### 1n: catastrophe/charity cannibalism

#### **They are the catastrophe market, trading suffering for the ballot and in the worst form of academic imperialism, they make it inevitable**

Baudrillard 94

(Jean, certified badass, Illusion of the End, 1994)

We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [['autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental exploitation of that poverty - charity cannibalism being worse than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history- the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source.¶ We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the waste-product of its own history.¶ The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure playground . Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of reproduction of the catastrophe market ); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West.¶ In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d' Alliance. for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain. But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself , in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food. It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world.¶ Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures.

#### **To call for a ballot is to breathe life into the system, a system content on devouring and consuming all beings and potentialities for the sake of dead labor which is turned on its head for more and more production - resistance is a sight for power to exert itself.**

**Bifo 11** (Franco, classy mofo, Marxist scholar, *After the Future*, )

Reality itself founders in hyperrealism, the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another, reproductive medium, such as photography. From medium to medium, the real is volatilized, becoming an allegory of death. But it is also, in a sense, reinforced through its own destruction. It becomes reality for its own sake, the fetishism of the lost object: no longer the object of representation, but the ecstasy of denial and of its own ritual extermination: the hyperreal. […] The reality principle corresponds to a certain stage of the law of value. Today the whole system is swamped by indeterminacy, and every reality is absorbed by the hyperreality of the code and simulation. The principle of simulation governs us now, rather that the outdated reality principle. We feed on those forms whose finalities have disappeared. No more ideology, only simulacra. We must therefore reconstruct the entire genealogy of the law of value and its simulacra in order to grasp the hegemony and the enchantment of the current system. A structural revolution of value. This genealogy must cover political economy, where it will appear as a second-order simulacrum, just like all those that stake everything on the real: the real of production, the real of signification, whether conscious or unconscious. Capital no longer belongs to the order of political economy: it operates with political economy as its simulated model. The entire apparatus of the commodity law of value is absorbed and recycled in the larger apparatus of the structural law of value, this becoming part of the third order of simulacra. Political economy is thus assured a second life, an eternity, within the confines of an apparatus in which it has lost all its strict determinacy, but maintains an effective presence as a system of reference for simulation. (Baudrillard 1993a: 2) Simulation is the new plane of consistency of capitalist growth: financial speculation, for instance, has displaced the process of exploitation from the sphere of material production to the sphere of expectations, desire, and immaterial labor. The simulation process (Cyberspace) is proliferating without limits, irradiating signs that go everywhere in the attention market. The brain is the market, in semiocapitalist hyper-reality. And the brain is not limitless, the brain cannot expand and accelerate indefinitely. The process of collective subjectivation (i.e. social recomposition) implies the development of a common language-affection which is essentially happening in the temporal dimension. The semiocapitalist acceleration of time has destroyed the social possibility of sensitive elaboration of the semio-flow. The proliferation of simulacra in the info-sphere has saturated the space of attention and imagination. Advertising and stimulated hyper-expression (“just do it”), have submitted the energies of the social psyche to permanent mobilization. Exhaustion follows, and exhaustion is the only way of escape: Nothing, not even the system, can avoid the symbolic obligation, and it is in this trap that the only chance of a catastrophe for capital remains. The system turns on itself, as a scorpion does when encircled by the challenge of death. For it is summoned to answer, if it is not to lose face, to what can only be death. The system must itself commit suicide in response to the multiplied challenge of death and suicide. So hostages are taken. On the symbolic or sacrificial plane, from which every moral consideration of the innocence of the victims is ruled out the hostage is the substitute, the alter-ego of the terrorist, the hostage’s death for the terrorist. Hostage and terrorist may thereafter become confused in the same sacrificial act. (Baudrillard 1993a: 37) In these impressive pages Baudrillard outlines the end of the modern dialectics of revolution against power, of the labor movement against capitalist domination, and predicts the advent of a new form of action which will be marked by the sacrificial gift of death (and self-annihilation). After the destruction of the World Trade Center in the most important terrorist act ever, Baudrillard wrote a short text titled The Spirit of Terrorism where he goes back to his own predictions and recognizes the emergence of a catastrophic age. When the code becomes the enemy the only strategy can be catastrophic: all the counterphobic ravings about exorcizing evil: it is because it is there, everywhere, like an obscure object of desire. Without this deep-seated complicity, the event would not have had the resonance it has, and in their symbolic strategy the terrorists doubtless know that they can count on this unavowable complicity. (Baudrillard 2003: 6) This goes much further than hatred for the dominant global power by the disinherited and the exploited, those who fell on the wrong side of global order. This malignant desire is in the very heart of those who share this order’s benefits. An allergy to all definitive order, to all definitive power is happily universal, and the two towers of the World Trade Center embodied perfectly, in their very double-ness (literally twin-ness), this definitive order: No need, then, for a death drive or a destructive instinct, or even for perverse, unintended effects. Very logically – inexorably – the increase in the power heightens the will to destroy it. And it was party to its own destruction. When the two towers collapsed, you had the impression that they were responding to the suicide of the suicide-planes with their own suicides. It has been said that “Even God cannot declare war on Himself.” Well, He can. The West, in position of God (divine omnipotence and absolute moral legitimacy), has become suicidal, and declared war on itself. (Baudrillard 2003: 6-7) In Baudrillard’s catastrophic vision I see a new way of thinking subjectivity: a reversal of the energetic subjectivation that animates the revolutionary theories of the 20th century, and the opening of an implosive theory of subversion, based on depression and exhaustion. In the activist view exhaustion is seen as the inability of the social body to escape the vicious destiny that capitalism has prepared: deactivation of the social energies that once upon a time animated democracy and political struggle. But exhaustion could also become the beginning of a slow movement towards a “wu wei” civilization, based on the withdrawal, and frugal expectations of life and consumption. Radicalism could abandon the mode of activism, and adopt the mode of passivity. A radical passivity would definitely threaten the ethos of relentless productivity that neoliberal politics has imposed. The mother of all the bubbles, the work bubble, would finally deflate. We have been working too much during the last three or four centuries, and outrageously too much during the last thirty years. The current depression could be the beginning of a massive abandonment of competition, consumerist drive, and of dependence on work. Actually, if we think of the geopolitical struggle of the first decade – the struggle between Western domination and jihadist Islam – we recognize that the most powerful weapon has been suicide. 9/11 is the most impressive act of this suicidal war, but thousands of people have killed themselves in order to destroy American military hegemony. And they won, forcing the western world into the bunker of paranoid security, and defeating the hyper-technological armies of the West both in Iraq, and in Afghanistan. The suicidal implosion has not been confined to the Islamists. Suicide has became a form of political action everywhere. Against neoliberal politics, Indian farmers have killed themselves. Against exploitation hundreds of workers and employees have killed themselves in the French factories of Peugeot, and in the offices of France Telecom. In Italy, when the 2009 recession destroyed one million jobs, many workers, haunted by the fear of unemployment, climbed on the roofs of the factories, threatening to kill themselves. Is it possible to divert this implosive trend from the direction of 107 death, murder, and suicide, towards a new kind of autonomy, social creativity and of life? I think that it is possible only if we start from exhaustion, if we emphasize the creative side of withdrawal. The exchange between life and money could be deserted, and exhaustion could give way to a huge wave of withdrawal from the sphere of economic exchange. A new refrain could emerge in that moment, and wipe out the law of economic growth. The self-organization of the general intellect could abandon the law of accumulation and growth, and start a new concatenation, where collective intelligence is only subjected to the common good.

