**Technology has fundamentally altered the way capitalism operates. In the 20th century the vision was of a future full of growth and development. New technologies would arise and the future would be infinitely better. The fundamental shift happened when machines were infused with us. We are so connected to technology, that we have become the technology. We exist in the period *after the future*.**

​​(Franco ‘Bifo’ **Berardi 2011** is a writer and theorist based in Bologna. His work revolves mainly around the aesthetics of the contemporary psychosphere. His latest books include Futurability, Phenomenology of the End, and The Soul at Work. In the 1970s he was one of the founders of the pirate radio station Radio Alice, the magazine A/traverso and of the political movement Autonomia,  “After the Future”, <https://libcom.org/files/AfterFuture.pdf>)

For us, dwellers of the postmodern conurbation, driving back home from the office, stuck and immovable in the traffic jam of rush hour, Marinetti’s adoration of the car seems a little bit ludicrous. But **the reality and concept of the machine have changed a hundred years after the Futurist Manifesto. Futurism exalted the machine as an external object, visible in the city**

**landscape, but now the machine is inside us: we are no longer obsessed with the external machine; instead, the “info-machine”** now **intersects with the social nervous system,** the “bio-machine” interacts with the genetic becoming of the human organism. **Digital and bio-technologies have turned the external machine of iron and steel into the internalised and recombining machine of the bio-info era. The bio-info machine is no more separable from the body and the mind, because it is no more an external tool, but an internal transformer of the body and of the mind,** a linguistic and cognitive enhancer. Now **the nano-machine is mutating the human brain and the linguistic ability to produce and communicate.** The Machine is us. In the mechanical era the machine stood in front of the body, and changed human behaviour, enhancing their potency without changing their physical structure. **The assembly line, for instance, although improving and increasing. the productive power of laborers did not modify their physical organism nor introduce mutations inside their cognitive ability. Now the machine is no more in front of the body but inside it.** Bodies and minds therefore cannot express and relate anymore without the technical support of the bio machine. Because of this change **political power has changed its nature. When the machine was external the State had to regulate the body and for this used the law. Agencies of repression were used in order to force the conscious organisms to submit to that rhythm without rebellion. Now the political domination is internalized and is undistinguishable from the machine itself.** Not only the machine but also the machinic imagination undergoes a mutation during this passage. Marinetti conceived the machine in the modern way, like an external enhancer. In the bio-social age the machine is difference of

information: not exteriority but linguistic modeling, logic and cognitive

automatism, internal necessity.

**Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the team that best deconstructs semiocapitalism. Prefer:**

**The aff’s idea that stuff is really bad right now but all we need to do is strike and we will solve capitalism is a ruse. This myth of the future  is based on a capitalist ruse. It creates a cruel optimism for the worker, in which they ignore the underlying grid of semiocapitalism for temporary futile solutions.**

​​(Franco ‘Bifo’ **Berardi 2** is a writer and theorist based in Bologna. His work revolves mainly around the aesthetics of the contemporary psychosphere. His latest books include Futurability, Phenomenology of the End, and The Soul at Work. In the 1970s he was one of the founders of the pirate radio station Radio Alice, the magazine A/traverso and of the political movement Autonomia,  “After the Future”, <https://libcom.org/files/AfterFuture.pdf>)

