Professor of Film and Television at Goldsmiths, University of London, De-colonising Ecomedia, Cultural Politics, 10(3), pp. 281-283, <http://research.gold.ac.uk/14137/1/MED_Cubitt_2014.pdf)/>

Many Green activists turn to indigenous knowledge as a way of restoring to contemporary consumer capital some of the values of traditional societies. The problems with this are manifold. Firstly, they presume that distinction between modernity and tradition which is at the heart of coloniality. Second, they presume that values other than economic can be rendered compatible with the exclusively economic value system of neo-liberalism. And third, they believe in a bounded and appropriable mode of knowledge on the Western model. As Anishinaabe researcher Leanne Simpson notes of an instance from the 1990s when researchers flocked to indigenous Canadians seeking traditional ecological knowledge, 'outside researchers were not interested in all kinds of knowledge, and they remain specifically interested in knowledge that parallels the western scientific discipline of ecology or the "environment", and they are often looking specifically for information that presents solutions to their own pending ecological crises' (Simpson 2001: 138-9). Linda Tuhiwai Smith makes the case that this divorce of indigenous knowledge from the people to whom it is proper (but not property) is not only an abuse of power, but undertaken, with whatever motives on the part of well-meaning anthropologists, in the frame of a globalization of Western economic values: the people and their culture, the material and the spiritual, the exotic and the fantastic, became not just the stuff of dreams and imagination, or stereotypes and eroticism, but of the first truly global commercial enterprise: trading the Other. . . . It is concerned more with ideas, languages, knowledge, images, beliefs and fantasies than any other industry. Trading the Other deeply, intimately, defines Western thinking and identity. As a trade, it has no concern for the peoples who originally produced the ideas or images . . . Trading the Other is big business. For indigenous peoples trading ourselves is not on the agenda (Smith 2012: 92-3) Tracing this trade back to pre-Enlightenment accounts of imperial voyages, Smith points towards a further aspect of the coloniality/modernity pair: the origins of semiocapitalism in the abstraction and theft of knowledge from indigenous peoples. The heart of this trade is the erroneous re-imagining of knowledge as data, as tradable commodity, a process that would not be applied to metropolitan populations until the 20th century. Peter Wolfe distinguishes two forms of colonization: franchise or dependent colonies where a settler minority depends on the labour of a majority of colonized natives, and settler colonies, grounded in immigration, who have no economic need for the indigenous people. The former gives rise to the forms of coloniality to which Fanon responded; and breed the fear of the oppressed that returns today in the 'ambient fears' (Papastergiadis 2012: 19-35) of 'homeland security' and immigration paranoia. In the second form, ‘Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of the native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay— invasion is a structure not an event' (Wolfe 1999: 2). In such colonies, notably in the Americas, Australia and New Zealand, the colonized are no longer feared. Instead, after the genocide, they become major ideological tokens. In some cases the colonizers charge themselves with 'smoothing the pillow of a dying race' (Stafford and Williams 2005: 110 ff); in others, as Simpson and Smith argue, indigeneity becomes a living link to land always experienced as alien by those whose ongoing invasion ensures its alienation. In this protracted attempt to 'return' to indigenous values, which become 'traditional' only when assaulted by modernity, the processes of environmentalisation which characterise capitalist modernity repeat themselves: land reappraised wherever it has remained common, once mineral and energy sources have been identified; skills and knowledges expropriated from the indigenous commons to become commodity technologies; even indigenous DNA mined for the biotech industries. In settler colonialism we should recognize the prototype of (1) the endocolonisation of the metropolitan commons, (2) the export of integral waste into the now externalized environment of land at the expense of (3) populations which are themselves deemed supernumerary to modernity, external to the operation of capital, and therefore also merely environments, and (4) the expropriation of common creativity in the new social media economy.

#### Promotion of indigenous knowledge is merely nostalgia for a state of belonging which neoliberal capitalism makes impossible. This affirms settlers’ fantasies about indigenous resistance, assuages guilt, and creates political passivity.

Cubitt 14

(Sean Cubitt is Professor of Film and Television at Goldsmiths, University of London, De-colonising Ecomedia, Cultural Politics, 10(3), pp. 282-283, [http://research.gold.ac.uk/14137/1/MED\_Cubitt\_2014.pdf)//](http://research.gold.ac.uk/14137/1/MED_Cubitt_2014.pdf)//TR)

There is a common self-designation among indigenous peoples, expressed in Te Reo Maori as tangata whenua, people of the land. A particular aspect of the as it were posthumous cult of indigenous ecological knowledge is nostalgia for place, for environmental belonging. What is lacking from this nostalgia, which powers so much North American environmentalism from Thoreau to Leopold, is an understanding of the process whereby land becomes environment: how land environs the increasingly economically defined human domain, only because it has been progressively, meticulously and methodically excluded from the narrowing field of what counts for human. It is not only, as Ursula K Heise (2008: 55) has it, that we are no longer dependent on our knowledge of the local to survive. It is also that in the context of the experience of mobility now common in global capital, from commuters to migrants, that 'the environmentalist call for a reconnection with the local can be understood as one form of "reterritorialization," an attempt to realign culture with place' (Heise 2008: 53). But this project is hedged round with problems: a green, self-sustaining lifestyle is simply not an option for the majority; the local itself is permeated by global trade and traffic; and the very means of perception and imagination with which we try to reconnect with our immediate locality are shaped by mediated comparisons and experiences of travel. It is in these circumstances that the nostalgia for place becomes a nostalgia for indigeniety, an indigeneity which not only have we Westerners never experienced, but which is in any case a Western imaginary. The ethnographic attempt to arrive at the truth of indigenous culture is only a way of structuring indigenous experience as Western knowledge. To understand this gap, it suffices to contrast the easily consumed indigeneity imagined in James Cameron's Avatar (2009) with the difficulty presented to Western audiences by Zacharias Kunuk's Atanarjuat (2001). Comparing the paternalism and sexual fantasy of Cameron's film with armed Maoist defense of tribal peoples in Orissa at the time of its release, Slavoj Zizek asks So where is Cameron's film here? Nowhere: in Orissa, there are no noble princesses waiting for white heroes to seduce them and help their people, just the Maoists organising the starving farmers. The film enables us to practise a typical ideological division: sympathising with the idealised aborigines while rejecting their actual struggle. The same people who enjoy the film and admire its aboriginal rebels would in all probability turn away in horror from the Naxalites, dismissing them as murderous terrorists (Zizek 2010). 'What lurks behind the compassion for the poor is their vampiric exploitation', Zizek adds. By contrast, consider the comments of a Boston Globe reviewer of Atanarjuat: these are not so much real men and women as they are symbols of ancient myth and lore. In this sense, The Fast Runner might have been just as effective as a pure documentary, rather than as a narrative bolstered by its documentary style. The characters are often indistinguishable from one another, psychologically and physically (cited in Bessire 2003) The lack of interest in both the mode of telling and the communitarian ethos of the film escapes the reviewer, who delights elsewhere in the exotic locations and filmic style, in blank incomprehension of what is at stake in a movie, which for precisely those qualities, became an international festival success. Avatar's 'vampiric' orientalism is matched by the failure of Western audiences to see in Atanarjuat anything but documentary: a Western mode of knowledge that converts the Other into trade. In the reception of Atanarjuat, the location stands only as the alien and removed. With Avatar we encounter instead peculiar phenomenon of 'Avatar Blues', widely reported cases of depression among audience members whose enjoyment of the film, and especially of the imaginary planet Pandora and its indigenous inhabitants was so intense that it left them deeply unsatisfied with the reality to which they returned afterwards (Cubitt 2012). Nonetheless, there is a residual utopianism in the attractions of both films. We must be wary both of displacing the burden of that utopia onto the colonized and endo-colonized, and of mistaking the necessary fantasy of a life well-lived for an immaterial pipe-dream. The media required to produce and consume these fantasies are immensely material, as are the energy sources required to build and power them, and those materials are intensely implicated in the ongoing processes both of coloniality and of utopianism. The political task of building a new eco-cosmopolitanism based on a new form of common wealth (Verzola 2008) needs its temporary autonomous zones of utopian fantasy, including the fantasy of reterritorialised locality. There is however no innocent way to do this.

### **Suffering**

#### Their sloppy adherence to the virtues of morality transforms into an addiction to the image of catastrophe, alleviating the unreality of our situation. For them, suffering becomes more lucrative than oil reserves – after all, we find ourselves to be much more important than our vehicles. What do we do when we run out of oil reserves?

Baudrillard 94 (Jean, hat*e*s kind f*r*iends and jogging, The Illusion of the End, 1994)

* we need to look at or invoke suffering to reassure ourselves that we’re smiley and cool
* always need more suffering, eventually we blow ourselves up and self-destruct as we run out of other sources of suffering

We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' ['autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history- the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the waste-product of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d' Alliance. for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain. But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself, in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food. It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world. Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures. In short, there is such distortion between North and South, to the symbolic advantage of the South (a hundred thousand Iraqi dead against casualties numbered in tens on our side: in every case we are the losers), that one day everything will break down. One day, the West will break down if we are not soon washed clean of this shame, if an international congress of the poor countries does not very quickly decide to share out this symbolic privilege of misery and catastrophe. It is of course normal, **since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons,** that **they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon**. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy – by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race. No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psychodrama of congestion, saturation, super abundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us - the drama of the excess of means over ends – calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. Artificial catastrophes, like the beneficial aspects of civilization, progress much more quickly than natural ones. The underdeveloped are still at the primary stage of the natural, unforeseeable catastrophe. We are already at the second stage, that of the manufactured catastrophe - imminent and foreseeable - and we shall soon be at that of the pre-programmed catastrophe, the catastrophe of the third kind, deliberate and experimental. And, paradoxically, it is our pursuit of the means for averting natural catastrophe - the unpredictable form of destiny - which will take us there. Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. Because it cannot accept being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species.

#### Their desperate appeal to your morality arises from the dreadful lack of reality they are suddenly experiencing – faced with such a terrifying prospect, they can only follow the blood, begging you to do the same. You should step back and ask – why *blood*?

Baudrillard 96 (Jean, hates vampires and farmer’s markets, “The Perfect Crime”, 1996, 133-136, ‘er’)

* debate as intellectual market

Our reality: that is the problem. We have only one, and it has to be saved. `We have to do something. We can't do nothing.' But doing something solely because you can't not do something has never constituted a principle of action or freedom. Just a form of absolution from one's own impotence and compassion for one's own fate. The people of Sarajevo do not have to face this question. Where they are, there is an absolute need to do what they do, to do what has to be done. Without illusion as to ends and without compassion towards themselves. That is what being real means, being in the real. And this is not at all the `objective' reality of their misfortune, that reality which `ought not to exist' and for which we feel pity, but the reality which exists as it is -- the reality of an action and a destiny. This is why they are alive, and we are the ones who are dead. This is why, in our own eyes, we have first and foremost to save the reality of the war and impose that -- compassionate -- reality on those who are suffering from it but who, at the very heart of war and distress, do not really believe in it. To judge by their own statements, the Bosnians do not really believe in the distress which surrounds them. In the end, they find the whole unreal situation senseless, unintelligible. It is a hell, but an almost hyperreal hell, made the more hyperreal by media and humanitarian harassment, since that makes the attitude of the whole world towards them all the more incomprehensible. Thus, they live in a kind of spectrality of war -- and it is a good thing they do, or they could never bear it. But we know better than they do what reality is, because we have chosen them to embody it. Or simply because it is what we -- and the whole of the West -- most lack. We have to go and retrieve a reality for ourselves where the bleeding is. All these `corridors' we open up to send them our supplies and our `culture' are, in reality, corridors of distress through which we import their force and the energy of their misfortune. Unequal exchange once again. Whereas they find a kind of additional strength in the thorough stripping-away of the illusions of reality and of our political principles -- the strength to survive what has no meaning -- we go to convince them of the `reality' of their suffering -- by culturalizing it, of course, by theatricalizing it so that it can serve as a point of reference in the theatre of Western values, one of which is solidarity. This all exemplifies a situation which has now become general, in which inoffensive and impotent intellectuals exchange their woes for those of the wretched, each supporting the other in a kind of perverse contract -- exactly as the political class and civil society exchange their respective woes today, the one serving up its corruption and scandals, the other its artificial convulsions and inertia. Thus we saw Bourdieu and the Abbé Pierre offering themselves up in televisual sacrifice, exchanging between them the pathos-laden language and sociological metalanguage of wretchedness. And so, also, our whole society is embarking on the path of commiseration in the literal sense, under cover of ecumenical pathos. It is almost as though, in a moment of intense repentance among intellectuals and politicians, related to the panic-stricken state of history and the twilight of values, we had to replenish the stocks of values, the referential reserves, by appealing to that lowest common denominator that is human misery, as though we had to restock the hunting grounds with artificial game. A victim society. I suppose all it is doing is expressing its own disappointment and remorse at the impossibility of perpetrating violence upon itself. The New Intellectual Order everywhere follows the paths opened up by the New World Order. The misfortune, wretchedness and suffering of others have every-- where become the raw material and the primal scene. Victimhood, accompanied by Human Rights as its sole funerary ideology. Those who do not exploit it directly and in their own name do so by proxy. There is no lack of middlemen, who take their financial or symbolic cut in the process. Deficit and misfortune, like the international debt, are traded and sold on in the speculative market -- in this case the politico- intellectual market, which is quite the equal of the late, unlamented military--industrial complex. Now, all commiseration is part of the logic of misfortune [malheur]. To refer to misfortune, if only to combat it, is to give it a base for its objective repro-- duction in perpetuity. When fighting anything whatever, we have to start out -- fully aware of what we are doing -- from evil, never from misfortune.

#### Their research posits a distorted exchange of suffering-for-ballots that, much like the replenishment of fishing lakes through dumps of fish, replenishes our own unreality with a huge dose of blood.

Brigg 17 (Morgan, senior lecturer in the School of Political Science and International Studies at The University of Queensland, “Humanitarian symbolic exchange: extending Responsibility to Protect through individual and local engagement”, <https://sci-hub.se/https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1396534>, 2017, ‘er’)

note: R2P = responsibility to protect

Building upon the cultural theory of Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille, Baudrillard characterises symbolic exchange as a poetic and necessitous cycle in social relations that is most evident in non-modern and non-capitalist societies. This form of exchange is prior to and at odds with the logic of scarcity, production and surplus value in capitalism: ‘The symbolic social relation is the uninterrupted cycle of giving and receiving, which, in primitive exchange, includes the consumption of the “surplus” and deliberate anti-production’ – the destruction of material goods; the potlatch is the most famous example – when production introduces imbalances that are untenable in the terms of symbolic exchange.38 From this platform, Baudrillard launches his foundational critique of both capitalism and Marxism as ‘historical products’39 that disrupt symbolic exchange. With symbolic exchange serving as both a model of reciprocal social relations and a foil for Baudrillard’s critique of global capitalism, the distorted forms of exchange that arise in global politics – including those arising between would-be rescuers and victims – attract some of his most biting criticism. In 1994 Baudrillard commented on Susan Sontag’s staging of a Bosnian version of Waiting for Godot during the 1993 siege of Sarajevo – her effort to ‘to pitch in and do something’.40 In his critique of this and related ‘cultural soul-boosting’,41 Baudrillard provides an analysis of a circulation of signs and values in global politics between would-be rescuers and victims that is, for him, indicative of a corrupt politico-moral register. Baudrillard argues that the impulse of would-be rescuers to do something rather than to stand by reveals a distorted form of symbolic moral exchange in which the privileged seek to ‘replenish the pond of values, the pond of references, and to do so by using that smallest common denominator which is the suffering of the world’.42 Baudrillard’s analysis challenges the presumed moral agency of the figure of the humanitarian and confounds the notion of an unruly conflict-ridden world ‘out there’ that is separated from a privileged and neutral ‘home base’. By analysing moral sentiments in terms of a moral economy of distorted symbolic exchange that resonates with global supply chains in a parallel global economy, Baudrillard turns the tables in the symbolic realm to render those in distress as powerful agents facing the raw reality of their circumstance, while the privileged humanitarian gains ethical standing and meaning by coming to the rescue. ‘They are strong. It is us who are weak and who go there [and become rescuers] to make good for our loss of strength and sense of reality’.43 Baudrillard argues that the privileged, by coming to the rescue in situations of suffering, consume the suffering of others in the symbolic realm in yet another unequal exchange – one that mirrors, underscores and adds insult to the structural iniquities of global politics. The dynamics of moral exchange between the figures of would-be rescuer and victim are illustrated by Sherene Razack’s44 analysis of popular media surrounding Canadian engagement with the Rwandan genocide. By examining the production and dissemination of images and stories, Razack shows how Canadians have engaged in a peculiar process of consuming the horror and suffering of Rwanda and Rwandans. This process feeds Canadian identity while effacing Rwandans themselves.45 For Razack, the consumption of others’ suffering in the production of one’s own humaneness is possible because of – as she shows by drawing upon Saidiya Hartman’s examination of slavery and self-making – the ‘slipperiness of empathy’.46 By getting close to the suffering of others, one makes such suffering one’s own, and thereby risks coming to exist in the place of the other in ways that obscure him/ her while conferring pleasure and moral authority on one’s self.47 Razack shows how, through various cultural productions and particularly the prize-winning documentary Shake Hands with the Devil based on General Romeo Dallaire’s book of the same name, ‘we Canadians come to experience ourselves as national, as citizens, and indeed as human’.48 She analyses Shake Hands and its reception, showing how it positions Canadians as compassionate and uninvolved observers through identification with Dallaire. In this process, Canadian audiences gain through their capacity for vulnerability in the face of depravity. Rwandans, meanwhile, remain under-specified, an ‘anonymous corporeality’.49 The effect is that ‘the suffering of the Rwandans has been transformed into our pleasure, the good feeling that we get from contemplating our own humanity’.50 Canadians are invited to identify with Dallaire. Indeed, there is ‘an interactive learning module for senior highschool and university students which invites students to be Dallaire’.51 Hereby, Canadians are offered the opportunity to understand themselves as simultaneously Canadian citizens and humanitarian participants on the world scene. It is impossible to ascertain – at least within the bounds of this article – whether individual R2P advocates participate in the economy of symbolic moral exchange that Razack maps. Nonetheless, the fusing of sentiment and the demand for prevention and protection within R2P advocacy is necessarily supported and fuelled by the circulations of similar signs, images and values in the affective exchange that is analysed by Razack. This is especially so in situations of imminent atrocity that establish powerful channels for getting the ‘blood to flow’;52 for trading in the signs, images and values of suffering and compassion. To advocate intervention in these situations is more compelling than other options when set against imminent danger and the challenge of the intervener–bystander dilemma. Doing so connects moral and military authority through subjectivity, bringing state capacity, military power and humanitarian authority into relief against the suffering of deeply disempowered and disenfranchised people. The striking differences between these worlds are deeply seductive within the symbolic economy of humanitarianism in a highly unequal globalised world. Regardless of the extent to which individual R2P advocates participate in the symbolic moral economy of humanitarianism, R2P advocacy relies upon and is entangled with this distorted form of exchange between the figures of would-be rescuers and victims, particularly through the humanitarian foundations upon which it depends. The concrete correlates include, as Orford notes, overlooking ‘the agency of the peoples of the states where intervention is to be conducted’,53 including their understandings of political life and the shape of their aspirations for political community. As Luck and Luck point out, ‘[t]oo often, distant analysts and policymakers, fueled by rescue fantasies, have cast the vulnerable as little more than passive victims, with no options and no part in prevention and protection’.54 R2P is thus suffused, as Frédéric Mégret argues, with a vision of international rescue which neglects the key role of individuals, civil society and resistance movements, including through the ‘power and resilience’ of would-be victims to protect themselves.55 These dynamics risk a situation wherein the forms of life, and especially ways of being and political ordering of the privileged humanitarian, are cast as superior to and thus come to stand in for and to disavow those of suffering others. To not challenge this situation and yet to support R2P is to participate in the troubled symbolic economy of humanitarianism and contemporary international architecture, thereby compounding rather than addressing underlying humanitarian problems of contemporary global politics. The foregoing critical analysis follows a harsh Baudrillardian logic to show that R2P advocacy relies upon a distorted and problematic form of symbolic moral exchange between would-be rescuers and victims in the affective relations of contemporary global politics. The moral common sense that underpins R2P cannot go unchallenged in the light of this critique. However, attending to the symbolic moral politics of humanitarianism through a Baudrillardian analysis also offers a framework for rethinking relations between the figures of would-be rescuers and victims in R2P, and for advancing R2P. Symbolic exchange is the foundation for Baudrillardian critique but it is also a crucial social relation of giving and receiving that connects people in powerful ways. A Baudrillardian critique therefore does not set out to disavow the germ of intersubjective commitment, whether of Canadian high school students engaging with the Rwandan genocide, or of R2P advocates. Instead, symbolic exchange can help to connect subjectivity and personal morality with the politics of the international order while reconfiguring R2P moral common sense and providing ways of advancing R2P by engaging individually and ‘locally’.

#### They transform morality into compulsory repetition manufactured by the system, a kind of call-and-response which instills a withering microfascism at the heart of our subjectivities. This self-tyranny is comparatively the worst form of violence.

Baudrillard 93 (Jean, hated self-help books, wrote a lot of them, “The Transparency of Evil”, “Essays on Extreme Phenomena”, 1993, recut “er”)

* i.e. they say “violence!” you say “ballot!”
* fits into the k of pulverization of subjectivity on the level of morality

At all events, it is better to be controlled by someone else than by oneself. Better to be oppressed, exploited, persecuted and manipulated by someone other than oneself. In this sense the entire movement for liberation and emancipation, inasmuch as it is predicated on a demand for greater autonomy – or, in other words, on a more complete introjection of all forms of control and constraint under the banner of freedom – is a regression. Whatever it may be that comes to us from elsewhere, even the worst exploitation, the very fact that it comes from elsewhere is positive. This is why alienation has its advantages, even though it is so often denounced as the dispossession of the self, with the other treated in consequence as an age-old enemy holding the alienated part of us captive. The inverse theory, that of disalienation, is equally simplistic, holding as it does that the subject merely has to reappropriate his alienated will and his alienated desire. From this perspective everything that befalls the subject as a result of his own efforts is good, because it is authentic; while everything that comes from outside the subject is dubbed inauthentic, merely because it does not fall within the sphere of his freedom. Exactly the opposite position is the one that has to be stressed, while at the same time broadening the paradox. For just as it is better to be controlled by someone else rather than by oneself, it is likewise always better to be made happy, or unhappy, by someone else rather than by oneself. It is always better to depend in life on something that does not depend on us. In this way I can avoid any kind of servitude, I am not obliged to submit to something that does not depend on me – including my own existence. I am free of my birth – and in the same sense I can be free of my death. There has never been any true freedom apart from this one. The source of all interplay, of everything that is in play, of all passion, of all seduction, is that which is completely foreign to us, yet has power over us. That which is Other, that which we have to seduce.

#### The aff is complicit in charity cannibalism - the sentimental exploitation of suffering which is worse than the violence itself. It ensures the spectacle of crisis must escalate.

Baudrillard, 94 [Jean Baudrillard, detestable and ingenious, “The Illusion of the End,” 1994, Polity Press]

The end of history, being itself a catastrophe, can only be fuelled by catastrophe. Managing the end therefore becomes synonymous with the management of catastrophe. And, quite specifically, of that catastrophe which is the slow extermination of the rest of the world. We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [l'autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history - the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the wasteproduct of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d'Alliance\* for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain; But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself, in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food. It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world. Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures. In short, there is such distortion between North and South, to the symbolic advantage of the South (a hundred thousand Iraqi dead against casualties numbered in tens on our side: in every case we are the losers), that one day everything will break down. One day, the West will break down if we are not soon washed clean of this shame, if an international congress of the poor countries does not very quickly decide to share out this symbolic privilege of misery and catastrophe. It is of course normal, since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons, that they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are ·being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy - by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race. No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psychodrama of congestion, saturation, superabundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us - the drama of the excess of means over ends - calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. Artificial catastrophes, like the beneficial aspects of civilization, progress much more quickly than natural ones. The underdeveloped are still at the primary stage of the natural, unforeseeable catastrophe. We are already at the second stage, that of the manufactured catastrophe - imminent and foreseeable - and we shall soon be at that of the pre-programmed catastrophe, the catastrophe of the third kind, deliberate and experimental. And, paradoxically, it is our pursuit of the means for averting natural catastrophe - the unpredictable form of destiny - which will take us there. Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. Because it cannot accept being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species.

#### Debate cannibalizes images of suffering as fuel for modernity in order to preserve itself. Absent this, the West would collapse out of shame.

Baudrillard, 94 [Jean Baudrillard, detestable and ingenious, “The Illusion of the End,” 1994, Polity Press]

The end of history, being itself a catastrophe, can only be fuelled by catastrophe. Managing the end therefore becomes synonymous with the management of catastrophe. And, quite specifically, of that catastrophe which is the slow extermination of the rest of the world. We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [l'autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history - the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the wasteproduct of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. 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It is of course normal, since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons, that they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are ·being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy - by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race. No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psychodrama of congestion, saturation, superabundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us - the drama of the excess of means over ends - calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. Artificial catastrophes, like the beneficial aspects of civilization, progress much more quickly than natural ones. The underdeveloped are still at the primary stage of the natural, unforeseeable catastrophe. We are already at the second stage, that of the manufactured catastrophe - imminent and foreseeable - and we shall soon be at that of the pre-programmed catastrophe, the catastrophe of the third kind, deliberate and experimental. And, paradoxically, it is our pursuit of the means for averting natural catastrophe - the unpredictable form of destiny - which will take us there. Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. Because it cannot accept being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species.

### Switch Side Debate

#### Switch sides exacerbates ideological division while retrenching existing social cleavages. Not only does switching sides not track truth or effectuate any political change – it depoliticizes social movements, preserving social stability under the appearance of dynamic exchange.

Edelman, 92 (Murray Edelman 92, "The construction and uses of social problems" in Jean Baudrillard: The Disappearance of Art and Politics, pg. 265-7)

Explanations for the social problems that persist are notable for the diversity of causes and of ideologies to which they point, not for their rigor, verifiability, or explanatory power. Explanations blame social institutions, social classes, those who suffer, or those who benefit. They may locate the cause of a problem in regional characteristics, nationality, ethnicity, climate, stage of historical development, personality, or a combination of several such categories. They may be concrete or abstract. They reproduce the typologies currently fashionable in other news reporting, popular discussion, and academic writing. Such diversity is as characteristic of social scientists' explanations as of popularly accepted ones. In this form of endeavor the scientific is also the political. To evoke a problem's origin is to assign blame and praise. Blame for recurring wars and militarism depends upon whether they are seen as originating in the plans of aggressors, the authoritarian character structure of some cultures, the chance occurrence of a sequence of events with which diplomats cannot cope, the logic implicit in industrialized societies, or the will of God. Each origin reduces the issue to a particular perspective and minimizes or eliminates others. Each reflects an ideology and rationalizes a course of action. **A particular explanation of a persisting problem is likely to strike a large part of the public as correct for a fairly long period if it reflects and reinforces the dominant ideology** of that era. Consider as examples the contrast in generally accepted explanations for international tensions in the decades preceding the Second World War and in those following the war or the contrast in dominant explanations of economic recession between the liberal thirties and the conservative eighties. The "career" of an explanation of a problem manifestly hinges in part on the acceptability of the ideological premise it implies. Because **a social problem is not a verifiable entity but a construction that furthers ideological interests, its** **explanation is bound to be part of the process of construction rather than a set of falsifiable propositions**. In a crucial sense problems are created so that particular reasons can be offered for public acceptance, and, as I note below, so that particular remedies can be proposed. An explanation for a chronic social problem can never be generally supported. It is offered to be rejected as much as to be accepted. Its function is to intensify polarization and so maintain the support of advocates on both sides. The reasons offered are crucial to the self-esteem of concerned people and to the viability of interested groups, organizations, and causes. They all draw support from the evocation of a spectacle that shows their rivals as threats. **An explanation for a troubling condition is typically more important to partisans than the possibility of eliminating the condition**; the latter is a rhetorical evocation of a remote future time unlikely to arrive, while the explanation is vital to contemporary political maneuver. Because there are always conflicting explanations, any affirmation of an origin for a problem is also an implicit rejection of alternative origins; such an affirmation is bound to bring to consciousness whatever it denies. As Derrida notes, the trace of what is negated remains present and so continues to play a part in action and in attitudes, its difference from the affirmation actually constructing the meaning of the affirmation. To declare that a Russian proposal for mutual reductions in armaments is only a public relations ploy is to arouse the suspicion that it may be more than that. **Oppositions in expressed "opinion" accordingly make for social stability; they are almost synonymous with it, for they reaffirm and reify what everyone already knows and accepts.** To express a pro-choice or an anti-abortion position is to affirm that the opposite position is being expressed as well and to accept the opposition as a continuing feature of public discourse. **The well-established, thoroughly anticipated, and therefore ritualistic reaffirmation of the differences institutionalizes both rhetorics, minimizing the chance of major shifts and leaving the regime wide discretion, for there will be anticipated support and opposition no matter what forms of action or inaction occur. As long as there is substantial expression of opinion on both sides of an issue, social stability persists and so does regime discretion regardless of the exact numbers or of marginal shifts in the numbers.** The persistence of unresolved problems with conflicting meanings is vital. **It is not the expression of opposition but of consensus that makes for instability**. When statements need not be defended against counterstatements, they are readily changed or inverted. Consensual agreements about the foreign enemy or ally yield readily to acceptance of the erstwhile enemy as ally and the former ally as enemy, as happened at the end of World War II; but opinions about abortion are likely to persist.3 **Rebellion and revolution do not ferment in societies in which there has been a long history of the ritualized exchange of opposing views on issues accepted as important, but rather where such exchanges have been lacking, so that a consensus on common action to oust the regime is easily built**. These observations seem counterintuitive only when opinion is conceptualized as growing in the individual mind, which then secretes it into the public domain. As soon as "opinion" is recognized as an ambiguous reference to texts, as bits of language that circulate in a culture and present themselves for acceptance or rejection, it becomes evident that opposing texts become bulwarks of one another while isolated texts, unsupported by opposition, are readily vulnerable to new language. Language about origins is therefore not likely to convert people from an ideology to a contrary one very often or generate an opinion that persists in spite of exposure to changing language or new situations. Its effect, as already suggested**, is to sharpen the issue, sometimes to polarize opinion, and in any case to clarify the pattern of opinion oppositions available for acceptance. The construction of problems and of reasons for them accordingly reinforces conventional social cleavages; those long standing divisions of interest in which relative power, sanctions, and the limits of the rivalry are well established and widely recognized. The political result of such reinforcement is clear** enough. **Realignments, new coalitions, and unconventional forms of political action are excluded from common discourse and so become less likely.** The evocation and reconstruction of origins are pervasive, constant, and central to political maneuver, a linguistically generated process that creates concerned groups, pits them against one another for varying time periods, and gives the political process an appearance of dynamism and tension that rarely has any bearing upon its outcomes.

### **Turkey**

#### **Turkey needs to figure out if it tastes like chicken or like pork. This is a prerequisite question.**

YUMRUKUZ 14 (ÖZLEM, YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, “A MEDIA ANALYSIS IN TURKEY ON THE THEORY OF SIMULATION BY JEAN BAUDRILLARD (2010- 2012)”, 31-35, 2014, ‘er’, graphs got weirdly copied sorry)

5. TRANSFORMATION OF TURKISH SOCIETY In the transition period from modern to postmodern, technology has become one of the significant factors that contributes to the process by its various mediums. Like many countries in the world, Turkish society can transform from traditional to ‗modern society‘ as it is liable to resist to a social structural transformation under the impact of capitalism. The first reason is that in the process of transition from conventionality to modernity, the traditional way of living has been practiced with the premises of modernity and has been altered substantially. Subsequently, social mobility has been achieved both vertically and laterally which means that though the mobility occurs to some extent, structural patterns may remain stable. In other words, even though there may happen to be a transfer and a prospective structural change, the behavior patterns of the individuals may not change in the parallel sense. In other words, though those migrated to cities contribute in the production to some extent in urban life, style of consumption such as habits, life styles or individual viewpoint may continue to exist in the previously experienced manner. For instance, a person after becoming rich and getting a social status in society may persist in one‘s own consumption patterns like spending holidays on farm, doing husbandry or engaging activities performed in previous life rather than experiencing a holiday type that of a city-dweller‘s. Above all, as long as a person‘s attitude towards life does not change, it becomes nearly impossible to observe a person behaving in accordance with what a city life requires in practice. The condition reminds us sociologist William Ogburn‘s theory of cultural lag that the solution can be found by way of the diffusion of innovations.4 The second reason counts as the goal of westernization since the time of Ottomans which stems from the rustic nature and origin of Turkish society. By the late of 1980s, most of the population was living in rural areas and the urban population was low in number and gradual migration from villages to towns. In the light of these presuppositions concerning a geographical shift conversely realized in behavioral patterns can be linked with the example of watching TV as a leisure time activity in urban areas. In spite of such a drift, demand for watching TV can directly be linked with a demand for entertainment which can also be observed with considerable rates recorded as seen in Table 5 below. Table 5: Entertainment Displayed in Private Channels in Turkey, 2011 Number Percentage % Sufficient 1.784 65,4 % Insufficient 937 34,4 % Subtotal 2.721 99,8 % Invalid 6 0,2 % TOTAL 2.727 100% Research on the Perception of Cultural Policy of Society and Media’s Effectivity on the Cultural Processes, SETA, 2011) According to statistical results taken from SETA, display of entertainment on TV channels is not sufficient in compensating the need to be entertained indoors. Those who responded as sufficient has a pleasure of being entertained which means that media provides an adequate element of amusement and can also be considered as the originator and server for fun. As for those who responded about its insufficiency means that they demand more entertainment than what media releases. Table 6: Entertainment Displayed in TRT Channel, Turkey, 2011 Number Percentage % Sufficient 1928 70,7 % Insufficient 770 28,2 % Total 2698 98,9 % Invalid 29 1,1 % TOTAL 2727 100% Research on the Perception of Cultural Policy of Society and Media’s Effectivity on the Cultural Processes, SETA, 2011) Incidentally, TRT is perceived as a more serious channel than the others as it is the state channel. For both private channels and TRT channel it is observed that there is an apetite and eagerness to be entertained. It is considered to have more embodiment of entertainment in comparison to private channels (see Table 6). The traditional content through television is translated into an object of entertainment that is presented, and has to be represented since we are already finished of it. As an example of it, marriage rituals are seen to be broken off from their own environment and have begun to be performed anachronically by the society as part of people‘s private choices and lives on television screen where the components of traditionality are thus compressed into the contemporary and have become like pastiches . As a result, binaries and distinctions seperating high and pop culture has been erased in the appreciation of art and culture given new meaning in the frame of television‘s reality. It is subsequently reduced to one dimensional level so that a great majority of people is exposure to nearly the same media content; they listen to the same music or reach the same commercial products, all of which are slightly differentiated by commercial value. Particularly, culture in postmodern society is partly oriented and sustained by media technologies. Kenneth (2011) gave a clear explanation on how traditional culture in postmodern world is manipulated by media technologies. First, he divided culture into two as grounded culture and commodified culture. The former emerges out of face-to-face interaction and is intended to create meaning, morality, norms, values and beliefs. As for commodified culture, it is created according to capitalist and mass media intended to beguile the viewer to incent buying (306). This connection mostly results in a generation and decadence of any culture rapidly. We may call this as the rapid transformation of one culture into another one parallel with the progress in information and communication technologies. Postmodern culture has its ties in this new trend of consumerist behavior which results in the consumption of a culture and emergence of another. The creation of a consumer society is therefore a result of technological penetration into our lives. As the abundance of the copied doubles becomes superficial and devoid of originality, objects are transformed into kitsch. In addition to that, the creation of various cultures inevitably occurs as a part of technological progression. Thus, a new form of culture in postmodern life is not able to grow on its own natural way, which is only the continuation of transformed version of the former. Additionally, twist of the images forms new social habits and life styles. This perversion of reality is so insidiously materialized by media that it is relatively permeative. The end of representation and the beginning of new form of representation by the media becomes the simulation itself. An image as postmodernists argue refers to limitless signifieds that are irrelevant from each other. Signs take the superiority in determining the infrastructure of relation construction of groups and cliques. How people relate meaning to objects and what these objects mean creating a collective consciousness in the minds of the people have a potential to transform individual perception thereby altering the social perspective. In sum, in the postmodern stage of capitalism Baudrillard dealt with how media created this falsity and uncertainty. Therefore, consumer society for Baudrillard represents the condition of culture in postmodern society since it has been overcome and seized by images of the hyper-real world in which they have already lost in essence and on which the dissertation inspiringly focuses the same supposition in terms of Turkish society. The production is ended in the creation of new forms of culture and older forms are remanufactured rapidly which means that the traditional way of living has already become problematic. Mobility in society is not culminated in new behavioral patterns on the other hand, practices may continue somehow in an altered form. In this sense, urbanization presents a cosmopolitan space, whereby a common platform is provided with a convenient atmosphere for those coming from different nationalities or ethnic groups who live together and endeavor to get accustomed to the common rules in towns though regional customs and behavioral patterns gradually have become lost in importance in material world. Media at this point provides a reserve to the need for the satisfaction of leisure in urban spaces for those who prefer more of a domestic life indoors.

