## 1

#### THE DIGITAL AGE IS HERE – Technology has created an age of constant information and signifiers floating through our phones and computers as media. This creates a dyslexia – reduced attention spans, no time for true human interaction – this leads to information overload, which is too fast for our organic minds to keep up with – that causes depression and drug use. It’s no coincidence that the rise of tech in the 80s was complimented with a drug epidemic. These signifiers must be evaluated; thus, the role of the ballot is to disrupt semiocapitalism.

**Berardi 09** [Franco Berardi, Italian communist theorist and activist in the autonomist tradition, whose work mainly focuses on the role of the media and information technology within post-industrial capitalism Precarious Rhapsody, by Franco Bifo Berardi et al., AK Press, 2009. P. 40-42 // LEX JB]

* TW – mentions of suicide, not read and in the context of growing mental illness statistics, but it’s in the card if you choose to read it after the round

The acceleration of information exchange has produced and is producing an effect of a pathological type on the individual human mind and even more on the collective mind. Individuals are not in a position to consciously process the immense and always growing mass of information that enters their computers, their cell phones, their television screens, their electronic diaries and their heads. However, it seems indispensable to follow, recognize, evaluate, process all this information if you want to be efficient, competitive, victorious. The practice of multitasking, the opening of a window of hypertextual attention, the passage from one context to another for the complex evaluation of processes, tends to deform the sequential modality of mental processing. According to Christian Marazzi, who has concerned himself in various books with the relations between economics, language and affectivity, the latest generation of economic operators is affected by a real and proper form of dyslexia, incapable of reading a page from the beginning to the end according to sequential procedures, incapable of maintaining concentrated attention on the same object for a long time. And dyslexia spreads to cognitive and social behaviors, leading to rendering the pursuit of linear strategies nearly impossible. Some, like Davenport and Beck , speak of an attention economy. But when a cognitive faculty enters into and becomes part of economic discourse this means that it has become a scarce resource. The necessary time for paying attention to the fluxes of information to which we are exposed and which must be evaluated in order to be able to make decisions is lacking. The consequence is in front of our eyes: political and economic decisions no longer respond to a long term strategic rationality and simply follow immediate interests. On the other hand, we are always less available for giving our attention to others gratuitously. We no longer have the attention time for love, tenderness, nature, pleasure and compassion. Our attention is ever more besieged and therefore we assign it only to our careers, to competition and to economic decisions. And in any case our temporality cannot follow the insane speed of the hypercomplex digital machine. Human beings tend to become the ruthless executors of decisions taken without attention. The universe of transmitters, or cyberspace, now proceeds at a superhuman velocity and becomes untranslatable for the universe of receivers, or cybertime, that cannot go faster than what is allowed by the physical material from which our brain is made, the slowness of our body, the need for caresses and affection. Thus opens a pathological gap and mental illness spreads as testified by the statistics and above all our everyday experience. And just as pathology spreads, so too do drugs. The flourishing industry of psychopharmaceuticals beats records every year, the number of packets of Ritalin, Prozac, Zoloft and other psychotropics sold in the pharmacies continually increases, while dissociation, suffering, desperation, terror, the desire not to exist, to not have to fight continuously, to disappear grows alongside the will to kill and to kill oneself. When, towards the end of the 1970s, an acceleration of the productive and communicative rhythms in occidental metropolitan centers was imposed, a gigantic epidemic of drug addiction made its appearance. The world was leaving its human epoch to enter the era of machinic posthuman acceleration: many sensitive organisms of the human variety began to snort cocaine, a substance that permits the acceleration of the existential rhythm leading to transforming oneself into a machine. Many other sensitive organisms of the human kind injected heroin in their veins, a substance that deactivates the relation with the speed of the surrounding atmosphere. The epidemic of powders during the 1970s and the 1980s produced an existential and cultural devastation with which we still haven’t come to terms with. Then illegal drugs were replaced by those legal substances which the pharmaceutical industry in a white coat made available for its victims and this was the epoch of anti-depressants, of euphorics and of mood regulators. Today psychopathy reveals itself ever more clearly as a social epidemic and, more precisely, a socio-communicational one. If you want to survive you have to be competitive and if you want to be competitive you must be connected, receive and process continuously an immense and growing mass of data. This provokes a constant attentive stress, a reduction of the time available for affectivity. These two tendencies, inseparably linked, provoke an effect of devastation on the individual psyche: depression, panic, anxiety, the sense of solitude and existential misery. But these individual symptoms cannot be indefinitely isolated, as psychopathology has done up until now and as economic power wishes to do.

