CHAPTER NINE

The Securitarian Society of the Spectacle

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In a society that really has been turned on its head, truth is a moment of falsehood.
—Guy Debord, Thesis 9, *The Society of the Spectacle*

The simple fact of being without reply has given to the false an entirely new quality. At a stroke it is truth which has almost everywhere ceased to exist or, at best, has been reduced to the status of pure hypothesis that can never be demonstrated.
—Guy Debord, Thesis V, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*

This perfect democracy fabricates its own inconceivable enemy, terrorism. It wants, actually, to be judged by its enemies rather than by its results. The history of terrorism is written by the State and it is thus instructive. The spectating populations must certainly never know everything about terrorism, but they must always know enough to convince them that, compared with terrorism, everything else seems rather acceptable, in any case more rational and democratic.
—Guy Debord, Thesis IX, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*

Uncertainty, ambiguity, equivocation, dissimulation, intransigent secrecy, inconceivable enemies, falsehoods without reply, truths that cannot be verified, hypotheses that can never be demonstrated—these have truly become the hallmarks of our (global) political present.[1] An audacious confrontation with this same constellation of epistemic enigmas distinguishes the unique imaginative force of the social critique of Guy Debord (1967; 1988). Although it emerged as the articulation of a radical political project during the 1960s, and despite contemporary efforts to domesticate it by safely consigning it

to the mausoleum of the past, Debord's work, like that of his Situationist cothinker Raoul Vaneigem, remains "part of a subversive current of which the last has not yet been heard" (Vaneigem 1967/1994: 18).[2] This persistent pertinence of Debord's thought in the wake of the so-called war on terror is especially evident in light of his bold and arresting proposition that the society which fashions itself as a "perfect democracy fabricates its own inconceivable enemy, terrorism" (Thesis IX, 1988/2005).[3] Thus, our present and unrelenting moment of crisis summons forth a reanimated consideration of the enduring explanatory power of Debord's austere theoretical formulation of spectacle.[4] Debord himself stringently cautions against quotation as recourse to "a theoretical authority invariably tainted if only because it has become quotable, because it is now a fragment torn away from its context, from its own movement" (1967/1995: 145–46). Nevertheless, he endorses plagiarism in the service of genuine subversion (154). With the aspiration of frankly confronting the terror of the spectacle of security, and thus with precisely strategic purposes (cf. Agamben 1996/2000: 73), I hope for this essay to incite Debord's specter to contemporary purposes.

In his *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (1988), Debord retrospectively provides a concise summation of the society of the spectacle, as he had originally depicted it in 1967: "the autocratic reign of the market economy, which had acceded to an irresponsible sovereignty, and the totality of new techniques of government that accompanied this reign" (Thesis II; 1988/2005). Significantly elaborating upon and extending Marx's critique of the fetishism of the commodity under capitalism (1867/1976: 163–77), Debord identified the overwhelming and unprecedented hegemony of image and appearance mediating all social relations, by which "the whole of life . . . presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*," ensuring that "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation" and tending to reduce all social life from its already estranged and atomized condition to the sheer passivity of spectatorship (1967/1995: 12; emphasis in original), "a generalized autism" (153). In his subsequent reformulation, Debord further elaborates "five principal features: incessant technological renewal; fusion of State and economy; generalized secrecy; forgeries without reply; a perpetual present" (Thesis V; 1988/ 2005).[5] Whereas the spectacle may be quintessentially characterized by an incessant monological tyranny and garrulous redundancy—"a sort of eternity of non-importance that speaks loudly" (Thesis VI; 1988/2005; cf. 1967/1995: 17, 19)—Debord's subsequent reflections nonetheless concentrate

more pointedly on the "generalized secrecy" that "stands behind the spectacle, as the decisive complement of all it displays and, in the last analysis, as its most important operation" (Thesis V; 1988/2005). Hence, the brazenness of the spectacle—its reliance on unrelenting mass mediation and exuberant display to manifest itself as a specious unity, "an enormous positivity, out of reach and beyond dispute" (1967/1995: 15)—remains, as in Marx's classic account (1867) of the thing-like reification of relations between people, inevitably accompanied by the invisibility of the real social relations of (alienated, exploited, and subjugated) life. What, then, might the concept of the society of the spectacle, with its emphatic interest in the cynical mobilization of appearances over and against lived social relations, have to offer a history of our securitarian present?

Catastrophe and History

> The end of history, being itself a catastrophe, can only be fueled by catastrophe. Managing the end therefore becomes synonymous with the management of catastrophe.
> —Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*

In his concluding remarks in *Comments*, Debord notably acknowledged that the subjugated, and even some of those who are directly implicated in the management of the spectacle's domination, are "made to believe that, essentially, they are still living in a world which in fact disappeared." Furthermore, he predicted that a change that would "decisively complete" the work of the spectacle was "imminent and ineluctable," but would ultimately appear "like lightning, which we know only when it strikes" (Thesis XXXII; 1988/2005).

Not long thereafter, in 1992, several key personnel in the highest echelons of the United States government elaborated a post–Cold War military doctrine for which the "first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival" and, more specifically, "to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power," in the interest of upholding and promoting the supremacy of "the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the U.S."[6] During the ensuing years, these same figures then collaborated in the formation of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC)

and were signatories to its founding programmatic documents (1997; 2000), which unabashedly called for a robust expansion of the United States' military capabilities and a dramatically more aggressive agenda for actively and deliberately reshaping global geopolitical realities according to what the Project deemed to be the United States' strategic interests. The Project was not at all reticent about its proposal for "preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles" (1997). Memorably, the authors of the Project's most important position paper acknowledged that financing such militarism would require popular justification, and explicitly and wistfully remarked upon the likely need for "some catastrophic and catalyzing event" reminiscent of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 (2000: 51). Then, "like lightening, which we know only when it strikes," as if fortuitously, on September 11, 2001, this "new Pearl Harbor" came to pass, in a spectacle of fiery death and mangled limbs and the thunderous redoubled collapse of the monumental twin towers of the World Trade Center. Leaving all the world paralyzed in front of their (our) television screens, watching the incessant coverage and inescapable repetition of the grisly scene, the events of September 11, 2001—in the eloquent words of Jean Baudrillard—presented themselves as "the brutal irruption of death live, in real time" (2001/2002a: 408; 2001/2002b: 16–17). Yet, as if miraculously, we the global multitude of televisual witnesses were seemingly rendered invulnerable in our isolated spectatorship as virtual "all-seeing survivor[s]" of the calamity-as-image, free "to remain indefinitely the same," in exactly the same place (Weber 2002: 454–555; cf. Lefebvre 1961/2002: 76).

