# Cybernetic Supplement

### 1NC – Cap/Cybernetics Shell

#### Capital has infiltrated the general intellect and has muddled the distinction between the machine and the human knowledge production

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Energy is essential for the production and movement of “things”. Using an assemblage of machines the industrial revolution exponentially increased the energy available to human society; however, such machinery required human supervision and control to attain its objectives. There are basically three “ideal types” of machines: those that convert matter from one form of matter to another; those that convert energy from one form of energy to another; and, those that exchange information. Cybernetics deals with the latter. In that sense, the Internet may be conceived of as an immense machine encompassing the breadth and length of the planet that has the real-time capacity to interconnect and put in common all of human kind, an embryonic global civil society. The next evolutionary leap is now underway, the Internet of things (IoT) which, as inferred from its name, will permit the connection of “things” to each other as well as to human beings implying that, like today’s cybernetic machines, “things” will soon possess a degree of “intelligence”. In conjunction with certain functions (e.g., the capture, recording and transmission of information), such intelligence will equal or exceed that of humans. Based on the foregoing, what Karl Marx’s anticipated as a “social brain” is emerging before our own eyes. Since ancient times, humans and things have formed a single system (human society) comprised of a single socio-technical object in the sense defined in actor-network theory (ANT) by Michel Callon and Bruno Latour.[1](javascript:void(0)) In the latter, humans provided the desire and intelligence and “things” the energy and transformation of matter, even if ‘us” and “them”, humans and machines did not intercommunicate (converse). Now, however, a subtle disruption is occurring as “things” begin to acquire varying degrees of intelligence and thus conversation and a new kind of synergy appears plausible. Such disruption was anticipated by Marx in his famous Fragment on Machines (1857) where he wrote: “The accumulation of knowledge and skills of the general productive forces of the social brain is thus absorbed within capital.” (Marx, 1980, p.220). There (see Notebook VI-VII of the Grundrisse), in what he referred to as “general intellect” or the “social brain”, the German philosopher anticipated the process through which vampire like capital has imbibed knowledge and abilities from the productive forces of society, violently extracting[2](javascript:void(0)) it from its workers. According to Marx, such extraction in the form of the class struggle has shaped the history of that which is real, i.e., “the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated it into forms of thought”.[3](javascript:void(0)) Insofar, this conception of the human brain as a generic or social being, is precisely what is fundamental for the derivation of a theory of knowledge (epistemology) from the theory of value, which means one basic thing: that the brain “is” social.[4](javascript:void(0)) Today, such reality is referred to as “virtual reality” or “Big Data” although it would be more accurate to refer to it as “encrypted reality”.[5](javascript:void(0)) The privatization of Big Data (or the social brain) explains how Silicon Valley’s media stars now dominate the world. In the words of Slavoj Žižek: How did Bill Gates become the richest man in America? His wealth has nothing to do with Microsoft producing good software at lower prices than its competitors, or “exploiting” its workers more successfully (Microsoft pays its intellectual workers a relatively high salary). Millions of people still buy Microsoft software because Microsoft has imposed itself as an almost universal standard, practically monopolizing the field, as one embodiment of what Marx called the “general intellect”, by which he meant collective knowledge in all its forms, from science to practical knowhow. Gates effectively privatized part of the general intellect and became rich by appropriating the rent that followed. (Žižek 2012, 146).

#### The impact is cybernetic civil war

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When such privatization reaches its final stages, capital will require very little living labor for its reproduction. By then, without state intervention, the risk will be that most workers will be hurled into the hell of unemployment and instability. However, in doing so, capital will have undermined its own foundation, “surplus value”, which can only be created by “living labor”. In Marx’s words: “Capital thus works in favor of its own dissolution as the dominant form of production.” (Marx 1980, 222) More recently, Stephen Hawking, the famous British astrophysicist, drew our attention to the same phenomenon: If machines produce everything we need, the outcome will depend on how things are distributed. Everyone can enjoy a life of luxurious leisure if the machine-produced wealth is shared, or else, most people can end up miserably poor if the machine-owners successfully lobby against wealth redistribution. So far, the trend seems to be toward the second option with technology driving ever-increasing inequality. [Emphasis added] (Hawking, 2015). If Hawking’s prediction comes true we will arrive at a situation where virtually every product will be machine made with little if any living labor involved. But, as pointed out by Bruno Milanovic (2015): “Isn’t this in some ways … very similar, to Marx’s process of increased “organic composition of capital” eventually leading to capitalism’s euthanasia (to use Keynes’ term in a Marxist framework)??” According to Milanovic, a former chief economist of the World Bank, Marx’s assumption is that the process of valorization implies intensification of capital relative to living labor. Thus, capitalists tend to accumulate more and more capital and to eliminate more and more living labor per unit of output. In a Marxist framework, this means a constant diminishing need for payed salary per hour which obviously generates consistently less surplus value. Such diminishing surplus value in inverse relation to increasing capital accumulation means a reduction in the rate of profit until it plummets to zero. How then will robotization affect capitalism? Karl Marx gives us some clues. As he wrote, each individual capitalist is constrained by the iron laws of the market to invest in increasingly capital-intensive processes to attain a competitive edge over other capitalists; however, when they all do the same, (ignoring counter-tendencies), the benefit rate diminishes for all of them. Thus, in the long term, when all is said and done, capitalists “withdraw from business” or, more precisely, move towards a zero rate of profit. In any case, living labor will be replaced by machines to such an extreme degree that the bulk of production will be carried out robotically. Employment will become insignificant. According to Marx, the ultimate political imbalance – or terminal crisis – would take place between a vast “reserve army of unemployed workers” and a thin layer of capitalists and successful wage earners. To visualize this imbalance, Milanovic (2015) invites us to … [I]magine thousands of robots working in a big factory with only one worker checking them out, and with the useful life of robots being one year so that you keep on replacing robots continuously and thus run enormous depreciation and reinvestment costs every year. The composition of GDP would be very interesting. If total GDP is 100, we could have consumption=5, net investment=5 and depreciation=90. You would live in a country with GDP per capita of $500,000 but $450,000 of that would be depreciation. Suppose now that following a Cybernetic ​​Civil War, -similar to the one recreated in the film V for Vendetta– and led by a global network of anti-system “hacktivists”, machines become the property of the unemployed and of the other disenfranchised of the system. The same enormous factories crowded with thousands of robots would be retained but their entire net product would be appropriated by the unemployed, who would use the income to facilitate a life of leisure with reduced working hours or perhaps none: gazing at screens and playing entertaining games on their laptops. Thus, cybernetic civil war would be a displaced class struggle. What, however, would be the “ideology” of the new cybernetic proletarians? Perhaps an invigorated “digitized fetishism” or perhaps, “the kingdom of freedom” as Marx hypothesized? In the words of Ricardo Sanín-Restrepo (2016): The wondrous machines of technology and communication are programmed in highly sophisticated languages and in extremely elitist environments that are instrumental for the domination of capital at its best. Even though we are connected irremediably in a network of ever-extending information, as a General Intellect, the cultural language of the machine remains encrypted: its flows and commands are still dependent on the hunger of the market, and its core intellect remains a highly scarce material. Hence, information can only become democratic when the machine—as a point of absorption of power-knowledge—is itself decrypted and politically liberated. “Wondrous machines” which, while embodying a great promise of human emancipation, still continue to replicate in their “flows and commands” the same moral baseness: racism, sexism, imperialism, capitalism, of the political matrix that bred life into them: Globalized Coloniality These are the great and disturbing challenges with which globalized coloniality and its encrypted reality confront us.