**The rise of the myth of the future is rooted in modern capitalism,** in the experience of expansion of the economy and knowledge. **The idea that the future will be better than the present is not a natural idea, but the imaginary effect of the peculiarity of the bourgeois production model.** Since its beginning, since the discovery of the new continent and the rewriting of the maps of the world, **modernity has been defined by an amplification of the very limits of the world,** and the peculiarity of capitalist economy resides exactly in the accumulation of the surplus value that results in the constant enhancement of the spheres of material goods and knowledge. **In the second part of the nineteenth century, and in the first part of the twentieth, the myth of the future reached its peak, becoming something more than an implicit belief: it was a true faith, based on the concept of "progress,"** the ideological translation of the reality of economic growth. Political action was reframed in the light of this faith in a progressive future. **Liberalism and social democracy, nationalism and communism, and anarchism itself, all the different families of modern political theory share a common certainty: notwithstanding the darkness of the present, the future will be bright.** In this book I will try to develop the idea that **the future is over.** As you know, this isn't a new idea. **Born with punk, the slow cancellation of the future got underway in the 1970s and 1980s. Now those bizarre predictions have become true.** The idea that the future has disappeared is, of course, rather whimsical-since, as I write these lines, the future hasn't stopped unfolding. But when I say "future," I am not referring to the direction of time. I am thinking, rather, of the psychological perception, which emerged in the cultural situation of progressive modernity, **the cultural expectations that were fabricated during the long period of modern civilization, reaching a peak in the years after the Second World War.** Those expectations **were shaped in the conceptual frameworks of an ever progressing development, albeit through different methodologies:** the HegeloMarxist mythology of Aujhebung and founding of the new totality of Communism; **the bourgeois mythology of a linear development of welfare and democracy; the technocratic mythology of the all-encompassing power of scientific knowledge; and so on.**

**Labor in the technosphere has become fractionalized. Value used to be associated with input and time. I.e. if you worked on the assembly line for an hour you could make 200 shoes and that had a certain worth. In the technological job sphere the value of work is immaterial. You can’t measure input anymore because that input doesn’t exist in the physical reality. The cognitariat is not producing goods but rather investing their social energies in the web of semiocapitalism. This means strikes always fail in the technosphere because you no longer have a physical value that you can use to negotiate with the bourgeoisie.**

​​(Franco ‘Bifo’ **Berardi 3** is a writer and theorist based in Bologna. His work revolves mainly around the aesthetics of the contemporary psychosphere. His latest books include Futurability, Phenomenology of the End, and The Soul at Work. In the 1970s he was one of the founders of the pirate radio station Radio Alice, the magazine A/traverso and of the political movement Autonomia,  “After the Future”, <https://libcom.org/files/AfterFuture.pdf>)