#### Turkey isn’t real – we have empirical data. It’s a shame: no more Thanksgiving!

YUMRUKUZ 14 (ÖZLEM, YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, “A MEDIA ANALYSIS IN TURKEY ON THE THEORY OF SIMULATION BY JEAN BAUDRILLARD (2010- 2012)”, 102-104, 2014, ‘er’)

With respect to hyperreality, in the study, an analysis of contemporary cultural and social condition of Turkey is put to understand the reflection of media‘s cultivation of televisual imagery in the social environment. At this point, it is concluded that TV is shown to be assuring a system of monolog that prevents a response from the receiver. A great majority of the participants agreed that media perverts reality to its own interest which seems paradoxical that they seemed to think as such though they gave their assent to the power of media. Its manipulative action adversely is shown to have an effect on traditional way of living; marriage programmes and Survivor directly represent the entertainment culture dominating society as a whole. Survivor in the dissertation is put more emphasis and is the focuse of our main presuppositions regarding Baudrillard‘s media theory. The marriage shows are mentioned as complementary to dissertation‘s focal point to support and strengthen the main argument on the potentiality of reality shows in creating simulations through televisual imagery. The research findings at this level indicate that the recipients are already entrapped in the seductive power of entertainment assured at first hand by media samples. While attempting to substantiate our hypothesis and findings we tried to focus on media‘s causes (media preference and exposure), effects (silent majority) and reflections (hyperreality in simulated models). Thus our findings strongly suggest that media imagery is substituted for reality that hides the absence of it as seen in the case of marriage and Survivor programmes. Obtained empirical results of the study suggest that viewers of a particular media sample tend to think on common grounds and act in the same way. The basic motive is to entertain one and ensure relaxation. To expound our arguments on the problem of reality in the frame of Baudrillard's concept of simulation and hyper-reality, the reality show Survivor is analyzed to substantiate how reality is merged with unreality and how the viewing audience is immersed into television imagery. Survivor as a type of reality programme is a designed and simulated show which viewers assume it as to be real. A number of figures whose lives are recorded are observed to change in attitudes and characters procreating delusion. Similarly, the viewing audience also is taken into the decision making processes by which they are held close in the simulated world of it. Baudrillard‘s media theory is sought to be experimentally verified in terms of recipients, media events and media content as a whole in Turkish society. Thus, the study has showed that the media messages are to a great extent cultivated in the concious and reflected in material life eliminating the authentic meaning of the object. The substituted meaning of the object then becomes ambigous and transparent that problematizes an ontological complication. Baudrillard‘s hyperreality stems from at this point where it becomes impossible to define neither authentic nor substituted meaning of any material existence as it has been submerged in a chaotic perception which we see in the case of Survivor viewers. It is found out that viewers believe what they watch are real and their responds bear a great many implications from programme depictions. Moreover, their perception is measured in accordance with what they are exposed on the screen, their wish, desires, hatred or anger are shaped and exhibition of an affinity is reassured through character identification and closeness that is emotionally fixed.

### **War**

#### **The West wages war to simulate meaning, to convince an increasingly unphased public that the West matters. This produces endless and arbitrary wars of intervention and humanitarianism in a sad attempt to hide the collapse of all grand narratives.**

Hammond 11 (Philip, PhD, Reader in Media and Communications at London South Bank University, “Simulation and Dissimulation,” Journal of War and Cultural Studies 3 (3): 305-318)

To dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn’t have. One implies a presence, the other an absence. (Baudrillard 1994a: 3)

Much analysis and critique of the news media’s role in representing war has centred on the issue of propaganda – including, importantly, propaganda directed at a domestic audience for the purposes of justifying war and maintaining public support. Critics have drawn attention to ‘information management’ on the part of governments and the military, and have examined the extent to which journalists are willing to challenge the official version of events. The process tends to be understood as one of dissimulation, whereby political leaders disguise the real reasons for going to war, clothing self-interest in a nobler rhetoric. The task of the critic is to peel away misleading official justifications and to expose the real interests at stake.

This article argues that, while propaganda and dissimulation remain relevant concepts to the critique of war representation, in the contemporary context it often makes more sense to understand the media presentation of war – and even war itself – in terms of simulation. Our interest here is not in battlefield technologies, military training simulations, video games and media spectacles created by what James Der Derian, in the subtitle of his 2001 book, calls the ‘Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network’, but rather in how the concept of simulation can be extended to encompass the rationale for and conduct of war, as well as its media representation. Drawing together recent work in international relations theory and postmodernist writing on the media and war, the article suggests that far-reaching political changes since the end of the Cold War have led western elites to use war and intervention as a way to simulate purposeful activity.

In what follows, we first examine this post-Cold War context, asking whether it still makes sense to understand western foreign policy in terms of the pursuit of (hidden) interests. The article then briefly considers how far the role of the media in conflict and intervention has changed, and asks how far it is still useful to conceptualize that role in terms of dissimulation. We then consider the alternative framework suggested by the idea of simulation. It is argued that, for western political elites, war and intervention have often appeared to hold out the possibility of simulating a sense of purpose and mission, in response to what Zaki Laïdi (1998: 1) calls the ‘crisis of meaning’ precipitated by the end of the Cold War.

INTERPRETING THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Understandably, the end of the Cold War is often understood as a moment of ideological triumph for the West. Yet it is important to remember that it was, at the same time, also a moment of ideological crisis. Francis Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ thesis expresses the bittersweet character of the Cold War victory: his argument is at once triumphalist and an acknowledgement that there is no longer any vision of the future:

The end of history will be a very sad time [. . .] the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. (Fukuyama 1989: 18)

Arguing that liberal-democratic capitalism now faced no challengers comparable to Soviet Communism, Fukuyama said he felt ‘ambivalent’ about the West’s victory, and anticipated the ‘prospect of centuries of boredom’. In terms of foreign policy, the problem came to be understood as ‘enemy-deprivation syndrome’. As one commentator puts it: ‘as soon as the initial euphoria over the Soviet Union’s collapse had passed, most of the American foreign-policy cognoscenti [. . .] began to search for a substitute enemy’ (Harries 1997: 35).

Over the years, substitutes have proved easy to find, from former US ally turned ‘new Hitler’ Saddam Hussein, through Somali ‘warlords’, Haitian generals and Serbian ‘Nazis’, to Islamist terrorists. There have also been a number of attempts to rethink the overall framework within which such figures might be seen as enemies and, more importantly, within which the United States, or the West more broadly, might be seen as engaged in a coherent mission comparable to the Cold War. The two main ideas in this respect have been ‘humanitarian intervention’ and ‘War on Terror’, both of which foreground ‘values’, rather than interests, as the basis for policy.

The first of these ideas was quickly put into practice at the end of the 1991 Gulf War, when, having expelled Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the western ‘allies’ then set up no-fly zones and safe havens to protect Kurdish and other refugees. By the end of the decade, in the 1999 Kosovo conflict, the full might of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was thrown behind what was known in Britain as ‘ethical foreign policy’ – a policy based on moral norms of right and wrong, rather than the naked self-interest of Realpolitik. The ‘War on Terror’ interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were also, at least in part, justified in similar terms. A war of self-defence and retaliation in Afghanistan was simultaneously cast as a war for human rights and women’s emancipation, and involved dropping humanitarian aid packages as well as bombs. The war to pre-empt the supposed threat of Iraqi ‘weapons of mass destruction’ (WMD) was said by coalition leaders to be also about ‘liberating the Iraqi people’. According to former British prime minister Tony Blair, the ‘crucial point’ about the interventions in both Afghanistan and Iraq was that ‘they were not just about changing regimes but changing the value systems governing the nations concerned’ (Blair 2006: 19). Senior British diplomat Robin Cooper, a former foreign policy advisor to Blair who became director of ‘politico-military affairs’ for the European Union (EU), has even developed such claims into a theory of the ‘postmodern international order’. For ‘postmodern states’ such as Britain, he argues, ‘state interest becomes less of a determining factor in foreign policy’, which is instead about undertaking ‘intervention for values’ and fighting ‘wars of principle’ (Cooper 2004: 53, 61).

Looked at in terms of the concept of dissimulation, such ideas may be understood as no more than attempts to construct a new ideological cover for the pursuit of foreign policy interests. Despite the epochal break of the end of the Cold War, many critics have tended to emphasize continuity, suggesting that both the Cold War and the period since have basically been ‘business as usual’ for western imperialism. Radical journalist John Pilger, for example, describes the post-1989 era as a ‘New Cold War’, and writes of ‘the unchanging nature of the 500-year western imperial crusade’ (Pilger 1999: 38, 21). Similarly, Noam Chomsky has argued that for the United States the Cold War was

largely a war against the third world, and a mechanism for retaining a degree of influence over its industrial rivals and, crucially, a mode of domestic social organization. And nothing has changed in that respect. So the Cold War hasn’t ended. (Chomsky 1990: 6)

From this perspective, all the talk of humanitarian concern, or the promotion of ‘War on Terror’ are really just a cover for the pursuit of self-interest. Uwe-Jens Heuer and Gregor Schirmer (1998), for example, critique ‘human rights imperialism’ on the grounds that, in many cases, ‘the altruism of the intervening parties was a mere secondary phenomenon to crude self- interested efforts toward the expansion of political and military power, spheres of economic influence, and the like.’

Yet it has not always been easy for critics to make a convincing case about how post-Cold War military interventions have furthered the ‘crude self-interest’ of western powers. The explanation offered for the 1991 Gulf War – that despite the rhetoric of good and evil, it was really just a ‘war for oil’ – has been wheeled out time and again, even in the unlikeliest of circum- stances. Everything from the US-led United Nations ‘humanitarian’ military mission to Somalia launched in 1992, through NATO’s 1999 Kosovo campaign, to today’s ongoing counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan has been viewed in terms of this one-size-fits-all explanation, as basically about securing access to oil and gas on behalf of US corporations (cf. Fineman 1993; Goodman 2009; Klare 2005). Twenty years on from the end of the Cold War, it is not obvious how humanitarian or anti-terror military interventions have served the direct self-interest of the United States and other western powers. Even if the argument is cast in more general terms, as a matter of securing US imperial hegemony and heading off potential rivals, as suggested by Chomsky’s comments cited above, it seems unconvincing because the United States has not really faced any serious challengers in any of the campaigns fought since 1989. The wars and interventions undertaken by the United States and its allies have been against weak states or sub-state groups, who have presented very little in the way of military, economic or ideological challenge to western capitalism. Securing access to oil, or securing hegemonic dominance do not appear to be sufficient as explanations of the near-constant military activity undertaken by western states over the last two decades.

A NEW ROLE FOR THE MEDIA?

The question of how one interprets the motivations behind wars and interventions has a direct bearing on how one understands the role of the media. Unable to see any obvious self-interest behind some of the operations under-taken by the western military since the end of the Cold War, many commentators began to wonder if the media had not in fact taken on a new role, actually leading an interventionist policy stance. Contemplating ‘Operation Restore Hope’, the aforementioned ‘humanitarian military intervention’ in Somalia, for example, veteran US diplomat George Kennan argued that it was irrational to undertake a costly and protracted mission in a country where there was ‘no defensive American interest’. He concluded that the decision to launch Operation Restore Hope must have been driven by media coverage of suffering and the consequent public pressure for action. Policy had been ‘controlled by popular emotional impulses [. . .] provoked by the commercial television industry’, he argued (Kennan 1993). Kennan’s argument was an influential formulation of the concept of the ‘CNN effect’: the notion that the crises spotlighted by real-time global television news dominate the foreign-policy agenda of western states. The idea has common sense appeal as an explanation for the apparent arbitrariness of western actions, but subsequent studies have mostly failed to substantiate the existence of the CNN effect (cf. Livingston 1997; Livingston and Eachus 1995; Mermin 1999; Robinson 2002). In the case of Somalia, as Jonathan Mermin (1999: 137) concludes, the intervention was not ‘evidence’ of the power of television to move governments’ but of ‘the power of governments to move television’. Coverage followed the agenda of US policy-makers, rather than leading it.

While the media may not have been dictating the foreign policy agenda, however, there is plenty of evidence that many journalists came to understand their role in these terms. In a series of reports from Somalia in May 1992, for example, one CNN correspondent accused the US of having ignored starving children who ‘want the world to see [...] and to forcefully act’; another said the West would be ‘neither forgiven nor forgotten’ if it did not mount ‘a massive, coordinated rescue mission’ (quoted in Mermin 1999: 132). As Mermin demonstrates, these explicit calls for action had no discernible impact on public opinion or government policy at the time, but they do indicate that journalists thought their job was not simply to report but to put pressure on politicians to act. In Britain the best-known proponent of this approach is the former BBC correspondent Martin Bell, who coined the phrase ‘the journalism of attachment’ (Bell 1998: 16) to describe a style of journalism that ‘cares as well as knows’, and which ‘will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor’. In place of what Bell called the ‘dispassionate practices of the past’, an emotive style of ‘attached’ journalism would strive to whip up public concern and thereby pressure western governments to intervene (Bell 1998: 16). In the United States a similar argument, in favour of ‘advocacy journalism’, is associated with CNN reporter Christiane Amanpour, who admonished former president Bill Clinton on live television in May 1994 for failing to articulate a tough policy on Bosnia (Ricchiardi 1996: 26).

It is a moot point whether such advocacy journalism actually had much impact on policy, although it could be considered significant in terms of what Piers Robinson (2002: 40) calls a ‘potential CNN effect’, whereby policy is formulated with one eye on how it might look in the media. But even putting aside the question of media influence, the fact that many reporters came to see their job as proselytizing for intervention should nevertheless give us pause. We should not exaggerate the extent of the clash between journalists, who tended to cast themselves in a flattering light as harsh critics of western governments, and political leaders, whom journalists criticized in a way that, far from questioning their authority to intervene militarily around the globe, actually presumed it and cast it as a moral imperative. Yet the fact remains that, in the conflicts and crises of the 1990s, the relationship between political leaders and the media was not simply one of top-down propaganda designed to legitimize military intervention, but rather involved journalists’ own spontaneous efforts to pressure apparently reluctant political elites to adopt a tougher, more interventionist policy.

A further anomaly, from the point of view of established critiques of the relationship between the media and government in wartime, is presented by the 2003 Iraq War, when – at least in Britain – the media took a far more critical stance than would be expected. A number of analysts have highlighted a ‘legitimation of dissent’ in the mainstream UK press (Couldry and Downey 2004: 280), whereby anti-war views were ‘given space and prominence in the media’ (Tumber and Palmer 2004: 164) in a way that is highly unusual in wartime. Perhaps the most striking example is the popular *Daily Mirror* news- paper, which abandoned its usual diet of tabloid trivia in favour of front-page anti-war articles by radical journalist John Pilger (Freedman 2003: 95–97, 103). Without wishing to overstate the extent of media opposition to the war, it is clear that in this case mainstream coverage was neither uniformly supportive nor straightforwardly propagandistic.

From the perspective of dissimulation, the choice would seem to be either naively to accept official propaganda claims as true, or to unmask them as a misrepresentation of the real interests driving war and intervention. In contrast, the view of war and intervention as simulation potentially opens up a different way of criticizing the media representation of war: neither seeking to uncover ‘real’, hidden interests, nor accepting the rhetorical justifications of war at face value. The next section further explores this notion of contemporary war as simulation, and considers its implications for analysing media coverage of war.

WAR AS SIMULATION

An alternative view of the end of the Cold War is offered by international relations theorist Zaki Laïdi, who argues that it has left us in ‘a world without meaning’. The fall of the Berlin Wall, he contends, ‘buried two centuries of Enlightenment’, in that it signalled the end, not only of communism, but of all forward-looking collective projects for the foreseeable future (Laïdi 1998: 1). In postmodernist terms, one might say that the end of the Cold War represented a collapse of grand narratives (Laïdi 1998: 8). This has clearly had a directly debilitating effect on the Left and on national liberation movements in the Third World, in that the ideas through which they had articulated a vision of the future now stand discredited. Just as importantly, what Laïdi calls the ‘crisis of meaning’ has fundamentally affected western societies and their governing elites. Put at its simplest, the West has lost its cohesion because it has lost its enemy. The ideological cement which anti-communism provided as a negative justification of western capitalism has crumbled away, and the system of institutions through which international relations were organized throughout most of the post-World War II era has lost its justification. Worst of all, western elites have lost the political wherewithal to cohere their own societies around a meaningful project and to give them a sense of a future goal.

Efforts to rethink the international role of the United States and its allies in the aftermath of the Cold War have been driven by the felt need to reinvigorate the domestic politics of the West and to reconnect with an increasingly disengaged electorate. As neoconservative thinkers William Kristol and Robert Kagan (1996) put it, ‘The remoralization of America at home ultimately requires the remoralization of American foreign policy.’ Complaining that they were living in ‘tepid times’, in which the public viewed foreign affairs with ‘the same routine indifference as breathing and eating’, Kristol and Kagan hoped that if ‘a more elevated vision of America’s international role’ could be found, this might help to ‘restore a sense of the heroic’. It is telling that of the ‘three imperatives’ advanced by Kristol and Kagan for reforming US foreign policy, only one – increased defence expenditure – was directly concerned with international affairs. Their other two priorities – ‘citizen involvement’ and ‘moral clarity’ – indicated that their underlying concern was with engaging people at home rather than accomplishing any strategic objective abroad.

From the perspective suggested by Laïdi’s analysis, one might say that for the governing elites of societies that have lost belief in any grand narrative of progress, war and intervention seem to offer opportunities to rediscover some sense of a meaningful project. As Laïdi puts it:

war is no longer a continuation of politics by other means, as in [Carl von] Clausewitz’s classic model – but sometimes the initial expression of forms of activity or organization in search of meaning [. . ..] War becomes not the ultimate means to achieve an objective, but the most ‘efficient’ way of finding one. (Laïdi 1998: 95)

In his commentaries on the 1991 Gulf War, Jean Baudrillard offered a similar ‘variant on Clausewitz’, arguing that the conflict was ‘the absence of politics pursued by other means [. . .]’ (Baudrillard 1995: 83). The hollowing-out of the political life of western nations after the end of the clashing ideologies of Left and Right leaves political elites disconnected from their own societies, unable to offer any inspiring vision of the future. In these circumstances, war, intervention and foreign policy-making have appeared to offer elites an arena in which such a vision may be simulated. This idea is taken up by David Chandler in his discussion of the EU’s foreign policy. Drawing on Baudrillard’s concept of simulation, Chandler argues that EU policy is not driven by the pursuit of self- interest which is then dissembled by shrouding it in a rhetoric of ‘European values’, but can better be understood as the simulation of a mission or project where none exists:

For the EU, every external measure, from trade regulations to foreign aid, to the sending of troops abroad, comes attached with the necessity of expressing the EU’s alleged shared ‘identity’ and ‘values’ in the increasingly shrill and desperate simulation of these absent factors. (Chandler 2007: 4)

As Chandler emphasizes, what gives rise to this simulation is an ‘attempt to overcome, bypass or evade political elites’ lack of connection with their own societies’. From this perspective, what is important is ‘not [. . .] a presence (of interests, of representation) but [. . .] an absence (a lack of social connection between elites and society and therefore of a lack of social power)’ (Chandler 2007: 2).

If international intervention since the end of the Cold War has been driven by the attempt to simulate a sense of purpose, however, it has also been undermined by the crisis of meaning. From the 1991 Gulf War to the War on Terror launched a decade later, intervention has been reactive and opportunistic, responding to perceived threats and crises rather than acting in line with some strategic project. As Chandler notes, the key ‘difference between simulation and interest-based policy-making’ is that the former expresses ‘the weakness of the political actor’. Rather than indicating strong and united western elites, confidently pursuing their interests in an unchanging imperial mission, post- Cold War policy has been ‘much more arbitrary and ad-hoc’ (Chandler 2007: 5), lurching from one crisis to the next with no clear strategic end in view. The so- called Bush doctrine of pre-emptive war against ‘terror’ was widely criticized as implying an endless series of military engagements in a global conflict that would never come to any conclusion. The same could be said of the notion of humanitarian intervention – of wars undertaken for human rights or other ‘ethical’ reasons – which also implies boundless military action without any obvious chronological or strategic end point. Such blanket justification for future wars might be seen, less as a sign of ideological strength, and more as an indication that political leaders have found it increasingly difficult to define their interests in the absence of the Cold War enemy.

Both of the points above – that post-Cold War interventions have been largely arbitrary and reactive, rather than unfolding some grand strategy, and that the impetus driving activism abroad has been the emptiness of public political life at home – were anticipated in Baudrillard’s commentaries on the 1991 Gulf War. These essays – in which he predicted that the war would not take place; asked, once it had started, if it was ‘really’ taking place; and maintained afterwards that it ‘did not take place’ – struck many commentators at the time as uncritical and irrelevant (cf. Norris 1992). The most, it seemed, that could be said for Baudrillard’s position was that it drew attention, in hyperbolic fashion, to the way that sanitized news footage of high-tech ‘smart’ weapons and ‘surgical strikes’ obscured the deadly effects of a conflict so militarily one-sided that its outcome was never in doubt (Patton 1995: 18). But for most critics, the point was to contrast the misleading media imagery with the reality of the war’s lethal effects, not to raise seemingly nonsensical questions about the ‘reality’ of the conflict itself. Yet Baudrillard was, no doubt, as aware as anyone else that the Gulf War was literally real; that, as he had written earlier, ‘war is no less atrocious for being only a simulacrum – the flesh suffers just the same, and the dead and former combatants are worth the same as in other wars’ (Baudrillard 1994a: 37–38). His point, rather, was that what was missing in simulated war was ‘the reality of antagonistic causes, the ideological seriousness of war’ (Baudrillard 1994a: 38).

The claim that the Gulf War ‘did not take place’ is best understood, in other words, as a political proposition: that in the absence of a grand narrative to make sense of the enterprise, war had become meaningless, empty, difficult to believe in:

Unlike earlier wars, in which there were political aims either of conquest or domination, what is at stake in this one is war itself: its status, its meaning, its future. It is beholden not to have an objective but to prove its very existence [. . ..] In effect, it has lost much of its credibility. (Baudrillard 1995: 32)

The lack of credibility derived from the absence of a shared framework of meaning that would make the war politically ‘real’ and historically important. In this sense, Baudrillard suggested, the Gulf War was less a battle with Saddam than a struggle to make sense of the West’s role in the post-Cold War world:

It is not an important match which is being played out in the Gulf, between Western hegemony and the challenge from the rest of the world. It is the West in conflict with itself, by means of an interposed Saddam. (Baudrillard 1995: 38)

Saddam was, as Baudrillard (1995: 38) pointed out, a ‘fake enemy’. But the fakery was necessary, not as a disguise for some hidden interest or purpose, but to try to produce some sense of purpose. Unlike in the past, he suggested, war ‘no longer proceeds from a political will to dominate or from a vital impulsion or an antagonistic violence’. Instead, it was an attempt to overcome the internal problems of western societies.

Baudrillard made a similar argument about the international response to the Bosnian conflict. Commenting on a December 1993 Strasbourg – Sarajevo television broadcast titled ‘A corridor for free speech’, and on recent visits to Sarajevo by intellectuals such as Susan Sontag, Baudrillard ridiculed the ‘false apostles and voluntary martyrs’ who went to Bosnia for a spot of ‘cultural soul- boosting’:

It is we who are weak and who go there to make good for our loss of strength and sense of reality [. . ..] [We] feel the need to salvage the reality of war in our own eyes [...]

Susan Sontag [. . .] must know better than them what reality is, since she has chosen them to incarnate it. Or maybe it is simply because reality is what she, and with her all the Western world, is lacking the most [. . ..] All these ‘corridors’, opened by us to funnel our foodstuffs and our ‘culture’ are in fact our lifelines along which we suck their moral strength and the energy of their distress [.. . .] Susan Sontag comes to convince them of the ‘reality’ of their suffering, by making something cultural and something theatrical out of it, so that it can be useful as a referent within the theatre of Western values, including ‘solidarity’. (Baudrillard 1994b)

Characteristically, Baudrillard couched his argument in terms of a loss of ‘reality’, but this should be understood in the same way as his doubts about the reality of the Gulf War. That is to say, it was not existential angst so much as the political exhaustion of western societies that sent intellectuals and adventurers to Sarajevo. Bosnia was interesting to them because of what it could be made to mean in the ‘theatre of western values’.

This helps to explain the moral fervour for intervention apparently felt by ‘attached’ journalists: as professional mediators charged with the task of explaining the world to their audiences, they too were responding to the crisis of meaning by helping to shape the presentation of events according to simplistic moral narratives of good versus evil. As Mick Hume (1997: 18) suggests in relation to the Bosnian War, advocacy reporting provided ‘a twisted sort of therapy, through which foreign reporters [could] discover some sense of purpose – first for themselves, and then for their audience back home’, as journalists undertook a ‘moral mission on behalf of a demoralized society’. In this sense, as far as both political leaders and advocacy journalists are concerned, the overall approach to international humanitarian intervention was essentially narcissistic: more about seeking a meaningful mission for the West than helping those on the receiving end. According to Michael Ignatieff, one of those intellectuals for whom Bosnia became a *cause célèbre*, ‘when policy was driven by moral motives, it was often driven by narcissism’:

We intervened not only to save others, but to save ourselves, or rather an image of ourselves as defenders of universal decencies. We wanted to know that the West ‘meant’ something. This imaginary West, this narcissistic image of ourselves, we believed was incarnated in the myth of a multiethnic, multiconfessional Bosnia [. . ..] Bosnia became the latest *bel espoir* of a generation that had tried ecology, socialism, and civil rights only to watch all these lose their romantic momentum. (Ignatieff 1998: 95)

Ignatieff’s comment not only captures how this search for meaning stemmed directly from the emptiness of western politics and disillusionment with grand narratives, it also indicates that the search was ultimately unsuccessful.

Baudrillard (2002: 34) also characterized the War on Terror in terms of the pursuit of the ‘absence of politics’ by other means. Indeed, his descriptions of the first ‘non-war’ on Iraq sound even more applicable to the 2003 sequel. He observed, for example, that Saddam’s military strength was exaggerated in 1991 by

brandishing the threat of a chemical war, a bloody war, a world war – everyone had their say – as though it were necessary to give ourselves a fright, to maintain everyone in a state of erection for fear of seeing the flaccid member of war fall down. (Baudrillard 1995: 74)

His account of this ‘futile masturbation’ could just as well have been written about the talking up of Iraq’s non-existent WMD capability in 2003, or about the West’s exaggerated fear of al-Qaeda. Similarly, Baudrillard’s remark that ‘the war ended in general boredom, or worse in the feeling of being duped [. . ..] It is as though there were a virus infecting this war from the beginning which emptied it of all credibility’ (Baudrillard 1995: 62) now calls to mind the efforts to build public support for the 2003 invasion with dubious dossiers of ‘evidence’, and the interminable enquiries and post-mortems that followed.

The difficulty of making war seem meaningful and credible means that media presentation has assumed a disproportionate significance. This is not to say, of course, that image and myth-making were not important in the past: Richard Keeble (1997: 8), for example, notes how a form of ‘unreal warfare’ developed in the 1980s with Britain’s Falklands conflict and US interventions in Grenada and Libya, in which war became essentially a ‘media event’. Yet in these earlier interventions, the media event was clearly tied to established political or ideological themes – such as British nationalism or anti-communism. After the end of the Cold War, in contrast, staging the spectacle of war has become a substitute for an inspiring cause to rally public support, and media presentation has consequently become even more central. As Baudrillard wrote in 1991: ‘The media mix has become the prerequisite to any orgasmic event. We need it precisely because the event escapes us, because conviction escapes us’ (1995: 75). In the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States announced that it would use ‘shock and awe’ bombing and ‘effects-based’ warfare, designed to win by demoralizing the enemy rather than by killing him. It was as if Pentagon planners had studied Baudrillard and decided that this time it really would be a ‘bloodless’ war-show. In a triumph of media-military cooperation, the military campaign was propaganda and the propaganda was part of the military strategy. Reporters were embedded with the coalition forces to produce dramatic footage of the front-line advance which, it was hoped, would cheer domestic audiences while intimidating Iraqi leaders, who were known to be watching the same images. Senior Iraqi figures were then contacted directly by US officials via phone and e-mail to reinforce the message that they should give up.

Yet the effectiveness of the propaganda was undermined by the way that the news media self-consciously drew attention to its deliberately manufactured quality. Rather than simply reporting events, journalists often discussed them in terms of news management and image projection, such as on 29 April 2003, when one BBC *Newsnight* presenter contrasted pictures of angry Iraqis protesting against the shooting of demonstrators with the day’s ‘intended message’ delivered by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. On a day when the most significant weapons find was a factory making bullets, another journalist for BBC One noted that ‘the Americans very deliberately drove captured Iraqi missiles past the media hotel in Baghdad,’ on 17 April 2003. It would be an exaggeration to describe such reporting as critical or oppositional, but coverage was often cynical and self-conscious, putting journalists at an ironic distance from events.

If the obvious effort to generate good PR simply confirmed the perception that the war’s presentation was carefully calculated and manipulative, an even greater problem was the fact that the coalition often seemed unsure about what message it wished to project. Traditional themes – promoting a martial, national or western identity – seemed to cause discomfort instead of rallying support. This was why news audiences witnessed the Stars and Stripes being proudly hoisted in Iraq one minute, only to see it hauled down in embarrassment the next. British journalists were apparently also instructed not to ‘take any pictures or describe British soldiers carrying guns’, and were told ‘to not portray [. . .] the British fighting men and women as fighters’, as reported on the BBC Two programme *Correspondent* on 18 May 2003. The British elite expressed similar concerns about appearing too militaristic in the way they celebrated victory, worrying about whether to hold a victory parade, a ‘cavalcade’ or a church ser- vice after the Iraq campaign. In the event, there was a ‘multi-faith service of remembrance’, designed to be ‘sensitive to other traditions, other experiences and other faiths’, including Islam, and commemorating Iraqi military and civilian dead alongside British losses. An inability to celebrate victory or to portray soldiers as fighters was symptomatic of elite incoherence; of a lack of agreed unifying values; of the very ‘absence of politics’ that the war was supposed to address.

CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF SIMULATION

This article has argued that contemporary war and intervention are driven by an attempt to simulate meaning and purpose in the post-Cold War era when western societies found that they had, in Ignatieff’s words, ‘lost [their] narrative, and with it, the rationale for engagement’ (1998: 98). From the 1991 Gulf War, through the pursuit of armed humanitarianism in the Balkans and else- where, to the latest ‘non-events’ of the War on Terror, the western military have been sent into action against fake enemies whose defeat, it was hoped, would prove that the West must be engaged in a meaningful and important mission. Ultimately, however, these attempts have been unsuccessful: even their supporters have been unable to convince themselves that such wars are fully ‘real’. The self-conscious and sometimes cynical tone of much of the coverage of the 2003 Iraq War seems like something of a departure from what has often been seen as the mainstream media’s ‘normal’ wartime loyalty and propaganda service. In the case of humanitarian interventions – when journalists were more likely to respond with enthusiasm than scepticism – the coverage also indicated the limits to simulation. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this was the highpoint of humanitarian military intervention, the Kosovo conflict, when a widespread disappointment with the outcome of this ‘successful’ war was sometimes expressed in terms which recalled Baudrillard’s doubts about the ‘reality’ of the Gulf conflict. An *Independent* editorial on 10 June 1999, for example, asked: ‘was it a “war” at all?’; and Ignatieff, in the title of his 2000 book, described it as only a ‘virtual war’. The main reason the war was thought, even by its supporters, to lack ‘reality’ was that no western troops were killed. Complaining that the war left a ‘bitter taste’, the same *Independent* editorial said there was ‘no sense of triumph, or of virtue rewarded’, though there ‘might have been, had NATO suffered some casualties’. Similarly, in the *Guardian* on 1 April 1999, Hugo Young wondered whether, if NATO forces were ‘not pre- pared to match their enemy’s risk with their own’, they ‘cannot expect to win, and maybe don’t deserve to?’; and in the same newspaper on 5 April 1999, Isabel Hilton interpreted the unwillingness to risk the lives of western troops as a symptom of the fact that ‘we are in a war that has no storyline we can believe in.’

Baudrillard’s (1994b) remark at the time of the Bosnian War that the West was ‘merely expressing its own disappointment and longing for an impossible violence against itself’ was borne out by the Kosovo conflict when commentators explicitly wished that their own soldiers would die to make the war ‘real’. Bizarre though this might seem, it expressed the fact that ‘ethical’ intervention and wars for ‘values’ had failed to offer a new source of meaning for the post-Cold War world. NATO’s ‘virtual war’ showed the triumph of the rhetoric but with no wider political significance: ‘citizens of NATO countries [. . ..] were mobilized, not as combatants but as spectators [. . ..] [The war] aroused emotions in the intense but shallow way that sports do’ (Ignatieff 2000: 3). Like the Gulf, politically it was only a simulated war, not the real thing.

Nevertheless, it is striking that, even before he took office, President Barack Obama was being urged to ‘use American power to reshape the world’ (Zakaria 2008), or to ‘remake the case for humanitarian intervention abroad’ (*Economist* 2008). Such calls for action were motivated, not so much by the need to address some specific problem, but by a vaguer, general hope that the president would be able to ‘re-moralize’ US foreign policy and offer a new narrative of engagement. Despite the limitations of simulated war, then, it seems unlikely that we have seen the last of it.

#### Western civilization tries to re-legitimize itself through its threat of illegitimacy. Representations of war through the propagation of information have deposed “real war”, rendering war ever “foggy” as we try to resolidify its meaning.