#### The era of Information Overload is upon us. Mumble rap, the catalyst for its downfall, was borne from its arrival. Waugh 20

Waugh, M. (2020). “Every time I dress myself, it go motherfuckin” viral’: Post-verbal flows and memetic hype in Young Thug’s mumble rap. Popular Music, 39(2), 208–232. doi:10.1017/s026114302000015x//Aanya

It is within this context that mumble rap has developed. ‘Mumble rap’ is ‘arguably the art of not rapping. Rather than rapping clearly, eloquently, articulately and with prowess and esteem, mumble rappers string occasional words together. [...] Mumble rappers tend to do just that, they mumble’ (de Paor-Evans 2017). While there is much aesthetic diversity to be found beneath the umbrella term, in general mumble rap has tended toward experimentation with vocal tone and baroque production rather than the ‘clever, eloquent storytelling and wordplay’ of virtuosic hip-hop poets, foregrounding often ‘lackadaisical delivery and [lyrical] sparse[ness]’ 214 (ibid.). It is for this reason that there has been such a significant backlash against the style from hip-hop traditionalists, whose defence of lyrical prowess and conscious storytelling manifests in often vitriolic dismissal of acts – variously described as ‘mindless’ (Aroesti 2018), ‘moronic’ (Beaumont-Thomas 2018) and ‘lackadaisical’ (de Paor-Evans 2017) – seen to be belittling these elements (Iandoli 2016; Kane 2018). The question, ultimately, has centred on whether artists who reject lyrical complexity in favour of slurred vocal stylings can be accepted within a genre that celebrates poeticism. The label was coined by Wiz Khalifa in 2016 (de Paor-Evans 2017), but discontent about apparently incomprehensible vocals had been dominating hip-hop culture for at least the previous five years, with prominent artists such as Fetty Wap, Gucci Mane and Chief Keef facing criticism during that period. According to Alyse, however, ‘the mumble rap conversation seems to always come back to Future and one song in particular: his 2011 trap banger “Tony Montana”’ (Alyse 2017). The sound of ‘Tony Montana’ is archetypal mumble rap, with Future’s chorus comprised of repetitive chanting (of the song’s title) and verses built from almost unintelligible murmuring and shouting. This seemingly unsophisticated song-writing is in fact conducive to a social media era of apparently shortened attention spans (Carr 2011; Loh and Kanai 2015), with the persistent hook’s catchiness reliant on comparable techniques to those utilised in advertising slogans. Indeed, de Paor-Evans argues that mumble rap ‘offers relief from the invisible acceleration of life, yet concurrently praises the disposable production–consumption model that ignites this acceleration in the first place. It is creativity born out of boredom’ (de Paor-Evans 2017). The repetitions of Future have effectively birthed an entire generation of mumble rappers, with the muttering incantations of 21 Savage, Kodak Black, Desiigner and others exemplifying an era when ‘communication is conducted in a ruthlessly efficient, textbased pidgin language, made up [of] abbreviations, punctuation marks, and semaphores. [Mumble rap is] a version of this hyper-compressed language’ (Greene 2013).

#### Affect is the prepersonal experience of potentiality, the way bodies change and are changed by other bodies and environments. We cannot deny our ability to affect and be affected; every interaction we have changes both of the entities involved. Attack on Titan makes use of this through the affect of horror. Ferdinand 17

Medium, Ruben Ferdinand,(  a fulltime writer and freelance academic always looking for work. I’ve been a manuscript editor for a fiction publication company for about two years and have written articles in Dutch for various online publications concerned with art and politics. Academic background includes historiographical research and source analysis, critical (media) theory, critical race theory, postmodernism and poststructuralism, postcolonialism, orientalism, and critical feminist theory, with a supplementary broad understanding of feminist vision theory, somatechnics, art and affect) Feb 13 2017/Lex AGh