#### Their compliance with topicality in fear of losing gives way to managerial procedures and simulated repression, terminally non-uniquing their solvency as the system already knows their next move and has conditioned responses to it. They have locked themself into eternal shadow boxing.

(Andrew Robinson, Political theorist, An A to Z of Theory | Jean Baudrillard and Activism: A critique, 2013, 9-12-16)NJW

On the other hand, managerial procedures (classroom management, prison management, parental management, crisis management, protest management) are invented to provide a prior meaning and a predetermined response to each irruptive event. If a dirty protest, then tape up the cell; if a refusal to move, then send in an ‘extraction team’ using ‘pain compliance’, and so on. The effect is that every option available to resisters has already been encoded, given a meaning and a response. This makes the system seem impossible to fight. Its framing of the available options turns it into a kind of habitus, or second nature, which most people don’t even see as a social construct. The code makes it difficult to resist, because any act of resistance is reinscribed, either as another yes/no choice, or as another social problem to be managed. These are challenges which can be met. Baudrillard’s analysis suggests that the system is vulnerable to any act which disregards consequences or is irreducible to the existing frame of possibilities, which is not a “rational action”. This is why the loss of fear has been so central in understanding revolts, from Tahrir Square to Tottenham. In addition, the system remains vulnerable, both to new tactics which it hasn’t thought of yet, and to any event on such a scale that it overwhelms available resources. Just-in-time production has reduced redundancy within systems. The result is that they don’t have the resources to spare, to cope with any events beyond the usual. This is suggested by Baudrillard’s view that the police simply simulate repression. As long as people are broadly conforming, the simulation works. The moment the unexpected happens, the police become unable to repress effectively. If Baudrillard is right, then the slightest thing escaping the system’s rationality is enough to pose a challenge to it.

#### The political has lost the will for positive action and now all that is left in the power of the masses is negation – Our alternative is the strategy of the masses

**Baudrillard, 93** (Jean, The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena, 1993)

In Simmel's words, 'Negation is the simplest thing imaginable. That is why the broad masses, whose component elements cannot achieve agreement as to goals, come together here.' It is useless to expect a positive opinion or a critical will from the masses, for they have none: all they have is an undifferentiated power, the power to reject. Their strength flows solely from what they are able to expel, to negate - and that is, first and foremost, any project that goes beyond them, any class or understanding that transcends them. There is something here of a philosophy of cunning born of the most brutal experience - the experience of animals, or of peasants: 'They won't put that over on us again, we won't fall for their calls to sacrifice, or listen to their pie in the sky.' Profound disgust for the political order - though one that may well coexist with specific political opinions . Disgust for the pretension and transcendence of power, for the inevitability and abomination of the political sphere. Where once there were political passions, we now find only the violence peculiar to a fundamental disgust with everything political. Power itself is founded largely on disgust. The whole of advertising, the whole of political discourse, is a public insult to the intelligence, to reason - but an insult in which we collaborate, abjectly subscribing to a silent interaction. The day of hidden persuasion is over: those who govern us now resort unapologetically to arm-twisting pure and simple. The prototype here was a banker got up like a vampire, saying, 'I am after you for your money' . A decade has already gone by since this kind of obscenity was introduced, with the government's blessing, into our social mores. At the time we thought the ad feeble because of its aggressive vulgarity . In point of fact it was a prophetic commercial, full of intimations of the future shape of social relationships, because it operated, precisely, in terms of disgust, avidity and rape. The same goes for pornographic and food advertising, which are also powered by shamelessness and lust, by a strategic logic of violation and anxiety. Nowadays you can seduce a woman with the w

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the debater with the best strategy to interrogate and rupture the hyperreal. Prefer – 1. 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. Implosive strategies are inevitable since external ones merely get coopted by the code 2. Motivation – All thought and action 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 K is a side constraint. 3. Constitutivism – Our roles within the space require implosive rupture.