Artrip and Debrix 14 (François, Director of the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) and Professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech, Ryan E., doctoral candidate in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) at Virginia Tech, “*The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation*,” Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014), SPECIAL ISSUE: BAUDRILLARD AND WAR, 6/21/22 - FI)

It is no coincidence that by the time of the Enlightenment, what Copernicus had destabilized—sovereignty and the centrality of civilization—became championedpolitical realities in the broad spectrum of liberal social contract theory. It is only **after the de-centering of “man” and civilization** that both become explicitly **represented as central**, and the whole legal/juridical/ethical edifice imagined by **classical liberalism begins to take** **hold**. If not for the strategic mediatization between warring sovereigns who, in effect, dissolved each other’s legitimacy, Hobbes would have had a harder time envisaging a theory of sovereignty desperate enough to locate true legitimacy—the authenticity of rule—into something like a “representative” consent to rule (Hobbes, 1994). In other words, was Hobbes not already operating at the level of a re-anchoring of legitimacy (and legitimation of the sovereign, first and foremost), after it had in fact already vanished? Legitimacy only appears as a categorical foundation of political order once it experiences its own negation. Legitimacy becomes a matter of political concern when the sovereign, the demos, possibly “man” is in need of reconstitution. This is the mediatizing work of representation too. **Representation murders what it re-presents**, but it eventually tries to re-solidify or **re-constitute that which it has murdered** in the first place. In this sense, and as we hinted at above, representations of war in a mediatized/digitized age operate according to a similar principle. They have always **already annihilated war’s possibility (as an event)**, thus evoking Baudrillard’s provocative claim that “the gulf war did not take place.” But representations have also done away with all of war’s “real” boundaries, constraints, causes, and temporal motivations/markers, thus rendering it **ever present, continuous, foggy, and virulently operative.** Through the dense manifold of classical liberalism, Western civilization has sought to re-solidify or re-anchoritself around a center (sovereignty, the state, the subject, the demos, war, etc.), but, paradoxically, by way of its eccentricity. It has tried to re-legitimate itself through the threat of its illegitimacy. And it has attempted to re-realize itself by way of its ever mediatized un-reality (or, better yet, its undecidability as either real or unreal, thus leaving us with hyper-reality). The social contract—abstractly understood as our social ascent from the chaotic substratum of instinct and originary violence, or primordial war—thus had to reconnect with several theological functions of centralization, legitimation, and meaning production, even if the organization of political power had lost any semblance of organic, much less ordained, origins.This historical tendency of representation to dissolve and re-solidify may be broadly referred to as **hyper-mediatization**, which, as we have suggested, is something deeply rooted in the representation of war too. Within this tendency, communication and information play important and functional roles as mechanisms of social codification/signification/meaning-making. To be sure, **communication/information** is the draw toward something absent—the **social real**, we will say—precisely because of its absence; it is a productive void in the third order of simulation (Baudrillard, 1983: 11). The **imperative to** communicate and, today, to **propagate information** (digitally, if at all possible) is most likely born of the profound undesirability of the **absence of** a core, of sovereignty, of **social reality**, or of the subject, which, paradoxically, **efforts to communicate** **further annihilate** by putting into **circulation a series of appearances**. The “signs of the real” are substituted for “the real itself,” Baudrillard writes. It is “an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, **perfect descriptive machine**” (Baudrillard, 1983: 4).

#### We must recognize war’s dissolution through political analysis, as its precisely what allows the proliferation of war and its representational violence.

Artrip and Debrix 14 (François, Director of the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) and Professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech, Ryan E., doctoral candidate in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) at Virginia Tech, “*The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation*,” Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014), SPECIAL ISSUE: BAUDRILLARD AND WAR, 6/21/22 - FI)

The various attempts at representing, explaining, justifying, or making sense of war and its violence, often in traditional referential geopolitical terms, are involved in an infinite splitting of what war must be or mean as much as they are concerned with a deepening and widening of the violence/virulence of its (global) representation. In its dissolution/dissemination through political analysis, war reveals its violent representational forms. On the one hand, analytically dissolved and disseminated, war becomes **unlocalizable**, thus, in a way **impossible to contain**. It **can no longer “take place.**” On the other hand, although it can no longer be waged in one place, it still must proliferate its effects virally and virulently. **Representationally unhinged from any object** (and reifying no particular subject or, rather, all sorts of subjects at once), war **can no longer be geopolitically maintained,** cultivated, and made use of by way of any of the (modern) categories that once sought to give it gravity: geography, ideology, morality, sovereignty, domination, or history. Thus, war becomes **strategically useless** even if, tactically, it betrays the violence or virulence of representation everywhere it is found. Just like in the image of terror/terrorism, all we witness, then, is panic. Panic war is a “floating reality… where we live on the edge of ecstasy and dread” (Kroker, Kroker, and Cook, 1989: 14). Ungrounded, strategically indifferent, and yet representationally effective and virulent, panic war no longer stands in as the “substantial event” of time/history, as the referential hinge that allows passage from one human epoch to the next. Today, Janus, the God of passages, transitions, and attributions of meaning in time, may still be worried about war. But Janus must now fixate his gaze in all directions (thankfully, today’s Janus is likely to have access to YouTube…). The once mythologized and later romanticized uniqueness of Janus’ bioptic talents has been transmuted into an impossible requirement of omniscience, omnivoyance, and omnipresence. The temple of Janus, which was once a symbolic spatial conduit for the inertia of time, has collapsed under the weight of an indifferent, perhaps more catastrophic, inertia: the inertia not of war’s violence (counter-actable through peace), but rather of the violence of war’s representation (that knows no bounds and no antagonisms). War no longer takes place in order to mediate time or to usher in a strategic (political) change through conflict. Perhaps it never really did. Rather, as representation, **war tactically preserves and perpetuates violent conflicts** and a propensity for doing away with things (starting with meaning) through a kind of digital/informational immanence (today’s preferred version of representation or mediation). Toward what ends/futures does this war and its representation reproduce themselves virally and virulently? Or, better yet, what compels us, if anything at all, to reproduce this war and its violence through our fascination with real-time digital technologies? Is it perhaps that the ideal of world peace still seduce us and that we must continue to represent war so that, if nothing else, we can always be there to try to antagonize it? Or is it perhaps instead that we harbor a secret wish of global/total annihilation, some will to terror hidden just beneath cognition, perhaps to unsettle regimes of representation, meaning, and truth once and for all? Are we and our digitized technologies of immediation advancing boldly in the face of war and war’s representation in the hope that our will to total visibility/informationality can function as the accursed share of the system? Is it such a principle (today’s secret death wish, perhaps), or is it another principle, more conventional but just as sinister perhaps, the will to communicate in the open that can explain that our opinions, theories, explanations, blogs, tweets, statuses, SMS’s, emails, video recordings, and photographs of war/terror/agony have to surface in pixels and circulate by way of viral imaging? Could it be that war is merely an excrescence, “[a]n indefinite extension: metastasis” (Baudrillard, 2008: 52)? Read this way, whether it has a logic, whether it can be explained, whether it can even be put into language or in representation, war would be like some sort of cancerous growth, exceeding temporal/transitional configurations. “In a system where things are increasingly governed by chance,” Baudrillard writes, “finality turns into delirium, and elements develop that know only too well how to exceed their end—until they wind up invading the whole system” (Baudrillard, 2008: 30). Without a locatable or intelligible object/subject, but equipped with the representational virulence of the digital, war becomes an in(de)terminable principle of decomposition and decay. Perhaps we **need to learn to recognize the symptoms of this decomposition/decay**, the symptoms of this fatal strategy (or tactics) of the real and representation. First and foremost, we probably need to recognize that what is often taken today to be a beacon of democratic immediacy and authenticity—**new digital technologies of representation**/mediatization as disembodied extensions of alleged human subjects/agents—is p**recisely what incants and then performs the totality,** globality, virtuality, and inescapability of war and its violence. Indeed, **the more we think we see**, and the more **quickly and directly we think we can capture “our” reality**, the **deeper we are in war’s digital fog** and the more irremediably involved we are in the maintenance of its virulence. To give Baudrillard the last word, at least for now, any power (representational, digital, virulent) that seeks to “absorb the negative […] is devoured by what it absorbs” (Baudrillard, 2010: 59).

#### War has turned into a game of reconnaissance and information gathering and analysis that’s instant and global.

Steuer 19 (Daniel, is research fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics,

and Ethics (CAPPE) at the University of Brighton, UK, “*War and Algorithm*,” Chapter 2: Prolegomena to Any Future Attempt at Understanding Our Emerging World of War (9/24/19), 6/22/22 – FI)

Flow Markets In their work on forex markets, the most advanced example of a flow market, Knorr-Cetina and Preda introduce the notion of a global scopic reflex system.132 Because the “real economy,” trading transactions, and political and cultural events have been translated into a self-referential “world” of information on the screen, for those individuals who participate in this system the computer screen is the world. The global physical space is condensed into screen space, and time is condensed into “now-ness.” The information on the screen may “contain” time (the figures, for example, may reflect the tracking of past transactions) but only in the form of an aggregated “now market.” Time and space lose their depth: The screen reality . . . is like a carpet of which small sections are woven and at the same time rolled out in front of us. The carpet grounds experience; we can step on it, and change our positioning on it. But this carpet composes itself as it is rolled out; the spatial illusions it affords hide the intrinsic temporality of the fact that its threads (the lines of text appearing on screen) are woven into the carpet only as we step on it and unravel again behind our back (the lines are updated and disappear). As the carpet is woven it assumes different patterns; the weave provides specific response slots to which traders react, taking the patterns in different directions.133 The scopic medium is a network whose spatial dimension has been almost completely condensed into its temporal dimension, and the temporal dimension approximates the now-ness of a perpetual flow out of nowhere into nothingness. It is “stable only long enough to enable transactions to occur and changes with transactions.”134 Computer-based scopic systems replace “embodied transaction and transmission capabilities by a set of technological and behaviourally enhancing components that, together, serve as a medium for the globally temporalized performance of these markets.”135 The “global reflex system of financial screens integrates within its framework the conduits for building and maintaining relationships.”136 Traders are confronted “with a market that has become a ‘life form’ in its own right, a ‘greater being.’”137 Screens “instantly reflect, project, and extend the reality of these markets in toto.”138 Markets are characterized by “ontological liquidity:” “The flow of the market reflects the corresponding stream of activities and things: a dispersed mass of market participants continues to act, events continue to occur, policies take hold and have effects.” Markets are synchronically well-defined but “ill-defined with respect to the direction they will take at the next moment.”139 This description of flow markets corresponds to the idea of network-centric warfare, except that here there can be no place for someone corresponding to the—imagined—central commander on his perch—someone who is apart from and overlooking the theater of war.140 The system of screens (interfaces) integrates military units, ultimately individual combatants, who are immersed in a theater of war that has become a life form in its own right. Screens “instantly reflect, project, and extend the reality” of these theaters of war to the combatants, potentially in toto. Combatants continue to act; events occur, and strategies take hold and have effects. But because of their ontological liquidity these theaters of war, as forms of life, though synchronically well-defined, will remain unpredictable—a carpet rolled out into the future only to unravel again the next moment. Global Frontierland The form of such flow markets and global scopic reflex systems is analogous to the form of Zygmunt Bauman’s global frontierland, in which “alliances” and “frontlines” are in constant flux, and coalitions represent no more than “temporary cohabitations of convenience.”141 This gives prime importance to the gathering and—if possible instantaneous—distribution of information.142 Bauman therefore speaks of reconnaissance battles, which are meant to explore the range of possible moves. These “bear striking resemblance to ‘focus groups’” as “the modern politicians’ favourite means of anticipatory intelligence-gathering.”143 This “confluence” between military, economic, and political practices suggests that the “space of flows”/flow-market model is assuming the place of a transcendental model of reality that informs agency across all areas of human activity. Information becomes a weapon: “Reconnaissance battles are the principal category of violence in an under-regulated environment.”144 The ideal endpoint of reconnaissance wars is the capacity instantaneously to identify a momentary enemy and take him or her out. Derek Gregory describes the space of the “individual-as-target” by using Kitchin and Dodge’s term “code/space”—that is, a space produced and activated by software whose spatiality is “simultaneously local and global, grounded by spatiality in certain locations but accessible from anywhere across the network.”145 Individuation, in this case, is the “technical production of an individual as an artefact of targeting.” Flesh-and-blood individuals “are brought within the militarized field of vision through the rhythm analysis and network analysis of a suspicious ‘pattern of life,’ a sort of weaponized timegeography.”146 The enemy is identified by means of a technology that relies centrally on the expansion of generalized data collection and its analysis “in a computerised process that yields a network of relations commonly known as the disposition matrix.”147 The disposition matrix is “a grid” representing gathered data from which “maps, target lists, individual watch lists and interpersonal contacts” are constructed.148 As an “automated, self-perpetuating intelligence system capable of transforming a large amount of raw data into ‘actionable intelligence’”149—recall Caerus’s “actionable insight,” the same body in civilian clothes, so to speak—it can potentially operate without direct human involvement. The disposition matrix opens up the prospect “of a global hunting ground produced through and punctuated by ‘mobile zones of exception,’”150 the “kill boxes” of the military strategists: “Kill boxes can be sized for open terrain or urban warfare and opened or closed quickly in response to a dynamic military situation.”151 Chamayou speaks of “temporary lethal microtubes” that can be opened up where “a legitimate target has been located:” the “body becomes the battlefield.”152 These microspaces “must be able to be aimed [at] wherever necessary.”153 Thus, the human body—or, rather, the data set corresponding to it—becomes a globally mobile, globally tractable, and globally targetable zone of hostility and of exception. To the extent that the resulting complexity and speed of the decision making exceeds the capacities of human bodies, it must be automated: flash boys meet hitmen in the digital semioscape of the global frontierland.154

#### The process of simulating warfare results in a techno-rationality inclined towards the operation of warfare which means they make global nuclear war inevitable ,

Tucker, 17 [Aaron Tucker, Research Fellow with the Centre for Digital Humanities at Ryerson University, “Ender’s Wargames: Drones, Data and the Simulation of War as Weapon and Tactic,” 2017, <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-319-60198-4_5>] // *EM*

In Platoni’s “Pentagon Goes to the Arcade,” first referenced in Chapter 4 of this book, she states that the move from simulating warfare to carrying out the results of the simulation in warfare settings was “wrapped up in … the idea that war in the future will be different from the wars of the past, involving fewer people and more machines, and keeping American troops safe by allowing them to do their fighting from behind a computer monitor” (para. 21). The problem with heavily relying on game theory and computer simulations in combination with wargames is that the networked virtual wars create distanced warfare, and humans on both sides of a conflict are pushed further away from each other and reconstructed as eventual results of math-guided, machine-aided violence. Mead paraphrases Paul Edwards when he calls this reliance “techno-rationality” and argues that it speaks to a mode in which “new technologies [are] seen as capable of overcoming the most difficult political and military circumstances” (163); he then adds that such an approach to warfare is problematic, because, quoting an unnamed general, “[within simulations] things are going to go wrong in the real world that you just can’t predict. They’re based on how humans behave, not on how a machine behaves” (163). For De Landa, this focus on planning and executing war based on “how a machine behaves” generates models that struggle with relatively narrow simplicity in addressing very specific combat situations under very specific rules and cannot be “simply added up one on top of the other” (104). The problems of computer-simulated wargames can largely be blamed on how both modeling systems of war lack the ability to effectively simulate very human problems such as fatigue, morale (100) and friction based on specific personality, cultures, cultural histories, etc. (103). More, by moving humans “out of the loop,” military planners are putting their trust in a computerized entity that De Landa argues is “much more ‘reliable’ than people in being willing to unleash a third world war” (87). To this end, even though many game theory models of conficts agree that “cooperative strategies are the most rational (the ‘fttest’) in the long run” (86), De Landa critiques computer-aided wargames as “artifcially blocking the paths to cooperation” because both game theory and computer simulations, “imaginary scenarios,” generate “pro-conflict biases and disguised [those biases] behind a facade of mathematical neutrality” (84) by “[encouraging] a picture of the adversary that emphasized confict at the expense of cooperation” (97)This chapter locates some of the initial fears of computer-guided simulations of war in WarGames, wherein the military’s computer WOPR (War Operation Plan Response) is accidentally hacked by a teenaged David Lightman (Matthew Broderick); Lightman and WOPR then play what Lightman thinks is a simulation of “Global Thermonuclear War,” which, after feeding the Americans at WOPR’s control “faked” data about Russian missile launches, leads to WOPR actually arming Russia-targeted missiles and initiating a launch sequence. This chapter will expand in more depth on WarGames, as well as the artifcial intelligence EDI in Stealth, but for now, both movies stand as popular examples of the mistrust given to the notion of simulating warfare and its potential “real-world” damages that emerges in instances that require putting computers at such a central role in military decision making. Obviously hardware and software have only advanced further since WarGames’ 1983 release and the ability to simulate warfare has only increased in fdelity. However, WarGames is useful to examine because WOPR is an early example of van Creveld’s warning that as simulations get more realistic they get more dangerous: “A game capable of simulating every aspect of war would become war” (Wargames 5). Der Derian points to the United States as leading the way in this virtual revolution: “[America’s] diplomatic and military policies are increasingly based on technological and representational forms of discipline, deterrence, and compellence that could best be described as virtuous war” (author’s italics 772). This “virtuous warfare” is driven by “the technical capability and ethical imperative to threaten and, if necessary, actualize violence from a distance—with no or minimal casualties” (772). Problematically then, the reliance on simulated and abstract warfare is the “direct introduction of unreality by military bureaucrats” that generates a version of war that does little to recognize the human combatants and violence on either side and instead creates a near-impenetrable cloud wherein an outside observer (civilian, military) can’t begin to differentiate between “real” and “unreal” (De Landa 101). Within the book Virtuous War, Der Derian argues that “at the strategic level, simulations and substitutions proliferate with plug-and-play worst-case scenarios; on the battlefeld, the enemy soldier becomes an electronically signifed ‘target of opportunity’ … that much easier to disappear” (121).Within this virtuous warfare of disappearing enemies, De Landa adds that “there is a blurring of the differences between simulation and reality. All the stimuli from the radar and computer screens remain identical” (101). This “post-corporeal” warfare digitizes the enemy into a “target of opportunity,” and Coker further warns that “if war is becoming increasingly digitized, if the enemy on a screen is reconstituted as pure ‘data,’ then the embodied state of war that we have taken for granted … may rapidly diminish in our imagination” (123) until “war itself was nothing but an exercise in management … a game of skill” (van Creveld Technology and War 245) and, fnally, “cast in terms of input-output and cost effectiveness” (246). Within this virtuous warfare, an enemy is rendered so unfamiliar that, Baudrillard warns, a military “cannot imagine the Other, nor therefore personally make war upon it” (37), thereby justifying the use of distanced and abstract tactics and weaponry. If the enemy is then reconstituted and distanced as data, then the role and concerns of the civilian and the soldier within the Total and State War Machines necessarily change as well. This datafying via the use of computers, wargames and drone strikes often co-opts the civilian into the State War Machine: in such a war game, humans were increasingly “taken out of the loop” (De Landa 99) and “games and simulations mutated from an experimental role designed to elicit insights in the participants to an institutionalized productive role, transforming civilians into military planners” (102). This aligns with Coker’s worries that the nature of a soldier has changed deeply, from a warrior that respects the enemy and the confict with which he/ she is engaged, into a “cubicle warrior,” a process by which “the warrior has been transformed into a technician and war into a routine … a series of more or less routine tasks” (118). Speaking about contemporary bomber pilots and drone operators, he describes this new soldier as “almost immune from danger … they [clock] up the hours in the sky like business executives” (120). By training in simulators and being given orders by authorities that rely on Internet-enabled simulations as tactics, the killing of enemies, of actual human combatants (and civilians), becomes a routine and mundane civilian job, fully integrated into civilian life and landscapes.This chapter will expand on these thoughts with a discussion of Good Kill and Eye in the Sky, movies that focus on the “routines” of the technician soldier, the drone pilot. Unlike the movies discussed in the frst three chapters of this text, these movies portray a version of the war flm in which the State War Machine does not rely on visceral and immediately violent soldier-to-soldier combat, what Basinger would identify as part of the “infantry” subgenre of the combat flm (20), but generates movies that are a blend between a Navy flm and an Air Force flm; these movies combine the Air Force flms’ focus on “professionalism … the problems men have in the chain of command” with the Navy flms’ focus on “the domestic lives of military men” (author’s italics 20). The three flms make clear that drone usage is a part of what Mead labels as “asymmetrical warfare,” which he clarifes as “battles between oppositions of vastly different strengths and capabilities” (51); decisions within such distanced asymmetrical warfare is controlled by the navigation of gathered intelligence on enemies and a series of game-theory calculations and disembodied data-driven predictions and simulations. Visually, Eye in the Sky and Good Kill resemble the submarine war flm rather than the infantry flm, in that the technician soldiers are held in small “safe” arenas outside of “combat spaces” (20), watching screens (portals) and the effects of their weaponry from an enclosed distance, as opposed to engaging in more “traditional” and bodily combat. In opposition to the present human body seen in the frst two chapters of this book, in particular in the taking up of the hard technological body of Elysium and Edge of Tomorrow, within the cinematic portrayals of drone warfare, the technician soldier emphasizes “situation awareness” via Internet-enabled technologies that focuses on “system and information management” (Mead 52), using information “to forecast plans and events” and then execute those attacks remotely (51).

#### Sitting down we are confronted with the theatre of war-a spectacle of the simulation- a simulacra of the simulacra that attempts to obscure the non war-the war has already and never had happened. And the ontology of change, chaos, the enemy, and the hero has become purged of its reality, being replaced by repetitions, control, search, blackmails, and hostages. Welcome, to the virtual.

Kłosiński 14(Dr. Michał Kłosiński, Dr hab. Michał Kłosiński, assistant professor at The Faculty of Philology, University of Silesia. An active member of Utopian Studies Society and The Society for Utopian Studies. During his doctoral studies he participated in the Paris Program in Critical Theory. He published various articles on Polish literature, literary theory and video games in: „International Journal of Baudrillard Studies”, „Pamiętnik Literacki”, “Teksty Drugie”, „Wielogłos”, „Śwat i Słowo”. He is the author of: Świat pęknięty. O poemach naiwnych Czesława Miłosza [Broken World. On „World. Naive poem” by Czeslav Milosz] (Warsaw 2013), Ratunkiem jest tylko poezja Baudrillard – Teoria – Literatura [Only poetry can save us. Baudrillard – Theory – Literature] (Warsaw 2015) and Hermeneutyka gier wideo. Interpretacja immersja, utopia [Hermeneutics of video games. Interpretation, immersion, utopia] (Warsaw 2018). He also co-edited (With Ksenia Olkusz and Krzysztof M. Maj) More After More. Essays Commemorating the Five-Hundredth Anniversary of Thomas More’s Utopia (Krakow 2016) and Ekonomiczne teorie literatury (with Paweł Tomczok) [Economic theories of literature] (Katowice 2016). His current hermeneutical and post-phenomenological research can be placed at the intersection of literary theory, game studies and utopian studies.May, 2014, Volume 11, Number 2, What is the “place” of War?, International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, <https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/what-is-the-place-of-war/)Lynbrook>SY

**I. Introduction** One of the primary questions I would like to pose in my article is the question about the “place” of war. What does it mean that a certain war “did not take place”? What does it mean that the war “takes place” (*a lieu*)? Does it have “a proper place”? Or maybe – if it “does not take place” – it is subject to some kind of “displacement”? Moreover, the French and English verbs suggest that taking place (*avoir lieu*) does also signify the action of arriving, producing, happening, coming etc. If that was not enough, there is a clear and visible contradiction in the oxymoronic title Baudrillard have chosen for his book: *The Gulf War did not take place* (*La Guerre du Golfe n’a pas eu lieu*). Look carefully: the place of war – that is “the Gulf” – is already properly defined, but at the same time it is being negated, because the war “did not take place”. And if the place of war is here subjected to negation, it means that this place is only simulated, produced, because it is displaced by and through the information network, media and language itself. In the first part of my article I am trying to depict and underline the significance of the antithesis inscribed in the title of Baudrillards book *The gulf war did not take place*. My main focus here is the idiomatic expression and the variety of possible meanings it produces in both English and French. I believe this analysis brings us closer to understanding how Baudrillard plays with the notion of war in the title of his book. The second part focuses on the idiomatic meanings of German “*stattfinden*”, the counterpart of the English “take place” to show that Baudrillard’s title could be read as “The Gulf war did not *find* its place” using the original Clausewitz language. Here I am also trying to show that, despite the fact that Baudrillard omits this problematic in his book, it philosophically answers the question of why the war degenerates (compare to Baudrillard 1995: 24). In the third part I am analyzing the etymology of the word “war” to show that Baudrillards position is closely related to the displacement of meaning attributed to this notion. I am trying to establish a link between the ancient meanings of war and Baudrillards negation of the Gulf war by showing that his and also Clausewitz’ thinking is closer to the “barbarian” understanding of war as a duel, reciprocal relation and something that can be exchanged, offered etc. I believe that this is the key to understanding why Baudrillard rejects the simulation model of “clean” war. I conclude my article by pointing to the fact that Baudrillards reflection about the displacement of war leads us to the auto-immunological discourse and that his logic of thinking war and about war challenges our visions of the Global or World Order. I am not developing this reflection further as I have written on the problem of auto-immune in Baudrillard in other places (Klosinski 2012). **II. The proper place of war** Neither Sun Zi in his brief *Art of War* nor Clausewitz in his long treaty *On War*, write on the problem of the place of war. They do however engage in some insightful analysis of different types of terrain and the specificity of engagement itself. On the one hand Sun Zi focuses on terrain and the methods the general should choose according to its types: *We may distinguish six kinds of terrain…(1) Accessible ground; (2) entangling ground; (3) temporizing ground; (4) narrow passes; (5) precipitous heights; (6) positions at a great distance from the enemy…/…The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground (Sun Zi, 1910: 24, 26).* On the other hand, Clausewitz who writes extensively about the strategic advantages of terrain (swamp, mountains, forests, country etc.), also points to the fact that the engagements themselves can be divided into those that “take place” and those that are “offered”: *One may admit that even where the decision has been bloodless, it was determined in the last analysis by engagements that did not take place but had merely been offered. In that case, it will be argued, the strategic planning of these engagements, rather than the tactical decision, should be considered the operative principle (Clausewitz 2007: 179).* Clausewitz sees the difference between the actual battle, or the engagement/war “taking place” and the one that constitutes an “offering”, a situation where the sheer presence of power is enough to end the conflict without bloodshed. To be precise here and to avoid further misunderstandings, the war in the Persian Gulf that Baudrillard tackles with in his book *The Gulf War did not take place*, is without question a war that took place if seen through the previous discussion in Sun Zi and Clausewitz. It was an engagement and it was prepared and executed according to the specific methodology of terrain, economy etc. So, how is it possible that Baudrillard – definitely not a theorist of war – constructs his argumentation about the Gulf War on the oxymoronic and such antithetic sentences as: *The Gulf War did not take place*, *The Gulf War will not take place* and a question: *The Gulf War: is it really taking place?* One might try to interpret these titles according to the division between reality and virtuality, to show that the Gulf War was a kind of spectacle, a simulation, that its scene, its theatre of engagement has been displaced – from the actual battlefield to the screen. Gary Genosko wrote that: *the passage from the virtual to the real was stalled in the excess of preprogramming, scenario-heaviness, over processing of plans, and the war itself was deferred and its place taken from it* ***(it wasn’t that the war did not take place but that it did not have a place) (Genosko*** *2004).* Genosko already plays on the idiomatic expression: “to take place” to show that the virtualization of war “defers” it, delays its coming, postpones it, “takes its place from it”. Alan Shapiro pointed me to the title of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s essay ‘The war has taken place’ written in June 1945, which seems to be the main intertext to Baudrillard’s title. **In Merleau-Ponty’s text the war “taking place” is the starting point, an opening phrase which enables him to stress the importance of ideological and historical turmoil, changes in thinking about the world and reality of war and its inevitable escalation** (Merleau-Ponty 2007: 41). War takes place as it shakes the fabric of the world, makes us re-think the relation between self and other, re-think various philosophies and philosophers with the positions they take (Merleau-Ponty mentions Plato and Heidegger). The war has taken place is also an essay on the role of Marxism in thinking about war, Nazism and fascism with its notions of class-struggle, history etc. But nowhere in his text does Merleau-Ponty mention why he chose this and not the other title. It is obvious that the catchphrase “**the war has taken place” said at the end of the second World War is both a call to re-think something that cannot be undone and a way to mark the specific time and place after the war – a time of re-thinking: philosophy, humanism, ethics, history, economy, anti-Semitism etc**. It is also a call, a sentence **said by someone who tells us about his own war experiences, about the time he was a soldier, a time of killing, distinguishing friend from foe and a time of occupation. And this war that “has taken place” here, in Merleau-Ponty’s text is the sum of something that cannot be forgotten, is a sum of conflicts produced in the world and by the world he lived in and survived through.(be actually expierenced this war, and it is a sort of living memory)** Baudrillard’s *The Gulf War did not take place* is a very definite negation of this “taking place” understood as actualizing in experience an impulse to re-think war. While Merleau-Ponty is building his narration about the changes in his world, in his friends thinking, **Baudrillard clearly engages in the only thing he can engage – in the media spectacle, in the images, fillers, propaganda, illusions and simulations of war which is a new type of mediatized experience.(expierene has fundementall changed in nature)** Merleau-Ponty writes from the heart of war, a war that has literally taken his place, his world, which has decided that one person lives and another dies, while Baudrillard is writing from our position, the position of the spectators watching “intelligent” missiles on TV. That is why the title of his book cannot be any more accurate in this matter, as it is both a different type of experience and **it does not make us re-think anything.** Moreover, what Baudrillard shows us is that the new type of **non-war is made precisely not to make us re-think anything with its pre-planning**, intelligent missiles, perfect strategies etc., **it does not “take place” as a challenge to our humanism**, to our philosophy.To further this analysis I propose to “unpack” Baudrillards oxymoronic, aporetic sentence about the Gulf War, not only to look at the dialectic of the virtual and the real that it projects, but also to present a hermeneutic reading of the Baudrillardean antithesis. But first we have to write this sentence down, present it as an antithesis: The Gulf War did not take place. But the Gulf itself is the place, a specific, geographically certain , “real” place. Let’s transform the sentence according to this knowledge: The War in a specific and real place did not take place. The antithesis is contradictory because of the detail Baudrillard plays with, namely that war, and especially Gulf War, has the place appointed already inside its name, in its definition. So, the place of war has already been marked in the act of naming that particular and singular war. We must not forget that the specific place oriented nomenclature constitutes almost every XX century (and earlier) conflict including two World Wars, where the place extends from the partial and geographic region to the “World”. The “World” here means “without boundaries”, not limited to a specific region, everywhere. But the most important aspect of this mechanism of “emplacement” is that it is the defining attribute of every conflict. Through the antithesis: “**The Gulf War did not take place”** Baudrillard not only **deconstructs the idea of singular war**, the slogan that “the war takes place”, the doubling of information, the repetition at the core of naming a certain conflict. We must **also understand** that the phrase “**to take place**” [*avoir lieu*] means not only “to happen”, but also: to arrive, literally: to produce (itself), to come: “Avoir lieu, se produire, arriver en un endroit et à un moment donnés (…)” (Larousse Dictionaire Francaise). These meanings are important to our interpretation of war taking place, because they point to the fact, that war is waged to actually take a certain place, so often to occupy that place, **to arrive at a certain destination, to produce certain results, or to produce itself.** The French definition of this idiom is a bit broader as the English dictionary does not point to these meanings: “When something takes place, it happens, especially in a controlled or organized way or as a result of something. EG The next attack took place four hours later” (Collins English Language Dictionary). The English thesaurus is a bit more generous: “Take place = happen, occur, go on, go down (US & Canadian), arise, come about, crop up, transpire (informal), befall, materialize, come to pass (archaic), betide” (Collins English Thesaurus). What is really interesting about this idiomatic expression in both French and English, is that it utilizes the action of “taking place” to speak about the time of an event, the time of occurrence, happening, and by doing so, it assures us, by locating the event “in place”, that it was real. **III. Searching for the place** In spite of these definitions it might be interesting to look at the passage about the engagement in Clausewitz once more, as he uses the word “stattfanden” (translated as ‘take place’) which has the verb ‘finden’ (to find) and the noun ‘die statt’ (place) at its root. What English and French call “taking place”, the German language describes literally as **“finding place”,** and – as trivial as it may sound – to find does not mean the same thing as to take. The action of finding place presupposes that the war or engagement has no proper place but is in constant search for it, **that the place is not a given of war**. Furthermore, finding does not imply possessing while taking does, so in Clausewitz the **engagement does not possess a certain place**, it merely finds it suitable for combat, whilst in French and English the place is to be overwhelmed and possessed, it is to be taken. But the difference between find place and take place also applies to the way that these idioms produce meaning: war finds a suitable place for itself or war possesses a place for its own needs; war searches and finds, war takes and holds, war does not have a place, war has a specific place. This idiomatic research leads us to the sentence by Genosko quoted earlier: “(it wasn’t that the war did not take place but that it did not have a place)”(Genosko 2004). Genosko gives us a hint that a Baudrillardean reflection about the Gulf War might be exactly the problem of thinking about the engagement as both: finding place, and taking place. What if we rewrite the title of Baudrillard’s book according to the German *stattfinden*: “The Gulf War did not find place”? The question now is a philosophical one: what happens when and if the war does not find its place? And Baudrillard answers clearly: “**Non-war is characterized by** that degenerate form of war which includes **hostage manipulation and negotiation**” (Baudrillard 1995: 24). The war degenerates, it searches for the ones who could **fulfill the roles of the warriors** **but it finds only hostages**, it searches for agonistic **conflict and challenge** but it **finds only negotiators and blackmail.** If Baudrillard quoted some of the passages on the engagement from Clausewitz, he would have probably written extensively about the engagement that did not take place but “was merely offered”, instead, he depicts the effects of a degenerate war on the spectators: “Along with the spectacle of these prisoners or these hostages, **the screens offer us the spectacle of our powerlessness**” (Ibid.: 39).In Clausewitz, the power play offered during the engagement that does not end in battle is positive – one side has acknowledged the power of the adversary and withdrawn from battle: the duel of prestige and power ended without bloodshed. But this is not the case in the Gulf War as Baudrillard perfectly knows that there can be no display of power from this side of the TV screen that our **powerlessness comes from the position we**, the terrorists and the hostages **have been given by the degenerate state of war. The war did not find its place and it haunts us precisely because of this displacement**. Baudrillard relates to Clausewitz twice in *The Gulf War did not take place*: “Promotional, speculative, virtual: this war no longer corresponds to Clausewitz’s formula of politics pursued by other means, it rather amounts to *the absence of politics pursued by other means*” (Ibid.: 30): “A variant on Clausewitz: *non-war is the absence of politics pursued by other means*… It no longer proceeds from a political will to dominate or from a vital impulsion or an antagonistic violence, but from the **will to impose a general consensus by deterrence**” (Ibid.: 83). Clearly Baudrillard wants to overturn the famous Clausewitz statement that the war is politics pursued by other means, which gives us a hint about one of the possible places the war should have taken, namely: the place of politics. If the Gulf War did not take the place of politics, then the logical conclusion is that neither politics nor war actually took place. But Baudrillard totally omits two most important features of engagement in Clausewitz: the “offering” and the “stattfinden”. However, my aim is to illustrate how they relate to his theory. By his antithesis Baudrillard states that the Gulf War did not take “its” place, did not arrive at “its” destination – namely, the Gulf. Moreover, we now know that its destination – altogether with the whole aura of war – was displaced, that it arrived, was produced, and brought to our TV screens. Ironically, the “theatre of war” quite literally turned into a theatre, a “live show” that was constantly being broadcast. The displacement and aporia of the Gulf War has been poetically deconstructed by Baudrillard, as he – providing his book with the oxymoronic title – reversed meanings and articulated the inner conflict of the idea of war and it’s execution. In his introduction to the book Paul Patton states that: *Rather, it means that state-of-the-art military power is now virtual in the sense that it is deployed in an abstract, electronic and informational space, and in the sense that its primary mechanism is no longer the use of force. Virtual war is therefore not simply the image or imaginary representation of real war, but a* ***qualitatively different kind of war, the effects of which include the suppression of war in the old sense*** *(Patton in Baudrillard 1995: 9)* The proper place of war is indeed inscribed in the war itself, but it has to be suppressed the contemporary media and the contemporary generals know that there is much more profit in displacing war, in producing it on the screen, in making the screen its “proper” place. But Patton also tells us that it is the **“military power” which turns to the informational warfare rather than the use of sheer force. Following this line of thinking one could say, that the current strategy is to re-place war with its simulacrum** and that simulacrum of war is introduced and produced in place of the war. This is of course the obvious interpretation which Baudrillard already provided us with .

