## The Drunken Reptile

**We begin with a story of nothingness - I have always unconsciously sought out that which will beat me down to the ground, but the floor is also a wall. I dream of the damnation I have so amply earned, stolen from me by the indolence of God.**

**Land, 92** (Nick Land, Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virtulent Nihilism, 1992)

It is 03.30 in the morning. Let us say one is ‘drunk’—an impoverished cipher for all those terrible things one does to one’s nervous-system in the depths of the night—and philosophy is ‘impossible’ (although one still thinks, even to the point of terror and disgust). What does it mean for this episode in the real history of spirit to die without trace? Where has it strayed to? ‘I thought of death, which I imagined to be similar to that walk without an object (but the walk, in death, takes this path without reason— “forever’’)’ [III 286]. An extraordinary lucidity, frosty and crisp in the blackness, but paralysed; lodged in some recess of the universe that clutches it like a snare. A wave of nausea is accompanied by a peculiarly insinuating headache, as if thought itself were copulating unreservedly with suffering. A damp coldness, close to fog, creeps through the open window. I laugh, delighted at the fate that has turned me into a reptile. The metallic hardness of intellect seems like a cutting instrument in my hand; the detached fragment from a machine tool, or an abattoir, seeking out the terminal sense it was always refused. The object of philosophy, insofar as the reflective meditation upon thought can be taken to characterize it, is arbitrarily prescribed as undisturbed reasoning (the cases of psychopathology, psychiatry, abnormal psychology, etc. do not remotely contravene this rigorous selection, because such studies of disturbed thought are constituted—in principle—without entanglement). It is thus that successfully adapted, tranquil, moderate, and productive reason monopolizes the philosophical conception of thought, in the same way that the generalized robotism of regulated labour squeezes all intense gestures out of social existence. My abnormal devotion to Bataille stems from the fact that nobody has done more than he to obstruct the passage of violent blanks into a pacified oblivion, and thus to awaken the monster in the basement of reason. Not that the repressed is locked in a dungeon, it is stranded in a labyrinth, and connected to the daylit world by a secret continuity. A tangle of confusion comes to seem like a door, a maze like a barrier, and one says ‘I’, but the inside is not a cell, it is a corridor; a passage cut from the soft rock of loss. Inner experience traverses a sombre porosity, and the moans of the minotaur reverberate through its arteries, hinting at an indefinable proximity. It becomes difficult to sleep.

## K

**Link 1: The aff replicates anthropocentrism by discounting the onto-epistemological power of outer space**

**Ferrando 16 - Francesca Ferrando, Liberal Studies Program, New York University, in the Book “The Ethics of Space Exploration” pgs 147-149, edited by Schwartz and Milligan, published 2016** “Chapter 10: Why Space Migration Must Be Posthuman” [Space and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-39827-3\_10] Accessed 12/1/21 SAO