Precariousness is itself a precarious notion, because it defines its object in an approximate manner, but also because from this notion derive paradoxical, self-contradictory, in other words precarious strategies. If we concentrate our critical attention on the precarious character of job performance what kind of program can we propose, to which target can we aspire? That of a stable job guaranteed for life? This would be (and this actually is) a cultural regression, the definite subordination of labor to the rule of exploitation. Notwithstanding the idea of Flexicurity which has been circulated, we are still far from having a strategy of social recomposition of the labor movement to extricate ourselves from unlimited exploitation. We need to pick up again the thread of analysis of social composition and decompositon if we want to distinguish possible lines of a process of recomposition to come. In the 1970s the energy crisis, the consequent economic recession and finally the substitution of work with numerical machines resulted in the formation of a large number of people with no guarantees. Since then the question of **precariousness became central to social analysis, but also in the ambitions of the movement. We began by proposing to struggle for forms of guaranteed income, uncoupled from work,** in order to face the fact that a large part of the young population had no prospect of guaranteed employment. The situation has changed since then, because **what seemed a marginal and temporary condition has now become the prevalent form of labor relations. Precariousness is no longer a marginal and provisional characteristic, but it is the general form of the labor relation in a productive, digitalized sphere**, reticular and recombinant. The word **“precariat”** generally **stands for the area of work that is no longer definable by fixed rules relative to the labor relation, to salary and the length of the working day**. However if we analyze the past, we see that these rules functioned only for a limited period in the history of relations between labor and capital. Only **for a short period at the heart of the 20th century, under the political pressures of unions and workers,** in conditions of (almost) full employment and thanks to a role more or less strongly regulatory of the state in the economy, **some limits to the natural violence of capitalist dynamics could be legally established.** The legal obligations that in certain periods have protected society from the violence of capital were always founded on the existence of a relation of force of a political and material kind (workers’ violence against the violence of capital). Thanks to political force it became possible to affirm rights, establish laws and protect them as personal rights. With the decline in the political force of the workers’ movement, the natural precariousness of labor relations in capitalism and its brutality have re-emerged. **The new phenomenon is not the precarious character of the job market, but the technical and cultural conditions in which info-labor is made precarious.** The technical conditions are those of digital recombination of info-work in networks. The cultural conditions are those of the education of the masses and the expectations of consumption inherited from late 20th century society andcontinuously fed by the entire apparatus of marketing and media communication. If we analyze the first aspect, i.e. the technical transformations introduced by the digitalization of the productive cycle, we see that **the essential point is** not the becoming precarious of the labor relation (which, after all, has always been precarious), but **the dissolution of the person as active productive agent, as labor power.** The cyberspace of global production can be described as an immense expanse of de-personalized human time. Info-labor, the provision of time for the elaboration and the recombination of segments of info-commodities, is the extreme point of arrival of the process of the abstraction from concrete activities that Marx analyzed as a tendency inscribed in the capital-labor relation. **The process of abstraction of labor has progressively stripped labor time of every concrete and individual particularity.** The atom of time of which Marx wrote is the minimal unit of productive labor. But **in industrial production, abstract labor time was impersonated by a physical and juridical bearer, embodied in a worker in flesh and bone,** with a certified and political identity. Naturally capital did not purchase a personal disposition, but the time for which the workers were its bearers. But **if capital wanted to dispose of the necessary time for its valorization, it was obliged to hire a human being, to buy all of its time, and therefore it had to face up to the material needs and to the social and political demands of which the human was a bearer. When we move onto the sphere of info-labor there is no longer a need to buy a person for eight hours a day indefinitely. Capital no longer recruits people, but buys packets of time, separated from their interchangeable and occasional bearers. De-personalized time has become the real agent of the process of valorisation, and de-personalized time neither has any right, nor any demand**. It can only be either available or unavailable, but the alternative is purely theoretical because the physical body, despite not being a legally recognized person, still has to buy his food and pay the rent. The informatic procedures of the recombination of semiotic material have the effect of liquefying the “objective” time necessary to produce the info-commodity. In all of the time of life the human machine is there, pulsating and available, like a brain-sprawl in waiting. The extension of time is meticulously cellularized: cells of productive time can be mobilized in punctual, casual and fragmentary forms. The recombination of these fragments is automatically realized in the network. The mobile phone is the tool that makes possible the connection between the needs of semiocapital and the mobilization of the living labor of cyberspace. The ring-tone of the mobile phone calls the workers to reconnect their abstract time to the reticular flux. Semiocapital puts neuro-psychic energies to work, and submits them to

machinic speed. It compels our cognition, our emotional hardware, to follow the rhythm of net-productivity. Cyberspace overloads cybertime, because cyberspace is an unbounded sphere, whose speed can accelerate without limits. But cybertime (the time of attention, memory, and imagination) cannot be speeded up beyond a limit. Otherwise it cracks. And it is actually cracking, collapsing under the stress of hyperproductivity. An epidemic of panic is spreading throughout the circuits of the social brain. An epidemic of

depression is following the outbreak of panic. The current crisis of the new economy has to be seen as a consequence of this nervous breakdown. Once upon a time Marx spoke about overproduction, meaning the excess of available goods that could not be absorbed by the social market. Nowadays it is the social brain that is assaulted by an overwhelming supply of attention-demanding goods. This is why the social factory has become the factory of unhappiness: the assembly line of net-production is directly exploiting the emotional energy of the virtual class. We are now beginning to become aware of it, so we are able to recognize ourselves as cognitarians. Flesh, body, desire, in permanent electrocution. It’s a strange word – “liberalism” – with which we identify the ideology prevalent in the posthuman transition to digital slavery. Liberty is its foundational myth, but the liberty of whom? The liberty of capital, certainly.

