**K**

**Debate is structured as a marketplace for information where we fetishize notions of “pedagogy” and is an extension of semiocapitalist logic through immaterial manors. Communication within the university isn’t one that develops subjectivities and psychic identity rather a system geared towards fragmentation and futuristic productivity.**

**Berardi 12** [David Hugill and Elise Thorburn, 9-26-2012, "Interview with 'Bifo': Reactivating the Social Body in Insurrectionary Times," Critical Legal Thinking, [https://criticallegalthinking.com/2012/09/26/interview-with-bifo-reactivating-the-social-body-in-insurrectionary-times //](https://criticallegalthinking.com/2012/09/26/interview-with-bifo-reactivating-the-social-body-in-insurrectionary-times%20//) JB]

* TW – mentions of suicide
* Impact turns fiat and notions of “the aff is a good idea”
* Debate bad and communication gets coopted

A: First of all because **students are increasingly learning in** small parcels, **small fragments**, small fractals **of knowledge**, and they are becoming **more** and more **accustomed to think** of their **knowledge not as knowledge but** as **intellectual availability to exploitation**.  In North American forms of education this is already well established, it is nothing new. It is new in much of Europe and it has begun to provoke some reactions. But it is also a **fact of a networked and globalized world**.  What does precariousness mean today? What is the relationship between precariousness and globalization? It means that you can **buy a fragment of labor** in Bangkok, a fragment in Buenos Aires, and **a fragment in Milan** and that these three **fragments become** the **same product from** the point of view of **capital**.  **Knowledge is** headed the **same** way. You no longer need – from the point of view of capital – to know in the **humanistic sense**, the meaning, the finality, the **intimate contradictions of knowledge**, you just need to know how **particular parcels of knowledge** can be made **functional**. There is something new and something old in this. Herbert Marcuse’s (1964) One Dimensional Man already identified this problem of the functionalization of knowledge but in his time it was only a kind of prediction about how capitalism would be transformed. Today, this functional consideration is the dominant form of our **relationship to knowledge**. So, we should question people about **what is happening to our knowledge**. Are we really learning things, knowing things? Or are we simply learning how to **become part of** the **productive machine**? Additionally, I think we need to ask people, especially young people, **about** their **suffering in the relationship with knowledge**, with communication and so on. I think that the problem of psychic suffering is of central importance our time. Problems of depression, panic, massive suicide, are **very real**.  Do you know that suicide has become the main cause of death among people between 18-25 years old? **Suicide is** becoming a **political weapon**. I’m not only thinking of Columbine or of Mohamed Bouazizi, the man who killed himself and started the Tunisian revolution.  Suicide has something to do with knowledge.  When your **knowledge** is becoming **more and more something** that does **not belong to you**, this is a problem of personal identity, of **psychic identity**.

**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 come prior to action, 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 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.

**Financial absolutism is framed by accelerationism – appropriation of resources becomes the end goal of desire. Extinction has already happened but the race for space through appropriation allows that semiotic cycle of wealth to survive.**

**Berardi 18** [Excerpted from *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry* by Franco “Bifo” Berardi, published by Semiotext(e) © Franco “Bifo” Berardi, 2018. All Rights Reserved, [https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/events-archive/vital-exhaustion/expiration-the-last-breath-franco-bifo-berardi-2018 //](https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/events-archive/vital-exhaustion/expiration-the-last-breath-franco-bifo-berardi-2018%20//) JB]

According to an **Oxfam report** that was made public at the Davos conference in January 2018, in 2016 inequality peaked: **82 percent of** the **wealth** produced that year **was hijacked by** the **1 percent** of the world’s population that already owns two-thirds of the world’s wealth.3 This is **not a joke** or an **exaggeration**: this is a documented **proof of** the demented nature of **financial absolutism**. Like a drain pump, financial capitalism has been sucking life from the organism of human society, at a rate that is accelerating by the second. The question is, why are people doing this? Why is a small fraction of humankind accumulating an unimaginable amount of wealth, while the gross majority of humankind is regressing toward misery? **What motivates this enormous appropriation** of common resources? Indeed, is there a motivation, or does the logic of financial accumulation automatically produce this irrational and immoral effect? Lastly, what is the point of accumulating and hoarding uncountable billions that could never all be exchanged for goods or pleasure in this lifetime? I don’t think that greed sufficiently explains this extreme concentration of wealth in the hands of a precious few. Should we rather explain this irrational inequality in terms of an evolutionary survival instinct? Can I even speak of an evolutionary instinct of humankind, does such a thing exist? Probably not, but I’m trying to find a sort of autopilot in human evolution. The survival instinct is alert today, because we sense (even if we tend to deny the evidence and reject this knowledge in our collective unconscious) **that** civilized **life on planet earth is approaching its end**. Our collective unconscious senses that the **final stampede** is drawing near because of so many unstoppable and irreversible processes: proliferation of **nuclear weapons**, global **warming**, water **scarcity, demographic expansion** and **desertification**, and, last but not least, **mental collapse**, spreading depression and panic. It is totally understandable at this point for **a human to be**, whether consciously or not, **preparing for a flight from planet hell**. And preparing to escape from hell is inconceivably expensive. **The 1 percent** of humankind **is preparing for this flight**, and they need huge amounts of **financial resources** to do so. Dystopian science fiction? Perhaps. Don’t forget, however, that in the last fifty years dystopian **science fiction has** produced the **most accurate roadmaps of our social and political becoming**.

**Post digital infosphere, the notion of “private entities” appropriating is overdetermined by capitalist desire – the network economy means that privatization is static and collapses to the semiotic economy.**

**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. 59-60 // JB]

Capital reacted, following the dictates of liberalist ideology, with the **coercive privatization** of the products of collective knowledge and the submission of **experimentation** to **economic competition**. The **privatization** of collective knowledge has **encountered resistance** and opposition everywhere, and cognitive **laborers** have started to **realize** that their **potential is superior to the** power of the **merchant**. Since **intellectual labor is** at the center of the **productive** scene, **the merchant no longer possesses** the juridical or material **instruments to impose** the principle of **private property**. Given that the most precious **goods in** social **production have** an immaterial and **reproducible character**, we have discovered that the **private appropriation of goods makes no sense**, while the reasons sustaining the **privatization of material goods** in industrial society have weakened. In the sphere of **semiotic-capital** and **cognitive labor**, when a product is consumed, **instead of disappearing** it remains available, while **its value increases** the more its use is shared. **This is** how the **network economy** works, and this **contradicts** the very principle of **private property** on which capitalism was founded until now.

**Questions regarding ethics are irrelevant in the world of the infosphere. All information gets coopted by the inescapability of capitalism – it’s search is cruelly optimistic in a world of semiocapitalism because of how information interacts with us.**

**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. Bifurications.” 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 alternative is to symbolically take the system hostage through it’s 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 Exhastion 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 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 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 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 **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 took also 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.