It is now time to consider the impact of space encountering on human identity and existential insights, by delving into the specific change of perspective brought along by space traveling. This radical shift, known as the overview effect, consists of a series of epiphanies experienced by astronauts looking at the Earth from outer space. In his book The Overview Effect: Space exploration and human evolution (1998), Frank White relates such a shift in consciousness to that specific geographical perspective, stating: “Mental processes and views of life cannot be separated from physical location” (3). Humans are embodied beings; their materiality is a process supported and deeply affected by their surroundings. White further asserts this point by emphasizing the fact that the astronauts in Earth orbits and the lunar astronauts have different types of epiphanies: “The orbital astronaut sees the Earth as huge and himself or herself as less significant. The lunar astronaut sees the Earth as small and feels the awesome grandeur of the entire universe…Both programs change the astronaut’s perception of the Earth and of his or her own identity, but in quite different ways” (ibid., 36). To White, the overview effect is so significant, that he affirms: “It is possible to grasp the true implications of this evolutionary process only by seeing it from the viewpoint of the universe as a whole, and from that perspective, the Overview Effect may point to humankind’s purpose as a species” (ibid., 5). **The overview effect is of key importance to space ethics, allowing us to approach the topic of space migration not** only **from the** usual **utilitarian perspective, but** also **from an onto-epistemological standpoint:** resonating with Heidegger, **space physically becomes “a way of revealing**”. 10.5 Conclusions The affects and effects of space travel are life-changing, as Valentina Tereshkova remarks: “As soon as I begin staring into the starry ways in the sky, I physically realize how close they are. Those who have already been in space, yearn with all their hearts and souls to haste there again and again” (2015, 10). Tereshkova recently volunteered for a one-way trip to Mars, believing in a project which, even though not accomplished yet, may soon enough become actual. This chapter responds to the urgency for reflecting on the large-scale ethical implications, socio-political challenges and technological preconditions of space migration. In the first section of this chapter we have demonstrated that in the ancient world astronomical insights had a direct impact on social events, architectonical structures and religious beliefs: knowledge of space was crucial to the understanding of the Earth and to the development of human civilizations. In the second section we have underlined how, in the space race, humans lost their ontological primacy. While humanistic categories such as gender, race, nationality, among others, are still affecting the practices of going to space, the anthropocentric ontological primacy of the human has been challenged. On one side, non humans animals were launched first and have preceded humans in space. On the other side, robots are better suited to survive to outer space conditions.28 Thirdly, space migration brings to the bioethical debate on human enhancement new terrain of discussion by addressing, among other controversial issues, the search for alien life and the possibility of creating hybrids and chimeras between human animals and non-human animals, who may be better fitted to live on planets other than Earth, with all the bioethical concerns that crossing such species boundaries may raise. In the third section we have highlighted how outer space cannot be thought separate from Earth: space technology is already causing space debris, an environmental hazard both for spacecrafts as well as for life on Earth. Space pragmatics should be revised by developing sustainable space technology in order to comply with the theoretical premises based on the “Outer Space Treaty” (1967), expanding the beneficial vision of space exploration and space migration, from humans and Earth, to non-human beings and non-human agents, including other planets, stars, natural satellites and asteroids, approaching outer space under specific environmental regulations. Space exploration and interstellar traveling are setting the conditions for a socio-cultural, bio-technological and geo-political evolution, which is radically challenging the notion of the human, of the cosmos and of life itself. From an onto-epistemological perspective, the narratives of outer space are **feeding a posthuman paradigm shift** by decentering the Earth from the center of the known universe, and placing hypothetical human and non-human beings on other celestial bodies; furthermore, space migration and the adaptation to extraterrestrial conditions may eventually bring along the evolution of posthumanities. Outer space represents a literal and physical place beyond anthropocentrism, Earth-centrism, biocentrism and life-centrism, although these discriminatory categories are reappearing in human activities and pragmatics in space: this is why space is crucial to Posthumanism as much as Posthumanism is necessary to space. Outer space can finally be seen as the becoming29 of the human, not only linguistically (as a “posthumus”, the etymological root of the term “human”), but also ontologically. Outer space has historically performed and continues to manifest as a way of revealing in the processual constitution of human and posthuman identities. Through a comprehensive analysis of past, present and future legacies, this chapter stresses the importance of adopting a posthumanist approach in space migration, in order to manifest, instead of old habits and new wars, desirable futures for humans and non-humans alike.

**Link 2: Foreclosing the failure of radical ecological and social arrangements in space cements the normative architecture of capital**

**Valentine 12 - David Valentine, Anthropological Quarterly, Fall 2012**“Exit Strategy: Profit, Cosmology, and the Future of Humans in Space” [https://muse.jhu.edu/article/488890] Accessed 1/13/22 SAO

