

D I G I T A L S H I T M I S S I L E S

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Translated from the Bulgarian by STANIMIR PANAYOTOV

Digital sovereignty is presented negatively by the hacker wars and thefts, election meddling, etc. In fact, this is about the digital usurpation of the sovereign.

This is how sovereignty is described by Han, a South Korean-born German professor (cited from Franco Berardi's new book *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry*):¹

"The shitstorm represents an authentic phenomenon of digital communication ... *Sovereign is he who commands the shitstorms of the Net.*"

Indeed, there is not even a sovereign, he is an absentee,*² a copy-pasted usurper-hacker.

Language, money, and the proletariat are in their essence such a sovereign nothing that can produce everything.

Today this is done, with an almost ontological valence, by the digital mutation which has mostly transformed the mafia underground into a computer paradise.

The consequences are unreal, as is the very reality—a psychodynamic point of intersection for countless projections of simulative flows.

1. Zlatanov cites Byung-Chul Han, as cited in Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2018), 26-27.

2. All words and/or phrases marked with an asterisk appear in English in the original.

Reality does not precede the semiotic or the communicative act, it is a performative construct emanating from the multitude of subjectivities of the so-called digital snowflake generation.

The modern power owes its existence to the ability to violently impose its own voice and silence the rest. Here Franco Berardi cites Hitler: “Without the loudspeaker, we would never have conquered Germany,”³ as stated in the *Manual of German Radio* in 1938.

3. Cited from Berardi, *Breathing*, 27.

And not so long ago there was a man who walked the streets of Sofia with a loudspeaker too, as a belated response to neuro-fascism.⁴

4. Zlatanov is here referring to Bulgarian extreme right-wing politician Volen Siderov.

But today power originates from the storm of imperceptible voices. The necessity to eavesdrop and censor drops out. On the contrary, through the statistical processing of databases, power stimulates expression and extracts rules for control germinating from the noise of the world.

The social sound is converted into white noise and the white noise becomes a social order.

Disappearance is in the essence of new technologies. Performance is the art of disappearance.

Perhaps what Wittgenstein said is being fathomed—the subject does not belong to this world, rather, it is its limit.

Perhaps it is through the revolving doors of metalepsis that we step across new worlds.

Of course, Berardi is influenced mostly by Guattari's chaosmosis* of sonic vibrations and concatenations.

It is in this osmosis with the chaos that a new harmony arises, as the effect of an autopoietic morphogenesis.

But there exist darker visions.

The code is an indebted language and the hacker mutations aim to compromise it in new configurations of binding through unbinding.

Sometimes, power itself acts as the hacker who breaks his debt code to come clean.

We are a database to be stolen outside our analogue profile.

Code is language in debt. Code is language in debt.*

By consuming the code, we reproduce the system of imperceptible subjection.

The menace of financial absolutism is contained within the crypted chaos.

This is clarified by the ambiguous codes employed by credit rating agencies for assessing national economies in something close to a self-fulfilling prophecy that has outplayed in advance the economic play.

Codes and brands are stronger than what stands behind them—no one is bigger than their own brand.

The code's world is a zombie-world with no semblance aside from its specters.

The financial system of the world is in fact a credit system with corresponding debt codes which are forcibly imposed and interpreted.

Here, a judicial or ethical measure is impracticable.

Banks, revenue agencies, the very government stand on solid grounds, but these are in effect huge exploits that can be bugged at any given time. Colossi with digital legs.

The judicial measure works on the same principle—a set of contingent citations that are being constantly compromised.

And how does it work in the real judicial world—agreements with criminals, defendants turned witnesses, destroyed or withdrawn evidences.

Are there guilty for bankruptcies and crises, for corruption and irresponsibility?

The code, which cannot take responsibility, is to blame.

The war will migrate into the networks, as Negri and Hardt knew.

The software as the functional analogy of previous ideologies (it is this that has been debated from Kittler onwards).

People will migrate into the networks as replicants and cyborgs in hacker wars.

Chiasmic turbulences versus the networks' hierarchies.

Digital widgets civilize us to the same extent of barbarization, according to Benjamin.

Today this is the computer underground.

Hacking is the modern version of exploitation and extortion. Digital vampires suck out the wastewaters in the chaos of value, in the crypted insecurity of all the same ancient spasms with no programming code. The market vibration within the body precedes the invention of the market alone, as Heidegger superstitiously notes.

But the same can be said of digital mutation.

The assemblers-compilers are the new edge lords* with no code of honor.

Bill Gates is indistinguishable from the boy next door.

The neologism “hacktivism” aims at a more optimistic picture to secure free access to at least a few common things—texts, ideas, network initiatives.