. Watching the mindless monstrosities rip into innocent townsfolk, then the proud nationalist troops rip into monsters, it’s hard not to feel a type of way: excited, repulsed, powerful? It’s a way of being affected. Affect can be described as the feeling immediately after seeing or hearing something not under your control, an emotional reflex of sorts. Affect is not arbitrary and uncontrollable, though— it can be directed and utilised for a specific purpose in conjunction with story, narrative, and, most importantly, aesthetics. Attack on Titan affects its audience not only with its visceral sequences of blood and blades, but with the cusp-of-war European imagery it consistently applies to its characters and locations. With paced-out dialogues, overdetailed facial close-ups, and sudden violent escalations, Titan conveys a constant sense of dread, capturing it within a historically and allegorical context. Series mangaka Hajime Isayama draws from an imagined past, but a past nonetheless, and Elliot and I believe that these aesthetics — those of horror and those of militarism — are the key parts to figuring out: how does this series instrumentalise this ‘affect’ and to what end does it do that? Titans: the affect of horror, the propaganda within dehumanisation, and nationalism. Most, if not all modern zombie narratives start with an ‘outbreak event’ (the irrupting pandemic and subsequent apocalypse) that are about 1) containing the threat, and 2) surviving after the first step fails. Titan flips the script from the start: humanity is the contained faction, pitted against a horde of seemingly endless, endlessly tall and nude cannibals that were already there. This ‘walling in’ part is important, because it lends credence to a central metaphor. Namely, that humanity is under siege. The city is home to all that’s left of humanity, making its besiegers attacking all of humanity. Concurrently, those attacking humanity are automatically branded as belligerent and inhuman: you tend to side with the people trapped in the cage, not those out of it. We can ideologically frame these dehumanised monsters as ‘enemies of mankind’ without feeling too bad about their expiration or being too concerned with their motivations. Also, I mean, look at them. Image for post Doing a visual analysis of these things is the worst thing I’ve done to myself. Part of what makes the terror of Titans so effective is their bodies. For one, they differ heavily in size. Ranging between ‘3-meter classes’ and ‘50-meter classes’, they easily tower over the average person. But it’s not just the fact that they’re giant — it’s that they look like Really Weird People. Their distorted proportions and elongated limbs only vaguely adhere to the human body plan, but they still resemble a human phenotype: hairy or bald, thin or big, happy or sad. Throughout the manga’s nearly decade-long run, you’ll seldom find two Titans that look anatomically identical. Their mannerisms underline this, too: during the Female Titan arc, the Survey Corps (Scouting Legion if you’re nasty) encounters many ‘aberrant’ Titans that don’t follow the normal behavioural conventions of zombies. These aberrants run, move on four legs, or stand completely still unless annoyed. All of this suggests a wide variformity in Titan physiology and behaviour, making them more monstrous through their uncanny yet unpredictable resemblance to humanity. As mentioned, creatures in horror operate on a set of rules. Ghosts take possession of people but can be exorcised; zombies eat people but are slow, etc. These are discernible guidelines that expose a monster’s vulnerable points and/or their origins, providing a solution. Most monster horror stories clarify where the monster comes from, because it lets the main cast figure out its weaknesses. Titan makes its monsters scary not just through visual design and visceral display, but by delaying this learning process. The rules for killing Titans can’t adequately inform a combat strategy other than ‘try to kill them, I guess?’ In general, Titans can only be killed if you cut out their nape. This puts the military at an enormous disadvantage, seeing as Titans are simply too tall to reach normally and slicing requires a lot of strength and momentum. So although their principal weakness is known, it’s still extremely difficult and dangerous and in many cases lethal to act on it. Image for post The ‘Smiling Titan’ In taking on the Titans, technology plays a huge part. They can’t be shot or destroyed through conventional means — cannons and most exposives are woefully ineffective — , so only with the 3D maneuver gear do our Spiderteens stand a chance. Hookshots, gas cannisters, and giant box cutter swords look wildly out-of-place, even sci-fi compared to the historical muskets and the simple artillery the rest of the army uses. The 3D maneuver gear symbolises superior technology that stands out in efficiency and design. Given Titan’s aestheticisation of history, it’s not a stretch to compare it to Prussia at the turn of the 19th century. Prussia prioritised mobility and shock tactics over numbers and raw manpower. Even so, the maneuver gear is extremely experimental and bears a high and unforgiving skill ceiling (mortality rates for recruits are very high). Moreover, the mobility doesn’t guarantee success. Even though the Spiderteens are fast and agile, it only takes one Titan to raise its arm and grab the wires, or place a well-timed chomp for a painful death to lay ahead. Knowing their weakness doesn’t solve the bigger problem of infinite huge cannibals, however. The only thing that’s known about Titans is obtained from what they’ve already been doing to humanity: they eat. But, again, why? This most common and frightening aspect of the series’ visual language is never accurately addressed. What’s mentioned at one point, however, is that Titans don’t have to eat to survive. For some reason, they only need sunlight to energise, which bizarrely puts them in the same taxonomy as plants. Titans, then, don’t gore and vore people for nourishment, and their fully-functioning digestive tract (Eren spends some time in a Titan stomach) is apparently entirely rudimentary. There’s a scene in the Female Titan arc where a couple of characters discuss this. When they arrive at this hypothesis, they freeze up. None of them say it out loud, they look disturbed by the thought, but the suggestion permeates the room that, maybe, Titans eat for entertainment? Suddenly, the Titans make a bit more horrible sense: their baby-like proportions, their awkward, almost playful body language, their puerile attitudes and vacant smiles… The characters may know, but they never say it: here, the learning process gets outsourced to the audience in an intrusive way. Attack on Titan instrumentalises the power of suggestion, leaving just enough room audience-side for an affective terror. Affect is ultimately rooted in what we can’t compartmentalise. We can know we’re scared, but not knowing why we’re scared is even scarier. Establishing and exposing these monsters as truly mindless, violent, and abhorrent gives the narrative an impenetrable excuse: the extermination of Titans is indubitably a good thing. This is reified in Eren’s endearing character trait: yelling in a shrill voice “I’ll kill them all” before getting owned super hard. Titans embody no political message, nor do they hold any agency; they are a canvas on which a faceless antagonism can be smeared and heroic sacrifice can be made. It’s not about the zombie menace, it never has been, it’s about humanity’s reaction to it. It is a narrative device that is both the cause and the excuse for nationalism (or worse). This brings us to more problematic parts of Attack on Titan’s aesthetics: its military:the brutalisation of necessity, the instrumentalisation of glory, and also still nationalism. Situating Attack on Titan’s military politics is hot potatoes given the series’ publishing history. In 2

#### The citizenry’s wounded attachments are tied to the paradoxical relationship of the Self and the Other. The cannibalistic nature of titans creates a phenomenon between the consumer and media-- drives are linguistically and inextricably tied to philia and phobia. Yamazaki 2

“Only the Winner is Allowed to Live”: The Concept of Cannibalism in Attack on Titan, Asuka Yamazaki, ITL, 2017//Lex AGh