Should we take these cosmological accounts seriously? Recently, as I explained my attempt to do so to a colleague, he became very angry with me. He argued that the cosmological mission of NewSpace entrepreneurs can only be fantasy, and to treat it as anything else was intellectually and politically dangerous because it obscured the extractive and exploitative ideologies that are fundamentally at the heart of any capitalist endeavor. Giving a counter example, I noted that several of my interlocutors are concerned about potentially civilization-killing asteroids hitting Earth and that their plans are practical and non-fantastic in the sense that species have been eradicated by asteroids before, a possibility that exceeds the demands, fantasies, or time frame of capitalism. I mentioned the famous Tunguska event of 1908 where a comet or asteroid hit a remote area of Siberia with a force roughly equivalent to 1,000 times the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. My colleague himself exploded at this point: “capitalism does more damage on the face of the Earth every day than that asteroid did at that moment!” While I’m not sure whether he was accurate or how one might assess the material impact of capitalist endeavors in a single day vis-á-vis a large asteroid strike, his point is not to be ignored. Yet what struck me most about this argument is, again, the implication that Earth and its recent human history brackets the totality of human experience and of its future, and that the evidence of capitalism’s effects on the Earth relegates potential asteroid strikes or human settlement in space necessarily to the realm of fantasy. On the other hand, my NewSpace interlocutors see the assumption— on the part of most of the public, governments, and social critics—that the human future is constrained by the upper limits of the Earth’s atmosphere and by the time-span of modernity as itself a dangerous fantasy. In the words of one presenter at the 2011 ISDC: “Something is going to hit us, we need to survive. We have to convince people of that.” In this view, the Earth-bound gaze ignores Earth’s context in a broader environment of the solar system and assumes an historical context which spans merely hundreds rather than **billions of years**. They see history in terms of a species imperative to expand in order to protect life and intelligence by distributing humans across the solar system and even the galaxy (as shown by Olson and Farman in this issue). But they too assume that Earth-originating, historically-recent free market principles will underpin such expansion, even as some might imagine or hint at other social and exchange forms arising in the encounter with space. What I seek here is another kind of exit strategy: an escape from the assumption (whether rightist or leftist) that the encounter with space will simply produce a repetition, extension, or logical conclusion of history, human sociality, exchange relations or any other human phenomena that have emerged on the surface of our planet. From libertarian supporters of NewSpace endeavors, this requires following through on the radical promises they see offered by a future in space with an acknowledgment that **the context of space may produce radically-different kinds of social and exchange relations**. From those who see human settlement of outer space as a fantasy or a dangerous distraction from the realities of environmental collapse and capitalist excesses, this requires a willingness to engage seriously with the possibilities of space as a context for human futures. From both, it requires an engagement with contemporary human activity that is not already explained by the brief span of modern human history. Again, it is important to reiterate I am not proposing a contradiction between cosmology and capital. NewSpacers are excellent capitalists; they certainly want to make money, and they see market forces as key to the settlement of space. Concomitantly, other entrepreneurs have visions of the social good that their enterprises will bring about, and may find finance capitalism’s short-termism equally vexing and necessary to navigate. Yet, NewSpace is unique not only in that it encompasses diverse industry sectors, but more importantly because it envisions itself as shaping the total future of the human species and of life on Earth itself; in this way, it is cosmological. And again, these are not exclusive goals. Several of my interviewees have contested my characterization of a necessary tension between NewSpace entrepreneurs’ and investors’ goals. In interviews, people like Kollipara, whom I cited above, see a distinction between these goals but not a tension. For Kollipara, profit is both the proximal engine and purpose of NewSpace enterprises, and he sees the investment problems of NewSpace industries as natural problems of any nascent industry. But going is still the end goal: like most other interviewees, Kollipara was willing to accept my ticket to Mars, to abandon his Earthly wealth to be part of the vanguard of the human future. While the market is seen by Kollipara and others as the natural engine for this radical evolution of the human future, the two are not smoothly aligned, and one cannot fully explain the other. I conclude with another return: to the future. The very idea of “the future” provokes suspicion in anthropologists because of its suturing to the teleologies of modernity and capitalism. And “space” is the iconic site of modernity’s future. Yet, again, as Collins (2008) notes, **if we accept that “the future” is necessarily the steady path of neoliberalism (or, alternatively, its overturning by a socialist revolution), aren’t we just buying into those very teleologies?** In turn, if we don’t pay attention to the explicit utopian human futures of people who are powerful enough to at least set them in motion, are we not preventing ourselves from becoming involved in one of the emerging debates about what a human future should look like? To be sure, the future that NewSpacers envision is already known to them; like the anthropologies that Collins critiques, it is a future past, though in this case built on the premise of free markets, American exceptionalism, science fiction precedents, a valorization of colonialism, and libertarian principles and ethics. But if NewSpace is in a position to enact at least some of its cosmological visions, I am arguing we should engage with those visions in their own terms, and not foreclose them within the unfolding of a story that we already know (the eternal success of neoliberalism or the inevitability of an environmental and socialist revolution) so that we may engage with this future and the surprising sociality and exchange relations that may emerge from it. This requires taking these future visions of humans in space—no matter how apparently extreme— seriously, as a cosmology with teeth.

