### 1 – K

#### Western Communication is on the brink of implosion – oversaturated by endless signs and images. Reality is dead, information is dissuasive, and truth no longer exists – any critical content of the Aff is over-coded by the hyperreal form of communication.

Artrip and Debrix 18, Ryan E., and François Debrix. "The viral mediation of terror: ISIS, image, implosion." Critical Studies in Media Communication 35.1 (2018): 74-88. (Philosophy and Political Science at Guilford College and Elon University)//Elmer

Mediation and the virality of the image A crucial feature of the contemporary media system (and its accompanying global circulation of images) is oversaturation. This oversaturation of media **is characterized by** so-called **viral** patterns of production, **dissemination, and consumption** of content, often achieved through globally networked digital platforms. Enabled by a seemingly exponential growth of networks and by ever-widened thresholds of social connectivity, digital technologies have ushered in an unprecedented intensity of information production. Today’s global mediascape is perhaps best defined by its immeasurable volume of communicative activity, constituted by an interminable accumulation/circulation of representational images (thus, it may be more apt to call it a global media circuitry). In order to theorize the relevance of the accumulative/circulatory effects of representation taking place throughout contemporary media processes, we turn to Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulation. According to Baudrillard’s theory of simulation, images have a tendency to “exceed” their original or intended function to represent, reflect, or describe some facet of reality. Images eventually overtake, overwhelm, and erase the possibility of originality or referential certainty. For Baudrillard (1983b), this takes place over the course of four “successive phases of the image” (p. 11). The first stage corresponds to the representational function of the image in its most ideal form. It describes a moment in the development of western thought—less likely an actual historical moment than one retroactively imposed on or assumed by western thought itself—whereby any reality can be perfectly reflected by an image. A second stage emerges as a response or opposition to the notion of representational faithfulness. It introduces the possibility of representational malfunction (often deployed intentionally), and it relates to what Baudrillard (1993) refers to in Symbolic Exchange and Death as “the counterfeit,” something that, Baudrillard claims, is “the dominant schema in the ‘classical period’” (p. 50). With the counterfeit, the image does not accurately represent anymore but rather “masks or perverts a basic reality” (Baudrillard, 1983b, p. 11). Representation gives way to distortion. Or, to put it somewhat differently, representation as distortion can now mislead, hide, cheat, dissimulate, or facilitate the production (and valuation) of lies and untruths (or counter-realities). In a third stage, Baudrillard (1983b) theorizes that the image now “masks the absence of a basic reality” (p. 11). The third stage marks a radical break from the first and second stages, and from representation in general. Representation becomes more or less a ruse or a lure; it can no longer be trusted (it cannot even be trusted to spread lies or falsehoods). In the third stage, the image’s “true” function is neither to reflect nor to distort, but rather to mask the impossibility of representation. Baudrillard (1996) conceptualizes that a crater has been left in the wake of a reality whose referentiality/representability has been “murdered” by the image itself, by the lure of representation, and by the desire to over-signify by way of the image. This third stage is marked by an over or hyperactive global (re)production of images and meanings in a panic mode eager to restore reality/referentiality at all costs. The demands that the real always be meaningful are everywhere in excess. “There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. […] there is a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production,” writes Baudrillard (1983b, pp. 12– 13). A **panic-driven sense of reality’s** radical **absence generates a crisis about the capacity of verifiable truth and representable meaning.** Still, according to this (il)logic, it is not enough to say that the absence of the real creates a void of meaning and truth inside which the entirety of western thought and its belief-systems disappear. Frantically, this void also stimulates and simulates reproductive effects driven by disappointment (that the real is no more) but also by desire (that the quest for the real produce more and more reality). Thus, this stage of “representation” or of reality-production also inevitably turns toward proliferation and saturation of all the signs that can stand for the real itself. The **less reality is present**, **the more** its **signs**, as substitutes for the real, proliferate. As Baudrillard (2005) puts it: “We live in terror both of the excess of meaning and of total meaninglessness” (p. 134). Demands on reality to be exponentially re-enacted, displayed, and proliferated (the new modalities of representation in this third phase) further deepen the absence of the real. Demands for evermore meaning (everything must make sense, be meaningful) exacerbate a general loss of certainty. Meaning, too, is about the exponential production and display of signs, signs that stand for what is meaningful. As Baudrillard (1988) writes, “Everywhere one seeks to produce meaning, to make the world signify, to render it visible. We are not, however, in danger of lacking meaning; quite to the contrary, we are gorged with meaning and it is killing us” (p. 63). Lastly, Baudrillard (1983b) arrives at a fourth stage of the image/simulation. Here, the image, indebted to the effects of absence-proliferation resulting from the third stage, “bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (p. 11). This stage of the image relates to a phase of the “real” in which the effects of representation (or what formerly could be called representation) can now be conceptualized as a series of independent operations. Images now circulate and reproduce in more or less complete abstraction from the demands of referentiality. In effect, the “real” has been hollowed out by its own representations (as we saw in the third stage). Nothing is left of the real but its simulacra, its sign-images that circulate and are exchanged indiscriminately throughout a global mediascape. At this stage, when we point to a “real” object in the world, we actually point **to a hyper-mediation** of the object and of its sign-function, often to manifold images, void of originality by virtue of having been hyper-circulated. The mediation of reality has led to the **disappearance of the** real and representation, and we find instead a hallucinatory complex of “hyperreality” whereby things appear and in fact are “more real than the real” (Baudrillard, 1983a, p. 99). Baudrillard’s diagnosis about representation, reality, and their fateful (hyper)- mediation is reflected through many of the operations of contemporary media, particularly those that involve the proliferation and saturation of inputs and outputs in the global circuitry. The immeasurable **volume** of hyper-produced digital contents seems to have overwhelmed the **global circuits of** communication, representation, and meaning/**signification**. The globalized world is faced with an irreducible complexity of interdependent transmissions, exchanges, and always expanding and morphing communication channels occurring between a multitude of networked actors/actants, interests, and media across the shifting realms of speculative finance, statecraft, international intelligence, the management of political processes, journalism, news-reporting/making, publishing, academia, or “scientific” expertise, and everyday consumer practices, on and on, ad nauseam. There occurs a widespread hyper-generation, hyper-distribution, and hyper-signification of causality and connectivity that, in turn, become virtually indistinguishable categories, excreted by digitally mediated social exchange, and often emerging as a series of signs or symptoms of the boundless growth of an implosive global system. As the system grows, all meanings, certainties, and **truth-claims implode**. Within this implosive global system, mediation of the true and the real may remain operative, but only according to a logic of functional contradiction. Indeed, the promise of certainty is continually (re)produced concomitantly with its disappointment or deferral. This is perhaps the fateful or fatal strategic extension of the culture industry’s logic of domination and libidinal exploitation that had once been outlined by Horkheimer and Adorno (2002). As Horkheimer and Adorno put it, [t]he culture industry endlessly cheats its consumers out of what it endlessly promises. The promissory note of pleasure issued by plot and packaging is indefinitely prolonged: the promise, which actually comprises the entire show, disdainfully intimates that there is nothing more to come, that the diner must be satisfied with reading the menu. (p. 111) Today, however, the operationalization of promise-disappointment functions beyond the strategic scope of consumer marketing and the culture industry. The **mediatized subject** is constantly hit by a barrage of direct and indirect promissory notes about various forms and versions of certainty, security, and **truth** emanating from multiple news media pundits, commentators, ideologues, technocrats, politicians, community activists, and fellow “digizens.” Increasingly, the reality of power (social, political, economic, etc.) is being scrambled by a hyper-real overproduction of conflicting “truths” and “untruths,” “reals” and “unreals,” “facts” and “alternative facts,” or “news” and “fake news” that exacerbate the implosion of ideologically incoherent and semantically fragmented images purporting to represent some sort of social/ political/economic reality (Artrip & Debrix, 2014). Put differently, in seeking to diagnose and represent the true and the real, media today often produce a series of “undecidable symptoms, and an assortment of vague and contradictory diagnoses” (Baudrillard, 1995, p. 48). Even mainstream news commentaries today echo a vaguely postmodern concern that we have somehow entered a dangerous “post-truth” era of mediated social and political reality (Davies, 2016; Flood, 2016). One widespread sentiment in response to this “posttruth crisis” is to fetishize “fact-checking” technologies and related epistemic media/ truth policing practices. This sentiment commonly implores that countermeasures be taken in response to “fake news” proliferation. Yet, the machineries that produce and disseminate the true and the untrue are one and the same. Both involve the same conditions of reproduction, the same thirst for reality, and the same system of operationalized promise/disappointment. The imperative to “fact-check” suggests that media need to fight against a threat to their own legitimacy and against the endangerment of truth. But journalists and pundits who tout “fact-checking” as some panacean form of political/social resistance appear to do so in complete ignorance or denial of the hyper-real effects of today’s global media. They fail to see that, in the words of Baudrillard (2005), “[t]he excess of information engenders undecidability of facts and confusion of minds. […] The excess of transparency engenders terror” (p. 193). The ethos/pathos of “factchecking” assumes that the immediacy of truth is still possible, or that media can or must remain neutral conduits for the transmission of reality. Thus, the fetishization of “fact-checking” does not care to address (or cannot make itself address) the more difficult situation, but one that is arguably at the root of the so-called post-truth condition: truth is always already **mediated**. Truth is always already **vulnerable to the challenges of “alternative” forms of reality assessment** and representation. The viral form of today’s media simultaneously demands and prohibits a hegemonic instantiation of truth. Perhaps this simultaneous and contradictory demand for and prohibition of epistemological hegemony has always been a central feature of liberal democracies and their quests for truth. The devout faith in the “marketplace of ideas” in (neo)liberal democratic designs—rooted in the virtues of transparency, freedom, and competition—promises that (like the infamous invisible hand of the market, perhaps) it will eventually always be able to sort out fact from fiction. But the radical equivalency and universal fungibility of all ideas make it such that each attempt to instantiate a hegemonic truth tends only to energize an **oppositional** or contradictory attempt. In the domain of news and political media, the user-subject’s search for truth resembles a shell game, the plight of which is perhaps nowhere more evident than with Counselor to President Trump Kellyanne Conway’s insistence on “alternative facts” in opposition to the seemingly more measured, documented, quantitative, and conventional facts reported about public attendance at Trump’s presidential inauguration (Bradner, 2017). The new U.S. executive’s blatant disregard for referential reality, made evident by the continual torrent of images, signs, and contradictory truth-claims disseminated from the state apparatus (or via the president’s Twitter account), reflects a stage of simulation in which the lie operates as a self-sustaining simulacrum. The lie is no longer a “counterfeit” (as it was in Baudrillard’s second phase of the image), but rather a free-floating signifier. The lie no longer antagonizes truth or the real. Rather, the lie makes sense only in relation to other lies that do not even care anymore to appear truthful. The lie mirrors the hyper-real condition and operations of media because it functions according to a framework of “truth” that assumes no weight about reality, assigns no inherent value to the real, and makes no referential claims. There is no certainty left when it comes to truths and lies. What is left is an unending play of symptoms emanating from the oversaturation (an oversaturation of images, signs, statements, and “realities,” once again) of an undifferentiated global system. Everything becomes uncertain (Baudrillard might say that it is indifferent), reduced to the universally fungible mode of information/news. As Baudrillard (1995) intimated, “everything which is turned into information becomes the object of endless speculation” (p. 41).

