**Interpretation – debate is a game and the affirmative should have to defend the implementation of United States government action grounded in the resolution.**

**This does not require any use of a particular form of argumentation, type of evidence or the assumption of the role of the judge – the resolution is especially meant to limit the form of debate, and that’s pretty neat!**

**Hoofd’07**|Ingrid M. Hoofd, National University of Singapore, “The Neoliberal Consolidation of Play and Speed: Ethical Issues in Serious Gaming” in “CRITICAL LITERACY: Theories and Practices Volume 1: 2, December 2007,” p. 6-14, 2007|KZaidi // recut ahs emi

Serious games are a fascinating next stage in the continuous exploitation of digital media technologies over the last decades for training, learning, and education. As formal education and training always involves the transmission and repetition of certain culturally and socially specific sets of skills and moral values, it would be of paramount importance to ensure that developments within the serious gaming industry are in step with the effects of the good intentions of nurturing people within a social framework that emphasises a fair, culturally diverse, and blooming society. In this light, it is interesting that from the very advent of the information society, digital technologies have been depicted as central to the development of a more just and equal society by harbouring the promise of bridging gaps between classes, races, and genders locally as well as globally. Driven by the vision of this utopian potential of new technologies, the education industry and larger policy organisations have been exploring the pedagogical possibilities of these technologies both in- and outside the traditional classroom for the last twenty-five years. Indeed, the implementation of increasingly more sophisticated and technologically mediated methods and tools for learning and education, takes as its starting point the techno-utopian assumption that (new) interactive technologies themselves are the primary harbingers of a fair and blooming society through facilitating (student) empowerment. This paper takes issue with this widespread techno-utopian perspective by seeking to shed light on the larger ethical implications of serious gaming. It will do so through foregrounding the relationship between global injustices, and the aesthetic properties and discourses of serious gaming. So while reframing serious games themselves in a new ethical perspective constitutes the main objective of this paper, it is equally important to situate serious games within a larger political discourse on the teaching of new skills. Firstly then, policy papers and academic studies on serious games all display an assumption of the inherent neutrality of gaming technologies, as if these technologies were mere tools equally suitable for all. What also becomes apparent in the language used in these studies and proposals, is how this instrumentalist vision of gaming technologies for learning goes hand in hand with a particular neo-liberal assumption of what constitutes a fit individual, and by extension of what the hallmarks of a ‘healthy’ society may be. For instance, in the European Union study “Serious Gaming – a fundamental building block to drive the knowledge work society” by Manuel Oliveira on the merits of serious games for education, justification runs along the lines of gaming ‘encouraging risk-taking and a winning attitude’ and creating a ‘performance-oriented individual.’ Similarly, Michael Guerena from the US Orange County Department of Education proposes in one of the Department’s web-casts that serious games instil “twenty-first century skills” like risk-taking, adaptability, self-direction, interactive communication, and ‘planning and managing for results’ in the students through the “channelling of fun.” Likewise, the UK-based Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association last year published their white paper Unlimited learning - Computer and video games in the learning landscape, in which they argue that serious games will “create an engaged, knowledgeable, critical and enthusiastic citizenry” whose “work practices will be geared towards networked communication and distributed collaboration” (49). Concerns around the ethical implications of serious games regarding their entanglements with larger social (gendered, classed, and raced) inequalities have until now largely been coined in terms of game content or representation. In a recent case in Singapore, the government’s proposition of using the RPG Granado Espada in secondary school history classes was followed by an outcry from various local academics condemning the stereotypical characters and simplistic representation of medieval Europe in the game. Likewise, various authors have critiqued current serious games not only because of simplistic representation of characters and surroundings, but especially because simulations generally tend to oversimplify complex social problems and situations. Gibson, Aldrich, and Prensky’s Games and Simulations in Online Learning (vi - xiv) for instance discuss these demerits of serious games. While such a critical analysis of how game content contributes to the reproduction of dominant discourses is definitely helpful, I would argue that the aesthetics of serious games involve much more than mere content. Instead, this paper will argue that the formal quest for instantaneity that research around digital media has displayed through the development of interactive technologies for education is already itself by no means a neutral affair. This is because the discourses that inform this quest and that accompany this search for instantaneity arguably enforce the hegemony of a militaristic, masculinist, humanist, and of what I will call a ‘speed-elitist’ individual. Moreover, I suggest that the propensity of current games to have sexist or racist content, is merely symptomatic of gaming technology’s larger problematic in terms of the aesthetic of instantaneity. In short, (serious) computer games have become archives of the discursive and actual violence carried out in the name of the utopia of technological progress and instantaneity under neo-liberal globalisation. This archival function is possible exactly because cybernetic technologies promise the containment and control of such supposedly accidental violence, while in fact exacerbating these forms of violence. This leads me to conclude that such violence is in fact structural to new serious gaming technologies, rather than accidental. I will elaborate this hypothesis by looking at various theorists who seek to understand this structural imperative of new technologies, and their relationship to the neo-liberalisation of learning and education. In turn, I will look at how this problematic structural logic informs the two popular serious games Real Lives and Global Warming Interactive. Secondly, the advent of serious gaming interestingly runs parallel with the contemporary dissemination and virtualisation of traditional learning institutions into cyberspace. While the existence of learning tools in other areas of society besides actual learning institutions has been a fact since the advent of schools, the shift of methods of learning into online and digital tools is symptomatic of the decentralisation of power from ‘old’ educational institutions and its usurpation into instantaneous neo-liberal modes of production. I am summarising the work of Bill Readings on the university here, because it sheds light on the shift in education tout court towards virtualisation, and its relationship to the ‘new hegemony of instantaneity.’ In The University in Ruins, Readings argues that the shift from the state-run university of reason and culture to the present-day global knowledge enterprise must mean that the centre of power in effect has shifted elsewhere. More important, says Readings, is that the function of the new ‘university of excellence,’ one that successfully transforms it into yet another trans-national corporation, relies on the fantasy that the university is still that transcendental university of culture in service of the state and its citizens. So the invocation of the fantasy of an ‘originary’ university of reason and progress, that produces unbiased knowledge for the good of all, facilitates the doubling of the production of information into other spaces outside the university walls proper. While Readings surely discusses only higher education institutions in The University in Ruins, I would argue that the logic of a shifting centre of power from the state into the technocratic networks and nodes of speed operates quite similarly in the case of primary, secondary, and other types of formal education. Indeed, the current virtualisation of learning and the emphasis on lifelong learning marks a dispersal of traditional learning institutions into online spaces. This dispersal works increasingly in service of the ‘speed-elite’ rather than simply in service of the nation-state. The heralding of serious games for education can therefore be read as a symptom of the intensified reach of the imperatives of neo-liberal globalisation, in which consumption enters the lives of locally bound as well as more mobile cosmopolitan citizens of all ages through harping on the technological possibility of the confusion of production and play. Through the imperative of play then, production increasingly and diffusely colonises all niche times and -spaces of neo-liberal society. In other words, (the emphasis on) play allows not only a potential increase in production and consumption through the citizen-consumer after her or his formal education of ‘skills’, but starkly intensifies flows of production and consumption already at the very moment of learning. While such an integration of play and production is generally understood within the framework of the neo-liberal demand for the circulation of pleasure, it is useful here to widen the scope from understanding the learner as a mere consumer of pleasure into the larger set of problematic interpellations that marks subjugation in contemporary society. Intriguingly, a host of research has emerged over the past years pointing towards the intricate relationship between subjugation, military research objectives, and videogame development. Such research suggests an intimate connection between the C3I logic and humanist militaristic utopias of transcendence, which incriminates interactive technologies as inherently favouring culturally particular notions of personhood. In the case of computer- and video-games for entertainment, researchers have argued that the aesthetic properties of gaming technologies give rise to so-called ‘militarised masculinity.’ In “Designing Militarized Masculinity,” Stephen Kline, Nick DyerWitheford, and Greig de Peuter argue for instance that interactive games open up very specific subject positions that “mobilize fantasies of instrumental domination” (255). This specific mobilisation that video-games invoke, is not only due to the remediation of violent television- and film- content, but also due to the intimate connection between gaming- and military industries which grant these technologies their particular cybernetic aesthetic properties (see also Herz 1997). This element of militarisation partly informs my concept of ‘speed-elitism.’ I extrapolate the idea of ‘speed-elitism’ largely from the works of John Armitage on the discursive and technocratic machinery underlying current neo-liberal capitalism. In “Dromoeconomics: Towards a Political Economy of Speed,” Armitage and Phil Graham suggest that due to the capitalist need for the production of excess, there is a strong relationship between the forces of exchange and production, and the logic of speed. In line with Virilio’s argument in Speed and Politics, they argue that various formerly the less connected social areas of war, communication, entertainment, and trade, are now intimately though obliquely connected. This is because all these forces mutually enforce one another through the technological usurpation and control of space (and territory), and through the compression and regulation of time. Eventually, Armitage and Graham suggest that “circulation has become an essential process of capitalism, an end in itself” (118) and therefore any form of cultural production increasingly finds itself tied-up in this logic. So neo-liberal capitalism is a system within which the most intimate and fundamental aspects of human social life – in particular, forms of communication and play – get to be formally subsumed under capital. In “Resisting the Neoliberal Discourse of Technology,” Armitage elaborates on this theme of circulation by pointing out that the current mode of late-capitalism relies on the continuous extension and validation of the infrastructure and the neutral or optimistic discourses of the new information technologies. Discourses that typically get repeated – like in the policy papers – in favour of the emerging speed-elite are those of connection, empowerment and progress, which often go hand in hand with the celebration of highly mediated spaces for action and communication. Such discourses however suppress the violent colonial and patriarchal history of those technological spaces and the subsequent unevenness brought about by and occurring within these spaces. I would claim that Armitage’s assessment of accelerated circulation, and the way new technologies make play complicit in the techno-utopian endeavour of speed, is crucial for understanding the larger ethical issues surrounding serious games. It is helpful at this point to look at Paul Virilio’s and Jacques Derrida’s work because this helps us understand the complicity of the aesthetics of interactive and visually oriented gaming technologies in speed-elitism.