**Alternative: Reject neoliberal determinism. Instead of embracing failure we must be attentive to the difference introduced by space as a critical philosophical project.**

**Valentine 15 - David Valentine is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, Platypus, May 5, 2015** “Failure and the Future” [https://blog.castac.org/2015/05/failure-future/] Accessed 1/14/22 SAO

There’s nothing quite as satisfying for the modern as an historical prediction about the future, or about a large transformational project, that has—inevitably—failed. Whether as specific as predictions of particular technologies (where’s my flying car?), or as general as claims that market solutions will erase social inequalities (capitalism will eventually end poverty!), critical scholars have demonstrated that faith in a progressive future is fundamentally a political and ideological project of the modern era. But this satisfaction with modernity’s failures alerts us to the fact that we never-moderns still have faith in one kind of prediction, which is precisely the prediction of inevitability of failure of such transformational projects and their promised positive futures. Indeed, one could say that what we call the end of the modern or of history was inducted in this affective mode: an ironic stance toward now-faded modernist futures, their hubris and hopefulness simultaneously exposed as illusions of a progressive but failed modernity. This is nowhere more apparent than in critical approaches to the human conquest of space beyond Earth. The recent negative publicity about Mars One is a case in point. Announced in 2012, Mars One’s founder, Bas Lansdorp, proposed sending privately-funded, one-way human missions to the Red Planet with volunteer crews, enabling the establishment of a Mars colony by 2029. Lansdorp has argued that such a remarkable goal could be achieved using existing technologies and could be funded by media rights to what, he argued, would be the solar system’s most-watched reality television program. Mars One and its volunteer crew selection process garnered enormous interest in the press, on television, and online, but its previous media-darling status is now on rocky ground due to the revelations of a mission finalist. As such, it now appears as yet another fantasy of universalizing capitalist relations, dashed on the shores of technological impossibility and capital’s internal contradictions, leaving capitalism (and the human species) to face its consequences firmly on Earth and begin its atonement at the dawn of the Anthropocene, that is, the current, human-impacted geological epoch of Earth. In my six-year ethnographic project, currently in its final stages, on outer space settlement advocates and their visions of the future, study participants have also been privately predicting Mars One’s failure for years, though for different reasons than those of media and scholarly observers. Despite Mars One’s claims, the engineers, rocket scientists, and entrepreneurs who have been involved in the space settlement movement for decades saw the practical holes in this future plot line all too quickly. But the synchrony between these analyses of Mars One’s failure is not my point; rather, it is the differences between their opening premises and the consequences of those differences. What intrigues me is how the cracks in Mars One’s plans reveal differences in how to span the gap between past, present, and future for which, as Hannah Arendt notes, we are poorly prepared. Since her 1963 essay, The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man, outer space has been, for scholars on the left, the site both of an ultimate dehumanization and of fantastical modern, technologized statecraft, distracting us from our imminent collision course with auto-extinction. Mars One stands as the latest example of such fantasy. For outer space settlement advocates, the multiple possible locations for humans and their ecologies in space—including on Mars—are the very promise of human futurity. Mars One, for them, is just poorly planned and resourced. The challenge I face in my current research and writing is how not to write off the futurity of my informants’ visions with a check issued by the urgency of the contemporary, for despite the long list of gaps in Mars One’s plans, there is a huge amount of labor and capital involved in better-planned visions for space settlement—so large that it would be dangerous to write off its effects, whatever they may be, as mere fantasy. Without discarding the important insights of Arendt and her intellectual descendants, my work is to take seriously both the engineering and scientific labor of my informants and the visions of the future that drive them. What is profoundly anthropological about their work is the requirement to take space not as an empty signifier guaranteeing the modern, capitalism, or the future, but as the location of real places (as Lisa Messeri has shown), as multiple kinds of nature to which humans may adapt themselves through technological interventions. That is, they take the difference of space not necessarily as a contrast to Earth or as a site of escape from Earth, but as multiple places that are also different from each other and that thus that require different kinds of thinking about what a future world might be. That **attention to “world” and future must incorporate everything from gravity**, air, light, and food to **labor, race, gender,** and exchange, to haircuts, proprioception, **sunlight, and privacy**. My query is this: What difference (to world, to future, to imagination, to science) is introduced by outer space that makes our critical tools inadequate for thinking about difference, relations, and humans beyond Earth? And might this difference, then, introduce a possibility for thinking futurity not simply in terms of modernity’s failed progress but along lines of multiple ways of becoming? That is the question with which I am grappling as I begin to write my book based on this research. Stay tuned!