**Norris 04,** (Trevor Norris, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, “Jean Baudrillard and Educational Practice” <http://infed.org/mobi/jean-baudrillard/#links)//> Born in 1929 in Reims, France, Jean Baudrillard studied sociology under Henri Lefebvre, and taught during several tumultuous decades at Nanterre, beginning shortly before the student uprising of May 1968. That same year saw the publication of his first book, The System of Objects, a study of the meaning derived from consumption as the process by which human social relations become mediated by objects. Jean **Baudrillard sought to provide an understanding of the new “hyper” form of advanced capitalism and technology which emerged through the virtual and simulated character of contemporary experience**. His account of the “implosion of meaning” entailed by the proliferation of signs and the reduction of the sign to the status of commodity points **toward the simultaneous experience of the loss of reality and the encounter with hyperreality**. In The Consumer Society Jean Baudrillard outlines how **consumers buy into the “code” of signs rather than the meaning of the object itself.** His analysis of the process by which **the sign ceases pointing towards an object** or signified which lies behind it, **but rather to other signs which together constitute a cohesive yet chaotic “code”, culminates in the “murder of reality”.** The rupture is so complete, the absence so resounding, and the code so “totalitarian” that **Baudrillard speaks of the combined “violence of the image” and “implosion of meaning”.** **Politics, religion, education, any human undertaking is swept up and absorbed by this process and ultimately neutralized; any liberating activity becomes complicit in the reproduction of its opposite.** **“The code is totalitarian; no one escapes it**: our individual flights do not negate the fact that each day we participate in its collective elaboration.”[1] More recently, Jean Baudrillard’s preoccupation with the simulated and his radical questioning of what remains of the “real” led him to such provocative statements as “the gulf war did not take place”[2]and “the collapse of the towers of the World Trade Center is unimaginable, but that is not enough to make it a real event.”[3] Jean **Baudrillard’s radical questioning of the character of signs, symbols and simulation in our postmodern age points towards the necessity to reconsider the role of contemporary educational practices as a possible site of resistance to the ‘code’**. Is education invariably complicit in the “murder of the real”?