**Failure to defend topical action decimates the quality of reality. Three reasons –**

**a. Fairness – it’s like, really important. I promise.**

#### b. Implosive violence – we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us and only hypothetical government action can solve it!

**Artrip and Debrix 14** [Ryan E. Artrip, Doctoral Student, ASPECT, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Francois Debrix, professor of political science at Virginia Polytechnical Institute, “The Digital Fog of War: Baudrillard and the Violence of Representation,” Volume 11, Number 2 (May, 2014)]

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 implosivityor 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).

#### c. Clash – Tailoring arguments to the format of switch-side deliberation promotes self-reflexive openness – that’s the best way to cause wide-scale opinion shifts over time which have absolutely no impact on the real world. Absent normative meta-consensus on procedural terms for debate that guarantee switch-side deliberative testing within mutually-understood constraints, we encourage dogmatism and group polarization. And none of that matters at all.

#### Mclennan 16 Mark McLennan is a graduate student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, having completed a BA and a JD at the University of Sydney. Simulacra and Simulated Policing: Baudrillard and Criminology.//Scopa

After describing a novel sociological position that regards semiology, rather than capital, as the key component of domination (Baudrillard [1968] 1998),  Baudrillard’s radical social theory emerges in light of considerations of consumerism, media, information and technology—all of which conspire to create what Baudrillard calls t‘hyperreal’ society. This is a contemporary world where all boundaries, categories and values implode into the ‘end of the social’. Baudrillard (1972) begins elaborating this theory in an article titled ‘Design and Environment or How Political Economy Escalates into Cyberblitz’ (Baudrillard, 1972, Chapter 10). In this essay, he points to the importance of ‘the passage out of a metallurgic into a semiurgic society’ (Ibid.: 185). Here, consumer objects take on a life of their own ‘as an embodiment and functional part of a system of signs, independent of its status as a commodity’ (Kellner, 1989: 76). He uses the German Bauhaus movement as an example to anticipate the ‘universal semantisation of the environment in which **everything becomes the object of a calculus of function and signification’** (Baudrillard, 1972: 185-86). This is achieved by the synthesis ‘of form and function, beauty and utility, of art and technology’ in the design of objects that **produces a functionalised universe whereby the meaning and function of every object is determined by its place in the system**. As a result, ‘the whole environment becomes a signifier, objectified as an element of signification’ (Ibid.: 186-87). This is analogous to Derrida’s concept of ‘difference’ whereby meaning is never present ‘in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself’ (Derrida, 1965: 27). Essentially, objects, words and images have no direct relationship to the things in which they refer, they inherent meaning only by interacting with one another in an **ongoing system of contrast**. Baudrillard refers to this system as a ‘**cybernetic code’**, and argues that reality itself is shut out from this system of because **the system is wholly self-referencing. This code creates ‘a functionalised, integrated and self-reproducing universe’ of meaning, controlled by simulacra and simulation**. And, like Derrida’s text, there is nothing outside of the code.In ‘The Orders of Simulacra’, Baudrillard (1995) outlines the stages of the transition from traditional society to the contemporary society defined by simulations (Baudrillard, 1995). First, according to Baudrillard, the feudal era had a fixed social order established by a hierarchy of obligatory signs indicating social class and rank. Here, a ‘natural law of value’ dominates the stage. Simulacra, a representation of another image, first emerge as ‘**counterfeits’ of the real**. For example, representations of class, law or value are said to be grounded in nature: art imitates life and democracy is legitimised by ‘natural rights’. Baudrillard indicates, however, that **the inherent goal of simulacra is to produce a controllable and universal system of power**. At this stage, counterfeit simulacra is working ‘only on substance and form, not yet on relations or structures’, but **its evolution will create ‘a pacified society, ground up into a deathless substance … that will guarantee an eternity of … cultural hegemony’** (Baudrillard, 1983b: 91).  Next, the second-order of simulacra appears during the industrial revolution. Importantly, infinite reproducibility is introduced into society. For example, exact replicas of objects are produced by assembly lines and automation. No longer is there nostalgia for a natural order; **nature is to be dominated by production; counterfeit simulacra are now obsolete**. Most importantly, however, the infinite reproducibility of objects, augmented by the rise of capitalism, **enables the emergence of the cybernetic code** and contemporary society. Baudrillard claims that ‘we are in the third-order simulacra’, where simulation models come to constitute the world and all referential finalities are abolished (Ibid.: 100-01): God, Man, Nature, History, Society and others. This is because **images are only understood by reference to other images**. Thus, society has moved from ‘a capitalist-productivitist society to a neo-capitalist cybernetic order’ (Ibid.: 111). As a result of this code, images no longer refer to an object; rather, they refer to another commutable image on the code. But, through models contained in common societal narrative and institutional discourse, simulations are able to produce a ‘reality effect’, which conceals the fact they are merely referring to other simulations (Bogard, 1996: 10). For example, **the code continually sets up simulations of events, which test individuals and ‘[inscribe] them into the simulated order’ through a ‘process of signalisation’** (Kellner, 1989: 80). For example, every advertisement, choice of commodity, choice of entertainment, and political candidate presents a chance for a binary response of affirmation or negation. It is in this way that individuals are inserted into a dominating ‘coded system of similarities and dissimilarities, of identities and programed differences’ **(Ibid.).** Thus, Baudrillard’s contemporary social theory is distinguishable from previous determinist social theories that postulate powerful individuals, classes, or corporations manipulating the public for certain ends. Instead, Baudrillard suggests that **social organisation is determined by individual’s responses to the pre-coded messages** that are derived from simulations of economics, politics, culture or the banal decisions of everyday life (Baudrillard, 1983b: 111). Importantly for the third-order of simulacra**, the binary system of the code creates a ‘deterrence model’ in which all ‘radical change is ruled out, since the very fact of an option between different political parties, [for example], acts as a deterrent against demands for radical social change’** (Kellner, 1989: 81). This is the end of society as traditionally theorised.In Symbolic Exchange and Death Baudrillard (1983c: 20) announces the end of traditional conceptions of society—the end of ‘labour, production, political economy’, and the ‘dialectic signifier/signified that permeated the accumulation of knowledge and of meaning’ (Baudrillard, 2002: 127). Baudrillard argues that **we are in a new era where media and the consumption of semiotic codes that inform images, have replaced production and political economy as the organising foundation of society**. For example, labour is now a ‘sign among signs’ (Baudrillard, 1995b: 23), a symbol of one’s status and integration: ‘the choice of occupation, the utopia of an occupation custom-made for everyone … labour power is no longer violently bought and sold; **it is designed, it is marketed, it is merchandised**. Production thus joins the consumerist system of signs’ (Baudrillard, 2002: 134). Because social reality is constituted by the ‘chess pieces’ of the signs and symbols that are mobilised through the media, **nothing is objectively determined and everything can be simulated** (Kellner, 1989: 62). **Thus, political economy is no longer the determinant that can explain social phenomena.**

**The topical version of the aff solves all their offense – the only option is a radical mimicry of the forms of the system, one that accelerates them to the point of their obvious vacuity. Fatal theory seeks to restore the symbolic space of mystery by operating in the margins, issuing the ironic force of the object in lieu of mastery of it. We must infuse education with symbolic exchange, breaking open the determinism of language and penchant for falsifiability that grounds political violence. Our paradoxical politics dwells in the poetic aporia of hyper-commodification, issuing signs against signs in a bitter but happy duel with reality as such**