#### The new cybernetic societies are built in elitist foundations with a strong police state—turns the aff

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Up to now the world’s most developed cybernetic societies, Estonia, Singapore and Israel, have been: (1) demographically small and politically homogeneous; (2) possess very strong police states; and (3), view widespread elitist education as a state and societal priority. Interestingly, because these societies are incongruously distant from California, the idiotic myth that “everything is invented by Silicon Valley” is being discredited.[6](javascript:void(0)) However, a transition point seems to be approaching. In a new twist on the current Cybernetic World War (a digital reprint of the Cold War between East and West), during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in early June of 2017 Vladimir Putin announced a qualitatively new political program which, judging by the speeches, will involve the full “digitization” of Russian society and of the Russian economy which they plan to extract from their formidable schools of mathematicians and physicists. During that forum Putin and his ministers announced an alliance with Ethereum, a decentralized Internet services system based on Blockchain technology, the technology on which “cryptocoins” are grounded. The technology comprises interconnected nodes of encrypted information distributed throughout the world, functioning as both databases and security backup mechanisms. According to the Kremlin, President Putin met with the founder of Ethereum, Vitálik Buterin, a 23-year-old Canadian born programmer of Russian decent. Mr. Putin was enthusiastic about Mr. Buterin’s ideas and arranged for contacts with potential Russian partners. The press release on the meeting disclosed that: According to Russian [First Deputy] Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov, Putin is “passionate” about the concept of digitization of the economy and new technologies. He said the president brought together a small group of administration and government officials to discuss these issues and only “permitted them to leave” after “one in the morning.” In St. Petersburg, Putin outlined the basics of the digitalization program the government has developed on its own. Among its goals is “general digital literacy” with “teaching curricula for people of all ages” and a “new and agile normative basis for introducing digital technologies in all fields”, taking into account “the informational security of the State, businesses and citizens.” Putin announced actions “to increase our intellectual, technological and professional superiority in the field of the digital economy”. In his opinion, “the groundbreaking schools in the fields of mathematics and theoretical physics” allow Russia “to achieve leadership in different sectors of the so-called new economy, especially the digital economy.” The digital economy is no longer a branch but rather, “the basis for creating new qualitative business, commerce, logistics and production models, which change education, health, state management and communication formats between people and which consequently create new development paradigms for the State, the economy and society as a whole”, argued Putin. Bonet in “El País”, (2017). Might not Putin’s strategy encompass the possibility that we find ourselves at the gates of what Alain Badiou has articulated as the “Event”: an intervention that cannot be accounted for in terms of its preexisting “objective conditions”? With Blockchain technology in play, societal wealth is being transformed, not only from an “immense accumulation of commodities” (Marx) towards an immense planetary synapse, but because of its revolutionary mathematical structure,[7](javascript:void(0)) it could also alter the traditional geometries of global power. Consider: What if in the near future Russia, China and India successfully duplicate Estonia, Singapore or Israel’s digitalization models? It will, of course, involve an escalation of the Cybernetic ​​World War with the principal Western Powers. Nonetheless, because they are all police and capitalist states with opaque, corrupt oligarchies entrenched in positions commanding both the economy and the administration, hacktivists, whether from the East or West, the North or South, will face the challenge of transforming the Cybernetic World War into a Cybernetic Civil War through the socialization of databases,[8](javascript:void(0)) i.e., decrypting Big Data and freeing all the potentia of its collective artificial intelligence from its current hijackers: both state (e.g., the United States, the European Union, Russia, China, etc.) and private (e.g., Google, Facebook, Netflix, Microsoft, Apple, etc.).

### 1NC – Extinction/Cybernetics Shell

#### Fear of extinction is shaped by the cybernetic episteme. It molds our thoughts and mediates our cognition to prioritize supposed “existential risks” and diverts attention away from the monetization of the human

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Life and society worldwide have been transformed by digital technology, including the fabrics of emotional relationships. Many believed the internet would be the largest ungoverned space in the world with unlimited emancipatory potential, and trusted Big Tech to make the world a better place. Yet power and capitalism filled that space with surveillance systems, the production of private capital, the monetization of data, and the control of human lives. Social media now shape daily life and many have lost faith in the possibility of a shared consensus reality. We are living in a scenario similar to one imagined by Black Mirror: our belief in digital communication and social media creates narcissistic personalities, selves dissociated and dislocated from their reflections online. Digital communication offers an opaque mirror that delivers egos without bodies, eliding alterity. The collapse of reality, however, is not an unintended consequence of advancements in, for instance, artificial intelligence: it was the long-term objective of many technologists, who sought to create machines capable of transforming human consciousness (like drugs do). Communication has become a site for the extraction of surplus value, and images operate as both commodities and dispositives for this extraction. Moreover, data mediates our cognition, that is to say, the way in which we exist and perceive the world and others. The image—and the unlimited communication promised by constant imagery—have ceased to have emancipatory potential. Images place a veil over a world in which the isolated living dead, thirsty for stimulation and dopamine, give and collect likes on social media. Platform users exist according to the Silicon Valley utopian ideal of life’s complete virtualization. The internet, moreover, has radically changed the political communications game and must be considered a complex propaganda apparatus. Although a single Tweet can destroy someone’s career, and fake news can start a real news cycle, meaning is subordinate to the circulation of vacuous content. The capitalist capture of data for profit does not rely on policing content; the production of capital only relies on the constant exchange and circulation of information. We don’t yet know the full extent of the manipulation of companies such as Facebook, Google, and Amazon in the last two elections in the US or in other elections around the world. But it is undeniable that digital platforms are actively censoring content in the interests of particular political actors. For instance: in October 2020, Zoom canceled a meeting hosting Palestinian human rights activist Leila Khaled; a month before, Facebook and Twitter censored information detrimental to Joseph Biden’s presidential campaign. The same two companies intervened and shut down pro-Trump accounts in 2020, even Donald Trump’s own Facebook and Twitter accounts. After the attempted coup at the US capitol on January 6, 2020, Facebook’s recently instituted oversight board ruled that Trump had created “an environment where a serious risk of violence was possible.” In this light, it seems likely that he will continue to be banned from the platform. According to journalist Shoshana Zuboff, however, this is insufficient, given that the oversight board’s decision (whose work is supported by a $130 million endowment from Facebook) follows years of inaction by CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who indulged and appeased Trump while entrenching what Zuboff calls “surveillance capitalism.”1 A liberal might think that shutting up Trump and helping Biden is not bad, as they are actions that seemingly advance the interests of the Democratic Party. What is at stake here, however, is not whether the platforms take a “good” or “bad” stance on a particular issue; the problem is that they have immense unchecked power and can act as they please. Platforms are allowed to secretly extract behavioral data from users, whether or not users are aware, transforming the information into targeted ads, destroying privacy, changing human experience into data, altering elections, and reshaping human civilization. This structure can be termed the “cybernetic episteme,” and the new form of control, which goes beyond the previous regime of biopower, can be termed “neuropower.” According to its Greek etymology, an “episteme” is a system of understanding. In The Order of Things, Michel Foucault uses the term “épistemè” to mean the nontemporal or a priori knowledge that grounds what is taken as truth in a given moment. Several epistemes coexist at a given time, as they constitute parts of various systems of power and knowledge. The cybernetic episteme, as defined by the collective Tiqqun some twenty years ago, describes our relationship to technology and machines (which are inseparable from the workings of capitalism).2 The cybernetic episteme is based on the modern tenet of progress and human-led transcendence achieved through science and technology. Under neuropower, the sensible gives way to cognitive pathologies. These pathologies depend on the consumption of content rather than the sharing of meaning. As Thomas Metzinger explains, the internet has become an integral part of how we model ourselves, as we use it for external memory storage, as a cognitive prosthesis, and for emotional self-regulation. This has radically changed the structure of conscious experience, creating a new form of waking consciousness that resembles “a mixture of dreaming, dementia, intoxication, and infantilization.”3 Other effects of neuropower are humans’ growing invisibility to each other and a paroxysmal racism that infiltrates power, technology, culture, language, and work. For Franco “Bifo” Berardi, racism has become a “virus” that exacerbates fear—above all, the fear of extinction, which seems to have become one of the motors behind white supremacy in the world.4 Dissociated from our environment, alienated from each other, we are oblivious to the challenges that are being posed to humanity by the Capitalocene.