### No Nuke War

#### Nuclear war is a figment of the AFF’s imagination

Baudrillard 81. Jean, “Simulacra and Simulation” p. 32-35

The apotheosis of simulation: the nuclear. However, the balance of terror is never anything but the spectacular slope of a system of deterrence that has insinuated itself from the inside into all the cracks of daily life. Nuclear suspension only serves to seal the trivialized system of deterrence that is at the heart of the media, of the violence without consequences that reigns throughout the world, of the aleatory apparatus of all the choices that are made for us. The most insignificant of our behaviors is regulated by neutralized, indifferent, equivalent signs, by zero-sum signs like those that regulate the "strategy of games" (but the true equation is elsewhere, and the unknown is precisely that variable of simulation which makes of the atomic arsenal itself a hyperreal form, a simulacrum that dominates everything and reduces all "ground-level" events to being nothing but ephemeral scenarios, transforming the life left us into survival, into a stake without stakes not even into a life insurance policy: into a policy that already has no value).¶ It is not the direct threat of atomic destruction that paralyzes our lives, it is deterrence that gives them leukemia. And this deterrence comes from that fact that even the real atomic clash is precluded-precluded like the eventuality of the real in a system of signs. The whole world pretends to believe in the reality of this threat (this is understandable on the part of the military, the gravity of their exercise and the discourse of their "strategy" are at stake), but it is precisely at this level that there are no strategic stakes. The whole originality of the situation lies in the improbability of destruction. ¶ Deterrence precludes war-the archaic violence of expanding systems. Deterrence itself is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable systems or systems in involution. There is no longer a subject of deterrence, nor an adversary nor a strategy-it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes. Atomic war, like the Trojan War, will not take place. The risk of nuclear annihilation only serves as a pretext, through the sophistication of weapons (a sophistication that surpasses any possible objective to such an extent that it is itself a symptom of nullity), for installing a universal security system, a universal lockup and control system whose deterrent effect is not at all aimed at an atomic clash (which was never in question, except without a doubt in the very initial stages of the cold war, when one still confused the nuclear apparatus with conventional war) but, rather, at the much greater probability of any real event, of anything that would be an event in the general system and upset its balance. The balance of terror is the terror of balance. Deterrence is not a strategy, it circulates and is exchanged between nuclear protagonists exactly as is international capital in the orbital zone of monetary speculation whose fluctuations suffice to control all global exchanges. Thus the money of destruction (without any reference to real destruction, any more than floating capital has a real referent of production) that circulates in nuclear orbit suffices to control all the violence and potential conflicts around the world. What is hatched in the shadow of this mechanism with the pretext of a maximal, "objective," threat, and thanks to Damocles' nuclear sword, is the perfection of the best system of control that has ever existed. And the progressive satellization of the whole planet through this hypermodel of security. The same goes for peaceful nuclear power stations. Pacification does not distinguish between the civil and the military: every- where where irreversible apparatuses of control are elaborated, everywhere the notion of security becomes omnipotent, everywhere where the norm replaces the old arsenal of laws and violence (including war), it is the system of deterrence that grows, and around it grows the historical, social, and political desert. A gigantic involution that makes every conflict, every finality, every confrontation contract in proportion to this blackmail that interrupts, neutralizes, freezes them all. No longer can any revolt, any story be deployed according to its own logic because it risks annihilation. No strategy is possible any longer, and escalation is only a puerile game given over to the military. The political stake is dead, only simulacra of conflicts and carefully circumscribed stakes remain.¶ The "space race" played exactly the same role as nuclear escalation. This is why the space program was so easily able to replace it in the 1960s (Kennedy/Khrushchev), or to develop concurrently as a form of "peaceful coexistence." Because what, ultimately, is the function of the space program, of the conquest of the moon, of the launching of satellites if not the institution of a model of universal gravitation, of satellization of which the lunar module is the perfect embryo? Programmed microcosm, where nothing can be left to chance. Trajectory, energy, calculation, physiology, psychology, environment-nothing can be left to contingencies, this is the total universe of the norm-the Law no longer exists, it is the operational immanence of every detail that is law. A universe purged of all threat of meaning, in a state of asepsis and weightlessness-it is this very perfection that is fascinating. The exaltation of the crowds was not a response to the event of landing on the moon or of sending a man into space (this would be, rather, the fulfillment of an earlier dream), rather, we are dumb-founded by the perfection of the programming and the technical manipulation, by the immanent wonder of the programmed un- folding of events. Fascination with the maximal norm and the mastery of probability. Vertigo of the model, which unites with the model of death, but without fear or drive. Because if the law, with its aura of transgression, if order, with its aura of violence, still taps a perverse imaginary, the norm fixes, fascinates, stupefies, and makes every imaginary involute. One no longer fantasizes about the minutiae of a program. Just watching it produces vertigo. The vertigo of a world without flaws.¶ Now, it is the same model of programmatic infallibility, of maximum security and deterrence that today controls the spread of the social. There lies the true nuclear fallout: the meticulous operation of technology serves as a model for the meticulous operation of the social. Here as well, nothing will be left to chance, moreover this is the essence of socialization, which began centuries ago, but which has now entered its accelerated phase, toward a limit that one believed would be explosive (revolution), but which for the moment is translated by an inverse, implosive, irreversible process: the generalized deterrence of chance, of accident, of transversality, of finality; of contradiction, rupture, or complexity in a sociality illuminated by the norm, doomed to the descriptive transparency of mechanisms of information. In fact, the spatial and nuclear models do not have their own ends: neither the discovery of the moon, nor military and strategic superiority. Their truth is to be the models of simulation, the model¶ vectors of a system of planetary control (where even the super- powers of this scenario are not free-the whole world is satellized). Because an explosion is always a promise, it is our hope: note how much, in the film as in Harrisburg, the whole world waits for something to blow up, for destruction to announce itself and remove us from this unnameable panic, from this panic of deterrence that it exercises in the invisible form of the nuclear. That the "heart" of the reactor at last reveals its hot power of destruction, that it reassures us about the presence of energy; albeit catastrophic, and bestows its spectacle on us. Because unhappiness is when there is no nuclear spectacle, no spectacle of nuclear energy in itself (Hiroshima is over), and it is for that reason that it is rejected-it would be perfectly accepted if it lent itself to spectacle as previous forms of energy did. Parousia of catastrophe: substantial food for our messianic libido.¶ But that is precisely what will never happen. What will happen will never again be the explosion, but the implosion. No more energy in its spectacular and pathetic form-all the romanticism of the explosion, which had so much charm, being at the same time that of revolution-but the cold energy of the simulacrum and of its distillation in homeopathic doses in the cold systems of information.¶ What else do the media dream of besides creating the event simply by their presence? Everyone decries it, but everyone is secretly fascinated by this eventuality. Such is the logic of simulacra, it is no longer that of divine predestination, it is that of the precession of models, but it is just as inexorable. And it is because of this that events no longer have meaning: it is not that they are insignificant in themselves, it is that they were preceded by the model, with which their processes only coincided. Thus it would have been marvelous to repeat the script for The China Syndrome at Fessenheim, during the visit offered to the journalists by the EDF (French Electric Company), to repeat on this occasion the accident linked to the magic eye, to the provocative presence of the media. Alas, nothing happened. And on the other hand yes! so powerful is the logic of simulacra: a week after, the unions discovered fissures in the reactors. Miracle of contagions, miracle of analogic chain reactions. ¶ Thus, the essence of the film is not in any respect the Watergate' effect in the person of Jane Fonda, not in any respect TV as a means of exposing nuclear vices, but on the contrary TV as the twin orbit and twin chain reaction of the nuclear one. Besides, just at the end-and there the film is unrelenting in regard to its own argument-when Jane Fonda makes the truth explode directly (maximum Watergate effect), her image is juxtaposed with what will inexorably follow it and efface it on the screen: a commercial of some kind. The Network effect goes far beyond the Watergate effect and spreads mysteriously into the Harrisburg effect, that is to say not into the nuclear threat, but into the simulation of nuclear catastrophe.¶ So, it is simulation that is effective, never the real. The simulation of nuclear catastrophe is the strategic result of this generic and universal undertaking of deterrence: accustoming the people to the ideology and the discipline of absolute security-to the metaphysics of fission and fissure. To this end the fissure must be a fiction. A real catastrophe would delay things, it would constitute a retrograde incident, of the explosive kind (without changing the course of things: did Hiroshima perceptibly delay, deter, the universal process of deterrence?). In the film, also, real fusion would be a bad argument: the film would regress to the level of a disaster movie-weak by definition, because it means returning things to their pure event. The China Syndrome, itself, finds its strength in filtering catastrophe, in the distillation of the nuclear specter through the omnipresent hertzian relays of information. It teaches us (once again without meaning to) that nuclear catastrophe does not occur; is not meant to happen, in the real either, any more than the atomic clash was at the dawning of the cold war. The equilibrium of terror rests on the eternal deferral of the atomic clash. The atom and the nuclear are made to be disseminated for deterrent ends, the power of catastrophe must, instead of stupidly exploding, be disseminated in homeopathic, molecular doses, in the continuous reservoirs of information. Therein lies the true contamination: never biological and radioactive, but, rather, a mental destructuration through a mental strategy of catastrophe. If one looks carefully, the film introduces us to this mental strategy, and in going further, it even delivers a lesson diametrically opposed to that of Watergate: if every strategy today is that of mental terror and of deterrence tied to the suspension and the eternal simulation of catastrophe, then the only means of mitigating this scenario would be to make the catastrophe arrive, to produce or to reproduce a real catastrophe. To which Nature is at times given: in its inspired moments, it is God who through his cataclysms unknots the equilibrium of terror in which humans are imprisoned. Closer to us, this is what terrorism is occupied with as well: making real, palpable violence surface in opposition to the invisible violence of security. Besides, therein lies terrorism's ambiguity.¶

