

Cunning technologies - hypnotizing chickens, horse whispering and the sorcery of social subjectivities.

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“...we propose that the problems besetting our planet and our species oblige us to refurbish mastery in a newly complex guise” - #Accelerate, Section 3, Paragraph #21

1. ‘Accelerationism’ is an attempt to think a way beyond the current capitalist construction of social production, derived from the thought that immanent to the capitalist mode of social production there is an undermining condition that has the potential to crack open the present and allow an alien future to emerge. Through such a crack the Communist horizon can become more than a Platonic ideal and operate as an organising and transforming reality that embodies collective self-mastery. Speaking strictly in terms of the Anti-Oedipus, this ‘undermining condition’ is “the great mutant flow” of “pure deterritorialisation”¹ that is *both* constantly reterritorialised on capitalist axiomatics (crudely, the rule of ‘making a living’) *and* “constantly escaping on all sides” causing “some of their currents to pass through the mesh of the axiomatic, underneath the recordings and reterritorialisations”². For accelerationism the materiality of the mutant flow is expressed, fundamentally, in the Prometheanism of technology. As such any strategy aimed towards escape from capitalism needs must focus on the capacities that can be unleashed in the complex formation of technics that lies at the heart of the current species named the human.

The Prometheanism of the technological forces of production, mobilised by capitalism for profit, might still offer a means of liberation rather than subsumption. This ‘liberation’ is ambivalent, however, since it vacillates between an *individualistic* and *communistic* mode. The individualistic mode embraces the technological futurism of the transhumanist desire for the merging of ‘man’ and machine whereas the communistic mode celebrates the possibilities for action opened up by technics of health-care, educational opportunity and collective organisation. The difficulty of the accelerationist idea lies in the

thought that its embrace of a technological Prometheanism that intends communistic goals of collective liberation (from disease, ignorance or state oppression, for example) inevitably collapses into capitalist reconstructions of consumption strategies deployed by individuals. Whilst it is not technology that will save us, is it *through technology* that we must go - or away from it? Can tech offer us an escape vector from capital?

In terms of the Anti-Oedipus 'both-and' dynamic, it is possible to simply deny the 'escape' moment. On this basis we might, perhaps, need to hold to something like a radical negativity in the face of the mutant flow. Even if the basic account of anti-oedipus and schizoanalysis were accepted, however, there is still the possibility that the escape moment is over-valued, amounting to little more than a renewed death drive ("the only escape is death!"). At the heart of this problem there is the claim that that the 'escape' moment in the mutant flow can never be recoded onto strategies that could *actualise* the communist moment. The question addressed in what follows is whether there are any ground for assessing the possibilities of recodings in a way that offers strategic means by which to do precisely that, to actualise the communist moment. Whilst an almost unlimited set of such strategies of recoding might be assessed, the focus here will be on *sorcerous* strategies, modes of recodings that are deployed by sorcerers, magicians and those who engage in the practices of cunning.

Why sorcery? Why cunning? One of the more troubling claims within Anti-Oedipus is that the "revolutionary break" cannot be "achieved except at the cost of, and by means of a rupture with, causality"³. On the face of it this claim is at best bizarre, at worst disempowering. If supposedly the first horrific mistake of Deleuze and Guattari is to validate an escape strategy that is little more than a reconfigured death drive, the second is surely to yield to the horror of 'spontaneism' and the quietism that follows. For we sorcerers, however, the rupture with causality is less shocking, as cunning practice presupposes something akin to the "irruption of desire that breaks with causes and aims"⁴ and is deployed precisely in order to increase the capacity to master such irruptions, whilst never subsuming them.

2. The magician James Wasserman makes the statement that “the magician swims in the same waters in which the psychotic drowns”⁵. We sorcerers recognise such a claim as an accurate description but recognise, at the same time, that there is a hubris to such a claim that might appear to many as reckless or ridiculous. The hubris in this situation is made even more stark if we briefly expand on exactly what is meant by ‘the magician’, which is best looked at in terms of what kind of things they do. This statement, for example, comes as part of a description of invocation, the process whereby a magician connects directly to what Wasserman calls an ‘archetype’. The archetypes he mentions in his discussion are Pan and Tahuti (Thoth) and whether we want to call these archetypes or simply gods is a discussion for another time. In the process of invocation, that can orient itself to gods, goddesses or a multiplicity of other entities, the magician deliberately attempts to replace - or at least conjoin - their ego or self with that of the entity invoked. It is this cross-over, between magician and entity, that is central to the process of invocation, in the course of which the magician does more than merely communicate with the gods, rather they become, for a time, those gods, or more precisely they enter into a ‘becoming-god’ since categories of identity fail to even remotely capture the process at work.