#### The digital economy passifies the individual through tech and has established a “new complex form of authoritarianism in which the individual gives up democratic rights to engage in social relations—Leads to ontological death

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Under lockdown, internet-based technology became embedded in everyday life more than ever before. Zoom and other platforms became the matrix of a production model that exacerbates the power of technology over society. A new lockdown economy has emerged in this disembodied communication space, where knowledge is subsumed under the rules of capital accumulation. The pandemic has led to extreme alienation, to the point that privilege is defined as depending on invisible laborers to sustain forms of life. This means that a new “virtual working class” has emerged that can take basics like food, water, and electricity for granted, knowing that they do not have to risk their bodies to have these comforts. Until 2016, digital technology promised access to all human knowledge, unlimited exchange, self-expression, democratization, participation, opportunities to make money, the acceleration of bureaucratic processes, and the means for grassroots and popular power to challenge governments and corporations. The peak of this alluring cyber-utopia came around 2010–11, when social media played a crucial role in the Occupy and Arab Spring movements. But in 2016, when Cambridge Analytica was revealed to have intervened in the US elections that brought Donald Trump to power, the public’s belief in such technologies to change power structures began to shift. We witnessed the worldwide rise of right-wing governments and populist movements supported by wealth. Maurizzio Ferraris has called this the era of “post-truth,” when the deconstruction of a stable truth became an important political tool.5 In online public space, discourse has been shattered, truth has become indiscernible, and relativism has become the norm. The public sphere—the bastion of established and emerging democracies, bolstered by mass media—began to shatter. Leaders such as Benjamin Netanyahu, Donald Trump, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Jair Bolsonaro, and Narendra Modi have used digital communications to construct charismatic identities and disseminate populist messages, causing deep social and political polarization. Politics has profoundly mutated: while minorities and people at the margins have found ways to validate their speech by expressing their perspectives, individualized propaganda has become the order of the day. Algorithms feed users the information they search for, resulting in personalized information bubbles designed to engage preexisting biases. Much of the news media now functions by monetizing user engagement through this type of targeting, which has led to new forms of intensified racism and other types of prejudice. Author Andrey Mir has termed this “postjournalism.”6 He explains that, since mass media outlets have lost publicity revenue, they need to monetize engagement on the internet and do so by generating anger and hatred, usually directed at some specific group of people. For many, the news is the way to access the world, and rage has become currency: platforms drive and monetize anger as a mode of engagement. A complex form of authoritarianism is emerging, linked to digital platforms owned by the powerful CEOs who make up the notorious “Silicon Six.” Under the new authoritarianism, populations are no longer commanded: they are asked to participate, and in this simulation of involvement, the “ideology of connection” replaces the idea of social relations, neutralizing democratic demands from users to have control over their own lives, rights, and data. In this way, people are made passive.7 Cédric Durand explains the difference between the original conception of the World Wide Web and the subsequent development of closed platforms. The WWW began as a decentralized architecture in which a generic transaction protocol (http) and a uniform identification format (URI/URL) generated a space of flat content. In this space, human and nonhuman agents could have access to information without any third-party mediation. In contrast, closed platforms use application programming interfaces, or APIs, to mediate interaction, giving way to data loops in which interactions are more dense. The technical object that sustains this hierarchical architecture is the API, each of which is owned by a platform. On the one hand, big platforms, by way of APIs, offer apps that incorporate basic and indispensable data for users. On the other, platforms have access to the additional information generated by the API, such as user activity and buying habits. As the ecosystem grows in complexity, the platform is able to accumulate more and more data.8 We become more densely connected with each other and with the platforms every day, as our lives get more and more tied to the cloud.

#### The cybernetic episteme has brought an imperialist form of “Technofeudalism” where the platform owners are the lords and the users are the serfs