#### The world is conditioned by the will to transparency’s desire for auto-immunization against the other from the self expanded Global Order who generates fractal warfare, in which the scattering of forces makes war everywhere yet precisely nowhere- for war has been robbed of meaning, and thus necessitates on being rescued by Spectacles role in organizing reality. The place of war has no place for politics rather it is the Spectacle-alive and running.

Kłosiński 14(Dr. Michał Kłosiński, Dr hab. Michał Kłosiński, assistant professor at The Faculty of Philology, University of Silesia. An active member of Utopian Studies Society and The Society for Utopian Studies. During his doctoral studies he participated in the Paris Program in Critical Theory. He published various articles on Polish literature, literary theory and video games in: „International Journal of Baudrillard Studies”, „Pamiętnik Literacki”, “Teksty Drugie”, „Wielogłos”, „Śwat i Słowo”. He is the author of: Świat pęknięty. O poemach naiwnych Czesława Miłosza [Broken World. On „World. Naive poem” by Czeslav Milosz] (Warsaw 2013), Ratunkiem jest tylko poezja Baudrillard – Teoria – Literatura [Only poetry can save us. Baudrillard – Theory – Literature] (Warsaw 2015) and Hermeneutyka gier wideo. Interpretacja immersja, utopia [Hermeneutics of video games. Interpretation, immersion, utopia] (Warsaw 2018). He also co-edited (With Ksenia Olkusz and Krzysztof M. Maj) More After More. Essays Commemorating the Five-Hundredth Anniversary of Thomas More’s Utopia (Krakow 2016) and Ekonomiczne teorie literatury (with Paweł Tomczok) [Economic theories of literature] (Katowice 2016). His current hermeneutical and post-phenomenological research can be placed at the intersection of literary theory, game studies and utopian studies.May, 2014, Volume 11, Number 2, What is the “place” of War?, International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, <https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/what-is-the-place-of-war/)Lynbrook> SY

IV. War as a displacement That is why we have to ask about the war itself, the war in its proper sense. And simultaneously to ask about the war as a consequence of displacement of meaning and sense. And to do so we have to look at the displacement of the word itself. Both English ‘war’ and French ‘*guerre*’ are already displaced names, alternatives created by the Francs and Germanic tribes who developed them to replace the Latin ‘*bellum*’, which sounded too much like the neuter form of the adjective ‘*bellus*’ (beautiful, pretty): “[…] late Old English (c.1050), *wyrre*, *werre*, from Old North French *werre* «war» (Modern French *guerre*), from Frankish \**werra*, from Proto-Germanic \**werso* (cf. Old Saxon *werran*, Old High German *werran*, German *verwirren* “to confuse, perplex”). Cognates suggest the original sense was “to bring into confusion”. Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian guerra are from the same source; Romanic peoples turned to Germanic for a word to avoid Latin *bellum* because its form tended to merge with *bello-* «beautiful.» There was no common Germanic word for «war» at the dawn of historical times. Old English had many poetic words for «war» (*wig*, *guð*, *heaðo*, *hild*, all common in personal names), but the usual one to translate Latin bellum was *gewin* «struggle, strife» (related to win). This etymology is, surprisingly, pointing towards the strong need to distinguish (both in meaning and sound) between something beautiful and something harsh. Both French ‘*guerre*’ and Germanic ‘*warrum*’ seem to replace the lateral alveolar phoneme ‘l’ with alveolar approximant ‘r’ which – along other significant changes in pronunciation – displace war from the domain of clean and soft sounding Latin into rattling and harsh “barbarian” register. Listen carefully, as this double ‘r’ happens to strike the same tune in *warrum* as in the *barbaros* – the latter word was used by Greeks and Romans to distinguish someone who did not speak their language. Moreover, to wage war is – according to the root of the word, to “bring into confusion”. Here we have the second contradiction pointed out by the etymology and described by Baudrillard in *The Gulf War did not take place*: the war produces confusion, chaos, disorder and we should be sensitive to every attempt at presenting it as a perfectly planned and precisely executed endeavor. But there is even more in the etymology of war then meets the eye and something that brings us closer to Baudrillard. The Latin *bellum* was in fact a replacement for an even more ancient word, *duellum*: *1590s (from late 13c. in Latin form), from Medieval Latin duellum “combat between two persons”, by association with Latin duo “two”, but originally from Latin duellum “war”, an Old Latin form of bellum (see bellicose). Retained in poetic and archaic language and apparently given a special meaning in Medieval or Late Latin of «one-on-one combat» on fancied connection with duo “two”.* At this point we can start our re-reading of Baudrillard and Clausewitz, as the ancient *duellum* and the “engagement that has merely been offered” seem to be exactly what Baudrillard is searching for in his reflection about war. Firstly, because the duel seems to be as close as it can get to the ritualistic and symbolic realization of agonistic, reversible and reciprocal relationship built upon challenge (and Baudrillard stresses the strength of these in many places (Coulter, 2012: 51-78). Secondly, because the “mere offering” of an engagement relates to the mechanism of seduction, potlatch and power play which also assumes the reversibility of positions (Baudrillard, 2007:52). What I am trying to show here is that war, described and interpreted by Baudrillard, somehow contradicts this ancient displacements, because – as he shows us – the Gulf War had to be beautiful, colorful, taken from a good angle and clean, clear, visible – bellum. The Gulf War should be renamed to Gulf Bellum. And Baudrillard opposes the bellum, just as the barbarians did, because he opposes the idea of clean war, an idea that war is no longer a confrontation, an agonistic encounter. The place of war is precisely in that roaring *warrum*/*guerre*, in the reciprocal *duellum*,not on the screen in High definition. That’s why he writes that: “At the desired place (the Gulf), nothing took place, non-war. At the desired place (TV, information), nothing took place, no images, nothing but filler” (Baudrillard 1995: 82). The displacement of war happened along with the displacement of information (fillers instead of facts), so that neither war, nor information took place, arrived at its destination. This is the paradoxical effect of the virtual war, informational warfare – that neither war nor information “takes its place”, nothing is what it seems to be. This interpretation is based on the principle of reversibility and Baudrillard quotes Brecht to legitimize the argument, that the war not taking place is in fact a sign of a New World Order (Ibid.: 83), a global one. This is the point where he actually defines the displacement of war and shows that the problem of the place of war is not only the problem of its emplacement, but rather of its dissemination, dispersion and fractalisation. In *The Spirit of Terrorism* Baudrillard describes this process along with the idea of a single world order – a product of the three World Wars (the First-, the Second-, and the Cold War): With each succeeding war, we have moved further towards a single world order. Today that order, which has virtually reached its culmination, finds itself grappling with the antagonistic forces scattered throughout the very heartlands of the global, in all the current convulsions. A fractal war of all cells, all singularities, revolting in the form of antibodies. A confrontation so impossible to pin down that the idea of war has to be rescued from time to time by spectacular set-pieces, such as the Gulf War or the war in Afghanistan. But the Fourth World War is elsewhere. It is what haunts every world order, all hegemonic domination – if Islam dominated the world, terrorism would rise against Islam, for it is the world, the globe itself, which resists globalization (Baudrillard 2002: 11-12). Let’s ask again – after reading this long quote – what is the place of war? Baudrillard deconstructs it: war disperses into the cellular war, fractal war at the lowest structural level and, at the same time, its place is designated as the World, as the Globe – the highest structural leve. This is another antithesis: the war takes place in a place impossible to “pin down”, at the level where it can no longer be defined, described as a war and, at the same time, it happens everywhere. And lets remind ourselves, that Baudrillard himself says that if something is everywhere, than it is nowhere at althat is the main principle of transesthetics, transpolitics and transsexuality. Now we can officially add trans-warfare to this list. When the war becomes a fractal war, then its proper place is the replicating code, the formula which metonymically actualizes itself as the law governing the world(when wats . Where is the war? What place has it taken? Baudrillard seems to say that it is everywhere. Or, if it is everywhere therefore nowhere it is possible to find it “at its own place”. As a result, if there is a Fourth World War, it must be the world itself being the proper place of war, being at war against the idea of The World Order. The Fourth World War is elsewhere because it takes the exact position the nomenclature gives it, it is no longer a World War “in” the World, on the Globe, but a World War against the World, against the Globe. In this sense it is no longer a war, it is the only possible war in spite of all the scandalous distractions offered to divert our attention from the conflict of Order and the World This logic presented by Baudrillard allows us to look at the problem of the place of war from an auto-immunological perspective. The trans-warfare and the struggle to introduce the New World Order is the proper name of the war against difference, against the other/Other, the war that searches for those who are not yet the part of the global and to either subdue them or crush them and incorporate their remains in the homogenous. Baudrillard’s description of this phenomenon of war is no different than his analysis of the famous “Boy in the Bubble” (Baudrillard 1993: 61), as the war with the world is the exact state the child is in with the environment – thus the protective cosmonaut-like suit (or the bubble). Absolute isolation through the unification of the world is just the paradoxical reversal of the “bubble child” situation: the world itself is trying to construct a giant bubble protecting it from terrorists, rogues, outlaws, Islam etc. That is why the war is metaphorically displaced and presented as a: “A fractal war of all cells, all singularities, revolting in the form of antibodies.” We are at war with ourselves; our bodies are at the state of conflict induced by their own homogeneity. Baudrillard’s idea, his theory of the war against the New World Order is a literary one, a fantastic poetic and hyperbolic science fiction narration about the biological interiorization of the place of war. VI. Conclusion I have shown that Baudrillard’s title is a universe of meanings in its own right, that by engaging it from an etymological and hermeneutic perspective we can see how he deconstructs the problem of war as a philosophical phenomenon. The author of *Simulacra and simulation* plays with the idiomatic expression “to take place” in order to present the Gulf war as an antithetic and aporetic non-event, a simulacrum produced by the media and politics. I also wanted to sketch various possible readings of Baudrillards title: as a displacement of meaning and sense (warrum/ guerre developed from bellum/ duellum), as a challenge to the way we think about war (it searches and finds place), as an intertextual, poetic and hyperbolic critique of its degeneration (from challenge, duel and reciprocal relation into a simulacrum of clean and beautiful surgical operation). Finally, I wanted to signal (in a hyperbolic way) that Baudrillards thinking about war is going into the domain of auto-immunology when he presents the world as the true place of war.

### Warming

#### Maintain the intelligence of mystery or continue the lock-step of the Promethean perspective of unlimited growth that terminates in atmospheric destruction. The desire to make everything signify taints science and causes it to eliminate the very possibility of an ozone as a mysterious zone.

Baudrillard 10. Jean Baudrillard, “Ventriloquous Evil” in Carnival and Cannibal, pg. 70

In the Promethean perspective of unlimited growth, there is not merely the desire to make everything function, to liberate everything, but also the desire to make everything signify.

Everything is to be brought under the aegis of meaning (and reality). In some cases we know that knowledge will forever escape us. But in the immense majority of cases we do not even know what has disappeared and has always already eluded us.

Now, science makes a systematic effort to eradicate this secret area, this ‘constellation of the mystery’ and to eliminate this demarcation line between the violable and the inviolable.

All that is concealed must be revealed; everything must be reducible to analysis. Hence the whole effort (particularly since the death of God, who restrained this attempt to break open the natural world) leads to an extension of the field of meaning (of knowledge, analysis, objectivity and reality).

Now, everything inclines us to think that this accumulation, this over-production, this proliferation of meaning constitutes (a little like the accumulation of greenhouse gases) a virtual threat for the species (and for the planet), since it is gradually destroying, through experimentation, that domain of the inviolable that serves us, as it were, as an ozone layer and protects us from the worst – from the lethal irradiation and obliteration of our symbolic space.

Shouldn’t we then, work precisely in the opposite direction, to extend the domain of the inviolable? To restrain the production of meaning the way they are trying to restrain the production of greenhouse gases, to reinforce that constellation of mystery and that intangible barrier that serves as a screen against the welter of information, interaction and universal exchange.

This countervailing work exists – it is the work of thought. Not the analytic work of an understanding of causes, of the dissection of the object-world, not the work of a critical, enlightened thought, but another form of understanding or intelligence, which is the intelligence of mystery.

### Will to Transparency

#### The generative point of violence today is the attempt to reduce all geopolitical events to information. Three impacts: (i) the proliferation of information thickens the fog of war, making conflicts more likely; (ii) the pursuit of information at all costs enacts a will to transparency that wages a global war on all singularities; and (iii) the reduction of all events to units of information that can be circulated within a closed system of exchange exhausts the possibility of meaning and value.

Artrip & Debrix 14 [Ryan E., Doctoral Student at Virginia Polytechnic, Francois, professor of political science at Virginia Polytechnic, "*The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation*," Baudrillard Studies Vol. 11 No. 2]

Such an expectation about the ontological “location” of the objects, subjects, stakes, and processes of today’s virulent war is generative of another expectation: that of the so-called self-evident violence of war and, by extension, of anything that socially and politically is said to matter for and about the demos (since virulent/virtual war is an all-encompassing, or all-swarming, “geopolitical reality”). In other words, what the so-called objects and subjects of today’s virtual/virulent war expect “their” war to represent is what ensures a disposition towards violence (a violence of “the global,” perhaps, as Baudrillard intimates) that may well be the result of attempts at securing a will to meaning, a will to make sense of things, and a will to be of political objects and subjects that today takes place or, rather, is intensified in virtual and digital modalities of representation and mediation. Part of the critical stake of this essay is to “locate” the violence/virulence of contemporary warfare not just in its empirical geopolitical “events,” but rather in the representational domain inside which those so-called events are expected to make sense, that is to say, in the always already preemptively belligerent and aggressive realm of representation (where the challenge is to produce and impose meaning at all costs). II. The Fog of War The claim about a certain quality of reality or even realism to new digital informational or communicative technologies has played a formative role in the global staging of several recent social and political conflicts. In both the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements of 2011, for example, digital technologies were celebrated for their real-time capacity and their subversive (democratic) potentials. The virtue of reporting “from the ground” of the event itself was championed as a matter of authenticity. There was a common sense that “truth” would finally be able to speak from its “real” source (the demos itself?). Not only is there a prevalent uncritical (even if sometimes well-intentioned) faith in new media and their digital technologies today, but, more importantly, there is often an impulse of liberation. Yet, this impulse is stifled by its faith in representation. The hope for openness, transparency, immediacy, and indeed liberation is so tethered to the real (and to the will to reality) that it ends up being negative or, at least, self-defeating. It often becomes evident that the so-called democratic uses of new media technologies—particularly in terms of reporting violent war events or conflicts of allegedly great concern/importance to the global demos—are, far from producing a clearer picture of an objective event, contributing to an ever thickening fog of meaning and truth. These new media technologies in and of themselves are not the object of our critique here. Moreover, we are not interested in “clearing the fog” of the real or war. Again, our critical intervention in this essay has more to do with deploying perspectives that may expose the violent dispositions of the contemporary mythos of war (and revealing the complicit role of the digitalized demos in the intensification of this mythos) than with attempting to clear the way for a different ethos about everyday reality, digitalized media, and the prevalence of warfare in political representations. In fact, part of our argument is also to suggest that the various cultural, political, and ethical mechanisms that seek to clear the fog of the real (and war) often end up reproducing it. The lure to criticize and debunk reality often requires that another real, another certainty, another dominant meaning, or indeed another democratic necessity be established through the same means and techniques, and media, that had to be challenged in the first place (thus, the simulacrum continues to proliferate its reality-effects). Behind the widespread “global” celebration of digitalized technologies for their newly found representational capabilities and accuracies, there lies the idea that, perhaps following a collective disgust with the dealings of Western media outlets as more or less uncritical props for the social/economic/ethical status quo in the past several decades, disseminated and “democratized” media technologies can de-mystify the world, lift its aura in a way, or perhaps “dig deeper” into the “truth” than, say, what the media networks involved in reporting news (including war news) in the 1980s and 1990’s (the famous CNN effect) ever could do. Because these technologies are far more in real-time than news networks, they are also generally thought to be able to evade oppressive/repressive censorship of particular corporate/class/state/ideology interests. But even more than escaping filters, digital representations today are often thought to be able to eliminate all of the ambiguities born of time. Thus, we (members of the public/demos) want to believe that mediation can be removed. And we want to subscribe to the view that any distortion occurring between an event and its perception/memory, or between the “actual” and its account, can evaporate. By reducing to the virtually infinitesimal or invisible the filter/screen between the image that represents and the real that is and, furthermore, by placing the productive responsibilities for the image into the hands of the user (literally into the digits), the digital establishes itself as something capable of demolishing the “malicious” surface of appearances to reveal a meaningful density of truth through the quasi-immediate interface. This is the dream of immediacy rediscovered and perhaps finally realized. At a most basic level of analysis, the risk involved in pointing to this desire for mediatized or digitalized immediacy would be to undermine the visual evidence of the violent/virulent occurrence of the omnipresence of war. For example, could we have deployed a critique of the US military’s and the US government’s use of torture in the War on Terror were it not for the seemingly unfiltered “shock and awe” of the Abu Ghraib photos? Again, from the point of view of the ethos of virtual/virulent war, the lure of digitalized immediacy has its uses (and, possibly, benefits, too, even for the demos). But, from the perspective of war’s mythos, it must be said that the “truth” about war and war operations cannot be fully revealed because representation, no matter how immediate or seemingly unmediated, always works by imposing some meaning onto things/events that are made visible/representable. Consider the role played by digital media in the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013. Within a matter of minutes of the blasts, even before the smoke could clear the scene, images and videos of terror taken from spectators’ mobile devices circulated through cyberspace. Everything was seemingly captured in that instant. The horror that drew so many people to capture images through their smart phones seems to speak on its own; it needs no commentary, no meaning to be given to it. In fact, it appears to have no mediation, no appropriation or narrativizing, no contextualizing either. That is precisely why smart phones are so apt at giving us such images, such representations, such “pure” meanings about things. Especially, such a horrifying violence, it is said, needs no commentary, no sense to be made of it. An immeasurable violence is done to the violated when one tries to make sense of the senseless (Agamben, 1999). Yet, as Baudrillard had already pointed out in his remarks on the Gulf War, “everything which is turned into information becomes the object of endless speculation, the site of total uncertainty. We are left with the symptomatic reading on our screens of the effects of the war, or the effects of discourse about the war, or completely speculative strategic evaluations” (Baudrillard, 1995: 41). In their digital representation, images of war and images of terror are dissolved into their own information. Information (what the image/event wants to tell us, to reveal, allegedly) already infiltrates the tweeted or texted image/scene (of horror, of war) with an urgency of signification and meaning. Images of horror cannot make sense, perhaps must not be made sense of, and yet they somehow beg for meaning, for circulation, or for propagation, in the hope that they may reveal something to someone. Thus, the digitalized mediation of the image, even in its instantaneity, still takes place. Images—or whatever event might have been “caught”—must succumb to a will to information, to a will to meaning, even if it is falsely affirmed that what is digitally rendered needs no commentary. Put differently, the image levels the event it represents by entering into a mass/global indifferent exchange, into a virulent global (representational) circulation that murders singularity or, indeed, the moment of trauma (on this question of the erasure of trauma, see Debrix, 2008: 4-5; Edkins, 2003: 37-38). The enigmatic singularity of the event—which, for Baudrillard, was once a precondition for any sort of historical transition—gives way to an endlessness of representation, whether such representation appears to have a clear ethical or political purpose/signification or not. It is in this always operative tendency of rendered appearances to yield meaning (even if their meaning is to be information-worthy), not in the image or event itself, that we situate the conditions of possibility and reproducibility for the ever-thickening representational fog and for the violence/virulence of images, or better yet, of appearances. To make war or, as the case may be, the terror event mean something—even in some of the most immediate reactions often designed to evoke injustice or, indeed, incomprehension—is the generative point of violence, the source of representation as a virulent/virtual code and mode of signification. Baudrillard writes, “Everywhere one seeks to produce meaning, to make the world signify, to render it visible.” He adds, “We are not, however, in danger of lacking meaning; […] we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us” (Baudrillard, 1988: 63). Indeed, the Western world—increasingly, the global—has found itself with a proliferation of meanings and significations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

It is as if the so-called crisis of nihilism (thought to be characteristic of much critique and philosophical suspicion throughout the 20th century) later on produced something of the opposite order. The mass violence of the 20th century inaugurated not a complete void of despair or meaninglessness, but instead a flood of meaning, if not an overproduction of it. Baudrillard refers to this frantic explosion of meaning/signification as “a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production […]” (Baudrillard, 1983: 7). Here, Baudrillard describes a mode of production of a different kind, not motivated by class interests or exploitation of value, but by an automated, perhaps viral, abreaction to the empty core or disenchantment of things and the world: that is to say, the degree to which things seem to lack a singular center of gravity or have lost a justifiable reference to the real world, and yet each thing that “matters” is also an attempt to get at reality as a question of accumulation (of meaning), circulation (of signs), and filling up of all interstitial spaces of communication and value. The end result is an over-abundance of signs and images of reality, something that culminates in what Baudrillard calls hyperreality—things appear more real than reality itself. The story that needs to be told is thus not about the undoubtedly deplorable “truth” or fact of explosive and warlike violence, but about a violence of another sort. In the radical digital transparency of the global scene, we (members of the demos) often have full or direct exposure to explosivity, as we saw above with the image of terror. But what still needs to be thought and problematized is implosivity or what may be called implosive violence. Implosive violence is a violence for which we do not, and perhaps will never, have much of a language (Rancière, 2007: 123). Although, not having a language for it or, rather, as we saw above, seeking to find a language to talk about it and, perhaps, to make sense of it is still sought after. This is, perhaps, what digital pictures of war/terror violence seek to capture or want to force through. Implosive violence, often digitally rendered these days, is in close contact with media technologies and representational devices and techniques because it seeks representation and meaning. This is why implosive violence insists on calling in wars (against terror, for example) and on mobilizing war machines (against terrorist others, against vague enemy figures), but wars and war machines that no longer have—to the extent that they ever had—a clearly identifiable object and subject, or a clear mission/purpose. As such, this implosive violence and its wars (the new Western/global way of war, perhaps) must remain uncertain, unclear, foggy, inwardly driven, representational, and indeed virulent. They must remain uncertain and confused even as they are digitally operative and desperately capture events/images to give the impression that meanings/significations can and will be found. Yet, as we saw above, it is not meanings exactly that must be found, but information and the endless guarantee of its immediate circulation. As information occupies the empty place of meaning, certainty, or truth, images must be instantaneously turned into appearances that search for meanings that will never be discovered because, instead, a proliferation of information-worthy facts and beliefs will take over (perhaps this is what US fake pundit and comedian Stephen Colbert famously referred to as “truthiness”). Or, as Baudrillard puts it, “free from its former enemies, humanity now has to create enemies from within, which in fact produces a wide variety of inhuman metastases” (Baudrillard, 2003). Thus, this implosive violence is destined to be a global violence since it "is the product of a system that tracks down any form of negativity and singularity, including of course death as the ultimate form of singularity. […] It is a violence that, in a sense, puts an end to violence itself and strives to establish a world where anything related to the natural must disappear […] Better than a global violence, we should call it a global virulence. This form of violence is indeed viral. It moves by contagion, produces by chain reaction, and little by little it destroys our immune systems and our capacities to resist" (2003; our italics).

# Solvency/Alternatives

### Fatal Strategies

#### **The only strategy left is the fatal strategy – to be more cynical than cynical in an age that is more real than real. We advocate for the strategy of the object, pursuing the logic internal to systems of domination until they collapse under their own reversibility. We are the silent majority, the Zoom bombers waiting inside the digital labyrinth.**

Pettman 8 (Dominic, University Professor of Media and New Humanities at The New School, “A Belated Invitation to the Orgy” Introduction to Jean Baudrillard’s *Fatal Strategies,* Semiotext(e) pp. 7–22)

“Too bad. Were in paradise.” —Jean Baudrillard WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED the writings of Jean Baudrillard, it felt as if I had discovered the ideal life-coach for an age in which life made very little sense. His various works appeared as an almost seamless soliloquy, distributed over, and parceled into, a series of books that functioned more as chapters in an overarching compendium, than discrete texts of their own. To step midway into Baudrillard’s stream-of-consciousness, was to treat his compulsively calm commentary on the present as an illuminating guide for the perplexed. Indeed, few other thinkers could, to my mind, account for the mystifying “events” that were claiming the attention of the world at large at the time: Michael Jackson’s unfolding follies, baroque conspiracy theories, newsless news reports, wars staged for prime-time audiences, and pseudoscandals which seemed to stimulate debate in direct inverse ratio to the changes they inspired. To come of age in the late 1980s and early 1990s was to find oneself in a sociopolitical echo chamber, robbed even of the false promise of revolution, or compensatory hope of utopia. For Baudrillard had insisted that this was indeed utopia: this lurching tableaux of strip malls, Sony Walkman-cocooned joggers, terrorist themed fashion shows, designer painkillers, and poll results, announced with obscene confidence into hushed clinical waiting rooms. “The crisis of achieved utopia,” is one of the many names Baudrillard christened the postmodern world, in which we were now obliged to endure the consequences of getting what we had collectively asked for. (The ultra-absorbent utility of Baudrillard’s “we,” however, is something that his critics have rightly questioned.) The orgy was over. Long live the orgy!

Revisiting Fatal Strategies fifteen years after the initial encounter, and twenty-five years after it was first published in France, I still have the sense that I am being introduced to an unclouded and fearless perspective, intent on breaking the rules of polite discourse by pointing out the strings, wires, smoke, and mirrors that many of us have been trained not to notice. Baudrillard’s words resonate with those troubled, inchoate intuitions about the sinister mechanics of the system, bypassing the rational methods and assumptions of his peers. (After all, Baudrillard was a sociologist who had little patience with sociology.) The temptation is to simplify the insights contained in his own countersystem, and interpret the hyperreal condition as a political conspiracy or localizable menace, just as the Wachowski brothers did in their naive homage to the great man, The Matrix. (As Baudrillard eventually pointed out, The Matrix is the kind of film the Matrix itself would have made about the Matrix.) Rescuing Baudrillard’s ideas from caricature thus becomes a challenging and important task, now that he is no longer with us.

One of Baudrillard’s final appearances in the US was at the New School in New York, to deliver a paper entitled simply “Cannibal/ Carnival. A line of people extended out onto 12th Street and down Sixth Avenue an hour before the lecture was scheduled to begin. Those walking by were under the impression a rock concert was imminent, as the auditorium, and then the overflow room, filled to capacity, forcing disappointed punters of all ages to be turned away. Clearly Baudrillard’s star had not dimmed, in spite of the ongoing disdain sanctioned by fickle academic fashions. For while part of this turnout could be explained by a morbid curiosity to see the last of the living postmodern giants, there was also a genuine desire to hear his pronouncements on the current “situation.”

But what does it mean to read Baudrillard not only after the orgy, but after Baudrillard himself—now that his words have sadly ceased midstream?1 What kind of legacy has he left those who would enter the remarkably comprehensive and coherent universe of his ideas? Well, perhaps the most significant gift he has bequeathed his readers is precisely that: a durable map of hyperreality on the same 1:1 scale as Borges’s map of the empire. Where hyperreality exactly covers the territory of the real, Baudrillard’s oeuvre exactly covers the deterritorialized cartography of the hyperreal. In doing so, his books function as sophisticated tools for navigating an age which has leap-frogged alienation to arrive at pure simulation.

What’s more (and this might seem a strange claim at face value), Baudrillard has given us hope. Clearly no one could write with such a poisonous pen unless it was filled with the bile of his own disillusionments and disappointments. To call him a lapsed romantic is much too crude and misleading. However, there is an aestheticism at work in his ideas—a belief in the potential of changing course, “if only for the sake of change,” that appeals to those cliche-phobic people who have managed to cut their own beautiful souls like an umbilical cord. For instance, in reference to wholly pessimistic readings of his statement that we are living post festum, Baudrillard reminds us that a woman is whispering into the man’s ear, “what are you doing after the orgy?” It is a potential rendezvous, an occasion to look forward to, and build toward: a slight shift in perspective, which creates a more promising view of the orgy itself. And so, by extending the poetic praxis of the Situationists into his own complex vision of the enemy (no longer life-draining Capital, but the biopolitical logic of the code), we find plenty of room to breathe inside those same concepts which impatient and obtuse readers simply dismiss as a litany of negative epiphanies.

Another great gift from Baudrillard is his style, which is nothing if not seductive. His ideas are complex, but fit together perfectly, like a particularly fiendish Chinese box. And like other great thinkers, he creates his own vocabulary—often counterintuitive— where “crisis” stands diametrically opposed to “catastrophe,” “ceremony” to “spectacle,” and “domination” to “hegemony.” When reading several titles in a row, his ideas can seem terribly repetitive. And yet, his phrasing is so exquisite, his examples so compelling, his rhetoric so uncompromising, that the diligent reader may feel obliged to take notes by simply transcribing page for page. (Indeed, were one to actually take the time to do so, then the strength of the skeleton supporting the dance comes into sharper relief.)

No work was more important to Baudrillard himself than Fatal Strategies, and it is indeed one of the best places to start for an overview of his thought. Here in these pages we find a holographic style; for the entire vision is contained in each fragment. From whichever unit one might choose to approach it—the sentence, the paragraph, the chapter, or the entire book—a crystallized sense of the argument shines through. What is more, there is a fugue-like persistence at work between the pages: a Pachelbel’s Canon of Genteel Disgust. Despite using academic language, and assuming some familiarity with the history of ideas, this book is not at all obscure or precious or esoteric. The author proceeds with the confidence of someone who has much to say, and wants others to understand it. To this end, he creates a formidably coherent textual universe; totalizing, despite—or due to—its reliance on paradox.

Along with Symbolic Exchange and Death, Fatal Strategies is one of Baudrillard’s most emphatic and comprehensive statements.2 Within these pages we are not only introduced to the key motifs developed in this earlier book, during his post-Marxist rehab— reversibility, value, impossible exchange, the object, transparency, virtuality, chance, etc.—but we are also witness to the underlying force (destiny/evil) which holds them together in the same constellation. Having previously noted that symbolic exchange is “a functioning principle that is sovereignly external and antagonistic to our economic ‘reality principle’” (SED, 120), Baudrillard goes on to develop the ecstatic challenge of the “counter-gift” to the restricted economy. Namely, that this anthropological specter cannot be assimilated without damage to the commodity system, based as it is on utility, (re)production, exchange value, and profit. As a kind of “accursed share,” the symbolic embodies the fatal strategy of achieving liberation through “the deepening of negative conditions” (223). In other words, the socio-cybernetic code can successfully absorb everything except a homeopathic dose of its own logic of exclusion. Thus, the violence of the symbolic—the obligation to reciprocate on levels deeper than objects tethered to exchange value—haunts the diminished contemporary world in the way kryptonite haunts Superman. The social law would have us believe that time is linear, and that gifts are unilateral. However, a more profound law invites the cyclical and the reversible to reenter the frame from which they had been rudely excluded.

Reversibility, for instance, denotes the limit point in which all alternative values spasm into their opposite: such as life and death, good and evil, chance and fate, male and female, human and inhuman, etc. As such, reversibility can also be considered a strategy emerging from within any given arrangement: the immanent potential for subversion or metamorphosis. At the general level of forms, and according the deeper laws of exchange mandated by the symbolic, such binary oppositions do not progress in a linear fashion, according to the dialectics of human history. Rather, they push each other to the outer limits, the object barrier, of their own moral values. No matter how we moderns strive to charge life with the positive, and death with the negative, there is “a kind of universal collusiveness of inseparable forms” (Pass 16-17) that makes a mockery of our digital desire to sort the quick from the dead. As such, the ideal Kantian subject is simply not qualified to parse a world plagued by third order simulation technologies. How can one argue rationally against “the malicious curvature that puts an end to the horizon of meaning” (45)? One can’t. How can one definitively decode a code based on signifiers sans signifieds? One cannot. Thus every system is pregnant with the possibility that it will “overflow its own reality principle and ... be refracted in another logic” (211).

Reality itself, then, is a victim of what Baudrillard would later call “the perfect crime” (in which perfection itself—or at least the attempt to achieve perfection—is the criminal). The hyperreal is not an illusion. It is not a false world of Platonic cave shadows, from which one could escape. It is the more real than real. Reality, as experienced in the different classical times preceding postmodernism, was indexed against illusion, dreams, art, magic. Today, reality has been swallowed up and disappears in its own hyperbole, just as sex disappears in porn, and events in the news. The traditional division between culture and nature no longer holds in the hyperreal, since both have been so thoroughly mediated. Virtual reality is thus both an oxymoron and a tautology at the same time. For Baudrillard, this calls for a “pataphysical” perspective: a concept taken from the proto-Surrealist Alfred Jarry, whose writings promoted the “science of imaginary solutions”: a counterintuitive, ametaphysical, rendering of ruses, rules, predestinations, and interconnections. In a pataphysical climate, there is no foundation to distinguish between the cosmic and the political, the real or imagined, so that each infects the other in unprecedented ways.

Philosophizing with a Spanner

Fatal Strategies can therefore be read as a perverse manual of conduct, pointing out common temptations and traps to avoid. I shall leave the ever-green, ever-vexed question of the “lived” or practical application of theory aside, and rather note that Baudrillard’s playbook initially disorients and then liberates, as it introduces the reader to a procession of ideas, blasphemous to both the secular priests of high reason and the neoromantic revolutionaries of the various “isms” of our time.

Inscribed within the title is a paradox and a pun. The paradox involves the nature of the conjunction, for as Baudrillard himself asks explicitly in the concluding pages, “how could there be fatality if there is strategy?” By what “sarcastic variable” could the strategic be figured as a subspecies of fate, or vice versa? Herein lies the enigma that powers not only this book, but Baudrillard’s entire wager of believing “for a single instant the hypothesis that there is a fatal and enigmatic bias in the order of things.” To do so is to throw into question all the fixed cultural algorithms the culture has relied upon to sort “right” from “wrong,” and distribute guilt or blame where necessary: “We have abolished the real world,” wrote Nietzsche, “what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? ... But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world! ”3 (Nietzsche cast a long and cooling shadow over Baudrillard’s work.)4 The pun embedded in the title, on the other hand, concerns the duel use of “fatal,” meaning primarily fate-as destiny, but also the symbolically lethal forces described in his earlier works: Freud’s death-drive detourned toward objects and forms, rather than to biographical beings.