**Pawlett 13 - William Pawlett, Senior Lecturer in the School of Law, Social Sciences and Communication at the University of Wolverhampton, in Ashgate Publishing, in 2013** ["Violence society and radical theory: Bataille, Baudrillard and contemporary society", https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288148526\_Violence\_society\_and\_radical\_theory\_Bataille\_Baudrillard\_and\_contemporary\_society, pg. 33-35, 1-5-2019] recut ahs emi

Symbolic Exchange and Death begins with a remarkably strident and politically radical preface: it declares that symbolic exchange is the only effective means of challenging or defying the capitalist system at a fundamental level. The capitalist system, for Baudrillard, is a vast and insidious system of control, adept at neutralising critique and political contestation. Critique may be neutralised by suppression or mis-representation, but increasingly **critique is assimilated as commodity** and as information/data through electronic solicitude. Taking its place within the general information overload, critical thought becomes just another link on the home page of the sort of person who ‘likes’ critical thought, one of your endless options on a Kindle or something you are made to read on an unpopular module during a university degree. That is, critical thought does not succeed in challenging the capitalist system; the cheap and abundant availability of works of critical thought, on Amazon for example, not only provides profits to a tax-dodging mega-corporation, it also demonstrates (or rather, simulates) the openness, tolerance and freedoms of the consumer capitalist system. How does symbolic exchange embody a greater or more successful defiance? Taking up Mauss’s notion of gift exchange as a concept “more radical than Marx’s or Freud’s”, Baudrillard insists that symbolic exchange does not merely describe the traditional practices of certain archaic cultures but is also “taking place here and now” (Baudrillard 1993a: 1). According to Baudrillard, symbolic exchange “haunts” capitalist social relations, it is present in them (in the sign – the medium of exchange) and it “mocks” these structural significations “in the form of their own death”. To understand what Baudrillard might mean by this it is important to stress that symbolic exchange is not a concept to be deployed as critique, symbolic exchange is, in itself, the practice of defiance; it is the living reversal of the system’s order. Symbolic exchanges, in Baudrillard’s sense, are the practice or act of reversal of the system’s priorities and values and so, in this sense, spell death for the system: not ‘real’ but symbolic death and symbolic death is more fundamental and humiliating than ‘real’ death. It is the enormity and reach of the system that makes it so vulnerable, like a much larger opponent being thrown by the momentum of their own weight in martial arts. The system is eminently vulnerable because it is built upon the sense of its own invulnerability, and specifically on its sense of irreversibility: the irreversibility of rationality, of progress, of (Western) dominance, the irreversibility of technological advancement. Given these conditions, according to Baudrillard, even a small or “infinitesimal” injection of reversibility can threaten the entire edifice; the system has no defences against symbolic reversion while it is more than capable of neutralising a frontal attack. Such reversions, the reversion of all the system’s ‘gifts’ include: the reversion of power in the sudden, unanticipated defiant acts of the apparently weak; the reversion of technological supremacy in the breakdown or computer virus; the reversion of rationality in the experience of the irreducible irrationality of rationality; the reversion of official meanings and sense into nonsense and mockery; the reversion of control in catastrophic failures. The effect of symbolic reversibility then consists in sudden, catastrophic reversals suffered by power and by the powerful which reveal, perhaps momentarily, the system’s deep vulnerability. Baudrillard’s position on symbolic exchange is not to be confused with the strategies of the Situationists, though he remained sympathetic towards this movement with which he was involved in the 1960s (Baudrillard 2004a: 15-20). An egg or custard flan thrown in the face of someone powerful and captured by the same media channels which the powerful usually dominate, can be far more effective in countering power than an unwieldy political statement. However, if the Situationists sought meaningful spaces for self-assertion in the gaps, lapses and dead zones of the capitalist system, Baudrillard’s approach is quite distinct. It seeks the setting in motion of a chain reaction or a chain failure through the rippling effects of symbolic humiliation by counter-gift or potlatch. The counter-gift may well be more effective when it is immediate, unplanned, or more specifically when it is not the result of subjective desires and considered beliefs – which can generally be accommodated by the system through simulation. One example might be the sudden, unexpected haranguing of then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher by an elderly lady in 1983. Yet, this example does not really capture the sudden escalation that is involved in placing one’s life and death as a stake against the system. The tragic suicide in December 2012 of a nurse, Jacintha Saldanha, who worked at the private hospital in London favoured by the British royal family and was tricked into revealing information about a royal by two ‘journalists’ working for a Australian radio show, captures something of this fatal escalation. She had been humiliated by the journalists, yet her suicide vastly escalated the stakes and re-directed the humiliation back at the journalists, the media and wider society, generating a truly devastating, ‘potlatching’ humiliation of the journalists responsible (who seemed to crumble inwards), it further weakened the reputation of the so-called ‘free’ press and also brought to a close the British royal family’s ‘bounce’ in popularity after the royal wedding, jubilee and the London Olympics. Each of these powerful interests suffered an immediate reversion of their standing, a symbolic death ; and although the British media partially succeeded in limiting these symbolic effects to the designated sacrificial scapegoats consisting of the two journalists, the fundamental nature of the sacrificial or symbolic sphere became, temporarily, brutally obvious. In a sense we could say that the system cannot suffer a ‘real’ death in any case, not only because it is not a discrete, finite organism but because, in Baudrillard’s terminology, it is already dead, it has no genuine life or vitality and is kept alive only by its life support systems of simulation. The vampiric nature of capitalism was, of course, already a prominent feature of the Marxist critique (Marx Capital Vol. 1). For Baudrillard, the capitalist system does not only draw the life-blood of its exploited workers, it condemns its citizen-consumers to a life-less survival, a living-on in a state of humiliation and dependence, a ‘life’ that is shaped by the system, a life that is made to seem a gift of the system. Though suicide is expressly forbidden by both religious and secular law, that is the system exerts ownership over our death as well as our life, the point of biological termination does represent the absolute limit of the system’s control. Given these conditions the only fundamental strategy of defiance, for Baudrillard, is to reverse this humiliation, to refuse the ‘gifts’ and imprecations, to reverse this derisory life through a symbolic death hurled back at the system. This may take the form of the reversal of the poisonous gifts of consumer goods and information through a greater counter-gift of “**hyper-conformity”: the absorbing of** anything and **everything the system gives while refusing the proper use of these ‘gifts’**. One example given by Baudrillard is obesity, the indiscriminate absorption of food to a degree that becomes a social problem; this involves a (literally) internal revolt against the cult of physical fitness and the body beautiful, a rejection of the injunction to compulsory sexuality and sexual enjoyment (Baudrillard 1990b: 27-34). A further example is the reversal and cancellation of the overload of information through its spontaneous “poetic dispersal” into paradox and ever greater uncertainty: only in the correct dosage does information aid understanding, in excess it creates an absolute uncertainty. These forms of internal reversal reveal the ambivalence hidden within the system. It is not ‘real’ (or biological) death, nor ‘real’ violence, which has the power to challenge the system, it is death as symbolic form which is excluded from the system, and it is the symbolic death through the reversion of its systems which may be re-introduced into the system to subversive and fatal effect. According to Baudrillard, symbolic exchange is experienced “as a demand forever blocked by the law of value” and embodies “an intoxicating revolt”. This intoxication is always present so it does suggest a radically different pattern of social relations, which for Baudrillard would be “based on the extermination of values” (Baudrillard 1993a: 1). But could this extermination of all controlling values ever exist beyond clearly circumscribed ritual occasions, such as those described by Mauss (1990)? It seems that for both Bataille and Baudrillard the answer must be negative, there can only ever be a dynamic alternation or a fundamental duality and, Baudrillard suggests, all social formations except Western modernity have implicitly understood this. This issue is re-visited in more detail in Chapter 2. For Baudrillard “the principle of reversibility (the counter-gift) must be imposed against all the economistic, psychologistic and structuralist interpretations” (1993a: 1-2) and he adopts a very Bataillean formulation when he declares that symbolic exchange is “a functional principle sovereignly outside and antagonistic to our economic reality principle” (1993a: 2). Baudrillard comes close to a definition of symbolic exchange with the following:The symbolic is neither a concept, an agency, a category, nor a ‘structure’, but an act of exchange and a social relation which puts an end to the real, which resolves the real, and, at the same, puts an end to the opposition between the real and the imaginary. This initiatory act is the reverse of our reality principle … the symbolic is what puts an end to the disjunctive code and to separated terms … in the symbolic operation the two terms lose their reality (Baudrillard 1993a: 133).