The first gigantic fluctuations in the European semio-sphere happened with the invention of printing and the great geographic discoveries, which lead beyond the frontiers of the anthropocentric order established by the Renaissance.

The new gigantic fluctuation is today felt when reason is subjected to financial rules so that the culture of belonging substitutes universal reason and identitarian *ressentiment* substitutes social solidarity.

Socialism returns as national-socialism—Trump, Putin, Salvini, Erdoğan.

Due to the economic security disruptions of neoliberal globalism, new social arrangements result in the digital reign of abstraction and in the aggressive return of identity in consolidating the nation and the national. As can be seen, these are incompatible things, even with a disjunctive synthesis glued onto them.

Hactivism is incriminated, as is clear from the case of Assange, despite his proven penchant for group sex parties. Or it is transformed into a terrorist politics with quite illegitimate aims.

At the end of modern industrialism, the deterministic relation between labor, time, and value is disrupted by the chaotic dimension of semio-capitalism.

There has never been value on this earth (Hölderlin versus Hegel).

Value is force. Or an artifact forcibly imposed. Or value chaos in an infinite self-sabotage.

When the commensurability of value drops off and time becomes aleatory and singular, the very idea of determinacy is weakened. This affects natural sciences as well, where now there is more talk about the contingent and indeterminacy.

It has come to complexity, where a minor disturbance (exploit, bug, digital mutations) leads to enormous unpredictable effects.

The semiotic and financial flows, those shitstorms, circulate too fast for our deciphering brains.

The new paradoxical class of computer specialists with ambiguous status increases more and more its subversive influence.

In Machiavelli's language chaos is translated as Fortuna. If you want to govern, you have to delimit chaos to a narrow circuit beyond which lies the dark infinity of unpredictability.

Politicians today are influencers and short-term forecasters.

The synchronizing of Fortuna and will is in the basis of political rhythm, but this is not a rhythm, it is only a slight tinge of hope.

Amidst the ocean of unruly matter and events, rule is always an illusion.

There is no law of the eventual laws.

The digital intensification of semiotic flow disrupts the rhythm and refrains inherited by modernity, however gross this comparison.

The acceleration of cyberspace refracts the rhythm of mental time and we do not know what corresponds or does not in our environment—this is another name for chaos, including the chaos of value. An inability to give meaning to the flows, and then the special vibration of panic as the subjective recording of chaos arises.

History no longer submits itself to narrative and takes the form of a semiotic hurricane of unbound and uninterpretable flows of neuro-stimuli.

The realization of reason in its techno-financial form leads to dementia.

This logic of dementia does not operate with the physical and historical reality of bodies but with the virtual condition of computing monads, to which the real bodies adjust.

It was Leibniz who first pointed to the principle of algorithmic regulations originating from the all-generating computer of God, traversing the entire universe and communicating every fragment according to a recombinant methodology.

The bad thing is, God does not have an account (a digital index of God's inexistence).

Every organic body of a living being is a kind of divine machine or a natural *automat*⁵ that infinitely exceeds all artificial automata.

5. That which Leibniz terms "automat" is often translated from German to English as "automaton"; it is here retained in its original German parlance.

Now, this is an antiquated vision. Rather, we are holograms in serial reproduction against the background of what John von Neumann first sought—self-copying cellular apparati.

Are we entering the dark continent of cybersex technologies, the new anti-utopia?

Mixing human and non-human assets and agents has enacted a new epistemological regime. Analogue ruins in the morphing cybersex.

If trauma precedes us and base emotions are on a stand-by regime outside ourselves, we begin to embody something like 3D printers in a three-dimensional construction with materials at hand. And their multi-dimensional versions are already knocking on the door.

In the search for new lands and new humans, why should not we imagine the printing of new suns?

Is the death drive not a virtual printer of a hopeless organic deposit of instincts? Should we not see Christ in the role of a programmer?

And is Lacan not in a similar role, with whom Jean-Luc Nancy says he has collaborated to define the modern era as the one of transitioning to the limit of all possible signification ...

When Lyotard asks himself if thought can go on without a body, it is as if Lacan has already answered the question. He assumes that the symbolic register is autonomous and does not need the support of a human substrate.

Thus, we reach a life converted into a machinic one—of self-printing genes.

John von Neumann aims exactly at this—self-copying machines, which we have always been.

The truth of the unconscious is of a machinic type.

But cancerous formations too are the result of mad self-copying.

A discreteness of the digital—to an extent where Kittler perceives World War II as a war waged between writing machines—Enigma and Colossus, the primeval computers.

Dionysus is a random generator, Apollo—a word processor. This is what digital design is.