Conveniently, PNAC stalwarts (Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby, Stephen Cambone, and others) were, by this time, strategically (re-)positioned at the helm of the US state.[7] That is to say, they were prepared to husband and reap the harvest of the seemingly cataclysmic events, which President George W. Bush, in a nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress, promptly and predictably analogized to "one Sunday in 1941" as the purportedly singular previous exception to a narrative wherein "Americans have known wars—but . . . they have been wars on foreign soil" (September 20, 2001). Then, on the anniversary of that earlier catalytic exception, Bush demonstratively identified the events of September 11, 2001, as this generation's Pearl Harbor, in response to which, he affirmed accordingly, "Now your calling has come" (December 7, 2001).

The rest, as they say, is history, or rather, more precisely, the rest is what they call the end of history.

The function of the spectacle, as Debord so presciently and emphatically contends, is "to bury history in culture," affirming "the eternal presence of a system that was never created and will never disappear" (1967/1995: 137). Indeed, in spite of the overt recourse to invoking an historical event (the Japanese bombardment of Pearl Harbor), such ritual evocations of the past operate less as a cogent reflection on history and rather more as a kind of mythmaking. This is made abundantly evident inasmuch as the Pearl Harbor comparison was deployed to authorize the enunciation of an extravagantly metaphysical discourse in which, according to Bush, "each of you is commissioned by history to face freedom's enemies" (December 7, 2001). The principal work of such mythification is aimed to recast contemporary militarism as the (implicitly masculine) generational duty of "the children and grandchildren of the generation that fought and won the Second World War" (ibid.). Indeed, this sort of ideological short-circuit is all the more crucial for contemporary war making because it pretends to suture the unfathomable rupture imposed by the US defeat in Vietnam. The humiliation of US military power and imperial prestige by the Vietnamese people's anticolonial aspirations for self-determination, as Linda Boose (1993) argues persuasively, represented "a traumatic break between the men of one generation and those of another," in effect, between fathers and sons. By seeking to dress that open wound in imperial-patriarchal intergenerational connectivity, the mythological evocation of World War II as a precedent for contemporary militarism is thus conscripted to restore the hallowed heritage of a "regeneration through violence" (Slotkin 1973).

The "first priority" of the spectacle, in Debord's account, is precisely "to make historical knowledge in general disappear," for "the end of history gives current-day power a pleasant break" (Thesis VI; 1988/2005). Inevitably assisted by Hollywood's seemingly fortuitous delivery earlier in 2001 of the feature film *Pearl Harbor*, this sort of spectacular effort to "bury history in culture" is well demonstrated in the ideological operation by which the ostensible "suicide bombing" of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were pressed to evoke the spectral memory of Japanese kamikaze pilots. This analogy nonetheless resonated even in commentary that presented itself in the guise of critique, as in Baudrillard's discussion of the events of September 11, 2001, where he makes repeated reference to the presumed hijackers as

"the kamikazes" (2001/2002a: 405, 411).[8] Such historical allusions, however, are strictly anachronistic. Indeed, the historically inaccurate elision of the Pearl Harbor attack (in 1941) with kamikaze suicide bombing (which was first deployed in late 1944; see Dower 1986: 52), is a perfect instantiation of what Michael Rogin incisively depicts as spectacular historical/political amnesia, upholding "an identity that persists over time and that preserves a false center by burying the actual past" (1993: 508). Suspending history by smothering it in a mythified culture of catastrophe, the spectacle of terror thereby served to hint at not only the much-celebrated "end of history" but also a quasi-eschatological end of time.

The Perpetual Present

That the so-called war on terror does not properly belong to historical time was reinforced in Bush's originary discourse by a still more grandiose and equally metaphysical gesture:

> There is a great divide in our time—not between religions or cultures, but between civilization and barbarism. People of all cultures wish to live in safety and dignity. The hope of justice and mercy and better lives are common to all humanity. Our enemies reject these values—and by doing so, they set themselves not against the West, but against the entire world. (December 7, 2001).

By disqualifying the "terrorist" enemy from civilization itself, and thereby from humanity as a whole, the ostensible "great divide in our time" is in fact shadowed by a preposterously implausible unity of humankind as such, under the aegis of "America" as "freedom's defender" (December 7, 2001). Thus, whereas "the bitterness . . . of our war in the Pacific now belongs to history"—and as such, by implication, may be consigned to a remote and domesticated (already "known" but effectively unknowable) past—the United States' present commitment to global war was refigured as "civilization's fight," in which even Japan, "one of our former enemies," may be counted as a junior partner (ibid.). At least in its ideological intent, these mystical fashionings of the United States' "mission" and "great calling" (ibid.) enact Debord's depiction of the spectacle as "essentially tautological" (1967/1995: 15) and the expression of a "ruling order [that] discourses endlessly upon itself in an uninterrupted monologue of self-praise" (19).

The events of September 11, 2001, were almost immediately codified (and commodified) as the quasi-hieroglyphic ideogram,"9/11" (Heller 2005: 3; cf. Simpson 2006), and as we have already seen, ideologically figured as a rupture in time that altogether severed those events from any prior history and enshrouded the perpetual spectacular present in the timelessness of a war without end (Trimarco and Depret 2005). True to the mandates of the society of the spectacle, the originary "shock and awe" of the attacks on the World Trade towers almost instantaneously became, in Wyatt Mason's words, "the most exhaustively imaged disaster in human history" (2004), and has retained the character of what Dana Heller aptly calls "a kind of memory that is not a recollection but a repetition" (2005: 24). Indeed, beginning exactly from the literal void left by the collapsed towers, tellingly designated "Ground Zero," there was initiated, through persistent insistence and astounding repetitiveness, a spectacular void in time itself, after which, by implication, there could be no past, no history that might illuminate, but only the "social organization of a paralyzed history, of a paralyzed memory" (another of Debord's formulations of the spectacle; 1967/1995: 114). Already by the following day, the script was fixed in place: "We're facing a different enemy than we have ever faced. . . . This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil" (Bush, September 12, 2001). A few days later, Bush's handlers had consolidated their discourse further: "This will be a different kind of conflict against a different kind of enemy" (Bush, September 15, 2001). The following day, this "new kind of enemy" was further glossed as "a new kind of evil," which would be met with a "crusade" (Bush, September 16, 2001). Four days thereafter, it was nothing less than "a different world" (Bush, September 20, 2001).