Baudrillard dismisses current critical radicality as “useless.” Certainly it takes courage to claim one’s own system as the antidote to banality and denounce dialectics as obsolete. But it isn’t just a flippant statement on his part. The multipolar polemic of Fatal Strategies begins by noting that, “Things have found a way of avoiding a dialectics of meaning that was beginning to bore them.” In other words, the rhetorical and/or revolutionary strategy of opposition is now corrupt and paralyzed, so that it has become necessary—in an age of rampant indeterminism—to deepen negative conditions until they flip, according to the cultural-cosmic principles or reversibility detailed throughout. (A point pushed by Zizek a decade or so later.) Fatal strategies themselves differ from other such techniques, such as Machiavelli’s or Sun Tzu’s, in that they are not about securing the sovereignty or prosperity of the subject, but are deployed by forces enigmatic to us: evil genies, sly objects, ironic events, and spanners in the works which escape the centripetal will and best laid plan’s of the individual.

We are thus witness to “a dizzying over multiplication of formal qualities.” All the elements of our world—science, politics, fashion, love—have become prey to a flabby hyperdeterminacy (which is equivalent to indeterminacy). This in turn leads to “the frenzy to explain everything, attribute everything, footnote everything.” Fatal strategies, in contrast, are those phenomena that slip away from the harsh light of interrogation, the presumption of explanation, and the tyranny of causality. Meanwhile, human activity continues to unfold in a kind of endless extra time, in which the results are meaningless, because no one can remember what they are playing for. “The worst thing,” writes Baudrillard, “is that there is no Promethean challenge involved here, no excess of passion or pride. It simply seems that the species has crossed some specific, mysterious point, from which it is impossible to retreat, decelerate or slow down.” To put it somewhat differently, the audience collectively feels de trop, yet stubbornly refuses to leave after the credits have rolled.

Going back is certainly not an option. Neither is allowing things to continue in their default trajectory. One difficult question is the degree to which the eponymous fatal strategies belong to “us” humans (potentially at least), and to what extent we are merely caught in their logic. Take the example of terrorism, which had a different tenor during the time of composition (the most visible form being left-wing extremism such as the Red Brigade), but nevertheless continues to have the same structural relationship to the media, the masses, and the State. Baudrillard argues that to take a hostage is to wrench someone from their own fate, so that they are suspended—“neither dead nor alive.” From a “fatal” perspective, we are all hostages, stripped of our symbolic connection to death and destiny by the infantile demand for security. In a passage which echoes uncannily through the halls of the Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, Baudrillard asks: “what kind of State would be capable of dissuading and annihilating all terrorism in the bud? It would have to arm itself with such terrorism and generalize terror on every level. If this is the price of security, is everybody deep down dreaming of this?”5

Terrorism is not something Baudrillard advocates on an individual, pragmatic level. He is certainly not asking his readers to hijack planes. And yet he understands the symbolic and semiotic conditions which summoned it into existence. When the drama of alienation gives way to the melodrama of terrorism, Baudrillard is bold enough to point out the silver lining. “It is worse than the one that replaces it, but at least it liberates us from liberal nostalgia and the ruses of history.”

Fatal strategies are beyond human control, since they seem to be woven into the quantum fabric of the cosmos. That mysterious would-be holistic entity known as “the world,” will—it seems—continue to use its own diabolical techniques to thwart human hubris and lack of imagination (which may or may not amount to the same thing). For instance, the object may only pretend to obey the laws of physics, “because it gives so much pleasure to the observer.” Some scientists would probably throw the book across the room at such a suggestion. The silent majority, however, may read on intrigued.

On the level of the individual then, fatal strategies are secret social tendencies or cosmic “objective” ironies which can provide a model for how to approach certain situations. One can, for instance, refuse to treat seduction as a narcissistic game of capture and control (as Don Juan might), and rather consider it as a way to “soak pleasure from this charming and absurd difference that nature has put between the sexes.” How successful one might be in replacing the obscene, demanding (and intrinsically alienating) discourse of love with the subtle, challenging (and inherently inclusive) challenge of seduction, is no means certain, given the cultural pressures set up against it. No doubt the stakes are against such an endeavor, given that the free-floating “ecological libido” of modern times represents “a product specific to our epoch, spread out everywhere in homeopathic and homeostatic doses .... [which] can be drained, diverted, magnetized from one niche to another, according to the flow. It corresponds ideally to an order of manipulation.” And yet, Baudrillard suggests, merely registering a willingness to change the rules of erotic engagement, to tinker with the semiotic code, and alter the assumptions they rep resent, has the potential to transform human intimacy beyond the unthinking form of personal blackmail that it has largely become.

On the level of the masses, it matters little what any given individual seeks to achieve in terms of strategic behavior. Taken collectively, the masses are themselves a transpolitical condition, and thus a stronger medium than all the media. That is to say, they comprise a kind of headless body, whose radical passivity absorbs all attempts at manipulation from above through gestalt apathy, thus reversing the flow of power, which traditionally relies on at least a modicum of civic consciousness. Woven throughout such a scandalous view of the populace, however, is a challenge, should we decide to read it along a certain grain. The text notes: Publicity, abstract, abject circulation of Eurodollars, stock prices, immorality of fashion cycles, useless technologies of prestige, electoral parades, arms escalation, all this is not only the historical sign of the domination of capital, but the most decisive proof of a fact more important than capital itself: no social project worthy of the name has ever really existed, that in the end no group has ever really conceived itself as social, that is to say in solidarity with its own values and coherent in its collective project, in short, there has never been even the shadow nor the embryo of a responsible collective subject, nor even the possibility of an objective of this kind. (101-102)

What may sound like a categorical dismissal of politics, anthropology, history—in fact, the entire set of Enlightenment trading cards—can be, from a different angle, considered a starting point for an unprecedented rethinking of what it means to exist as a social being without a society of any traditional description. Indeed, the important question of what it means to belong, in an age which has pushed far beyond alienation, has been taken up by contemporary Continental political philosophers, often via the trope of the “multitude.” Thinking through the possibility of a “community-of-those-who-have-nothing-in-common”—along with the conditions which block this possibility—-is a supremely challenging task. Baudrillard’s ideas will have to be reread in the light of this seemingly endless “state of exception” (a phrase mentioned more than once in Fatal Strategies, and deployed most recently by Giorgio Agamben).

The Last Laugh

“This revolution will not be symbolic, dazzling, and subjective, but obscure and ironic. It won’t be dialectical, it will be fatal.” —Jean Baudrillard

Half-way through Fatal Strategies, the author insists: “This is not ...a cynical philosophical view, but an objective view of societies, and possibly of all systems of thought. The energy itself is cynical and immoral.” In other words: “You must be cynical or perish.” The choice between cynicism or death is not one peddlers of emo music or “the new sincerity” care to contemplate these days.

However, the mistake is to think of this stance as inimical to what Bataille called “the practice of joy before death.” Indeed, Baudrillard’s entire project can be glimpsed in his firm belief that “there is perhaps another, more joyous way of seeing things, and of finally substituting for eternally critical theory an ironic theory” (120). The task is thus to be more cynical than cynical, in a global culture which is more real than real. Hence his habit of promoting ideas, “if only for the sake of change”: a noble attempt, in an age of simulated novelty and profound stagnation; where the Eternal Return has been replaced by the Eternal Rerun. But if radical pessimism has the latent ability to “save us,” is there not a subtext of salvation running through Baudrillard’s narrative? And how does this messianic trope square with his impatience toward the various cargo cults (evangelism, capitalism, etc.) attempting to thaw the cryogenically frozen body of history?6

Indeed, it seems at times that this author cannot shake off the soixante-huitard advocation of action: “We need to coalesce all the centrifugal forces to escape from this force of inertia” (125). Then again, such words may represent merely a description of our dilemma, in the free indirect mode. Were Baudrillard still here to put us straight on this question, it would be surprising to hear an unambiguous answer, for that would be to smother the fatal force of its challenge. After all, the function of polite (i.e., neutralized) communication is transparency—something Baudrillard considered the most sterile form of evil yet concocted. “[Sjynthesis is a soft solution; dialectics a nostalgic one. The only radical and modern answer: potentiate what is new, original, unexpected ...”

Baudrillard’s list of targets includes psychoanalysis, moralism, “America,” second-wave feminism, pornography, cloning, false radicality... even yoga! In their stead, he seeks to locate a genuine revolution, on a scale or front that we— as the species-centric being par excellence—have not anticipated. Namely, the “insurrection of the object,” which he describes as “a silent revolution, but the only one left now.” The fate of the object is one strategy which, according to this book, has long languished unclaimed in the Lost & Found office of radical ideas; at least until now. And for this reason alone, it is a useful expansion of agency beyond the rather self-serving principles of the human subject. “Only the subject desires; only the object seduces” (141).7

Consistent to the end—and even in the last years of his life— Baudrillard shruggingly acknowledged the possibility of “a confrontation that is no longer precisely political but metaphysical and symbolic in the strong sense.” As the West continues to both carnivalize and cannibalize itself under the self-appointed mandate of an endless and abstract “war on terror,” the oppressed, exploited and colonized suffer from “a kind of enormous Stockholm syndrome,” parroting the values of those who hold them hostage, both economically and ethically. And yet, just as he did a couple of decades earlier in Fatal Strategies, the great pataphysician sees an ongoing “justice in reversibility.”8

The strategies Baudrillard documented so well, in an attempt to marshal them into some kind of beneficial pattern, for the sake of a new and vital currency, continue to pulse today without their master of ceremonies. Thankfully we can confidently assume that worldly ruses and cosmic twists are still in store. Baudrillard was many things to many people: a prophet of the present, a writer of science fiction, the most quotable thinker since Nietzsche, an alchemist who managed to leach every last drop of sentimentality out of nostalgia, the original Ronin of critical theory, and a man who talked incessantly about the power of silence. The crystalline, high-altitude pleasure of reading this particular book is the clarity of being liberated from banal hope, and ushered toward a more fatal kind of orientation toward the future. Recognizing and appreciating the difference between a fatal strategy, and common-or-garden fatalism, is the challenge that Baudrillard himself has left us.

#### Only a fatal strategy of hyper-conformity and indifference can resist the neo-liberalization of the university as a cite of productive education. Our subtle mimicry of the system renders the world more mysterious and enigmatic, avoiding information saturation and making debate possible again.

Kline 16. Kip Kline, professor of education at Lewis University, *Baudrillard, Youth, and American Film: Fatal Theory and Education*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016, 109-17

Policies and discourse in schools and the general rhetoric around education in the United States suggest that our society tends to value children and adolescents primarily for their economic potential. In itself, this amounts to a kind of violence toward young people. Further, as the previous chapters have argued, films about teenagers often feed on adult anxieties and moral panics about youth and, in turn, they reinforce the idea that youth need to be controlled and should be pushed into conformity. Movies in the third and fourth order of simulacra do this with hyperreal images, convincing simulations of youth as reckless and out-of- control, and Virtuality (e.g., found footage style cinematography). Films of the third and fourth order featuring teen characters have a relationship of reinforcement with the rhetoric and policies that result in violence toward young people and deepen the conflation of the systems of schooling and economics. Critical education scholars, critical pedagogues, and others are committed to highlighting and opposing the rhetorical violence and the more draconian school policies to which young people are subjected in schools. They also provide convincing arguments that demonstrate the ways in which the system operates in the service of capital. However, the responses to these phenomena that their work offers are, from a Baudrillardian view, inefficacious since they are rooted in an outmoded Marxist theory and lean on a commitment to emancipation and liberation through pedagogy. Here I argue, the critical education work that is rooted in the traditions of Marxism and critical theory, though it has been indispensable in terms of locating and critiquing violent discourse and practice with regard to education and youth, also promotes a cruel form of hope in educational institutions as central figures in the reversal of the lamentable current systemic trends. It argues that critical theory and pedagogy provide hope that systems, in particular, education, can be revolutionized. Critical theorists are right to see mainstream schooling as a generator of the affective liquidity leveraging neo-liberalism, but their suggestions for resistance and revolution are less than promising. Modernist projects of critical theory and pedagogy have proven to be mirages. In their place, I argue for a more viable, postmodern hope in the form of fatal theory, fatal strategies, and radical thought. These related ideas from the later portion of Baudrillard’s corpus are applied here to the troublesome discourse about youth that informs the systems in which they move, especially education, which again, is increasingly subservient to other systems (e.g., political, economic). To begin, it should be noted that referring to Baudrillardian concepts as contributing to forms of postmodern hope is a bit precarious given his rejection of the postmodern. Below I discuss, in some detail, Baudrillard’s complex relationship with postmodernity. I also specifically articulate why I have chosen to refer to my application of fatal theory and radical thought to youth and education as an effort toward postmodern hope. Before the full discussion of fatal theory in light of education and youth, I analyze the ways in which certain forms of resistance (which are often taken up by critical theorists in education) are inefficacious in the current state of the world, in late capitalism. Baudrillard’s ideas are central to that argument. Beyond this, I argue that there are two growing and particular kinds of critique in the age of ubiquitous social media that also fail to hit their mark. Snide remarks or “snark” as a reaction to offensive or anti-progressive rhetoric and policy has become an increasingly popular means of garnering online attention through displays of cleverness. Snark is, however, often associated with satire, which can be understood as having affiliation with fatal strategies. So, there is a complicated relationship between Baudrillard’s fatal theory and snark. I explore this relationship below and ultimately argue that snark falls into the category of a form of resistance or critique that gets absorbed into the code. Incredulity is another reaction by leftists and those associated with critical theory to right-wing bigotry, ignorance, and oppression. Again, examples of such reactions are not difficult to locate in social media. It has been an outlet for an accruing amount of ostensive shock, astonishment, and disbelief by progressives in the face of various expressions of anti-progressivism. Like snark, incredulity seems to be a preferred tool for responding to political and social rhetoric to which one is averse. And also like snark, the inherent critique in incredulous reactions is impotent in the late capitalist code. To be clear, when it comes to critical pedagogues and critical theorists with interests in youth and education, it is not the content of their concerns that I find wanting. This is also the case, as noted earlier, with regard to critical media literacy. Critical pedagogy, in general, and critical media literacy, specifically, locate and critique the same systemic violence as a Baudrillardian fatal theory of youth and education. Violent discourse and policies toward young people and their connection to institutions like schools is of deep concern to both critical and fatal theorists. But Baudrillard’s fatal theory focuses more on the level of form than critical theory. And, ultimately, radical thought provides possibilities for resistance that avoid being subsumed by the late capitalist code whereas, the responses of critical theory and critical pedagogy are vulnerable to being incorporated into the code and repackaged as a set of signs to be consumed. Fatal theory/strategies and radical thought are challenging notions within Baudrillard’s corpus and the intent in this chapter is to preserve their provocativeness in my analysis and application to matters of youth and education. In so doing, it is important to admit that this application work will not result in any policy or practice suggestions. Such is not the outcome of the pursuit of fatal strategies and its accompanying radical thought. Rather, their aim is well beyond the level of policy as they seek to push on the negative conditions of the system until it reverses course. Radical thought can be accompanied by what Baudrillard terms “theory fiction” as a way of rendering the world enigmatic, as a means of staying at the margins in order to anticipate the world and its events that he claimed critical thought was lagging behind. 1 Relevant systems with respect to youth and education are already given over to the late capitalist code. The system of schooling, for example, is constantly subject to externally imposed policy changes at both the macro and micro levels. Anecdotes abound in local American schools regarding the rapidity with which new programs are implemented, ostensibly in order to address a wide range of problems including English language learners, the so-called achievement gap, bullying, perceived deficiencies in “social-emotional learning,” childhood obesity. While some of these issues seem to have clear educational components, all of the programs that schools adopt in order to address them fall under the category of what David Labaree has called “the educationalization of social problems.”2 Baudrillard’s radical thought and fatal theory, when translated into this context of the system of schooling in the United States, reject the notion that making headway with these social issues involves the constant adoption of new, “better” programs, replacing last year’s model for ameliorating the achievement gap or creating healthier school lunches with a new “research based” approach. Ultimately the radical thought and postmodern hope that I am arguing for here dismisses altogether the educationalizing of social issues, though not out of insouciance. Rather, the fatal theorist in education understands that the only available options are radical thought and theory fiction, which do offer the hope of potentially flipping the very conditions that allow for the current functioning of the late capitalist system. Baudrillard’s work has been misread as nihilistic. As we saw above, Kellner is convinced of its unequivocal pessimism. "Baudrillard’s nihi- lism is without joy, without energy, without hope for a better future.”3 But Baudrillard himself insisted that fatal theory and radical thought are, indeed, hopeful. ”[O]ne must fight all charges of irresponsibility, nihilism or despair. Radical thought is never depressive. On this point there is a total misunderstanding.”4 In the context of education, there is some amount of hope already in disabusing ourselves of the notion that dialec- tical critique has efficacy within the late capitalist code. But also, hope with regard to youth and education might lie in taking the opposite tack of the critical theorists who react with incredulity to the system working as it is designed to work. The fatal theorist, by contrast, seeks to destabilize through hyperconformity to the system’s expectations. To choose the path of fatal theory and postmodern hope, though, will mean abandoning our projects, even our favored progressive ones, of educationalizing of social problems. As mentioned above, connecting Baudrillard with the notion of "post- modern hope” requires explanation. His connection with postmodemity is complex. His critics, namely Kellner, understood him as unequivocally postmodernist. For those critics, this label meant that he was nihilistic, that he in some sense celebrated the world he was describing. Kellner, who was clearly no admirer of Baudrillard’s centralization of the semiot- ic, went so far as to call him a “sign-fetishist.”5 But Mike Gane and others have demonstrated clearly that Kellner had misread Baudrillard. Indeed, Baudrillard specifically resisted the label “postmodernist.” He once said, "I have nothing to do with postmodernism.”6 On Gane’s reading, it is ironic that during the 19805, the rise of the postmodern counter-move- ment targeted Baudrillard as “the high priest of postmodernism” since Baudrillard’s "position is one of great hostility to the whole phenome- non.”7 But Gane later admitted that Baudrillard’s rejection of the post- modern label was done "not entirely consistently, since occasionally he has been willing to play with the opposition between the modern and the postmodern.”8 It should be noted that Gane’s admission was not a change of position on his reading of Baudrillard, rather, in the time be- tween the two assertions, Baudrillard had made new statements regard- ing modernity/postmodernity. Throughout the late 19805 and well into the 19905, Gane and Kellner argued over Baudrillard’s relationship with postmodernity. Gane, on the one side, asserted that Baudrillard’s project was to combat the postmod- ern (as is the case in Rex Butler’s claim that Baudrillard’s work is "in' defence of the real”).9 Kellner, on the other, alleged Cane was wrong and that Baudrillard’s project was surely “connected in intricate ways to the problematic of the postmodern.” 10 For his part, Gane was convinced that Kellner had "ulterior objectives” in his reading of Baudrillard. “Kellner has attempted a critique of Baudrillard that first sets up the modernity- postmodernity model and then claims that Baudrillard underestimates the potential for a Marxist appraisal of this shift and resistance to it," according to Gane, who, then went on to critique Kellner’s position saying, “The problem with this line of reading Baudrillard is that it launches the critique too soon at the wrong object: a critique of a phantom based on a crude and dogmatic appeal to a theory of capitalism and of revolutionary mass action and social transformation.” Gane eventually argued that, in the end, Baudrillard’s later writing seems to settle the issue since he neglects to use the term postmodern much and rarely employs the concept. That is, “it does not map on to either the third or fourth order simulacra categories,” and, beyond this, "By locating the emergence of the term in Baudrillard’s writing it does look as if its func- tion has been to specify one of the routes not to take within fourth order culture” (emphasis mine).12 Although I am much more sympathetic to Gane’s reading of Baudril- lard than Kellner’s, as has been clear throughout, here I am using the phrase “postmodern hope” to describe the result of replacing critical theory with fatal theory and radical thought in the efforts to resist violent rhetoric and policy regarding youth and education. I use the term postmodern with some amount of trepidation though, in the end, I find it necessary. Not only did Baudrillard reject it as a label, it also is a danger- ous word since it elicits rabid reactions from some who take issue with a broad set of arguments filed under postmodernism. It can also, for the same or similar reasons, trigger outright dismissal of any arguments that follow when it is mentioned. I am also well aware, on the other hand, that the term postmodernism can attract too quick and too eager agreement for those whom I would call celebratory postmodernists, who I take to be the inverse of the dismissive lot previously mentioned. In this case the content of the arguments that follow are less important than the moniker that precedes them. Celebratory postmodernists could also refer to those who find particular elements of the break with modernity to be welcome (e.g., the loss of the real, the onset of nihilism) developments. I do not count myself among this group; on the contrary, and it is the group into which Kellner mistakenly places Baudrillard. Because of these complica- tions around postmodernism, I want to be very clear about my use of the term. First, I am using postmodern to generally classify my descriptive arguments about the world. The primary animating ideas surrounding these arguments are taken from Baudrillard—the third (and eventually fourth) order of simulacra, simulations, and hyperreality, or, the loss of the real. Again, for Baudrillard, the loss of the real was a descriptive critique and his entire project was to defend the real through a description of a world in which the semiotic has colonized the symbolic, a world in which the trajectory of communications technology has substituted virtual non-communication for proximal human interaction, and the deluge of signs without referents—a world of simulations that have supplanted the dialectical relationship between illusion and the real. Baudrillard found all of this lamentable. In the context of critical scholars of education and youth, Baudrillard’s descriptive arguments are best referred to as postmodern since critical theorists tend to rely on Marxian notions that Bau- drillard came to reject.13 Beyond this, specifically in the field of philosophy of education the preponderance of arguments is based in classical (mostly Plato and Aristotle) or modern (mostly Dewey and critical theory) thought. There are numerous exceptions, to be clear. However, when philosophy is applied to education, it is generally the case that arguments favor what are understood as either classical or modern philosophical traditions. In my view, Baudrillard’s ideas fall into neither category and his particular descriptive arguments can be understood as more radical than those that rely on critical theory. Additionally, and perhaps more to the point, I am using the term postmodern to describe a lack of faith in Enlightenment projects and modern forms of dialectical critique. To the degree that this lack of faith is an indicator of postmodernism, a Baudrillardian form of hope is appropriately understood as postmodern. As he said, "All forms that tend to project a dazzling and miraculous liberty are only revolutionary homilies.” 14 For him the late capitalist code is adept at subsuming critique and offering it back as a set of signs to be consumed. The code actually encourages a certain level of critique. Pawlett says, “effective resistance cannot be dialectical because synthesis or resolution is the very dynamic of the capitalist system as it constantly revolutionises itself through the sign code. In other words critique is rapidly absorbed by simulation.”15 In my View, there is some amount of hope already in disabusing our- selves of the notion that dialectical critique has efficacy within the late capitalist code. Relatedly, postmodern hope can come in the form of locating and understanding various forms of false hope that stem from the various forms of what I have called modern descriptions of the world above. In addition to this initial postmodern hope that comes along with a separation from false hope, I also want to offer the idea that hope with regard to youth and education might lie in taking the opposite tack of the critical theorists or the kind of critique that begins with incredulity in the face of the system working precisely as it is designed. That is, the functioning of the system can be destabilized through a hyperconformity to its expectations. Although this notion will be taken up in more detail below, one of the ways in which it translates to the present study of youth and education is refusal to support the educationalizing social problems—not even the ones those of us who count ourselves as radicals or progressives like since the responses that educational institutions have with regard to social issues are precoded anyway. As mentioned above, David Labaree has made significant contribu— tions to the analysis of the educationalization of social problems. Schools in the United States continue to be the primary location for attempting to address social problems and yet, they are demonstrably unsuccessful in doing so. Labaree’s explanation is that, as a society, we are content with a formalized version of social reform that does not actually hit its target, since this gives us satisfaction with regard to social ills and at the same time does not violate the particular brand of liberalism in' the United States that emphasizes individualism. He says: We assign formal responsibility to education for solving our most pressing social problems 111' light of our highest social ideals, with the tacit understandm‘g that by educationalizing these problem—solving ef- forts we are seeking a solution that is more formal than substantive. We are saying that we are willing to accept what education can produce- new programs, new curricula, new ms'titutions, new degrees, new edu- cational opportunities—m place of solutions that might make real changes m' the ways in which we distribute social power, wealth, and honor.16 Below I discuss in detail how lack of support for the educationalizing of social problems is related to the fatal strategy of hyperconformity to the system. Before a full examination of fatal theory and radical thought as applied to education and youth, it is important to understand how some critical reactions to late capitalism end up reinforcing the rationality of the system. IN CREDULITY, SNARK, AND THE REIN SCRII’I'I ON OF CAPITALIST RATIONALITY Much of the response to specific incidences the sort of violence directed at young people generally and specifically in schools is often met with is a kind of disbelief or amazement by critical pedagogues and critical theory scholars concerned with the state of schooling or treatment of youth in the United States. This is not altogether different from the typical response of most progressives and leftists to any ignorant, bigoted, or otherwise offensive statement or act by conservative politicians and pundits, right-wing religious zealots, or social commentators. Social media’s rise to ubiquity has enabled a high level of visibility of these kinds of reactions. Both Facebook and Twitter (to use the most popular examples) are replete with incredulous responses to the most obstreperous racism and sexism and fundamental religion-based hatred. “Can you believe what [well-known political or social figure or commentator] just said?!” is a familiar Internet trope. Yet, this response of incredulity is curious. What do criticalists and leftists expect from right-wing or fundamentalist commentators? Should we continue to be shocked and amazed by the same rhetoric from the same talking heads? Should we expect that politicians with a track record of thinly veiled bigotry will eventually align them- selves with anti-racist or anti-sexist social movements? Through a Baudrillardian lens, it can be argued that these responses of incredulity end up reinforcing the rationality of the system. It seems as though the kinds of reactions analyzed above are akin to the response critical theorists and progressive educators have to anti- democratic school reform and continued evidence that school policies and rhetoric regarding youth are animated by market logic. On one pos- sible reading the response of incredulity is a form of dialectical critique. And insofar as late capitalism is the enemy of the aims of democratic education, this may be a problem since, according to Baudrillard, in late capitalism dialectic resistance is no longer possible. Therefore, any traditional critique of the system assumes and even reinforces the rationality of the system. In the end, the point is that what is responded to with incredulity should not be surprising or shocking. Valuing unfettered market logic is precisely the way the system works. Why are we surprised when late capitalism functions exactly the way it is supposed to? It is designed to stretch and create new markets (out of teenagers or public institutions such as schools) and manipulate them. And traditional forms of resistance, based in critical or emancipatory theories are only capable of producing signs of resistance. As William Pawlett puts it: According to Baudrillard there is no more dialectic of measuring, either in representation, the dialectic between the sign and reference, or in economics between supply and demand. The [late capitalist] code absorbs these through “predictive anticipation” and “planned socialisation,” which extends far beyond the production and consumption of goods and incorporates "needs, knowledge, culture, information, sexuality” as terms of the code. All that once had an "explosive force” is defused, deterred or contained; there may still be signs of the dialectic, but they are precisely that: only signs. Signs of revolt and liberation abound (Che Guevara t-shirts and gay couples on TV). But these are signs generated by the capitalist system and any “revolution” they generate is at the level of the sign. 17 My argument here is that to respond with incredulity is to create a Sign of revolt. This contemporary form of incredulity is a form of outmoded dialectical critique adorned with the accouterment of the social media age that ends up adding to a set of signs to be consumed. One of the ways in which this phenomenon articulates itself is in the tone and style that critical progressives often employ when responding incredulously to offensive policies, speech, and acts. That is, I think the kind of response referred to above that I find exemplified in social media Sometimes engenders the false hope of what I will call here, the Club of Snark. By this I mean that snark often becomes the extension of the in- Credulous response. Snark, combined with the development of (non) communications technology and social media, can result in a race to see who can generate the most cleverly constructed retort. In the case of progressive and critical educators, a virtual club is then formed around snarky riposte to the opponents of democratic/Deweyan-inspired ideas about schooling and school reform or to the bigoted and neoliberal opponents of critical pedagogues. No doubt, progressives and others on the Left are by no means the only groups participating in snark. I focus on progressives, the Left, critical theorists and pedagogues because those are the groups with which a fatal theorist in education is aligned in terms of sets of concerns about youth and education. My concern is that the pro- gressive Clubs of Snark are ineffective in terms of reversrnig conditions.

#### Insisting on the determinacy of signs, the will to transparency in language and learning, forms the motor of social control. Instead, we advocate for fatal theory and radical thought that can restore the symbolic space of mystery through an ironic indifference that elides mastery.

Kline 16. Kip Kline, professor of the philosophy of education at Lewis University, *Baudrillard, Youth, and American Film: Fatal Theory and Education*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016, 117-127