Or, rather, the two-headed interface of the world.

The subject is inessential, a carbon-based processing machine with silicone implants.

I am a word processor, as an American poet states.

Or otherwise a random generator of random numbers.

But Kittler knew that real numbers are unprogrammable. He seeks non-programmable programs, a paradox. As with the white noise of the Greek Sirens, he organizes a special expedition.

The digital principle of recombination is not all-comprehensive—there is no algorithm of all algorithms.

The regular violence of exploitation, corruption, and war is today subsumed under digital chaosmosis, it has become chaotic, disseminated in a deconstructive manner.

There is no Gulliver in digital Lilliput.

Only the flow of data matters, which gives artificial life and syntactic exchange to operating informational units, producing value within the frame of teleological economy, where God is the only debt-code.

But this, too, is antiquated. The market and society should be open, without *eschatos*, and enormous eschatological hopes were invested in this *Offenheit*, which is a par-

adox, but today we already understand that what is at stake is a cloaca of non-ecological shitstorms.

Digital reason replaces historical reason, the spiritual necessity for historical realization (*Aufhebung*) is replaced by the mathematical necessity of a logical machine that entangles human language in actual events.

The interactive grid permeates daily life and slowly reformats cognitive activity in the sense of an increasing coordination between consciousness and digital networks.

We get mud-bound in the virtual environs of movable widgets which expands our dependency on simulations that are hardly distinguishable from real life.

Today, other than human languages, everyone ought to know at least one computer language.

Is this the way towards Leibniz's supreme *automat*, the recombinant panlogical machine? Or is it maybe the way back to the digital, which is always preceded by the analogue?

In the link between human cognition and networked automata, neuro-totalitarian tendencies are being enacted, as Berardi suggests. A neuro-fascism of the small nations jammed by psychotic empires.

Technology permeates the organic body and sculpts its cognitive activity as the body incessantly releases non-assimilable substances—excesses and surpluses of life, libido, unconscious.

Here Berardi spares the sublime objects and surpluses as we know them on the Lacanian-Žižekian line; after all, he is a Deleuzian.

But he does cite Jonathan Franzen—on the subatomic level of the human, the self* has no stable chronology.

There, everything is fractalized and has lost the ability to connect to the Other.

In an interior, foreign country, there flows the solitary dance of synchronization with the pure abstraction of digital time.

We suffer from depressive anxiety related to the excess of stimuli, promises, unlimited horizon of possibilities with nothing in common and no translation.

The obliteration of the mind's singular psychogenesis, exchanged for and uniformed with connective procedures, is being inferred.

Nevertheless, Berardi mentions in passing that the unconscious cannot be obliterated without an excessive engagement with such a psychoanalytic topic.

He prefers the panoramic sociological vision. The world is something of a transition from nicotine to cellular culture. Marlboro replaced by Motorola.

The sensory apparatus has changed and become rudimentary in digital automatism.

On the digital level, there is no chronology, nor history, nor sense, nor truth.

The hunting of Pokémon in Pokémon GO and mortal selfies are but a guileless onset of immersive technologies.

The continuum of unifying experience is destroyed by the fractal simultaneity of connected virtual aspects. Connectedness without connecting, without solidarity.

Profile, account, code—we become replicant islands of wretchedness populated by solitary digital savages of whom nothing is known other than their mining for crypto-currency.

Defoe's bourgeois myth of Robinson and Friday, however, remains unchanged.

Search engines manipulate the impotent island-monads held in subjection through their very own digital securitization.

Islands populated by the paradoxical class of singletons,* singular psychotics. Connected by what divides them.

The digital is going to do the dirty work for you without you having to situate yourselves as dirty.

Every click is a carbon nail in your analogue coffin.

Fortuna's search engines are not fastened with Virtue,* as in Machiavelli, nor with the simplest of charisma.

Machines are not charismatic, and, what is worse, do not produce added value.

The digital mutation is as invasive as it is because it is not based on ideology or politics. It is not a choice, an automatism. It does not indicate laws or moral principles, but the neuro-physical constitution of language and being.

In fact, this is the new ideology of digital snowflakes which shows the way to the nuclear winter.

The cult of individualism reveals its false nature—what does it mean when the sole value measure for individual success is the conformism of competition?

Totalitarian power invested in the pseudo-universal as the hidden interdiction of being free and competitive.

Today, competition is trapped by market conformism—mediocre tweeting inside the electronic caves of the stock exchange.

What they cannot take away from you is the freedom to fuck up your own life in the way demanded by you yourself.

Capital as a debt code cannot be caught since it is outside the relations of transference.

Thinking and capital are agents of their own nothingness, disappearing in the virtual protocols of interrupted liquidity.

