

# The Silence of Solidarity

tobias c. van Veen — September 11<sup>th</sup>-December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001

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*Our deconstruction of this spectacle cannot be textual alone, but must seek continually to focus its powers on the nature of events and the real determinations of the imperial process in motion today.*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* 48

*All projects for the 'liberation of desire' (Surrealism) which remain enmeshed in the matrix of Work can only lead to the commodification of desire.*

Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.* 79

Calling in from the margins, calling in from a burning skyscraper floor, a blood-soaked desert, a screaming aeroplane, a flattened village: calling in with dynamite strapped to my chest, with nails soaked in rat poison. Calling in sick, calling 911. Calling the White House, calling Muslims names, calling terrorists cowards, calling the kettle black.

Who calls, and who hears, in times of crisis?

Which calls make it through when the lines are busy, when everyone calls the crisis centre, calls 911? And the lines—do they not become crossed, do we not begin to hear someone else's frantic screams, perhaps when we were not supposed to, the insulation was supposed to keep us apart?

When should I play the call—is it proper to place the call at all, when you know that your number is up? And what if the number you are calling is down?

Everyone is calling, and the switchboard operator only offers a pasted-on smile (you can hear it cracking) and this message: it is ok, we will place the call for you, tell them what you want to do, deep in your desire (and this is what your desire is): kill, maim, torture for you. You told us so, a little freedom lost for feeling much safer, blanket security—so I heard, warm with my own fear, exchanging it in careful quantities for the safe terror of Homeland Defence.

The switchboard is lit up and everyone speaks at once. But every message is the same. It is only when the wires cross that the unexpected garble brings forth a message the defies its determined medium, now frying softly with electrical fire.

“911 Is A Joke” – Public Enemy, 1991

### 9-1-1: Crisis Thinking On Capitalisation

Crisis-thinking: the rapid-fire of emergency neurons, body filled with adrenaline. The rush to pull apart truth from fiction, to differentiate the proper response. To resist the lockdown. Every Left publication asks, from *Z Magazine* to *Socialism and Democracy*: what is the situation of the Left, and its proper strategy and response, post 9-1-1?

First we must consider what the response has been so far, and this response is one of capitalisation from the event, of the event, in the event itself and post-event, already re-writing the event to suit the profit made. And the techniques that have been used to capitalise, to profit—these are the strategies of the market, of marketeering, of advertising: the control of propaganda-information, the ghostly remnant of knowledge. The purchase of satellite images of Afghanistan by the US Government; the latest book by Chomsky, already published, on the crisis. And so what do we mean—a question we shall return to time and time again—when we say, “to capitalize”?

“To capitalise” on an event is to make use of it, to profit from it, to take advantage of it, and the Left's preconceptions of the word is one of suspicion if not downright dislike. Rhetorical imagery of greedy, money-hungry corporations—*capitalists*—dominates as the predominant iconography, the violent symbols that plunder and profit once again from a situation that negatively affects others; and so despite the economic downturn, every corporation, media outlet, and entrepreneur is trying to find ways to make money from all the possible spin-offs surrounding 9-11: it certainly is a good day to be an arms supplier, biotech company, fervent journalist, or a political commentator with a patriotic and strong, manly voice. And the situation keeps all sides employed. The Left, too, capitalises. It would be ridiculous to think that the Left doesn't, or hasn't: to take advantage of a situation, to turn the situation around to suit one's own goals and aspirations—this has traditionally been the process of inciting the masses toward revolution, or at least attempting to lift the wool from their eyes and drag them out of the silent shadows, and this sense of *carpe diem* is not lost on many groups that resist global capital—as well as those that support it, for September 11<sup>th</sup> becomes a justification and an excuse for all kinds of government repression as well as dissident action.<sup>1</sup> The question becomes one of *how* various aspects of “the Left” can make use of the situation to its advantage, and whether or not this is for the “common good” is at times somewhat irrelevant, for 9-1-1 is a catalyst which the enzymes are busily squabbling over. The common Leftist response to the situation, as observed on email lists, in articles, and in general activist discussion,<sup>2</sup> is that of an increased call for “solidarity.” The Pack must be reaffirmed, the group ego stroked, sympathies confirmed through allegiance (patriotic flag waving, “national outpourings of grief;” the rush for cohesive dissident protest). 9-11 solidified the masses together, into what some call “solidarity,” i.e. 9-1-1 re-ordered the masses into inertia, it slowed them down into the stasis of entropy, complacency, acceptable terror, fear, and rage. A reordering that divided the masses more sharply, as—just like various Left groups—new, restrengthened contingents of White Supremacists, Patriots, Conservatives, Right-Wing Christians, and paramilitary groups have scrambled to increase their numbers and strength from interpreting 9-11 to their advantage.<sup>3</sup> Solidarity knows no partisan politics: it is found on the Right and the Left and through the Centre, with various positionings and alliances

restratifying the political landscape at an incredible rate, resulting in the most incredulous bedfellows (Right-wing Militias join the call of the Left and of Anarchists denouncing the Anti-Terrorism Act; Planned Parenthood joins many moderate, anti-abortion Christians in denouncing Jerry Falwell's remarks, etc.).

With every group sounding their bugles, the echoes become indistinguishable from across the valley. Cacophony: 9-11 is already an advertising war, as the White House has already shown in the hiring of Madison Avenue executives<sup>4</sup> to unfold their unsurprisingly unconvincing message of "hospitality" to the war-torn Afghan people. It's a postmodern Old West rhetoric: President Bush makes allusion to Wanted Posters for the bad guys (Wanted: Evil), and at the last moment, the Sheriff rides into town to save the day—with a megaphone, telling the starving population everything will be A-OK, while scouting the next bomb target. The strategy—indeed we are dealing with what Virilio calls *logistics*—is a double-blind, a feedback loop of advertising designed to comfort the sender, the receiver, and the onlooker (the feedback loop quickly disseminates these positions once it has been set in motion, for we are dealing with an economy of entropy, consisting of inertia and chaos). The very presence of an advertising agency exists only to convince the US masses that there *is* an effort to convince the Afghan people. And of what? Derrida's question of hospitality to the other is sold and bought: it is not a question of a hospitality of the hearth and the home, the risk of friendship, it is only of convincing the masses that the Afghans *are* being given the *semblance* of hospitality (and not even "real" hospitality itself, which has long since disappeared from the relation between the US government and its people: indeed, all the masses can recognize and believe in is this *semblance*). It is an ontological logistics: the Afghans *are getting the message* (loud and clear, no doubt). The semblance of hospitality is its only official and (in)visible form today, and it is this mirrored spectre that operates consumer culture, propelled by the embracing warmth of *target-advertising*. Taking McLuhan and Baudrillard a step farther, target-advertising in itself is its own message, irregardless of the actual message itself: it simulates the warmth of hospitality (how nice that they thought of me!), and in doing so promotes itself with warm fuzzies. Target-advertising speaks the language of the *image* of capitalist-democracy: *look, even the Afghans are good enough for advertising!* ...it's the perfect *target audience*, for how do the advertising executives measure their success with the Afghan people? Is it projected as a flow-chart decrease in US flag-burning quotas? Not at all: the goal is not to convince the Afghans, but to convince the US itself, to feed the US's self-gratifying thirst to know that it is always in the Right.

Target-advertising itself collapses as its own justification is advertising—for what is being advertised? Nothing. Usually there is a product: here there is none. If not a product, there is a lifestyle: here there is none, at least for the Afghani people. Usually there is an invitation: buy this, and be like this...once again, the simulated warmth of hospitality comes from no actual flame. For the Afghans, there is nothing to buy, nothing to live through this model of Western propaganda; the message bounces back from Afghanistan intact, and impacts the American people, which was the real target all along. What the Afghans see—indeed, if they see or actually hear anything at all outside the din of slaughter—is once again propaganda aimed to sell the image of their compliance to the West, be it in pictures of the injured, the rebellious, the grieving, or the agreeing. They realise this quite perfectly,

whether they actually see the US media/government propaganda or not: they harbour their resentment at having their image traded for bombs, which leads us to the crises we now face: the Other never ceases to reinterpret and subvert the intended message. Hence it only truly makes sense to the sender, in that the sender always interprets it as making sense for them. We see our own reflection everywhere we look. “Smart Advertising:” propaganda has resurfaced its head in a rather overt form, although now it combines with an entirely new neo-liberal, global-capitalist outlook. After Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, we will employ the term *Empire* in order to begin to understand the deterritorializing process of the New World Order in the global control of capital, of flows and blockages, territory, of all information, of history itself and the constructed mechanisms of time and ontology that proclaim Empire as the always already present, the immanence of existence that justifies itself through advertising. “Empire” explodes the ceaseless Marxist debates<sup>5</sup> on theories of the “State”—or theoretical lack thereof—by considering the current, practical signs of the emergence of Empire that simultaneously construct its evolving theoretical framework: Empire is process, it is hatching, creating itself as we speak.

In Empire, advertising itself has moved from purely saying, “I consume, I buy” to “We Are Concerned.” Target-advertising: it’s a carefully constructed ethico-political social imperative that instigates a feeling that this is the *instinctually* right response. The advertising itself was instinctually created—such is the contradictory construction of Empire. The US people learn to feel concerned, and most importantly, *they believe that the Afghans feel the West’s concern* (the Afghans of course feel no real concern from the West nor for it: they have lived too much already). The subtext is not that of buying an external product and the happiness and social pressure attached to it—the lifestyle of consumerism—but rather the message itself, the message that says: look, we are advertising to the Afghans; *and this makes us good, and yes, they believe us*. The ads are worth more than real food aid to the American public, because they are self-comforting, self-reflexive, a feedback (baby feeds itself pablum), they offer their own ethico-imperatives and simulated justifications that make it feel just so right. Advertising becomes its own propaganda, it advertises its own presence, promotes itself, its *ways*, it is a self-justifying medium that promotes itself as the elixir of the world’s ills: it is the image of neo-capitalist democracy, what we feel, hear, and taste daily as democracy. Advertising has replaced Western conscience: if we can convince the Afghan people that we are only trying to help them through bombing them—that does not even so much matter, all that matters is that we feel convinced in our conviction that *they believe we are helping—then we have convinced ourselves that we are trying to convince them*. Advertising takes on a pivotal role, and yet one that is almost invisible, for we barely recognize it as such, disguised as it is as truth or scandal: be it from the government, the laws, press releases, media. And yet the advertising behind the truth is not a lie: it is the depth of the truth itself, the very carrier of that truth, the medium and the message. As advertising collapses propaganda and consumerism and identity politics as one form, the instinctual ethico-imperative, one medium, one content, it reaffirms its patriotic and complete part in Western custom and society. To not advertise to the Afghani people would be improper, would really be denying their humanity (we would not be able to bear it). “Propaganda becomes the marketing and merchandise of idea-forces, of political men and parties... propaganda approaches advertising ... This convergence defines a society—ours—in which

there is no longer any difference between the economic and the political...” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* 88).