#### The Impact is implosive violence as we seek to exterminate otherness by imposing meaning onto the globe.

Artrip and Debrix 14, Ryan E., and François Debrix. "The digital fog of war: Baudrillard and the violence of representation." (2014). (Philosophy and Political Science at Guilford College and Elon University)//Elmer

The story that needs to be told is thus not about the undoubtedly deplorable “truth” or fact of explosive and warlike violence, but about a violence of another sort. In the radical digital **transparency** of the global scene, we (members of the demos) often **have** full or direct exposure to explosivity, as we saw above with the image of terror. But what still needs to be thought and problematized is implosivity or what may be called **implosive violence.** Implosive violence is a violence for which we do not, and perhaps will never, have much of a language (Rancière, 2007: 123). Although, not having a language for it or, rather, as we saw above, seeking to find a language to talk about it and, perhaps, to make sense of it is still sought after. This is, perhaps, what digital pictures of war/terror violence seek to capture or want to force through. Implosive violence, often digitally rendered these days, is in close contact with media technologies and representational devices and techniques because **it seeks** representation and **meaning**. This is why implosive violence insists **on calling in wars** (against terror, for example) and on **mobilizing war machines** (against terrorist others, against **vague enemy figures**), but wars and war machines that no longer have—to the extent that they ever had—a clearly identifiable object and subject, or **a clear mission/purpose**. As such, this implosive violence and its wars (the new Western/global way of war, perhaps) **must remain** uncertain, **unclear**, foggy, inwardly driven, representational, and indeed virulent. They must remain uncertain and confused even as they are digitally operative and desperately capture events/images **to give the impression that meanings/significations can and will be found.** Yet, as we saw above, it is not meanings exactly that must be found, but information and the endless guarantee of its immediate circulation. As information occupies the empty place of meaning, certainty, or truth, images must be instantaneously turned into appearances that search for meanings that will never be discovered because, instead, a proliferation of information-worthy facts and beliefs will take over (perhaps this is what US fake pundit and comedian Stephen Colbert famously referred to as “truthiness”). Or, as Baudrillard puts it, “free from its former enemies, humanity now has to **create enemies from within**, which in fact produces a wide variety of inhuman metastases” (Baudrillard, 2003). Thus, this implosive violence is destined to be a global violence since it "is the product of a system that tracks down any form of negativity and singularity, including of course death as the ultimate form of singularity. […] It is a violence that, in a sense, puts an end to violence itself and strives to establish a world where anything related to the natural must disappear  […] Better than a global violence, we should call it a global virulence. This form of violence is indeed viral. It moves by contagion, produces by chain reaction, and little by little it destroys our immune systems and our capacities to resist" (2003; our italics).

#### The 1AC’s reliance on Media as a conduit of images and facts is an abolishment of reality that replaces human interaction with spectacle, image, and simulation reinforcing the hegemony of the Sign Economy.

Pawlett 7, William. Jean Baudrillard: against banality. Routledge, 2007. (Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the University of Wolverhampton)//Elmer