Capital must be absolutely free to expand in every corner of the world to find the fragment of human time available to be exploitated for the most miserable wage. But liberalism also predicates the liberty of the person. In neoliberal rhetoric, the juridical person is free to express oneself, to choose representatives, and be entrepreneurial at the level of politics and the economy. All this is very interesting, only that **the person has disappeared, what is left is like an inert object, irrelevant and useless. The person is free, sure. But his time is enslaved.** His liberty is a juridical fiction to which nothing in concrete daily life corresponds. If we consider the conditions in which thework of the majority of humanity, proletariat and cognitariat, is actually carried out in our time, **if we examine the conditions the average wage globally, if we consider the current cancellation of previous labor rights, we can say with no rhetorical exaggeration that we live in a regime of slavery. The average salary on the global level is hardly sufficient to buy the indispensable means for the mere survival of a person** whose time is at the service of capital. And **people do not have any right over the time of which they are formally the proprietors, but effectively expropriated. That time does not really belong to them, because it is separated from the social existence of the people who make it available to the recombinant cyberproductive circuit. The time of work is fractalized, that is, reduced to minimal fragments for reassembly, and the fractalization makes it possible for capital to constantly find the conditions of the minimum salary.** Precariousness is the black heart of the capitalist production process in the sphere of the global network in which circulates a continuous flow of fragmented and recomposable info-work. Precariousness is the transformative element of the whole cycle of production. Nobody is outside its reach. **The wages of the workers at unspecified times are struck, reduced, cut, and the life of all is threatened by precarization.** The digital info-work can be fragmented in order to be recomposed in a separate place from where that work is done. From the point of view of the valorization of capital, flow is continuous, but from the point of view of the existence and time lived by cognitive workers, **productive activity has a character of recombinant fragmentation in cellular form.** Pulsating cells of work are lit and extinguished in the large control board of global production. **Info-work is innately precarious, not because of the contingent viciousness of employers but for the simple reason that the allocation of work time can be disconnected from the individual and legal person of the worker,** an ocean of valorizing cells convened in a cellular way

and recombined by the subjectivity of capital. It is appropriate of reconceptualize the relationship between recombinant capital and immaterial labor, and it is advisable to obtain a new framework of reference. Given the impossibility, from now on, to reach a contractual elaboration of the cost of work by basing it on the legal person, owing to the

fact that the productive abstract labor is disconnected from the individual

person of the worker, the traditional form of the wage is put out of play since

it no longer guarantees anything anymore. Therefore, the recombinant character of cognitive labor seems incompatible with any possibility of social recomposition, and with a process of subjectivation. **The rules of negotiation, collaboration and conflict have changed, not because of a political decision, but because of a technical and cultural change in the labor relationship.** The rules are not immutable, and there is no rule which forces us to comply with the rules. The legalist left has never understood this. Fixed on the idea that it is necessary to comply with the rules, it has never known how to carry out confrontation on the new ground inaugurated by digital technologies and the globalization of the cycle of info-work. The neoliberals have understood this very well and they have subverted the rules that were laid down in a century of trade-union history. **In the classical mode of industrial production, the rule was based on a rigid relationship between work and capital, and on the possibility of determining the value of goods on the basis of socially necessary working time. But in the recombining stage capital based on exploitation of fluid info-work, there no longer exists any deterministic relations between work and value.** We should not aim to restore the rules that the neoliberal power has violated,we should invent new rules adequate to the fluid form of the labor-capital

relation, where there is no longer any quantitative time-value determinism and thus where there is no longer any necessary constant in the relationship

between economic sizes. How can we oppose the systemic de-personalization of the working class and the slavery that is affirmed as a mode of command of precarious and

depersonalized work? This is the question that is posed with insistence by whomever still has a sense of human dignity. Nevertheless, the answer does

not arrive because the form of resistance and struggle that were efficacious in the 20th century appear to no longer have the capacity to spread and

consolidate, nor consequently can they stop the absolutism of capital. We have learned from the experience of workers’ struggle in the last years that

the struggle of precarious workers does not become a cycle, does not leave a social sediment of consciousness, organization and solidarity. **Fractalized work**