It's a rat race to convince—the people? the masses? the Afghans? the enemy? terrorists?—basically *ourselves* that *our* interpretation and, therefore, cause and struggle, are the right and correct ones, the only ones, the ones backed by force—the bombs—and even by the medium-message itself, the advertisement and the act of advertising, perhaps one of the only things which must be made very clear to distinguish the West from the terrorists: we're in the right not because we've got democracy or the bombs, but because we've got a message-medium, advertising, while the terrorists have for all purposes remained silent. It's a refusal to play each other's game, just as Baudrillard noted after the Gulf War,<sup>6</sup> but it is also an unbalanced game (the so-called “level playing field”) where the dominance of technology—and all that implies, its essence, its becoming, its power, its *ways* of enforcing, or enframing, these ontologies and ethics—is on the side of Empire. The problem is, Empire resides on no “side.” As Hardt and Negri make clear, the US is the primary actor of Empire, but not Empire itself. Empire is a network, a set of responses and movements that we are just beginning to witness: the fall of constitutions in all Western countries, the acceptance of a US-backed world police force, the unleashing of global market capitalism on all corners of the Earth no matter what the consequences. We are all Empire.

The similarities, prescient now, to the Gulf War. Here once again, the same situation: the Americans bomb from afar, the Taliban fight from caves, retreat beyond borders; the Americans fight with advertising in an effort to convince themselves that they are doing the right thing. The difference this time since the Gulf War? That destruction has occurred on American soil: herein lies the key difference, as Michael Albert notes. But stemming from this *nouveau* attack is a *nouveau* logistics of informaiton: Target-Advertising is the safety blanket that America needs to sleep at night: for now there is real cause for nightmares.

And so in the game of capitalisation, the Left plays well alongside the Right: both trying to comfort themselves (hardly each other, this does not matter) that they are right through the technology of targeted advertising. Everyone calling their own number (is it busy?). And above all, everyone trying to reassure themselves that the Afghanis understand their good faith and intent—be it killing them or saving them.

(Yet of course the terrorists have not remained silent. But do we really hear them, with our ears to the cell-phone, our eyes to the ground, then to the air (watching out for terrorism from above or below) when they call not through the wire, but with the violence of fire?)

### **Target Strategies: Advertising Advice, Or Blowing Up On Stage**

Michael Albert and Stephen R. Shalom's article “September 11 And Its Aftermath,” written for the October issue of *Z Magazine*—which was published soon after the events of September 11th—poses the question “What should progressives do?” Their answer is:

Change depends on organized resistance that raises awareness and commitment. It depends on pressuring decision makers to respect the will of a public with dissident and critical views. Our immediate task is to communicate accurate information, to counter misconceptions and illogic, to empathize and be on the wavelength of the public, to talk and listen, to offer information, analysis, and humane aims. (8)

A very carefully worded statement. There is no talk of violent resistance here to a capitalist State. What is prescribed is a middle-of-the-road approach that the average businessman would certainly approve: pressure those in power, encourage views similar to your own by countering those of the opposition, agree with the public in order to make yourself popular, make sure to listen, offer your views when the situation is timely, and somewhat hope for the moment when some form of class consciousness—mass agreement to a mass message—takes shape. The latter would finally relieve dissidents of their present minority status, allow them to say that they actually *do* speak for the majority of the population, thereby truly allowing them to lobby the government “in the name of the people.” This is the standard strategy of most lobby groups (which begs the question: has the Left been relegated to a simple *lobby group*?). What is said here also makes a strong claim about change, about what must be done, which is nothing short of a massive education project: “awareness” must be raised: it has sunk to subterranean levels—it hides in caves—and once elevated, it must be attuned toward a commitment, all of which must be carefully organised and planned, a concerted product advertising campaign.

It is, of course, perhaps all that *can* be said at this given moment, due to the political climate—advocating a stronger resistance could be deigned terrorism—and considering that *Z Magazine* is usually the voice of the “liberal Left.” The model being proposed here—that of playing the fair, rational fight, essentially attempting to revamp the Enlightenment project with some new bells and whistles—is still the dominant model of our times: it’s Marxist class consciousness with a rational pop-image, it’s lobbying and explanations and logical arguments and sympathy and organised altruism: it’s a well constructed, orchestrated advertising campaign.

*This* ad campaign falls apart in the real market. The market share of the Left is not growing, it is in recession. The advice offered by Albert and Shalom fails in the eyes of a more experienced businessman, who would say to play dirty, to take out the opposition, to run smear campaigns, to fight with the gloves off. And certainly the frustration felt by the Left, knowing that their protests do little in the scheme of things, that their commentary goes unnoticed and fails to influence policy, tends to direct more militant members to conduct their politics on the “level playing field,” i.e. the plane of dirty war that business and government operates upon. This is a contradictory playing field, one that is certainly not operating on one plane nor on one level: its semantics and symbolic systems are constantly devouring each other in a rat-race of fierce competition; and ironically it is the dirtiest moves—as Baudrillard notes, the Gulf War was a dirty war that was a clean war, a dirty, backstabbing, “war” that never happened with a “clean” façade of “clean” technology and “clean” intentions—that ensure the system’s stability. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt understand this in *Empire*: the contradictoriness of Empire only serves to

strengthen it: “We should not expect that the complexity of the processes that construct the new imperial relationship of right be resolved. On the contrary, the process are and will remain contradictory” (20). The more Empire spurns the tension of crisis, the potential of war, of massacre, of genocide, the more it is revered and thanked for stepping in to mop up—usually with murderous violence—the situation it helped to create. To learn from this model: the experienced businessman knows that advertising is not everything and yet everything depends on advertising. Negri and Hardt realise that despite the ever-growing power of Empire, there are cracks in its façade, and its contradictions that in the same move serve to strengthen its might also serve to weaken it, to potentially offer the means to disassemble the global capitalist project. And so advertising is everything and nothing: it strengthens and dissolves, it connives and convinces as the invisible hand of propaganda while at the same time laying itself bare for continuous reinterpretation and even possible subversion. But does it truly offer opportunity for resistance? Even Hardt and Negri quote Holderlin: “But where danger is, grows / The saving power also...” Is there saving power in propaganda? How uncanny to return to Heidegger...

Dirty advertising scores points that are not measurable: influencing the movement of the masses is beyond the realm of science and numerology. It is an art: it has vast social consequences that can only be observed in the memory and traces of society and consciousness, the movements that comprise the missing corpse of history, movements which are immediately reconfigured by the same forces—reinterpreted for power struggles, as 9-1-1 is now (even the missing corpse is defaced: its memory, which is all it ever was, is perverted). This is a dirty war that advertises a clean face and it is impossible to fight with righteous statements and clean analysis, or advertising firms and propaganda, both which amount to the same thing.

It is perhaps good to know that in some ways the “Left” in its various forms doesn't want to play the bloody role on the playing field, at least not any longer. The Left has learnt from this role, as every time it plays the game it loses, both in the moment—becoming a tyranny, the dictatorship that follows the revolution—and in history—being remembered, perhaps perverted—as despotical. Yet, the caveat: the Left cannot help play the game of propaganda and advertising, of spewing information into the void to collapse meaning, to spurn violence and reconstruct Empire (in its own image: the image of Empire is a mirror). This is all it knows how to do, this is how it was raised, with the primal scene—it's own perverted corpse—of public presence, of information spewing forth to change the minds of the masses, in its lonesome head.

Surely, you say, the techniques used by the Left and the jingoism of the Right, the militarists, the Government, Empire itself—surely, there must be a difference. Is there not an ethical standard that separates the backroom corporate strategies of the multinational corporation and the autonomous, dehierarchized Leftist-Group? Something that would separate the capitalising of the Left and the capitalising of the Capitalists, draw a line, mark a boundary between different types of propaganda? After all, isn't the Left *right* and the Right *wrong*, and essentially what matters is not the medium but the intent, the content, the message?



## Running On Entropy—Medium, Message, Milieu

I. The Medium Is Not The Message. Let us assume, for a moment, that the medium is not the message, and that there is a chance of drawing lines in the sand to distinguish between what the Left's message is and everyone else's without paying attention to the medium. This is very difficult; for the cry of the Left asserts immediately that what the Right asserts as incontrovertible Fact is propaganda (the other side, of course, claims the same). So we must put that aside and analyse all information as content and factual, whether it comes from the Right, the Left, the government, or the Coca-Cola corporation. (In some ways, we are doing the work of a particular strain of Genre Theory.) Is this how we will change people's minds, with balancing these pure facts? For it is obvious that one or both sides will lie, and the game becomes one of proving the other wrong and convincing the undecided other that the side in question is right. This is, of course, propaganda, but we cannot consider it as such, for these are arguments of content without consideration to the medium. To claim this approach is to say that it is of no consequence whether the information appears on a brochure or a TV; that the delivery does not affect the preparation of the material. To want to play this game would result in the most unbelievably naïve losses, as the other side realises and uses the power of object symbolism, lifestyle association, and memory triggers of rhetoric, advertising and propaganda, while the truthfully vain voice of the rationalist is ridiculed by well-aimed ironic TV ads—after all, wouldn't you rather have that new VW Bug than the Revolution?

Still: is it not possible to realise and understand the role of the message without saying that it irrevocably changes the nature of the content, that the two are not intertwined beyond unraveling? Sure: show the content without a medium first. Then we can start.

What we have is a screaming match, and an impossible one at that. An ethico-imperative that does not notice that it is screaming, that simply cannot. It is deaf and blind.