To exemplify his position regarding information, Baudrillard focuses on news reports where there is ‘a discontinuum of signs and messages in which all orders are equivalent (1998a: 121). News reports on ‘war, famine and death are interspersed with adverts for washing powder and razors’ and, we might add, with the self-advertising of journalists, news organisations and TV companies. But this is not merely a chaotic, confused abundance of signs: ‘it is the imposition upon us, by the systematic succession of messages, of the equivalence of history and the minor news item, of the event and the spectacle, of information and advertising at the level of the sign’ (1998a: 122). Not only events, but also the world itself, are ‘segmented’, cut up into ‘discontinuous, successive, non-contradictory messages’. We do not consume a spectacle or an image as such, but the principle of the succession of all possible spectacles or images: ‘there is no danger of anything emerging that is not one sign among others’ (1998a: 122). Baudrillard engages with the theories of McLuhan and his infamous slogan ‘The medium is the message’, arguing that the really signiﬁcant level at which media inﬂuence people is not that of the content of its messages. It is in ‘the constraining pattern – linked to the very technical essence of those media – of the disarticulation of the real into successive and equivalent signs’ (1998a: 122). Marxist attempts to theorise the effects of the media on audiences and consumers fail because such critiques focus on the ideological nature of content and the ownership of networks but pay little attention to the medium itself and to its possible affects on perception and social relations (1981: 166–72). In exploring the medium Baudrillard postulates a ‘law of technological inertia’, suggesting that the closer the medium gets to ‘the real’, through techniques such as documentary style ﬁlm-making and live coverage, the greater the ‘real absence from the world’. In other words, ‘the world’ as space of perspective – of seeing and knowing – is increasingly replaced by a sequence of images in which ‘the primary function of each message is to refer to another message’ (1998a: 122). In this way the medium, not the message, imposes a certain way of seeing the world on the audience. Rather than a space for reﬂection and critical distance we have information sliced and diced as a commodity-sign. This is no Luddite hatred of technology. Both McLuhan and Baudrillard note that the medium of the printed book, dating back to the ﬁfteenth century, imposes a particular mechanics of perception, a form of constraint favouring solitary reﬂection and linearity. But the distinctive nature of the electronic mass media is, for Baudrillard, that they ‘function to neutralise the lived, unique, eventual character of the world and substitute for it a multiple universe of media which are homogeneous’ (1998a: 123). The electronic media are ideological in the sense that they declare through their form, and often also in content, ‘the omnipotence of a system of reading over a world become a system of signs’. The ‘confused’ and ‘conﬂicted’ world is transformed into an abstract, ordered one, a world of consumable signs where ‘the signiﬁer becomes its own signiﬁed . . . we see the abolition of the signiﬁed and the tautology of the signiﬁer . . . the substitution of the code for the referential dimension deﬁnes mass media consumption’ (1998a: 124–5). For Baudrillard the media are, in fact, ‘anti-mediatory’ (1981: 169). They prevent response, the reciprocal exchange of meaning, allowing only simulatory responses, responses drawn from a predeﬁned range or code. Indeed, for Baudrillard ‘the code is the only agency that speaks’ (1981: 179). Today, ‘interactive’ TV is far more developed but the ‘interactivity’ on offer remains that of the medium or the code. We are confronted with a myriad of choices, channels, spectator angles and phone-in options, but all are generated from the medium: we merely complete the circuit. Human interaction is replaced by simulatory interactivity.

#### The Will to Objectivity turns the world into a Global Target – Academic Rationality and the Will to Know culminates in Extermination.

* Answers Science/Objective Truth Args

Chow 06. Rey Chow, professor of comparative literature at Brown, The Age of the World Target, 2006, pg. 40 //Elmer

Often under the modest and apparently innocuous agendas of fact gathering and documentation, the "scientific" and "objective" production of knowledge during peacetime about the various special "areas" became the institutional practice that substantiated and elaborated the militaristic conception of the world as target.52 In other words, despite the claims about the apolitical and disinterested nature of the pursuits of higher learning, activities undertaken under the rubric of area studies, such as language training, historiography, anthropology, economics, political science, and so forth, are fully inscribed in the politics and ideology of war. To that extent, the disciplining, research, and development of so-called academic information are **part and parcel of a strategic logic**. And yet, if the production of knowledge (with its vocabulary of aims and goals, research, data analysis, experimentation, and verification) in fact shares the same scientific and military premises as war—if, for instance, the ability to translate a difficult language can be regarded as equivalent to the ability to break military codes 53—is it a surprise that it is doomed to fail in its avowed attempts **to "know" the other cultures**? Can "knowledge" that is derived from the same kinds of bases as war put an end to the violence of warfare, or is such knowledge not simply warfare's accomplice, destined to destroy rather than preserve the forms of lives at which it aims its focus? As long as knowledge is produced in this self-referential manner, as a circuit of targeting **or getting the other** that ultimately consolidates the omnipotence and omnipresence of the sovereign "self"/"eye"—the "I"—that is the United States, the other will have no choice but remain just that—a target whose existence justifies only one thing, **its destruction by the bomber**. As long as the focus of our study of Asia remains the United States, and as long as this focus is not accompanied by knowledge of what is happening elsewhere at other times as well as at the present, such study will ultimately confirm once again the self-referential function of virtual worlding that was unleashed by the dropping of the atomic bombs, with the United States always occupying the position of the bomber, and other cultures always viewed as the military and information target fields. In this manner, events whose historicity does not fall into the epistemically closed orbit of the atomic bomber—such as the Chinese reactions to the war from a primarily anti-Japanese point of view that I alluded to at the beginning of this chapter—will never receive the attention that is due to them. "Knowledge," however conscientiously gathered and however large in volume, will lead only to further silence and to the silencing of diverse experiences.54 This is one reason why, as Harootunian remarks, area studies has been, since its inception, haunted by "the absence of a definable object"-and by "the problem of the vanishing object."

#### The aff’s search for metaphysical consistency is just an investment in the simulacra that coheres our reflections on those alleged truths – guarantees philosophical incoherence.