Thanks to the multiplication of shitstorms in the social networks and the info-sphere, the regime of truth is destroyed, and we inhabit a post-factual discursive world.

And post-theoretic, as some do not forget to add.

The world has never had a message. Only this necrotic code of debility, exhumed by the lords of fraud.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: During the last several years, as he has joined the ranks of the iconoclastic journal *Nova sotsialna poeziya* (*New Social Poetry*), Zlatomir Zlatanov continues publishing—mostly online—a series of often seemingly anachronistic and scattered essays that deal with everything from digital culture via psychoanalysis and fascism to poststructuralist philosophies. Yet Zlatanov's principled focus is anatomizing the innards of neoliberal capitalism specifically in its Bulgarian neo-noir spin-off. The text presented here is symptomatic of Zlatanov's traumatic manifesto-like style: it appears to play with the "neuro" turn in philosophy and theory while abstaining from entertaining any adjacent ideology, be it communizing or commonizing. Zlatanov's typical style of ideological defamiliarization denudes impending traumatic shifts within an ongoing political momentum of "turbo-fascism." If it is difficult to unearth a unified message from

this piece of writing, this is largely due to its fragmented structure, which can easily make it a poem. However, the engagement presented here is one of critical tech agnosticism unleashing a Deleuzo-Guattarian schizo-analytical warfare upon the new digital order of the world. This is not a dramatization against the digital, but an attack on the world.

Here, warfare is dramatized most effectively by a peculiar Bulgarian word—*лайномет* (*laynomet*)—which is a composite of the Bulgarian words for "shit" and "throwing." My rendition here is "shit missile" (instead of the even more literal "shit thrower"), given that missile has an openly militaristic connotation that the verb "throw" does not sufficiently carry—other than the "throwing" of a grenade, of course. What the world *laynomet* describes in the Bulgarian original is a person (usually, a journalist) or a newspaper that defames and derogates someone's

reputation and/or work. Someone is a “shit missile” if that person tries to smear you with no particular account relating to anything in real life. That this word relates to journalism is not unusual—Zlatanov has a graduate degree in journalism and is well-trained in this business. Yet the way the “shit missile” works here is well beyond the “shitful” info-flows of tabloidization and yellow journalism—Zlatanov sees the entire semio-sphere as a gigantic “shit missile.” Against whom? Probably against itself, but this is perhaps the one question that one would like to have answered, for Zlatanov does not specify who is the subject of the “shit missile.” If the info-sphere is an inorganic and ahistorical grandiose invention of post-capitalism, then the “shit” that is thrown is now pervading all strata of reality: the stock exchange, the market, all institutions of life—so long as they are living the life of a disjunctive synthesis, they serve as

concomitant and complicitous “shit missiles.” Yet they do not seem to have an object/subject relation: the inorganic automation of capital transforms into a capitalocenic, carbon-based, subjectless *automat* whereby the Network operates on account of shitting and leaking out for its own sake. And so the “shit missile” is, thus, a trans-subjective nowhere of an erstwhile organic memory, an indication of the very possibility of a relation between something/someone and something/someone. With no teleology but all *hypertelia* (Baudrillard), the shit missile that Zlatanov employs is as meaningless in its realness as it is obsolete in its hypertelia. The *laynomet*, in short, is the conceptual projectile for bombarding the signification of the total economy of bodies and desires as they exist in disjunction with the real world. And the single-paragraph sentences are perhaps the very “shit shots” with which the missile is bombing us.

ZLATOMIR ZLATANOV (born 1953 in Slatina, Bulgaria) is a poet, writer, and critic who, shortly after the political changes of 1989, became—and still is—one of the mavericks of Bulgarian postmodernism. At the very cusp of the theoretico-political transition, he has already experimented with short stories and poetry, as in the poetic book *Palinodies* (1989), largely considered the first openly postmodernist poetry book in Bulgaria. He pre-emptively examined the coming neoliberal transition with his novelette *Exitus* (1985), which he adapted for the 1989 movie with the same title directed by Krassimir Kroumov (to this day considered one of the most representative Bulgarian films concerning the perestroika). Plundering the poetic canon, especially of national poetry, he has transformed and hijacked familiar meanings from the canon into workable socio-political material, with books such as, most (in)famously, *On the Island of the*

Coprophiles (1997). In the late 1990s and early 2000s he began to develop an increasingly theoretical lexis (beginning with *Protocols for the Other*, 2000) and later engaged with the thought of Lacan and Badiou, publishing novels such as *Lacanian Networks* (2005) and the series of essays, *Alain Badiou, Or, the Persistence of Illogical Worlds* (2008).

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