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Our dependency on platforms provides the ground for technofeudalism. Historically, feudalism was characterized by a fundamental inequality that enabled the direct exploitation of peasants by lords. The lord was both the manager and master not only of the process of production, but of the entire process of social life. In today’s technofeudalism, platform owners are the digital lords and users are the serfs. Rather than commodity production, these platforms are geared towards accumulation through rent, debt, and the privatization of the basic infrastructure that sustains our lives. What is at stake is no longer “true” or “fake” information but the cybernetic episteme upon which our lives and subjectivities have been built. The cybernetic episteme is premised upon modernity’s enclosure of experience. In modern epistemology, which is the precondition of the cybernetic episteme, the self is externalized and experienced at a remove from the body. Perception is centered on the brain and eyes instead of the whole body, separating sensation from reason. The self’s relationship with the world is mediated through mirrors, camera lenses, the canvas, the microscope, and mathematical models.9 The cybernetic episteme, moreover, is inextricable from colonialism, which entails dispossession, dislocation, dissociation, and appropriation. Ariella Azoulay has called the logic underpinning these processes “the shutter”; this logic is materialized in photographic technology that separates humans from objects, self from the world, and people from their lands. The shutter is the principle of imperialism by which campaigns of plunder have left people both worldless and objectless. For Azoulay, the logic of the shutter was invented centuries before photography gave it a technological apparatus, and it enabled the dispossession of non-Western peoples in tandem with the accumulation of visual and material wealth in archives and museums in the West.10 The cybernetic episteme is likewise conceptually constituted by this shutter, since it relies on capturing, naming, moving, and archiving subjects—as does imperialism. In this regard, the cybernetic episteme naturalizes the mediation of the self; it creates not only the condition of detachment from the world, but allows the appropriation of the cultures of others, as well as the dissolution of collective being. The shutter is akin to Heidegger’s Gestell or “representation,” which goes hand in hand with Eurocentrism and Anthropocentrism. The Gestell and the shutter both imply that the world and experience have become representation, through an aesthetic order in which what is produced as artifice becomes the reality of experience. In a 2017 Facebook promo video for a new virtual reality technology, Mark Zuckerberg and his colleague Rachel Frank tele-transported themselves to Puerto Rico after a devastating flood. They intended to showcase the potential of the new technology, but instead revealed its inherent violence. The ability to transport oneself to faraway places “as if” one’s body were present gives the illusion that one we can make a difference in the world through technology.11 Another example, in a different register of colonial modernity is that way Western museums allow visitors to "transport" themselves by observing objects looted from elsewhere, like the Pergamon Museum in Berlin where museumgoers can roam around the Ishtar Gate, which has been on display in the museum since 1930. In a section of Ariella Azoulay’s video Undocumented: Unlearning Imperial Plunder (2020), she films actual visitors to the Pergamon while noting that dislocation is the essence of (imperial) modernity. The VR museum visitor is at the center of a world, but they are not really there (an effect similar to the dispositive of perspective in painting). For globalized Western culture, the ground for vision, enlightenment, culture, and even social change is the dislocation and disappearance of bodies.12 Disembodiment and dislocation are also fundamental epistemological premises of transhumanist Silicon Valley ideology. In this ideology, the teleology of secular modern individualism culminates in the uploading of a person’s mind to a new biological, artificial, or biological-artificial body. The utopian goal of expanding and preserving human consciousness is physically and spiritually achieved. Transhumanism is the dream of enhancing the human body through technology, and ultimately escaping human suffering by transcending the “errors” of death and aging. Posthumanism takes things a step further: its goal is to immortalize consciousness by uploading it to a robotic or synthetic body. Posthumanism does away with the biological dimension of the self, fundamentally altering what it means to be “human.” In both trans- and posthumanism, technology promises to give us the divine attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience, making humans into “pure consciousness,” achieving a kind of individual and secular transcendence. In the first episode of the British TV series Years and Years (2019), Bethany, an adolescent whose face is hidden behind a 3D emoji mask, announces to her parents that she is “transhuman.” She declares: “I don’t want to be flesh. I want to escape this thing and become digital, I want to live forever as information.” Eventually Bethany becomes a hero with transhuman superpowers: her mechanized eyes and brain, which are connected to all the data in the world, allow her to make visible the horrors that the British government have perpetrated in a refugee camp. This techno-utopian narrative implies a democratic ideology, insofar as one political goal of democracy is to make visible the ordeals of oppressed minorities—in this case through virtual disembodiment. In contrast to this techno-utopian narrative, science fiction—especially cyberpunk literature— generally portrays transhumanism as a nightmarish apocalyptic scenario of social control and individual subjection. Several episodes of Black Mirror do this, for example. But what Black Mirror and Years and Years have in common is that technological advances and the increasing symbiosis between humans and machines are associated with political, economic, and social instability. In reality, “mind uploading” has attracted millions of dollars of investment from the billionaires of Silicon Valley and beyond. In a mixture of engineering and enlightenment, consciousness is now being hacked through biofeedback techniques, meditation practices, and microdosing drugs. Many critics have observed that the utopian ideology of transhumanism underpins the Valley’s culture of “move fast, break things, and make as much money as possible.” Technologies aiming to expand human consciousness are rooted in purely extractivist, capitalist values. In this sense, cybernetics is a political project on a planetary scale. As described by Tiqqun, cybernetics is a gigantic “abstract machine” made up of binary machines deployed by empire, and a form of political sovereignty that has merged with the capitalist extractivist project.

#### The technosphere’s cost is the climate catastrophe

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In the pre-cybernetic era—that is to say, before the 1940s—machines were intended to emulate humans; their actions resembled human behavior, but ostensibly without intent or emotions. This is why Donna Haraway describes pre-cybernetic machines as “haunted.”13 They seemed animated by ghosts, reminiscent of Walter Benjamin’s automaton that was inhabited by a hunchbacked dwarf. Machines were not self-moving, self-designing, or autonomous. They could not achieve human dreams, only mock them. In turn, humans related to machines by using or acting upon them: switching them on or off, using them as tools to achieve an end. Today, the relationship between human and machine is based on internal, mutual communication in a feedback loop. Early machines were led; today, machines lead us.14 This does not mean that machines have simply become humanized through the proliferation of androids. Rather, humans have surrendered consciousness to AI, becoming obedient and predictable. In the twenty-first century, machines have blurred the distinction between the artificial and human mind, not only because machines can imitate human functions, but because humans have become increasingly passive, since we are now subject to neuropower. Within the cybernetic episteme, it is no longer enough to talk about a “control society”; we must talk instead about a composite of interlinked forms of oppression (exploitation, alienation, and domination), in tandem with extreme securitarianism. Another way to see the cybernetic episteme is as the reconceptualization of social worlds into information-processing systems. Practices of computation are used to produce new organizational and infrastructural apparatuses, which in turn create value and profit by exploiting and disposing of human life. Social worlds are subsumed into technologies through techniques such as statistical forecasting and data modeling. The cybernetic episteme stems from a world brought into being by Europeans; this world began with the discovery of the “new world” and the creation of empires and colonies (which coincided with the scientific revolution). In this sense, the cybernetic episteme is inseparable from the Western civilizing project for the whole world, which connected disparate places through technologies like the telegraph and steam shipping, often powered by the extraction of fossil fuels like coal. This project has culminated in globalization as the deregulation and financialization of world economies.15 The Western civilization project, based on Enlightenment values including equality, peaceful public life, access to modern science, the rule of law, democracy, and technological progress, involved the creation of infrastructure to unify nations and the world.16 We can call this infrastructure the “technosphere.” The technosphere comprises not only digital technology but all machines, factories, computers, cars, buildings, railways, and mobility infrastructure, as well as systems of food production, resource extraction, and energy distribution. Today, the infrastructure of the world—the technosphere—is shaped by information, which means that the world we inhabit is designed by data.17 The technosphere is a supplement humans have created to help overcome the limits of “human nature” insofar as humans cannot live independently from structures geared towards sustaining life. The technosphere has promised to enable us to increase production and reproduction with less human effort. Moreover, [the technosphere](https://www.e-flux.com/journal/122/430488/authoritarianism-and-the-cybernetic-episteme-or-the-progressive-disappearance-of-everything-on-earth/) is also regarded as the main tool humans have to fight decay, entropy, and death, since it comprises all the structures humans have built to keep themselves alive on the planet. The total mass of the technosphere amounts to fifty kilos for every square meter of earth’s surface—a total of thirty trillion tons, which coexists with the diminishing hydrosphere (water, the frozen polar regions) and the biosphere (all of earth’s living organisms).18 The ultimate price of the technosphere is global warming and environmental devastation. Like humans, the technosphere needs external energy input, which is not sustainable as long as it comes from fossil fuels that will eventually be depleted. From this standpoint, the cybernetic episteme represents the gradual merging of human activity into the activity of what we have built and surrounded ourselves with. Much of this built environment is invisible.19 Infrastructure and data are partially occult because we are alienated from them, even as we are produced and managed by them. The invisible infrastructure that sustains our lives is what matters politically right now. And insofar as the technosphere is cybernetic, it is inextricable from capitalism and politics.

### 1NC – Grove Add-on

#### The cybernetic regime is part and parcel with the Eurocene’s homogenization---the entire Earth becomes a single integer incapable of finding speciation in the never-ending conquest for data. You should be highly skeptical of the Eurocentrism that dominates their scholarship and refuse datafication of the globe.