Baudrillard 2 [Jean; Simulacra and Simulation; French Sociologist/Philosopher; 1981; University of Michigan Press; LCA-BP] \*bracketed for lang

Or, very much on the contrary, there is a rigorous and necessary correlation between the two, to the extent that **Information is** directly **destructive** of meaning and signification, or that it neutralizes them. The loss of meaning is directly linked to the dissolving, dissuasive action of information, the media, and the mass media. The third hypothesis is the most interesting but flies in the face of every commonly held opinion. Everywhere **Socialization is measured by** the **exposure** to media messages. **Whoever is underexposed** to the media **is** dissocialized or virtually **asocial**. Everywhere information is thought to produce an accelerated circulation of meaning, a plus value of meaning homologous to the economic one that results from the accelerated rotation of capital Information is thought to create communication, and even if the waste is enormous, a general consensus would have it that nevertheless, as a whole, there is an excess of meaning, which is redistributed in all the interstices of the social—just **as** consensus would have it that **material production**, despite its dysfunctions and irrationalities, opens onto an excess of wealth and social purpose. We are all complicitous in this myth. It is the alpha and omega of our modernity, without which the credibility of our social organization would collapse. Well, the fact is that it is collapsing, and for this very reason: because where We think that information produces meaning, the opposite occurs. Information devours its own content. It devours communication and the social. And for two reasons. 1. Rather than creating communication**, it exhausts itself in the** act of **staging** communication. Rather than producing meaning, it exhausts itself in the staging of **meaning**. A gigantic process of simulation that is very familiar. The nondirective interview, speech, listeners who call in, participation at every level, blackmail through speech: “You are concerned, you are the event, etc.” More and more information is invaded by this kind of phantom content, this homeopathic grafting, this awakening dream of communication. **A circular arrangement through which one stages the desire of the audience**, the antitheater of communication, which as one knows, is never anything but the recycling in the negative of the traditional institution, the integrated circuit of the negative. Immense energies are deployed to hold this simulacrum at bay, to avoid the brutal desimulation that would confront us in the face of the obvious reality of a radical loss of meaning. It is useless to ask if it is the loss of communication that produces this escalation in the simulacrum, or whether it is the simulacrum that is there first for dissuasive ends, to short-circuit in advance any possibility of communication (precession of the model that calls an end to the real). Useless to ask which is the first term, there is none, it is a circular process—that of simulation, that of the hyperreal. The hyperreality of communication and of meaning. More real than the real, that is how the real is abolished. Thus, not only communication but The social functions in a closed circuit, as a lure— to which the force of myth is attached. Belief, faith in information attach themselves to this tautological proof that the system gives of itself by doubling the signs of an unlocatable reality. But one can believe that this belief is as ambiguous as that which was attached to myths in ancient societies. One both believes and doesn’t. One does not ask oneself, “I know very well, but still.” A sort of inverse simulation in the masses, in each one of us, corresponds to this simulation of meaning and of communication in which this system encloses us. To this tautology of the system the masses respond with ambivalence, to deterrence they respond with disaffection, or with an always enigmatic belief. Myth exists, but one must guard against thinking that people believe in it: this is the trap of critical thinking that can only be exercised if it presupposes the naïveté and stupidity of the masses. 2. Behind this exacerbated mise-en-scene of communication, the mass media, the pressure of **information pursues an irresistible destructuration of the social**. Thus information dissolves meaning and dissolves the social, in a sort of nebulous state dedicated not to a surplus of innovation, but, on the contrary, to total entropy. Thus the **media are producers not of socialization, but of** exactly the opposite, of **the implosion of the social in the masses**. And this is only the macroscopic extension of the implosion of meaning at the microscopic level of the sign. This implosion should be analyzed according to McLuhan’s formula; the medium is the message, the consequences of which have yet to be exhausted. That means that **All contents of meaning are absorbed in the only dominant form of the medium**. Only the medium can make an event—whatever the contents, whether they are conformist or subversive. A serious problem for all counter-information, pirate-radios, anti-media, etc. But there is something even more serious, which McLuhan himself did not see. Because beyond this neutralization of all content, one could still expect to manipulate the medium in its form and to transform the real by using the impact of the medium as form. If all the content is wiped out, there is perhaps still a subversive, revolutionary use value of the medium as such. That is—and this is where McLuhan’s formula leads, pushed to its limit—there is not only an implosion of the message in the medium, there is, in the same.

**Thus, the alternative is to embrace radical nihilism. Capitalism engages in unending reproduction; only a drainage of excess solves: drain propped up ideals, drain the death grip of semiocapitalism. A society that maintains capitalist production is contingent upon subjects that are forced to labor under semiocapitalism – so we let the system collapse in on itself.**

**Baudrillard 81** [Jean Baudrillard, sociologist, cultural theorist, and philosopher], Simulacra and Simulation, 1981//pesh-anika