For his part, Baudrillard has been accused of not theorizing resistance at all, most notably by Kellner.” But Pawlett and others have understood this as a misreading, owing primarily to the ideological commitments of the accuser. “Baudrillard does not neglect to theorise resistance . . . he theorises in a non- or post-Marxist manner, which, in itself, is unforgivable for Marxists.”22 In place of a Marxist theory of resistance, Baudrillard offers fatal theory and radical thought. That is, he provides a companion theory of resistance alongside his theory of the semiotic colonization of the symbolic and the orders of simulacra. Gane put it this way: Baudrillard provides not only a theory of the semiotic stages of West— ern culture, but also a new way of relatin'g to this theory. Thus, as his' writings suggest new analyses of simulations, transpolitical forms, virtual cultures, his relation to them is not a critical rationalism. His' writing attempts to provoke a paradoxical counter-spiral. And the distance between the two spirals is precisely that of the ritual, the symbolic relation, not one of mastery or possession or ressentiment.23 The counter-spiral in Baudrillard’s writing is indeed the articulation of his theory of resistance that was denied by Kellner. It is the radical thought that seeks to restore symbolic interaction through operating on the margins and the fatal strategies of anticipation of the ironic force of the object in lieu of mastery of it. Baudrillard’s theory of resistance aims to avoid the reinscription of the rationality of the system and to circumvent neutralization in the code. Like the misreading of Baudrillard as not theorizing resistance, his critics have also misread him as accepting or celebrating that which he actually critiques. His entire project, as several Baudrillardian scholars have noted in contrast with the critics’ misreading, is critical of the cur- rent semiotic stage and the loss of the symbolic. The theories of simulation and hyperreality are critical and in particular stand in contrast with institutions that reinforce the hyperreal. As Pawlett says: Baudrillard’s notions of simulation, deterrence and hyperreality are still, part at least, critical notions. That is to say that the system, and its key institutions of control—politics, finance, education, media, and advertising corporations—still understand the world in' terms of the second order, of representation and referentiality. . . . Indeed, these institutions actually push the system further and further into hyper-reality by multiplying signifiers that are supposedly attached to stable signifiers but, their very multiplicity, actually loosen the relationship between signifier and signified.24 Not surprisingly Pawlett mentions the system of education (read: school- ln'g) here as one that functions with a second order simulacra View of the World. Especially in the United States, the schooling system is entirely insistent on the world of reality and representation and it is dogmatically committed to fixed referentiality, that is, a hyperdeterminacy of signs to the point that we begin to suspect that there is no real relationship between signifiers and signifieds. One thinks here of the phenomenon of educational “buzzwords” with which scholars and practitioners of edu- cation are completely familiar. Yet, its insistence on the determinacy of signs is what makes it a primary system of social control. In Baudrillard’s View, in the third and certainly the fourth order, in the full virtualization of the world, critical thought is no longer tenable. In the order of integral reality, the real has fully disappeared and along with it, illusion and the possibility of dialectic critique. One of his later texts, The Perfect Crime, discussed the end of critical thought and dismissed it as “intellectually anachronistic!“25 Instead of a world that calls for defending critical values in an as yet unactualized world, Baudrillard described a world in which reality was at its height. This is the world of too much reality and objectivity, not a lack of it, a world of full actualization. Hyperreality constitutes this world in which reality lacks nothing and all negation has been subsumed. And here there is no longer any critical thought. He said: [C]ritical thought . . . is 111' substance ended. Even if it had survived its catastrophic secularization in all the political movements of the twentieth century, this ideal and seemingly necessary relationship between the concept and reality would, at all events, be destroyed today. It has broken down under pressure from a gigantic technical and mental simulation, to be replaced by an autonomy of the virtual, henceforth liberated from the real, and a simultaneous autonomy of the real which we see functioning on its own account in' a demented—that is, infinitely self-referential — perspective. 26 His critics accused him of nihilism. As we saw above, though, this was a misreading by Marxist scholars who may have had difficulty accepting Baudrillard’s post- or non-Marxist critiques. Having described the world as one in which critical thought has ended, he offered radical thought as a means of resistance in the third and fourth orders. His most complete description of radical thought also comes from The Perfect Crime. The other form of thought [radical thought] is eccentric to the real, a stranger to dialectics, a stranger even to critical thought. It is not even a disavowal of the concept of reality. It is illusion, power of illusion, or in other words, a playing with reality, as seduction is a playing with desire, as a metaphor is playing with truth. This radical thought does not stem from a philosophical doubt, a utopian transference, or an ideal transcendence. It is the material illusion, immanent in this so-called "real" world.27 Radical thought, then, is able to avoid the pitfalls of critical thought in the third and fourth orders. It does not succumb to being subsumed in the way that the negative is subsumed in dialectical critique in the late capitalist code. Instead, it functions on the margins by reincorporating the place of illusion that is lost in the orders of hyperreality and virtuality. Baudrillard claimed, "Radical thought . . . anagrammatizes, it disperses concepts and ideas and, by its reversible sequencing, takes account both of meaning and the fundamental illusoriness of meaning.” Illusion, the very component of cinema that Baudrillard found to be disappearing in its contamination by television, is restored in radical thought. Illusion is not just absent from contemporary film but also in policy and rhetoric related to youth and education. Accountability, transparency, clarity, responsibility, objectivity, and facts—these concepts drive the institutions in which young people mandatorily operate. But Baudrillard said, “Work over the illusion. Create illusion to create an event. Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible what is only too intelligible, make the event itself unreadable. Accentuate the false transparency of the world.” Institutions that cling to a second order understanding of the world encourage quite the opposite when they push for straightforwardness and verity. In so doing, they end up pushing the world further into hyperreality. In Pawlett’s analysis of Baudrillard’s radical thought, it leads directly to fatal strategies. In particular, he says "the only strategy remaining is the annulment of the meaning of signs into indeterminacy.” 30 Institutions that are directly connected to young people, like schools, deal in hyperdeterminacy of signs. That is, meaning is semiotically trapped inside bureaucratized “buzzwords” and phrases. Zero-tolerance policies sprout up in this milieu. Teen identity categories are simulatorily overdetermined as was demonstrated in the previous chapter on The Breakfast Club. An atmosphere of control, fueled by a hyperdeterminacy of the meaning of signs seems to accompany any institution that deals with youth. Again, much like the current state of cinema, schools and other institutions ostensibly serving young people rarely, if ever, function with any sense of illusion. Schools in particular cling with white knuckles to a second order view of the world yielding layers of hyperdeterminacy of meaning. They have doubled down on their commitment to objectivity and facts in the third and fourth orders, but “radical thought, for its part, wagers on the illusion of the world. It aspires to the status of illusion, restoring the non-veracity of facts, the non-signification of the world, proposing the opposite hypothesis that there is nothing rather than something, and going in pursuit of that nothing which runs beneath the apparent continuity of meaning. Radical Thought for Youth and Education: Hyperconformity and Indeterminacy Institutions that directly involve young people, namely schools, are currently at the point of functioning as an arm of the late capitalist system. That is, television, films, social media, and schooling are all of a piece in that they are ultimately in the service of capital. This is, in part, why there is such a tight relationship between media discourse about youth and rhetoric regarding young people in schools. We should, therefore, understand and respond to the system of schooling as such. Part of this response might include executing hyperconformity to the system in the form of being more aggressive about the schooling/education distinction. In everyday, popular discourse schooling and education are largely conflated. This error is consistently corrected in graduate courses in schools and colleges of education, if not in undergraduate courses. There is a distinction between schooling and education, we are taught. Schooling has something to do with formalization whereas education is a broader term, referring to a litany of forms of human adaptability. Of course, tlu's is just one of a surfeit of articulations and explanations of the distinction. In the end, we all know there is a difference between schooling and education and part of that difference is the difficulty in defin'in'g the broader concept of the latter. This is an idea that scholars of education and youth learn in the early stages of development. Yet, collectively we do not seem to execute the distinction with persistence, including those of us who oppose the goals of schooling in late capitalism. A clear disarticu- lation of the two might be a way to begin to apply fatal theory to educa- tion, to help to disrupt the system of schooling. Education, if fundamentally treated as a concept that has little or perhaps even nothing to do with schooling in late capitalism, could then be imbued with symbolic exchange and more immediate forms of communication. A rigid differentiation between schooling and education can help set the conditions for applying fatal theory to the problem of violence toward youth through hyperconformity and indeterminacy. What might this look like? Perhaps a reversal of the discourse around young people and education involves an effort to render the world enigmatic for them, a particular form of the annulment of the meaning of signs into indeterminacy. The consequences of the current system of education and the dominant rhetoric regarding youth in late capitalism have included a desperate pursuit of measurement (almost entirely through quantification) and the virtual disappearance of the enigmatic. Indeed, enigma is, by many accounts, suppressed in the system of schooling in the United States. Scientism and the consistent over-valuing of a flimsy form of certainty is, in my view, opposed to education. Illusion and enigma, troubling the very notion of “facts”; though he did not specifically link these ideas to education, Baudrillard did establish them as bound up in radical thought. When applied to youth and education, we can see that radical thought and fatal strategies that annul the meaning of signs into indeterminacy is directly opposed to the conservative thought that is typically associated with rhetoric and polices of schooling and these are almost always conflated with the larger concept of education. Again, my argument here is that pushing toward indeterminacy is central to education but is opposed by schooling and therefore, the fatal theorist in education operates with a hard distinction between the two—not a loose, academic one. Distinguishing education from schooling in this way not only opens space for radical thinking in the form of indeterminacy, it also allows for the fatal strategy of hyperconformity to the system. Labaree’s argument about the educationalization of social problems is instructive here. Insofar as we understand the system of schooling in the United States as operating directly at the tension between the inherent collectivism of liberal democracy on the one hand and American individualism on the other, Labaree’s explanation of why schools are increasingly asked to address social problems when it is demonstrably the case that they are highly ineffective at the task is convincm'g. However, if we take a Baudrillardian view on the school, that is, as a modern institution with a second order understanding of the world that also operates m' the full service of capital, if we understand the battle for the fundamental purpose of schooling to have already been lost to private interest, that phenomenon itself becomes the explanation. Capital is always served when public institutions are set up for and/or charged with failure to ameliorate social ills since the answer then becomes to allow the market to intervene. In the case of schools in the United States, this happens through the inﬂux of corporate language (a well-established trend), a reliance on corporations for materials to support the steady succession of mandated programs, or in some cases, literally turning the school over to a corporation. Hyperconformity to this system might mean, then, to not support schools as an institutional location for treating social problems. Though critical pedagogues and other progressives and Leftists understand schools in the United States to have been colonized by the interests of the market, many still argue that schools should take on a number of social issues. In order to hyperconform to the system of schooling, it must be recognized as thoroughly subservient to the economic system in late capitalism and be treated as such by withdrawing support for schools to be charged with addressing cases of social concern. We know this is not the function of schools in late capitalism anyway so, to push these negative conditions until they flip, a hyperconformity to the system is necessary since traditional, dialectic critique gets neutralized into the code. Another version of Baudrillardian indeterminacy with regard to youth was suggested at the end of the previous chapter. Restoring to children and adolescents their own strangeness, encouraging a sense of inner alterity and radical otherness, are precisely not functions of the system of schooling in the United States. On the contrary, conformity to the system, homogenization, and locating a specific identity category are encouraged. Thematizing or demonstrating alterity is often punished. As we saw with the simulations in The Breakfast Club, even when precoded identity categories are questioned in the context of schools, it is done in the service of eliminating otherness, as in, “we are each all of these identity categories at once,” which not only creates the ebbing of alterity but also ends up reinforcing the identity categories that are ostensibly questioned. The kind of radical thought that accompanies hyperconformity and indeterminacy is always anticipatory and at the margins. One way to think with anticipation and exceptionality is to engage in a postmodern, radical Popperian falsifiability as Baudrillard did with his theory of simulation. “So, for example, you put forward the idea of simulacrum, without really believing in it, even hoping the real will refute it . . . Alas, only the fanatical supporters of reality react; reality, for its part, does not seem to wish to prove you wrong.”32 In this case, Baudrillard’s claims were not falsified, but in the wake of simulation theory being “confirmed,” he was able to argue, "The simulated disorder of things has moved faster than we have.” If simulation theory cannot be falsified, we have a strong argument for radical thought. That is, the world of simulation requires the enacting of fatal strategies, of employing a kind of radical speculation in order to anticipate events, of trying out marginal ideas to see if the world can falsify them. Paradoxically, this postmodern Popperianism is often demonstrated in film and television, that is, on the very screens with which Baudrillard had a love/hate relationship. Take the recent speculative fiction/dystopian British television series, Black Mirror, for example. In each episode, a near future is imagined in which technology, politics, crime, social relations, death, and intimacy form disastrous confluences. In one episode, "The Entire History of You,” a device implanted behind one’s ear that records all life events and makes them available for video playback on screens or in the wearer’s eye is commonplace. A young lawyer, his wife, and their social circle interact with a number of issues that are made unique in a world with the “grain” device. These include second guessing a response in a professional setting and using the viewing of previous sexual encounters as a source of arousal during actual, proximal sex. Yet, at a dinner party, when one of the guests who has had her “grain” stolen (read: ripped out of her skin) says she has no plans of replacing it, the others suggest that they would not be able to function without their' devices. The show ends with the dissolving of the relationship between the main characters after the "grain" has been the animating force in the lawyer discovering his wife’s infidelity and his obsession with watching the relevant footage, which are called “re-dos.” In another Black Mirror episode, "Fifteen Million Merits,” a future dystopian world is imagined in which the vast majority of people must ride stationary bicycles that provide power for the society. They earn "merits" that allow for their sustenance but if they pedal extra time or with in- creased speed, they have disposable income with which they can purchase virtual luxuries. Although it costs an exorbitant amount of merits, the one way these proletarian bike riders can transcend their position is , through buying a ticket to potentially perform on the American Idol-like game show, "Hot Shots.” The main character, Bing, gifts his merits to his girlfriend, who has a pleasant singing voice, so she can buy herself a Chance to become a pop star and leave the life of bicycle pedaling with a successful "Hot Shots” audition. Although her performance seems to be going well, the "Hot Shots" judges stop her in the middle of the song, offering her a role as one of the society’s porn starts on the erotica chan- nel instead. As it is her only chance to escape her servile life on the bike, she reluctantly agrees. Bing is distraught and angry with the judges’ manipulation of his girlfriend’s life, pedals his bike with extraordinary determination, and conserves his merits until he has earned enough to buy himself a ticket to audition on “Hot Shots.” He ostensibly performs a dance routine but a few moments into it he stops, reveals a shard of glass he had sneaked into the audition, holds it to his throat and then goes on a rant of admonition of the judges and what they did to his girlfriend. He rails against the entire system and its disregard for humanity. The final twist in the episode comes in the form of the "Hot Shots” judges applauding his “performance” and offering him his own show. In the last scenes, we see Bing “ranting” into a camera, holding the shard of glass to his throat, and then we see bike riders tuning into his show, at the end of which he reminds them to tune in next week for another speech. Both episodes serve to anticipate the potential pitfalls of the trajectory of modern media and technology. They can be read as dystopian science fiction, the imagining of a worst-case scenario in the development of technology and the trend toward the concentration of wealth in late capitalism. But they are arguably functioning as the fatal strategy of radical Popperianism, articulating bold hypotheses about the trajectory of the world that may or may not be falsified in the future. Or, Black Mirror is conceivably an articulation of thought about the current state of affairs from the extreme margins, not anticipating the lamentable aspects of a world-gone-wrong but rather, a figurative statement about contemporary times. After all, how much different is the "grain" device in “The Entire History of You” that records one’s life and allows for "re-dos” than the proliferation of life-mediation by screen for which omnipresent smart- phones are primarily used? Recuperation (in the sociological sense) of subversive activity that is depicted in "Fifteen Million Merits” is evident m' contemporary society. One can think here of all the instances in' which originally seditious music or art is eventually used to support markets or Conservative politics. As a recent example, in 2015, Dee Snider, of the 1980s heavy metal band, Twisted Sister, gave permission to Republican Presidential candidate, Donald Trump, to use the band’s anthem, "We’re Not Gonna Take It” on the campaign trail.34 Thought of in this way, Black “Mirror is less an imagined dystopic future and more a metaphoric critique of the present. Or, as Baudrillard said, “Science fiction? Hardly.”35 At all events, Black Mirror can be understood as a kind of radical thought. But given Baudrillard’s critique of the screenification of the world, how can this be? At the most basic level, Baudrillard’s arguments are about the loss of the symbolic and the ways in which simulacra have colonized the world/the real. This creates a situation in which critique and resistance get swallowed up by the consumer code and spit back out as a set of signs to be consumed. But Black Mirror is itself a series of hyperreal images. Put another way, the paradox is that this loss of the svmbolic and the lamentable effects of total simulation are illustrated well by hyperreal images in Black Mirror. Baudrillard largely understood hyperreal films and Reality TV to be evidence for his theses, not critiques of the loss of the symbolic or critiques of telemorphosis (though as men- tioned previously he did acknowledge a few films around the turn of the twenty-first century to have taken on the subject of the blurring between the real and the Virtual).36 What does it mean that particular media iterations (films and TV shows) are catalysts for the Baudrillard-inspired critique of media here? Can television/media critique the telemorphic trajec- tory of which they are constitutive? It seems that they can. This is in part the case because of the importance of paradox in Baudrillard’s corpus. But beyond this, it is clear that there is room in his ideas about resistance through radical thought for using TV and cinema in that process. He said, "You have to live in collusion with the system and in revolt against its consequences. You have to live with the idea that we have survived the worst.”37 How then, can the radical thought and fatal theory exempliﬁed in' Black Mirror be understood in the context of education and youth? That is, how does anticipatory, marginal thought apply to a radically new education? There is clearly a dearth of radical thought in the context of youth and education. But to imagine a new kind of education and a new discourse regarding young people is itself to think with anticipation and on the margins. Baudrillard suggested, in his discussion of radical thought, that the proposition of his theory of the simulacrum itself was exemplary of insisting on illusoriness, to render the intelligible unintelligible. This kind of radical thought is sorely needed to flip the negative conditions of the system that produces the kind of violence toward young people fueled by contemporary films.

### Pawlett

#### Exterior critiques of the system miss the point by being too close to the mark: they only reify the reality principle of semiotic systems – the ground these radical moves chose to fight on is demarcated and beaten in advance. All are complicit and so attempts to criticize the system on the plane of the real succumb to the will towards integral reality.

Pawlett 14. William Pawlett, senior lecturer in media, communications, and cultural studies at the University of Wolverhampton, UK, “Society At War With Itself,” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014)

It all depends on the ground we choose to fight on … most often … we choose to fight on ground where we are beaten before we begin (Baudrillard 2001: 119). This paper examines Baudrillard’s assertion, made in later works includingImpossible Exchange (2001), The Intelligence of Evil (2005) and Pyres of Autumn(2006), that individuals, society and indeed the global system, are internally and irreconcilably divided, that modernity is ‘at odds with itself’ (Baudrillard 2006: 1). In his view dissent, rejection and insurrection emerge from within, not from external challenges such as alternative ideologies or competing worldviews, but from within bodies, within borders, inside programmes. For Baudrillard much of the violence, hatred and discomfort visible around the globe can be understood as a latent but fundamental ‘silent insurrection’ against the global integrating system and its many pressures, demands and humiliations (2001: 106). This is anendogenic or intra-genic rejection, it emanates from within the system, from within individuals, even from within language, electronic systems and bodily cells, erupting as abreaction, metastasis and sudden reversal.[2](http://www2.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-pawlett.html#ft-endnote2) For Baudrillard then, despite the many simulations of external threat and enmity – radical Islam currently being the best example – the most dangerous threat lies within: ‘society faces a far harder test than any external threat: that of its own absence, its loss of reality’ (2006: 1). The global order, conventionally labelled “capitalist”, is neutralising its values and structures, its ideologies disappear, its principles are sacrificed. Even the sense of “reality” produced by the abstract sign and by simulation models begin to disappear (2005: 67-73; 2009: 10-15). The goal is ‘integral reality’, a limitless operational project geared towards the total transcription of the world into virtuality: ‘everything is realised and technically materialised without reference to any principle or final purpose’ (2005: 18). Yet there is an internal war or “backlash” taking place between integralist violence which seeks ultimate control by eliminating all otherness, and duality. Duality, for Baudrillard, is “indestructible” and is manifest as the inevitable or destined re-emergence of otherness: of death, Evil, ambivalence, the ghosts of symbolic exchange, the accursed share within the system. The integrating system then suffers a ‘dissent working away at it from inside. It is the global violence immanent in the world-system itself which, from within, sets the purest form of symbolic challenge against it’ (2005: 22). This is a war or conflict that does not end, the outcome of which cannot be predicted or programmed. It is a war that is quite different from the disappearance of war into simulated non-events, such as occurred with the Gulf wars (Baudrillard 1995). Indeed, Baudrillard suggests, the deterrence of world wars, and of nuclear wars, does not result in peace, but in a viral proliferation of conflicts, a fractalisation of war and conflict into everyday, local, and ubiquitous terror (1993b: 27). This paper will examine Baudrillard’s position on internal rejection through two closely related themes: complicity and duality. Complicity, and the closely related term collusion, are themselves dual in Baudrillard’s sense. That is, complicity or collusion express an internal division or ‘duality’ which is not a simple opposition of terms. As is so often the case, Baudrillard’s position builds on his much earlier studies: Requiem For the Media (orig. 1972, in Baudrillard 1981: 164-184) had already argued that the dominance of the abstract sign and of simulation models meant that any critique of the system made through the channels of semiotic abstraction were automatically re-absorbed into the system. Any meaningful challenge must invent its own, alternative medium – such as the silk-screen printings, hand-painted notices and graffiti of May 1968 – or it will lapse into an ineffectual complicity with the system it seeks to challenge (Baudrillard 1981: 176). In his later work, Baudrillard’s emphasis on duality and complicity is extended much further, taking on global, anthropological and even cosmological dimensions, and increasingly complicity and collusion are seen as dual, as encompassing both acceptance and a subtle defiance. This paper examines the dual nature of complicity and collusion. It considers the influence of La Boetie’s notorious Essay on Voluntary Servitude on Baudrillard, seeking to draw out what is distinctive in Baudrillard’s position. The second section turns to the notion of duality, examining Good and Evil and Baudrillard’s assertion that attempts to eliminate duality merely revive or re-active it. Complicity implies a complexity of relations, and, specifically, the condition of being an accomplice to those in power. To be an accomplice is to assist in the committing of a crime. If the crime is murder, the term accomplice implies one who plans, reflects, calculates – but does not strike the lethal blow. The crime which is of particular interest to Baudrillard is, of course, the perfect crime: the elimination of otherness, of ambivalence, of duality, even of “reality” and of the abstract representational sign which enables a sense of “reality” (Baudrillard 1996). The global, integral, carnivalising and cannibalising system, which might loosely still be called capitalist, is at war against radical otherness or duality; yet, for Baudrillard, as duality lies at its heart, locked within its foundations, it is indestructible and emerges through attempts to eliminate it. If the system has been largely successful at eliminating external threats, it finds itself in an even worse situation: it is at war with itself. II. Complicity Complicity is a particularly slippery term. In the 1980s Baudrillard’s thought, mistakenly assumed to be “Postmodernist”, was argued to be complicit with capitalism, largely because it questioned the ability of dominant strands of Marxism and feminism to significantly challenge the capitalist system (Callinicos 1989; Norris 1992). At the same time, Baudrillard was alleging that the work of supposedly radical theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari (1984 orig. 1972) and Lyotard (1993 orig. 1974) was, with their emphasis on desire as productive and liberatory force, complicit with the mechanisms of advanced consumer capitalism (Baudrillard 1987: 17-20). So which branch of contemporary theory is most complicit with capitalism? Liberals, humanists and environmentalists who see their clothes stolen by mainstream politicians? Marxists and Communists who by refusing to update their thinking provide a slow moving target for right-wing snipers? Post- Modernists and Post-Structuralists who attack Enlightenment thought but refuse to speak of the human subject and so have “thrown the baby out with the bath water”? Network and complexity theory which flattens all phenomena and experience to a position on a grid, producing a very complex simplification? The list could go on but it is a question that cannot be answered because all critical theories are complicit with the system they critique. They fight on a terrain already demarcated by their opponents, a terrain on which they are beaten before they begin, one where the most compelling argument can always be dismissed as doom-mongering or irresponsible intellectualism. This includes Baudrillard’s own critical thinking, as he readily acknowledges (Baudrillard 2009a: 39). Further, and even more damaging to the project of critique, in a hegemonic or integral order the system solicits critique and it criticises itself, so displacing and making redundant the laborious attempts at academic critique. The latter continue, even proliferate, but with decreasing impact. So, what does Baudrillard mean by complicity with the global order? Baudrillard’s concern is primarily with complicity at the level of the form of the (capitalist) system, not at the level of belief, consent or allegiance to particular contents of capitalist life (consumer products, plurality of ‘lifestyles’, a degree of ‘tolerance’ etc.). Complicity is often seen, by critics of capitalism, as acceptance of consumerism and its myriad choices and lifestyles, but this is a reductive level of analysis from Baudrillard’s perspective. By complicity or collusion Baudrillard means, on the one hand, the very widespread willingness to surrender or give up beliefs, passions and “symbolic defences” (2010: 24), and on the other – as the dual form – an equally widespread ability to find a space of defiance through the play of complicity, collusion, hyperconformity and indifference (1983: 41-8). That is, while many of us (in the relatively affluent West) share in the profanating, denigrating and “carnivalising” of all values, embracing indifference, shrugging “whatever”, we do so with very little commitment to the system, rejoicing inwardly when it suffers reversals: we operate in a dual mode. While such attitudes of indifference may seem to accept that there is no meaningful alternative to capitalism: an attitude that has been called ‘capitalist nihilism’ (Davis in Milbank and Zizek, 2009) and ‘capitalist realism’ (Fisher 2008), Baudrillard’s notions of “integral reality”, duality and complicity may have significant advantages over those approaches. Unlike thinkers who remain anchored to critical thinking defined by determinate negation, Baudrillard’s approach emphasises ambivalence, reversal and both personal and collective modes of rejection more subtle than those envisioned by the increasingly exhausted mechanisms of critique. The critique of consumer capitalism – the consumption of junk food, junk entertainment and junk information – is now integral to the system; the critique of finance capitalism – banker’s bonuses, corporate tax avoidance – is integral to the system, yet it fails to bring about meaningful or determinate social transformation. Indeed, such critiques may do no more than provide the system with a fleeting sense of “reality” – real issues, real problems to deal with – around which the system can reproduce its simulacra, perhaps to reassure us that “something is being done”, “measures are being put into place” etc. “Reality” cannot be dialectically negated by critical concepts when both ‘reality’ and the critical concept disappear together, their fates clearly tied to each other (Baudrillard 2009b: 10-12). There is a sense then in which the production of critique is in complicity with the system, the unravel-able proliferation and excess of critical accounts of the system has the effect of protecting the system. Complicity consists in a sharing of the denigration of all values, all institutions, all ideas, all beliefs: so long as we believe in nothing – at least not passionately – then the system has us, at least superficially. For example, in recent decades we have seen the denigration of religious faiths – or their reduction to ‘cultural identity’ and ‘world heritage’ objects; the denigration of public services and welfare provision accompanied by their marketisation; the denigration of the poor, the young, immigrants and the unemployed. Yet this is not only the denigration of the powerless or disenfranchised, there is also the widespread denigration of those seen as powerful: politicians, corporations, celebrities. For Baudrillard, it is quite inadequate to focus only on the power of global neo-liberal policies such as marketisation in these processes of denigration. This is where Baudrillard’s position departs decisively from anti-globalists and from neo-Communists such as Negri, Zizek, and Badiou. Global power has deliberately sacrificed its values and ideologies, it presents no position, it takes no stand, it undermines even the illusion that “free markets” function and has made “capital” virtual; become orbital it is removed from a terrestrial, geo-political or subjective space. These are protective measures enabling power to become (almost) hegemonic (Baudrillard 2009a: 33-56; 2010: 35-40). Baudrillard often emphasises the fragility and the vulnerability to reversal of the “powerful” and the distinction between powerful and powerless is radically questioned in his work. So what is this global power? Where is it? The answer, of course, is that it is everywhere and it is in everyone. We have not liberated ourselves from slavery, but, Baudrillard contends, internalised the masters: ‘[e]verthing changes with the emancipation of the slave and the internalisation of the master by the emancipated slave’ (2009a: 33). We tyrannise ourselves, for example by demanding that we maximise our opportunities, fulfill our potential. This is a deeper level of slavery – and complicity – than any previous historical system could inflict (Baudrillard 1975; 2009a: 33). Yet duality always re-emerges, Baudrillard insists: indifference is dual, complicity is dual. Carnivalisation and cannibalisation are themselves dual: the global system absorbs all otherness in a ‘forced conversion to modernity’ (2010: 5), reproducing otherness within the carnival of marketable “difference”, yet cannibalisation emerges as a reversion and derailing of this process. The world adopts Western models: economic, cultural, religious – or it appears to. Hidden within this complicity with the West, there is, Baudrillard suggests, a deeper sense of derision and rejection. The allegiance to Western models is superficial; it is a form of mimicry or hyperconformity that involves a ritual-like exorcism of the hegemonic system. Further, such mimicry reveals the superficiality of Western cultural and economic models: this is not only a superficial acceptance, but an acceptance of superficiality. Western values are already parodic, and, in being accepted, they are subject to further parody as they circulate around the globe (2010: 4-11). The West has deregulated and devalued itself and demands that the rest of the world follows: "It is everything by which a human being retains some value in his own eyes that we (the West) are deliberately sacrificing … [o]ur truth is always to be sought in unveiling, de-sublimation, reductive analysis …[n]othing is true if it is not desacralised, objectivised, shorn of its aura, dragged on to the stage" (Baudrillard 2010: 23). Western desacrilisation amounts to a powerful challenge to the rest of the world, a potlatch: desacralise in return or perish! But who has the power? Who is the victor? There isn’t one, according to Baudrillard. Of the global order, Baudrillard writes: ‘We are its hostages – victims and accomplices at one and the same time – immersed in the same global monopoly of the networks. A monopoly which, moreover – and this is the supreme ruse of hegemony – no one holds any longer’ (2010: 40). There is no Master, no sovereign because all the structures and dictates of power have been internalised, this is the complicity we all share with global order, yet it is a dual complicity: an over-eager acceptance goes hand-in-hand with a deep and growing rejection.

#### We ought not seek meaning, but only to squander it. In order to challenge the system, we must begin with the level of form, the Code, not its representational contents. Our performance of radical theory is one that shatters the very possibility of reifying the coded and economic meaning of engagement within debate. Absent a poetic nullification of the code all attempts at resistance remain binary and banal. We must challenge the semiotic medium through which politics is filtered.

Pawlett 13. William Pawlett, senior lecturer in media, communications, and cultural studies at the University of Wolverhampton, UK, Violence, Society and Radical Theory : Bataille, Baudrillard and Contemporary Society, pg. 132

Baudrillard on Hatred and Difference In recent sociological literature, hatred is understood as the result of an entrenched structure of difference which imposes a normative and hierarchical order on those who appear to be ‘different’. Those who benefit most from established social and economic structures: white, middle-class heterosexual males, exercise and reinforce their position of dominance through a wide range of oppositions with each pair consisting of positive and negative terms. Hence black, female, gay, become the negative terms by which white, male and straight define and maintain their identities as superior. Since such identity positions are not naturally superior they require the maintenance of boundaries separating them ideologically from their opposite term. Identity and difference are mutually reinforcing and difference tends to be reduced to a subordinate, supplementary or supporting role. Further, such accounts assert, in times of stress, loss of status (such as loss of employment, or difficulty in securing meaningful employment) those in a privileged position will vent their frustrations on those who are ‘different’ (Perry 2001). More recently, sociological accounts have stressed the importance of the emotional bonds which link the hater with whomever or whatever they hate (Alford 1998; Scheff and Retzinger 2001). The hater is thereby revealed to be in a situation of weakness and dependence which tends to further enrage them. Many writers then enjoin a celebration of ‘difference’ or ‘diversity’ such that difference can be either revealed as really rather similar to identity – as in many multiculturalist arguments – or alternatively ‘difference’ is celebrated as ‘different’ but not lesser. In both of these accounts there is usually some appeal for greater education or information on ‘cultural difference’ and better or more positive media representations of ‘difference’. This section examines how the ideas of Bataille and Baudrillard depart from these trends. Hatred, for Bataille, is a powerful, enduring though derivative and mobile psychological attitude. Hatred is not an affect or drive, but a restricted, accumulated rag-bag of sentiments. Such sentiments parallel capitalist values in that they consist of ideological and representational claims which are extremely reductive, in particular, they reduce human being to the state of a productive instrument, and further in their accumulative form and refusal of generosity and reciprocity. For Baudrillard, hatred is a far more supple relation than the term ‘bond’ suggests; it is so readily channelled, re-directed, switched or substituted. In the destructured, implosive and limitless system that dominates contemporary life the hater does not necessarily even require an object or ‘other’ to hate, or an identity position to protect or affirm. In his re-thinking of hate Baudrillard asks, provocatively, is it some version of difference or otherness that suffers the rage of haters, or is it rather those who are perceived and positioned as “dangerously similar” (1993b: 129). The category of the “dangerously similar” includes those who have been forcibly deprived of their difference by the globalising of simulatory Western values. For Baudrillard, we are all haters, not because of some innate ‘badness’ of human nature, but because we live in a system that encourages hate and thrives upon its channelling. Both Bataille and Baudrillard then take hatred very seriously, aiming to theorise it in its intensity and power and avoiding facile social prescriptions concerning social progress through better representation or education. The Code and its Discriminations In For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (1981, orig. 1972) Baudrillard began to describe various codes of meaning (or signification) as integrated by what he called ‘the code’ ( le code, la grille, le Code du signes, la matrice ). By “the code” Baudrillard intended not particular codes of meaning (English, French, Morse) or particular modes of the interpretation of meaning (dominant, resistant, plural) but rather the condition of possibility of coding . 2 For an effective critique of the consumer society to be made, Baudrillard suggests, we must focus analysis on the form of the Code, not its contents or representations which are, of course, extraordinarily open, malleable and diverse. The Code as form is preconscious, or, in Baudrillard’s terminology, has the effect of “precession”; that is, as grid or network it precedes individual experience, perception and choice. The medium of this grid is the abstract, arbitrary sign. Signs, visual and linguistic, are the medium of coding, of the ordered exchange between coded elements. Composed to two sets of inter-locking relations, the sign-referent and signifier-signified, the sign is the universal form constructing the oppositions of subject and object, of real and representation, of self and other: the building blocks of ‘reality’ itself. The ordered exchange of signs produces identity and difference: every ‘thing’ is semiotic; every ‘thing’ is a ‘thing’ because it is not some other ‘thing’. Signs produce social meanings and values on a scale or grid whereby all points can be measured and compared. To clarify, it is not that every ‘thing’ can be converted into sign form, it is rather that the very process of transcription or coding produces ‘things’ within a scheme of identities and differences. Though the Code encompasses every ‘thing’ it cannot process symbolic exchange, seduction, the ambivalence (or becoming) of life which consist not ‘things’ with identity but of volatile relations, always “in transit” or metamorphosis. The Code then does not merely express particular aspects of the consumer capitalist system such as media, fashion or advertising: it is far more fundamental. At the fundamental level the Code is what prevents symbolic exchange by breaking its cycles or by seizing and diverting its potential. Symbolic exchange now occurs or rather “effracts” only when the Code and its value systems are annulled, reversed or suspended. Symbolic exchange traverses all oppositions, challenging fixed or stable positions or power relations. Baudrillard’s major example of symbolic exchange is, of course, the gift and counter-gift discussed in Chapter 2. To reiterate, the meaning of the gift never settles into fixity or identity, it is not structured by a logic of difference, its meaning can be transformed at any moment in the on-going relation or “pact” between parties – indeed this relation is of the gift and the gift is of this relation: relation and gift flourish together, and die together. Baudrillard defines the Code as a “generalised metaphysics” synthesising social values, social production and social identities, and this system ends any sense of the social as dynamic, symbolic form. The Code enacts an “obligatory registration of individuals on the scale of status” (1981: 68), producing a “hierarchy of differential signs” which, crucially, “constitutes the fundamental, decisive form of social control – more so than acquiescence to ideological norms” (ibid.). It makes no difference whether we, as individuals, endorse the consumer capitalist system or not, since we are all positioned by the Code, and are positioned through it by others: the game of ideological critique takes place within the terms set by the Code. The Code breaks, blocks and bars ambivalence producing the structure of difference – the play of identity and difference characterised by oppositions such as true/false, good/evil, self/other, black/white, male/female. The standard dimensions of consumer status positioning flow from this source: rich/poor, young/ old, fat/thin, attractive/unattractive. While structural or dialectical oppositions are characteristic of the first and second orders of simulacra, in the third order the Code simulates choice, difference and diversity through binary “modulation” by allowing the privileged terms of its oppositions to switch, fuse or “implode” (1983: 95-110). For example ‘fat’, ‘poor’ and ‘old’ can be beautiful too – if only within the confines of fashion, cosmetics advertising or pop music video. The Code operates in “total indifference” to content; everything is permitted in sign form; that is as “simulation”. The Code also performs a pacifying effect on society: the once clear-cut, structural divisions such as class and status are made less visible by registering all people as individual consumers on a single, universal scale. Everyone becomes a consumer, though some, of course, consume far more than others. As universal form the status of consumer confers a kind of democratic flattening of social relations, but an illusory one. If class conflict was, to some extent, pacified, Baudrillard does not contend that society as a whole is pacified; indeed other forms of violence and dissent emerge and cannot be deterred. Baudrillard wrote of the emergence of new “anomalous” forms of violence, less intelligible, less structured, post-dialectical or implosive (Baudrillard 1998a: 174-85; 1994: 71-2)). He refers to the Watts riots of 1965 as an example of new violent rejections of the consumer system. Later, Baudrillard proposed the term “disembodied hate” or simply “the hate” to express aspects of this process (1996a: 142-7). The Code then is a principle of integration producing everything and everyone as a position on the scale of social value . With the last vestiges of symbolic orders around the world being eliminated by neo-liberal economic globalisation how is the Code to be challenged or defied? 3 Departing from the form but not the intent of Marxist theory, Baudrillard argued that the apparent distinction between use value and economic exchange value is produced as a “code effect”. In other words, use value is a simulatory form produced by the capitalist system as justification and grounding for its trading of economic exchange values (1981: 130-42). For Baudrillard the illusion of use value, like the illusion of signified meanings and the illusion of the stable solid reality of the referent, are produced by the Code as structural groundings, shoring up the unstable ‘reality’ of signs and preventing the emergence of ambivalence (1981: 156 n.9). To challenge, defy or breach the Code then it is not sufficient to ‘return’ to use value. Indeed such strategies, shared by some Marxists, environmentalists and anti-globalisation movements actually feed the capitalist system: the market’s semiotic assimilation of environmentalism as the ‘green’ brand choice is an obvious example. But if Marxist theory fails to engage with and challenge the system of signs, so too, for Baudrillard, do many Structuralist, Poststructuralist and Postmodernist theorists of desire, difference and liberation. To defy the system it is never sufficient to ‘play with signs’, that is, to play with plural, ‘different’ or multiple identity positions. Here we encounter Baudrillard’s total rejection of what would later be called ‘identity politics’ and also a central misunderstanding of his position on signs. 4 For Baudrillard to play with signs – signs of consumption and status, signs of gender, sexuality or ethnicity is simply to operate within the Code . It is an unconscious or unwitting complicity with the Code’s logic of the multiplication of status positions; it is, in a sense, to assist it in the production of ‘diversity’ and ‘choice’. It is deeply ironic that some of Baudrillard’s critics have claimed that Baudrillard himself merely ‘played with signs’ and that he advocated a playing with signs. Yet Baudrillard is clear, in order to oppose the system “[e]ven signs must burn” (1981: 163). In his controversial work Seduction (orig. 1979) Baudrillard draws an important distinction between the “ludique” meaning playing the game of signs, playing with signification (to enhance one’s status position or to assert one’s identity through its ‘difference’), and “mise enjeux” meaning to put signs at stake, to challenging them or annul them through symbolic exchange (1990: 15778). 5 For Baudrillard signs play with us, despite us, against us; any radical defiance must be a defiance of signs and their codings. Unfortunately, the distinction between ‘playing with signs’ – playing with their decoding and recoding, and defying the sign system has not penetrated the mainstream of Media and Cultural Studies. Eco’s influential notion of “semiotic guerrilla warfare” (Eco 1995) and Hall’s even more influential notion of “resistant decoding” place their faith in the ability of the sovereign, rational consumer to negotiate mediated meanings. For them the citizen-consumer confronts media content as the subject confronts the object. Hall does not consider that much media content is now ‘pre-encoded’ in an ersatz ‘oppositional’ form which renders the moment of ‘oppositional decoding’ merely one of conformity or ironic recognition (see Hall et al. 2002: 128-38). In other words, the terms for ‘resistant’ readings can be pre-set as positions within the Code. Critique is rendered uncertain, even meaningless by coded assimilation because the system sells us the signs of opposition as willingly as it sells us the signs of conformity; it sells signs of inclusion and empowerment as eagerly as it sells signs of affluence and exclusion. Can we even tell them apart? In which category would we place the phenomenon of Sex and the City , for example? 6 Today, millions of people manage, archive and share signs of their designated identity through social media platforms, in Baudrillard’s terms holding themselves hostage to the system of signs. The realm of symbolic exchange or seduction does not come about when individuals ‘play with signs’ but when (signs of) individuality, identity, will and agency are annulled through an encounter with radical otherness. Radical otherness, or radical alterity, for Baudrillard, refers to otherness not ‘difference’, that is otherness beyond representation, beyond coding – including ‘oppositional’ or assertive de/re-codings. A system of “total constraint” the Code does not merely produce identity but also difference, diversity and hybridity: indeed each of these now describe marketing strategies. Of course, the system does not seek to promote passivity or apathy among consumers but quite the contrary: to thrive and expand the system requires active, discriminating, engaged consumers, jostling for position, competing for advancement. The Code exists “to better prime the aspiration towards the higher level” (1981: 60), delivering diversity and choice at the level of signs or content (the goods that we choose to eat, the products and services that we choose to wear, watch, download) and it requires in return … nothing much at all – merely that we understand ourselves as consumers . The aim of the system is to make ‘the consumer’ the universal form of humanity yet within this form an almost infinite variety of differential contents or positions are possible; homogenisation and diversification become indistinguishable. Since ‘humanity’, for Baudrillard, as for Nietzsche, is already constituted as a universal form by the Enlightenment (1993a: 50) this task is close to completion, though the final completion, the “perfect crime” against Otherness will never, according to Baudrillard, come to pass (Baudrillard 1996a). 7 As a term the Code largely disappeared from Baudrillard’s writings after Simulacra and Simulation (1994). Are we to take it that the Code is still operational in the “fourth order” or is it defunct? We can answer this question by recalling two important points. Firstly, Baudrillard did not contend that the pacification and control effected by the Code would be total (quite the reverse, see Baudrillard 1996a: 142-9; 1998a: 174-85), only that the Code aimed at total constraint. Baudrillard’s most developed example, the masses, let us recall, are not so passive and docile that they are manipulated by the system; rather, they withdraw into silence or practice a hyper-conformity without belief in, or commitment to, the integrated system of values. In other words, they refuse to be the active, discriminating, reflective consumers that the system requires. Baudrillard writes “We form a mass, living most of the time in panic or haphazardly ( aleatoire ) above and beyond any meaning” (1983: 15), the masses are clearly not only the poor and marginal, they are “us, you and everyone” ( nous, vous, tout le monde ) (1983: 46; 2005b: 51). This ‘we’ is not a rhetorical device used to assert a faux value consensus; rather it suggests a buried, banished commonality, a commonality of nothing except a shared rejection of systemic control. Everyone, as posited by the Code, is mass ; both inside and, at the same time, beyond the Code: mass, yet singularity. Secondly, in the late 1980s when Baudrillard proposed a fourth order, a fractal stage with “no point of reference”, where “value radiates in all directions” as a “haphazard proliferation” (Baudrillard 1993b: 11) he was clear that the previous orders continue to function alongside the fourth order. In other words, there are still dialectical tensions operating, associated with the second order, and the Code of the third order also flourishes. Indeed what is most distinctive about the fourth order is that: things continue to function long after their ideas have disappeared, and they do so in total indifference to their content. The paradoxical fact is that they function even better under these circumstances (Baudrillard 1993b: 6). The idea or principle of the Code then is dead, but it functions even more effectively than ever, it becomes virtual, it produces “integral reality” as the complete and final replacement for the world as symbolic form (Baudrillard 2005a: 17-24). The Code, simulation and virtuality become so dominant, so global, that overt forms of resistance or counter-systemic violence are absorbed within it. Countersystemic violence might be given a (safe) place to play out through the media and entertainment industries, or it might be neutralised by the system offering a simulated, commodified version of what protesters and dissenters demand – this was how the sexual revolution was neutralised, according to Baudrillard. However, new forms of violence emerge from within saturated, controlling and dissuasive systems, intra-genic forms which, Baudrillard suggests, seem to be “secreted” by the system itself as it reaches a bloated, excessive or “hypertelic” state. “The hate” is one example of such intra-genic violence. Racism, Indifference and “the Hate” The whole art of politics today is to whip up popular indifference (Baudrillard, Cool Memories II , 1996b: 16) What then is the relationship between the Code and violence and hatred? The Code both pacifies and produces hate; indeed it produces hatred through pacification. While consumer capitalism has, to some extent, achieved a pacifying effect on ‘structural’ hatred such as the racism of skin colour, the system generates new hatreds and new violence that cannot be ‘treated’ by socialisation, education and information. On racism specifically Baudrillard argues: Logically, it [racism] should have declined with the advance of Enlightenment and democracy. Yet the more hybrid our cultures become, and the more the theoretical and genetic bases of racism crumble away, the stronger it grows. But this is because we are dealing here with a mental object, with an artificial construction based on an erosion of the singularity of cultures and entry into the fetishistic system of difference. So long as there is otherness, strangeness and the (possibly violent) dual relation – as we see in anthropological accounts up to the eighteenth century and into the colonial period – there was no racism properly so-called … all forms of sexist, racist, ethnic or cultural discrimination arise out of the same profound disaffection and out of a collective mourning for a dead otherness, set against a background of general indifference (Baudrillard 199a6: 132). If the systemic violence of difference is ameliorated, at least in the world of signs and in what people are prepared to state openly, the post-dialectical violence of indifference seems to grow in intensity. The violence of in-difference or “the hate” is like an antibiotic resistant virus, a hospital ‘superbug’: it cannot be treated by the standard measures because the over-use of those very measures helped to produced it (Baudrillard 1996a: 142-7; 2005a: 141-55). The Code’s vast edifice of signs – “the fetishistic system of difference” – diversifies and assimilates producing ‘positive’ representations at the same time as the divide, both economic and cultural, between rich and poor deepens and ramifies. The edifice of signs actually “deters”, prevents or displaces the possibility of genuine social progress by delivering “simulated” social progress: signs of equality, signs of inclusion, signs of empowerment. Baudrillard’s contends that this “indifferent” society is based on the expulsion of all forms of “radical otherness”: foreignness, death, madness, negativity, ‘evil’, even the radical otherness of language is dismantled by linguistics and informationalisation. Such societies are, broadly, ‘tolerant’ but this means simply that there is a widespread indifference to the other. So long as the other conforms to the agenda set by liberal capitalism – a life reduced to usefulness, productivity, and distinctive regimes of consumption – that is, so long as the other remains fundamentally the same , the other is tolerated. Difference is tolerated so long as it remains within the identity/difference binary opposition, difference being plotted from the standards of sameness and identity. In a sense, difference and indifference become indistinguishable: minorities are tolerated in their difference when they can offer certain superficial differences within the consumer system: different food, different music, different clothes, different ‘culture’. Indeed ‘culture’ is increasingly understood as the inessential markings of certain groups: it is commonplace to hear talk of club culture, organisational culture, gay culture and these generally refer to nothing more than the current styles of speech, aesthetic preferences and consumption practices of these groups. The society of indifference generates a new and insidious form of racism. The “indifferent society” is not one where ‘anything goes’ or where there are no systemic exclusions, quite the reverse: “the whole movement of an indifferent society ends in victimhood and hatred” (Baudrillard 1996a: 131). What he calls the “negative passion of indifference” involves a “hysterical and speculative resurrection of the other” (1996: 131). This artificial other is “idealised by hatred”, by condescension or pity – the other becomes fetish. Racism is desperately seeking the other in the form of evil to be combated. The humanitarian seeks the other just as desperately in the form of victims to aid … [.] The scapegoat is no longer the person you hound, but the one whose lot you lament. But he is still a scapegoat and he is still the same person (Baudrillard 1996: 132). Hatred is secreted by the modern, liberal, indifferent reconstruction of the Other as other. This “negotiable other” is promoted, even celebrated but only through a compulsory registration on a single scale of identity/difference, a scale by which the other is assimilated, measured and judged. Indeed, for Baudrillard, this compulsory registration constitutes “a subtler form of extermination” than structural racism (1993b: 133). The other – the lower case, similar, yet marginally different other – is scapegoated by humanitarianism in search of an object of pity, by politicians seeking opportunities for televised performances of contrition, by the media seeking sensational and calamitous tales. But this is not simply misjudged charity, well-meaning but ineffective, the fetishising of the other serves a deeper purpose. Western power brokers urgently require an injection of reality, of real reality to shore up their public relations campaigns, their regimes of simulation, and the other as victim can be made to provide precisely this. Western politicians and corporations seek to “import their force and the energy of their misfortune” (Baudrillard 1996a: 134). The disastrous other of the ‘third world’ provides useful cover for the operation of neo-liberal and neo-conservative economic, cultural and military policies which maintain the third world in its disastrous, but to them, usefully disastrous condition. “The hate”, as Baudrillard figures it, cannot be broken down and understood through the structural or binary oppositions of self and other, black and white, inside and outside. The hate does not emanate from a recognisable position: a self, an ideology, a discourse or a culture, nor does it emerge from the ideology or culture of the other. The verb ‘to hate’, like the self or ego has been liberated and become autonomous: uprooted it flows and seeps crossing any boundary, any limit (Baudrillard 2005c: 141). The hate is networked, it travels at the speed of information, it has not one object or target but all and any; because it is not, primarily, hatred of something or someone, it is not reflective or critical nor does it propose alternatives. Having no definite object, goal or purpose, no programme or ideology, the hate is a particularly intractable and corrosive form of hatred. If these ideas appear rather formalistic or abstract, it is surprisingly easy to generate illustrative examples. If we take the violent protests by some Muslim groups, provoked by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten publishing cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in 2005, what precisely was the object of the protesters’ hate? It was not a particular newspaper, it was not the Danish state or people, it was, perhaps, not even ‘The West’ as such, it was the dominance of a system of representation that recognises no outside, no sacred, no ‘beyond’, that reduces all meanings, beliefs and sensations to signs. 9 To give other examples: the middle classes hate and fear the ‘hoodie’ or the baseball-capped ‘chav’; the BNP (British National Party) hate ‘Muslims’ though, increasingly, they ‘tolerate’ Hindus and Sikhs; motorists and air passengers suddenly experience “the hate”. These hates do not follow the limits of self and other, inside and outside, they are far more mobile and tactical; they flare up and then vanish or mutate before reappearing without warning. Yet, what Baudrillard’s position suggests is that we (in the sense noted above) do not hate the Other – the radically Other, we merely hate the other – as transcribed through the Code as ‘difference’. Thus transcribed an individual person is merely a conglomeration of signs which fabricate their ‘reality’ their ‘culture’ – and if this is what we are reduced to, why wouldn’t we hate each other? The Code then reduces the radically Other to the “dangerously similar”: dangerously similar because others differ only in sign content or position (Baudrillard 1993b: 129). In our superficial acceptance of the Code we hate (and we do all hate) the other as sign , as merely a signified ‘reality’. We encounter an other who is no more than the ‘reality’ of their signification; at best we are indifferent to the other and tolerate them. Indeed, we cannot but be indifferent to the other because it is through indifference that we tolerate.

