**K**

**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, but it’s in the card if you chose 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 antidepressants, 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 topic’s 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 Exhaustion 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 subprime 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 the concept of autonomy seriously. 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.

**Questions regarding truth or falsity are irrelevant in the world of the infosphere. All information gets adopted by the inescapability of capitalism. Truth is impossible in the world of semiocapitalism because of how information interacts with information.**

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  “0. Bifurcations.”  Precarious Rhapsody, by Franco Bifo Berardi et al., AK Press, 2011. P. 14-15 // LEX JB]

Because of this, I believe that **it is necessary to identify** the **new forms of social consciousness** beginning **from generational belonging**. And for this reason I will speak of two decisive successive shifts in a mutation that has led to the draining of humanistic categories and of the perspectives on which modern politics was based. These two passages are constituted in the subsumption of the human mind in formation within two successive technological configurations of the media-sphere.  **The first is that which I call video-electronic, meaning the technologies of televisual communication**. It is a case of the passage that Marshall McLuhan speaks of in his fundamental 1964 study, Understanding Media. McLuhan looks at the transition from the alphabetic sphere to the video-electronic one and **concludes that when the simultaneous succeeds the sequential, the capacity of mythological elaboration succeeds that of critical elaboration. The critical faculty presupposes a particular structuring of the message: the sequentiality of writing, the slowness of reading, and the possibility of judging in sequence the truth or falsity of statements**. It is in these conditions that the critical discrimination that has characterized the cultural forms of modernity becomes possible. But in **the sphere of video-electronic communication, critique becomes progressively substituted by a form of mythological thinking in which the capacity to distinguish between the truth and falsity of statements becomes not only irrelevant but impossible. This passage took place in** the techno-sphere and media-sphere of **the 1960s and 1970s** and **the generation that was born at the end of the 1970s began to manifest the first signs of impermeability to the values of politics and critique that had been fundamental for the preceding generations of the twentieth century**. The more radical mutation was the diffusion of digital technologies and the formation of the global internet during the 1990s. **Here, the functional modality of the human mind changes completely, not only because the conditions of communication become infinitely more complex, saturated and accelerated, but rather because the infantile mind begins to form itself in a media environment completely different from that of modern humanity.**

**Thus, the only alternative is to symbolically take the system hostage through its own method of exhaustion. We do this through radical passivity and a method of the Wu Wei – only radical passivity can escape the infosphere**

**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 Exhaustion and Subjectivity.” After the Future, by Franco Bifo Berardi et al., AK Press, 2011. P. 107-108 // LEX JB]

-        TW – mentions of suicide, not read, but it’s in the card if you chose to read it after the round

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 semiocapitalism 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 comm**it 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 exercising 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 **with**drawal, 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. The global recession started officially in September 2008 and lasted officially until the summer of 2009. **Since the summer of 2009 the official truth in the media, in political statements, in economic talk was: recovery**. The stock exchange began to rise again and the banks started again paying huge bonuses to their managers and so on. Meanwhile, unemployment was exploding everywhere, salaries were falling, welfare was curtailed, 90 million more are expected to join the army of poverty in the next year. Is this recovery? Our conditional reflex (influenced by the Keynesian knowledge that recovery is the recovery of the “real economy”) answered: no, this is not recovery, capitalism cannot recover only by financial means. But we should reframe our vision. **Finance is no longer a mere tool of capitalist growth. The financialization of capitalism has made finance the very ground of accumulation**, as Christian Marazzi (2010) has explained in recent works such as The Violence of Financial Capitalism. In the sphere of semiocapitalism, financial signs are not only signifiers pointing to some referents. The distinction between sign and referent is over. The sign is the thing, the product, the process. The “real” economy and financial expectations are no longer distinct spheres. In the past, when riches were created in the sphere of industrial production, when finance was only a tool for the mobilization of capital to invest in the field of material production, recovery could not be limited to the financial sphere. It also took employment and demand. Industrial capitalism could not grow if society did not grow. Nowadays we must accept the idea that financial capitalism can recover and thrive without social recovery. Social life has become residual, redundant, irrelevant.

**Interpretation—the aff must disclose the plan text before the round. To clarify, disclosure can occur on the hsld wiki or over message.**

**Violation—they didn't**

**First is prep and clash—two internal links—a) neg prep—4 minutes of prep is not enough to put together a coherent 1nc or update generics—30 minutes is necessary to learn a little about the affirmative and piece together what 1nc positions apply and cut and research their applications to the affirmative b) aff quality—plan text disclosure discourages cheap shot affs. If the aff isn't inherent or easily defeated by 20 minutes of research, it should lose—this will answer the 1ar's claim about innovation—with 30 minutes of prep, there's still an incentive to find a new strategic, well justified aff, but no incentive to cut a horrible, incoherent aff that the neg can't check against the broader literature.**

**D] Voter:**

**Fairness and education are voters – debate’s a game that needs rules to evaluate it and education gives us portable skills for life like research and thinking.**

**Drop the debater – a) the 1AR is too short for theory and covering substance so a ballot implication is key, b) only dropping the debater deters future abuse and sets a positive norm.**

**Use competing interps – reasonability invites arbitrary judge intervention since we don’t know your bs meter.**

**No RVI’s – a) illogical – you shouldn’t win for being fair – it’s a litmus test for engaging in substance, b) baiting – they can stick me with 6min of answers to a short arg and make the 2AR impossible, c) topic ed – incentivizes negs to bait theory and read 2N scripts which avoids substance**