#### Now for the paradigm issues:

**[1] Fairness and Education are voters! Appeals to fairness and education buy into a global ponzi scheme**

**Senese and Page 95 - Guy B Senese, Professor of Educational Foundations at North Illinois University and Ralph Page, Associate professor of Philosophy at the University of Illinois, Published April 30, 1995** “Simulation, Spectacle, and the Ironies of Education Reform” [https://www.amazon.com/Simulation-Spectacle-Education-Critical-Paperback-ebook/dp/B000WEX9BQ] Accessed 8/29/19 SAO

For Baudrillard, reform projects can be understood as quasi-public advertisements and promotions. These promotions enter the world of consumer circulation independent of the logic of capital accumulation. The power of this circulation is a function of ideology only tangentially related to the facticity of the object of the promotion. For boxing, the damaging, sometimes death-dealing struggle is obscured when reformers shape the debate. This shaping works to alter the true dangers of the activity and serves as advertisements for the importance of reformers. For education, the ideology of equal opportunity and excellence is an advertisement for the deeper struggle where public-school compulsion becomes the standardized substitute for the lost power of working-class persons to amass private goods and time for their own and their communities' betterment. The orchestration of schooling appears in this light somewhat like a dance marathon, a decorous and energetic activity initially, but one which grinds to an obscure and deadly march of endurance and success of a few only at the expense of those contestants who fall. We may follow Baudrillard into his world, where what things stand for are more important than what they are for. Reform, as a sort of spectacular, decorous democratic mobilization of care, stands for rectitude, but is coded to promote little if any substantial change. Indeed Baudrillard claimed that "control of the code" and the proliferation of sign values are of more significance than control of labor and the sphere of production. He argued for theoretical perspective in which the most fruitful area of approach is to oppose and expose the process of signification that makes possible the process of obscurity, which operates as a function of the symbolic universe of competition and struggle in capitalist societies. For Baudrillard, capital itself is a "demented enterprise, without limits, to abolish the symbolic universe in an indifference that is always greater, and in circulation of values always accelerated ... capital is described as the reign without limits of exchange value." Thus the de-mentation of participants in a competitive struggle must be met by the de-mentation of our efforts to describe and define the symbolic universe encapsulating these struggles. Boxing and schooling play a part in this symbolic universe, and all efforts to reform must also reform their metaphorical message. For Baudrillard the struggles of Right and Left, which have their counterpart in reform efforts in education, particularly have imploded in a media-saturated society, in which differences become signs simulating democratic debate. Capital is itself a fundamental challenge to the natural order of value and moral hierarchy. Justice and reason are only accidental to its efficiencies. With Baudrillard we might argue that reform and democratic process "involve the injection of homeopathic doses of the social and the political into a body in which the previous vestiges are dying.” Svi Shapiro contributed an analysis of the 1980s excellence movement that illuminates some of these homeopathic and spectacular elements of education reform. He argued, for example, that the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) report, "while stopping short of calling for new outlays, also makes clear its support for a strong federal role." This highlights the paradoxical allegiance to a "new federalism," evident in the growing privatization impulse, while the education of children is quietly redefined as the sole protectorate of a "national interest." This interest is that of business primarily, and the NCEE report's apparent concern with education in the humanities, civics, or the development of a "literate citizenry" are in fact subsidiary to the human capital development interests of business. "Knowledge, learning information and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce," the report concludes," and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs ... if only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we will retain in world markets, we must rededicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system." Yet, disguised by the metaphors of expansion and productivity is the reality for working-class children of the struggle for what they hope are actual, not symbolic, life chances.

**[2] We can cross apply the aff to theory. Solves ideological dogmatism and content exploration**

**Koh 13 - Ben Koh, NSD Update, October 1st, 2013** “Breaking Down Borders: Rethinking the Interaction Between Theory and Ethics” [http://nsdupdate.com/2013/breaking-down-borders-rethinking-the-interaction-between-theory-and-ethics/] Accessed 8/14/20 SAO

First: Fairness is at its basis is an ethical concept. For instance at its basis, fairness as Rawls explains is, “a number of persons engage in a mutually advantageous cooperative venture according to certain rules and thus voluntarily restrict their liberty, those who have submitted to these restrictions have a right to a similar acquiescence on the part of those who have benefited from their submission.” That is to say, the basis of fairness rises from benefiting from cooperation. In the debate context, the “benefit” as Rawls refers to could be the actual ability to debate, or speaking without interference etc. In the same way that it’s considered immoral under most ethical systems to take without recompense, fairness is relevant due to it being the “recompense.” Additionally, equality’s importance is as a moral concept. The utterance that we ought to both start with the same amount of speaking time is morally relevant for it guides or at least constrains our actions, or the rightness and wrongness thereof (i.e. if I go a minute longer in the NR, I would usually be dropped or at least penalized due to its wrongness). Second, Fairness is normative: A) The idea that there is a consequence to a certain unfair act implies its relevance to our action. Debaters generally don’t read theory just because they wanted to point out something interesting or amusing, they do so to win or to rid the round of the problematic argument. B) The voluntary concession of the basic rules for the round renders fairness as being “obligatory.” Loland explains, “the obligation of fairness does not arise unconditionally. One basic premise is that the parties are voluntarily engaged. They have chosen participation in favor of nonparticipation and have thus more or less tacitly agreed to follow the commonly accepted rules and norms of the practice play the game. Loland further explains that “in sporting games, the predominant distributive norm is meritocratic. The norm on equal tratemnt, then, becomes a necessary condition for a game to take place. To be able to evaluate the relevant inequalities satisfactorily, participants have to compete on the same terms. All competitors ought to be given equal opportunity to perform.” The implication is that an argument that questions ethical assumptions (or even more basically assumptions at all) needs to be open to criticism. In the same way debaters now take into account the theoretical implications of their frameworks (i.e. the line of arguments centered around whether or not “ought is defined as maximizing well-being” is a fair interpretation), debaters should take into account the ethical implications of their theory arguments. Analyzing the way we debate theory further exposes these assumptions. Theory is debated typically in a very utilitarian fashion. Debaters tend to weigh between theory standards under assumed criterions of “what would a policy maker do,” how easy the calculation is, etc. They answer the question of drop the debater vs. drop the argument commonly in terms of solvency, whether or not there is a deterrent effect, etc. It’s no surprise in my mind that most “LARPers” are generally as proficient on the LARP as they are on the theory debate due to the reproduction of skill. To keep theory argumentation at a standstill in its variation is to deny the basic value in LD in the first place. There’s no reason why we should not question the assumption of how we debate or think about theory in the same way we question the assumptions of right and wrong in LD. A question that follows then is what occurs if we debate theory in a more Kantian sense? Or a more Nietzschean one? Etc. I’m not persuaded by the idea that ethical arguments cannot apply to the context of theory debate. Examples: 1) If the argument against consequentalism is true that there are infinite consequences, is norm setting ever possible? 2) If an intention based framework is true, and the violation was not made intentionally, should the one violating still be held culpable for the violation 3) A polls framework would outline why community consensus is most ethically relevant. If a certain practice is common, would that implicate its moral permission? Beyond the voter, concepts like competing interpretations, which in some variations claims that only one interpretation is objectively/ absolutely true, could easily be criticized with postmodern arguments. Massumi (a Deleuzian contemporary) would probably argue that the attempt to instill a certain worldview of the round is indicative of state philosophy, where “The end product would be ‘a fully legitimated subject of knowledge and society’ – each mind an analogously organized mini-State morally unified in the supermind of the State. Prussian mind-meld.” Security K type arguments that criticize the idea of deterrence claiming that mindset is the root cause of the threats it attempts to be prevented can easily apply to drop the debater justifications about norm setting. Apprehension to introduce this type of argumentation into the debate sphere can be tracked most likely to the tendency of judges to either a) paradigmatically assume fairness is important to avoid annoying and assumptive debates about whether or not fairness is a voter or b) judges not voting on these arguments frequently in the past. However, this line of thought I present does not attempt to claim that fairness is absolutely not a voter. This type of argument generally does not contest if theory itself is unfair or resolvable in a theoretical way, i.e. in the fashion most “fairness not a voter” arguments are made. The goal rather is to reframe the lens of which we analyze theory debates, or analyze “fairness not a voter arguments.” The application fosters discussion about what fairness ethically should imply, not in attempt to create more “frivolous theory debates” or figure out ways to make theory irresolvable. In fact, this mindset would produce better philosophical discussion. By examining the full implication of an ethical argument, debaters could more fully understand what it means to argue X or Y is the correct moral framework beyond just the resolution at hand. Whereas debate about animal rights or compulsory voting does allow for that form of philosophical analysis, this viewpoint allows for full education of ethics to even more frequent, real world concerns of fairness and education. Additionally, most of the historical unwillingness is probably rooted in tendency for debaters to use this avenue of argumentation in a blippy fashion. However in the same way that arguments that are more fleshed out or have definitive warrants are given priority over others, debaters ought to argue this similarly. Rather than treating ethical arguments against theory as a “back up strategy,” this should become a more full, centralized approach. The purpose of this article is that fairness as an ethical idea, with the same ethical discussion, etc., should not be absent from questioning. The implementation, function, correctness of a conception of fairness, etc., should all be open for debate in the same way that we try to figure out if death is really morally bad after all. The even broader implication is that LD debate should continue to foster questioning**.** To take a firm stance on basic assumptions is to deny the role of philosophical questioning in the first place. To quote Rebar Niemi, “the notion that any one of us could set some determinate standard for what debate should be is preposterous, uneducational, sanctimonious, and arrogant. I think that the notion that we should teach the already privileged population of debate to be inflexible, dogmatic, and exclusive in their belief sets creates worse citizens, worse people, and ultimately a worse world.”