II. The Medium Is The Message. In this scenario, both are intertwined, as are Baudrillard and McLuhan. Does this mean that the Left should stop using the popular methods of communication? That TV interviews are out? Not necessarily: perhaps what needs to be investigated is the *way* this medium/message is being used. For where the saving power grows in the heart of danger, there are different *ways*, as Heidegger reminds us.<sup>7</sup> These *ways* must be investigated in the heart of what threatens humanity and the globe: advertising, propaganda, information (and no matter which political "side" they come from). The essence of technology has revealed itself, in one aspect, as the ability to communicate the mirror of our own excrement back to us as a desirable object and lifestyle: this is advertising, propaganda, so-called "information." September 11<sup>th</sup> changed the nature of propaganda and advertising, it comprehensively furthered its use as a comfort tool of the civilizing force of war in the construction of Empire. Advertising has dehumanized the West to the point where, in a gesture that is at once calculatedly cruel and yet also naively compassionate, we outreach with what has sold us our only sense of life, liberty, and happiness—advertising—thereby dehumanizing the other with same act we use to re-dehumanize ourselves, "rehumanizing" with the dehumanization of advertising.

We give them what destroyed us. Like a drug addict: we think it might make them feel better. It certainly makes us feel better.

Things fall apart, things collapse: the whirling centre is strangely pleasurable, a strange attractor, magnetic force. Advertising and information are no longer separate; not only have information and knowledge collapsed, but all communication into its medium: “communication” is the tagline that advertising uses to sell itself, its own medium. The battle we are facing pertains to Heidegger’s question of technology: advertising, as an advent of a technological medium, has become the medium itself; it can be seen as a visible occurrence, or gesture, of the essence of technology as enframing—an overdetermined modality of Being that orders all into master/slave relationships, where every Being considers the Other as a slave. The trick is that everyone is a slave in this narrow model, or *way*, of existence. The technological medium is more than simply technology; as its essence, it has invaded our very *way* of existence. Advertising is an enframing of information, it renders all information useless, immediately casts it as advertising, as Baudrillard notes, it collapses information upon itself into nothingness, into the medium. Information and advertising are supposedly modes of “communication,” i.e. the motility of technology mixed with consciousness, but the imperative of enframing has forced them into a slave mode of ontology, a way of being centred upon capitalist consumption. The motility of technology is actually stasis. This contradictory coupling is the premise of Empire, and theoretically, of entropy. The globalization of stasis is comprised of elements of both inertia—the ordering of all things, in an entropic system, into inert rows, what Heidegger called “standing reserve”—and chaos, the free radical milieu of all milieus. The contradiction is the crack in Empire that founds it and weakens it.

### **Solidarity and Silence**

“The medium is important to the message we are trying to convey”—the sentence is technically impossible in light of McLuhan, but one that we must still enunciate clearly. A different medium will coerce a different message: paying attention to the one to decipher the other will yield the motility of the two, the energy where the cracks in Empire might be opened.

A sense of what we are doing is right, then, is *not* all we have to go on. “Rightness” is a fairly weak ethical imperative, it is Nietzsche’s “intuition” that he so strongly denounces as the herd mentality<sup>8</sup>—and not only that, it is the imperative that must be denounced, for the imperative is the command of advertising, of capitalist society: the imperative is the collapse of intuition into reason, or Faith into Knowledge, and the implosion of the two is the repackaging of excrement as desire. There is more to it than just the facts and the straight lace arguments and the clear attempts to convince the masses. And there is more to than the manicured TV personalities, polished press conferences, and manufactured government consent; for what September 11<sup>th</sup> has hastened is the implosion of rhetoric and information in the creation of Empire. When positing resistance, we must take this into consideration, otherwise it’s just another imperative, another dictum, another command to

be obeyed or to rebel against, which is essentially another ad, another selling strategy, a further ordering and restricting of the frame of becoming. And beyond: there's more to it than collapse and implosion, as we shall see. All of this certainly causes some pressure to counter the group depression that one faces after fighting and struggling for so long with little success. 9-11 is a pivotal psychological moment: it opens the doors to a new group psychology, a focused struggle, it reopens the doors to liberationary sentiment, and it once again brings the question back to solidarity. And what is solidarity, now? Is it group cohesion or group coercion? Expressing solidarity is the medium's medium. If it contains a message, it is only one of agreement despite real disagreement (in times of crises, the Marxists march "in solidarity" with groups they normally despise). A union of ideas between members of a group—the traditional definition of solidarity—was a hopeless sentimental speculation of the imperative mind. Solidarity is an overdetermined production of centrifugal locality which, despite its apparent internationalist tendencies, ends up only reinforcing chasms and breaks that produce finger-pointing between various Left groups on the global stage rather than bringing them to productive dialogue. "The Leftist strategy of resistance to globalization and defence of locality is also damaging because in many places what appear as local identities are not autonomous or self-determining but actually feed into and support the development of the capitalist imperialist machine" (Hardt and Negri 45).<sup>9</sup> Hardt and Negri still employ the term "solidarity," but they begin to radically alter the concept: "...the time of such proletarian internationalism is over" (50). Given the distinct link made between the pointlessness of simply fighting for the local *contra* the global—a fight that embraces secluded solidarities—the notion of international, networked solidarity is an oxymoron: a network implies a multiplicity of *ways*, not unions.

Solidarity is a jingoism, a cry that, much like "comrade," is stale, ineffectual, and worse, an imperative: a tool to bring into line disparate elements, dissident elements, of any group, to maintain the group's whole, its control, shape, destiny. This destroys the group's parts and destroys the group itself: solidarity enforces a vertical structure under its transcendental inertia. Solidarity destroys the possibility of discovering different *ways* (it destroys all *Wills*): despite that it seems the most effective way to explore horizontal arrangements, it essentially repackages group warmth into a vertical shutdown of dissidence. It enforces the group into following a singular, narrow path (and with a general sweep of the hand: this is one of the keys to the current demise and confusion of the Left).<sup>10</sup> Acting with purpose, and as a heterogeneous group—yes. Solidarity—no. Solidarity silences. "To achieve any understanding of social groups, one must get rid of one kind of rationalist-positivist vision of the individual (and of history)" (Guattari, "The Group And The Person" 35)—and in doing so, one must explore the possibility of different group arrangements. Guattari offers one, as far back as 1964 from his work at the La Borde clinic—the idea of *transversality*, a group structure opposed to both verticality (leaders, assistants, etc.) and horizontality (a forced kind of solidarity, "as it exists in the disturbed wards of a hospital, or, even more, in the senile wards; in other words a state of affairs in which things and people fit in as best they can with the situation in which they find themselves" ("Transversality" 17)). Such an organisation—organisation is even the wrong word—requires nothing short of an entire un-ordering of the group, so people become aware of everyone's role in the functioning of the group, for, "So long as people remain fixated on themselves, they never see anything *but* themselves" (18). Combine

transversality with the creation of Hakim Bey's anterior economic and cultural networks<sup>11</sup>—the Temporary and Permanent Autonomous Zones—and you have the beginnings of alternative ways of group operation and resistance to Empire: within society, and yet weeding its way out of it. But our task here is not to elucidate in detail the possibilities that exist (for this is only one of many).<sup>12</sup> It is, however, our task to elucidate the position of the Left today in relation to 9-1-1, what 9-1-1 has dealt the Left, and what the Left has dealt 9-1-1: the “State” of the Left, if you will, its clichés and its responses, its cracks and deformations.

### **The Horizon of Advertising, The Black Hole of Information: Imperfect Implosion**

9-11 is an event—and continues to be an event, its horizon is shrinking but never-ending—that draws people in, upon themselves, once again brings talk of solidarity in all quarters, on all sides, and these combinatory forces and group actions construct 9-11 as an implosion, a magnetic force that brings every voice, as a group, to the cacophonous ensemble. And yet the cacophony is strangely silent: in the wake of solidarity, there is essentially only one voice, and that voice strengthens Empire. Already Empire has projected time in eddies and backwaters, organising the forever moment of the present as the always-is, rewriting its own history to continually restage the present. Solidarity buys directly into this strategy: Empire requires the solidarity of its dissidents, to pinpoint with GPS accuracy their position for obliteration, or careful cultivation—in order to maintain a little order through a constant enemy, and to regulate tension through a pressure valve, a strategy of containment through Bakhtinian Carnival. The Left's general assumption is that solidarity is a good thing, that the compacted forces of the unionized group will explode with real change, obviously in favour of the particular agenda in question. But solidarity only hastens the formation of Empire and offers little possibility for resistance, for it is the medium of all resistance that plays by the rules of Empire.

The dream is essentially the same, no matter what the politics: the lower classes will gain consciousness and overthrow or vote out or pressure the capitalist oppressors...or, to rewrite the same equation with different variables: the Whites will unite against the dark-skinned harbourers of terror, the Patriots will realise their righteous power and domination of the world, the neoliberals will finally be able to write, solely on their own terms, The End of History... eradicate all opposition once and for all...a grand ending of the Other: nuking all enemies, atomic annihilation, and taken *ensemble*, Mutually Assured Destruction. As MAD is unlikely and yet always so close—all sides desire it in the Spectacle—the dreams of domination through solidarity embrace every position, every dream an apocalyptic utopia of masochism. The dreams come pouring forth, every meeting of activists, Right or Left, an outpouring glut of swirling unified views of solidarity, overproducing meaning and regenerating the proliferation of signs that construct the implosive force of Empire.

Packets and streams of media, information, interpretations, truths and lies that offer themselves interchangeably—depending on whose camp you happen to be in (each one struggling to win)—and all amount to advertising, Target Advertising, propaganda, as the

silence of solidarity, all swirling on the horizon of the event itself, which has already disappeared off the radar in the fog of meaningless (re)interpretation, if it ever actually registered. The struggle has already begun to reanalyse and recreate the original event, to advertise “history,” in a desperate attempt to lay claim to “discovering” the true, factual version of the origin (the original advertisement). And out of all of this comes not an explosion—what every group seems to desire—but what Baudrillard would call a black hole, the implosive pit of information where meaning collapses, the silent cacophony of the ad campaign. “Advertising, therefore, like information: destroyer of intensities, accelerator of inertia” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 92). The more information—which is all advertising at this point, interchangeable/combinatorial—the less we are able to understand (the) matter, the more inertia the entire system (de)generates, slows down and reverses, back in, the implosive force.