Wasserman notes at one point that there is a difference between two ways of describing this process, one being a ‘bringing down’ of the entity into the magician, the other a ‘raising up’ of the magician. He says that during the process of invocation “you’re trying to identify with a higher force and bring that force down into yourself, I would be inclined to say ‘raise myself to that force’”⁶. This last, crucial, inflection (“*I would be inclined to say ‘raise myself to that force’*”) points to how the undoubted hubris that sorcery involves must be constituted with a particular inflection for it to operate. One way of thinking of this inflection of hubris is by considering cunning. Both the magician and the sorcerer deploy cunning, but with a slight difference which explains, to some degree, what the difference is between magic and sorcery. Very roughly, the magician orients to the world as a multiplicity of persons of greater or lesser power, although by power what is often meant is a ‘power to’, something like a capacity, rather than a ‘power over’, in the sense of an authority. The sorcerer, on the other hand, orients to the world more in terms of a multiplicity of machines or technologies, to a generalised non-anthropomorphic or anthropocentric technics. We might even want to say that the sorcerer takes the world to be a multiplicity

of assemblages, some of which are already moving, others of which can perhaps be made to move. Both sorcerer and magician might be thought to be panentheistic to some degree, although neither need necessarily be theistic at all, so that definition is quite problematic. Both undoubtedly populate reality with many more living things, minds and consciousnesses, whatever they may be, than is part of any standard naturalism. Both have some sense of potentialities at work within reality, both have some sense of determination or fate or necessity. Perhaps the magician notes a role for grace that is more explicit than the sorcerer, although the latter knows what they are talking about. Most notably, perhaps, the magician has a sense of purpose if not a goal. The sorcerer is usually a little more nihilistic. For both, however, the cunning they deploy is not a simple 'animal cunning' and that's what makes it interesting if we want to understand the hubris of the magical act, an operation deployed by both magician and sorcerer alike.

Cunning is a curious thing, both animal and human and neither-nor. The Greek concept of 'metis' speaks to a kind of practical knowledge, something local and unable to be transmitted universally and often translated as cunning⁷. The relationship between knowledge and cunning is one that intimately connects with questions of ethics and most of the discussion around this concept focuses on the kinds of understanding that might be gained by positioning cunning in different determinate relationships to knowledge, sometimes supportive and necessary, other times verging on undermining the very purpose of knowledge itself. The epistemological problem of cunning is that it appears entirely instrumental, functional and in some sense 'outside' knowledge. Cunning is an occultation at its very heart and so the transparency assumption that underpins most naive epistemologies, that is, that if something can be known it can be known clearly enough to be communicated with clarity, short-circuits when it encounters cunning. Whilst the *place* or *situation* in which cunning appears can be described, cunning itself sits like some sort of dark weight to one side of true knowledge. This dark, occulted aspect of cunning often speaks to its animal side, to its instinctive nature and to something atavistic in the human.

In itself cunning suggests something missing in any model that needs reason or knowledge to be bound together with something like universally transmissible discourse. At the same time it crosses over with the masters of suspicion in that cunning is both something that might be *deployed* by an agent as well as

something that *constitutes* an agency. To be more exact, cunning is something that seems necessary, although not sufficient, for agency to appear. This can best be understood through an analogy with lying. To have grasped an adequate use of language a speaker must know not only *what* a lie is but also *how* to lie. They might be rather poor in their execution of the lying operation ('you're a terrible liar, I always know when you're lying') but they must still know that lying is a matter of context, expectations, body language and various other complex assemblages of interaction, as well as the simple dissembling of explicit meaning. Without this knowledge of *how to* lie the agent will not only be unable to actually lie even though they understand the concept, they will also fail at a huge range of other fundamental social relationships such as tact, compassion, politeness and general sociability techniques such as small-talk. To be able to speak is constituted by being able to lie, as a necessary but not sufficient condition of speaking. Analogously, to be able to con (to be cunning), is a necessary but not sufficient condition for conscious agency. It is inconceivable that an agent could, in principle, not be cunning. To be a conscious agent is to be conceived as capable of cunning.