**[3] Theory is disciplinary tool that upholds hierarchies**

**Pawlett 8 - Dr William Pawlett, International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, January 2008** “Against Banality – The Object System, the Sign System and the Consumption System” [https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/against-banality-the-object-system-the-sign-system-and-the-consumption-system/] Accessed 8/25/20 SAO

Inequality drives the system, providing the underlying dynamic for the games of invidious distinction. Baudrillard does not contend that the capitalist system is “deliberately bloodthirsty”40 simply that it seeks to maintain privilege, domination and, through these, control. It is simply that a new car for a private consumer is a more effective means of social control than a new public hospital, while a visible “underclass” of the marginal and rejected serves as a potent reminder of what happens if you refuse to play by the rules. It is important to emphasise that at this stage of Baudrillard’s thought there is a strong sense of “determination by social structure”; a social level of causality which is quite real though it is largely hidden or unconscious. Baudrillard’s analysis attempts to penetrate beneath or beyond the “metaphysical” notions of growth and affluence, of needs and uses, to expose the workings of the system through “a genuine analysis of the social logic of consumption”.41 This analysis reveals fundamental inequality and divisiveness – a social status war. The level of ideology with its notions of equality, fairness, and of technological progress, is secondary and offers signs of freedom which mask “real” lived inequalities (though the distinction between real and apparent is abandoned in Baudrillard’s next study For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign).

**[4]** **The ROB is to vote for the debater with the best strategy to interrogate and rupture the serious gane.**

**Prefer –**

**[a] Bindingness – Every subject exists within the code – any action a subject takes is infected by its operations which means an understanding of it is a priori question to any action.**

**[b] Motivation – All thought and action including the flow has been influenced by the semiotic attachments enforced by the hyperreal which means any genuine motivation stemming from an agent must come from a rupture, since capitalism has otherwise influenced all our desires so the aff is a side constraint. Means the aff is a side constraint on the flow.**

**[c] Sociological Subjectivity – hijacks their fwk- if a subject is socially excluded, only rectifying the mechanisms of the code which produced those conditions allows for any solvency.**

**[d] All our other cards are reasons as to why the ROB is important.**

#### [5] Nixon’s proclamation that “Gold is dead” marked the end of material labor relations. With no anchor to production the financialization of capitalism has made revolution impossible. Only the exacerbation of viral reactions solves through catastrophic collapse.

Baldwin 15 - Dr. Jon Baldwin, London Metropolitan University, International Journal of Baudrillard Studies, July 2015 “Baudrillard and Neoliberalism” [https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/baudrillard-and-neoliberalism/] Accessed 10/5/20 SAO