#### Deterrence is too good

Baudrillard 95. Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation: The Precession of Simulacra, pg. 37-40

What no longer exists is the adversity of the adversaries, the reality of antagonistic causes, the ideological seriousness of war. And also the reality of victory or defeat, war being a process that triumphs well beyond these appearances. In any case, the pacification (or the deterrence) that dominates us today is beyond war and peace, it is that at every moment war and peace are equivalent. "War is peace," said Orwell. There also, the two differential poles implode into each other, or recycle one another - a simultaneity of contradictions that is at once the parody and the end of every dialectic. Thus one can completely miss the truth of a war: namely, that it was finished well before it started, that there was an end to war at the heart of the war itself, and that perhaps it never started. Many other events (the oil crisis, etc.) never started, never existed, except as artificial occurrences - abstract, ersatz, and as artifacts of history, catastrophes and crises destined to maintain a historical investment under hypnosis. The media and the official news service are only there to maintain the illusion of an actuality, of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of facts. All the events are to be read backward, or one becomes aware (as with the Communists "in power" in Italy the retro, posthumous rediscovery of the gulags and Soviet dissidents like the almost contemporary discovery, by a moribund ethnology, of the lost "difference" of Savages) that all these things arrived too late, with a history of delay, a spiral of delay, that they long ago exhausted their meaning and only live from an artificial effervescence of signs, that all these events succeed each other without logic, in the most contradictory, complete equivalence, in a profound indifference to their consequences (but this is because there are none: they exhaust themselves in their spectacular promotion) - all "newsreel" footage thus gives the sinister impression of kitsch, of retro and porno at the same time - doubtless everyone knows this, and no one really accepts it. The reality of simulation is unbearable - crueler than Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, which was still an attempt to create a dramaturgy of life, the last gasp of an ideality of the body, of blood, of violence in a system that was already taking it away, toward a reabsorption of all the stakes without a trace of blood. For us the trick has been played. All dramaturgy, and even all real writing of cruelty has disappeared. Simulation is the master, and we only have a right to the retro, to the phantom, parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials. Everything still unfolds around us, in the cold light of deterrence (including Artaud, who has the right like everything else to his revival, to a second existence as the referential of cruelty). This is why nuclear proliferation does not increase the risk of either an atomic clash or an accident - save in the interval when the "young" powers could be tempted to make a nondeterrent, "real" use of it (as the Americans did in Hiroshima - but precisely only they had a right to this "use value" of the bomb, all of those who have acquired it since will be deterred from using it by the very fact of possessing it). Entry into the atomic club, so prettily named, very quickly effaces (as unionization does in the working world) any inclination toward violent intervention. Responsibility, control, censure, self-deterrence always grow more rapidly than the forces or the weapons at our disposal: this is the secret of the social order. Thus the very possibility of paralyzing a whole country by flicking a switch makes it so that the electrical engineers will never use this weapon: the whole myth of the total and revolutionary strike crumbles at the very moment when the means are available - but alas precisely because those means are available. Therein lies the whole process of deterrence. It is thus perfectly probable that one day we will see nuclear powers export atomic reactors, weapons, and bombs to every latitude. Control by threat will be replaced by the more effective strategy of pacification through the bomb and through the possession of the bomb. The "little" powers, believing that they are buying their independent striking force, will buy the virus of deterrence, of their own deterrence. The same goes for the atomic reactors that we have already sent them: so many neutron bombs knocking out all historical virulence, all risk of explosion. In this sense, the nuclear everywhere inaugurates an accelerated process of implosion, it freezes everything around it, it absorbs all living energy. The nuclear is at once the culminating point of available energy and the maximization of energy control systems. Lockdown and control increase in direct proportion to (and undoubtedly even faster than) liberating potentialities. This was already the aporia of the modern revolution. It is still the absolute paradox of the nuclear. Energies freeze in their own fire, they deter themselves. One can no longer imagine what project, what power, what strategy, what subject could exist behind this enclosure, this vast saturation of a system by its own forces, now neutralized, unusable, unintelligible, nonexplosive - except for the possibility of an explosion toward the center, of an implosion where all these energies would be abolished in a catastrophic process (in the literal sense, that is to say in the sense of a reversion of the whole cycle toward a minimal point, of a reversion of energies toward a minimal threshold).

### Debris

#### Models of space debris risk are totally incalculable and only contribute to an ideological smokescreen for neoconservative policies that produce imperial imaginations of a unified Earth that allow hegemons like the United States to secure itself in the face of threats to their dominance like debris.

Ormord, 12 (James, School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, “Beyond world risk society? A critique of Ulrich Beck’s world risk society thesis as a framework for understanding risk associated with human activity in outer space.” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2013, volume 31, pages 727 – 744)