Therein lies the rub because if this is the case it is not because cunning is dependent on conscious agency, as witnessed by the cunning animal who may be sentient but is not sapient. The cunning acts of an animal *imply* something like sapience, yet they push us to anthropomorphise an animal more than almost any other behaviour. Sapience, however, does not necessarily imply cunning. Sapience is also not enough for agency, it is another necessary but not sufficient condition. The sapient individual without cunning is the naive and when that naivete extends far enough it becomes socially pathological, in that the individual lacking cunning but with sapience is prey for any individual with both and is, in effect, no longer capable of agency in the face of such a combination⁸.

Cunning thus appears as a force outside the human but bound into its dreams and desires. Cunning appears in the negotiation of forces and brings insight through deception. It orients the cunning one to an alternative future and opens the eyes of the other to be seen through, albeit only through inference. It is this *opening of inference in the realm of the practical* that lies at the heart of cunning and which is the root of its intimate connection to conscious agency. Inferences in the realm of the practical take the form not

of formal logical connection but are instead a combination of material inferences and dispositions to make such inferences. The material inference that 'if Bristol is to the East of Brighton, then Brighton is to the West of Bristol', or 'if I take 100 micrograms of LSD then perceptual judgements over the course of the next 8 hours will be unstable', are specific and context dependent. Technically speaking they are *non-monotonic* inferences. This means that the content of the inferences, not just the form, is what gives them their logical structure.

To be cunning is to be able to *experiment* with the *inferences* of the other, be it the prey or the partner. The cunning one needs those inferences from behaviour A to effect B to be in place in order to experiment with the connections and push the dynamics that drive behaviour in one direction rather than another. (I know that if I make a loud noise the herd of deer will run away, so if I place a trap and then shout so as to *push them into the trap* I deploy a cunning that is grounded in understanding and experimenting with the behavioural inferences at play.) At this point a strict 'causality' is subsumed in something far closer to a concept of production and cunning is a strategy that engages with the production of production.

To be cunning, then, is to be able to experiment with behavioural inferences, including (for the magician and sorcerer) the beliefs that surround human behaviours. One of the basic rules of operation for practical occultists is that behaviour and belief are reciprocally involved in each other in a process of negotiation such that neither can completely determine the other. Magical ritual practice is the experimentation with behaviours and beliefs combined, often through the mediating layer of symbolic connotation, with tradition, history and purposes. It is impossible to establish a simple creed or doctrine for magicians and sorcerers because their ritual practice is not grounded in *axiomatisation* but in *experimentation*. The magician who simply follows a set of previously established rituals and never creates their own or 'tests and modifies' existing practices is almost a contradiction in terms. The hubris of the magician and sorcerer comes in at precisely this moment, because underpinning the experimentation model is a radically different understanding of authority and knowledge from that found in either religions of the book or sciences of number and measurement. To experiment is to take the

experimenter as authority rather than tradition or transcendence. The hubris of the magician and sorcerer is well founded in that they take themselves as the highest authority in their actions and responsibilities. Only a god should be so arrogant.

3. The cunning one is usually a human, but not always. Cunning is animated by both Fantastic Mr Fox and Wile.E.Coyote, although with the latter the speed of Road Runner always overcomes the traps. Still, even here the cunning one is an animal, albeit a fictional one. Yet there is no obvious ontological excuse to restrict cunning to animals. Most notably, Hegel extends cunning into the realm of the absolute, slips it into the world, on the back on reason, as a means of actualisation. Taken as such it is viable to assume, if only for idle speculations sake, about the role of cunning in the actualisation of technology. If there is a 'cunning of reason', is there also, perhaps, a 'cunning of the machine'?

In an article in the New York Times in 2014 the subject was the role of PowerPoint within the US military, in particular its role in briefings. Generals are reported bemoaning the applications increasingly ubiquitous role within strategic discussions, with one being quoted directly as saying "powerpoint makes us stupid"⁹. The article goes on to note that there are military commanders who have "serious concerns that the program stifles discussion, critical thinking and thoughtful decision making". Brigadier General H.R.McMaster is quoted as saying that Powerpoint is "dangerous because it can create the illusion of understanding and the illusion of control." In addition there is a 'numbing' effect - given the name 'death by Powerpoint' - which is deliberately used by the military propaganda efforts. "Senior officers say the program does come in handy when the goal is not imparting information, as in briefings for reporters. The news media sessions often last 25 minutes, with 5 minutes left at the end for questions from anyone still awake. Those types of Powerpoint presentations, Dr Hammes said, are known as 'hypnotizing chickens'."