## CP

**CP text: I am plagiarizing the 1AC. It’s mine. The aff has nothing left to bargain with. This is the best challenge to systems of property. We shatter the illusion of neoliberal control of knowledge production.**

**Froomkin 13 - David Froomkin, The Morningside Review, Published in Partnership with Columbia University Libraries, Columbia Undergrad Student, May 1st, 2013** “Plagiarism as Revolution, Concept as Content: Apotheosizing the Author under the Aegis of Appropriation” [https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/TMR/article/view/5441] Accessed 9/29/21 SAO

“Art is either plagiarism or revolution.” —attributed to Paul Gauguin In “It’s Not Plagiarism. In the Digital Age, It’s ‘Repurposing.,’” Professor Kenneth Goldsmith writes about his course “Uncreative Writing,” which explores the concept of authorship. His students study the Internet’s impact on the proliferation of plagiarism. Goldsmith observes that “the sheer penetration and saturation of broadband . . . makes the harvesting of masses of language easy and tempting,” going on to discuss new artistic methods facilitated by the Internet that rely on appropriating previous artistic works (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). In his course, Goldsmith encourages—and even requires—his students to plagiarize. Worried about the conventional and clichéd way in which creative writing is often taught, with students told that their job as authors is to produce works of originality, Goldsmith established his course as an alternative: We retype documents and transcribe audio clips. We make small changes to Wikipedia pages (changing an “a” to “an” or inserting an extra space between words). We hold classes in chat rooms, and entire semesters are spent exclusively in Second Life. Each semester, for their final paper, I have them purchase a term paper from an online paper mill and sign their name to it . . . Students then must get up and present the paper to the class as if they wrote it themselves, defending it from attacks by the other students. What paper did they choose? Is it possible to defend something you didn’t write? Something, perhaps, you don’t agree with? Convince us. (“It’s Not Plagiarism”) By making his students express themselves in words not of their own choosing, Goldsmith forces them to confront what constitutes authorial intent. Though they copy, they engage in the significant job of arranging. Even in choosing which paper to plagiarize, his students necessarily express themselves. Moreover, as they are appropriating others’ ideas, the aesthetic value of their products must derive entirely from the method of composition. “Uncreative Writing” proposes a radical redefinition of authorship for the digital age, which would make context the new content. Indeed, it suggests that even if it is impossible to create substantively original works, art may still derive its aesthetic value from its conceptual basis. To justify his project, Goldsmith invokes the example of novelist Jonathan Lethem, whose February 2007 article in Harper’s Magazine, “The Ecstasy of Influence: A plagiarism,” epitomizes the kind of patch-written project Goldsmith extols. There is not a single new idea in Lethem’s essay; instead, it synthesizes the ideas of a great number of authors—and indeed does so without obvious attribution. As Lethem’s title points out, his entire essay is a plagiarism. Goldsmith writes, In academia, patchwriting is considered an offense equal to that of plagiarism. If Lethem had submitted this as a senior thesis or dissertation chapter, he’d be shown the door. Yet few would argue that he didn’t construct a brilliant work of art—as well as writing a pointed essay—entirely in the words of others. It’s the way in which he conceptualized and executed his writing machine—surgically choosing what to borrow, arranging those words in a skillful way—that wins us over. Lethem’s piece is a self-reflexive, demonstrative work of unoriginal genius. (“It’s Not Plagiarism”) That Lethem’s finished product succeeds stylistically is unquestionable. Despite his almost complete reliance on appropriation, Lethem manages paradoxically to create a brilliant work of art by synthesizing his influences so beautifully. As Goldsmith points out, it is the conceptually elegant method by which Lethem crafts his essay that gives it its appeal. Goldsmith characterizes copyright criticism as the centerpiece of Lethem’s argument. “Echoing the cries of free-culture advocates such as Lawrence Lessig and Cory Doctorow, [Lethem] eloquently rails against copyright law as a threat to the lifeblood of creativity,” he writes (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). Yet, Lethem does much more than simply criticize copyright. Lethem’s observation that all works of art embody their antecedents leads him to argue that copying is not only inevitable, but desirable. Many masterpieces owe their creation to artists’ inspiration by predecessors. Thus, Lethem questions the traditional conception of authorship, which rests on the assumption that creators produce works of unique inspiration (63). This assumption underpins Jane Ginsburg’s 2009 article “The Author’s Place in the Future of Copyright,” in which Ginsburg, a Columbia law professor, defends the traditional view of authorship. In stark opposition to Lethem’s critique, she views copyright as vital in protecting this tradition. “Vesting copyright in authors,” she writes, “made authorship