The first section of this essay clarified that the depiction of the Titans’ cannibalism is described cruelly using visual language; however, their barbarous action is shaped in a mirror image relationship with the food culture of humans. In this view, both Titans and Humans are divided into the two contrasting categories of “savage” and “civilization” in order to conceptually express the differences of cultural relativity in an exclusionary form. The two conflicting categories arouses the fear of the readers and gives them a cathartic effect. However, the act of “eating”—the theme of the primary stage in both the giant and the human being—is illustrated not only in the binomial confrontation structure on the surface but also in the deep layer concept of this story. This structured relevance reflects the symbolized barbarism of the act of eating and the historical facts that have suppressed it, and therefore, the reader needs to understand this concept of “eating” and “cannibalism” in order to understand the development of the story.The second section analyzed the monopolizing of supernatural Titan power that the transcendental human being or the hybrid noble person holds and bequeaths to the next generation by performing divine ceremonial cannibalism. The structured ceremonial man-eating behavior is conceptualized in the real history of humanity. This comic illustrates the hierarchy system among humans, as well as between a human and a Titan, through the divine cannibalism of such an exceptional person as a god. Additionally, the primitive natural environment of humanity is revealed in the barbarous behavior of the hero and its privileged class. In this political and legal cannibalism, violence is used as a means of controlling others by influencing the inheritance of power.Using philosophy and psychoanalysis, this paper studied the way cannibalism, regarded as taboo in human history, and the violence behind it appears in Attack on Titan. This analysis makes it possible to reconfirm and objectivize the violence which forms the literary fascination with this comic and adds to its commercial appeal. While the acts of man-eating are forgotten in the modern age, fiction cannot avoid dealing with such a traumatic memory of human beings, in which their cultural taboo is re-contextualized as horror material and reproduced on a self-identical basis of humanity who forget and suppress this taboo in their history. In a sense, it is an expansion of the narcissism of the reader who project on the comic by excavating human memory. Considering the great reception of Attack on Titan beyond global cultural differences, applying an analytic approach to this shocking and horrifying cannibalism elucidates the fear created in this plot and clarifies the phenomenon of the reader’s absorption into that subject. This comic has a great impact on the reader, with its violent content and many cathartic elements. Normally, the reader would not care about why they are fascinated by this comic, or about the impact of this comic, or how deeply their minds and feelings are involved. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how this comic is based on violent structure and content and objectivize the fear and catharsis in order to comprehend the narrative structure and objectively read the comic. Indeed, the discourse within the fiction is inseparable from human history and memory.

#### Their call for unionization and strikes might have worked a century ago, but post digital infosphere, the solvency is impossible.

**Berardi 11** [Franco Berardi, Italian communist theorist and activist in the autonomist tradition, whose work mainly focuses on the role of the media and information technology within post-industrial capitalism “Chapter 4 Exhastion and Subjectivity.” After the Future, by Franco Bifo Berardi et al., AK Press, 2011. P. 107-108 // LEX JB]

The financial cycle is bleeding the social environment dry: sucking energies, resources, and the future. And giving nothing back. Recovery of the financial process of valorization of capital is totally separated from the cycle of material production and social demand. Financial capitalism has obtained autonomy from social life. Let’s consider the political side of the same problem: once upon a time when society was suffering the blows of recession, workers reacted with strikes, struggle and political organization, and forced state intervention in order to increase demand. Industrial growth needed mass consumption and social stability. What is impressive in the ongoing crisis, on the contrary, is the widespread passivity of the workers, their inability to unionize. The political trend in Europe is the meltdown of leftist parties and the labor movement. In the US, Obama is daily attacked by racist and populist mobs, but no progressive social movement is emerging. 1.2 million people have had their mortgages foreclosed upon and lost their houses following the sub-prime swindle, but no organized reaction has surfaced. People suffer and cry alone. In the old time of industrial capitalism, the working class could fight against a target that was precisely identified: the boss, the entrepreneur who was the owner of material things like the factory, and of the product of his laborers. Nowadays the boss has vanished. He is fragmented into billions of financial segments, and disseminated into millions of financial agents scattered all around the world. The workers themselves are part of recombinant financial capital. They are expecting future revenues from their pension fund investments. They own stock options in the enterprise exploiting their labor. They are hooked up, like a fly in a spider web, and if they move, they get strangled, but if they don’t move, the spider will suck their life from them. Society may rot, fall apart, agonize. It is not going to affect the political and economic stability of capitalism. What is called economic recovery is a new round of social devastation. So the recession is over, capitalism is recovering. Nonetheless, unemployment is rising and misery is spreading. This means that financial capitalism is autonomous from society. Capitalism doesn’t need workers: it just needs cellular fractals of labor, underpaid, precarious, de-personalised. Fragments of impersonal nervous energy, recombined by the network. The crisis is going to push forward technological change, and the substitution of human labor with machines. The employment rate is not going to rise in the future, and productivity will increase. A shrinking number of workers will be forced to produce more and more, and to work overtime. The real bubble is the work bubble. We have been working too much; we are still working too much. The human race does not need more goods, it needs a redistribution of existing goods, an intelligent application of technology and a worldwide cut in the lifetime dedicated to labor. Social energies have to be freed from labor dependence, and returned to the field of social affection, education, and therapy. We should take seriously the concept of autonomy. In the present condition autonomy means exodus from the domain of economic law: Out-onomy, abandonment of the field of economic exchange, self-organization of knowledge and of production in a sphere of social life which is no longer dependent on economic culture and expectations – barter, free exchange of time and of competence, food self reliance, occupation of territories in the cities, organization of self-defense.