The self-evident anti-Muslim overtones of Bush's invocation of a "crusade"—an apparently fleeting yet flagrant ideological gesture (notably made on a Sunday, which Bush explicitly hailed as "the Lord's Day" when "millions of Americans mourned and prayed," accompanied by nine mentions of the word "faith")—met almost immediately with vociferous opprobrium. The "scandal" conveniently allowed Bush to cynically disavow such allegations in a classic instance of what Slavoj Žižek (1997: 31–33) describes as a momentary revelation of the obscene, which enables power to retroactively engage in self-censorship in order to enhance the efficiency of its own discourse. The day before, Bush had already dutifully conscripted an emphatically ecumenical multiculturalism into the service of reanimating US nationalism, promulgating that "Americans of every faith" were committed to "eradicate[ing] the

evil of terrorism" (September 15, 2001). Earlier still, in a televised phone call with the mayor of New York City and the governor of New York state, Bush had already declared, "our nation must be mindful that there are thousands of Arab Americans . . . who love their flag just as much as the three of us do. And we must be mindful that as we seek to win the war that we treat Arab Americans and Muslims with the respect they deserve" (September 13, 2001). Thus, he had already implicitly instituted the notion that there were some Arabs and other Muslims who—because they might in some manner demonstrably perform their "love" for the US flag and thus confirm that they are "good Americans"—could thereby be verified to be deserving of respect. Then, upon delivering his ultimatum to the Taliban regime as the prelude to war against the people of Afghanistan, Bush explicitly addressed himself to "Muslims throughout the world," avowing "We respect your faith. . . . Its teachings are good. . . . The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends," and thus made explicit the capricious distinction between "good" Muslims and "evil" ones, enemies who "hate us."

Notably, in the truest spirit of the society of the spectacle, Bush specified among the Taliban's most reprehensible crimes the charge that "you can be jailed for owning a television" (September 20, 2001). All religious creeds, however "diverse," may be interchangeably "good," or are at least universally tolerable, insofar as they interchangeably refract the universal estrangement of human productive powers and creative capacities. But then television's spectacle too must be venerated, or at least granted its due toleration, alongside all the other proverbial opiates of the mass of humanity. What is decisive in Bush's magnanimously "multiculturalist" discourse of US power is the more fundamental friend/enemy distinction (De Genova 2010). Such imperial multiculturalism is inevitably premised upon submission and conformity to the global regime of capital accumulation which enforces such alienation—a "world order . . . ultimately backed by the U.S."[9] Thus, the ultimatum to the Taliban also notoriously provided the occasion for an ultimatum to the world: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush, September 20, 2001).

If this was a discourse that sought to interrupt and suspend history, therefore, it was also one that aspired to fix the future, matching retrospective reconstructions with century-long projections. Precisely in the posthistorical spirit of divining and conjuring into existence a "new American century" (and honoring the sheer inconceivability of such an epoch not being predicated upon warfare),

Bush had promptly nominated his so-called war on terror as "the war of the twenty-first century" (Bush, September 13, 2001). Thus, this discourse aimed to preempt the possibility that there could be even a plausible future within the scope of any living person's life span that might be different from the regime of the present moment. In a peculiar turn of events, however, the mass media widely reported Bush's formulation of an implicit hundred years' war as "the first war of the twenty-first century," thereby parochializing this war as just one more in a presumably never-ending prosaic succession and also implicitly limiting its temporal horizon. A notoriously ineloquent (and therefore all the more congenially populist) mouthpiece, Bush very probably misspoke in the first instance; hence, his oratory may have been subsequently rectified by those who superintend his cue cards and speech teleprompters. Or perhaps his rhetoric was simply subjected to the stringent discipline of the spectacle itself, and had to be brought in line with a phrase that had already become inflated by its almost instantaneously global circulation. In any case, the slogan was accordingly revised in Bush's own rhetoric (e.g., September 16, 2001). Later, however, in an effort to promote the notion of a necessary and overdue "revolution" in "the American way of war," Bush did nonetheless rekindle another variant of this millenarian century–speak, referring to "the terrorists" definitively as "the enemies of the 21st century" (December 11, 2001).[10]

Thus, everything is new, nothing will ever be the same again, but henceforth, nothing will change, ever again.

In the wake of the election of Barack Obama as Bush's successor to the US presidency, the facile illusion that the most pernicious aspects of the Bush administration would now be simply finished, or promptly rectified by a new regime in the White House, has had to be tempered by a sober and intrepid assessment of the deeply consequential institutionalization of antiterrorism (De Genova 2010). One need only note that in his speech on the evening of the election, Obama found it imperative to proclaim to the world: "And to all those watching tonight from beyond our shores, from parliaments and palaces to those who are huddled around radios in the forgotten corners of our world . . . a new dawn of American leadership is at hand. To those who would tear this world down—we will defeat you" (November 4, 2008). Even as Obama gestured toward a "new" (and by implication, different) style of "leadership," here was the requisite signal and the belligerent affirmation of a pronouncedly "American" imperial will to overpower those who might dare to set themselves up as the enemies of "this world," which is to say, after all, this global regime

of capital accumulation and its regnant sociopolitical order. In his speech on "national security," delivered on the eve of the Memorial Day (militarist) holiday weekend during the first months of his presidency in 2009, Obama reasserted the entrenched idiom of the Bush administration's rationalizations for its overseas military adventures, vowing to "take the fight to the extremists who attacked us on 9/11." Indeed, he invoked yet again the dominant ideological message of historical rupture—"After 9/11, we knew that we had entered *a new era*"—while he likewise reaffirmed the well-worn theme that could situate his own devout commitment to war making within a larger national-family narrative of perpetual renewal: "Now this generation faces a great test in the specter of terrorism" (May 21, 2009; emphasis added). Remarkably though, if only inadvertently, Obama designated the defining enemy of the era—"terrorism"—to be but a "specter," a haunting metaphysical fixture virtually indispensable to the ongoing project of US empire and militarism as a way of life.