the functional and moral center of the system” (148). Ginsburg believes that authorship is the basis of a social system of value. Lethem’s argument for copying, she suggests, is an affront to authorship. To allow anyone to plagiarize an author’s work would be to reduce its value and thus be an attack on the author. Ginsburg worries that “the advent of new technologies of creation and dissemination of works of authorship not only challenges traditional revenue models, but also calls into question whatever artistic control the author may retain over her work” (148–9). The prospect of authors losing their creative control scares her, because she equates authorship with originality and fears the demise of originality. Ginsburg criticizes advocates of a free culture who claim that copyright “somehow degrades the noble calling of disinterested creativity” (152), labeling them “techno-postmodernists.” She writes: “If the author is dead, or must be dethroned, then the reader not only lives, but reigns supreme. Readers give meaning to the texts they peruse; reading itself becomes a creative act” (151). The postmodern theory supposes that readers rather than authors give meaning to texts today in the act of reading them. This would undermine the traditional concept of authorship by devaluing the role of the author. Ginsburg views techno-postmodernism as nihilistic because it challenges her value system. Ginsburg argues that “the Internet gives concrete effect to the postmodernist theory of reader as creator, for all readers can remanipulate the text, and none can impose unilateral significance” (151). As Goldsmith points out in his article, the Internet makes appropriation easy, which Ginsburg would argue facilitates the dethroning of the author. It would be easy to label Goldsmith a techno-postmodernist and to interpret his course as an attack on authorship, yet the opposite is true. By reimagining what the author can be in the 21st century, Goldsmith defends authorship against those who would devalue it. Ginsburg might see the goal of the course as manipulating text to expose a lack of “unilateral significance,” fitting with her thesis about readers’ replacement of the author (Ginsburg 151). However, Goldsmith’s course is concerned not with the role of the reader, but of the writer. It is not a course in techno-postmodernism. The “new writing has an electronic gleam in its eye,” but “its results are distinctly analog, taking inspiration from radical modernist ideas and juicing them with 21st-century technology” (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). Indeed, Goldsmith rightly rejects the nihilistic notion that authorship is dead. He agrees with Ginsburg that this is a theory under which “individual creativity is discredited” (Ginsburg 152). Rather, Goldsmith argues that the new literature is “a writing imbued with celebration, ablaze with enthusiasm for the future, embracing this moment as one pregnant with possibility” (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). Ginsburg’s account of the techno-postmodernists does not reflect Goldsmith’s argument: he suggests that by copying, writers can create works of aesthetic value—and that this is perhaps the only source of creativity left to artists today. Goldsmith is trying not to dethrone, but to inaugurate, the author. Lethem represents better the idea behind Goldsmith’s course; indeed, his theory defends postmodernism from charges of nihilism, reinterpreting what postmodernism means in the context of authorship. Lethem examines T.S. Eliot’s preoccupation with attribution, implying that it reflects a broader social paradigm. Lethem argues that this obsession with citation “can be read as a symptom of modernism’s contamination anxiety. Taken from this angle, what exactly is postmodernism, except modernism without the anxiety?” he asks (62). Lethem suggests there is nothing nihilistic about this postmodern approach to creation. Rather, he reconciles postmodernism with a concept of authorship, suggesting that authors may still create original works of art using techniques of appropriation. Copying, Lethem says, allows authors to “make the world larger” (65). This strongly implies that he has not abandoned the possibility of creating works of originality. In light of Lethem’s claim that **appropriation reinforces authorship**, it is possible to consider Goldsmith’s course a reaction to the supposed nihilistic reductionism of Ginsburg’s techno-postmodernists. Goldsmith’s seeming willingness to concede the death of originality proves chimeric, as he ultimately suggests that copying allows his students to produce work of incredible creativity. Goldsmith observes that his students will at first invariably react with horror to his instruction that they copy. Yet, ultimately, they reconsider their objections. Goldsmith describes how “after a semester of my forcibly suppressing a student’s ‘creativity’ by making her plagiarize and transcribe, she will tell me how disappointed she was,” not because her creativity had been stifled, but “because, in fact, what we had accomplished was not uncreative at all; by not being ‘creative,’ she had produced the most creative body of work in her life” (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). Goldsmith’s seeming **dismissal of authorship is an attempt to reclaim it** in an age in which, to many, it seems impossible to create a substantively original work. Indeed, Goldsmith’s article can be