**can** also **punctually rebel, but this does not set into motion any wave of**

**struggle. The reason is easy to understand. In order for struggles to form a**

**cycle there must be a spatial proximity of the bodies of labor and an existential**

**temporal continuity. Without this proximity and this continuity, we lack the**

**conditions for the cellularized bodies to become a community. No wave can be**

**created, because the workers do not share their existence in time, and**

**behaviors can only become a wave when there is a continuous proximity in**

**time that info-labor no longer allows.**

**The creation of the infosphere, and the infusion of labor with technologies is a new frontier of semiocapitalism. The net enabled infinite spaces of productivity and creation. But growth cannot be infinite, the limit is time. While cyberspace is now infinite, time can’t be. The brain is subjected to infinite information but can’t take it because its processors can never be infinite. The new limit to growth is not land, labor or capital, but the capacity of the human nervous system.**

​​(Franco ‘Bifo’ **Berardi 4** is a writer and theorist based in Bologna. His work revolves mainly around the aesthetics of the contemporary psychosphere. His latest books include Futurability, Phenomenology of the End, and The Soul at Work. In the 1970s he was one of the founders of the pirate radio station Radio Alice, the magazine A/traverso and of the political movement Autonomia,  “After the Future”, <https://libcom.org/files/AfterFuture.pdf>)

**Semiocapital puts neuropsychical energies to work, and submits them to the speed of electronic machinery. It compels our cognition, our emotional hardware to follow the rhythm of net-productivity. Cyberspace overloads cybertime, because cyberspace is an unbounded sphere, whose speed can accelerate without limits. But cybertime (the time of attention, memory, and imagination) cannot speed beyond a limit. Otherwise, it cracks. And it is actually cracking, collapsing under the stress of hyper-productivity. An epidemic of panic is spreading throughout the circuits of the social brain. An epidemic of depression is following the outbreak of panic**. The crisis of the new economy at the beginning of the zero zero decade has to be seen as consequence of this nervous breakdown. **Once upon a time Marx spoke about overproduction,** meaning the excess of available goods that could not be absorbed by the social market**. In the sphere of net-production it is the social brain that is assaulted by an overwhelming supply of attention-demanding goods. This is why the social factory has become the factory of unhappiness: the assembly line of net-production is directly exploiting the emotional energy of the virtual class**. We have to become aware of it; **we have to recognize ourselves as cognitarians. Flesh, body, desire, in permanent electro-stimulation**. Biologist, philosopher and journalist at the same time, Kevin Kelly was the animator of CoEvolution Quarterly in the ’80s, then editor of Wired magazine for many years. In his book Out of Control, he speaks of a bio-informatic Super-organism which is the result of the synergy of uncountable human minds, and is placed outside of the reach of human control, understanding and government:

**The alternative is radical passivity, a process in which we withdraw our energies from the market, and stop investing in the technosphere of semiocapitalism. We use the exhaustion of the system against itself, because it relies on exploitation of the cognitariats social energy.**

​​(Franco ‘Bifo’ **Berardi 5** is a writer and theorist based in Bologna. His work revolves mainly around the aesthetics of the contemporary psychosphere. His latest books include Futurability, Phenomenology of the End, and The Soul at Work. In the 1970s he was one of the founders of the pirate radio station Radio Alice, the magazine A/traverso and of the political movement Autonomia,  “After the Future”, <https://libcom.org/files/AfterFuture.pdf>)