The technology is recognised as having negative effects, even if it might be possible to deploy those effects to achieve particular goals, as in the case of the journalists (chickens) hypnotized by the presentations. Curiously, however, despite the negative effects on the internal culture of briefings, the

idea that it could be removed and that they could 'go back' to the old ways they did things is absent from the picture. The technology is having effects which conscious agents acknowledge to be problematic but which they appear powerless in the face of. The situation presents almost as part of the familiar trope of technologies 'coming alive' and turning on their supposed masters. Yet these problems might be argued to reside within limitations of human intentional life, not in the tech itself. Psychologists and neuro-scientists might, quite reasonably, point to various facets of human cognitive life as the source of explaining the curious behaviour of continuing to use tools which are recognised to be harmful. The real problem, we might think, cannot lie with inert tech, lumps of materials and code, because these things don't have intention or goal or purpose. On this line of thinking it is obviously a category mistake of some kind to ascribe anything like 'cunning' to an inert, purposeless piece of tech.

It is clear that the process of 'hypnotizing chickens' (journalists) via prolonged Powerpoint exposure aims at preventing problematic questions and overly keen scrutiny on the operations of the military. This is undoubtedly a kind of cunning, a practical use of tech to prevent, block or direct discussion in order to maintain military control over military operations. Yet at the same time there is something forgotten if the focus is only on the aim of those giving the briefings to the journalists. The scenario is not best understood by beginning from those aims or goals but instead needs to be conceived as a synthesis of tech and generalised potentials. There was almost certainly no original 'intention to deceive' which then deployed Powerpoint as its means. Instead the more likely scenario is that those giving the briefings have a generic intention that is something like 'provide information as freely as possible without jeopardising operational security and autonomy'. The briefing officer doesn't have to be 'intending to deceive', simply to maintain their autonomy and prevent unwanted incursions into their operational activity. Within this general framework of the maintenance of autonomy, which has its own specific dynamics within the military-public relation, Powerpoint arrives. The synthesis of the generic framework with the specific properties of an extended Powerpoint presentations - 'death by Powerpoint' - produces the assemblage of behaviours, tech and techniques that constitutes the situation of the hypnotized chickens. **It is this assemblage that enables the cunning to emerge.** The technology is not a mere means to an end that lies outside it but opens up specific, concrete options and side-effects and it is only

once those specifics exist that cunning strategies can be deployed to manipulate them. Cunning is not simply an intentional operation but one dependent on the possibilities within a concrete, actual situation. In particular it can arise from the practical strategies and patterns of activity that are embedded within sets of general, as well as specific, frameworks of potentials¹⁰. These general frameworks of potentials often include background belief structures, parts of a general conceptual scheme that can operate underneath conscious awareness.. As part of the background structures, the general frameworks can produce something akin to unconscious cunning through the development of skillful practice. Such unconscious cunning is one way of understanding the process of the reterritorialisation of production as the unconscious axiomatics of power drag production into its oppressive form.

In contrast with the strategy of hypnotizing chickens there can be a deterritorialising effect produced by the general frameworks of potentials, which might be illustrated by considering an employee, perhaps in the IT department of a large organization, utilising strategies of confusing transparency, strategies that we might encounter under the colloquial phrase of 'blinding with science'. There are various strategies employees use to maintain or gain some degree of power within their working environment, including the use of jargon, acronyms and domain specific concepts as well as the assumption of the role of expertise. This obfuscation has become almost archetypical of the whole concept of 'Information Technology Support' but is not limited to this particular field. In general, wherever artisanal skill is required to be deployed within general areas of operation there is a tendency for the worker to convert their activity into an occulted practice, to one degree or another. In doing so the dynamic is one of resisting the axiomatics of power and capital, adding friction to the process of subsumption to the gravity well of oppression. **The occultation of skill is a technique of resistance to power because it relies upon the concrete nature of labour.** The more the worker is indispensable - that is, the less their labour is substitutable - the greater the strength of their position. Of course this is always a negotiation since the substitutability of the worker is one of the grounds for the operation of abstract labour, and within the axiomatic of capitalism it is only ever possible to increase or decrease the potential substitutability of labour, never remove it altogether. In this concrete struggle, however, techniques of occultation are a means of

cunning and rely on the technology itself allowing such occultation processes to be instantiated in actual practice.