It is difficult to say to whose advantage an implosion amounts to. It is the grand big zero of the nothing of solidarity. It is, in the traditional sense, a crushing defeat for everyone, for it is not what they expected: neoliberal and left rhetoric and all the others amount to nothing. No Revolution. Nihilism is *not* present at last: no explosions, no gratification, just endless crushing violence of a different sort that constitutes the behemoth of Empire in its structural, political, and ontological formations. Desire is thwarted into the everlasting now of Empire, for Empire is the magnet of historical solidarity: it requires it, it thirsts it, and it thrives upon its contradictions by advertising its own history that begins with itself.

However: Baudrillard's vision of the perfect implosion has not happened, and most probably will not. Not because information-advertising actually increases our knowledge, but because the entropic system is never purely closed. Entropy never purely degenerates: it is both implosive destiny—the perfect inert state of Zerowork<sup>13</sup> on the one hand, the ordering of standing-reserve on the other—and chaos, the milieu of milieus and the harbinger of intensities. Never perfectly circular, never perfectly operating at the same speed in all quarters, the entropic system, like any model, is more perfect than the simulation we call the real—and therefore never purely entropic—contradicting its own inherent contradictions—by dint of its malleability. Inertia/energy, implosion/explosion, inside/outside: in Baudrillard, despite the positing of an overdetermining implosive force, the centric fantasy of the implosive model reconstructs all the old binaries that should have collapsed. The binaries continue to reconstruct a landscape that theoretically deconstructs itself through its glut of intensity-destroying hyperinformation, *thereby positing the possibility for resistance beyond the sheer force of implosion*: the quasar, the supernova, the wormhole, and what passes through the highest point of reverse-intensity: the white hole. Instances of cracks at the heart of Empire that prove the possibility of multiplicities and intensities that defy Baudrillard's centric and flattening meaning implosion.

## **Multiplicities of Resistance: *Ways at the Heart of Empire***

To act then, to act upon 9-11. What *other ways* are there to reinterpret 9-1-1?

The language I am using here attempts to describe two observations. 1. In accordance with Baudrillard, an overabundance of information/advertising, as the dominant paradigm, or masquerade, of communication and knowledge, depletes, if not actually lessens, the general consciousness, or knowledge, of the masses. This results in a general inertia of the system—the inert destined ordering of entropy—making the possibility of an explosive revolution dim, that is, at one level—at the level where we search for truth, where a glut *is* a glut, a threat to a previous system that requires explosive tactics. And what is this system? A system that gave us capitalism and socialism, that promised truths and utopias. The socialist and the capitalist revolutions are over as we enter the continuous implosion of Empire. The systems that claimed explosion created implosion (they wanted the chaos of entropy, secretly, the explosion: but they were given overdetermined inertia).<sup>14</sup> They lied: it was false advertising. 2. Working on different levels—we might say plateaus—are random explosions (that have never been wholly explosive, by their very nature as *explosive*), seemingly oblivious to an implosive movement and yet wholly aware of the entire global situation: such was the violent explosion of 9-11 that hastened the rise of Empire, quickened the pace of the general implosion toward the *now* of solidarity. The Arab terrorist undoubtedly understands the global impact of US Foreign policy far better than the US public—it killed their friends and family. And yet the Arab terrorist does not understand that their explosive act plays directly into the hands of Empire, that it reinforces and reintroduces (with much fanfare) the US's role as the world's policeman responding to the barbarian threat. Qualification: to a degree—there is always the nomad on the border who threatens the city. But in this case, the city has grown to such a size that territory no longer matters (the nomad is in the city, and the city is in him: this is where we are, as urbanized intellectual dissidents). Virilio began to see this in his analysis of speed and the *polis* as Pure War;<sup>15</sup> under Empire, territory is deterritorialized, and its conquest is no longer necessary to exert power; what matters is the control—never absolute—of flows and blockages.<sup>16</sup> The maintenance of this control is called Peace; and the process is Pure War. Underlying these logistics of Empire is the crushing, imperfect implosion: the state of the State is multi-layered, and is neither purely implosion nor purely Pure War: Empire is the violent media/tion between these plateaus: it is the lockstep anti-rhythm. "...there is nothing less rhythmic than a military march" (Deleuze and Guattari 313).

As Baudrillard also mentions, there is the unconscious yet destructive and unpredictable movement of the implosive masses, like a brute herd that acts with its weight, driven not by a sudden epiphany of class consciousness but by a herd mentality—intuition/imperative/counter-imperative—responding maliciously, viciously, childlike, to the call of hyperinformation, reinterpreting it in ways not foreseeable by the masters of Empire.<sup>17</sup> In saying this Baudrillard seems to place a perverse faith in Nietzsche's herd. Although the salvatory prospects of the herd are dim—and who would want to be *saved*, anyway, by a *herd*?—the possibilities for repossessing, reinterpreting—stealing even—the techniques and strategies of the herd are tantamount to the staging of resistance to Empire: respond with perverse numbers to the call of advertising, so much that the result is crushing; such is

the strategy of electronic hacktivism when it crashes a corporate website with multiple and continuous pings... A subverted, jammed version of Baudrillard's Beauborg scenario. The subversion of the implosion and its herd mentality amounts to an unbalanced scenario: this implosive movement is ridden with minor explosions that are carried along in the tide, orbited by those caught in the event horizon. The implosion is lopsided: at some points it is not even imploding at all, and yet at every point where the tide seems to turn away from the black hole, in a definitive, explosive movement outwards—the terrorist attack of 9-1-1 itself was such a moment—*the moment of explosive turning only hastens the implosion*: this is the lesson of 9-1-1 that must be understood. The movement of the explosion equates a furthering of the implosion.

At the same time—always, all over—there are other movements, within the same explosive movements, or outside them—it is the same, for here the binaries deconstruct into intensities and inertias, multiplicities of rhythms, they transcode or flip from one to the other, perform the opposite operations simultaneously. Movements neither traditionally explosive nor implosive, orbiting on the event horizon like the ship in *The Black Hole* (dreaming the possibility of escape...the cyborg dream...). The possibility of stable subversion. We might call this the possibility of the anterior network, the fold between the map and reality (or the map and the map), what Hakim Bey sees as the possibility for the Temporary Autonomous Zone, the ontology of Harroway's cyborg, an opening of ontology in general to embrace *ways of becoming*. I think more attention needs to be paid to this possibility of the fold—instead of the *turn*—and its potential, in both practical, theoretical, economic, and ontological spheres, as well as ways to take the initiative to fold the map, the simulation, and “reality” ourselves. We must realise that solidarity coalesces resistance into stasis, *turns* it inwards to implosion. The exploration of folding initiatives is autonomous and rhizomatic, and although chaotic disorganisation can manifest ineffectively when faced with the policing function of Empire, it allows the strongest of intensities to burst forth—an intensity that is an explosive movement that, although it may hasten the implosionary collapse of Empire, also reconfigures the possibilities for orbit. We must take to heart Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri when they say

The deterritorializing power of the multitude is the productive force that sustains Empire and at the same time the force that calls for and makes necessary its destruction. (61)

The question now shifts from “What is the position of the Left?” to “How does one stage its various and continuous immanent intensities? How does one transcode intensity to orbit?” This is not a question of converting the Revolutionary power to the construction of the State, for an orbit is an autonomy, not a destiny, and the process of transcoding is an intensity, not a violent overthrowing. This is beyond most Marxism, it frightens Marxism because of its deep nihilism and commitment to a deconstructive strategy and ontology without a determinist vision of the future—yet it still offers, according to Hardt and Negri, a constructive ethico-political element. The limit of the constructive element is the limit of Hardt and Negri's resistance to Empire. This limit is found in their continuous search for a “centre” to an internationalist movement,<sup>18</sup> something which is structurally beyond their search for a “common sense of direction” (65). Whereas a common sense of direction can

question the need for direction at all—indeed position itself as orbit, instead of a direction—the positing of a necessity of a “centre” predetermines the possibility of the question: the structural centre is the medium of hierarchy. Ironically, Hardt and Negri end up agreeing, at this very brief point, with Jessica Helfand on the seeming necessity of a hierarchical centre, and it haunts their thought as the centre of Enlightenment humanism. Helfand, in her analysis of New Media, sees the current decentralizing trends of information distribution as dangerous in a Baudrillardian manner, but her critique returns to the idea of hierarchy as the saving grace—much as we will find McKibben will do in *Adbusters*.

With technology comes decentralized power and with it, greater personal freedom and enhanced choice. That such decentralization also subverts the sorts of hierarchies that previously led to deeper and more enlightened understanding is perhaps a greater loss to modern civilization than any of us care to acknowledge. (Helfand, “Dynamics of Choice” 89).

Deeper-Enlightened-Modern-Civilization: Hardt and Negri do not fall into this trap, and their quest for a centre is an honest attempt to coalesce a decentralized network of resistance into an internationalist project that works *within* the contradictions of hierarchy and deterritorialization rather than simply attempting to combat these constructing cracks in Empire from some imaginary outside. But there are other ways beyond centrism and hierarchy on the one hand, and communal, collective decision-making on the other. A deconstructive approach is a *topos* that energetically responds with the space for an affirmative life.

It *means* nothing. We are past the question. It only provides the background for restaging the question of capitalising from 9-11.

Various explosions continue to occur, violence rears once again, liberatory forces move with surprising speed. And at 9-11, the implosive force is apparently checked, like the Viking Berserker who held back the entire Saxon army at Stamford Bridge in 1066: frozen, to act and think, for one instant, by the ubiquitous terror of terror. Frightened, angry, lashing out, we are somewhere in the middle between explosion and implosion, not quite entropy, not quite stasis. And hovering as we are on the event horizon, ironically captive (but only for a few moments!) by the spectre of terror, therein lies the opportunity to turn the tide, not in or out, but through, to maintain the horizon itself, to set up a stable orbit, what Deleuze would call a “smooth space,” a moment for possibility, the TAZ, a way out that is in—while the rest head toward the implosion with their silent calls for solidarity. The position of the Left should be to realise that, under the auspices of Empire, the time has come not to solidaritize (in the jingoistic sense), advertise, or propagandize, but to investigate the possibilities of the *fold*—the anterior network, the orbit, the decentralized network—and the *art (technē) of folding*.