As would be expected of a thinker from the left concerned with issues of political economy, Jean Baudrillard’s work can be used to illuminate the machinations of geopolitical finance and the global economy. The most significant event to recently occur to this economy was the financial crash and crisis of 2007/8. A Baudrillardian reading of these events is the prime focus of the essay. Baudrillard’s work proposes that the origins of the crash can be found in the transformation of capitalism into a new form of hyper-capitalism, namely neoliberalism. As well this is the transformation of the economy into a financial simulacrum, namely a hyper-real economy. This article proposes that the suspension of the gold standard by United States President Richard Nixon in 1971 is the principal act of deregulation of the market. This fundamentally transmuted the nature of the economy. This ‘freeing’ of the market can be understood as a semiotic act, even a creative act, and is compared to radical movements in the arts. It is common to use the phrase gold standard to refer to a model of excellence or a foundation upon which judgement may be based. Postmodernity may be defined as an era that has lost such gold standard foundation. Nixon’s claim that ‘Gold is dead’ echoes Friedrich Nietzsche’s claim that ‘God is dead.’ Nothing is the same after this. There is no longer any possible morality of the market. The flow of capital is freed from any anchor to real wealth. We witness, as Baudrillard had fully anticipated, the virtual international autonomy of financial capital. Monetary debt becomes a mere paper promise and the world becomes more successful at creating claims on wealth than creating wealth itself. This is the play of floating capital. In this financial simulacrum money becomes a sign free of any reference to real wealth or production. When this simulacrum is exacerbated to the point of parody, the bubble bursts and crash ensues. The crash and crisis of neoliberalism can be seen to fully correlate with Baudrillard’s principle of exacerbation. The article begins by outlining the official and unofficial accounts of the crash of 2007/8. It suggests that capital is, to a certain extent, perpetual crisis. The move of the economy into neoliberalism and the discontent this facilities is remarked upon. The deregulation of the gold standard is a key moment in the move to a hyper-real economy. Analogies with post-modern architecture, music, literature, and poetry are made. These analogies are possible because, at heart, they all involve issues with the political economy of the sign. Indeed, in the early 1970’s Baudrillard had identified a certain correlation between Saussure and Marx on the semiotics of value. The deregulation of the gold standard is argued in the article to be central to the genealogy of the hyper-real economy. The implications of this are considered as well as consequences of the move to simulated finance and the virtual market. One outcome is the freeing of the economy and unlimited financial speculation. The trans-economics of speculation is argued to be exacerbated to the point of parody, and hence the bubble bursts. The article concludes with a discussion of the Baudrillardian motif of exacerbation. The world’s leading economies are in crisis and the harsh repercussions of the financial crash of 2008 are still being felt. The global financial meltdown continues and economic inequality has reached extremes not seen for a century. Business and government in their economic activity, commercial or military expansion, corruption, and surveillance are widely distrusted. Many people regret the consumerism and social corrosion of modern life. **However the emancipatory activities of protest, activism, and both the traditional and radical left, appears already exhausted, ineffectual, and have yet to deliver.** Less fortunate people in the west seem entrapped in a form of what Baudrillard would call Stockholm syndrome – expressing empathy for a system that does not have their interests at heart and which conceals gross inequalities of wealth, power, and opportunity. They seem content to accept exploitative and precarious working conditions, and the compensatory pathologies of narcissistic consumption (retail therapy), media spectacle (a thousand channels and nothing on), fantasies of status and advancement (the mythologies of advertising), and celebrity idolatry (the twittered selfie). Meek acceptance or resignation to a banal, materialistic, nihilistic society appears complete for some. Capital and affluent societies have always had waves of boom and bust – stasis and chaos – but what is crucial about the current financial situation is its scale. It is a global crisis and not regional like other previous crashes. It cannot be contained, assistance is not available from some other region, and austerity measures are already being met with civil disobedience. Dependent on one’s perspective, this heralds one of the greatest catastrophes of recent history or one of the most significant opportunities for radical change. Nobel laureate economist, Joseph Stiglitz, has proposed that the crisis – the fall of Wall Street, the revelation of the machinations of the bankers, and market fundamentalism – presents a legitimation crisis to capitalist society akin to the effect of the fall of the Berlin Wall upon communism. What was the catalyst for the crash? After decades of largely steady growth and expansion the global economy began to reveal signs of distress in 2007. On the 9th August BNP Paribas is the first major bank to acknowledge the risk of exposure to the subprime mortgage market and freezes three of their funds. Subprime lending is typically made to those who may have difficulty maintaining the repayment schedule. These high credit risk loans are characterized by higher interest rates making them lucrative to the institutions granting them. The chief executive of another major bank, Northern Rock, will later claim that this was ‘the day the world changed.’ In 2008 it became apparent that financial difficulty had snowballed and that the world was experiencing the onset of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Day by day there was the utter collapse of huge and household name financial institutions, the failure of core businesses, stock and housing market downturn, and decline in consumer wealth and economic activity. Global retirement funds dropped by 20 per cent in a single week. Economies worldwide slowed, credit was tightened, and international trade declined. Banks had to be bailed out by nation states to avert a meltdown on Wall Street. A number of causes and triggers of the crash were proposed with varying weight given by differing authorities. These involved a complex intersection of economic policies and deregulation. They include the encouragement of home ownership, the relatively easy access to loans for subprime borrowing, and subsequent overvaluation of bundled subprime loans, all of which assumed the housing market would continue to grow indefinitely. There were also questionable modes of trading by buyers and sellers, an ambition for short-term instant profit over longer term growth. There was a lack of adequate capital holdings by banks and insurance companies to support the financial commitments they made. An important distinction should be made here between the individual and the economic system itself. Often it is all too easy to scapegoat a few individuals for their failings in the attempt to present the financial system as essentially just and workable. Undoubtedly there were individuals’ idiosyncrasies within the system. There was blatant greed, idiocy, insider dealing, criminal activity, and escalation of little more than Ponzi schemes. There were dealers on cocaine, antidepressants, or anti-anxiety medication, which fuelled exuberance and the taking of risks one would normally avoid. Memorably, Tom Wolfe cites a study that discovered that “traders with unusually high levels of testosterone at the start of the trading day could be counted on to turn a profit by the day’s end.” However, when it came to sex “his demonstration rarely took more than 60 seconds. It went pump pump pump pump pump pump pump pump oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oooouh uh oo agghhh and bingo – roll off, snore like a bear” (Wolfe, 2013: 19). Traders treated their customers with disdain, referring to them as ‘muppets’, ‘guppies’, ‘suckers’, ‘marks’, ‘sheep’, ‘chumps’, ‘lambs’, ‘baby seals’ (Ibid). But these were the only people actually providing ‘liquidity’, that is, ready money. Also worthy of consideration are the hiring policies of financial Human Resources departments with their tried and tested techniques for ensuring they only hire the most aggressive and money-driven of all their candidates, and their ability to weed out anyone with morals, restraint or empathy. Whilst there is an element of ‘human error’ to the crash ultimately focus should be upon the economic system itself, a system that churns out and feeds off such individuals. The U.S. Senate’s report, Wall Street and the Financial Crisis: Anatomy of a Financial Collapse, concluded that the crash was the result of “high risk, complex financial products; undisclosed conflicts of interest; the failure of regulators, the credit rating agencies, and the market itself to rein in the excesses of Wall Street” (U.S. Senate: Levin-Coburn, 2011). Concomitant with this, and to address and attempt to lessen the chance of a recurrence, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act regulatory reforms were adopted. This was an overhaul of the U.S. financial regulatory system on a scale not seen since the restructurings that followed the Great Depression. The act attempts to increase regulation of banking and risk, increase transparency of markets (in particular derivatives), and protect consumer and insurance interests. There are further measures to increase standards and cooperation in accounting procedures and credit rating agencies. The ambition of the legislation is announced as follows: “To promote the financial stability of the United States by improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, to end ‘too big to fail’, to protect the American taxpayer by ending bailouts, to protect consumers from abusive financial services practices, and for other purposes” (Ibid.). Alongside the new regulatory measures there have been two dominant responses to attempt to lessen the impact and aggravation of the crisis. One is unprecedented fiscal stimulus such as institutional bailouts and quantitative easing – the printing of more money – to promote economic activity. Another has been the implantation of austerity measures such as public spending cuts, and certain tax increases. The general mood from western governments and big business has been one initial embarrassment and hand-wringing followed by an air of business as usual: the show must go on. There has been the regulatory patching up, the closing of a few loopholes, the making of some cuts here, and a stimulus of the economy there. The belief is that after several years, maybe even a decade or two, economic growth will return to the previous level and things will be back to normal. The masses must tighten their belts. They must accept the slashing of public spending, the shrinking of social protection, and an impoverished quality of life. They must accept the thwarting and regression of progressive change. They must knuckle down and ride out the storm while seeing advancement opportunities for their children dwindle to levels unknown for more than half a century. That is the mainstream official, Wall Street, version of events. On this account the crash presents no insurmountable obstacle to the ideology of free market capitalism. The crash is seen as just a blip. There is historical amnesia and myopia in this official vision. On the other hand there is a more critical view of the crash. Capitalism, its critics say, has always had waves of boom and bust. A boom fuelled by lending and private debt is always and inevitably followed by bust. Witness the recent bubbles in third world debt (1980s), the Asian meltdown (1990s), dot.com fever (2001), and property and mortgages (2007). On this view capitalism is perpetual crisis. The regular and cyclical nature of boom and bust is apparent in a broad historical overview of US economic activity. There were depressions in the 1830s, 1870s, and 1890s, and a financial panic in 1907: “It is interesting to note that all were immediately preceded by some kind of speculative financial boom that went bust, followed thereafter by the sharp and deep contraction of the real economy in the wake of the speculative bust” (Rasmus, 2010: 11). The crash of 1929 was a massive financial catastrophe chiefly caused by highly leveraged speculative borrowing. Hand-wringing and regulation followed such as the introduction of rules to stop such leveraged speculative trading by banks with customer deposits. Certain stability in the 1950s and 60s followed and there was no major financial catastrophe until the deregulation and removal of the aforementioned rules in the 1970s and 80s. Hence we arrive at another massive financial catastrophe caused in part by highly leveraged speculative borrowing. Again, this is being followed by hand-wringing and regulation. And so it continues like endless sequels to a film that was awful to begin with. As Marx and Engels had anticipated in The Communist Manifesto, “And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises?…by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises” (Marx, 2002: 184). What is crucial, however, about the contemporary financial situation is its scale. In the late 1990s Baudrillard had proposed that “what has triumphed isn’t capitalism but the global” (Baudrillard, 1998: 10). It may now already be a cliché and a form of wishful-thinking for some, but Christian Marazzi suggests that this is “one of the greatest crises of history” (Marazzi, 2011; 9). joseph Stiglitz has proposed that the crash presents a legitimation crisis for capital and should all but silence the most vociferous supporters of neoliberalism (the neoconservative supported vision of ‘capitalism on steroids’). This may well be overly optimistic but what remains significant is the fact that ‘capitalism’ or ‘neoliberalism’ is now emerging as the name of the problem rather than as something that seems obvious, the best, natural, or even inevitable. The term neoliberalism was originally coined in Europe in the late 1930s to suggest a new form of liberalism following the decline of interest in classical liberalism. It fell out of favour until recently whereby the meaning has shifted somewhat to embrace a host of related ideologies, mode of governance, and policy packages that are all favourable to a hyper-capitalism. There is a clear relationship with globalisation and imperialism. There are nuances but typically the political philosophy of neoliberalism supports total economic liberalisation, ultra-free trade, open markets with no geographic restriction, complete deregulation, and on-going privatisation. It would weaken and decrease the public sector in favour of the private sector. For its critic’s neoliberalism is a form of fundamentalism as crude and dangerous as any other fundamentalism. This market fundamentalism seeks market solutions and suggests competition as the answer to any problem**. The competition**, however, is not on a level playing field: **it is won by those with** connections and concentration of **capital, founded on imperialism, slavery, theft, and lineage**. The players take illegal short cuts, creatively cut corners, exploit others, and avoid tax payments. As with any competition it ensures that there are some winners but a majority of losers. This is at odds with the neoliberal claim that competition ensures the best outcome for all involved. A political economy has been established which ultimately only benefits a wealthy elite. Neoliberalism advocates the unfettered use of free market techniques and principles outside the spheres of commerce and business in the creation of new markets and interventions in non-economic areas and social space such as health, care, education, culture, energy, and so on. The basic premise is that everything will run better if run as a business. The neoliberal answers to the canonical questions of philosophy, such as ‘Why are we here?’ and ‘What should I do?’ are answered thus: We are here for the market, and you should compete. Neoliberals tend to believe that “humans exist for the market, and not the other way around” (Treanor, 2005). The human is defined as merely a potential entrepreneur, the middle-manager of their own life, which is seen as their own initial capital and enterprise. Neoliberalism perhaps makes sense only to those already holding the bargaining chips of economic power, or the poor souls who have internalised this ideology and definition of their finite time on earth in purely economic terms. Since the 1970s neoliberalism as a practical system of government has been implemented in various forms around the world often under the guise of liberal-democracy but in reality as variants of crony capitalism (a sprinkling of liberal legitimacy to dictatorships), corporatocracies (the corporate takeover of nation states), and unfettered and unrequested globalisation. The governments of Ronald Regan and Margret Thatcher, with big business whispering and tonging in their ears, are said to have done much to facilitate and disseminate such neoliberal ideology. A key resource for their ideas is Friedrich Hayek’s paranoid and unwarrantedly influential book The Road to Serfdom. Hayek argued that the trend, as he saw it, towards socialism and collectivisation occurring throughout the west in the 1940s was incompatible with freedom and democracy. The fear is of the growth of the state and variants of socialism. His ideology is perhaps best summarised by Ronald Reagan’s famous quip: “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’” Given the recent bank bailouts this rings rather hollow today. Thatcherism is largely synonymous with neoliberalism. The tributes that followed the recent death of Thatcher revealed how much of neoliberalism is now taken for granted even of the left of the political spectrum. One delightful piece of dissention was offered by Labour M.P. Glenda Jackson in a House of Commons speech which went against the mainstream of historical amnesia. She spelled out the disapproval of such neoliberalism for the general population of the UK. Thatcherism wrought “the most heinous social, economic and spiritual damage upon this country… We were told that everything I had been taught to regard as a vice – and I still regard them as vices – was, in fact, under Thatcherism, a virtue: greed, selfishness, no care for the weak, sharp elbows, sharp knees, all these were the way forward…[people know] the price of everything and the value of nothing” (U.K. Parliament, CM201213). Also typical in enumerating the social problems, growing populist reaction, and discontent of neoliberalism are the heartfelt words of a UK school teacher: “We train children to be successful, ruthless, greedy and selfish; our virtues are money, fame and looks. We do not reward kindness, do not value loyalty, we do not care about courage” (Griffiths, 2013: 11). The World Health Organisation has predicted that depression is on track to become the second most widespread disease, after heart disease, in the developed world by 2020. Oliver James (2008) posits a strong correlation between rising rates of mental distress and nations most advanced in neoliberalism. Our hugely increased wealth over the past half century has done nothing to increase our happiness. In fact not only does market capitalism have little impact on improving levels of happiness but it actually exacerbates certain types of mental illness. Rates of distress among women in the UK almost doubled between 1982 and 2000. This is also true of the US and in striking contrast with more egalitarian and collectivist countries. Capitalism itself, with countless boom and bust cycles, is fundamentally bi-polar, swinging from the hyped-up mania and exuberance of a boom to the depression and come down of a bust. The advocacy of cognitive behaviour therapy, James suggests, must be refuted as merely a sticking plaster for a sick society which encourages individuals to try to think positively rather than challenge the status quo. James describes the human being under neoliberalism as a passive, empty, anxious, isolated person for whom life has no meaning except work and who compensates for this through compulsive consumption. Our emotional malaise is a direct result of increased competitiveness, individualism, materialism, and the way that these exploit our insecurities. **Selfish capitalism generates insecurity and inflates comparisons**. A winner-takes-all competitiveness merely creates losers and a pandemic of low self-esteem. It offers only compensatory pathologies around consumption, celebrity, and status. The acceleration of neoliberalism is clearly a crisis in itself, and a back-drop to the actual crash. There will be numerous ways of telling the story of the crash and the ‘biggest bubble in history’ but at some stage all plot lines will converge to one place and one time: Camp David, Maryland, on the afternoon of Friday 13th August 1971. Here, in secret, Richard Nixon met Federal Reserve chairman Arthur Burns and other advisers. The backdrop was high inflation, and high unemployment. These were implications of the fact that since the mid 1960’s the US had begun to borrow enormous sums to fund Lyndon B. Johnson’s ‘Great Society’ and the Vietnam War. In essence “the US began to live – and kill – considerably beyond its means” (Kunkel, 2012:23). To avert a run on America reserves Nixon announced the advice he was going to follow on television on Sunday 15th August, before the markets opened: “I have directed Secretary Connally to suspend temporarily the convertibility of the dollar into gold … Now, what is this action – which is very technical – what does it mean for you?” (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?%20pid=3115%20#axzz%201UZnES7PMon). Indeed, what does it mean and what are the implications today? Previously the Bretton Woods system of international financial exchange had fixed exchange rates based on the US dollar, which was redeemable for gold by the US government at the price of $35 per ounce. This anchor meant that the U.S. was committed to backing every dollar overseas with gold. The dollar was anchored to gold and other currencies were anchored to the dollar. Paper banknotes in circulation carried the guarantee that they could be exchanged for a certain amount of gold. As gold is scarce, this put strict limits on the amount of money that governments could print. The suspension of the direct convertibility of the U.S. dollar into gold ushered in the era of **freely floating currencies**. This is a move away from the strict post-Depression regulation of U.S. finance. The current world monetary system assigns no special role to gold; indeed, the Federal Reserve is not obliged to tie the dollar to anything. It can print as much or as little money as it deems appropriate. Nixon’s neat opportunism “changed the rules of world trade” (Auters, 2010: 35). and Slavoj Žižek confirms that the decision to abandon the gold standard for the US dollar “was the sign of a much more radical shift in the basic functioning of the capitalist system” (Zizek, 2012: 17). In semiotic terms Nixon suspended the relationship between a sign and its referent – in this instance money and gold. This disconnected the circuit between paper and bullion, and hence representation and the real. The implications following this type of divorce of sign systems from their referent (even if the relationship was always only ever idealist or utopian) underpin much of Baudrillard’s work. The implications of the loss of a core referent, or loss of a sign systems connection to a reality, are often discussed under the rubric of postmodernism. The much debated term was first used around the 1870s but gained wider currency in the 1970s. Following Nixon there is no transcendental law of capital and in many ways anything goes. There is incredulity to grand narrative of the modern, planned, regulated market. One can make an analogy with developments in the arts. Around the date of the ‘Nixon Shock’, July 15, 1972 at 3.32 pm to be exact, Pruitt–Igoe, a large urban housing project in St. Louis, Missouri, was given the final coup de grâce by dynamite and the first stage of demolition was complete. For architectural theorist and provocateur, Charles Jenks, this was the day modern architecture died and a new paradigm emerged: postmodern architecture. The destruction of the complex, typified by poverty, crime, and segregation, signalled the failure of public policy planning and is seen as a direct indictment of the ideals of modernism and of the society-changing aspirations of the International School. Modernist architectural form, planning, and space were meant to regulate good conduct and healthy behaviour. Postmodern architecture, for better or worse, is incredulous to such ambitions and has loss the gold standard and regulation of modernist planning. In music one might point to composer Arnold Schoenberg’s ambition of the emancipation of the dissonance. Music loses the standard of tonality and arguably sounds like the dissonance of emancipation. Literature loses the regulated contract between author, text, and reader with fragmentation, paradox, parody and questionable narrators. The work of art loses the divine and cult value. It is no longer the representation of a referent just as money is no longer a representation of gold or wealth. Religious and mythological themes, the portrait of the patron, the landscape, and the slice of modern life all dissipate. Art becomes a self-referential sign system playing with its own possibilities. Its referent becomes other art movements and as such becomes simulation. New Age spirituality is a quasi-sentiment of the ineffable freed from the dogma and rituals of the standard of institutionalised religion. In Baudrillard’s signature theory, reality itself becomes a self-referential system disconnected from the gold standard of the Real. Let us take a moment to stretch a tentative analogy with what happened in poetry and the deregulation of verse. The Oxford Companion to English Literature announces that “Verse in the twentieth century has largely escaped the straitjacket of traditional metrics.” Likewise we can say that ‘Economics in the twenty first century has largely escaped the straitjacket of the traditional regulated market.’ In England ‘free verse’ was initially a term of derogation before it became a battle cry, and today is more or less a neutral descriptor. Emerging at the advent of European modernism, the French term vers libre, first used by Gustave Kahn in the late 1880s, signified poetry free from the closed forms such as the sonnet, villanelle, or sestina, making very little or no use of traditional rhyme or meter. Kahn refused all legitimacy to traditional meter, seeing in it only a constraint, “an essentially political one – the inherited legacy of royal centralism and absolutism, put to work in servile manner” (Meillassoux, 2012: 22). Charles Baudelaire, with his focus on modern life in the city, also signals the freeing of poetry from strictly religious, mythological, or natural referents. There is no standard in terms of form or content that poets are bound or restricted by. For pedagogical convenience we can cite the myth of Arthur Rimbaud as pioneering these developments. The poet is raised to ‘seer’ with ‘verbal hallucinations’ and ‘verbal alchemy’ under the aegis of the theory that ‘inventing the unknown calls for new forms’. This is Rimbaud, in his own words, “exempt from all morality” (Robb, 2001: 194). Une Saison en Enfer was one of the first modern works of literature to show “that experiments with language are also investigations into the self.” Fifteen years before the vers libre made its official appearance in French literature, the idea that poems could be written without rhyme or metre “sounded like artistic vandalism” Ibid.). For Stéphane Mallarmé, Rimbaud was the sort of ‘attractive hooligan’ who could, and did, do “serious damage to French literature” (Ibid.). In ‘Crisis of Verse,’ Mallarmé will speak of the “exquisite and fundamental crisis” (Meillassoux, 2012: 21). occasioned by the emergence of free verse. The qualified acceptance of free verse is enabled insofar as “God had ceased, for the young Mallarmé, to guarantee the status of literary symbols” (Ibid.: 28). For verse, as the poet believes, there are to be no political or centralist constraints, no referents or standards, no morality, and ‘God has ceased.’ For the economy, as Nixon states, there are to be no political or centralist constraints, no referents or standards, no morality and ‘Gold is dead.’ For organised religion and philosophy, as Nietzsche states, there are to be no political or centralist constraints, no referents or standards, no morality, and ‘God is dead.’ If we have broken with these standards and referents of poetry, religion, and philosophy then it is because we have killed their guarantor and transcendental signified – God. If we have broken with these standards and referents of the economy then it is because we have killed their guarantor and transcendental signified – Gold. 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 process and 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.