interpreted as an articulation of a fundamental principle of authorship: that creation is as much about methodology as about material—and, moreover, that through plagiarism his students elevate method to material. For Goldsmith, the “trend among younger writers who take [Lethem’s] exercise one step further by boldly appropriating the work of others without citation, disposing of the artful and seamless integration of Lethem’s patchwriting,” reveals that “context is the new content” (Goldsmith 3). Modern technology has created an aesthetic sensibility that considers appropriation an essential aspect of authorship. **What matters is no longer what one says, but the mode of her saying it**. Still to Goldsmith, the postmodern writer gains authorship by creating a work of aesthetic merit. Thus, in a world in which “long-cherished notions of creativity are under attack, eroded by file-sharing, media culture, widespread sampling, and digital replication,” Goldsmith’s course “rise[s] to that challenge by employing strategies of appropriation, replication, plagiarism, piracy, sampling, plundering, as compositional methods” (“Uncreative Writing” 1). “Along the way,” he writes in his syllabus, “we’ll trace the rich history of forgery, frauds, hoaxes, avatars, and impersonations spanning the arts, with a particular emphasis on how they employ language” (1). Goldsmith’s course thus focuses on employing language to express old ideas in new ways, which he believes permits new authorship. Yet there is an ambiguity at the heart of Goldsmith’s idea. Writing of the beauty of plagiarists’ products, Goldsmith concludes that “far from being coercive or persuasive, this writing delivers emotion obliquely and unpredictably, with sentiments expressed as a result of the writing process rather than by authorial intention” (“It’s Not Plagiarism”). Goldsmith seems to distinguish between compositional method and creation, the latter alone associated with traditional views of authorship. In this, he channels postmodernist French philosopher Michel Foucault, who argues that authorship is a modern concept, sure to wither away. Foucault claims in his 1969 essay “What Is an Author?” that “the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction” (Foucault 119). Thus, he argues authorship is a characteristic of, rather than requisite for, a work. Authorship matters to Foucault only because it affects the perception of a work. Foucault anticipates presciently the controversy over the disappearance of authorship. Moreover, he argues that “the author function will disappear . . . in such a manner that fiction and its polysemous texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of constraint—one which will no longer be the author, but which will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced” (119). Foucault expresses the postmodern theory that claims that authorship will be replaced by a different lens through which to interpret text. Foucault does not address Ginsburg’s concern, shared by Lethem and Goldsmith, about the demise of originality, but another idea from the same essay may better reflect the postmodern development in authorship. Foucault advances the concept of “discursivity,” a specific—and heightened—form of authorship in which creators establish not only an idea but an avenue for ensuing ideas. “Founders of discursivity,” Foucault writes, “are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts” (Foucault 114). He gives as his examples Freud and Marx, who pioneered fields of thought. Perhaps the new aesthetic sensibility of the digital age extends the realm of Foucauldian discursivity to include all works that are plagiarized by the “techno-postmodernists.” These works spawn methodological progeny in a parallel fashion to Marx’s and Freud’s inspiring their heirs. If Goldsmith’s methods of appropriation can indeed be considered an extension of the realm of discursivity, then the very plagiarism that Ginsburg decries as defacing an original work instead uplifts it, giving the original creator’s authorship a discursive character. Viewed this way, Goldsmith’s process could heighten authorship itself. Lethem provides perhaps the best extension of Foucault’s theory of authorship. Asking whether “our appetite for creative vitality require[s] the violence and exasperation of another avant-garde, with its wearisome killing-the-father imperatives,” Lethem suggests “we [might] be better off ratifying the ecstasy of influence—and deepening our willingness to understand the commonality and timelessness of the methods and motifs available to artists” (67). Lethem proposes to end discussions of modernism and postmodernism, and instead to embrace methods of reuse as a definitive aspect of authorship. **To do so would be to embrace the collaborative character of authorship in contemporary times.** This is exactly what Goldsmith does in “Uncreative Writing.” By employing plagiarism, Goldsmith revolutionizes the concept of authorship, which he says derives not only from the substance of a work but also from its very composition. Like Ginsburg, he maintains that authorship still lives, but he differs from her in his rejection of the limited view of authorship which she defends. Instead, sharing Lethem’s view that plagiarism allows contemporary artists to create works of originality, Goldsmith expands authorship twice: once by recognizing the significance of appropriation and again by extending Foucault’s discursivity.