### Capitalists All: Folding—Case Study of Cultural Jam (Sticking / Subverting)

Seizing the moment then—as it is fleeting—joins all spectrums to the tune of capitalising upon it: yet is there a different *way* to subvert the propaganda of capitalisation while still affecting the dominant technologies? A prime example of such a “group,” on the “Left,” that considers the benefits of “capitalising” from the subversion of a situation is RTMark.com, the culture jammer and hacktivist mecca of the Net that proudly claims itself a “corporation” dealing in “cultural capital”—not in profits of the monetary sort but of all the stuff that makes up this nebulous thing we call “culture,” so peculiar and present to humanity—art and resistance and emotion and pleasure, and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of justice, equality, and fairness beyond the Law: the apparent ties of the social that provide the boundaries for the aesthetic to surpass, ironically operating “within” the realm of the virtual (Baudrillard’s implosion of the social is checked—briefly—by the virtually social). RTMark.com compiles and organises the majority of culture jam projects, from Negativland’s musical appropriations in protest of corporate copyright to online e-activism, public advertising “jamming” and all kinds of creative counter-corporate projects. Culture jamming is always somewhat the “work of the moment,” and although taking inspirations from the Situationist ideas of *detournement*, culture jamming embraces a sense of irony and fatalism, even hedonistic Spectacle itself, that is at odds to Debord’s calls for sobriety and objective disruption from the non-Spectacular outside. In this sense culture jamming often is seen as a reactionary force, disrupting the realms of appearance—what the old Marxists would call superstructure—after the capitalist gimmicks and marketing make themselves known, or present. Seen this way, culture jamming is open to criticism of not being pro-active enough, of not grasping the situation before it happens, i.e. of not having a “program”—it can only jam what has already been produced—or worse, it is charged with not doing anything about the underlying economic conditions (the “base”) that brought about the superstructure of consumerist propaganda. Such a critique falls into the trap of separation of medium and message: it fails to recognise that *the target of culture jamming is production itself*. The State of collapse as Empire and the change in modes of production from industry and post-industry to information and “communication” have collapsed the traditional materialist binaries of base and superstructure. “The development of communications networks has an organic relationship to the emergence of the new world order—it is, in other words, effect and cause, product and producer. Communication not only expresses but also organizes the movement of globalization” (Hardt and Negri 32). Communication is the information-implosion that structures globalization, dissolves territory, and reinstates self-regulating Foucauldian control over the subject, what Negri and Hardt call the sphere of the *biopolitical*.

The political synthesis of social space is fixed in the space of communication. This is why communications industries have assumed such a central position. They not only organize production on a new scale and impose a new structure adequate to global space, but also make its justification immanent. Power, as it produces, organizes; as it organizes, it speaks and expresses itself as authority. Language, as it communicates, produces commodities but moreover creates subjectivities, puts them in relation, and orders them. The communications industries integrate the

imaginary and the symbolic within the biopolitical fabric, not merely putting them at the service of power but actually integrating them into its very functioning.  
(33)

Power has not disappeared: it never existed, in a sense (chaos never died), it is only reappropriated as a matter of instinct; it requires the faith of the masses to believe in its reappropriation, reinstatement, and rule (the masses produce their own repression; they also undermine it). To deface the power-object—advertising, property, an institution—is to denounce its power, and to rename it in the face of chaos and the introduction of flux and invigorated meaning as the movement of signs. To culture jam is to directly affect the medium-message of communication-production and “its power” over the biopolitical. Indeed, it to jam is to perform power’s lack thereof of any real power whatsoever, despite its ordering ability, the inert ordering of entropy. In fact what Empire believes to be its power is in fact the always already implosive movement of entropy to inertia and stasis: Empire believes that *it’s ordering things* when things are already dissolving into conformity themselves—the silence of solidarity. Given that it cannot even control the totality of even the planet—there is always the fold between even the virtual map and the virtual territory—it simply grasps the inertia-entropy already at work. Such is the *policing* function of Empire: to enforce inertia-entropy, to ignore the other aspects of entropy, namely the random, meaningless, and chaotic placement of the ordering itself that once apprehended, opens the system to chaos. The realisation of culture jamming is this: Entropy/Order: it’s the same—Chaos—it just depends on its manipulation. Pulling the pants off authority. Disrupt the communication—through a subverted herd-response, a blockage, or redirection of the flow—and reintroduce a pause in the “immanence” of justification and the ability for power to rewrite its (End of) History. This pause might just be long enough to create the space necessary for a stable subversion, an orbit of the pending black hole and crushing violence of Empire.

Moreover, culture jamming *is* proactive, and it has learnt to become so. Combating the latest Nike campaign is no longer as important as anticipating the moves of corporate propaganda in general and countering it *before* its dissemination. Such anticipation is at odds with Marxist historical determination, as it predicts no end stage of capitalism, no worker’s utopia, no Revolution. The anticipation is built upon an attunement to the desire market, to the Spectacle; it is analysed at the same level as the advertising executive, with the same methods, and not at the abstract level of a modified Hegelian history. Anticipating the moves of production—essentially the moves of desire, or pleasure, or seduction, it no longer matters, as this is the level of practice, and every culture jammer takes into account last year’s trends and product recognitions—is not easy, but it is one of the steps necessary to begin to crack the foundations of Empire; it certainly bears a stronger moment of insurgency than the never-ending “analysis” of the Left after the fact (of which this paper is certainly guilty, and necessarily so). And the insurgency! Culture jamming offers the opportunity to flip the situation—however briefly—to change the nature of one’s subjectivity, to mark it as free for an instant. It simply no longer matters whether such “liberation” is real or a simulation at that moment, for the moment itself is empowering, life-changing, affirmative. And is this not the point, to change lives? No more future speculation: change happens *now* in the culture-jamming *ethos*.

In general, the traditional Marxist critique of culture jamming is also not that interesting: it fails to hold much sway in the light of defacing billboards and crashing Yahoo! Capitalism. It just isn't all that much fun anymore. The tightrope culture jamming walks—between irony on one hand and fatalism on the other—sways between Debord and Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari, ends up somewhere around a reinterpreted Negri and Hardt, and presents problematics from an entirely different angle than that of the traditional Marxist dialectic. The confusion that Culture Jamming finds itself in, however, is in regards to its goals and analysis. This is most recently illustrated in the November-December issue of *Adbusters*, which focuses on the clogged and polluted mental environment, overripe with too much useless information. As Bill McKibben notes in his article “A Volume Problem,”

...the modern consumer economy sends up an almost infinite blitz of information and enticement, till the air is so thick with it that every feature of our society is changed. In neither case is it pollution in the usual sense, easily cleaned with a smokestack filter or combated with a more wholesome image. Instead, it's a volume problem.

McKibben's commentary, which draws upon studies showing that “the average American child spends 40 hours a week (40!) 'consuming media,’” calls for a “liberation from self-absorption... where no single idea (“buy”) holds sway.” In denouncing the hyperinformation of consumerism and advertising, McKibben advocates the expansion of heterogeneous systems, a plurality of ideas, “where no musician sells 10 million copies, but 10 million musicians sing each night. Where we are freed from consumer identity and idolatry to be much more ourselves.” Two major forces are at work in McKibben's work that can be said to speak for, at least somewhat, the state of the Culture Jamming movement today. 1. A Baudrillardian sense that too much information, too much media, does not improve society and the quality of life—communication of intriguing and creative ideas—but hinders it. Furthermore, it is not only the *amount* of information, but its covert tagline, its transcendental imperative: *buy, consume*. 2. A sense that the *individual* must be *liberated*, perhaps a tinge of event-specific neo-Ludditism, but also a desperate longing to return to a purer culture, one untainted by advertising. Nostalgia and sentimentality. And the way to return is emancipatory, liberating—one gets the feeling that this is an “explosive” movement. Hardt and Negri also posit the rhetorical schema of “liberation,” but it is within a context of the globalization of desire, and not the regress of the pure and local.

McKibben owes much in his analysis to the work of Jean Baudrillard, in particular Baudrillard's analysis of media in *Simulacra and Simulation*: “...information dissolves meaning and dissolves the social, in a sort of nebulous state dedicated not to a surplus of innovation, but, on the contrary, to total entropy” (81). McKibben's argument is thus: to save the social, one must destroy the overabundance of information, and the global system that creates it. This is the *wrong response* according to Hardt and Negri and to Baudrillard, as it plays directly into the hands of Empire. Baudrillard, however, isn't so dead-on either: we have already noted how the system is *not* simply “total entropy”: the cracks are there, in the heart of entropy through its attempted ordering of inherent chaos. McKibben's

response, although drawing from Baudrillard—we can clearly see McKibben's debt in recognising Baudrillard's radical theory that more information *decreases* communication and destroys the social rather than improving it—does not seem to follow from it, for what McKibben still advocates is an explosive and humanist response, “liberationary” in the classical sense, utopia (“10 million musicians...”). Indeed, perhaps it is because McKibben dreams a little too strongly that he indulges in utopia, a dream, rather than the possibility for reconstructing the possibility of such a life in the present, the field of immanence. The latter would be making dreams a reality of the imaginary, and this is the poetic strategy of Hakim Bey and the tactics of Hardt and Negri. And this is also where the healthy comparison stops between McKibben and Baudrillard, and Baudrillard's analysis takes a darker turn. According to Baudrillard, the implosive situation created by hyperinformation calls not for a liberationary, explosive rhetoric, but one that, if it is to be effective, must mobilise with the weight of the “masses” themselves. In fact, “to choose the wrong strategy is a serious matter” (86):

All the movements that only play on liberation, emancipation, on the resurrection of a subject of history, of the group, of the word based on “consciousness raising,” indeed a “raising of the unconscious” of subjects and of the masses, do not see that they are going in the direction of the system, whose *imperative* today is precisely the overproduction and regeneration of meaning and of speech. (my italics, 86)

The imperative of Empire is the overproduction of advertising through the communications industries which enslave the biopolitical subject: through her desires, her work, her leisure, her consumption, her production, her aesthetics, her lifestyle, her life, her ontology. According to Baudrillard, McKibben has the right analysis but the wrong response. But, in light of our critique of Baudrillard, we also need to question the analysis, which, in its explosive, utopian fashion, orients the project of Culture Jamming inwards, toward the implosion. To a degree, an implosive situation calls for an implosive resistance—for, ironically, an implosion actually appears as an explosion, of an explosion of ideas and information: the response should not be an explosion past the hyperexplosion, but a realisation of the underlying implosion—the contradictory entropy of the system—in praxis.