### Radical Thought

#### We affirm the unknowable and indecipherable play of language. Happily embracing the felicitous and enigmatic play of language is necessary for debate to mean anything again. This is also the only political act that remains in a system over-coded by Sameness and Intelligibility.

Baudrillard 96 Jean, PhD in Sociology, Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School, *The Perfect Crime*, translated by Chris Turner, pp. 102-104

What are we to do, then? What becomes of the heterogeneity of thought in a world won over to the craziest hypotheses? When everything conforms, beyond even our wildest hopes, to the ironic, critical, alternative, catastrophic model?

Well, that is paradise: we are beyond the Last Judgement, in immortality. The only problem is to survive there. For there the irony, the challenging, the anticipation, the maleficence come to an end, as inexorably as hope dies at the gates of hell. And it is indeed there that hell begins, the hell of the unconditional realization of all ideas, the hell of the real. You can see why, as Adorno says, concepts prefer to scupper themselves rather than reach that point.

Something else has been stolen from us: indifference. The power of indifference, which is the quality of the mind, as opposed to the play of differences, which is the characteristic of the world. Now, this has been stolen from us by a world grown indifferent, as the extravagance of thought has been stolen from us by an extravagant world. When things, events, refer one to another and to their undifferentiated concept, then the equivalence of the world meets and cancels out the indifference of thought -- and we have boredom. No more altercations; nothing at stake. It is the parting of the dead sea.

How fine indifference was in a world that was not indifferent -- in a different, convulsive, contradictory world, a world with issues and passions! That being the case, indifference immediately became an issue and a passion itself. It could preempt the indifference of the world, and turn that pre-emption into an event. Today, it is difficult to be more indifferent to their reality than the facts themselves, more indifferent to their meaning than images. Our operational world is an apathetic world. Now, what good is it being passionless in a world without passion, or detached in a world without desire?

It is not a question of defending radical thought. Every idea one defends is presumed guilty, and every idea that cannot defend itself deserves to disappear. On the other hand, one must fight all charges of irresponsibility, nihilism or despair. Radical thought is never depressive. On this point, there is total misunderstanding. Ideological and moralistic critique, obsessed with meaning and content, obsessed with the political finality of discourse, never takes into account writing, the act of writing, the poetic, ironic, allusive force of language, of the juggling with meaning. It does not see that the resolution of meaning is to be found there -- in the form itself, the formal materiality of expression.

Meaning, for its part, is always unhappy. Analysis is, by definition, unhappy, since it is born of critical disillusionment. But language, for its part, is happy, even when referring to a world without illusion and without hope. That might even be the definition of a radical thinking: a happy form and an intelligence without hope.

Critics, being unhappy by nature, always choose ideas as their battleground. They do not see that if discourse always tends to produce meaning, language and writing, for their part, always create illusion -- they are the living illusion of meaning, the resolution of the infelicity of meaning by the felicity of language. And this is surely the only political -- or transpolitical -- act that can be accomplished by the person who writes.

As for ideas, everyone has them. More than they need. What counts is the poetic singularity of the analysis. That alone can justify writing, not the wretched critical objectivity of ideas. There never will be any resolving the contradictoriness of ideas, except in the energy and felicity of language. `I do not paint sadness and loneliness,' says Hopper. `What I wanted to do was to paint sunlight on the side of a house.'

At any rate, better a despairing analysis in felicitous language than an optimistic analysis in an infelicitous language that is maddeningly tedious and demoralizingly platitudinous, as is most often the case. The absolute tediousness secreted by that idealistic, voluntaristic thought is the secret sign of its despair -- as regards both the world and its own discourse. That is where true depressive thought is to be found, among those who speak only of the transcending and transforming of the world, when they are incapable of transfiguring their own language.

Radical thought is a stranger to all resolving of the world in the direction of an objective reality and its deciphering. It does not decipher. It anagrammatizes, it disperses concepts and ideas and, by its reversible sequencing, takes account both of meaning and of the fundamental illusoriness of meaning. Language takes account of the very illusion of language as definitive stratagem and, through it, of the illusion of the world as infinite trap, as seduction of the mind, as spiriting away of all our mental faculties. While it is a vehicle of meaning, it is at the same time a superconductor of illusion and non-meaning. Language is merely the involuntary accomplice of communication -- by its very form it appeals to the spiritual and material imagination of sounds and rhythm, to the dispersal of meaning in the event of language. This passion for artifice, for illusion, is the passion for undoing that too- beauteous constellation of meaning. And for letting the imposture of the world show through, which is its enigmatic function, and the mystification of the world, which is its secret. While at the same time letting its own imposture show through -- the impostor, not the composteur [composing stick] of meaning. This passion has the upper hand in the free and witty use of language, in the witty play of writing. Where that artifice is not taken into account, not only is its charm lost, but the meaning itself cannot be resolved.

Cipher, do not decipher. Work over the illusion. Create illusion to create an event. Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible what is only too intelligible, make the event itself unreadable. Accentuate the false transparency of the world to spread a terroristic confusion about it, or the germs or viruses of a radical illusion -- in other words, a radical disillusioning of the real. Viral, pernicious thought, corrosive of meaning, generative of an erotic perception of reality's turmoil.

### War Against the Real

#### Theory must wage war on the reality principle, ciphering instead of deciphering the Event so that it cannot be terrorized by the hegemony of the code. Our semiotic insurrection performatively enacts an intervention into the real that shatters what was once self-evidence into so many shards of confusion.

Strehle 14. Samuel Strehle, fellow in the DFG research training group “The Real and Modern Culture” at the University of Konstanz, Germany, MAs in sociology and philosophy from Albert-Ludwigs-Universitat Freiburg, Germany, researcher in the department of anthropology at the University of Trier, Germany, currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Basel, Switzerland, “A Poetic Anthropology of War: Jean Baudrillard and the 1991 Gulf War,” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014)

The production of war signs is linked to the issue of war not only in matters of content, but also in matters of form. Content-wise, war is just one of many fields in which reality signs are produced; regarding its form, however, it is the pure logic of war itself that works in this industry. The production of reality for Baudrillard is a kind of warfare itself: Not only is it a monologue of power, a “speech without response”, as he states in Requiem for the Media (1971: 172); even more, the “terrorism of the code” (ibid.: 179) is a war-like attack on our senses.

We, the viewers, are targets of a bombardment of signs and images. “Semiocracy”, Baudrillard (1976: 78) calls this terror in his writing on the New York Graffiti scene: we live under a dictatorship of signs (against which the Graffiti raise their anti-semiotic counterforce). The war sign industry is just one of many subdivisions of a society-wide ‘reality sign industry’ that floods our lives with all kinds of spectacular products and information. “We are all hostages of media intoxication, induced to believe in the war just as we were once led to believe in the revolution in Romania, and confined to the simulacrum of war as though confined to quarters. We are already all strategic hostages in situ; our site is the screen on which we are virtually bombarded day by day” (Baudrillard 1991b: 25).

Finally now, this is where Baudrillard’s genuine theoretical intervention takes place. Like the Graffiti writers, Baudrillard attempts to fight back against the terrorism of the code and its work of purification—somehow continuing Graffiti writing by other means. Baudrillard is leading his own war, his own counter-guerilla warfare against the reality principle. What are his spray cans? Which are the walls on which he puts his ‘mark on society’? It is the holy walls of theoretical discourse that Baudrillard defaces with a low tech weapon called “theoretical terrorism”, as he called it once (Baudrillard 1983a: 91, my translation)—a thinking made to oppose, to challenge the hegemony of reality.

The idea of ‘theoretical terrorism’ is strongly linked to his concept of “reversibility”[13](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote13) —a key term in Baudrillard’s thinking. The term may be characterized by two main aspects: At first, it refers to the reciprocity of gift exchange in which there is no closure of exchange but an endless changing and challenging of sides. In this regard, it is a name for the symbolic fluidity of power.[14](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote14)  At second, it refers to a principle of changing a situation by radically reversing its viewing angle—“poetic transference of the situation”, as Baudrillard calls it in Impossible Exchange (1999: 85).

Being a rather “phantastic principle” (Zapf 2010: 145, my translation), the concept of reversibility is linked with the most powerful and yet most clandestine subtext in Baudrillard’s oeuvre: ’Pataphysics. The idea behind this absurd science of “imaginary solutions” is as simple as it is mysterious: It is an attempt to create a different reality through imagination.[15](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote15)  Pataphysicians fight reality through the use of imaginary forces, through creating illusion and deceit.

It is easily overlooked how central this pataphysical approach has been for Baudrillard; even his most serious book, Symbolic Exchange and Death, is surprisingly full of pataphysical statements, especially in the dense, programmatic introductory pages: “The only strategy against the hyperrealist system is some form of pataphysics, ‘a science of imaginary solutions’; that is, a science-fiction of the system’s reversal against itself at the extreme limit of simulation, a reversible simulation in a hyperlogic of death and destruction” (Baudrillard 1976: 4 f.).

How can “science-fiction” shatter the system of reality? Baudrillard explains his strategy later in The Perfect Crime (1995), especially in the section on “Radical Thought”, and in Impossible Exchange (1999). Ideas, he claims, can create their own reality, since thinking is a performative act that builds its own ‘parallel world’: “Thought […] does not seek to penetrate some mystery of the world, nor to discover its hidden aspect—it is that hidden aspect. It does not discover that the world has a double life—it is that double life, that parallel life” (Baudrillard 1999: 149). In the performative “act of thinking” (ibid.: 115), reality is not so much depicted but challenged. The purpose of theory for Baudrillard is the exact opposite of what we normally would expect: It should not recognize and analyze reality, instead it must deny and contradict its hegemony. It has to create illusion and establish a power of seduction that makes one lose the path of reality. The “value of thought”, claims Baudrillard (1995: 94), “lies not so much in its inevitable convergences with truth as in the immeasurable divergences which separate it from truth.”

Only in awareness of those abstract ’Pataphysics can we distill any sense out of some of the oddest remarks in Baudrillard’s oeuvre, for example his “delirious self-criticism” from Cool Memories where he accuses himself of “having surreptitiously mixed my phantasies in with reality” and of “having systematically opposed the most obvious and well-founded notions” (Baudrillard 1987: 38). He even complains about readers taking his theories for actual facts and reading them in a “realist version”: “Simulacra are today accepted everywhere in their realist version: simulacra exist, simulation exists. It is the intellectual and fashionable version of this vulgarization which is the worst: all is sign, signs have abolished reality, etc.” (Ibid.: 227).

Instead of this “realist version”, Baudrillard suggests that even his most prominent terms can be regarded as pataphysical attempts to seduce his readers through fictitious ideas, for example when he admits to having “put forward the idea of simulacrum, without really believing in it, even hoping that the real will refute it” (Baudrillard 1995: 101). Apparently he understands his thinking to be something like a playful simulacrum itself, for also theory can precede—and thereby seduce—reality: “The theoretical ideal would be to set in place propositions in such a way that they could be disconfirmed by reality, in such a way that reality could only oppose them violently, and thereby unmask itself. For reality is an illusion, and all thought must seek first of all to unmask it. To do that, it must itself advance behind a mask and constitute itself as a decoy, without regard for its own truth. [...] Reality must be caught in the trap, we must move quicker than reality” (ibid.: 99).

In this sense, Baudrillard’s writing is “theory-fiction” (Baudrillard 1991c: 202) rather than theory, as he borrows a term from Jean-François Lyotard (1979: 92 f., cp. Blask, 2002: 133).  Like all ’Pataphysics, this notion of “theory-fiction” may be traced back to the surrealists and their “poetic anthropology”, as Dietmar Kamper (1981, my translation) has called it. Such an anthropology is “poetic” because it refers to the art of writing, but also because it touches the original notion of “poiesis”, meaning to create something. ‘Poetic anthropology’ does not seek to describe a reality that lies out there, instead it aims to autopoietically produce the subject it writes about through its own act of description.

Theory for Baudrillard is a “paradoxical political intervention” (Zapf 2010: 241, my translation). Thinking itself has to become the ambiguous kind of “singularity” (Baudrillard 1995: 96) and “event” (ibid.: 104) that is eliminated from almost any other sphere of the system: “Cipher, do not decipher. Work over the illusion. Create illusion to create an event. Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible what is only too intelligible, make the event itself unreadable. Accentuate the false transparency of the world to spread a terroristic confusion about it, or the germs or viruses of a radical illusion—in other words, a radical disillusioning of the real.” (Ibid.: 104).

Maybe this is the most unique aspect of Baudrillard’s thinking altogether. He is a thinker who tries to think the world different from what it actually is. He sees himself as something like a smuggler or drug dealer, pushing forbidden items on a “black market in thought” (Baudrillard 1999: 104), promoting “a clandestine trade in ideas, of all inadmissible ideas, of unassailable ideas, as the liquor trade had to be promoted in the 1930s” (Baudrillard 1995: 104 f.).

If Baudrillard is the drug dealer of sociology, what does this imply for his analysis of war and his reference to the principles of symbolic exchange and the duel form? If we want to believe Baudrillard that he is not interested in rehabilitating older wars, we should read his reference systematically rather than historically [16](http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-11_2/v11-2-strehle.html#ft-endnote16)—there might have never been any historical war as glamorous and honorable as portrayed by Clausewitz anyway. Hence, the introduction of symbolic exchange and the duel principle into the analysis of war might be more like a strategy to introduce a different view of things into the common perception of war. It delivers the necessary contrast against which the aestheticized, whitewashed reality of the war can be scrutinized and deconstructed as not the only possible reality of war. Only in the light of its radical other can the reality of war be denaturalized and revealed as a self-display of power and hegemony.

In this regard, Baudrillard has always remained a critical thinker who seeks to intervene into reality instead of just observing it. To the same degree he is neither a cynic nor a fatalist, that is—a resigned thinker. On the contrary, in an interview on the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center he even aligns himself with the ideas of the Enlightenment: “Fatalism offers an unpalatable interpretation of the world, for it leads to resignation. I don’t resign myself, I want clarity, a lucid consciousness. When we know the rules of the game, then we can change them. In this respect, I am a man of the Enlightenment” (Baudrillard 2002b). There is one major difference, though, between Baudrillard and the classical Enlightenment: He wishes for “clarity” and lucidity, he wants to “know the rules of the game”, but he does not seek the truth; he wants to “change” the rules of the game by diverting the game from its truth.

It does not seem to matter so much to Baudrillard if his instance of contrast—symbolic exchange and the duel principle—is more fictitious or real, illusionary or true; most possibly it has something of both sides, being undecidable like a simulacrum in the strongest sense. When Baudrillard writes about the Gulf War, he creates an odd mixture of lucid observations on the one hand and theoretical seductions on the other. If there could ever be something like ‘war studies’ in the spirit of Baudrillard, they would have to dare not to eliminate this undecidability, otherwise they would lose the spirit.

What matters the most for Baudrillard is the effort to break open the uniform process of reality production and shatter its seeming self-evidence into pieces. Theory according to Baudrillard is an attempt to reverse our view of the world—shifting our perspective by introducing something new and unsettling into the order of things. What seemed natural before, now starts to look artificial; what presented itself as a glorious triumph suddenly appears stale; what was evident becomes shady. Baudrillard’s theories are like evil ghosts: They haunt reality by staging its excluded other—no matter if this other really exists or if it has to be feigned.

# Bataille CP??

### “organisation pik”

#### CP: [plan text but remove O from NATO]

#### That solves.

Bataille 45 (Georges, tried to remove his head, On Nietzsche, 1945, edited for language)

“Life." I said. "is bound to be lost in death, as a river loses itself in the sea, the known in the unknown" (Inner Experiena). And death is the end life easily reaches (as water does sea level). So why would I wish to turn my desire to be persuasive into a worry? I dissolve into myself like the sea-and I know the roaring waters of the torrent head straight at me! Whatever a judicious understanding sometimes seems too rude, an inunense folly connected with it (understanding is only an infinitesimal part of that folly), doesn't hesitate to give back. The certainty of incoher· ence in reading, the inevitable crumbling of the soundest constructions, is the deep truth of books. Since appearance constitutes a limit, what truly exists is a dissolution into common opacity rather than a development of lucid thinking. The apparent unchangingness of books is deceptive: each book is also the sum of the misunderstandings it occasions. So why exhaust myself with efforts toward consciousness? I can only make fun of myself as I write. (Why write even a phrase if laughter doesn't immediately join me?) It goes without saying that, for the task. I bring to bear whatever rigor I have within me. But the crumbling nature of thinking's awareness of itself and especially the certainty of thinking reaching its end only in failing, hinder any repose and prevent the relaxed state that facilitates a rigorous disposition of things. Committed to the casual stance-l think and express myself in the free play of hazard.) Obviously, everyone in some way admits the importance of hazard. But this recognition is as minimal and unconscious as possible. Going my way unconstrained, unhampered. I develop my thoughts, make choices with regard to expression-but I don't have the control over myself that I want. And the actual dynamic of my intelligence is equally uncontrollable. So that l owe to other dynamics-to lucky chance and to fleeting moments of relaxation-the minimal order and relative learning that I do have. And the rest of the time . . . Thus, as I see it my thought proceeds in harmony with its object, an object that it attains more and perfectly the greater the state of its own ruin. Though it isn't necessarily conscious of this. At one and the same time my thinking must reach plenary illumination and dissolution . . . In the same individual, thought must construct and destroy itself. And even that isn't quite right. Even the most rigorous thinkers yield to chance. In addition, the demands inherent in the exercise of thought often take me far from where I started. One of the great difficulties encountered by understanding is to put order into thought's interrelations in time. In a given moment, my thought reaches considerable rigor. But how to link it with yesterday's thinking? Yesterday, in a sense, I was another person, responding to other worries. Adapting one to the other remains possible, but . . . This insufficiency bothers me no more than the insufficiency relating to the many woes of the human condition generally. Humanness is related in us to nonsatisfaction. a nonsatisfaction to which we yield without accepting it, though; we distance ourselves from humanness when we regard ourselves as satisfied or when we give up searching for satisfaction. Sartre is right in relation to me to recall the myth Of Sisyphus, though "in relation to me" here equates to "in relation to humanity," I suppose. What can be expected of us is to go as far as possible and not to stop. What by contrast, humanly speaking, can be criticized are endeavors whose only meaning is some relation to moments of completion. Is it possible for me to go further? I won't wait to coordinate my efforts in that case-I'll go further. I'll take the risk. And the reader, free not to venture after me, will often take advantage of that same freedom! The critics are right to scent danger here! But let me in turn paint out a greater danger, one that comes from methods that, adequate only to an outcome of knowledge, confer on individuals whom they limit a sheerly fragmentary existence-an existence that is mutilated with respect to the whole that remains inaccessible.

### Extensions

#### There was only one debate to be had, that of being versus becoming.

Bataille 39 (Georges, leader of a secret society, “The Labyrinth”, <https://onscenes.weebly.com/philosophy/the-labyrinth-georges-bataille>, 1927-1939) \*we don’t endorse gendered language

The Insufficiency of Beings MEN ACT IN ORDER TO BE. This must not be understood in the negative sense of conservation (conserving in order not to be thrown out of existence by death), but in the positive sense of a tragic and incessant combat for a satisfaction that is almost beyond reach. From incoherent agitation to crushing sleep, from chatter to turning inward, from overwhelming love to hardening hate, existence sometimes weakens and sometimes accomplishes "being." And not only do states have a variable intensity, but different beings "are" unequally. A dog that runs and barks seems "to be" more than a mute and clinging sponge, the sponge more than the water in which it lives, an influential man more than a vacant passerby. ​In the first movement, where the force that the master has at his disposal puts the slave at his mercy, the master deprives the slave of a part of his being. Much later, in return, the "existence" of the master is impoverished to the extent that it distances itself from the material elements of life. The slave enriches his being to the extent that he enslaves these elements by the work to which his impotence condemns him. ​The contradictory movements of degradation and growth attain, in the diffuse development of human existence, a bewildering complexity. The fundamental ​separation of men into masters and slaves is only the crossed threshold, the entry into the world of specialized functions where personal "existence" empties itself of its contents; a man is no longer anything but a part of being, and his life, engaged in the game of creation and destruction that goes beyond it, appears as a degraded particle lacking reality. The very fact of assuming that knowledge is a function throws the philosopher back into the world of petty inconsistencies and dissections of lifeless organs. Isolated as much from action as from the dreams that turn action away and echo it in the strange depths of animated life, he led astray the very being that he chose as the object of his uneasy comprehension. "Being" increases in the tumultuous agitation of a life that knows no limits; it wastes away and disappears if he who is at the same time "being" and knowledge mutilates himself by reducing himself to knowledge. ​This deficiency can grow even greater if the object of knowledge is no longer being in general but a narrow domain, such as an organ, a mathematical question, a juridical form. Action and dreams do not escape this poverty (each time they are confused with the totality of being), and, in the multicolored immensity of human lives, a limitless insufficiency is revealed; life, finding its endpoint in the happiness of a bugle blower or the snickering of a village chair-renter, is no longer the fulfillment of itself, but is its own ludicrous degradation-its fall is comparable to that of a king onto the floor. ​At the basis of human life there exists a principle ofinsufficiency. In isolation, each man sees the majority of others as incapable or unworthy of "being." There is found, in all free and slanderous conversation, as an animating theme, the awareness of the vanity and the emptiness of our fellowmen; an apparently stagnant conversation betrays the blind and impotent flight of all life toward an indefinable summit. ​The sufficiency of each being is endlessly contested by every other. Even the look that expresses love and admiration comes to me as a doubt concerning my reality. A burst of laughter or the expression of repugnance greets each gesture, each sentence or each oversight through which my profound insufficiency is betrayed-just as sobs would be the response to my sudden death, to a total and irremediable omission. This uneasiness on the part of everyone grows and reverberates, since at each detour, with a kind of nausea, men discover their solitude in empty night. The universal night in which everything finds itself-and soon loses itself-would appear to be existence for nothing, without influence, equivalent to the absence of being, were it not for human nature that emerges within it to give a dramatic importance to being and life. But this absurd night manages to empty itself of "being" and meaning each time a man discovers within it human destiny, itself locked in turn in a comic impasse, like a hideous and discordant trumpet blast. That which, in me, demands that there be "being" in the world, "being" and ​not just the manifest insufficiency of human or nonhuman nature, necessarily projects (at one time or another and in reply to human chatter) divine sufficiency across space, like the reflection of an impotence, of a servilely accepted malady of being. II. The Composite Character of Beings and the Impossibility of Fixing Existence in Any Given Ipse Being in the world is so uncertain that I can project it where I want-outside of me. It is a clumsy man, still incapable of eluding the intrigues of nature, who locks being in the me. Being in fact is found NOWHERE and it was an easy game for a sickly malice to discover it to be divine, at the summit of a pyramid formed by the multitude of beings, which has at its base the immensity of the simplest matter. Being could be confined to the electron if ipseity were precisely not lacking in this simple element. The atom itself has a complexity that is too elementary to be determined ipsely.' The number of particles that make up a being intervene in a sufficiently heavy and clear way in the constitution of its ipseity; if a knife has its handle and blade indefinitely replaced, it loses even the shadow of ipseity; it is not the same for a machine which, after five or six years, loses each of the numerous elements that constituted it when new. But the ipseity that is finally apprehended with difficulty in the machine is still only shadowlike. Starting from an extreme complexity, being imposes on reflection more than the precariousness of a fugitive appearance, but this complexity-displaced little by little-becomes in turn the labyrinth where what had suddenly come forward strangely loses its way. ​A sponge is reduced by pounding to a dust of cells; this living dust is formed by a multitude of isolated beings, and is lost in the new sponge that it reconstitutes. A siphonophore fragment is by itself an autonomous being, yet the whole siphonophore, to which this fragment belongs, is itself hardly different from a being possessing unity. Only with linear animals (worms, insects, fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals) do the living individual forms definitively lose the faculty of constituting aggregates bound together in a single body. But while societies of nonlinear animals do not exist, superior animals form aggregates without ever giving rise to corporeal links; men as well as beavers or ants form societies of individuals whose bodies are autonomous. But in regard to being, is this autonomy the final appearance, or is it simply error? In men, all existence is tied in particular to language, whose terms determine its modes of appearance within each person. Each person can only represent his total existence, if only in his own eyes, through the medium of words. Words spring forth in his head, laden with a host of human or superhuman lives in relation to which he privately exists. Being depends on the mediation of words,which cannot merely present it arbitrarily as "autonomous being," but which must present it profoundly as "being in relation." One need only follow, for a short time, the traces of the repeated circuits of words to discover, in a disconcerting vision, the labyrinthine structure ofthe human being. What is commonly called knowing-when a man knows his neighbor-is never anything but existence composed for an instant (in the sense that all existence composes itselfthus the atom composes its unity from variable electrons), which once made of these two beings a whole every bit as real as its parts. A limited number of exchanged phrases, no matter how conventional, sufficed to create the banal interpenetration of two existing juxtaposed regions. The fact that after this short exchange the man is aware of knowing his neighbor is opposed to a meeting without recognition in the street, as well as to the ignorance of the multitude of beings that one never meets, in the same way that life is opposed to death. The knowledge of human beings thus appears as a mode of biological connection, unstable but just as real as the connections between cells in tissue. The exchange between two human particles in fact possesses the faculty of surviving momentary separation. A man is only a particle inserted in unstable and entangled wholes. These wholes are composed in personal life in the form of multiple possibilities, starting with a knowledge that is crossed like a threshold-and the existence of the particle can in no way be isolated from this composition, which agitates it in the midst of a whirlwind of ephemerids. This extreme instability of connections alone permits one to introduce, as a puerile but convenient illusion, a representation of isolated existence turning in on itself. ​In the most general way, every isolable element of the universe always appears as a particle that can enter into composition with a whole that transcends it. Being is only found as a whole composed ofparticles whose relative autonomy is maintained. These two principles dominate the uncertain presence of an ipse being across a distance that never ceases to put everything in question. Emerging in universal play as unforeseeable chance, with extreme dread imperatively becoming the demand for universality, carried away to vertigo by the movement that composes it, the ipse being that presents itself as a universal is only a challenge to the diffuse immensity that escapes its precarious violence, the tragic negation of all that is not its own bewildered phantom's chance. But, as a man, this being falls into the meanders of the knowledge of his fellowmen, which absorbs his substance in order to reduce it to a component of what goes beyond the virulent madness of his autonomy in the total night of the world.