**The concept of exhaustion entered public discourse in the 1970s with the**

**publication of Limits to Growth, the Report of the Club of Rome:** Under the direction of a team of systems analysts based at Massachusetts Institute of Technology..., the report gave voice to the prevailing consensus that **Fordist manufacture had entered a period of irreversible decline.** But it also brought something palpably new to the analysis. If there was a crisis in the offing, it was not one that could be measured in conventional economic terms – a crisis in productivity or economic growth rates – but rather a wholesale crisis in the realm of reproduction. For the Club of Rome what was at stake was no less than the continuing reproduction of the earth’s biosphere and hence the future of life on earth. The most visible signs of the impending crisis were therefore to be found in the existence of all kind of ecological disequilibria, exhaustion, and breakdown, from rising levels of pollution to famine and the increase in extinction rates. (Cooper 2008: 15-16) The Report refers to the physical resources, not to the dangers of over-exploitation of the nervous energies of the social mind. But the Report cried havoc, because for the first time the intrinsic impossibility of unlimited growth was revealed. In her remarkable book, Melinda Cooper relates the concept of exhaustion to the biological field, and also to the field of mental energy. Cooper writes: **Twenty years later,** armed with more sophisticated modeling tools, the same team came up with a slightly more nuanced prognosis for the future. **Limits to growth, they** now **argued, were time-like rather than space-like.** This meant that **we might have already gone beyond the threshold at which an essential resource such as oil could be sustainably consumed,** long before we would notice its actual depletion. In fact, it was highly probable according to the report’s author, that we were already living beyond our limit, in a state of suspended crisis, innocently waiting for the future to boomerang back in our faces. Time is in fact the ultimate limit in the world’s model. (Cooper 2008: 16-17) **Time is in the mind. The essential limit to growth is the mental impossibility to enhance time** (Cybertime) beyond a certain level. I think that we are here touching upon a crucial point. The process of re-composition, of conscious and collective subjectivation, finds here a new – paradoxical – way. Modern **radical thought has always seen the process of subjectivation as an energetic process: mobilization, social desire and political activism, expression, participation have been the modes of conscious collective subjectivation in the age of the revolutions. But in our age energy is running out, and desire which has given soul to modern social dynamics is absorbed in the black hole of virtualization and financial games,** as Jean Baudrillard (1993a) argues in his book Symbolic Exchange and Death, first published in 1976. In this book Baudrillard analyzes the hyper-realistic stage of capitalism, and the instauration of the logic of simulation. 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 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.

**Recognition ruins the revolutionary potential of the strike. The state’s goal is not to improve conditions for the worker, but to make sure this protest can’t exist outside of the law.**

**Crépon,** Marc, **and** Micol **Bez**. "The Right to Strike and Legal War in Walter Benjamin's “Toward the Critique of Violence”." *Critical Times* 2.2 (2019): 252-260.

If we wish to understand how the question of the right to strike arises for WalterBenjamin in the seventh paragraph of his essay “Zur Kritik der Gewalt,” it is impor­tant to first analyze the previous paragraph, which concerns the state’s monopoly on violence. It is here that Benjamin questions the argument that such **a monopoly derives from the impossibility of a system of legal ends to preserve itself as long as the pursuit of natural ends through violent means remains.** Benjamin responds to this dogmatic thesis with the following hypothesis, arguably one of his most impor­tant reflections: “To counter it, one would perhaps have to consider the surprising possibility that **law’s interest in monopolizing violence visàvis the individual is explained by the intention not of preserving legal ends, but rather of preserving law itself.** [This is the possibility] that **violence, when it does not lie in the hands of law, poses a danger to law,** not by virtue of the ends that it may pursue but **by virtue of its mere existence outside of law.” In other words, nothing would endanger the law more than the possibility of its authority being contested by a violence over which it has no control. The function of the law would therefore be, first and foremost, to contain violence within its own boundaries.** It is in this context that, to demonstrate this surprising hypothesis,Benjamin invokes two examples: the right to strike guaranteed by the state and the law of war. Let us return to the place that the right to strike occupies within class strugle.To begin with, **the very idea of such a struggle implies certain forms of violence. The strike could then be understood as one of the** recognizable **forms** that **this violence can take.** However, **this analytical framework is undermined as soon as this form of violence becomes regulated by a “right to strike,” such as the one recognized by law in France in 1864. What this recognition engages is,** in fact, **the will of the state to control the possible “violence” of the strike.** Thus, **the “right” of the right to strike appears as the best, if not the only, way for the state to circumscribe within** (and via)**the law the relative violence of class struggles.** We might consider this to be the per­fect illustration of the aforementioned hypothesis. Yet, there are two lines of questioning that destabilize this hypothesis that we would do well to consider.  In other words, **nothing would endanger the law more than the possibility of its authority being contested by a violence over which it has no control.** The function of the law would therefore be, first and foremost, to contain violence within its own boundaries. It is in this context that, to demonstrate this surprising hypothesis, Benjamin invokes two examples: the right to strike guaranteed by the state and the law of war