Prior to the Iridium–Cosmos collision experts placed the odds of two objects larger than ten centimetres in diameter colliding in space at “millions, maybe even billions, to one” (Rincon, 2009). The chances of damage being sustained by operational objects as they collide with smaller objects are much higher, at 1–10%; this may be their single greatest threat (Rex, 1998; Williamson, 2006; Wright, 2009, page 6). A United Nations report in 1999 brought together a range of measurements and statistical models from different agencies in an attempt to draw up a risk assessment. These models “did not agree quantitatively because of differences in assumptions and starting conditions” (UN, 1999, page 25). But despite this, it concluded that collision risk in Low Earth Orbit (less than 2000 kilometres) was “not great”, and the collision risk in Geostationary Orbit was “correspondingly lower”. However, all were also agreed that the number of major collisions would rise exponentially if current trends continued. This is based on the understanding that because it takes a long time to disperse, debris created from one impact will go on to create more impacts in a ‘collision cascade’, referred to as the ‘Kessler Syndrome’ (Brearley, 2005; Williamson, 2006; Wright, 2009). In a 2006 report NASA referred to this situation as “supercritical” (Wright, 2009). Modelling this effect adds to the complexity of a risk assessment already understood to be limited by knowledge of current amounts of debris and of how spacecraft respond to impacts that “do not fall into categories normally known from solid-state physics” (Rex, 1998, page 100; UN, 1999). To these difficulties in modelling the physical risks to spacecraft should be added the impossibility of establishing the social and economic consequences of a collision cascade in Geostationary Orbit, which one author describes as a (limited) resource “necessary to human life” as “the space ... which allows contemporary communication practices to exist” (2) Geostationary Orbit exists at an altitude of 35 786 kilometres at which satellites appear stationary from Earth. See Collis (2009) for a useful discussion of its legal geography. (Collis, 2009, pages 55 and 49). Expert opinion has suggested a collision cascade “could take out world communications” (Ellis, 2009). Outer space was once considered inexhaustible. It is now being realised that the development of outer space has been unevenly concentrated in key regions (see MacDonald, 2007), with implications for thinking of outer space as a ‘common pool resource’. Debris might impede the use of space within a generation as the unintended consequences of human activity undermine its promise (Benko and Schrogl, 1997a). Earth’s orbit now has to be seen as a ‘fragile environment’ for human activity (Benko and Schrogl, 1997a; Williamson, 2006). A 1972 UN Convention established that the ‘launching state’ is liable for any damage caused by its activities or by nongovernmental entities operating under its jurisdiction. In terms of damage caused by debris in outer space, if fault can be established then financial reparation must be made to restore damage to people or property. There is therefore, in principle, a mechanism for establishing accountability. Lotta Viikari (2008) still holds out hope for the development of Environmental Impact Assessments and the extension of ‘polluter pays’ principles to space debris (page 20). This convention breaks down, however, in a ‘supercritical’ space environment in which it becomes increasingly difficult for a claims commission to establish cause, fault, and damages (Zhao, 2004). Due to the impossibility of establishing fault, no claims for compensation have ever been settled in regard to space debris (Kai-Uwe Schrogl, personal communication, October 2010). As international law only considers direct damage between states and their corporations, there is no incentive to protect the space environment itself (Brearley, 2005, page 26). As the shortcomings of the system of accountability have become increasingly apparent, measures to address the space debris issue have been agreed by international bodies. NASA guidelines having already been established following a commitment by President Reagan (in consultation with industry), the 1999 UN report detailed a number of possible strategies for dealing with the space debris issue. Firstly, space objects should avoid releasing debris as part of their normal operations, avoid on-orbit explosion (eg, by venting energy sources), and be disposed of at the end of their lifetimes, either by reducing their orbit so that they reenter the atmosphere more quickly or by moving them to a ‘disposal’ or ‘graveyard’ orbit further from the Earth, though neither is risk-free (Rex, 1998). Secondly, space object designers should protect them with adequate shielding and collision avoidance mechanisms. Many of these guidelines have since been reiterated in 2002 Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee guidelines and were eventually accepted by the UN in 2008. The possibility but incalculability of a future collision cascade is a prime example of late-modern risk. It is particularly interesting to note that the reports were also marked by the paradox of risk modelling in a reflexive society (Beck, 2009, page 136): scientists attempted to incorporate responses to their predictions into the predictions themselves, thus reducing the predicted risk on which these responses were supposedly based. But the degree of voluntary international cooperation in response to the issue of space debris appears to vindicate Beck’s optimism about a cosmopolitanism ‘from above’, shared with others such as David Held [and echoed in regard to space debris by David Wright (2009, page 10)]. There are, however, reasons to be sceptical. In an excellent paper on sovereignty in outer space, Jill Stuart (2009) contrasts Held’s (2002) cosmopolitan sovereignty with regime theories based on the Realpolitik of state confrontation [or Everett Dolman’s (2002) ‘Astropolitik’, on which see Fraser MacDonald (2007) for a critique]. Cosmopolitan sovereignty is based on a cosmopolitan consciousness both influencing and influenced by international cooperation in outer space (eg, the International Space Station). Stuart argues that the declining importance of the nation-state resonates with the ‘overview effect’ of viewing a borderless Earth from space (White, 1987). Despite her optimism, Stuart is aware that there are serious issues with Held’s cosmopolitanism, especially when applied to outer space. There is good reason to believe that the apparent cosmopolitanism of human activity in outer space is an ideological smokescreen behind which neoconservative policies are being pursued (see, for example, Caldicott, 2002). In his analysis of images of Earth taken from space, Denis Cosgrove (1994) identifies both a ‘One World’ discourse that views a globally connected world as the project of a modern Christian American imperialism, and a ‘Whole Earth’ vitalist environmentalism that sees Earth as fragile, isolated organic unity. “Each”, however, “effectively exemplifies the Apollonian urge to re-establish a transcendental, univocal, and universally valid vantage point from which to sketch a totalising discourse” (page 288). Both thus erase locality. Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1996) also tears apart the ‘spaceship Earth’ ideology reflected in White’s overview effect, arguing that the illusion of a unified Earth serves only to disguise inequalities of power. The lack of accountability for space debris actually polarises international interest in space debris mitigation. States such as the US that rely on the ‘space operating environment’ to exercise control over social order (see Dickens and Ormrod, 2009), and that have an economic interest in maintaining capital growth in outer space, have a long-term interest in mitigating against debris [although the US withholds high-quality data because of security concerns (Rincon, 2009)]. States with only a short-term interest in space, such as Indonesia, have not been willing to mitigate space debris (Benko and Schrogl, 1997a). Rational actor theory has been employed to argue both that the major spacefaring nations will be willing to mitigate space debris voluntarily (Brearley, 2005) and that international agreements are necessary (Viikari, 2008). Such theory reaches its limits here as it cannot cope with the differing political and economic interests within states and their temporal nature. Even when alliances and agreements hold, it must be questioned whether the current trajectory of space debris mitigation serves the interests of a global public. As Enzensberger (1996) observes, industrial measures to protect the environment either serve to concentrate capital in the hands of larger companies as smaller companies cannot finance their own mitigation systems, or they manifest themselves as costs to the public (page 26). Viikari (2008, page 24) suggests the former is also true of competing spacefaring states. Viikari nonetheless advocates a system wherein ‘environmental losers’ could receive other benefits. Neil Smith (2009) anticipates the development of outer space becoming the next stage in the extensive expansion of capitalism. He also makes clear, in relation to carbon trading on Earth, that a system such as Viikari proposes would neither protect the nearby space environment nor spread the benefits of space activity more equally (it merely represents ‘the vertical integration of nature into capital’). The costs borne by the public, meanwhile, include those associated with debris-monitoring and with state mission compliance with international guidelines. There has also been discussion of developing lasers, tethers, and slings to drag debris out of orbit (ESA, 2005), all of which introduce their own forms of risk. A contract to develop such technology would benefit one space technology company or another but the cost would be borne by the public, as recently demonstrated by NASA’s $1.9 million award to Star Technology and Research to develop the ElectroDynamic Debris Eliminator (Chang, 2012). Commercial sector compliance with voluntary codes of practice is understandably low as it can be extremely costly and organisations within the sector cannot be held responsible in the event of catastrophe. Nor does capital, as an abstract and fluid entity, have any interest in the long-term future of the space environment. Satellites fix capital for a decade, but their investors have no concern for the future beyond this. Whether or not guidelines are forced on commercial operators will depend on the relationship between states or suprastates and capital. While the costs of mitigation are seen to undermine commercial viability it is unlikely that procedures will become compulsory. This includes the possibility of a launch tax, which would fly in the face of legislative trends in US space policy. Compulsory measures are more likely, however, if major stakeholders in the space industry become the ones to profit from them. European company EADS Astrium has funded £1 million in research into the CubeSail project at the Surrey Space Centre in the UK. The CubeSail is intended to drag satellites out of orbit at the end of their lifetimes. EADS is a major state contractor as well as a commercial operator. France has recently made it law that satellites under its jurisdiction must be deorbited after twenty-five years. There are profits to be made by Astrium if other countries follow suit. The politics of space debris call into question Beck’s assertion that the old alliances between the state, capital, and science are over. In recent work, Beck (2005, page 138) makes clear that he believes the transnational logic of capital trumps the power of states. But this work lacks the attention to the complexity of relationships between neoliberal and neoconservative politics that characterises the work of David Harvey (2003). Harvey argues that states vacillate historically between protecting regional interests and opening borders. The creation of larger and larger alliances of states is one potential outcome of this process. It may be that international state alliances in one form or another take responsibility for space debris. But Harvey reminds us that, firstly, these ‘cosmopolitan’ agreements do not represent the public interest but exist to safeguard capital accumulation, and, secondly, that they are always prone to dissolution. None of the parties involved support the measure most certain to improve orbital pollution, which is to stop (or limit) the launch of objects into orbit (UN, 1999). Instead, the solutions being pursued only serve to deepen the contradiction between those who benefit from risk mitigation and those who bear the costs. As attention to the problem grows, the perceived impending catastrophe appears to demand an immediate technological solution that actually obscures the politics at work [see de Goede and Randalls (2009); see also Swyngedouw (2007) on catastrophism and climate change].