Grove 2019 [[Jairus Victor Grove; “Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics at the End of the World” Jairus is the Professor at the University of Hawai’I Manoa in the Department of Political Science. Duke University Press, 2019 https://read-dukeupress-edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/books/book/2607/Savage-EcologyWar-and-Geopolitics-at-the-End-of](Jairus%20Victor%20Grove;%20), Accessed 7/15/22 //jerry]

I am not suggesting that Crutzen and others are part of a vast conspiracy; rather, I want to outline how climate change, species loss, slavery, the elimination of native peoples, and the globalization of extractive capitalism are **all part of the same global ordering**. That is, all of these crises are geopolitical. The particular geopolitical arrangement of what others have called the longue durée, and what I am calling the Eurocene, is geologically significant but is not universally part of “human activity” despite the false syllogism at the heart of popular ecological thinking that a global threat to humanity must be shared in cause and crisis by all of humanity.11 Departing from Sloterdijk, I am hesitant to so easily locate modernity or explication as the root or cause of the global catastrophe. No single strategy, war, act of colonization, technological breakthrough, or worldview fully explains the apocalypse before us. However, there is something like what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call a refrain that holds the vast assemblage together, a geopolitical melody hummed along with the **global expansion of a form of life characterized by homogenization rather than diversification**. Accordingly, if we are to make some sense of such a vast world that is, even for Crutzen and Birks, “quite complex and difficult to model,” I think we must consider the particular refrain of geopolitics that is capable of, by scientific as well as more humbly embodied standards, **destroying worlds along with the world**.12 To eschew geopolitics simply because, as a refrain, it is too big, too grand, or too universal would ignore the conditions of possibility for nuclear weapons, power politics, and carbon-based globalization, and would greatly impoverish the explanatory capability of even the best climate models. So maybe it is not so strange that Crutzen and others’ attention to the nuclear threat of great powers has all but disappeared despite the fact that Russia and the United States still possess thousands of nuclear weapons, and as of late have been all too vocal about using them. Instead, the Anthropocene, as envisioned by Crutzen as a universal concern, requires with it a depoliticization of the causes of that concern. Therefore, Crutzen’s fascination with nuclear winter is geopolitical not because it is about nuclear weapons—although that does not hurt. Rather, Crutzen’s attention to nuclear winter is geopolitical because it is an image of the Earth system as a system with particular beneficiaries animating that interest. Sloterdijk’s diagnosis of what I am terming the Eurocene, or the space of what he calls European “earth-users,” **is present in the very cybernetic understanding of the planet as a spatial and substantive whole**.13 In the cases of both nuclear winter and climate change, the atmosphere is a model, or more accurately, the last model. **The whole Earth becomes a single integer in a larger set of planet systems rather than a set of habitats, zones, or locales.** **The Earth is merely another system isomorphic as a unit of analysis** with Mars or the exoplanet trappist-1f. The shift in scale from place to the planetary is much more than a pulling back from the ground upward. The integrated Earth as the representation of a system and as an actual material system is aided by a process of integration, proceeded by a few hundred years of Sloterdijk’s conception of explication where each part of each environment is disaggregated, described, and then reassembled to explain the whole. The process of integration is not merely a metaphoric or metaphysical geopolitics. It is the condition of possibility to understand the planetary as being political, as well as the condition of possibility for its charting as an economic and military cartography. Unlike the weltanschauung of Heidegger’s world image, the planetary “user space” requires **five hundred years of conquest**, fossil fuel extraction and exploitation, settlement, hundreds of expert fields from geography to chemistry to ecology, and the normative consolidation of cosmopolitanism as a right to the freedom of movement at least for those capable of the feat.14 The worldview or world image alone is a necessary but insufficient cause. The practices that habituated, expanded, and intensified that worldview are what is critical to its emergence. In this sense, the Anthropocene, like Crutzen’s award-winning models of climate change and nuclear winter, is much more than an explanatory model. These models are the outcome of five centuries of integration and homogenization such that the infrastructure capable of making the Earth as a system knowable could be built, **and the circulation of knowledge and data could be amassed to even make the diagnosis of a geological epoch in the first place**.15 Properly accounting for the origins of our ecological crisis is vital. No political project oriented toward the many possible futures stretching out before us can consider the questions of ecology and justice on a global, much less geological, scale unless we first take on the unfortunate historical generality of the Anthropocene. The continuing project of Europeanization, now led by U.S. imperial power (although perhaps not for much longer), is central to how the planet got to this point. Understanding this is essential for how any “we” worthy of the plurality of the planet can invent something less nasty and brutish than what currently counts as global order. A consideration of the Eurocene, a geological history and name that foregrounds the geopolitical confrontation that stands in the way of any such future, is required in order to take the scale of our predicament seriously, while also confronting the power politics that made that scale possible.

#### Cybernetics reshapes our working memory by the rearranging of contents—facilitates a new global order of cybernetic fascism

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Human communication is at the center of the cybernetic global order. The neural system of globalized networked society is digital communication. In a 1975 film called Comment ça va?, Anne-Marie Miéville and Jean-Luc Godard discuss the “illness” of information. They begin with an image of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, published in the leftist newspaper Libération. At the time, photojournalistic images had begun to proliferate as a form of information, and Godard and Miéville critique Libération (the most left-wing newspaper in Europe in those days) for failing to include the reader in the creation and dissemination of information. They ask: “How is it that things enter and exit the machine?” (Comment ça va de l’entrée à la sortie de la machine?). This question is about how ideas, words, discourses, human interaction, and images become information and then reach readers and viewers. In Comment ça va?, mass media represents an illness that has killed communication and language. Last year, Godard updated his critique of the media in an interview posted to Instagram. He stated: “Plato’s cave has been fixed on paper/screen.” For Godard, the consequence of the becoming-information of communication and language is the loss of ambiguity in communication. Digital technology has infiltrated every aspect of existence, and the margin of error between the transmission and the reception of a message has been eliminated by mediatization and digitization. For Godard, digital communication denies the force of the image or the word because it eliminates redundancy, misunderstanding, the possibility of reading between the lines, and the possibility of alterity. In a more recent film of his—Adieu au language from 2014—Godard suggests that digital media have destroyed face-to-face communication. He asks: What kind of self could emerge in a time when objects and bodies are disfigurable and refigurable through virtual manipulation?20 Godard posits that the origins of today’s totalitarianism can be traced to the interruption of interior experience by the spectacle. In the film, Godard features a lengthy quote from Philippe Sollers explaining that the spectacle “cuts off” the subject from its interior life—a process that is, paradoxically, highly seductive.21 Furthermore, for Godard digital communication creates a new form of isolated solitude where people lack ties to others. In this light, technology has not become an extension of man, as Marshall McLuhan predicted, but has instead attained autonomy from man, since digital media can communicate amongst themselves without human mediation. For Godard, this means that the “face-to-face” encounter—a basic form of human relation that is the foundation of ethics—is no longer possible. Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist and sociologist, comes to similar conclusions: daily conversations no longer involve eye contact, and face-to-face discussion has been replaced by words on a screen.22 According to Turkle, texts, tweets, Facebook posts, Instagram messages, and Snapchats split our attention and diminish our capacity for empathy. They have created new codes of etiquette; no longer do we feel restrained from reaching for our phones in the presence of other people. This new etiquette entrenches a culture of individualism and isolation from each other. This isolation cultivates the perfect ground for fascism. The digitization of communication not only has political and communal consequences. It also affects the neuroplastic potential of the living brain. The cybernetic episteme reshapes our working memory by rearranging its contents. As Warren Neidich writes, the new focus of power is not only the false reproduction of the past (the manipulation of the archive), but the manipulation of our working memory—the type of memory that influences our decision-making. Authoritarian neuropower wants nothing less than to shape our future memory, argues Neidich.23 If the nervous system of cybernetics is digital communication, at the center of digital communication is desire. Mark Fisher devoted his last lectures at Goldsmiths in 2017 to this subject. During one lecture, he played for his students a famous Apple TV commercial from 1984, directed by Ridley Scott and originally broadcast during the Superbowl. In an overt reference to George Orwell’s novel 1984, the commercial depicts a dreary, repressive control society. This society is seemingly liberated when a buxom blonde woman tosses a sledgehammer at a large screen broadcasting the image of an authoritarian figure, causing the screen to explode. The commercial ends with these lines crawling across the screen: “On January 24, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you’ll see why 1984 won’t be like 1984.” Fisher observes that the video counterposes top-down bureaucratic control to upstart entrepreneurialism. The dreary control society depicted in the commercial is an allusion to not only the Soviet Union, but also IBM, the dominant computer maker at the time. Apple posits itself as the dynamic, colorful new company that will liberate society from dreary IBM, ushering in a new, more vibrant world order. This new world order will fulfill our (capitalist) desires in a way that the communist world cannot. As Fisher suggests, we now live in that world of libidinal capitalism.24 Elsewhere Fisher writes that what drives the circulation of information is the user’s desire to make one more connection, to leave one more reply, to keep on clicking. Capitalism persists because cyberspace is already under our skin, writes Fisher; to retreat from it would be like trying to retreat into some nonexistent precapitalist imaginary. In his view, we believe we have as much a chance of escaping capitalism as we do of crawling back inside our mother’s womb.