4. A curious example of the strategy of resistance to the axiomatics of capital that intertwines the concrete labour found in the practice of the worker and the explicit deployment of occult symbolism and frameworks is to be found in the 'Society of the Horseman's Word and Grip'¹¹. This organisation operated as a cross between a secret occult society and a trade union. Predominantly, though not exclusively, found in Scotland, it existed from perhaps the late 18th century up until the great horse massacre following the Second World War¹² when Britain transitioned from the power of the horse to the horse-power of the internal combustion engine. At the heart of the Society lay the secret word of power that constituted the gift of horse whispering.

The caricature of such 'words of power' in the Disney world of 'abracadabra' is only ever an amusing foil for any practising occultist, for whom the role of the secret is far more interesting. Whilst there are indeed some straight forward 'secrets' within occult organisations, for the most part the secret is not something subject to identification and thus dissemination but is instead an organising force of practice. The secret is not that there is no secret but that the secret is only capable of being encountered through practice and more specifically through the practice of practices. It is in this sense a strategy for engaging in the production of production, a cunning strategy that opens a reciprocal dynamic between the specific intentions of the practitioner and the general framework of potentials organised into the particular tradition of practices that are to be practised. It is a cunning strategy because it 'enables without providing' the actualisation of agency - it forces individuation to arise as the practitioner *becomes-sorcerer*.

In the Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word, for example, the labour of the worker is made concrete as they become 'horseman'¹³. To the extent that they become such a thing they attain power in the straight forward sense of mastery *both* of the technology *and* the technics, that is, the overall assemblage of relations, potentials and means in which the horseman is actualised. To do so the horseman must be able to manipulate the horse but in such a way that their technologies cannot be abstracted into a

knowledge economy where such technologies become simply subject to external power relations. The horseman needs must hide what it is they are doing so that they become indispensable to the doing of it. They need to reach the position where the farmer cannot simply sack them at will.

To hold their power they must occult it, quite literally. So we find the trappings of occult symbolism and actions, such as the invitation to join that cannot be requested but must be offered, the initiation into and submission to the Society in order to gain the power, the centrality of oral teaching and the forbidding of writing down or otherwise making actual the word. The assemblage that is formed as the Society deploys mythology and story to generate enough consistency for transmission to occur outside of 'the book' form of transmission and we find a series of characters such as Cain and the devil deployed to ensure these stories operate in tension with the external cultural practice within which the power is to be occulted. If you are initiated into a Society by kissing the devil and know the techniques through lessons ascribed to 'evil' figures such as Cain, the nature of these personae is such as to guide most to not mention them in the wider field of public discourse. This practice pushes the member to keep silent, which in turn then develops a borderline or frontier between who are and those who are not 'in the know'.

Once 'in the know', of course, the power of the secret actualises other aspects of the general framework of potentials. For example part of the general framework of potentials that might be thought to reside in the idea of 'class consciousness', the idea that the worker is the producer of value which is then expropriated from them, becomes actualised as the practice of power shows the practitioner relations that were themselves previously obscure. Take the verse from one of the songs in the Society:

Success the ploughmen's wages crown;
Let ploughmen's wages ne'er come down,
And plenty in Scotland aye abound,
By the labour o' the ploughmen.
For the very King that wears the crown,
and the brethren o' the sacred gown,
And Dukes and Lords of high renown,

Depend upon the ploughmen¹⁴.

The transition here from 'mere economic' concerns where the level of wages is the measure of success in being a horseman to one of awareness of structures of political power is capped with an understanding not only of the existence of such structural power relations but also of the *location* of the power in the hands of the horseman not the crown. Such an understanding of the dependence of power on the labour of the ploughmen suggests that the individuation of the horseman through the occulted powers of the Society and the word produces more than simply an *unconscious* actualising of the power as a horseman. In the process of assembling the horseman as an individuated and distinct position within the social, and in so doing resisting - although not overcoming - the axiomatic of capitalism, the communist horizon appears. From fiction comes friction and then the glimmer of a spark.