Nihilism no longer wears the dark, Wagnerian, Spenglerian, fuliginous colors of the end of the century. It no longer comes from a Weltanschauung of decadence nor from a metaphysical radicality born of the death of God and of all the consequences that must be taken from this death. Today's nihilism is one of transparency, and it is in some sense more radical, more crucial than in its prior and historical forms, because this transparency, this irresolution is indissolubly that of the system, and that of all the theory that still pretends to analyze it. When God died, there was still Nietzsche to say so - the great nihilist before the Eternal and the cadaver of the Eternal. But before the simulated transparency of all things, before the simulacrum of the materialist or idealist realization of the world in hyperreality (God is not dead, he has become hyper-real), there is no longer a theoretical or critical God to recognize his own. The universe, and all of us, have entered live into simulation, into the malefic, not even malefic, indifferent, sphere of deterrence: in a bizarre fashion, nihilism has been entirely realized no longer through destruction, but through simulation and deterrence. From the active, violent phantasm, from the phantasm of the myth and the stage that it also was, historically, it has passed into the transparent, falsely transparent, operation of things. What then remains of a possible nihilism in theory? What new scene can unfold, where nothing and death could be replayed as a challenge, as a stake? We are in a new, and without a doubt insoluble, position in relation to prior forms of nihilism: Romanticism is its first great manifestation: it, along with the Enlightenment's Revolution, corresponds to the destruction of the order of appearances. Surrealism, dada, the absurd, and political nihilism are the second great manifestation, which corresponds to the destruction of the order of meaning. The first is still an aesthetic form of nihilism (dandyism), the second, a political, historical, and metaphysical form (terrorism). These two forms no longer concern us except in part, or not at all. The nihilism of transparency is no longer either aesthetic or political, no longer borrows from either the extermination of appearances, nor from extinguishing the embers of meaning, nor from the last nuances of an apocalypse. There is no longer an apocalypse (only aleatory terrorism still tries to reflect it, but it is certainly no longer political, and it only has one mode of manifestation left that is at the same time a mode of disappearance: the media - now the media are not a stage where something is played, they are a strip, a track, a perforated map of which we are no longer even spectators: receivers). The apocalypse is finished, today it is the precession of the neutral, of forms of the neutral and of indifference. I will leave it to be considered whether there can be a romanticism, an aesthetic of the neutral therein. I don't think so - all that remains, is the fascination for desertlike and indifferent forms, for the very operation of the system that annihilates us. Now, fascination (in contrast to seduction, which was attached to appearances, and to dialectical reason, which was attached to meaning) is a nihilistic passion par excellence, it is the passion proper to the mode of disappearance. We are fascinated by all forms of disappearance, of our disappearance. Melancholic and fascinated, such is our general situation in an era of involuntary transparency. I am a nihilist. I observe, I accept, I assume the immense process of the destruction of appearances (and of the seduction of appearances) in the service of meaning (representation, history, criticism, etc.) that is the fundamental fact of the nineteenth century. The true revolution of the nineteenth century, of modernity, is the radical destruction of appearances, the disenchantment of the world and its abandonment to the violence of interpretation and of history. I observe, I accept, I assume, I analyze the second revolution, that of the twentieth century, that of postmodernity, which is the immense process of the destruction of meaning, equal to the earlier destruction of appearances. He who strikes with meaning is killed by meaning. The dialectic stage, the critical stage is empty. There is no more stage. There is no therapy of meaning or therapy through meaning: therapy itself is part of the generalized process of indifferentiation. The stage of analysis itself has become uncertain, aleatory: theories float (in fact, nihilism is impossible, because it is still a desperate but determined theory, an imaginary of the end, a weltanschauung of catastrophe).\*1 Analysis is itself perhaps the decisive element of the immense process of the freezing over of meaning. The surplus of meaning that theories bring, their competition at the level of meaning is completely secondary in relation to their coalition in the glacial and four-tiered operation of dissection and transparency. One must be conscious that, no matter how the analysis proceeds, it proceeds toward the freezing over of meaning, it assists in the precession of simulacra and of indifferent forms. The desert grows. Implosion of meaning in the media. Implosion of the social in the masses. Infinite growth of the masses as a function of the acceleration of the system. Energetic impasse. Point of inertia. A destiny of inertia for a saturated world. The phenomena of inertia are accelerating (if one can say that). The arrested forms proliferate, and growth is immobilized in excrescence. Such is also the secret of the hypertelie, of what goes further than its own end. It would be our own mode of destroying finalities: going further, too far in the same direction - destruction of meaning through simulation, hypersimulation, hypertelie. Denying its own end through hyperfinality (the crustacean, the statues of Easter Island) - is this not also the obscene secret of cancer? Revenge of excrescence on growth, revenge of speed on inertia. The masses themselves are caught up in a gigantic process of inertia through acceleration. They are this excrescent, devouring, process that annihilates all growth and all surplus meaning. They are this circuit short-circuited by a monstrous finality. It is this point of inertia and what happens outside this point of inertia that today is fascinating, enthralling (gone, therefore, the discreet charm of the dialectic). If it is nihilistic to privilege this point of inertia and the analysis of this irreversibility of systems up to the point of no return, then I am a nihilist. If it is nihilistic to be obsessed by the mode of disappearance, and no longer by the mode of production, then I am a nihilist. Disappearance, aphanisis, implosion, Fury of Verschwindens. Transpolitics is the elective sphere of the mode of disappearance (of the real, of meaning, of the stage, of history, of the social, of the individual). To tell the truth, it is no longer so much a question of nihilism: in disappearance, in the desertlike, aleatory, and indifferent form, there is no longer even pathos, the pathetic of nihilism - that mythical energy that is still the force of nihilism, of radicality, mythic denial, dramatic anticipation. It is no longer even disenchantment, with the seductive and nostalgic, itself enchanted, tonality of disenchantment. It is simply disappearance. The trace of this radicality of the mode of disappearance is already found in Adorno and Benjamin, parallel to a nostalgic exercise of the dialectic. Because there is a nostalgia of the dialectic, and without a doubt the most subtle dialectic is nostalgic to begin with. But more deeply, there is in Benjamin and Adorno another tonality, that of a melancholy attached to the system itself, one that is incurable and beyond any dialectic. It is this melancholia of systems that today takes the upper hand through the ironically transparent forms that surround us. It is this melancholia that is becoming our fundamental passion. It is no longer the spleen or the vague yearnings of the fin-de-siecle soul. It is no longer nihilism either, which in some sense aims at normalizing everything through destruction, the passion of resentment (ressentiment).\*2 No, melancholia is the fundamental tonality of functional systems, of current systems of simulation, of programming and information. Melancholia is the inherent quality of the mode of the disappearance of meaning, of the mode of the volatilization of meaning in operational systems. And we are all melancholic. Melancholia is the brutal disaffection that characterizes our saturated systems. Once the hope of balancing good and evil, true and false, indeed of confronting some values of the same order, once the more general hope of a relation of forces and a stake has vanished. Everywhere, always, the system is too strong: hegemonic. Against this hegemony of the system, one can exalt the ruses of desire, practice revolutionary micrology of the quotidian, exalt the molecular drift or even defend cooking. This does not resolve the imperious necessity of checking the system in broad daylight. This, only terrorism can do. It is the trait of reversion that effaces the remainder, just as a single ironic smile effaces a whole discourse, just as a single flash of denial in a slave effaces all the power and pleasure of the master. The more hegemonic the system, the more the imagination is struck by the smallest of its reversals. The challenge, even infinitesimal, is the image of a chain failure. Only this reversibility without a counterpart is an event today, on the nihilistic and disaffected stage of the political. Only it mobilizes the imaginary. If being a nihilist, is carrying, to the unbearable limit of hegemonic systems, this radical trait of derision and of violence, this challenge that the system is summoned to answer through its own death, then I am a terrorist and nihilist in theory as the others are with their weapons. Theoretical violence, not truth, is the only resource left us. But such a sentiment is Utopian. Because it would be beautiful to be a nihilist, if there were still a radicality - as it would be nice to be a terrorist, if death, including that of the terrorist, still had meaning. But it is at this point that things become insoluble. Because to this active nihilism of radicality, the system opposes its own, the nihilism of neutralization. The system is itself also nihilistic, in the sense that it has the power to pour everything, including what denies it, into indifference. In this system, death itself shines by virtue of its absence. (The Bologna train station, the Oktoberfest in Munich: the dead are annulled by indifference, that is where terrorism is the involuntary accomplice of the whole system, not politically, but in the accelerated form of indifference that it contributes to imposing.)