### Alt – Shared Reality

#### We need to defend facts about a shared reality and develop mutually shared relationships exclusive from the cybernetic episteme

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By means of the cybernetic episteme, Silicon Valley has shaped the world we all live in. As we are poisoned equally by microplastics and fake news, losing our grasp of a shared reality, the “Silicon Six”—as Sacha Baron Cohen called the titans of Silicon Valley in a 2019 speech—propagate algorithm-fueled fear, propaganda, lies, and hate in the name of profit. As Baron Cohen pointed out, the major online platforms largely avoid the kind of regulation and accountability that other media companies are subject to. “This is ideological imperialism,” he said. “Six unelected individuals in Silicon Valley impos[e] their vision on the rest of the world, unaccountable to any government, and acting as if they are above the law.”26 He called digital platforms the greatest propaganda machine in history. Democratic institutions have failed to reign in the information chaos and the destruction of the public sphere. As Shoshana Zuboff argues, we inhabit a communications sphere that is no longer a public sphere.27 She describes this situation as an “epistemic coup” that has taken place in four stages: First, by way of companies gathering personal data about us and then claiming it as their own private property. Second, through data inequality, which means that companies know more than we do. Third, through the epistemic chaos created by algorithms. And fourth, through the institutionalization of this new episteme and the erosion of democratic governance.28 Baron Cohen observes that people can take a stand against platforms by recognizing our power to boycott them. (One example is the mass defection from WhatsApp to Telegram when the former announced that would share its user data with Facebook.) But we also need to defend the existence of facts and a shared reality, understanding the world not as something we see but as something we inhabit—treating life not as something we have, but as something we live. Anti-platform strategies might be accused of Luddism, but they are not necessarily opposed to technology—only to certain uses of technology. It is also crucial that we regard the cybernetic episteme as inextricable from a broader malaise: humanity’s relationship to life and the planet is a toxic one. The very technologies that supposedly enable us to read, think, flourish, and desire are destroying the world we inhabit.29 People continue to yearn for commonality, mutuality, and something to share. But the culture we currently share is largely mediated by repressive, profit-driven digital platforms. This is why we need to flee from the invasion of images, to distinguish between image and reality, and to affirm the opacity of the world and the ambiguity of language. We need to resist platform monopoly through presence, embodiment, immediacy, and human memory. We need to find ways to create life as opposed to turning it into data, combine emotional and intellectual knowledge, and regard visceral gut feelings as a form of human consciousness. We need to learn to exist in symbiosis with others and with the environment, not dislocated, uprooted, and detached.

### Impact – War Machine

#### Cybernetics is a new form of digital capitalism and has materialized The War-machine—a materialization a war itself

**Tiqqun 10**, 5-29-2010, "The Cybernetic Hypothesis," Anarchist Library, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/tiqqun-the-cybernetic-hypothesis> , GJM

“They wanted an adventure, and to live it out with you. In the end all that’s all that can be said. They believed resolutely that the future would be modern: different, impassioning, and definitely difficult. Peopled by cyborgs and bare handed entrepreneurs, frenzied stock-marketeers and turbine-men. And for those that are willing to see it, the present is already like that. They think the future will be human, feminine even — and plural; so that everyone can really live it, so that everyone participates in it. They are the Enlightenment men we’ve lost, infantrymen of progress, the inhabitants of the 21st century. They fight against ignorance, injustice, poverty, and suffering of all kinds. They go where it’s happening, where things are going on. They don’t want to miss out on a thing. They’re humble and courageous, at the service of interests that are far beyond them, guided by a higher principle. They can pose problems, and they can find solutions. They’ll have us traversing the most perilous of frontiers, they’ll reach out a hand to pull us up onto the shore of the future. They’re History marching forth, at least what’s left of it, because the hardest part is over. They’re the saints and the prophets, true socialists. They’ve known for a long while that May 1968 wasn’t a revolution. The true revolution is the one they’re making. Now it’s just a matter of organization and transparency, intelligence and cooperation. A vast program! Then...” Excuse me? What? What’d you say? What program? The worst nightmares, you know, are often the metamorphoses of a fable, fables PEOPLE tell their kids to put them to sleep and perfect their moral education. The new conquerors, who we’ll call the cyberneticians, do not comprise an organized party — which would have made our work here a lot easier — but rather a diffuse constellation of agents, all driven, possessed, and blinded by the same fable. These are the murderers of Time, the crusaders of Sameness, the lovers of fatality. These are the sectarians of order, the reason-addicts, the go-between people. The Great Legends may indeed be dead, as the post-modern vulgate often claims, but domination is still comprised of master-fictions. Such was the case of the Fable of the Bees published by Bernard de Mandeville in the first years of the 18th century, which contributed so much to the founding of political economy and to justifying the advances made by capitalism. Prosperity, the social order, and politics no longer depended on the catholic virtues of sacrifice but on the pursuit by each individual of his own interests: it declared the “private vices” to be guarantees of the “common good.” Mandeville, the “Devil-Man” as PEOPLE called him at the time, thus founded the liberal hypothesis, as opposed to the religious spirit of his times, a hypothesis which would later have a great influence on Adam Smith. Though it is regularly re-invoked, in a renovated form given it by liberalism, this fable is obsolete today. For critical minds, it follows that it’s not worth it anymore to critique liberalism. A new model has taken its place, the very one that hides behind the names “internet,” “new information and communications technology,” the “new economy,” or genetic engineering. Liberalism is now no longer anything but a residual justification, an alibi for the everyday crimes committed by cybernetics. Rationalist critics of the “economic creed” or of the “neo-technological utopia,” anthropologist critics of utilitarianism in social sciences and the hegemony of commodity exchange, marxist critics of the “cognitive capitalism” that oppose to it the “communism of the masses,” political critics of a communications utopia that resuscitates the worst phantasms of exclusion, critics of the critiques of the “new spirit of capitalism,” or critics of the “prison State” and surveillance hiding behind neo-liberalism — critical minds hardly appear to be very inclined to take into account the emergence of cybernetics as a new technology of government, which federates and associates both discipline and bio-politics, police and advertising, its ancestors in the exercise of domination, all too ineffective today. That is to say, cybernetics is not, as we are supposed to believe, a separate sphere of the production of information and communication, a virtual space superimposed on the real world. No, it is, rather, an autonomous world of apparatuses so blended with the capitalist project that it has become a political project, a gigantic “abstract machine” made of binary machines run by the Empire, a new form of political sovereignty, which must be called an abstract machine that has made itself into a global war machine. Deleuze and Guattari link this rupture to a new kind of appropriation of war machines by Nation-States: “Automation, and then the automation of the war machine, only came truly into effect after the Second World War. The war machine, considering the new antagonisms running through it, no longer had War as its exclusive object, but rather it began to take charge of and make Peace, policy, and world order into its object; in short: such is its goal. Thus we see the inversion of Clausewitz’s formula: politics becomes the continuation of war, and peace will release, technologically, the unlimited material process of total war. War ceases to be the materialization of the war machine, and rather it is the war machine that itself becomes war itself materialized.” That’s why it’s not worth it anymore to critique the cybernetic hypothesis either: it has to be fought and defeated. It’s just a matter of time.