#### Young Thug utilizes musical inconsistency to deploy paradoxical linguistic symbolism to the Infosphere—an excess of language that exists outside the limits of control.

Waugh, M. (2020). “Every time I dress myself, it go motherfuckin” viral’: Post-verbal flows and memetic hype in Young Thug’s mumble rap. Popular Music, 39(2), 208–232. doi:10.1017/s026114302000015x//Aanya

Thug’s songs even continue their inconsistent composition process post-release, with projects such as JEFFERY and BEAUTIFUL THUGGER GIRLS being changed after their initial arrival on streaming services (with the respective later addition of guest vocals by Travis Scott to ‘Floyd Mayweather’ and Quavo to ‘You Said’) in an echo of Kanye West’s much-publicised 2016 evolving album The Life Of Pablo (Caramanica 2016). In addition to his changeable voice and his lyrical/representational indecipherability (further illustrated in the unpronounceable title of unreleased debut album Hy!£UN35 and in his insistence that ‘I don’t want to explain [anything]. I hate explaining’; Stephenson 2014), Thug ‘raps obsessively about wetness, frequently bragging about the drippiness of his diamonds and the viscosity of his sexual encounters. [He] sloshes syllables around in his mouth, cultivating a new kind of fluidity’ (Richards 2015). His malleable ability to make words sound formless and ephemeral, partially a result of his foregrounding of extended vowels, contrasts with the solid consonance of more conventional rap. He has an ‘allergy to consonants. He extracts them from words. [He] repeatedly blurts [words that do not] require him to close his mouth [and] reshapes the vowels of certain words [to] make them rhyme’ (ibid.). On ‘Drippin’ and ‘Nigeria’ (2013) he rolls words around his mouth as if gargling liquid, evoking abstract aural images of flowing water and provoking the previously mentioned comparisons with Jackson Pollock’s drips and splatters. The tender sounds of ‘Worth It’ – a dedication to his fiancée Jerrika Karlae – are generated through a similar stretching of words such as ‘whine’ until they become onomatopoeic. Thug’s fascination with twisting and reshaping vowels allows him to rhyme words and phrases that would otherwise be non-homophonic (a trait he undoubtedly inherited from Lil Wayne, whom he has proclaimed to be his biggest musical influence; Cook-Wilson 2015). A typical Thug verse can rhyme ‘unlocked’, ‘watch’, ‘charge’ and ‘narcs’, followed by ‘emotions’, ‘roaches’, ‘rolling’, ‘broadie, ‘macaroni’, ‘token’ and ‘cozy’ (‘You Said’) fluently. Clearly, then, Young Thug’s molten voice anthropomorphises ambiguity and slipperiness, but even his lyrical content – certainly somewhat secondary within his work – explores these themes (at least after the words have been deciphered by the listener). Thug relishes the use of surreal linguistic symbolism reminiscent of Salvador Dali’s melting paintings, deploying lyrics such as ‘diamonds they shower me’ (2015’s ‘Dome’) and ‘that pussy wet so I’ma slide’ (2014’s ‘Imma Ride’); producing track titles including ‘Drippin’ and ‘Florida Water’ (2014); and exhibiting an ever-present preoccupation with ‘slime’. He utilises onomatopoeic sounds in both his ad-libs (see, as just one example, the punctuating ‘aah’ on each line of 2017’s ‘On Fire’) and lyrics [‘Diamonds they go boing/Hop inside that pussy like a trampoline, boing boing’ and ‘Beep beep beep like a bus on that ass’ from 2015’s ‘Raw (Might Just)’], replacing lyrics with infantile noises.

#### Thus, the Role of the Ballot is to Embrace Thuggerz: endorse a revolutionary method modeled after Thug’s post-verbal flows.

Waugh, M. (2020). “Every time I dress myself, it go motherfuckin” viral’: Post-verbal flows and memetic hype in Young Thug’s mumble rap. Popular Music, 39(2), 208–232. doi:10.1017/s026114302000015x//Aanya