The majority of culture jammers still posit themselves in a liberationary rhetoric—such as the Billboard Liberation Front<sup>19</sup>—even if they don't appear to take it all that seriously, because the thrill of the moment—climbing the ladder, pasting the billboard, escaping—is addictive in its subversive stealing of power and its affirmative energy. At that moment, the Jammer feels that she has finally surmounted the transcendental term behind the hyperinformation—consume, buy. The utopian dream is still powerful for many culture jammers, and given Nietzsche's critique of the herd mentality, simply responding in a Baudrillardian fashion—with dumb numbers to crush the system with its own overweight violence—may not be a pleasurable project, nor one that offers the possibility of creation beyond destruction.<sup>20</sup> What should be done? Twist Baudrillard and McKibben into a little knot with Hakim Bey: use numbers, the implosion, *and* a perverted autonomy, a singular intensity, a cult individualism, to jam the implosion. Such are the tactics of the hacktivist website ping attacks, the deterritorializing force of the destructive masses turned toward

Empire. Strategy needs to adopt motility and contradiction, the realisation that the deterritorializing act, while producing Empire, also destabilizes Empire's implosive forces, upsets the biopolitical fabric of the overgenerated signifier, and produces an affirmative, spontaneous and unpredictable intensity within the subject and the fabric of the biopolitical.

The problematic is that of Culture Jamming's production of Empire through an overgeneration of meaning that is subsequently reappropriated by the advertising machines. Empire co-opts the co-opters. Just as memory includes remembering and forgetting, the advertising executives already anticipate resistance (flip side of the binary): *stop shopping, clean your mental environment*<sup>21</sup> ... silence: back to solidarity. McKibben's response, through its simplified resistance (however subversive) falls into this trap of always already co-option. He fails to realise how easily, and how simply, his response plays into the hands of Empire. By not going far enough, culture jamming becomes a cliché: GAP Clothing announces a new line of "anarchist gear;" billboards are purposely designed to look like they have been "jammed," etc. By going too far into a neo-Ludditism, culture jamming loses its grasp on technology and its ability to anticipate global developments. In doing so, it loses the chance to deconstruct the danger of technology. Jamming itself needs to grasp its destructive as well as its ironic and humorous potential—perhaps we approach Bey's Poetic Terrorism at this extremity.<sup>22</sup> *Chaotic subversion then must remain the key and it must maximize its destructive potential in the face of advertising.* It calls not for resistance but creation and subversive destruction; the creation of anterior networks, and the maximized subversive destruction of the communications industries through its symbols, from within and without. Subversive destruction is a creative, empowering way to steal the best tools from, and thereby hasten, the implosive collapse of medium and message, and medium into medium, that is the overproduction of communication and the communication of overproduction. We have arrived somewhat, in a roundabout way, at a modified version of the Temporary/Permanent Autonomous Zone of Hakim Bey.

If we took all the energy the Leftists put into "demos," and all the energy the Libertarians put into playing futile little 3rd-party games, and if we redirected all that power into the construction of a real underground economy, we would already have accomplished "the Revolution" long ago. ("Permanent Tazs," 1993)

It is not our place here to enter into a long discussion of Bey's work and the paths it offers. It is enough to note that it offers a possibility of resistance to Empire that is mobile, creative, subversive, and yet destructive.

### Back to 9-1-1: The Medium of Capitalisation

*This is when the ontological drama begins, when the curtain goes up on a scene in which the development of Empire becomes its own critique and its process of construction becomes the process of its overturning.*

Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 47

Capitalisation is more than a seizing of the moment: it is a medium for doing so that is irreparably tied to the workings of capital—and thereby also to the workings of any program that calls for The Revolution. To subvert the moment of capitalisation is to attempt to subvert the underpinnings of capital and capitalisation itself: the ontology of capitalisation as standing-reserve. Refusing to subvert the moment sucks one into its demise of inert order, of ordering, what Heidegger would call “standing-reserve.” We aren’t speaking here of a tactical refusal such as an anarchist non-response to work, or of shunning the vote—both of which can be seen as a tactical subversion, what Bey would call affirmative “Zerowork” (*T.A.Z.* 79). We are speaking of a moment that calls for the living of life, the subversion of the norm, the dance or the slipping into shadows, and, faced with this chance, the refusal of life, spouting the negative where Nietzsche’s affirmative should ring true. One should not be commanded, as an imperative, to grasp the moment: one must realise that the moment calls for affirmation, and realise that to simply not grab—with both hands—the moment is to condemn oneself to the overdetermined program that Empire sets forth. It is not a question of class consciousness or Revolution: it is a question of the moment. The question is: how to pose the Yes? And to whom? When? These are the timing elements of subversion which the knowledge of culture jamming can greatly facilitate.

When one is dealing with the nature of “capital,” and especially “cultural capital,” linear systems of analysis crumble before the spontaneity of the moment, as seen operating at odds in the analysis of 9-11: one side is the mainstream media and the government, often operating with a sense of “How did this happen?”, carefully presenting a select and narrow version of history in response to superficial questions from carefully chosen political commentators; and on the other side is the criticism of the Left, which for the most part only deliberates rational argument or repackages the same dated and stale Imperialist analyses. In both cases, an event is being used to justify or explain certain actions and histories (or lack thereof); both sides (to generalise completely) stand to “capitalise” off 9-11 in the sense that they use the event to further their own agendas, without affirming action. Neither side—and we are generalising here—subverts the event to radically alter anyone’s life in a positive manner. Both sides are complicit in this. Umberto Eco tries to justify the lack of action in a talk given shortly after the Gulf War by saying that:

What struck some as the silence of intellectuals about war was perhaps their fear of talking about it in the media in the heat of the moment, and this for the simple reason that the media are a part of war and its paraphernalia, and so it is dangerous to think of the media as neutral territory. Above all, the media work on a different time scale. The intellectual function is always exercised ahead of time (regarding what might happen) or with hindsight (regarding what has happened), seldom with

regard to what is actually happening, for reasons of rhythm, because events are always faster and more relentless than reflection on events can be.  
(*Five Moral Pieces* 16).

There are several issues to discuss here. First is the issue of saying anything at all, and within this issue is the notion of “tactical silence,” of not making a statement in the media. Such a silence is, of course, understood. But the reasons for this particular silence are not. The media is, of course, part and parcel of the war machine. But a lesson could be learned from culture jamming and poetic terrorism: instead of fearing the media, one can manipulate and subvert the media and/or conduct counter-media operations or utilize anterior media networks.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, such a silence could be used to pause the media operation itself (it is not always necessary to make a statement). And so always something must be done: tactical silence is an option, but the silence of solidarity—the waiting game—is the negative coercion of power. Second is the issue of timing—when should one speak? The idea that the media and the intellectual work on different time scales has only served to distance the position of the intellectual from action, a dilatory lagging of the intellectual behind the speed of society. Society knows this: this is why the intellectual is hardly taken seriously: Sunera Thobani is portrayed as a madwoman, and the intellectual who *does* seize the moment now has to fight against this tradition of silence that has created a buffer of popular ridicule. The issue of speed, as Virilio makes clear time and time again, needs to be grasped: the intellectual in this case is a horse-and-buggy on the information highway. If society is moving at a faster rate, so must the response of the intellectual. Right now, the rhythm is out of sync, and the intellectual lets loose too soon or too late, like a bad lover. It’s either organised release, like a military march—solidarity, the lack of rhythm—or complete chaos, the “milieu of milieus” (Deleuze and Guattari 313). There is no rhythm, no sense of timing. “Rhythm is the milieus’ answer to chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-chaos or the chaosmos.... In this in-between, chaos becomes rhythm, not inexorably, but it has a chance to. Chaos is not the opposite of rhythm, but the milieu of all milieus.” Timing is everything in affirming the moment: it is an affirmation of rhythm and chaos, the chaos of the organised act that spurns rhythm. Timing is an attention to the movements of entropy. A well-timed response—quick, imaginative, subversive—can catch Empire off-guard or unawares: “It becomes ever more difficult for Empire to intervene in the unforeseeable temporal sequences of events when they accelerate their temporality” (Hardt and Negri 81).

Given rhythm, the next issue is that of the act itself. What should the intellectual be doing? The intellectual statement still holds weight. Despite the media’s ridicule of Sunera Thobani, her speech still produced much needed debate over 9-11 (the same can be said for Susan Sontag<sup>24</sup>). However, more needs to be done: the statement must become an act, and the act must become subversive. Thobani accomplished this through her performativity, Sontag through writing at an intensity that countered directly after the 11<sup>th</sup>. However it remains to be seen if the branding of “Enemy of Empire” will last and whether the consequences will be positive or negative. Perhaps a lesson can be learned here from culture jamming about the possibilities of anonymity in the act and the subversion of the situation with irony. In any case, it is enough to refute Eco and his general thesis that the

intellectual works on a different “timeline.” Eco’s position is a linear one, one that relies upon historical determinations of the future—his predictions—or glorified celebrations or denunciations of the past. Refuting such a position opens the doors to poetic destruction—we could call this deconstruction—of the event at hand, which “reveals the possibility of alternative social organizations” (Hardt and Negri 48), and, given a constructive and creative ethico-political approach, leads to a “scenario of different rational acts—a horizon of activities, resistances, wills, and desires that refuse the hegemonic order, propose lines of flight, and forge alternative constituent itineraries.” We could call this the horizon of Temporary Autonomous Zones on the edge of the imploding black hole, and perchance the possibility of the stable orbit of the Permanent Autonomous Zone.

Philosophy is not the owl of Minerva that takes flight after history has been realized in order to celebrate its happy ending; rather, philosophy is subjective proposition, desire, and praxis that are applied to the event. (49)

### **The Terror of Capital: A Poetic Manifesto**

#### [1] Capital

What exactly do we mean by “capital”? Have we yet approached the question? Money laid out—to grab, to take: always relating to the transaction of money. One loses one’s head over money, because of money. (Caput, one is broke). Capitalising: making money from an event, getting ahead of others—getting another’s head (the one who wins gets (a)head).