5. The question was whether there are any grounds for assessing the possibilities of recoding the mutant flow of capital in a way that offers strategic means by which to actualise the communist moment. If 'death by PowerPoint' illustrates how new technologies (albeit very simple ones) can be recoded into control mechanisms, the role of concrete labour suggests that there are inherent points of friction within any specialised practice, friction that the abstraction of labour attempts to grind away. Increasing friction through combining it with fictions, as in the case of the horseman, might be thought to prolong the durability of such resistance but even then a radical shift in the technology can, almost at one fell swoop, obliterate such resistance.

Yet this obliteration also points to the possibility of technology - more precisely, to the possibilities in *technics* - as sites of resistance, if we combine the fiction and friction moments. The friction moment here takes on a curious form in that it is now less about a form of skill or specialisation within labour as it is the skill of concrete *networked sociality*. The higher the degree of skill within networked sociality the greater the friction produced in the process of control by the state apparatus and *to that extent* the greater the friction to recoding on a capitalist axiomatic.

For example, the enormous crisis that currently exists around control of 'privacy' online arises because of the swarming general framework of potentials opened up by networked sociality. Whilst the potentials were rapidly colonised by vectors of profit this led not to a subsumption of such potentials, only to their increase. At the heart of this, those who become skilled in exploring and experimenting with such potentials offer wider and deeper moments of friction, from the darknet through to wikileaks or the use of the Blackberry messaging system in the 2011 UK riots. In fact the privacy problem only serves to exacerbate the likely increase of such moments of friction as the need to occult activity becomes no longer something strange or idiosyncratic but rather connected to dynamics of bourgeois individualist cultural frameworks - it becomes normalised to encrypt. The assumption that control is being imposed, combined with the ideological background of individualism, produces a logic of encryption. The logic of encryption - and the skill with which to use it - slips outside of the state and into the foreground of the general framework of potentials. Skilled state operators realise that the control society is no longer viable and have already begun to experiment with the confused society, where the use of proliferating fictions aims to produce political paralysis.

Each time, it might be argued, these possible moments of fiction and friction within the mutant flow of capital are subject to attempts to recode them onto the capitalist axiomatic and the control structures of the state. This is indisputable but trivial. That is part of the dynamic of the capitalist system. The question, however, is whether the general framework of potentials is proliferating options of escape or constricting them. It seems indisputable that such a proliferation is occurring. Here we can return to Anti-Oedipus and the problem of quietism and strategy.

If someone retorts that we are claiming the famous rights to laziness, to non-productivity, to dream and fantasy production, once again we are quite pleased, since we haven't stopped saying the opposite, and that desiring production produces the real, and that desire has little to do with fantasy and dream¹⁵.

At this moment in the proliferation of technologies of networked sociality the dreams of communism must be reconfigured by the direct engagement in the desiring productions of the social. Communist horizons need to stop appearing in dreams as throwback moments to 1917. Communists need to stop living in the

past, like senile old fools in a care home. Strategically the revolutionary activist should be turning towards code, towards techniques such as Bayesian hierarchical models and Monte Carlo Markov chain algorithms. The task is direct experimentation within the generalized framework of potentials of networked sociality. Communist, take up your code and build the tools of revolutionary social self-mastery!

What sort of tools need to be built? Here the strategy of cunning, of finding the moments of fiction and friction within the generalised framework of potentials offers itself as a space of experimentation. Whilst wildly over-estimated in their actual capacities, organisations such as The Pirate Bay and Anonymous need to be understood as precisely the kind of experiment that needs to be learnt from and built on. These ideologically ambiguous and curious experiments offer clear examples of exploiting the cunning potentialities of networked sociality.

6. Before being accused of simply descending into a paen to the network, let me return to the core point, which is not that the particular technologies we currently live with are wonderful or in themselves themselves liberatory, they are not. They are simply the dominant feature of the framework of generalised potentials. The point is not that any particular framework is itself better than any other, rather that the potentials offer moments of cunning, vectors of friction. Yet these vectors can only be activated by experimentation and practice and such practice needs to be driven not by a fantasy of a past that needs to be reclaimed but rather by the practical tasks of the everyday. Such experimentation and practice is driven not by pre-established goals but fundamentally through play, practice and application. It is in such play and practical application, in the finding out of what can be done, in the deliberate provocation of effects in order to see what might occur, it is in the experimental praxis of technics, that our future might be glimpsed again.