**The 1AC’s fantasy of collision cascades sustains these racial technics through existential blackmail. Their pseudo-scientific rationalization of risk blackmails populations into accepting any savior to the horrific uncertainty of the collision cascade, which demobilizes radical solutions in favor of quick fixes, guaranteeing greater threats later down the road.**

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Beck has been criticised for his ‘confusion’ about whether or not exposure to risk is unevenly distributed according to social and geographic divisions (Lupton, 1999, page 68). He has argued that “pollution follows the poor” (Beck, 1999, page 5) and has accepted that the rich can sometimes buy themselves safety, but he has also stated that nuclear contamination, for example, “is egalitarian, and in that sense ‘democratic’” (page 61), and he hopes for our unification into a global “civilizational community of fate” (2006, page 7; also 1992, page 47). In elaborating what he calls a “political economy of risk”, however, he appears to accept that the economic consequences of risk are unevenly socially distributed (1999, page 61). It is therefore surprising that he refers to the subpolitics of risk as an ‘enemyless’ politics. For even if it is accepted that risks themselves unite us in principle, there are clearly, as in the instances discussed above, those who benefit from the proliferation of risk. I have argued throughout the paper that there are serious problems with Beck’s account of how a cosmopolitan public sphere will emerge. The contradictions of risk themselves are portrayed as the most powerful force in undermining the risk makers, whilst it is merely for social movements to make risk scandalous, and various “moralizing groups” to put risk on the social agenda (1999, page 67). **Beck sees progress as** occurring “not through class struggle or revolution as in Marx, but as an unintended consequence of modernity itself” (Lupton, 1999, page 67). Politics “nestles down” in everyday life as risk decisions become impossible to ignore (Beck, 1997, page 152). His hope for cosmopolitan ecological democracy revolves around consumer boycotts and buycotts, and in **balloting over ecological issues**. In his assertion that “in sorting through the trash for recycling, everyone is compelled to cooperate as a minor activist in the overall rescue mission for the earth and humankind” (1997, page 91, emphasis added), activism is dissolved into individualised consumer behaviour administered by the state (see Smith, 2009, page 17). The theoretical problem posed by the relative failure to politicise the public about the risks involved in space activity is precisely that it does not impose itself on the everyday lives of those who stand to suffer. Nor are the risks concentrated in any socially or geographically determined sector of the population, with the exception of localised risks around manufacture and launch facilities such as the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The decision by **SNAP-9A** scientists to design the plutonium capsule to break up in the event of a disaster was in this sense a perfect tactic to avoid politicising any particular group. Issues concerning risk associated with human activity in space may find greater symbolic anchoring in areas immediately surrounding manufacture and launch sites, accounting for the geographic concentration of activism within those areas, but there is no necessary reason why people should engage with them. Accounting for why some people are mobilised to contest these risks whilst others are not, even when they share the same interests, values and knowledge, is difficult using Beck’s theoretical framework. As Lupton (1999, page 62) argues, “a usual response to grave dangers is to deny their existence as a kind of psychological self-protective mechanism, an attempt to maintain a sense of normality”. As she says, Beck accepts this (see Beck, 1995, pages 42–57). He argues that in the most “hopelessly hazardous situations … there is a growing tendency not merely to accept the hazard, but to deny it by every means at one’s disposal” (pages 48–49). He even makes the point that the imperceptibility of danger could in principle make this easy, but comes back again to the idea that we confront unavoidable risk decisions in day-to-day scenarios: “The lake one was about to leap into is revealed as a sewer, the superb, crispy lettuce in one’s mouth turns out to be contaminated and foul” (page 55). The “tolerance of despoliation and hazards”, says Beck, “wears thin only where people see their way of life jeopardized, in a manner they can both know and interpret, within the horizon of their expectations and valuations” (page 46). I have highlighted throughout that, where risks are not directly confronted and are uncertain, the operation of economic power becomes more important. One dimension to how power operates under these circumstances has recurred throughout the paper: the ability to **create and manage fantasies about catastrophe**. The more sophisticated the **technologies** used to **rationalise risk** become, the more significant what it **cannot model** becomes. Various approaches to psychoanalysis have examined how **fantasy creates both** **what is feared** (its ‘horrific’ dimension) **and the pacifying solution that relieves this fear** (its ‘beautific’ dimension). This is true of Kleinian psychoanalysis (eg, Klein, 1946, page 6), but particularly of contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis, which has dealt with images of catastrophe specifically. This provides tools to explore in more depth Beck’s category of ‘things we are unwilling to know’. The Lacanian social theorist Slavoj Žižek (2008, page xii), for example, adds another category—‘unknown knowns’—to Donald Rumsfeld’s typology of knowledge. Žižek argues that when gaps appear in the symbolic order (in this case rationalising risk discourses) fantasy operates to conceal the true horror of the Lacanian Real; that which cannot be articulated. Žižek (2008, pages 5–6) provides the **example** of **safety demonstrations on aeroplanes**. These demonstrations do not serve to pacify our true fears about a crash landing, but to construct the horrific scenario. The true horror remains our inability to know how the crash scenario will play out. Precisely **the same is true of NASA’s Environmental Impact Statements, which are known to be fabrications but are still preferred to uncertainty** (the UN demands an impossible risk assessment that is probabilistic and geographically limited). The image of a **collision** **cascade** in orbit taking out global communications is also a **fantasy**, as are Haynes’s and McKay’s mutant bacteria. These fantasies each allow us to contemplate uncertainty. But each has a different effect, engineered and selected to function in the interests of those in power. Environmental Impact Assessments provide scenarios that legitimate State acquiescence to capital. They cover over not only science’s failings, but also those of the State and capital in turn. **They function to draw activists into** what Beck (1995, page 42) describes as “**orgies of mathematics and science” that work to prevent a truly reflexive discussion of risk**. Whilst informed activists engage with these scenarios as though they were rationalities (and, for example, demand to see more of the information on which they are based), less informed members of the public leave them to it. **Collision cascade fantasies and solutions for them in the form of fantastic technologies also sustain a relationship between capital and the State in which disaster and solution must be conceived within the existing regime governing space activities**. Not many people have direct economic interests in planetary engineering as yet, bar a marginal group of scientists. Desiring an impossible knowledge, these fantasies give scientists recourse to seek further funding (though more advanced modelling will make the unknown more, not less, terrifying), whilst at the same time making any politicisation of their work seem absurd. Meanwhile, the notion of **planetary engineering itself functions as a fantasy sustaining our unsustainable relationship with the Earthly environment**. Such fantasies are especially effective in **immobilising** public concern because of their remote setting in outer space. Space colonisation advocate Kraaft Ehricke (1972) referred to the development of outer space as the ‘benign industrial revolution’ precisely because it removed the negative consequences of industrial activity to a place where they no longer mattered. The same principle underpinned proposals to dump nuclear waste in outer space. Such a manoeuvre is a form of Beck’s “**symbolic detoxification**”, and the relationship between purity, exclusion, and avoidance has been tackled in the literature on risk (eg, Douglas, 1992; Joffe, 1999). Conclusion I have argued that, whilst many of the descriptive concepts established in Beck’s world risk society thesis can capture the existing state of risk beyond the globe, these risks reveal some of the problems with Beck’s theoretical understanding of risk politics. Contrary to Beck’s understanding, I have argued that there is nothing inevitable about these issues entering into a cosmopolitan public sphere. I have argued that this is especially true given the economic interests that keep uncertainty about these risks away from the public. I recommend that **we should remain sceptical about apparently cosmopolitan international cooperation regarding risk in outer space**, arguing that **this exists only where the interests of states and capital coincide**. I have also outlined some of the ways in which **space activity is** set to increase in order to resolve Earthly problems. These necessarily entail new and **increased risk**s, and are not the result simply of overspecialised science, but are **driven by the need for new capital fixes**. Because of the existence of these mechanisms, it cannot be trusted that progress will be made through the inevitable functional realignment of risk politics. The influence of power on risk politics beyond the global level must instead be recognised and collectively challenged, and **especially the function of fantasy** within this. An equal and open discussion of both the ‘goods’ and ‘bads’ (to use Beck’s terms) produced by space activity can only proceed on this basis.