9-11: an emergency telephone call on the global stage of Empire. It calls for: bumper stickers—I Love America, I Hate Osama; books on terror (how many “secrets” are there to be revealed about bin Laden?); membership drives—support the Daughters of the Revolution, Join the Military, Become a Marxist-Leninist...read our propaganda, watch out TV show (did you see that Ad with...?) and check out our website (RAWA sells mugs).

#### [2] Cultural Capital

The difference between capital, and the subversory potential of cultural capital, must be carefully evaluated in light of the technological danger of the medium of capital, in its hastening of Empire, its ontology of enframing. Whereas monetary gain and profit feed from the fear, desire, innocence, and ignorance of others in the system of *capital* (spurned and encouraged by media and their advertisers), *cultural capital* “profits” the openness of the subversive individual to create, resist, think, and act out *against* or *through* the fears, desires, innocence, and ignorance of the capitalised masses. The notion of “profit” is radically redefined to mean the affirmation of life and not the accumulation of wealth or products. The profit flow is bi-directional: it flows back to the one who instigated the moment of subversion, as an overwhelming affirmation of positivity, and it flows “into” the general milieu of “cultural capital,” the memory of the masses, as it provides a further example of creationary subversion for others, acting as catalyst for further action and the affirmation of positivity in others, through experiencing in some way the subversive event. The flows of cultural capital work at destroying the ontology of consumption and pursuing



an ontology of affirmation and creativity (a *dramatic* ontology). Cultural capital is not only a subversion of capital, it is also a ripple through the practical and ontological complacency of the masses: it does not have the widespread, upheaval effect of Revolution—which leads simply to bloodshed, violence and dictatorship—but it has the taste of insurrection and of affirmative resistance. Since subversion affects an institution, symbol, or medium-message that is seen, heard, read, or felt by many, the effect upon the masses is a *twist* in un/consciousness—as opposed to a “raising” of consciousness or any sort of cultivation of “class consciousness.” It is direct action philosophy of the now.

### [3] The Masses

Despite that the “masses” are often taken advantage of in the worst ways possible, they are not so blind as we would like to think (being a part of them, whether we like it or not), and considering that they are always already rethinking and reinterpreting what has been apparently “handed” to them, it can be said that the creative alternative, the alternative of autonomous resistance, becomes an orbital possibility that many will turn to if it can be demonstrated to hold an ontological potential: it must benefit “culture,” which is composed of, first and foremost, the individual. To say that “cultural capital profits” means that it immediately gives back to that from which it came: the individual herself, and so it is an ever-expanding feedback loop, and not an idealistic balance or dialectic; feedback loops are open to movements of self-destruction and of conflictual entropy (the war machine / inert orders). Cultural capital becomes a morphing between the masses and culture that implodes in on itself, which is why it is impossible to measure according to the laws of capitalism, as it is, for the most part, the silent and invisible hand that guides capitalism itself, that causes its fluctuations, its never-ending tragedies, and it is that which every capitalist is trying to put his or her finger on and what every marketing agency spends the majority of its R&D capital on trying to tap.

### [4] The Exclusive

Not everyone will desire the potentials of an open ontology. It is not the goal of a subversive movement to attempt to organise the totality of humanity against Empire when many will resist. It is the goal only to seek out others who are dissatisfied and to network their creative ways of living into direct alternatives.

### [5] Our Culture

As Anti-Terrorist legislation becomes commonplace in the West, and what was left of our personal freedoms erode into nothingness, the barren landscape of culture becomes all the more present, for at the point of its disappearance, when it risks becoming outlawed entirely, culture sticks out its neck at one last gamble, to ask the question that so desperately needs asking: what are we fighting for, in this war on terror, if what we hold so dear—supposed democracy, personal freedoms of speech, assembly, association, privacy—is reduced to a pale apparition? If what makes us—supposedly—so different from the enemy is erased? Despite the Western arrogance of these assumptions, it must be noted that they can, at this point, be retuned and used to the advantage of a resistance. The feedback loop has hit a high frequency at the horizon of its disappearance. This frequency alerts both political activists and business, for ironically enough, cultural capital is needed for both movements, to sell things and to affect social intensities, dragging the masses

from silence and solidarity to covert appropriation and globalised action. But to think that it could not disappear entirely and that yet it could actually disappear are two impossible thoughts.

#### [6] Mental Landscapes

We are taught that to fight an enemy is to get inside his or her mind, to understand their movements and reasons. But in the process, there is the ultimate risk of becoming that enemy. “At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp” (Deleuze and Guattari, “Rhizome” 10). And in fighting “terror”—the most ubiquitous enemy of them all—the nation-state holds a mirror up to its worst fears, pointing at itself pointing at itself pointing, turning to tell the others: Look! It is pointing at us, it wants to destroy us... Apparitions are all that we have ever known—ghostly remnants of the values we supposedly uphold that conjure references to past histories, dead cultures, dead writers and their books and philosophies. To say that we are losing these values now, that they can be somehow legislated away, is to misunderstand their nature: for freedom, the core idea of them all, is on the same plane as terror—a subatomic event horizon—and neither concept can be even *thought* of within the realm of capital, the implosory black hole: not by bombs, not by money (*capitalis*), not by advertising, corporatisation, globalisation, legislation or activism. We have never known these things which we hold at the centre of struggle, for the centre is collapse; they are neither central nor held: we can only see the affects of the masses and the way they sway, the way they move and react to the tunes of (cultural) capital, the indiscriminate swarming of bees, or maggots, like quasars lighting the black hole of implosive capitalism.

#### [7] Feedback

The pitch of the feedback loop rises to unbearable levels—information overload— with analysis of events poring in from every direction, all sense of “truth” lost, and all that can be presented as clear and present danger is the reality of what cannot be known, that is, of death and its cultural mechanism, the war machine. With war as the focus, the machine rumbles into gear and the possibility for (self) destruction is opened: not only destruction of the other, but destruction of the viewpoint that can still see concepts of freedom and terror. We are at that indeterminate moment, the event horizon of the black hole, the point where orbit can be maintained or lost, where the wrong step sends us into the black hole, forever losing sight of the outside light, the quasars of resistance. We face obliteration of the mental constitution of the self that *remembers* (freedom). Blood-soaked, the self without memory revels in the *jouissance* of the moment, and we have reached the end of history that Fukiyama promised—but through the violent self-destruction of capitalism—not its triumph—where capital reaches beyond its bounds to fully develop its Pure War economy into War Ontology.

#### [8] Capital Shockwave

What we can see then, like a shockwave emanating from the smoking remains of the Twin Towers, is an emotional reaction carefully cultivated to sustain its phallic anger, the horns blaring as the Warriors go into battle, again and again and again, each new threat—anthrax

and bioterrorism, car bombs, plane hijackings—spurning yet another wave of government-grown and media-supported public vengeance. Capitalising from the public’s understandable anger launches the first drastic curtailing of Western rights within Empire, while at the same time, a new enemy is defined at the margins through racial stereotyping. The nomad at the borders once again: how convenient that the nomads truly are nomads.

[9] Crux

The energy at this point is volatile and can move in many directions—in favour of repression, warmly embracing masochism—the heat of Revolution—or against repression, embracing freedom through subversive creativity of anterior networks—and it is difficult to predict exactly what will happen when such a space is created, a smooth space that will open potential for a resistance to capitalise from the situation, to influence with life and vitality the direction of cultural capital, to intensify the energy of the feedback and direct it against capitalisation (and thereby against its own constituent elements).

Such a move destroys itself. The leverage point that would be used to move such energy would be destroyed in the process if the goal were to end “capital.” And “capital,” as a concept like “terror” or “freedom” is not something that can be destroyed or forgotten, and certainly not legislated or enforced, as that places the legislator in the same camp as the State. “Capital” as economic profiteering can be changed and controlled through economic means, as socialism has taught us. But beyond economic restructuring in favour of financial equality for all, there must be a rethinking of what it means to distribute *justice* to all in the realm of cultural capital. Cultural capital is not something that can be directed, it is a phantom and yet the most powerful force, it cannot be dictated by capitalist or socialist: it cannot be determined, and it certainly cannot be subsumed under an ideology and overdetermined. It can only be subverted. We are dealing in ghostly concepts, but material means: the point is not to overdetermine the struggle so we only fight for material changes or cultural ones, as if they were somehow opposed, for the relation between the material and the cultural is one that is imploding. Instigate the moment of cultural capital.

If we lose the opportunity, we only fall back on myths: Holderlin’s saving power at the heart of danger—the possibility of going through the black hole to emerge out the white. This may be the moment of annihilation or revolution: it will be both. A new universe. The immanent actualization of poetic deconstruction and the creation of alternate networks. The construction of Empire reveals its cracks. One must get into the structure, like a weed, so one can grow and break it apart. Tumbling ruins.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Particular to the Province of British Columbia, Canada, is the use of September 11th by the new centre-right provincial Liberal government to justify, among other things, health care cuts: “The age of entitlement ended on September 11. We can no longer demand [health care] services as our due. We have to accept responsibility along with our rights. Even patients and their families have responsibility in using health care services prudently.” Valerie Roddick, Chair. BC Select Standing Committee on Health Report of Proceedings, October 10, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> See the upcoming paper, “The Bitter Infighting of Marxist Radicals.”

<sup>3</sup> One of the more infamous, and immediate responses to 9-1-1 was that of Right Christian Jerry Falwell. “On Pat Robertson’s 700 Club, broadcast on September 11, Jerry Falwell said, ‘The ACLU’s got to take a lot of blame for this...throwing God out successfully with the help of the federal court system, throwing God out of the public square, out of the schools. The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle...all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say, ‘You helped this happen.’” (From <http://www.actionagenda.com/petitions/>). Falwell’s response has divided the Right Christians as well, in the same moment that they gain strength; this can be seen in the response from the Religious Freedom Website (<http://www.tylwytheg.com/enemies/falwell.html>), among others; in fact, he has since been referred to as the agent of the Taliban in the US by both Liberals and the Right.