While there are drawbacks to Thug’s oversharing, not least the fact that many fascinating tracks are released with little fanfare [and no attachment to larger projects, in the cases of ‘Safe’ (2017), ‘MLK’ (2018), ‘Pacifier’ (2015), etc.], he has evolved beyond the ‘quantity over quality’ issue that often marred his predecessors’ output, producing songs that demonstrate either groundbreaking experimentation or mainstream potential with unprecedented frequency. Referring to his break-out singles, Thug boasts that he ‘can do a perfect song in ten minutes. I did [“2 Bitches (Danny Glover)”] in eight minutes. “Stoner” took me almost an hour’ (Sandberg 2015). These tracks achieved then-improbable recognition for such an instinctively spontaneous writing/recording style – 2013’s ‘2 Bitches (Danny Glover)’ was popular in clubs internationally and 2014’s ‘Stoner’ charted at number 47 on Billboard – but Thug’s influence has subsequently led to high chart positions for comparably impulsively produced tracks such as Lil Uzi Vert’s ‘XO TOUR Llif3’, Future’s ‘Mask Off’, Lil Pump’s ‘Gucci Gang’, 21 Savage’s ‘Bank Account’ and Playboi Carti’s ‘Magnolia’ (all 2017). There is no question, however, that the unpredictability and spontaneity of Young Thug are exemplified in his vocal style, whose experimentation exceeds those of his mumble rap predecessors in its rejection of classical hip-hop techniques. Thug’s rapping – if, indeed, it can be referred to as such – pushes the limits of human vocalisation while dissolving the fundamental rules of hip-hop flow. In his musicological overview of ‘flow’, Adams concludes that, despite the diversity of flows deployed within the genre, there has historically been a specific set of unifying technical rules and expectations binding them all together (Adams 2009). Indeed, he suggests that the ‘rhythm’ of flow was the element of hip-hop that most ‘developed as rapping evolved [into] an art form’ (ibid.). The musicality of rappers’ flows has, alongside observational lyricism, thus long been held up as a signifier of the genre’s importance and worthiness-of-discourse. Yet instead of following these stringent (but unwritten) rules by remaining on-beat or staying ‘in-the-pocket’, Thug constantly ignores/eludes the rhythmic patterns of the production over which he raps. He is more interested in performing a variety of novel vocal acrobatics to make himself sound as alien as possible, switching swiftly from falsetto crooning to percussive scatting, and from surreal mumbling to discomfiting whines and yelps, even if this means completely disrupting the flow of the track. This ‘structureless hip-hop’ (Wilhite 2018) is demonstrated on early hit ‘Lifestyle’ (2014), whose almost unintelligible chorus relies on purely emotive vocalisations to connect with its audience; listeners are forced to hum along with the melody in the absence of discernible lyrics. The song, which also featured fellow Atlantan Rich Homie Quan and Cash Money label-head Birdman, was released in conjunction with the collaborative project Rich Gang: Tha Tour Part 1 (2014), and the novelty of both had immediate impact (Drake 2014; Pearce 2014; Vozick-Levinson 2014). Undoubtedly Thug’s most prominent placement to that point, he utilised the platform presented by Quan’s more reserved and comprehensible crooning to foreground his own ‘tantalising unorthodoxy’, ‘hieroglyphic raps’ (Zaworski 2014) and ‘impulsive, almost volatile’ vocalisations (Pearce 2014). On Rich Gang..., Young Thug ‘leap[s] octaves without warning, often vaulting from a purr to a squawk. [He lets] certain vowels buzz in the back of his throat so that they become percussive enough to imply rhythm [and he fills] empty spaces with nonsensical blah-blahs’ (Richards 2015). Indeed, the overall effect of Thug’s sound is so unique that journalists have found it difficult to locate a language to define it precisely. Descriptions vary from ‘onomatopoeic’ (Sandberg 2015) to ‘Jackson Pollock splatters’ (Richards 2015) to comparisons with the improvised chaos of ‘free jazz’ (ibid.), highlighting the intense abstraction of his aesthetic. Thug often replicates the repetitive stylings of mumble rappers such as Future, twisting his voice into new shapes and employing unique patterns with each recitation, ultimately locating the structure/tone that best amplifies that section’s emotionality (see, for example, the rapid chanting on the chorus of 2016’s ‘Digits’ or the surreal slur of 2014’s ‘OMG’ with Gucci Mane). While he can certainly ‘rap’ conventionally (see, for example, his virtuosic performances on tracks such as 2014’s ‘Givenchy’, 2016’s ‘Drippin’ and 2017’s ‘Sacrifices’, a collaboration with Drake and 2 Chainz that features an uncharacteristically lucid verse from Thug), he seems to deem words somewhat inconsequential (exemplified by the repetition of certain basic themes, lines and phrases across his catalogue, their presence existing merely as convenient tools/outlets for his vocal experiments). Thug’s sound is a celebration of form over content, emphasising the invention of novel flows and atmospheric soundscapes (constructed by producers such as Metro Boomin, TM88, Wheezy and London On Da Track, and mixing engineers Alex Tumay and Kesha Lee) rather than poetic language. According to producer Dun Deal, Thug does not actually write lyrics prior to recording these outbursts of emotion. He ‘draw[s] what he want[s] to do on paper. He would draw [...] weird signs and shapes [and say] “I don’t need no words”’ (Greene 2015b). This abstract (perhaps apocryphal) compositional technique provokes the image of Thug using his voice as a spontaneous instrument, favouring tone, repetition and melody over technical lyricism. ‘Stoner’ exemplifies all of these aspects, taking the previously discussed sloganeering of Future’s refrains to a logical conclusion. Its procession of repeated hooks, bridges and choruses eliminates the complex poetic verses of traditional hip-hop in favour of looping but distinct refrains including ‘I feel like Fabo’, ‘I’m a stoner’ and ‘just like a boss’.