Under Obama, furthermore, Bush's "state of emergency" has been normalized and routinized, now articulable in a rather more prosaic language. Instead of incendiary alarm or millenarian urgency, Obama recites his antiterrorist articles of faith in the manner of a somnambulist: "We know that al Qaeda is actively planning to attack us again. We know that this threat will be with us for a long time . . ." (May 21, 2009). Most revealingly, upon the assassination of Osama bin Laden in 2011, Obama's presumed triumph was distinctly understated and somber. In place of trumpeting the bravado of assault squad commandos, he quietly praised the "tireless" and "painstaking" work of "counter-terrorism professionals" and "our intelligence community." While unequivocally characterizing the event as "the most significant achievement to date in our nation's effort to defeat al Qaeda," Obama nonetheless insisted, "[bin Laden's] death does not mark the end of our effort. There's no doubt that al Qaeda will continue to pursue attacks against us. We must—and we will—remain vigilant at home and abroad" (May 2, 2011). Thus, the resounding message was that, in effect, nothing had changed—that perpetual warfare as well as the "vigilance" of a veritably global security state would remain the banal fact of a by now relentlessly tedious "new era."

Rupture and Continuity

In terms that Debord surely must have appreciated for their obscene piety toward the spectacle, the end of the Cold War had occasioned Francis

Fukuyama's precipitous (and precisely, spectacular) proclamation of the End of History in 1989, with a crypto-Hegelian neoliberal anticipation of "the universal homogeneous state" tersely characterized as "liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to VCRs and stereos in the economic" (1989: 6; cf. 1992). Exactly one month after September 11, 2001, Fukuyama found it proper to reiterate his position. Perfectly enacting Debord's contention that "the spectacle is the self-portrait of power" (1967/1995: 19), Fukuyama announced: "We remain at the end of history because there is only one system that will continue to dominate world politics, that of the liberal-democratic West" (2001; see also De Genova 2010).

Within this resounding echo chamber of triumphalism, much of contemporary social and political criticism is itself a merely "spectacular critique of the spectacle" (Debord, Thesis III; 1988/2005), recapitulating as many of its conceits as not. Perhaps the most telling example of such spectacular criticism, precisely because of its flagrant combination of at times astonishing lucidity with casual and abject cynicism, is that of Jean Baudrillard. The enduring salience of Debord's thought may indeed be detected in the analogies with it suggested by Baudrillard's work. Although, in his later works, Baudrillard is fairly circumspect about his theoretical debts to Debord, evidences are ample, nonetheless, as in his audacious gesture: "The spectacle of terrorism imposes the terrorism of the spectacle" (2001/2002a: 414; 2001/2002b: 30).[11] Because of the distinct affinities between Baudrillard and Debord, therefore, my critique aspires to engage Baudrillard in a manner both more generous and more interested than might be viable from the vantage point of more polemically anti-"postmodern" treatments (e.g., Norris 1992).[12] After all, Baudrillard had the critical acumen to respond almost instantaneously to the events of September 11, 2001, by declaring unsentimentally that "free-market globalization is in the process of actualizing itself . . . [as] a globalized police state of total control, with a security terror" (2001/2002a: 414; 2001/2002b: 32).

For discrepant reasons theoretically, and with the apparently opposite political conclusion, Baudrillard nonetheless concurs with Fukuyama's prognosis: against those who "believed in a resurrection of history beyond its well-advertised end," Baudrillard affirms with regard to the events of September 11, 2001, "this terrorist violence is neither a reality backlash nor a history backlash" (2001/2002a 413; 2001/2002b: 28–29). Thus, Baudrillard effectively replaces Fukuyama's cheerful neoliberal triumphalism with predictions of an inexorable apocalyptic doom. Interlaced with eulogies for "the West"

and "the white world" as "the waste-product of its own history" (1992/1994: 67), Baudrillard forecasts "the slow extermination of the rest [*sic*] of the world" (66) and ultimately humanity's "death as a species" (71). It is, however, a distinctly "retrospective apocalypse" (22). Elsewhere, moreover, he is emphatic about his particular objection to the notion of an "end" of history, as such: "We have to get used to the idea that *there is no end any longer, there will no longer be any end*, that history itself has become interminable. . . . This attempt to escape the apocalypse of the virtual is a utopian desire, the last of our utopian desires" (116–117); emphasis in original). The apocalypse that Baudrillard announces, then, is expressly not real but rather "virtual" (119)—not so much an "end" of history as a veritable reversal (10–13), and thus history's nullification through perpetual recycling (27), "a catastrophic process of recurrence" (11). If it is catastrophic, then, it is only so in a more or less predictable—hence, strictly manageable (66)—way, because it is never genuinely new but rather a mere repetition and virtual recapitulation of history in a state of suspended animation. Fukuyama's "end of history" thus presents itself in Baudrillard's interpretation as something more akin to an incessant barrage of reruns, engulfing us in virtuality and evacuating all events of any meaning. From the same perspective, but referring to "the spirit of terrorism" and the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, Baudrillard detects merely "a repetitive and déjà vu type of pseudo-event" (2001/2002: 415; 2001/2002b: 34). Hence, for Baudrillard, "we no longer make history. We have become reconciled with it and protect it like an endangered masterpiece" (1992/1994: 23), and "in this way, we enter, beyond history, upon pure fiction, upon the illusion of the world" (122). Like Fukuyama, nevertheless, Baudrillard (even in the guise of criticism) merely exalts the futility of resistance, and what is ultimately the smug conceit of an unabashedly solipsistic Eurocentrism in his philosophical standpoint is tantamount to a grand injunction to paralysis and, precisely, specular passivity.[13] Baudrillard's critique of the notion of the "end of history" amounts to little more than the countercontention that nothing has changed and, indeed, nothing can change.

The compulsive proclamation that "everything changed," on the other hand, is indisputably one of the more blatant if no less nefarious ideological operations of the hegemonic discourse of antiterrorism in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. As for Bush, so also for Obama: "After 9/11, we knew that we had entered a new era . . ." (Obama, May 21, 2009). Critical social inquiry would of course be well-advised to shun such apocalyptic

rhetoric, as if we were truly the bewildered inhabitants now of the end of time. "Discontinuity," Walter Benjamin aptly suggests, "is the regulative idea of the tradition of the ruling classes" (1927–40/1999: 364). Hence, the poignancy of Baudrillard's suggestion of a management of catastrophe, its superintendence, and all the finely calibrated orchestration and choreography thereby implied. If one may speak of cataclysmic and catalytic events, however, it is useful to recall a still more fundamental critical insight derived from Marx's analysis of capital's voracious appetite for surplus value as its defining feature. Insofar as surplus value can only be extracted from living labor (so-called variable capital), the cyclical crises of undervalorization compel a process whereby unprofitable investments in physical capital must occasionally be sacrificed in favor of new investments that can put living labor to work and thus generate new sources of surplus—what, since Schumpeter, has been known as the "creative destruction" of fixed capital (Schumpeter 1950: 83; see also Sewell 2012). We are therefore left to confront what becomes, in Amadeo Bordiga's memorable elaboration of Marx's crucial thesis, nothing less than a "ravenous hunger for catastrophe and ruin" in "an economy based on disasters" (1951; see also Klein 2007). Furthermore, it is instructive to guard a deep and abiding sense of Benjamin's parallel theoretical concern: "that things are 'status quo' *is* the catastrophe" (1927–40/1999: 473; emphasis in original); "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule" (1940/1968: 257).