#### The world fundamentally rests on the logic of (in)difference, in which origins are simultaneously unlocatable and everywhere all at once. The proliferation of communication under late stage capitalism washes up and crashes on the rocks of truth and falsity, eroding meaning at its shores. Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best ruptures hyperreality.

**Baudrillard 1** [Jean Baudrillard, sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, true sweetheart, “Fatal Strategies”; LCA-BP] \*edited for lang

More generally, visible things do not terminate in obscurity and in silence; they vanish into what is more visible than the visible: obscenity. An example of this ex-centricity of things, of this drift into excrescence, is the irruption of randomness, indeterminacy, and relativity within our system. The reaction to this new state of things has not been a resigned abandonment of traditional values, but rather a ~~crazy~~ overdetermination, an exacerbation, of these values of reference, function, finality, and causality. Perhaps nature is, in fact, horrified by the void, for it is in the void, and in order to avoid it, that plethoric, hypertrophic, and saturated systems emerge. Some-thing redundant always settles in the place where there is no longer any-thing. Determinacy does not withdraw to the benefit of indeterminacy, but to the benefit of a hyperdeterminacy: the redundancy of determinacy in a void. Finality does not disappear in favor of the aleatory, but rather in favor of hyperfinality, of a hyperfunctionality: more functional than the functional, more final than the final - the hypertelic (hypertélie). Having been plunged into an in-ordinate uncertainty by randomness, we have responded by an excess of causality and teleology. Hypertelic growth is not an accident in the evolution of certain species, it is the challenge of telos as a response to increasing indeterminacy. In a system where things are increasingly left to chance, telos turns into delirium, and develops entities that know all too well how to exceed their own ends, to the point of invading the entire system. This is true of the behavior of the cancerous cell (hypervitality in a single direction), of the hyperspecialization of objects and people, of the operationalism of the smallest detail, and of the hypersignification of the slightest sign: the leitmotiv of our daily lives. But this is also the chancroid secret of every obese and cancerous system: **those of communication, of information**, of production, of destruction - **each having long since exceeded the limits of functionality,** and use value, in order to enter the phantasmic escalation of finalities. The ~~hysteria~~ of causality, the inverse of the ~~hysteria~~ of finalities, which corresponds to the simultaneous effacement of origins and causes, is **the obsessive search for origins, for responsibility, for reference**; an attempt to extinguish phenomena in infinitesimal causes. But it is also the genesis and genetics complex, which on various accounts are represented by psychoanalytic palingenesis (the whole psyche hypostatized in prime infancy, every sign a symptom); and biogenetics (all probabilities saturated by the fatal ordering of molecules); and the hypertrophying of historical research, the delirium of explaining everything, of ascribing everything, of referencing everything ... All this becomes a fantastic burden - references living one off the other and at the other's expense. Here again we have an excrescent interpretive system developing without any relation to its objective. All of this is a consequence of a forward flight in the face of the haemorrhaging of objective causes. Inertial phenomena are accelerating. Arrested forms proliferate, and growth is immobilized in excrescence. This is the form of the hypertelic, that which goes beyond its own ends: the crustacean that strays far from the ocean unable to return (to what secret end?); or the increasing gigantism of Easter Island statues. Tentacular, protuberant, excrescent, hypertelic: this is the inertial destiny of a saturated world. The denial of its own end in hyperfinality; is this not also the mechanism of cancer? The revenge of growth in excrescence. The revenge and summons of speed in inertia. The masses are also caught in this gigantic process of inertia by acceleration. The masses are this excrescent process, which precipitates all growth towards ruin. **It is the circuit that is shortcircuited by a monstrous finality**. Exxon: the American government requests a complete report on the multinational's activities throughout the world. The result is twelve 1,000 page volumes, whose reading alone, not to mention the analysis, would exceed a few years work. Where is the information? Should we initiate an information dietetics? Should we thin out the obese, the obese systems, and create institutions to uninform? The incredible destructive stockpiling of strategic weapons is only equaled by the worldwide demographic overgrowth. As paradoxical as it may seem, both are of the same nature and correspond to the same logic of excrescence and inertia. A triumphant anomaly: no principle of justice or of proportion can temper either one; they incite one another. And worse, there isn't even so much as Promethean defiance here, no excessive passion or pride. It appears simply that the species has crossed a particular mysterious point, where it has become impossible to turn back, to decelerate, or to slow down.