## Case

#### Turn negative rights—a right to strike claims a right to a specific job, which is a positive right, Gourevitch 16 summarizes, bracketed for gendered language:

Gourevitch, A.. “Quitting Work but Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike.” Perspectives on Politics 14 (2016): 307 - 323. //LHP AV Accessed 7/4/21

If **a right to strike** is not a right to quit what is it? It **is the right that workers claim to refuse to perform work they have agreed to do while retaining a right to the job**. Most of what is peculiar, not to mention fraught, about a strike is contained in that latter clause. Yet, surprisingly, few commentators recognize just how central and yet peculiar this claim is (Locke 1984).2 Opponents of the right to strike are sometimes more alive to its distinctive features than defenders. One critic, for instance, makes the distinction between quitting and striking the basis of his entire argument: **the unqualified right to withdraw labour, which is a clear right of free men, does not describe the behaviour of striker**s...**Strikers**...**withdraw from the performance of their jobs, but in the only relevant sense they do not withdraw their labour**. The 2 Don Locke is one of the few to note both how central the claim to ‘keeping the job’ is and how hard it is to ground this claim. “So what is distinctive about **a strike is**....**the refusal to do a particular job, combined with the insistence that the job is none the less still yours.”** Locke 1984, 181. jobs from which they have withdrawn performance belong to them, they maintain. (Shenfield 1986, 10-11) On what possible grounds may workers claim a right to a job they refuse to perform? While many say that every able-bodied person should have a right to work, and they might say that the state therefore has an obligation to provide everyone with a job, **the argument for full employment never amounts to saying that workers have rights to specific jobs from specific private employers.** For instance, in 1945, at the height of the push for federally guaranteed full employment, the Senate committee considering the issue took care to argue that, “**the right to work has occasionally been misinterpreted as a right to specific jobs of some specific type and status.” After labeling this a “misinterpretation,” the committee’s report cited the following words from one of the bill’s leading advocates:** “It is not the aim of the bill to provide specific jobs for specific individuals. **Our economic system of free enterprise must have free opportunities for jobs for all who are able and want to work**. **Our American system owes no [person] ~~man~~ a living, but it does owe every man an opportunity to make a living**.” (Senator Murray, quoted in United States, Wagner, and Radcliffe 1945, 8). These sentences remind us how puzzling, even alarming, the right to ‘specific jobs’ can sound. In fact, **in a liberal society, the whole point is that claims on specific jobs are a relic of feudal thinking.** In status-based societies, specific groups had rights to specific jobs in the name of corporate privilege. Occupations were tied to birth or guild membership, but not available to all equally. **Liberal society, based on freedom of contract, was designed to destroy just that kind of unfair and oppressive status-based hierarchy**. A common argument against striking workers is that they are latter day guilds, protecting their sectional interests by refusing to let anyone else perform ‘their jobs’ (e.g. Hayek 2011, 384-404). As one critic puts it, the strikers’ demand for an inalienable right to, and property in, a particular job cannot be made conformable to the principles of liberty under law for all...the endowment of the employee with some kind of property right in a job, [is a] prime example of this reversion to the governance of status. (Shenfield 1986, 13) If such criticisms fundamentally misunderstand the entirely modern basis for the right to strike, we still need an account of how anyone could claim something like a property right in a job she not only never acquired but that she then refuses to perform.

#### The right to strike necessarily involves violating the right to property and contract – it’s coercive, Gourevitch 16 summarizes:

Gourevitch, A.. “Quitting Work but Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike.” Perspectives on Politics 14 (2016): 307 - 323. //LHP AV Accessed 7/4/21

A second problem follows on the first. **If workers have rights to the jobs they are striking then they must have some powers to enforce those rights**. **Such powers might include** mass picketing, secondary boycotts, sympathy strikes, **coercion and intimidation of replacement workers, even destruction or immobilization of property** – the familiar panoply of strike actions. While workers have sometimes defended such actions without using the specifically juridical language of ‘rights,’ in many cases they have used that kind of appeal.3 Even when they have not employed rights-discourse, they have invoked some related notion of demanding fair terms to their job (Frow, Frow and Katanka 1971). Each and any of the above listed activities of a strike – pickets, boycotts, sympathy actions – are part of the way workers not only press their demands but claim their right to 3 See James Gray Pope’s (1997) remarkable reconstruction of the way, in the 1920s, rights-discourse helped organize and sustain a ‘constitutional strike’ against attempts to curtail and outlaw the strike. the job. Strikers regularly implore other workers not to cross picket lines and take struck jobs. **These are more than speech-acts. At the outer edges, they amount to intimidation and coercion**. Or at least, workers claim the right to intimidate and coerce if the state will not itself enforce this aspect of their right to strike. Liberal societies rarely permit a group of individuals powers that come close and even cross over into rights of private coercion. It is no surprise that regulation and repression of these strike-related activities have been the source of some of the most serious episodes of strike-related violence in US and European history (Brecher 2014; Lambert 2005; Forbath 1991; Adamic 1971; Taft and Ross 1969; Liebknecht 1917). So, alongside the unclear basis for the strikers’ rights to their jobs, the problem for a liberal society is that this right seems to include private rights of coercion or at least troubling forms of social pressure. Yet there is more. **The standard strike potentially threatens the fundamental freedoms of three specific groups**. • Freedom of contract **It conflicts with the freedom of contract of those replacement workers who would be willing to take the job** on terms that strikers will not. Note, this is not a possible conflict but a necessary one. **Strikers claim the job is theirs, which means replacements have no right** to it. But replacements claim everyone should have the equal freedom to contract with an employer for a job. • Property rights **A strike seriously interferes with the employer’s property rights**. **The point of a strike is to stop production**. **But the point of a property right is that, at least in the owner’s core area of activity, nobody else has the right to interfere with his use of that property**. **The** **strikers**, by claiming the employer has no right to hire replacements and thus no way of employing his property profitably, **effectively render the employer unfree to use his property as he sees fit**. To be clear, strikers claim the right not just to block replacement workers, but to prevent the employer from putting his property to work without their permission. For instance, New Deal ‘sit-down’ strikes made it impossible to operate factories, which was one reason why the courts claimed it violated employer property rights (Atleson 1983, 46-48). Similarly, during the Seattle general strike in 1919, the General Strike Committee forced owners to ask permission to engage in certain productive activities – permission it often denied (Brecher 2014, 106-111). • Freedom of association Though the conceptual issues here are complicated, a strike can seriously constrain a worker’s freedom of association. It does so most seriously when the strike is a group right, in which only authorized representatives of the union may call a strike. In this case, the right to strike is not the individual’s right in the same way that, say, the freedom to join a church or volunteer organization is. Moreover, the strike can be coercively imposed even on dissenting members, especially when the dissenters work in closed or union shops. That is because refusal to follow the strike leads to dismissal from the union, which would mean loss of the job in union or closed shops. The threat of losing a job is usually considered a coercive threat. So not only might workers be forced to join unions – depending on the law – but also they might be forced to go along with one of the union’s riskiest collective actions. **Note that each one of these concerns follows directly from the nature of the right to strike itself**. **Interference with freedom of contract, property rights**, and the freedom of association **are all part and parcel of defending the right** that striking workers claim to the ‘their’ jobs. These are difficult forms of coercive interference to justify on their own terms and **they appear to rest on a claim without foundation**. Just what right do workers have to jobs that they refuse to perform?