#### The Cybernetic society facilitates violent totalitarianism

**Tiqqun 10**, 5-29-2010, "The Cybernetic Hypothesis," Anarchist Library, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/tiqqun-the-cybernetic-hypothesis> , GJM

The Cybernetic Hypothesis is thus a political hypothesis, a new fable that after the second world war has definitively supplanted the liberal hypothesis. Contrary to the latter, it proposes to conceive biological, physical, and social behaviors as something integrally programmed and re-programmable. More precisely, it conceives of each individual behavior as something “piloted,” in the last analysis, by the need for the survival of a “system” that makes it possible, and which it must contribute to. It is a way of thinking about balance, born in a crisis context. Whereas 1914 sanctioned the decomposition of the anthropological conditions for the verification of the liberal hypothesis — the emergence of Bloom and the bankruptcy, plain to see in flesh and bone in the trenches, of the idea of the individual and all metaphysics of the subject — and 1917 sanctioned its historical contestation by the Bolshevik “revolution,” 1940 on the other hand marked the extinction of the idea of “society,” so obviously brought about by totalitarian self-destruction. As the limit-experiences of political modernity, Bloom and totalitarianism thus have been the most solid refutations of the liberal hypothesis. What Foucault would later call (in a playful tone) “the death of Mankind,” is none other than the devastation brought about by these two kinds of skepticism, the one directed at individuals, and the other at society, and brought about by the Thirty Years’ War which had so effected the course of Europe and the world in the first half of the last century. The problem posed by the Zeitgeist of those years was once again how to “defend society” against the forces driving it towards decomposition, how to restore the social totality in spite of a general crisis of presence afflicting it in its every atom. The cybernetic hypothesis corresponds, consequently, to a desire for order and certitude, both in the natural and social sciences. The most effective arrangement of a constellation of reactions animated by an active desire for totality — and not just by a nostalgia for it, as it was with the various variants of romanticism — the cybernetic hypothesis is a relative of not only the totalitarian ideologies, but also of all the Holisms, mysticisms, and solidarities, like those of Durkheim, the functionalists, or the Marxists; it merely takes over from them. As an ethical position, the cybernetic hypothesis is the complement, however strictly opposed to it, of the humanist pathos that has been back in vogue since the 1940s and which is nothing more than an attempt to act as if “Man” could still think itself intact after Auschwitz, an attempt to restore the classical metaphysics on the subject in spite of totalitarianism. But whereas the cybernetic hypothesis includes the liberal hypothesis at the same time as it transcends it, humanism’s aim is to extend the liberal hypothesis to the ever more numerous situations that resist it: It’s the “bad faith” of someone like Sartre, to turn one of the author’s most inoperative categories against him. The ambiguity that constitutes modernity, seen superficially either as a disciplinary process or as a liberal process, or as the realization of totalitarianism or as the advent of liberalism, is contained and suppressed in, with and by the new governance mentality emerging now, inspired by the cybernetic hypothesis. This is but the life-sized experimentation protocol of the Empire in formation. Its realization and extension, with the devastating truth-effects it produces, is already corroding all the social institutions and social relations founded by liberalism, and transforming both the nature of capitalism and the possibilities of its contestation. The cybernetic gesture affirms itself in the negation of everything that escapes regulation, all the escape routes that existence might have in the interstices of the norms and apparatuses, all the behavioral fluctuations that do not follow, in fine, from natural laws. Insofar as it has come to produce its own truths, the cybernetic hypothesis is today the most consequential anti-humanism, which pushes to maintain the general order of things, all the while bragging that it has transcended the human.

#### Cybernetics relies on a self-validation process of information extraction—the only way out is through disruption by physical human discourse