Nevertheless, as Debord sagely recognizes, "To analyze the spectacle means talking its language to some degree" (1967/1995: 15). In other words, to dissect and interrogate the spectacle's semblance of unity, one must become practically entangled with a unity that the spectacle itself projects. The specious unity of the spectacle is "merely the official language of generalized separation"—the separation occasioned by the systemic and universal detachment of fractured images from every aspect of what may formerly have been cognizable as the totality of social life (12). Reality then becomes apprehensible, if at all, only in always-already partial and fragmented shards, so innumerable that the only semblance of a unity is that grand inversion presented by the spectacle itself. In his reflections on the Bonapartist despotism of the French Second Empire, Benjamin memorably offers a prescient remark: "In times of terror, when everyone is something of a conspirator, everybody will be in a situation where he has to play detective" (1938/1973: 40). Like a detective, indeed, one must gather apparently disconnected clues from the many

shattered and scattered fragments, and reconstruct a negative image of the spurious totality that the spectacle bombastically and gratuitously supplies in the course of its own narcissistic exhibition.

Confronted with the diversionary tactics of this ubiquitous fragmentation, spectacular criticism of the spectacle, in contrast, can merely ironize "the unfolding of events which are themselves also without meaning and consequences and in which . . . there are no longer any causes, *but only effects*" (Baudrillard 1992/1994: 121; emphasis in original). This sort of nihilistic disillusionment, reduced to rhetorical contrivance, which we may detect in one such as Baudrillard, provides an exemplary instance of what Giorgio Agamben (following Debord) identifies as one of the defining features of the spectacle itself as "our epochal condition": "What prevents communication is communicability itself; human beings are kept separate by what unites them. . . . Language not only constitutes itself as an autonomous sphere, but also no longer reveals anything at all—or, better yet, it reveals the nothingness of all things" (1990[1996/2000]: 85; cf. Lefebvre 1961/2002: 76). In contrast to the garrulous irony of spectacular criticism, as Agamben incisively notes with regard to the creative paralysis of the satirist Karl Krauss in the face of the "indescribable" rise of German fascism, "Debord's discourse begins precisely where satire becomes speechless" (76).

Where Satire Becomes Speechless

Amid the cacophony of heightened security alerts and the proclamations that everything had changed, that we were living now in an altogether different world, there were also immediately discernable calls summoning ordinary US citizens to demonstrably enact with patriotic fervor the "the steel of American resolve" to not allow those "despicable" terrorist bullies to intimidate "a great nation" (Bush, September 11, 2001). What was the precise content of this relentless flattery of "American resolve"? Anything less than a dazzling display of collective will to "be open for business" would be tantamount to conceding that the enemy had succeeded in their mission of depriving "Americans" of "our way of life, our very freedom" (ibid.). The day after September 11, 2001, when Bush appeared for a media photo opportunity with his National Security "team" to announce that the prior day's events were indeed "more than acts of terror. They were acts of war," he assured the public that the state was indeed there to protect "the nation" and deliver it from

darkness, that the federal government was fully operative, that all of its agencies were indeed "conducting business." "But," he continued, "it is not business as usual" (September 12, 2001). Evidently in a spirit of magnanimity that inadvertently confirmed that "our way of life, our very freedom" was not, in fact, to be confused with free time, however, when Bush officially proclaimed Friday, September 14, 2001, to be a "National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001," he "encourage[d] employers to permit their workers time off *during the lunch hour* to attend noontime services to pray for our land" (September 13, 2001; emphasis added).

Five days after the events, on the same occasion when Bush notoriously announced that the so-called war on terror was a "crusade" in which "we will rid the world of evil-doers," the complementary and truly emphatic message of his prepared remarks was nonetheless that it was time to "go back to work" and "work hard like you always have" (September 16, 2001). Indeed, in this brief outdoor press conference, for which the prepared opening statement consisted of only five short paragraphs, Bush remarkably uttered the words "work" or "job" fifteen times. In a subsequent media event, staged in an airport to shore up confidence in the ailing airline industry, Bush ventriloquized the air travelers in attendance by proclaiming "their" clear message to the "American public": "get about the business of America" . . . "we must stand against terror by going back to work" (September 27, 2001). In the face of increasing evidence of an economic recession, these ham-fisted injunctions to collectively shake off the proverbial posttraumatic stress syndrome and return to productive labor were also coupled with tinny bids to go shopping. However uncannily, Bush even declared it "one of the great goals of this nation's war . . . to restore public confidence in the airline industry . . . to tell the traveling public: Get on board . . . Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed." One could scarcely miss the spectacular code-switching between the commander-in-chief's millenarian scenarios of "a new type of war" against an elusive network of "evildoers" "who know no borders," intent to "terrorize America" (ibid.), on the one hand, and the chief executive cheerleader's feeble pleas for what Dana Heller has called "the promise of closure through consumption" (2005: 20) and "America-as-cure marketing" (21), on the other, luridly strung together in absurd dissonance, alternating currents within the same speech. Hence, the message: Be scared,

be very, very scared . . . but don't neglect your patriotic duty in the war against terrorism to "get on board . . . and enjoy life"; just be mindful to do so "the way we want it to be enjoyed." As if to verify that his own incessant labor "to rout out and destroy global terrorism" was enough to work up a beastly appetite, furthermore, Bush opened his remarks (September 27, 2001) with mention that Chicago's mayor, who was on hand, had reportedly promised to buy him lunch; Bush predictably pandered to what Benjamin DeMott (1990) has called "the imperial middle": "I like my cheeseburger medium."