#### The process of strike uses patients or beneficiaries of work as a means to an end

**Howard 20** [Danielle Howard,, Mar 2020, "What Should Physicians Consider Prior to Unionizing?," Journal of Ethics | American Medical Association, [https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/what-should-physicians-consider-prior-unionizing/2020-03 //](https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/what-should-physicians-consider-prior-unionizing/2020-03%20//) LEX JB]

* Written in the context of doctors, warrant can be used for all jobs

**The** possible **disadvantage to** patients highlights the crux **of** the moral issue of physician **strikes. In** Immanuel **Kant’s** *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, one formulation of **the categorical imperative is to “Act in such a way as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of anyone else, always as an end and never merely as a means**.”24 **When patient care is leveraged** by physicians during strikes, **patients serve as a means to the union’s ends**. Unless physicians act to improve *everyone’s*care, union action—if **it jeopardizes** the **care of some hospitalized patients**, for example—cannot be ethical. It is for this reason that, in the case of **physicians looking to form a new union**, the argument can be made that unionization should be used only as a last resort. Physician union **members must be prepared to utilize collective action and accept its risks to patient care, but every effort should be made to avoid actions that risk harm to patients.**

#### Uses others as a mere means to an end

Fourie 17 Johan Fourie 11-30-2017 "Ethicality of Labor-Strike Demonstrates by Social Workers" <https://www.otherpapers.com/essay/Ethicality-of-Labor-Strike-Demonstrates-by-Social-Workers/62694.html> (Johan Fourie is professor of Economics and History at Stellenbosch University.) JG

A further formula of the Categorical Imperative is "so, act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other context, never solely as a means to an end but always as an end within itself' (Parrott, 2006, p. 51). By this Kant meant people should be valued and respected as an individual and not used for the benefit of others. Participating in a labor-strike demonstration/action is **a direct violation of this** categorical perspective as it would not be ethically permissible because the severe dependence and well-being of clients, the effective functioning of the employer organization, and society **is used to duly and unduly influence the bargaining process for better working conditions**. In participating in the labor strike demonstration, the humanity, and well-being of clients and society **is not seen as crucial** **and as an 'end'**, but rather used to demonstrate the undeniable need for the skills and expertise of social workers. Furthermore, through withholding services, social worker professionals demonstrate that the well-being and welfare of society have lost its inherent importance/value. Though the value of overall well-being is taught throughout the social work training process and is enshrined in the professional ethical codes.

#### Violates the commitment to not cause harm

Fourie 17 Johan Fourie 11-30-2017 "Ethicality of Labor-Strike Demonstrates by Social Workers" <https://www.otherpapers.com/essay/Ethicality-of-Labor-Strike-Demonstrates-by-Social-Workers/62694.html> (Johan Fourie is professor of Economics and History at Stellenbosch University.) JG

In addition to the above, engaging in a labor strike demonstration is a gross violation of the **prima facie duty of the social worker**, nonmaleficence: **to not cause harm**, and display a commitment to the well-being of the client, organization as well as society. As Social Workers withdraw their labor, services are ceased, and automatic disruption occurs which can inflict serious harm on clients, organizational functioning as well as society. According to Mehta and Swell (2014), examples of the harm caused to clients and organizational functioning include severe and fatal delays in executing or developing timeous interventions **for at-risk clients,** miscommunication, and no service delivery. Moreover, by withdrawing their labor in a strike demonstration, ethical principles such as beneficence and social justice are also not adhered to as no acts of kindness, empathy is shown, and the most vulnerable members of society **will be impacted the most**.

#### Going on strike isn’t universalizable – a) if everyone leaves work then there will be no concept of a job b) everyone means the employer even leaves which is a contradiction in contraception

#### No aff offense – no unique obligation of the state to give ability to strike – if a workplace is coercive you can use legal means or just find another job