#### The great tragedy of modern warfare is its indifference and apathy. Utility slowly arises and suffocates all modes of relationality and expenditure, reducing all sacrifices to dull cyclical routine from its citizen-devotees – yet like a tea-kettle, existence screams for release.

Hamblet 05 (Wendy, Professor of Liberal Studies at North Carolina, “The Manic Ecstasy of War”, <https://sci-hub.se/10.1080/14631370500292052>, 2005, ‘er’)

* monocephalic: one head
* acephalic: no head
* chthonic: undeworld-esque gods, like hades

Intricate unyielding systems of rules and regulations—passports, licenses, identity cards, forms completed in triplicate, travel restrictions, immigration regulations, police interrogations, surveillance of social and financial transactions among subgroups, security checkpoints, departments of homeland security—weed out the deviant lifeforms until ultimately all countervoices have been silenced, all rebellion quite obliterated, all evolutionary movement logically contradictory. But, at this evolutionary apex, a problem arises in paradise. As the monocephalic state increasingly closes itself off, it stifles social existence, smothers creative energies, chokes the passion from its citizen-devotees, suffocates their spiritual urges, and reduces all sacrifices to mundane utility. When the perfect eternality of the structure is complete and the nation duly deified, all labors have become co-opted in utter servitude. Bataille names this culminating stage of development, the peaceful, stable end sought by all states, in its most excessive extrapolation—fascism. Ultimately, however, life and time must break free and move forward into futures. This most solid state holds firm for a short while only; then there begins a condensation of forces. Life rises up and explodes the suffocating stasis, disintegrating the solid, erect whole. Existence and liberty flow forth in rage, blood, tears, and passion. The death of God is complete. For Bataille, these endless cycles describe the movement of history: the erection of unitary gods of knowledge and power that ultimately ossify into totalities, and then explode in hysterical, raging catastrophes, releasing the explosive liberty of life from mundane servitude. The acephalic chaos will eventually recompose, slowly heaving up an ugly divine head once again. Life turns back on its chaotic freedom and develops what Bataille calls an aversion to the initial decomposition. The chaotic structure moves from the ek-stasis bliss of wanton pleasures and pains toward the stasis of the deity once again. Time, states, and human individuals, for Bataille, move between the two contradictory forms: stasis and ek-stasis. Time demands both forms in the world—the eternal return of an imperative object, and the explosive, creative, destructive rage of the liberty of life. Bataille’s analysis of state evolution offers resolution to the mystery of the frequency of wars in the modern civilized era: It suggests that war composes a “potlatch”—a manic ecstasy of useless self-expenditure that permits a breakout from mundane servitude. We may not readily recognize, in our states, the extreme forms that Bataille describes—fascist stasis or chaotic ecstasy. We believe that, although chaos is unquestionably undesirable, fascism is promoted only by madmen—Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin. We may be convinced that fascist urges fade with global democracy where all people will, eventually, know the order and security of the first world. Modern Western states, we may object, compose a golden mean between Bataille’s two economies, aspiring neither to fascism nor to a manic primitivism, but to the reasonable metron of golden rules. But the roots of the Western world are well planted in the fascist drive for hyper-order and changeless eternality. Hesiod and the PreSocratics, as much as Jewish and Christian myth, cite a common arche of the universe in the good works of a god that renders order (cosmos) out of chaos (kaos). For the ancients, one head (cephalus) is far superior to many; simplicity is beauty, whereas the many compose hoi poloi, an embarrassment of riches. The foundational logic that posits monocephalic order as ontologically and morally superior to acephalic multivocity remains an unquestioned assumption embedded in the Western lifeworld. A single well-ordered edifice, stretching high into the sky—erect, rigid, unyielding—is preferable, in the Western mind, to the broadest playing field studded with incongruous heroics. Bataille’s meditations on the dark underside of reason’s projects and triumphs, on such prohibited subjects as monstrous tortures, illicit sexual excesses, and the colorful anuses of apes, provide a theater of cruelty and death that is designed to challenge the polite threshold of civilized culture, to shock and interrupt the philosophical tradition it invades, and to subvert the pretenses of refined sophistication thought definitive of civilized society. Bataille shows that people are torn by conflicting drives, by lofty ideals, and by the dark concealed forces they suppress and deny. Lorenz states that Bataille’s treatment of the dark, concealed urges in human nature offer resolution to the paradox of the simultaneous lofty goals of modern states and the frequency of brutal aggressions by those very states naming themselves the most civilized. Perhaps the popularity and frequency of war even in the civilized modern era represents the release of suppressed subterranean drives within industrialized, rationalist, rigidly hierarchically ordered populations enslaved to reason and utility. The violence that floods the globe in modernity, that claims to be serving reasonable projects of global freedom and democracy, may represent new forms expressing old desires, the projects of monocephalic statehood aspiring to deification. Bataille recognizes chthonic forces as instrumental in the modern world: “The economic history of modern times is dominated by the epic but disappointing effort of fierce men to plunder the riches of the Earth [and turn its fire and metal into weapons] ... . [M]an [lives] an existence at the mercy of the merchandise he produces, the largest part of which is devoted to death.” The fierce men of modernity—gods, kings, and their modern sequels (presidents, popes, corporate rulers)—extend their control to the ends of the planet. Fierce men disembowel the Earth and turn on their own kind the products of molten metal torn from her bowels to ensure the permanence of their nations. War, states Bataille, “represents the desperate obstinacy of man opposing the exuberant power of time and finding security in an immobile and almost somnolent erection.” Bataille believes that primitive urges are still at work in the projects of modernity. Human beings, as much as superstructures of power, must satisfy their dark urges for the good of their communities. They must release their death drives if they are to gather together in heartfelt communities. Human beings crave mystical, passionate, frenzied escape from the rigorous projects of their ordered systems. If Bataille is correct, people must ultimately break free from the mundane enterprises of their everyday lives. Their inner demons will beckon them from their ordered worlds to revel in orgiastic festival. Surely Bataille’s claim—that life’s erotic drives will out and fulfill themselves in deathly destructiveness and wanton joy—should trouble us greatly, given the leveling effects of modern industrial society, its will to mediocrity, utility, and conformity. But is Bataille correct in his attribution of a measureless and rending character to modern war? Is modern warfare the aimless catastrophe that Bataille claims it to be? If so, then modern wars can be explained, according to Bataille, as ecstatic release from the fascist orientation of modern ordered states and from people’s imprisonment within the merchandise they produce. Modern war, with its Shock and Awe techno-theatrics, should provide a wondrous release from mundane servitude. War could be said to satisfy collective fantasies of manic omnipotence and the drive for self-sacrifice for sacred values. Perhaps the wars of modernity occur with such rabid frequency because people must satisfy their suppressed lust for a sexualized release from the cold reality of state projects, the utilitarian reasons of state. This resonates with Clausewitz’s claim that people’s martial enthusiasm must find release in politically restrained wars or fulfill itself in the maximum exertion of self-expenditure, that is, self-annihilation. For Clausewitz, modernity represents that unfettered stage when war has escaped all political bounds and reasonable restraint. Although ostensibly a world driven by the lofty goals, modernity—for Clausewitz—composes an era of absolute war. The democratic revolution may have embraced other goals—citizen welfare and the grandeur of their rulers—but democracy, for Clausewitz, composes merely one of a number of crucial forces (the scientific revolution that provides the technology, the industrial revolution that provides mass production of weaponry, and the imperialism that draws the entire globe into the war system) that have been successfully harnessed to the powerprojects of the mightiest nations. The goods of the modern West, including the good of democracy, exist to extend Western hegemony globally in the marketplace of military power. But Bataille claims that war is useless expenditure—a release of the primal urges of a community toward excessive overflow. He states: “Military existence is based on a brutal negation of any profound meaning of death and, if it uses cadavers, it is only to make the living march in a straighter line.” But, if war is to be posited as an ecstatic release, it must compose orgiastic overflow, an entirely useless and pointless expenditure of the nation’s finest goods. Excessive expenditure is defeated the moment the violent explosion of forces serves mundane projects of servitude and utility. When war serves the purposes of the state, it loses its manic and ecstatic character and ceases to fulfill the people’s deepest needs for release from servitude and instrumentality. But Bataille is mistaken; the apparent uselessness of modern warfare is a deception, an illusion. War is one of the oldest traditions of our species. It has become a timeworn vehicle precisely because it serves a great many functions in states. Clausewitz names the institution of war a form of communication between nations. Franco Fornari states: “War is a multifunctional institution. ... It is extremely difficult to find a substitute that would perform all of its functions.” One of the most crucial functions that war provides in service of the state is the crystallization of its monopoly on violence. War is a crucial aspect of the centralizing, evolutionary process that culminates, ultimately, in fascist stability. The establishment of a massive and robust military is utterly necessary to the deification of the structure and the raising of a sturdy cephalus, because, along with the creation of strong policing and military forces, war serves to alienate the private violence of the citizens and place their collective aggressive energies into the hands of the cephalus. War serves the collective illusion of eternality. War serves other crucial functions in the state: it confirms the values, virtues, and meanings of one’s own cultural group. Sacred symbols—flags, national anthems, tales of past heroes, fallen ancestors—are put to work in luring the best of the nation—its strong and courageous youths—to the extreme patriotism required to maintain order in fascist regimes. The seduction of the nation’s best to its wars includes their provision of an international stage to display the collective prowess of the nation, a point of pride for all citizens, even the most oppressed of the society, and it allows for the individual display of the soldiers’ manly character—the valor, the selflessness, the loyalty. The wars of modern super-states continue in the tradition of imperialist projects of old. Posited as serving the most selfless values—the advancement of freedom, democracy, and the spread of civilization—today’s wars clearly bring too massive a booty to be named selfless expenditures. In fact, for the past fifty years, wars have increasingly become shameless lootings of helpless peoples—the projects of economists and accountants and big businessmen purified by political propaganda and backed by an arsenal of modern techno-weaponry. War serves the needs of the cephalus; it serves the personal narcissism of the leaders, and the collective narcissism of the combatants and civilians. Above all, modern wars serve economic goals; their booty is prodigious. They may cost the sacred love-object (the nation) massive capital, human and monetary, but the generals, the political leaders, and their corporate cronies profit handsomely from the hostilities. War also serves the fantasy that the sacred love-object is the savior and benefactor of the globe; war serves the paranoid collective delusion that the cephalus is infallible and indestructible, unlimited as the god in its strength and in its moral substance. Killing the enemies, propagandized as evil, the collective illusion is fed that evil is overthrown: thus the sanctity of the loveobject is preserved. Sacred values are recomposed; the cephalus stands taller, more erect, more firm than ever in the wake of a good war. But for all the benefits served by the institution of war, modern wars are deeply tragic; they do waste millions of innocent lives; they tear apart societies and disburse homeless families across the globe. One in nine of the earth’s seven billion now lives a miserable, wandering, hopeless existence on parched lands where even the earth mother is barren. Ultimately the greatest tragedy of modern war lies in its stark utility to the few at the extreme expenditure of its many. The utility of war defeats the purposes of war by frustrating the deepest needs of the society—the people’s need to build heartfelt communities, a need that can only be served by expressing the collective aggressive energies of the society beyond utility. Bataille states that: “Since [war] is essentially constituted by armed force, it can give to those who submit to its force of attraction nothing that satisfies the great human hungers, because it subordinates everything to a particular utility ... it must force its half-seduced lovers to enter the inhuman and totally alienated world of barracks, military prisons, and military administrations.” In fact, it may well be the non-release of ecstatic urges that explains a state’s return, year after year and decade after decade, to that old institution. It may be that the deepest paradox of modern war is that, in its usefulness to the cephalus and in its service to the fascist drives of the state, war proves utterly useless in dispensing its most fundamental function; it ceases to discharge the most vicious and cruel needs of the people, their deepest primitive motivations, whose collective release makes possible the formation of a heartfelt community. Bataille counts this failure as the most tragic of the multiple tragedies of modern war. The sacred values of community—life, freedom, festival, and the joy of communal fraternity—are rendered meaningful only in juxtaposition to their opposites. Bataille states: “The emotional element that gives an obsessive value to communal life is death.” But, ultimately, insists Bataille, the sacrifice will be celebrated beyond the reasonable purposes of the cephalus. If Bataille is correct, then we can be certain that, for those states whose wars are utterly utilitarian, self-annihilation is imminent.

#### “We try to escape from elementary horror, but, in the darkness and dead silence, it maintains…everything we have not been able to reduce to the reassuring order, a movement to which we know we shall later succumb.” – Georges Bataille

Meiches 19 (Benjamin, assistant professor of security studies and conflict resolution at the University of Washington-Tacoma, “Wars of excess: Georges Bataille, solar economy, and the accident in the age of precision war”, <https://sci-hub.se/https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619887845>, 2019, ‘er’)

* 3pt font is a rant about “birdstrikes”

In his most systematic effort to connect excess to politics, The Accursed Share, Bataille (1988a: 7–15) addresses the problem of solar economy (also described as ‘general economy’) as a background condition for all organic and political life. Instead of approaching economic and politics from the perspective of exchange, Bataille begins with the surplus energy of the sun, which ceaselessly descends to the planet’s surface. For Bataille, all ecologies, all organisms, and therefore all social systems are formed from this relentless production of solar excess. Classical studies of economics and politics only focus on the patterns of what he calls ‘restricted economies’ while neglecting the background conditions that give rise to their dynamics.1 Solar economy, Bataille contends, forces organized systems of any complexity to invent mechanisms for expending or ridding themselves of excess, since the sun continually produces surpluses of energy.2 Bataille applies this principle across multiple scales, from the reproduction of bacteria in the form of scissiparity (cell division), to the ecstatic, wasteful rituals of human sacrifice, to contemporary economic exchange. Each of these processes is a form of expenditure that consumes or gets rid of excess as a response to ‘the circulation of energy at this point in the universe’ (Bataille, 1988a: 20, emphasis added). Bataille draws two lessons from this observation. First, any social system relies not only on processes of production, the classic Marxist emphasis, but also on elaborate methods of consuming or expending excesses. Second, because solar economy constitutes a base condition for life, the expenditure of excess also impacts questions of value. Indeed, Bataille views many traditional ideals and ideologies as antithetical to the condition of solar economy. Paradigms that privilege rationality, calculation, or utility, for instance, presume the power to measure and determine the ends of any given political or economic situation. While utility and rationality work in the limited context of restricted economies, solar economy has no limits since it is defined by excess; there is always some part of it that is beyond human comprehension or aspirations. Rationality, utility, and the preservation of the future are, at base, ambitions antithetical to the excessive character of solar economy. In contrast to these paradigms, Bataille describes multiple societal mechanisms for expending or consuming excess. The Accursed Share traces these dynamics in historical contexts that include Aztec sacrifices, potlatch practices, the rise of Islam, the Protestant Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, communism, and modern warfare. Fully outlining each of these cases is beyond the scope of this article, but Bataille (1988a: 27) clarifies that all societies presuppose the solar economy ‘on which [they] depend, which [they] cannot limit, and whose laws [they] cannot ignore without consequences’. In each case, the organizing problem is the question of ‘how the wealth is to be squandered’ (Bataille, 1988a: 23). For Bataille, war constitutes a particularly important form of expenditure. He highlights multiple elements of armed conflict that facilitate expenditure at different historical moments. Military action presupposes movement, flight, and the catastrophic loss in the irrecuperable force of ballistics (Land, 1991: 40–42). Expenditures occur in the intensities and frenzy of combat, which involve not only physical volatility and waste but also the exposure of life to death without recovery. From the edge of a blade, to the fragmentation of a bullet, to the explosion of an intercontinental ballistic missile, the use of weapons involves non-recuperable expenditures of force that are excessive in relation to the body they strike (Lambert, 2013). While armies tend to produce hierarchical organizational structures and states often pursue war in order to accumulate, Bataille believes that, underlying these dynamics, war remains a mode of expenditure. Bataille’s position is not an attempt to naturalize warfare. Rather, he believes that excess is a precondition for the development and innovation of human societies. The existence of excess leads to contestations, excess human energy spent in disputes over how to organize social affairs, and this, in the extreme, also generates warfare. While war entails certain violence, Bataille views it more fundamentally as a creative process of expenditure in response to the pressures of solar economy.3 Bataille views the rise of modern industrial warfare as reversing the relationship between war and the expenditure of excess by transforming armed conflict into a rational exercise structured by principles of utility and accumulation. Bataille interprets the conjunction of capitalism, economic rationalization, and the rise of the bureaucratic state as converting warfare into a means of accumulation. Here is Bataille (1985: 200): ‘national and military life are present in the world to try to deny death. . .. [N]ation and army profoundly separate man from a universe given over to lost expenditures and to the unconditional explosion of its parts’. Several arguments are implicit in this quote. First, the accumulation of martial forces during the early 20th century was bound to produce large-scale conflict because such processes of accumulation were inherently unstable since they were predicated on controlling a volatile excess that would eventually produce expenditure in the form of catastrophic loss of life. Second, during the rise of industrial warfare, armed conflict was slowly redefined to make every form of expenditure into an opportunity for accumulation. Third, this model of armed conflict loses something crucial relative to earlier forms of warfare: ‘dull war, such as that organized by modern economics, also teaches the meaning of the Earth, but it teaches it to renegades whose heads are full of calculations and plans for the short run; that is why it teaches it with a heartless and depressing rage’ (Bataille, 1985: 201). Put differently, Bataille argues that modern armed conflict, in spite of its efforts to preserve and accumulate, nonetheless remains dependent on solar economy. As such, modern armed conflict also produces expenditures. In the historical context of industrial warfare, Bataille contends that these expenditures manifested in the form of industrial detritus, massive loss of life, and unprecedented cruelty. Bataille defines heterology as ‘the science of the heterogeneous . . . the science of the excluded part’ (Bataille, 2018: 31, emphasis added). While Bataille traditionally uses this term to discuss the relationship between the sacred and the profane, it also includes things out of place, waste, and otherness, which cannot be incorporated into a dominant social order. Put differently, Bataille (2018: 36) is asserting that the rational organization of warfare according to the logic of accumulation cannot account for the production of unruly, contingent violence. Since modern warfare cannot account for this form of violence, it disavowed the untold deaths in the world wars, the cruel rationalization of suffering, the violent production of the means of war, and the inability of these intensely violent episodes to shift the organizing principles of modern societies. Modern warfare thus did not eliminate expenditure. Instead, it displaces and disguises expenditure in the form of the destruction of disposable lives or the relegation of forms of life to the realm of the heterological. However, Bataille (2018: 36) also argues that things banished to the realm of the heterological, from waste to taboo erotic practices, incite new forms of desire by provoking ‘hypnotic attraction’. In this way, Bataille contends that modern societies recreate strong attachments to warfare because war continues to function as a limit experience, an encounter with the heterological, opened up by the expenditure of excess. To unpack this point, it is necessary to clarify Bataille’s interpretation of the relationship between sovereignty and excess and why, paradoxically, warfare engenders sovereign experience. Bataille’s understanding of sovereignty is opposed to classical conceptions of the term. For Bataille, sovereignty is not associated with legal dictates, personal power, or the capacity to kill. Rather, sovereignty is an experience beyond ‘the anguish of death’. Bataille clarifies: ‘Sovereignty has many forms: it is only rarely condensed into a person and even then it is diffuse. The environment of the sovereign partakes of sovereignty, but sovereignty is essentially the refusal to accept the limits that the fear of death would have us respect in order to ensure, in a general way, the laboriously peaceful life of individuals’ (Bataille, 1991a: 222, emphasis added). Sovereignty surfaces in the incipient movements of expenditure, beyond utility or rationality, where the anguish of death no longer matters. In these moments, sovereignty emerges as an intensity that accompanies the exposure to the contingency of death. This experience results from the human encounter with ‘base matter’ that ‘is external and foreign to ideal human aspirations, and [that] refuses to allow itself to be reduced to the great ontological machines resulting from these aspirations’ (Bataille, 1991a: 31). For Bataille, sovereignty occurs when life is no longer subservient to the demands of an organized or ordered end. To underline this point, he emphasizes that ‘sovereignty cannot be the anticipated result of calculated effort. . .. [W]hat is sovereign can only come from the arbitrary, from chance’ (Bataille, 1991a: 226, emphasis added). As a mode of expenditure, war involves regular exposure to chance or contingency and, accordingly, the experience of sovereignty. Bataille goes so far as to argue that only warfare, eroticism, and death push against that ‘practice of reason [through which] we might believe in the possibility of an ordering of all things, which would exclude risk and caprice and would ground authenticity on nothing more than prudence and the pursuit of usefulness’ (Bataille, 1991a: 225). It is important to note that this process is, in epistemological terms, qualitative. There is no formula for producing sovereignty, because to predetermine the emergence of sovereignty would be to erase the contingency that is a condition of possibility for such an experience. Bataille castigates modern societies for making exactly this mistake. In his reading, they seek to eliminate contingency, which ultimately produces a much crueler disposition (Bataille, 1986: 78). For Bataille, war’s cruelty is evident in the effort to manage, modify, and calculate the scope of violence: Organized war withers efficient military operations based not the discipline which when all is said and done excludes the mass of combatants from the pleasure of transgressing the limits, has been caught up in a mechanism foreign to the impulsions which set it off in the first place; war today has only the remotest connection with war as I have described it; it is a dismal aberration geared to political ends. (Bataille, 1986: 80) Modern industrial warfare reflects not only the abandonment but also the reversal of expenditure and, in doing so, the effort to eliminate sovereign experience. For Bataille, this process is both tragic and ultimately unsuccessful, because it merely displaces the drive to expend. Consequently, this drive reappears in the form of a desire for sovereign experience. For Bataille, this drive is evident in the rise of social fantasies about war and an almost covetous relationship between modern subjectivity and the contingencies of the battlefield. Moreover, contemporary warfare’s aesthetic obsession with cleanliness exhibits the qualities that Bataille detests: the removal of death, the erasure of expenditure as a part of solar economy, the sanitization of the aesthetics and practices of war, and the domestication of warfare and military organization in order to avoid any exposure to contingency. At the same time, modern warfare cannot erase contingency and, therefore, retains the possibility of generating sovereign experiences. This possibility, Bataille maintains, explains why war continues to generate strong social attachments as a space for transgression and expenditure. Such desires are not, for Bataille, intrinsically problematic; rather, the disaster of modern industrial warfare results from the move to govern war according to principles of utility and the attempt to regulate the excessive dynamics of solar economy. Modern warfare, informed by principles of accumulation and rationality, ultimately incites these desires as a form of resistance to the world of utility. These theoretical insights introduce new ways of reading multiple aspects of late warfare. Excess, precision warfare, and the accident Critical security scholars have frequently commented on the development of precision and risktransfer warfare (Coker, 2009; Heng, 2006; Rasmussen, 2006; Shaw, 2005). These studies illustrate how new technologies, new rhetoric about technology and collateral damage, and other paradigmatic changes to armed conflict mask the scale, regularity, and intensity of violence in late warfare. Many of these arguments focus on the discursive separation between the objectives and practices of precision warfare, the reduction of lethal violence, and the outcomes, namely, the production of precarious lives (Butler, 2004; Weizman, 2012). This section applies many of the insights of Bataille’s work to the context of precision warfare and the accident. The goal is to illustrate how Bataille’s thought provides new insights into the development and dynamics of late warfare. In particular, Bataille’s understanding of war and excess expands these critiques in two ways. First, unlike existing literature, his theories rely less on the notion that a separate governing ideology recently changed the nature of armed conflict and, instead, focus on the reasons why the concepts of risklessness and precision become attractive principles of modern warfare in the first place. Second, Bataille reframes debates about precision warfare by interpreting them as symptoms of a larger problematic about excess, contingency, and sovereignty. To help illustrate these points, this section briefly evaluates the case of the ‘accident’ as a pivotal notion in the legitimation of injury and death in contemporary precision warfare. ‘Accident’ is a relatively recent term in political discourse. It emerged in the context of industrial development as a means of managing conflict between corporations and their workers. Specifically, the accident introduced a space of ‘agentless action’, such as a machine malfunction, that allowed corporations to dispute their responsibility for exposing workers to injury (Cooter and Luckin, 1997; Perrow, 1999). This legal application of the category was transplanted from engineering scholarship, where the concept of the accident was developed in order to explain how a contingent occurrence could take place within an otherwise stable system without appealing to transcendent or theological principles (Siegel, 2014: 1–12). In the context of engineering, the history of machine design was partly inspired by the effort to resolve particular accidents, but, in a socio-legal context, the accident birthed the possibility of an event without responsibility, without conditions (Siegel, 2014: 15–21). With the rise of industrial warfare, accidents became a part of the discourse of armed conflict. In international relations literatures, this is perhaps most apparent in the case of accidental nuclear launch given the potential for nuclear use to cause planetary destruction (Sagan, 1995). However, the accident reappeared as a problem with the rise of precision warfare because of the explicit emphasis on exactness, the reduction of war’s lethality, and the deliberate, even careful, character of war. In short, the ability to govern war precisely existed in tension with the probability of socalled accidental deaths. Precision warfare was, by its nature, supposed to become accident free. Patricia Owens (2003) and Maja Zehfuss (2011) have both offered excellent analyses of the dangerous character of this logic. As Owens (2003: 599–600) opines, ‘at issue [in this form of warfare] is how civilian deaths are legitimated and under what guises this occurs’. According to Owens, the accident functions as a way of explicating and extending martial power and, more specifically, of discursively producing an event as accidental: ‘the events labelled “accidents” were not accidents until they had been narrated as such, contrary to the liberal state (and positivist) assumption that they must self-evidently be accidents’ (Owens, 2003: 616). Owens and Zehfuss explain how the category of the accident enables advocates of precision warfare to deny any relationship between supposed precise technologies and their capacity to injure and kill. In this way, Owens and Zehfuss also confirm the broader observation of Paul Virilio (2006) that the accident constitutes an integral part of any technology (martial or not). According to this model, the birth of a technology is also the birth of the accident, and, consequently, any perspective that treats the accident as derivative is engaging in a depoliticization of the dangers of technology and speed. This process of depoliticization guts the possibility of democratic politics in discussions of security and war (Glezos, 2013). Bataille’s writings on war illuminate several additional elements of accidents and risk-transfer war. First, critical security studies literature chiefly approaches the accident through the lens of ideology, discourse, and narration. Here, the accident functions as a kind of discursive trick that separates legitimate and illegitimate violence and, therefore, legitimate and illegitimate modes of warfare. This point is an important rejoinder to the rhetoric of risk-transfer warfare. However, Bataille’s theories focus less on discursive or epistemological claims about the accident and more on its ontological status. As the previous section outlined, Bataille views warfare as a mode of expenditure that emerges from conditions of excess. For Bataille (1985), excesses emerge from a type of ‘base matter’ that is not subject to representation and can only be testified to through inner experience. This form of excess, which cannot be fully sensed or described, is thus ontologically contingent and cannot be known in advance. Put differently, for Bataille, contingencies are a constitutive part of armed conflict regardless of the terminology or discourse that surrounds them. Industrial warfare sought to eliminate these contingencies in order to function according to a model of rational accumulation. The recent rise of precision, risk, and the accident as frames for understanding contingency occurs as part of this much larger paradigmatic shift to reframe war as a problem of utility, rationality, and ends. The accident constitutes only the newest method not just of legitimizing war but also of governing and eliminating the problem of excess. Since warfare involves expenditures of excess, it is necessarily rife with contingencies and accidents. The accident thus operates as a liminal event in modern armed conflict, both as an epistemological invention to legitimate specific deaths and injuries, and as the resistance of base matter and solar economy to human efforts at rationalization and governance. These theoretical observations make several interventions into debates about precision warfare. First, Bataille extends existing critiques of risk-transfer warfare by both situating them as part of a broader shift in modern warfare and establishing that the very terms of the discourse are antithetical to the conditions of solar economy. Bataille’s thought shows how the structure of rationality in riskless war relies on the accident as a discursive supplement in order to comprehend the excesses that will recur in a condition of solar economy even when armed conflict is defined by utility, rationality, and accumulation. The accident is not only an ideological trick designed to depoliticize, but also an epistemological supplement that insulates the precision paradigm from its inability to grapple with excess. This provides an alternative way of interpreting the concern for the accident since, following Bataille, precision legitimates modern warfare by seeking to eliminate the excesses that have continually reappeared in spite of the broader transformation of war into a rational exercise. Precision and the language of the accident constitute only the latest effort to govern the excessive character of war. Second, this framing also illustrates why accidents often receive unprecedented attention in the context of modern armed conflict. Indeed, while critiques such as those of Owens and Zehfuss reveal how the accident legitimates liberal war, what might be called the affective dimensions of the accident receives comparatively little scrutiny (Bataille, 1991a: 203). Here, Bataille’s work extends existing critiques of precision war by shedding light on the formation of subjectivity in relation to the accident. Recall that, for Bataille, the experience of sovereignty develops in response to chance, the anguish of death, and expenditure without reserve. Bataille further contends that human desires are constituted by an ambivalent relationship to excess, transgression, and sovereign experience. On the one hand, humans seek to conserve their life against excess and, on the other hand, human societies emerge out of the excesses of solar economy. Bataille (1991a: 243) posits that this ambivalence generates an attachment to the possibility ‘always unexpected, [of being] relieved of the heaviness that the world of utility imposes on us, of the tasks in which the world of objects mires us down’. For Bataille, the accident, as a form of contingency, reveals a potential type of sovereign experience. The existence of this possibility helps to alleviate the sorrow and futility of a world defined by utility. Accidents function according to the model of the miracle, the unanticipated, the unpredictable, or the impossible, which nonetheless occurs (Bataille, 1991a: 242). Following Bataille’s reading, the accident produces two reactions to sovereign experience in modern warfare. On the one hand, the exposure to the anguish of death incites the need to control, manage, and govern accidents, a process that has been well documented by critical security studies scholars (Bousquet, 2018; Campbell, 1998; Rasmussen, 2006). On the other hand is the possibility that accidents inspire affective attachments and fascinations as a form of exposure to sovereign experience. Put differently, accidents spark a form of excitement – either in the midst of warfare or in fantasies of war – that has received comparatively little attention. The accident becomes a site of desire because it ensures that warfare remains contingent, implicitly resisting efforts to govern, rationalize, or form, in Bataille’s words, ‘dull war’. This perspective provides a model to explain why the fantasies, imaginaries, and even experiences of martial accidents remain a point of intrigue, thrill, and draw for modern subjectivities. Within the accident is the budding potential of sovereign experience. Accidents thus support two complementary forms of subjectivity. The first responds to the inevitability of accident as a means of securitizing and governing contingency, while the second embraces the accident as a sovereign or limit-experience that breaks with the overt rationalization of war and social life. This point has significant implications for resisting or contesting securitization regimes. In particular, if Bataille’s insight about the lure of sovereign experience is correct, then classical strategies of critique, delegitimization, and demasking power relations in precision warfare, and other contexts, are problematic strategies because they do not confront the underlying drive to embrace warfare’s contingencies as moments of sovereign experience. For Bataille, this desire for sovereign experience intensifies the need to transgress, to explore prohibited zones and probe limits. Consequently, delegitimizing the accident, emphasizing the transgressive character of violence (or other parallel acts), paradoxically strengthens the affective attachment to warfare by reinforcing the notion that war holds out the possibility of sovereign experience. Contesting security discourse on these lines would thus do little to engage the frame of the accident because it does not support new modes of expenditure, but simply re-emphasizes the transgressive character of specific practices of securitization and violence. In this way, Bataille’s work shows the limits of existing critical studies of the accident. To illustrate this point, claims about accidents involve not only political questions about the meaning or significance of specific injuries, but also issues of equipment malfunction, logistical breakdowns, and encounters with surrounding ecology. Many of these dimensions of the accident, as sites of excess and contingency, lead to an enormous proliferation of new aesthetics, fantasies, and forms of securitization in modern warfare. To briefly examine a single example, a growing literature assesses the potential for ‘birdstrike’, collision between aircraft and birds, as a threat to military readiness and security (Richardson and West, 2000). In the birdstrike literature, a multiplicity of different bird species appear as a new type of security threat because of their possible interference with the mechanical operation of airplanes or other airlift operations. Birdstrikes are exceedingly rare events, which number in the dozens despite thousands of airlift operations since the invention of flight. Nonetheless, significant attention, monetary investment, major proposals to redesign airports, and even plans to disrupt the ecological habitats of bird species have all been framed as questions of security and military necessity (Heims, 2011; Kitowski, 2011; Zakrajsek and Bissonette, 2005). Accidents like birdstrikes exist far afield from the typical concern of critical security analysis, yet the writing on this subject reflects Bataille’s point since this literature treats the threat of the birdstrike as an event verging on the miraculous. As Bataille argues, the transformation of war into a practice of accumulation generates new excesses and expenditures – in this context, the contingent encounter between plane and bird. A martial paradigm defined by accumulation and rationality views these excesses and expenditures (the needless loss of a plane) as a threat to security. Hence, even statistically infrequent birdstrikes constitute an interruption of the dynamics of accumulation. These events attract incredible attention because they involve contingency and the possibility of sovereign experience and, accordingly, become the subject of intense, affective investment. The vivid fear for multiple bird species and the consistent concern for aircraft malfunction reveal a social imaginary drawn to the potential for excesses and contingencies no matter the form and no matter how statistically insignificant. Here, the birds become the object of a certain kind of martial horror. Bataille predicts exactly this shift at the level of desire and imaginary and goes so far as to suggest that, for moderns living under a paradigm of utility, only the ‘imagination has sovereign moments available to it’ (Bataille 1991a: 256). Bataille’s work points to these more liminal accidents as key places where excesses invite speculation about the potential for sovereign experience and, at the same time, incite new practices of securitization. In this way, the birds, as a partially aerial ecosystem, become a new source not just of anguish and threat, but also of sovereign experience, a new target in the expansion of armed conflict to new ecologies, and a relief from the onerous character of modern social life. While birdstrikes represents only a single case, several studies have highlighted the importance of transgressive and liminal roles in contemporary warfare, such as crowdfunding as a new mode of martial organization or the insurgent potential of improvised explosive devices (Grove, 2016, 2019). These examples also reflect Bataille’s insights about how expenditure, excess, and the possibility of sovereign experience animate and shift practices of mobilization and violence in contemporary armed conflict. In a similar way, Bataille shows how the accident (along with other forms of contingency) is not anathema to risk-transfer warfare, but instead functions as a supplement, a moment of transgression amidst the overt rationalization of warfare. Modern discourses on precision rest on a form of knowledge that precludes Bataille’s sovereignty: ‘knowledge is never sovereign, to be sovereignty would have to occur in a moment. But the moment remains outside, short of or beyond, all knowledge. . .. [I]n short, we know nothing about what ultimately concerns us, what is supremely important to us’ (Bataille, 1991a: 202–203, emphasis in original). The paradigms of risk-transfer warfare, of the minimization of the accident, and of securitization more generally are not capable of thoughtfully generating new forms of expenditure. They derive, for Bataille, from a fearful response to finitude and solar economy: ‘we try to escape from this elementary horror, but, in the darkness and dead silence, it maintains the unpredictable and elusive movement of everything we have not been able to reduce to the reassuring order, a movement to which we know we shall later succumb’ (Bataille, 1991a: 217), a paradigm that incites not only risktransfer warfare but arguably the broader pursuit of security. As a consequence, securitized subjectivities seek opportunities for expenditure in transgressions such as the accident. These desires, in turn, transform the structure of contemporary warfare.