It should suffice to say nothing else of Bush's mediocrity than that it supplied only the most perverse instance which cynically confirms, indeed displays, nothing so much as the veritable status of all US presidents, precisely, as puppets. Here is a revealing instance, however, of just what kind of theatrical work is required of those who come to serve as such prominent devices in the larger spectacle. "The self-movement of the spectacle consists in this," Debord clarifies, "it arrogates to itself everything that in human activity exists in a fluid state so as to possess it in a congealed form—as things that, being the negative expression of living value, have become exclusively abstract value. In these signs we recognize our old enemy the commodity, which appears at first sight"—very much like the cheeseburger that the mayor is going to *buy* for the president—"a very trivial thing, and easily understood, yet which is in reality a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties" (1967/1995: 26). Prefiguring the spectacle indeed, as Agamben notes in his reflections on Debord, the "secret" of the commodity was one that capital sought to most effectively conceal "by exposing it in full view" (Agamben 1990 [1996/2000]: 74]).

Bush's seemingly trite and ephemeral remark about an apparently trifling cheeseburger, which he was so performatively eager to consume, abounds in the sort of metaphysical subtleties that command immanent critique. Indeed, the gesture recalls Andy Warhol's famous observation about the metonymic relation between "America," the illusory egalitarianism of the market, and the absolute supremacy of the commodity:

> You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you know the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it, the bum knows it, and you know it.[14]

Bush's cheeseburger thus signaled his fatuous equality (his primacy among equals, we might say) with the citizens and denizens alike who comprise the US populace and are routinely interpellated into varying degrees of subjection by his discourse. The cheeseburger's prospective consumption promised to consummate what would be, by implication, the well-deserved but emphatically humble reward for Bush's tireless labor of protecting "the American people" by waging and winning the so-called war on terror. Earlier, in an awkward effort to strike a measured balance between the potentially competing demands of compassion and "resolve," tragedy and opportunity, mourning and war making, Bush had remarked: "I am a loving guy, and I am also someone, however, who has got a job to do—and I intend to do it" (September 13, 2001). The middle-brow, "Middle America," and compulsively "middle-class" (reactionary) populism of US politics aside, and its egalitarian ethos of wholesome and unpretentious sameness notwithstanding, the message was clear. The president was simply and dutifully doing *his* job, just as he urged everyone else to get back to work and do theirs: "And we have got a job to do—just like the farmers and ranchers and business owners and factory workers have a job to do. My administration has a job to do, and we're going to do it. We will rid the world of evil-doers" (ibid.). The just reward for each and every hardworking drone (as patriotic citizen-bystanders in the larger passion play of "America" versus evil) would also be "at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing," which upon closer inspection is revealed to be "a very strange thing, abounding in . . . theological niceties" (Marx 1867/1976: 163)—the commodity—in this instance, dressed down in the homely and diminutive garb of so many unassuming cheeseburgers, all the same, and all good.

Or, at least, as good as anyone should have any right to expect.

Securitizing Everyday Life

The demand for a dutiful and docile (and now, patriotic, even heroic) submission to the terrifyingly mundane business-as-usual of alienated labor and joyless consumption has to be recognized as the covert yet resplendently overt "truth" of the regime of the spectacle and its official "state of emergency" (Bush, September 14, 2001). While Bush persistently reiterated the litany, which he had enunciated in his very first "Address to the Nation" on the evening of the events, that "the terrorists" were obsessed with "America" and targeted it because it is "the brightest beacon for freedom

and opportunity in the world" (September 11, 2001)—later embellishing the claim with the contention that "these people can't stand freedom; they hate our values; they hate what America stands for" (September 13, 2001)—his injunctions to the citizenry in this monumental struggle against evil itself were consistently and remarkably quotidian. "Americans are asking: What is expected of us?" Bush ventriloquized, with the immediate reply, "I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children" (September 20, 2001). He went on to list a series of other modest, even pedestrian, requests: do not single out anyone for "unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith"; make charitable donations for the victims of the attacks; cooperate with the FBI; be patient with delays and inconveniences caused by more stringent security measures, for a very long time to come; continue to "participate" confidently in the US economy; and pray for the victims, for the military, and "for our great country" (ibid.). In short, leave the war in the hands of the experts (including the prosecution/persecution of suspected enemies; cf. De Genova 2007), submit to the authority of the security state, combine religious devotion with nationalist and militaristic acquiescence, work hard, spend money without inhibitions, and above all, just "live your lives"—which is to say, conform to the dreary lifeless conventions of an already alienated everyday life.

The spectacle of "terrorism," however, electrified the overall sense that the everyday—if consistently disappointing, universally dissatisfying, and in general, excruciatingly boring—was now to be both equated with a nostalgia for a putatively "lost" sense of safety and comfort, and permanently if ineluctably imperiled by an elusive menace. Baudrillard notes incisively:

> [The terrorists] have even—and this is the height of cunning—used the banality of American everyday life as cover and camouflage. Sleeping in their suburbs, reading and studying with their families, before activating themselves suddenly like time bombs. The faultless mastery of this clandestine style of operation is almost as terroristic as the spectacular act of September 11, since it casts suspicion on any and every individual. Might not any inoffensive person be a potential terrorist? . . . So the event ramifies down to the smallest detail—the source of an even more subtle mental terrorism. (2001/2002b: 19–20; cf. 2001/2002a: 409–410)

Furthermore, Baudrillard adds, "If they could pass unnoticed, then each of us is a criminal going unnoticed . . . and, in the end, this is no doubt true"

(2001/2002b: 20; cf. 2001/2002a: 410).[15] Here, indeed, is the most profound possible meaning to Baudrillard's contention that "a globalized police state of total control" is being actualized through "a security terror" (2001/2002a: 414; 2001/2002b: 32). This subtle terrorizing that apparently disrupts and destabilizes the somnolence of the everyday, which Baudrillard attributes to the cunning of "the terrorists," is figured however as an effect of a larger "vertiginous cycle" in which the suicidal death of the terrorist is "an infinitesimal point," a kind of miniscule puncture "that provokes a suction, a vacuum, a gigantic convection" around which power "becomes denser, tetanizes itself, contracts and collapses in its own superefficiency" (2001/2002a: 409; cf. 2001/2002b: 18). He goes on to claim that "all the visible and real power of the system" is virtually helpless against the merciless and irreducible potency of the minute but symbolically supercharged suicides of a few individuals—exactly because their deaths challenge power to match their exorbitant audacity and determination by doing what it could never do (destroy itself), thus leaving it with no possibility of a symbolically adequate reply (ibid.). Yet, in all of this, Baudrillard never parts company with the official story, by which we are instructed to believe—based on the "intelligence" of the police and secret police, the veracity of which may strictly never be demonstrated and is therefore never strictly verifiable—the unquestionable and irrefutable "truth" of what is finally a conspiracy theory *par excellence* about a handful of fanatics.