**There is a doublebind – Either you think the K is wrong and ownership is good so you vote neg because they have failed to prove private ownership is bad, or you think the aff is true and its good to allow me to steal their intellectual labor because property rights are unethical and you vote neg because they have no arguments left in the round.**

#### 2 net benefits

#### [1] Dissuasiveness DA

**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)

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**” (B

**[2] Serious gaming DA**

**Hoofd 07 - Ingrid M. Hoofd, National University of Singapore, December 2007** “The Neoliberal Consolidation of Play and Speed: Ethical Issues in Serious Gaming” in “CRITICAL LITERACY: Theories and Practices Volume 1: 2” p. 6-14, 2007 [http://www.criticalliteracyjournal.org/cljournalissue2volume1.pdf] KZaidi Recut 9/27/21 SAO

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. In “Cyberwar, God, and Television,” Paul Virilio talks about the simulation industry’s function of “exposing [one] to the accident in order not to be exposed to it” (322). What is according to him ‘accidented’ through the virtualisation of accidents and violence, for instance in video-games, is reality itself. This ‘accident of reality’ that virtuality brings about, argues Virilio, is due to the fact that simulation technologies fragment space through their property of instantaneous connection with previously far-away places. The hallmark of this fragmentation is therefore that it brings about an intensification of forms of in- and exclusion through actual disconnection. Eventually, there will be “two realities: the actual and the virtual” (323), and I would claim that consequently the privileged speed-elite will be able to live in the illusion of engaging with social reality that the virtual grants, at the cost of the (s)lower classes who will suffer the social and ecological effects of the accidents of virtualisation. The illusion of mastery for Virilio consists in the sense of the “incorporation of the world within oneself” that “real time technologies permit” (328) due to their militaristic compulsion that seeks to “reduce the world to the point where one could possess it” (329). I maintain that these statements spell out exactly the function and logic of serious gaming.

#### [3] Implosion DA

**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).