#### [6] External critiques fail – they justify the moral superstructure they criticize.

**Robinson 12 - Andrew Robinson, Ceasefire, August 24th, 2012** “An A to Z of Theory | Jean Baudrillard: From Revolution to Implosion” [https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-10/] Accessed 3/9/20 SAO

Baudrillard and resistance Last week, this column explored Baudrillard’s account of the collapse or implosion of capitalism. What does all of this mean for political resistance? For one thing, it means that the dominant system must continue to be opposed. For Baudrillard, there is always something missing from the code. It is always incomplete, leaving a radical remainder. The system is based on a split. The code is differentiated from reality. It has to be, to avoid symbolic exchange. It cannot achieve the complete inclusion which comes about with generalised reversibility. Yet the code tends to take over all of social space. Its “other” disappears or becomes invisible. It tries to be a complete system, a total reality. It largely succeeds in sucking intensity from social life. Yet it also remains vulnerable, because of the exclusion on which it is based. Baudrillard theorises resistance in terms of the irruption of the symbolic in the realms controlled by the code. It is something like what Hakim Bey terms the ‘return of the primitive’. We really need the dimension of the ‘secret’. Its forced revelation is destructive and impossible. The return of the symbolic is discussed in various ways in different texts. Resistance arises when subjects come to see their own programmed death in the accumulation, production and conservation of their subjectivity. They become fiercely opposed to their reduction to the regime of work-buy-consume-die. Resistance becomes increasingly nihilistic, in response to the programming of the universe. It becomes resistance to the code as meaning, and at the same time as lack of intensity. In seeking to restore intensity, it resorts to the modalities of symbolic exchange. The impossibility of “revolution” It is important to differentiate Baudrillard’s view from standard accounts of revolution. To be sure, this is the position from which Baudrillard emerges. In the early work, The Political Economy of the Sign, Baudrillard argued that the regime of the code could only be destroyed by a total revolution. ‘Even signs must burn’. Baudrillard’s early work can be read as a call for a Situationist-style overthrow of capitalism through a revolution in the everyday, which breaks the power of the code and of signs. In more recent works, Baudrillard rethinks this view. He claims that revolution is now impossible. Baudrillard makes this claim because of the end of production. Revolution was historically seen as the liberation of the productive energy of humanity from the confines of capitalism. But if production no longer exists, this kind of vision has no hold. Labour has become another sign. There is no tendency for it to liberate itself by moving beyond capitalism. Baudrillard is deeply critical of standard leftist responses to neoliberalism. He criticises revolutionaries of his day for seeking a return to the “real”. He sees this as nostalgia for the previous, Fordist period of capitalism. People seek to get rid of the code, and go back to the earlier kind of simulation. Or they seek to identify something which is not yet signified in the system and which ought to be – for instance, excluded groups who should be included. This actually ties people to the prior forms of the dominant system. For Baudrillard, the weapons of the previous period are already neutralised in the order of the code. Revolution is a casualty of the end of the period of system-expansion. Explosions and revolutions are effects of an expanding order. This expanding order is an effect of the regime of production. But simulation is instead an inward-looking order. It is ‘saturated’ – it cannot expand any further. As a result, explosion will never again happen. It has been replaced by the ‘cold’ energy of the simulacrum. Instead, there is constant implosion. The world is saturated. The system has reached its limits. It is socially constructed as dense and irreversible, as beyond the ‘liberating explosion’. Baudrillard believes that we are past a point of no return: the system can’t be slowed down or redirected to a new end. We are in a ‘pure event’, beyond causality and without consequence, and every effort to exorcise hyperreality simply reinforces it. These are little fractal events and gradual processes of collapse which no longer create massive collapses, but exist horizontally. Events no longer resonate across spheres. It is as if the forces carrying the meaning of an event beyond itself have slowed to a standstill. The London ‘riots’ or the student fees **protests**, for example, **do not turn into generalised rebellions** in Britain as perhaps they still might in Egypt or Greece. **We are in an era of ‘anomalies without consequences’**. But the system will nevertheless come to an end, by other means. Even if people can’t revolt, a reaction is certain. Explosive violence is replaced by implosive violence, arising from a saturated, retracting, involuting system. The system has lost its triumphal imaginary because of its saturation. It is now in a phase of mourning, passing towards catastrophe. Things don’t get transcended anymore, but they expand to excess. Baudrillard sees this as the culmination of a kind of negative evolution. Systems pass through stages: a loose state produces liberty or personal responsibility; a denser state produces security; an even denser state produces terror, generalised responsibility, and saturation. Beyond saturation there is only implosion. Anti-consumerism is another target of critique. Criticising consumer society for doing what it claims to do – for supplanting ‘higher’ virtues with everyday pleasures – is a false critique which reinforces the core myth of consumerism. Consumer society functions as it does, precisely because it does not provide everyday pleasures. Rather, it simulates them through the code. Baudrillard also criticises moral critique and scandal, such as Watergate. He argues that the system requires a moral superstructure to operate, and the revival of such a superstructure sustains the system. What is really scandalous is that capital is fundamentally immoral or amoral. Moral panics serve to avoid awareness of this repressed fact. Similarly, critiques of ideology risk reaffirming the system’s maintenance of the illusion of truth. This helps cover up the fact that truth no longer exists in the world of the code. Since there is no reality beneath the simulacrum, such analyses are flawed. It is now the left (or the Third Way) that tries to re-inject moral order and justice into a failing system, thereby protecting it from its own collapse. Baudrillard implicitly criticises theories such as Laclau’s, which seek to re-inject meaning and intensity into politics. For Baudrillard, this task is both impossible and reactionary. Baudrillard sees the system as creating the illusion of its continued power by drawing on or simulating antagonisms and critique. There is thus a danger that **critique** actually **sustains the system, by giving it a power it doesn’t have**. **Trying to confront and destroy the system** thus inadvertently **revives it, giving it back** a little bit of **symbolic power.** He also sees conspiracy theories and current forms of Marxism as attempts to stave off awareness of the reality of a systematic code. In any case, the energy of the social is simply a distorted, impoverished version of the energy of “diabolical” forces (i.e. of symbolic exchange). Baudrillard thinks that societies actually come into being, not for the management of interests, but coalesce around rituals of expenditure, luxury and sacrifice. Politics itself was a pure game until the modern period, when it was called upon to represent the social. Now politics is dead, because it no longer has a referent in reality. This is because it lacks symbolic exchange. The absence of symbolic exchange leads also to an absence of possibility of redistribution, either North to South or elite to masses. Fascism also resists the death of the real, in a similar way. It tries to restore in an excessive way the phenomena of death, intensity and definite references, in order to ward off the collapse of the real. Fascist and authoritarian tendencies revive what Baudrillard terms ‘the violence necessary to life’ – they keep up some kind of symbolic power. (Baudrillard’s Lacanian heritage is clearly shown in this idea of a necessary violence). Baudrillard has a certain sympathy for the desire to escape hyperreality in this way, but also sees it as futile. People doing this – both left and right – are trying to resuscitate causes and consequences, realities and referents, and recreate an imaginary. But the system deters such efforts from succeeding. Le Pen for instance is ultimately absorbed, as the mainstream integrates and repeats his racist ideas. This analysis could also be applied to various “fundamentalisms” and ethno-nationalist movements today. This kind of resistance is ultimately reactionary, seeking to restore the declining regime of signs. But it can only be understood if its basis in energies of resistance to simulation is recognised. It is because it channels such resistance that it is able to mobilise affective forces. Baudrillard’s analysis is here similar to Agamben’s view that the sovereign gesture is now exercised everywhere because of the rise of indistinction and indeterminacy. The paradox is that the performance of fundamentalism often leads back towards the world of simulation and deterrence. Such movements map symbolic exchange onto the state, restoring some of its reality, but ultimately contributing to the persistence of simulation. Resistance from inside the regime of power is impossible because of deterrence. Baudrillard suggests that it’s now impossible to imagine a power exercised inside the enclosure created by deterrence – except for an implosive power which abolishes the energies preventing other possibilities emerging. He also suggests that the loss of the real is irreversible. Only the total collapse of the terrain of simulation will end it, not a test of reality. A truly effective revolution would have to abolish all the separations – including the separation from death. It cannot involve equality in what is separated – in survival, in social status and so on. The strategy for change is now exacberation, towards a catastrophic end of the system. Baudrillard believes that the resultant death of the social will paradoxically bring about socialism.

**[7] Impact calc: 1. It’s a question of orientation towards the form of the university which is a prior question to the content of that practice and proves consequences are incoherent 2. The system must be gorged by its own meaninglessness and an overproduction of incoherent signs and symbols prove our method is doing its job by demonstrating the system has already subsumed truth 3. Don’t grant them analytic because their mode of thought has been epistemically skewed by the code so all their arguments are influenced by capitalism and detached from reality 4. Denying the aff is impossible – since we are an exposure of reality, any argument starts from the premise the aff is true, but to deny the aff is to deny any referent for your arguments and reality itself. 5. It’s impossible to defeat the aff from other indexes since a) It would require an external standard of evaluation, but that would require a further standard, which is infinitely regress b) Epistemic skew – Every other index has been influenced by the code so using them to criticize our aff proves it true since the code influenced it and is trying to take down our movement**