The "shock and awe" publicity campaign for the obscenely asymmetrical and ruthlessly indiscriminate aerial bombardment of Iraq (to say nothing of the less trumpeted assault on an already prostrate Afghanistan before it, and then again subsequently under Obama) surely never matched the palpable symbolic momentousness of the collapse of the World Trade Center's twin towers. Nevertheless, that spectacular "originary" moment indubitably did provide the ensuing onslaught of global militarism with the necessary (and arguably adequate, if not sufficiently persuasive) symbolic "cause." And if these spectacular events have indeed ensured that we are all now suspects (De Genova 2007), each a potential "criminal going unnoticed" (Baudrillard 2001/2002b: 20; cf. 2001/2002a: 410), then the securitization of everyday life that has ensued from the gigantic convection generated by those events may itself be their supreme achievement. For, the "terrorist" menace is the state's pronouncedly evil changeling, its most perfect and ideal enemy, whose banal anonymity and phantasmagorical ubiquity prefigure and summon forth the irradiation of the everyday by the security state as our savior and redeemer.

The ascendancy of the reanimated security state may even be an expression of the would-be superefficiency of the system of power. In contrast to Baudrillard's sense of its impending doom, this securitarianism has precisely not gone reeling from a symbolically mortal assault and careening toward an implosive collapse, but rather has refortified its foundations by seeking to meticulously secure and perpetuate what Vaneigem called "the everyday eternity of life" (19911994: 7), with all its "abundant and bitter consolations" (8).

By now, we are overdue to revisit some of the critical insights of the critique of everyday life postulated by Henri Lefebvre (1947; 1961; 1968; 1981; 1992), who was, after all, a major intellectual precursor and interlocutor for Debord, Vaneigem, and their Situationist collaborators. Indeed, in *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (1968), his boldest reformulation of that critical itinerary, which he ultimately continued to elaborate and refine over the greater part of a long and remarkably prolific intellectual lifetime, Lefebvre arrives at an arresting conclusion: the outcome of an excessively bureaucratitized capitalist society of controlled consumption and regimented everyday life is, precisely, *terrorism* (1968/1971: 148). More specifically, Lefebvre interrogates a kind of terrorism predicated upon a repressive social order "that, in order to avoid overt conflicts, adopts a language . . . that deadens or even annuls opposition . . . a certain type of (liberal) democracy where compulsions are neither perceived nor experienced as such," which "holds violence in reserve . . . [and] relies more on the self-repression inherent in organized everyday life" (146). In *a terrorist society* (in emphatic contradistinction with the reign of political terror and its extravagant recourse to outright violence to terrorize a polity), Lefebvre continues, "compulsion and the illusion of freedom converge . . . terror is diffuse, violence is always latent, pressure is exerted from all sides." The putative "values" of such a society "need no explaining, they are accepted, they are compelling, and any desire to understand or question them savours of sacrilege" (147). In a terrorist society, "each individual trembles lest he ignore the Law . . . everyone feels guilty and is guilty—guilty of possessing a narrow margin of freedom and adaptability and making use of it by stealth in a shallow underground darkness, alas, too easily pierced" (159). Hence, "moral discipline [is] the insignia of terrorist societies . . . the façade exhibited for the benefit of a well-governed everyday life" (161). This sort of terror defines for itself a pure, formal, abstract, unified societal space of everyday life as the arena of its power, from which time—and thus, history and historicity—must be unrelentingly evicted. Rather than a space of

"false consciousness," therefore, it is one of a true but crippled consciousness of reality, severed from the sheer open-endedness of radical possibility and unscripted creativity, which renders terror *normal* (179). Thus, we may say that securitarianism is the spectacular face of what Lefebvre calls a "terrorist society." Securitarianism is indeed a form of rule enacted through the spectacle of terror.

The spectacle of security then recalls again Marx's more elemental depiction of capital (dead labor), sucking life from the wakeful death of the living, ensconced as we are in the routinized subordination of our work and the subordinated routinization of our everyday life. Indeed, as Marx incisively notes, "Security is the supreme social concept of civil society; the concept of the police. . . . Security is . . . the *assurance* of its egotism" (1843/1978: 43; emphasis in original). The egotism of the global capitalist sociopolitical order, of course, operates both as the unencumbered reign of private property and private aggrandizement, but also as the atomizing individuation that ubiquitously accompanies an alienated everyday life, where privacy is haunted always by privation (cf. Lefebvre 1947/1991: 149; 1961/2002: 70–74). If security is the assurance of the generalized poverty, tedium, and humiliation that together comprise the most elementary preconditions of capitalist social relations of both production and consumption, then the spectacle of security, like all propaganda, necessarily takes everyday life as its premier object and entails a strategic struggle to possess it by tactical calculation (Lefebvre 1961/2002: 73), to "[smother] it under the spurious glamour of ideologies," and to perpetrate and perpetuate "a passive awareness of disaster and gloom" (Lefebvre 1968/1971: 33).

Their Terror, or Ours?

It is safe to say, in conclusion—and without at all compromising the requisite methodological agnosticism about "conspiracy theories"—that, to paraphrase Sartre, were there no terrorists, the US nation-state, in its ongoing bid for hegemony over the global empire of capital accumulation, would have to invent them. The terrorist menace has simply been altogether too enormously profitable and frighteningly (indeed, terrifyingly) enabling, politically. The self-anointed most perfect democracy fabricates its own inconceivable enemy, terrorism. It wants, actually, to be judged against the inconceivable (phantasmatic) ghoulishness of its spectral enemies, rather than by any of the

measurable results of its actual endeavors. The authoritative account of the ahistorical timelessness of terrorism is written by the imperial state in its ever-agonistic plea for genuinely global sovereignty, and it is thus instructive. We, the spectating populations, must certainly never know everything about terrorism, but we must always know enough to be convinced that, compared with terrorism, everything else seems rather acceptable, in any case more rational and democratic. Their terror, or ours? Pick your poison—in the end, they may just as well be indistinguishable.