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Like any discourse, the cybernetic hypothesis could only check to verify itself by associating the beings or ideas that reinforce it, by testing itself through contact with them, and folding the world into its laws in a continuous self-validation process. It’s now an ensemble of devices aspiring to take control over all of existence and what exists. The Greek word *kubernèsis* means “the act of piloting a vessel,” and in the figurative sense, the “act of directing, governing.” In his 1981–1982 classes, Foucault insisted on working out the meaning of this category of “piloting” in the Greek and Roman world, suggesting that it could have a more contemporary scope to it: “the idea of piloting as an art, as a theoretical and practical technology necessary for existence, is an idea that I think is rather important and may eventually merit a closer analysis; one can see at least three types of technology regularly attached to this ‘piloting’ idea: first of all medicine; second of all, political government; third of all self-direction and self-government. These three activities (healing, directing others, and governing oneself) are quite regularly attached to this image of piloting in Greek, Hellenic and Roman literature. And I think that this ‘piloting’ image also paints a good picture of a kind of knowledge and practice that the Greeks and Romans had a certain affinity for, for which they attempted to establish a *tekhnè* (an art, a planned system of practices connected to general principles, notions, and concepts): the Prince, insofar as he must govern others, govern himself, heal the ills of the city, the ills of the citizens, and his own ills; he who governs himself as if he were governing a city, by healing his own ills; the doctor who must give his advice not only about the ills of the body but about the ills of individuals’ souls. And so you see you have here a whole pack of ideas in the minds of the Greeks and Romans that have to do I think with one and the same kind of knowledge, the same type of activity, the same type of conjectural understanding. And I think that one could dig up the whole history of that metaphor practically all the way up to the 16th century, when a whole new art of governing, centered around Reasons of State, would split apart — in a radical way — self government/medicine/government of others — not without this image of ‘piloting,’ *as you well know*, remaining linked to this activity, that activity which we call the activity of government.” What Foucault’s listeners are here supposed to *know well* and which he refrains from pointing out, is that at the end of the 20th century, the image of piloting, that is, management, became the cardinal metaphor for describing not only politics but also all human activity. Cybernetics had become the project of unlimited rationalization. In 1953, when he published *The Nerves of Government* in the middle of the development of the cybernetic hypothesis in the natural sciences, Karl Deutsch, an American university social sciences academic, took the political possibilities of cybernetics seriously. He recommended abandoning the old concept that power was sovereign, which had too long been the essence of politics. To govern would become a rational coordination of the flows of information and decisions that circulate through the social body. Three conditions would need to be met, he said: an ensemble of *capturers* would have to be installed so that no information originating from the “subjects” would be lost; *information handling* by correlation and association; and a *proximity* to every living community. The cybernetic modernization of power and the expired forms of social authority thus can be seen as the visible production of what Adam Smith called the “invisible hand,” which until then had served as the mystical keystone of liberal experimentation. The communications system would be the nerve system of societies, the source and destination of all power. *The cybernetic hypothesis thus expresses no more or less than the politics of the “end of politics.”* It represents at the same time both a paradigm and a technique of government. Its study shows that the police is not just an organ of power, but also a way of thinking. Cybernetics is the police-like thinking of the Empire, entirely animated by an *offensive concept of politics*, both in an historical and metaphysical sense. It is now completing its integration of the techniques of individuation — or separation — and totalization that had been developing separately: normalization, “anatomo-politics,” and regulation, “bio-politics,” as Foucault calls it. I call his “techniques of separation” the *police of qualities*. And, following Lukács, I call his “techniques of totalization” the *social production of society*. With cybernetics, the production of singular subjectivities and the production of collective totalities work together like gears to replicate History in the form of a *feigned movement* of evolution. It acts out the fantasy of a Same that always manages to integrate the Other; as one cybernetician puts it, “all real integration is based on a prior differentiation.” In this regard, doubtless no one could put it better than the “automaton” Abraham Moles, cybernetics’ most zealous French ideologue, who here expresses this unparalleled murder impulse that drives cybernetics: “We envision that one global society, one State, could be managed in such a way that they could be protected against all the accidents of the future: such that eternity changes them into themselves. *This is the ideal of a stable society, expressed by objectively controllable social mechanisms.*” Cybernetics is war against all that lives and all that is lasting. By studying the formation of the cybernetic hypothesis, I hereby propose *a genealogy of imperial governance.* I then counterpose other wisdom for the fight, which it erases daily, and by which it will be defeated.

### AT Cyber Regs

#### Societal notions of cybernetics have been built around the regulation of subjects and military conquest.

**Tiqqun 10**, 5-29-2010, "The Cybernetic Hypothesis," Anarchist Library, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/tiqqun-the-cybernetic-hypothesis> , GJM

Even if the origins of the Internet device are today well known, it is not uncalled for to highlight once again their *political meaning*. The Internet is a *war machine* invented to be like the highway system, which was also designed by the American Army as a decentralized internal mobilization tool. The American military wanted a device which would preserve the command structure in case of a nuclear attack. The response would consist in an electronic network capable of automatically retaking control over information itself if nearly the whole of the communications links were destroyed, thus permitting the surviving authorities to remain in communication with one another and make decisions. With such a device, military authority could be maintained in the face of the worst catastrophes. The Internet is thus the result of a *nomadic transformation of military strategy*. With that kind of a plan at its roots, one might doubt the supposedly anti-authoritarian characteristics of this device. As is the Internet, which derives from it, cybernetics is an *art of war*, the objective of which is to save the head of the social body in case of catastrophe. What stands out historically and politically during the period between the great wars, and which the cybernetic hypothesis was a response to, was the metaphysical problem of creating order out of disorder. The whole of the great scientific edifice, in terms of what it had to do with the determinist concepts of Newton’s mechanical physics, fell apart in the first half of the century. The sciences, at that time, were like plots of territory torn between the neo-positivist restoration and the probabilist revolution, and slowly inching its way towards a historical compromise so that the law could be re-established after the chaos, the certain re-established after the probable. Cybernetics passed through this whole movement — which began in Vienna at the turn of the century, and was transported to England and the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, and constructed a *Second Empire of Reason* where the idea of the Subject, up to that time considered indispensable, was absent. As a kind of knowledge, it brought together an ensemble of heterogeneous discourses all dealing with th e *practical problems of mastering uncertainty*. Discourses fundamentally expressing, in the various domains of their application, the desire for a restoration of one order, and furthermore the maintenance thereof. Underlying the founding of Cybernetics was a context of total war. It would be in vain to look for some malicious purpose or the traces of a plot: one simply finds a handful of ordinary men mobilized by America during the Second world war. Norbert Wiener, an American savant of Russian origin, was charged with developing, with the aid of a few colleagues, *a machine for predicting and monitoring* the positions of enemy planes so as to more effectively destroy them. It was at the time only possible at the time to predict with certitude certain correlations between certain airplane positions and certain airplane behaviors/movements. The elaboration of the “Predictor,” the prediction machine ordered from Wiener, thus required a specific method of airplane position handling and a comprehension of how the weapon interacts with its target. *The whole history of cybernetics has aimed to do away with the impossibility of determining at the same time the position and behavior of bodies.* Wiener’s innovation was to *express the problem of uncertainty as an information problem,* within a temporal series where certain data is already known, and others not, and to *consider the object and the subject of knowledge as a whole*, as a “system.” The solution consisted in constantly introducing into the play of the initial data the *gap* seen between the desired behavior and the effective behavior, so that they coincide when the gap closes, like the mechanism of a thermostat. The discovery goes considerably beyond the frontiers of the experimental sciences: controlling a system would in the end require a circulation of information to be instituted, called feed-back, or retro-action. The wide implications of these results for the natural and social sciences was exposed in 1948 in Paris in a work presented under the foreboding name of *Cybernetics*, which for Wiener meant the doctrine of “control and communication between animal and machine.” Cybernetics thus emerged as a simple, inoffensive theory of information, a theory for handling information with no precise origin, always potentially present in the environment around any situation. It claims that *the control of a system is obtained by establishing an optimum degree of communication between the parties to it*. This objective calls above all for the continuous extortion of information — a process of the *separation* ofbeings from their qualities, of the production of differences. In other words, as it were, mastery of a uncertainty would arise from the proper *representation and memorization* of the past. The spectacular image, binary mathematical encoding — invented by Claude Shannon in *Mathematical Theory of Communication* in the very same year that the cybernetic hypothesis was first expressed — on the one hand they’ve invented memory machines that do not alter information, and put incredible effort into miniaturizing them (this is the determinant strategy behind today’s nanotechnology) and on the other they conspire to create such conditions on the collective level. Thus put into form, information would then be directed towards the world of beings, connecting them to one another in the same way as commodity circulation guarantees they will be put into equivalence. Retro-action, key to the system’s regulation, now calls for *communication* in the strict sense. Cybernetics is the project of recreating the world within an infinite feedback loop involving these two moments: representation separating, communication connecting, the first bringing death, the second mimicking life.