Inevitably the future has already been lost for many but the dead weight of the revolutionary desires of the past now lays its grip around the throat of the revolutionary desire for the future. Neoliberalism signalled a moment of class victory, one that is perhaps now encountering the problems of its maturity. Of the

three tasks suggested in the Accelerationist Manifesto - a new intellectual infrastructure that can create a new vision of the good society, widescale media reform and the reconstitution of forms of class power¹⁶ - it is no doubt the latter that is most difficult to perceive. Here one further aspect needs to be added to the notion of a renewed praxis of technis within the contemporary general framework of potentials embodied in networked sociality, the aspect of class war. If there is a strategic dynamic that must be introduced into the play and experimentation with technics it lies in rebuilding the sense of class war, releasing it from the grip of the past and producing weapons and means with which such a war might be fought. These weapons will provide means of survival in the face of state bureaucracies, ways of avoidance of surveillance, capacities to manipulate managers, legal systems, governments. Strategies of cunning deceit need to provide means of cheating the system, propagate ways of knowing and acting that offer the possibility of continual guerilla war against the recordings of capital. If the revolutionary forces of desire are to provide guns for the war, these weapons will only occasionally be AK47's. At the moment the tools of encryption are instead perhaps one of the clearest examples of such weapons as are needed and it is the pursuit of such weapons of war that should strategically orientate the forces of revolutionary desire.

The question of politics that lies at the heart of accelerationism and that intersects with revolutionary desire is badly formulated if understood in terms of ideas. It is about practice, above everything. The moment of practice subverts the central problematic of ideas, which is that the idea occults its own desire, actualising only as a symptom of a current moment and as such caught within this moment. It is this failure of transparency in the idea that now prevents the future from appearing, even on the horizon. Such a horizon can only arise again as the skills for survival - and for resistance - develop a capacity to embody new potentials. To free such potentials is the task of all the forces of revolutionary desire, that is the strategic moment, but it can be done only on the basis of the actual practice of skills and techniques that themselves provide the condition for a new technics and with it a new social order of production.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti Oedipus* (1972) trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R.Lane (London:Continuum 2003), 409.
2. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, 410.
3. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, 412.
4. *ibid.*
5. Cited from the short film 'In the center of the fire: invocation', available online at <http://youtu.be/yAwdFvfQYNA>, accessed 21 Nov 2014.
6. *ibid.*
7. One of the central texts in the longstanding interest in 'metis' is Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (1974), trans. Janet Lloyd (Chicago:1991). A fascinating comparative analysis of Greek and Chinese cognate conceptual arrangements of 'metis' and 'knowledge' is offered by Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words; wisdom and cunning in the classical traditions of China and Greece* (Cornell:1992). Metis is also important, albeit negatively, in the discussion of tragedy, moral luck and excellence in Martha Nussbaum, *The fragility of goodness* (Cambridge:1986).
8. A similar point is made by Daniel Dennett where he says that "The organism that has no poker face, that communicates states directly to all hearers, is a sitting duck, and will soon be extinct." - Daniel Dennett, "The evolution of why" in *Reading Brandom: on Making it Explicit*, Ed. Bernhard Weiss and Jeremy Wanderer (Routledge:2010), 57. Whilst Dennetts point rests on an implicit model of inter and intra species competition driving evolution, and whilst the point made above about cunning, lying and agency involves a fundamentally *social* constraint, rather than a 'simple' evolutionary one, the separation between the two realms is neither accepted nor assumed in the argument offered here.
9. Elizabeth Bumiller, "We have met the enemy and he is powerpoint"; New York Times, April 26 2010

10. The notion of a 'general framework of potentials' is one that plays, in this essay, something of a placeholder role for a more detailed account of a concept that fulfills the functions described by 'intentions' without being dependent on conscious agency. Relying, as it does, on the still vague sense of 'potentials' this concept will ideally be replaced in future with something more rigorous and less prone to re-anthropomorphisation or idealisation
11. For an account of this organisation see *The Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word*, William Rennie and Ben Fernee (Caduceus:2009).
12. Keith Chivers, *The shire horse: a history of the breed, the society and the men* (Allen and Co:1976), estimates that some 100,000 horses were slaughtered in 1947 and the same number in 1948.
13. It is worth noting that the Society formed a 'brotherhood' and explicitly excluded women.
14. Cited in Rennie and Fernee, *The Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word*.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, 416.
16. *#Accelerate - manifesto for an accelerationist politics*, Section 3, paragraphs 16, 17, 18.