Notes

1 Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Marcial Godoy for his vision as the organizer of the workshop, "Citizenship, Securitization and Vernacular Violence," sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, and held at Bogaziçi University in Istanbul (January 2007), for which this essay was first commissioned. I also owe a note of profound appreciation to Ayça Çubukçu, Zeynep Gambetti, and Magdalena Rodríguez for their intellectual engagement during its original formulation and revision. Some portions of this essay were included in my chapter, "Spectacle of Terror, Spectacle of Security," in Shelley Feldman, Charles Geisler, and Gayatri Menon, eds., *Accumulating Insecurity: Violence and Dispossession in the Making of Everyday Life* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

2 Remarkably, the French state authorized an injunction on January 29, 2009, signed by the minister of culture, Christine Albanel, to prevent the selling of Debord's archive to Yale University, officially declaring it to be "a national treasure" with "a great importance for the history of the ideas of the second half of the twentieth century and for knowledge of the still-controversial work of one of the last great French intellectuals of the period" (Gilman-Opalsky 2011: 23, 31–32n.16).

3 Debord would indubitably have had as his principal frame of reference the state repression of "terrorism" associated with the left-wing "armed struggle" movements that emerged in Europe during the 1970s, as well as the various military formations associated with separatist movements demanding national self-determination in Europe, such as in Northern Ireland or the Basque country. Writing in the late 1980s, during the waning years of the Cold War, when anti-imperialist national liberation struggles throughout the so-called Third World were routinely branded as "terrorist," and in the aftermath of various sensational airline highjackings, however, Debord would already have recognized the increasing salience of the figure of "international" terrorism. Thus, in retrospect, we may appreciate his insights with

regard to the contemporary (post-2001) discourse of antiterrorism, not merely as a commentary on the devolution of the social and political struggles of the 1960s but also as a remarkably prescient anticipation of post–Cold War geopolitical realignments.

4 For more extended elaborations of Debord's conception of the society of the spectacle, see De Genova 2011. For other recent engagements with Debord, see, for example, Agamben 1990; cf. 1995/1998: 6, 10–11; Gilman-Opalsky 2011; Giroux 2006; Hussey 2001; Jappe 1993; Merrifield 2004 and 2005; Retort 2004, 2005, 2008; Rogin 1993; Weber 2002. For critical engagements with Retort 2005, see Balakrishnan 2005; Campbell 2008; Katz 2008; Mitchell 2008; Stallabrass 2006; Tuathail/Toal 2008. For more general invocations of the significance of spectacle, see also the contributions to Garber, Matlock, and Walkowitz, eds. 1993; for a discussion of "the banality of images" for a consolidation of global power through visuality, see Mirzoeff 2005: 67–115.

5 The more prosaic of these themes have already been remarkably prominent in critical scholarship regarding the antiterrorist security state. For work addressing the intersection of "incessant technological renewal" with the operations of state power, see Monahan 2006 and Webb 2007. For work on the fetishization of technology, see Campbell 2006, Goff 2004; Johar Schueller 2007, and Parenti 2007. For work on the "fusion of state and economy," see Fernandes 2007; Hughes 2007, Martin 2007, and Wolin 2008.

6 I. Lewis Libby, Paul Wolfowitz, and Zalmay Khalilzad, draft of "Defense Planning Guidance" (1992), a classified document prepared for Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, later leaked to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, at which point public controversy required that it be rewritten; excerpts available at: www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/wolf.html. See also "Excerpts from Pentagon's Plan: 'Preventing the Re-Emergence of a New Rival'," *New York Times,* March 8, 1992; "Keeping the U.S. First," *Washington Post*, March 11, 1992.

7 Notably, in addition to his vice president, secretary of defense, and other top-ranking officials in his war cabinet, George W. Bush could likewise count his own brother, Jeb Bush (governor of Florida) as yet another PNAC signatory. Especially in light of the state of Florida's pivotal role in securing the presidency for George W. Bush in the 2000 election, and with regard more generally to the beleaguered status of his accession to the office, many have posited that the whole constellation begins to bear the hallmarks of a palace coup, albeit one of a peculiarly "democratic" and ultimately "legal" sort. This, of course, is merely one of several conceivable conspiracy theories, of which I am inclined to be a purveyor of none, and about which,

following Debord's preoccupation with the woefully agonistic character of any quest for "truth" under the regime of the spectacle, I find it prudent (and productive) to remain agnostic, as these matters are finally uncertain and probably genuinely unknowable. Methodologically, however, the more pertinent challenge is not to engage in conspiratorial guessing games, and even more important, to remain averse to any still more dubious endeavors to evaluate good faith or bad intentions on the parts of the personnel who administer the spectacle's domination, which can only be tantamount to apologetics. Instead, the task of critical social inquiry has to be to scrutinize and soberly assess the real effects.

8 Notably, in the translation by Chris Turner (Baudrillard 2001/2002b), published in book form by Verso, the term *kamikaze* is studiously avoided.

9 See note 6, above.

10 For a critique of the strategic reorientation known as "the revolution in military affairs" and its ideology of "full-spectrum dominance," prominently championed by Bush's first secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, see Goff 2004 and Parenti 2007.

11 Much earlier, and at a crucial point of departure in his intellectual trajectory, Baudrillard (1973/1975: 120) paid modest homage to the singularity of the Situationist conception of the society of the spectacle as one of his own theoretical antecedents, and in an interview in 2000 remarked that Debord should be read as "one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century, precisely because he is not a postmodernist thinker, nor a prophet nor a precursor of the post-modern condition. He is the opposite: a suicide" (Hussey 2001: 71n. 6). For their part, the Situationists also acknowledged the superficial affinities of Baudrillard's thought with their own critique, disparaging him in their characteristically polemical style as a "decrepit modernist-institutionalist" (quoted in Knabb 1981: 211).

12 For a useful critique of Norris's critical strategy of "attacking a soft target of [Baudrillard's] own invention," see Patton 1995:17.

13 For a thoughtful reading that seeks to recuperate the critical potential of Baudrillard's concepts of "simulation" and "the simulacrum," notably posited explicitly in relation to Debord, see Hussey 2001.

14 The Andy Warhol Museum, "Andy Warhol: Life and Art," www.warhol.org/education/pdfs/art_and_life.pdf.

15 Although I have relied upon the Valentin translation (2001/2002a) in citations above and hereafter, I have opted in favor of the Turner translation (2001/2002b) here as a matter of preference for the suggestiveness of his choice of language in this instance.

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