<sup>4</sup> “The Pentagon has hired a well-known Washington public-relations firm to help it explain U.S. military strikes in Afghanistan to global audiences, U.S. officials confirmed Thursday. It’s part of a broader Bush administration campaign to try to reverse arising tide of opposition in the Islamic world” (Strobel and Landay). “...the Pentagon has hired the Reardon Group, a public relations firm in Washington, D.C., to help explain the U.S. military strikes to global audiences. The administration also has established a ‘coalition of information centers’ in Washington, London and Islamabad to disseminate war news to Middle Eastern reporters—a hard task since those in the region are 10 hours ahead of Washington” (Tamara Straus, “The War For Public Opinion,” at <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=12050>). And, most recently, although not dealing with Afghanistan, but the Israel-Palestine situation: “It will be a most unusual advertising campaign for the State Department. In the next several weeks, the department will use the Internet, newspapers, posters, fliers and matchbooks to advertise a program offering rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of specific Palestinians accused of killing or planning the killings of Americans in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The advertising campaign is an expansion of the ‘Rewards for Justice’ program, the State Department’s nonprofit charity that solicits private funds to pay millions of dollars in rewards for information leading to the arrest of terrorism suspects. In addition, the program’s web site, [www.dssrewards.net](http://www.dssrewards.net), which profiles the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 22 ‘most wanted terrorists,’ will add the photographs and descriptions of Palestinians wanted for the deaths of as many as 21 American citizens in the last decade.” (Sciolino)

<sup>5</sup> To see a good analysis of the stalemating of Marxist, Foucauldian, and feminist debates on the lack of a definitive theory of the State—Capitalist or Marxist—see Jessop, Bob. “Bringing the State back in (Yet Again): Reviews, Revisions, Rejections, and Redirections.” Published by the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University at: <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/soc070rj.html>. Forthcoming in *International Review of Sociology* (2001) (1).

<sup>6</sup> “One of the two adversaries is a rug salesman [Hussein], the other an arms salesman [Bush]: they have neither the same logic nor the same strategy, even though they are both crooks. There is not enough communication between them to enable them to make war upon each other. Saddam will never fight, while the Americans will fight a fictive double on screen.” (*The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* 65).

<sup>7</sup> In “The Question Concerning Technology.” We are dealing with the problem that enframing—the essence of technology—poses, as it blocks other ways of revealing (being and truth), orders the globe into standing-reserve (a slave situation), projects man as the lord of all (egoism), and blocks man from seeing anything but himself (mirror repetition; where he does, however, not see his essence but only his reflected image). I leave

“man” here to signify the relation between patriarchy and the Enlightenment project Heidegger is attacking and yet still a part of.

<sup>8</sup> “...since Plato, all theologians and philosophers have followed the same path—which means that in matters of morality, instinct (or as Christians call it, “Faith,” or as I call it, “the herd”) has hitherto triumphed” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 60 (192)). This does not mean that Reason (Knowledge) reins supreme however, and I follow Nietzsche in this indeterminate path: “...for reason is only a tool, and Descartes was superficial.”

<sup>9</sup> For example, such finger-pointing is evident in the radical Left’s denunciation of RAWA in Afghanistan. See “The Bitter Infighting of Marxist Radicals,” (Forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> “...this strategy of defending the local is damaging because it obscures and even negates real alternatives and the potentials for liberation that exist *within* Empire” (Hardt and Negri 46).

<sup>11</sup> I.e. the Temporary and Permanent Autonomous Zones, which are anterior economic and cultural networks to the State. Instead of dreaming of revolution and planning protest, Bey argues that one should instead develop anterior networks to the State. Simply begin living the life you wanted to—now. This post-anarchist sentiment is one that has fuelled the culture and politics of Punk DIY and the rave scene, and emerged visibly in protests such as Reclaim the Streets. However, it is still to be taken seriously by the Left establishment. “If we took all the energy the Leftists put into ‘demos,’ and all the energy the Libertarians put into playing futile little 3rd-party games, and if we redirected all that power into the construction of a real underground economy, we would already have accomplished ‘the Revolution’ long ago.” (“Permanent Tazs,” 1993). We will return to this quote and to Bey.

<sup>12</sup> It is, however, worth noting the following comment on consensus-based organisation, which has become an *a priori* aspect of “solidarity”: “Consensus-based organizing can sometimes create unnecessary conflict and interference. Organizing autonomously—and trying another free association whenever one isn’t working—can give you the freedom you need not to resent others, so you can work well with the ones around you. Revolution may involve learning to live and act cooperatively, but it doesn’t mean *everyone* has to be friends” (Crimethinc. Secret Service). Jacques Derrida has also taken up similar questions in *Of Hospitality*, Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Hakim Bey describes “Zerowork” as a tactical anarchist refusal to Work, not so much in defence of “laziness”—which must be defined in terms of a Working society—but to avoid the commodification of desire (*T.A.Z.* 79).

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting this quote from William Morris at the beginning of *Empire*: “Men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and then it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.” This thinking underlies Hardt and Negri’s methodology, thereby allowing them to say, for example, that “...the formation of Empire is a *response* to proletarian internationalism” (51).

<sup>15</sup> See Virilio, Paul and Sylvère Lotringer. *Pure War*. Trans. Mark Polizzotti and Brian O’Keeffe. New York: Semiotext(e), 1997.

<sup>16</sup> A case could be made for this not only in Afghanistan—where the argument over oil has taken prominence, although this could be secondary to the desire to exterminate all forms of pre-governmental society, as Baudrillard analysed in Vietnam—but also in the militarization of the Canada/US border by the United States. The loss of Canada’s sovereignty is on every Canadian’s lips—either one desires it, and wants to join the US, or abhors the idea of Canada becoming a US State. But neither see that this has practically already happened. Why invade or control Canada in any overt fashion, when the Canadian government already does that splendidly? All that is necessary is the control of the “nation’s” flows—its trade, its people. The majority of Canada’s trade by far is with the US; the militarization of the border is only a slightly manifest declaration of US control that began with NAFTA. Prediction: Canada will lose its currency within 5 years and begin to use the US dollar; its intelligence and policing agencies will become—as they are moving to do right now—completely US-controlled; Canada will lose all foreign policy independent of the United States. The question of resistance, as Negri and Hardt mention, should not be a reactionary stance that calls for a Canadian nationalism/patriotism; resistance should realise the worldwide occurrence of this phenomenon, and organise against the worldwide phenomenon of Empire in the name of a non-exploitative world network.

<sup>17</sup> Baudrillard gives the example of the Beauborg Museum. Today, in terms of a subversive use of the herd mentality, we can give the example of Hacktivist Internet Website Squatting, such as the online activist art world’s response to etoys.com, the corporation that attempted to take down the respected art website etoy.com (which had been there for much longer). Both Beauborg and etoy.com work upon the same

principle. The advertising of the website says: come here! The response by the hacktivists was to respond in droves, utilising online, easily accessibly software that repeatedly pinged etoys.com until it crashed from too much traffic (a hyper-response to the advertising). This is the virtual dream of Baudrillard's Beauborg: that so many people will come—the masses—that the structure will collapse from its own success. The difference between Beauborg and etoy.com lies in the conscious utilisation of the mass-technique, which today has become a timely, subversive tactic, unlike the herd mentality of Baudrillard.

<sup>18</sup> “How can productive labour dispersed in various networks find a centre?” (65).

<sup>19</sup> In the film “Culture Jammers,” the BLF comments on how culture jamming will not turn back the tide of capitalism; however, they say, *it can change your life*.

<sup>20</sup> Baudrillard's response overdetermines the horizon: there are more *ways* than simply thinking explosion/implosion, for entropy introduces chaos, and chaos allows multiple resistances to the problems of Empire. Furthermore, his response projects no possibility of creating an anterior network, or alternate system.

<sup>21</sup> Most advertisers already incorporate this into their strategy. SUVs, laptops and other mobile communications products (especially cellphones) all advertise a new found freedom to be had from their possession, through their apparent ability to transport the user physically or mentally away from civilization.

<sup>22</sup> Poetic Terrorism: “...aesthetic actions which possess some of the resonance of terrorism (or “cruelty,” as Artaud put it) aimed at the destruction of abstractions rather than people, at liberation rather than power, pleasure rather than profit, joy rather than fear” (*T.A.Z.* 39). Examples: “Weird dancing in all-night computer-banking lobbies. Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays. Land-art, earthworks as bizarre alien artifacts strewn in State Parks. Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-Terrorist objects. Kidnap someone & make them happy...In order to work at all, PT must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media)” (5). In fact, the art-world should often be targeted by PT for its continuing institutional complacency: “The Art World in particular deserves a dose of ‘Poetic Terrorism’” (63). However, PT should not be done solely for artists, and for it to be successful, it must change the life of at least one other person beside the Poetic Terrorist: “...if it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails” (5); “Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art” (6). Much of current culture jamming, including events such as Santarchy or the Santacon (see <http://burningcam.com/santacon/> and <http://www.santarchy.com/>) and the Whirlmart ([http://www.breathingplanet.net/whirlmart\\_statement.html](http://www.breathingplanet.net/whirlmart_statement.html)), actively pursue similar principles.

<sup>23</sup> For example, <http://www.indymedia.org>. Noam Chomsky is also a frequent contributor—among many others—to ZNet: <http://www.zmag.org>.

<sup>24</sup> “The disconnect between last Tuesday's monstrous dose of reality and the self-righteous drivel and outright deceptions being peddled by public figures and TV commentators is startling, depressing. The voices licensed to follow the event seem to have joined together in a campaign to infantilize the public. Where is the acknowledgment that this was not a “cowardly” attack on “civilization” or “liberty” or “humanity” or “the free world” but an attack on the world's self-proclaimed superpower, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions? How many citizens are aware of the ongoing American bombing of Iraq? And if the word “cowardly” is to be used, it might be more aptly applied to those who kill from beyond the range of retaliation, high in the sky, than to those willing to die themselves in order to kill others. In the matter of courage (a morally neutral virtue): whatever may be said of the perpetrators of Tuesday's slaughter, they were not cowards”

([http://www.newyorker.com/THE\\_TALK\\_OF\\_THE\\_TOWN/CONTENT/?010924ta\\_talk\\_wtc](http://www.newyorker.com/THE_TALK_OF_THE_TOWN/CONTENT/?010924ta_talk_wtc)).

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