### 2 – Hijack

#### Kant collapses to libertarianism: The universality of freedom justifies a libertarian state, which outweighs on actor specificity: frameworks must discuss the obligations of a state to be morally relevant to this resolution.

**Otteson, 9** James R. Otteson (professor of philosophy and economics at Yeshiva University) “Kantian Individualism and Political Libertarianism” The Independent Review, v. 13, n. 3, Winter 2009

In a crucial passage in Metaphysics of Morals, Kant writes that **the “Universal Principle of Right” is “‘every action which by itself or by its maxim enables the freedom of each individual’s will to co-exist with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law is right**.’” He concludes, “Thus the universal law of right is as follows: let your external actions be such that the free application of your will can co-exist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law” (1991, 133, emphasis in original).5 **This stipulation becomes** for Kant **the grounding justification for the existence of a state**, its raison d’être, and **the reason we leave the state of nature is to secure this sphere of maximum freedom compatible with the same freedom of all others.** Because this freedom must be complete, in the sense of being as full as possible given the existence of other persons who demand similar freedom, it entails that **the state may—indeed, must—secure this condition of freedom, but undertake to do nothing else because any other** state **activities** would **compromise the very autonomy the state seeks to defend**. Kant’s position thus outlines and implies a political philosophy that is broadly libertarian; that is, it endorses a state constructed with the sole aim of protecting its citizens against invasions of their liberty. For Kant, **individuals create a state to protect their moral agency, and in doing so they consent to coercion only insofar as it is required to prevent themselves or others from impinging on their own or others’ agency**. In his argument, **individuals cannot rationally consent to a state that instructs them in morals, coerces virtuous behavior, commands them to trade or not, directs their pursuit of happiness, or forcibly requires them to provide for their own or others’ pursuits of happiness**. And except in cases of punishment for wrongdoing,6 **this severe limitation on the scope of the state’s authority must always be respected**: “The rights of man must be held sacred, however great a sacrifice the ruling power may have to make. There can be no half measures here; it is no use devising hybrid solutions such as a pragmatically conditioned right halfway between right and utility. For all politics must bend the knee before right, although politics may hope in return to arrive, however slowly, at a stage of lasting brilliance” (Perpetual Peace, 1991, 125). The implication is that a Kantian state protects against invasions of freedom and does nothing else; in the absence of invasions or threats of invasions, it is inactive.

#### Negate:

#### 1] Media advocacy is a] an outlet to freely express and cultivate your views and b] crucial to protect individual freedoms in the face of interference from the state.

Alexis De Tocqueville 35, 6-17-1835, "On Freedom of the Press," Libertarianism.org, [https://www.libertarianism.org/publications/essays/freedom-press //](https://www.libertarianism.org/publications/essays/freedom-press%20//)Dulles VN

There are certain nations which have peculiar reasons for cherishing the liberty of the press, independently of the general motives which I have just pointed out. For in certain countries which profess to enjoy the privileges of freedom every individual agent of the Government may violate the laws with impunity, since those whom he oppresses cannot prosecute him before the courts of justice. In this case the liberty of the press is not merely a guarantee, but it is the only guarantee, of their liberty and their security which the citizens possess. If the rulers of these nations propose to abolish the independence of the press, the people would be justified in saying: Give us the right of prosecuting your offences before the ordinary tribunals, and perhaps we may then waive our right of appeal to the tribunal of public opinion. But in the countries in which the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people ostensibly prevails, the censorship of the press is not only dangerous, but it is absurd. When the right of every citizen to co‐​operate in the government of society is acknowledged, every citizen must be presumed to possess the power of discriminating between the different opinions of his contemporaries, and of appreciating the different facts from which inferences may be drawn. The sovereignty of the people and the liberty of the press may therefore be looked upon as correlative institutions; just as the censorship of the press and universal suffrage are two things which are irreconcilably opposed, and which cannot long be retained among the institutions of the same people. Not a single individual of the twelve millions who inhabit the territory of the United States has as yet dared to propose any restrictions to the liberty of the press. The first newspaper over which I cast my eyes, upon my arrival in America, contained the following article:

#### 2] I-Law agrees on an unconditional right to freely advocate any stance or opinion through media.

United Nations 48, 12-10-1948, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> //Dulles VN

Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

#### Any overturning of this is a form of interference in given freedoms.