Vampire's Empire: Another Gaming Environment for American Psychos

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ABSTRACT

LOAD MAP DATA # 0 BOOT CAMP: GROUND ZERO

In Vampire's Empire - a violent 80s arcade game - players crusade through unreal dungeons and haunt a cute-old-little vampire. Alike within any capitalistic endeavour, virtually controlling and violently executing command, is mandatory to win the game. Commonly, social order comes for free - accompanied by prevailing levels of social indifference. We are already familiar with the mission, well before the game begins: collecting as many points as possible, while attempting to focus a light stream upon the poor duke Dracula. Conceptually, Bret Easton Ellis' novel American Psycho and Vampire's Empire got a lot in common, but one difference remains: Patrick Bateman, brilliantly performing as an all-star-vampire, never sees the light, and no-body seemingly haunts him. Here comes your assignment: Like all-too-many-others, Patrick Bateman persists to luminously perform; due to invisibly organ()zing hands, that immediately resolve every apparent conflict, within his gaming empire. Judged by first impression, Patrick Bateman is gaming within an empire without an exit - this is where your task begins. You are a MASTER OF INTERPRETATION (MOI), in charge to *catch on* empire's vampire. You will need to master this line of flight, to successfully complete your mission. The upcoming 9 game maps are getting increasingly incomprehensible, as you proceed. There are no time-restrictions. As your quest proceeds, new weapons, bonuses and surprises will be available: The better you look, the more you see[1].

As a common playground, both American Psycho and Vampire's Empire, build their

...Patrick Bateman (narrating): I live in the American Gardens Building on West 81st street, on the 11th floor. My name is Patrick Bateman, I'm 27 years old. I believe in taking care of myself, in a balanced diet, and a rigorous exercise routine. In the morning if my face is a little puffy, I'll put on an ice pack while doing my stomach crunches. I can do a thousand now...There is an idea of a Patrick Bateman, some kind of obstruction, but there is no real me. Only an entity, something illusory. And though I can hide my cold gaze, and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours and maybe you can even sense our life styles are probably comparable... I simply am not there.

stories on the destinies of information-age-vampires. One is haunted by the spectre of an old-fashioned arcade-player, fuelled by the conventional wisdom to score, dominate and win. Another is doomed to impressively perform his deeds within the loops of an 80s-style greed society software. Sharp-looking Patrick Bateman just wants to *fit in*, and live up to the expectations of the New York greed society protocols. Patrick wanders around, like within a gigantic first-person-shooter-like simulation. Without the least of consequences, the effects of his moves violate every single moral law of the prevailing post-enlightened, global society. Yet, the quality of the Patrick character steams from a certain sensibility; while he is seizing all-too-many-things that go wrong, he pushes even harder. But two wrongs don't make a right. Breakdown symptoms of his virtual gaming environment are omni-present. Any affirmatively following observer is constantly expecting the end of Patrick's mission - his mistakes are just too obvious. His lawyer knows, just as well as his secretary - the symptoms of his violent pre-occupations are much rather murder & executions, than mergers & acquisitions. Besides, Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho is not producing anything to justify his WTC corner office, but displays all the characteristics of a non-active activist[2] manager. Patrick's job appears to be the simulation of his job. He constantly operates on the verge of collapsing. At first sight, his violent actions appear to be the other side of socially required acts of repression; as if they were directly resulting from the

heavyweight of his determined[3] and schizo-phrenic[4] life-style. A-life-style that really has become the life-style of an increasing number of corporate adventurers. You already realized this, right, together with the historical fact, that inter-faces of social connectivity (games, movies, and novels like *American Psycho* and *Vampire's Empire*) vary along with the utopia (gaia[5], electricity[6], media[7], self-descriptive communication[8], code[9], or multitudinal virtual power[10]) that marks a respective society's phantasmic horizon. No wonder - a fair number of us, and them, grew up with regard to the phantasmic horizon of the 80s. Its traces and leftovers remain highly visible. Do not all of us maintain a fair deal of relationships with the kinds of Patrick Batemans'? Why?

MAP # 1 VIOLENCE BECOMES A SCREAM FOR IDENTITY

Patrick finally laments: This is not an exit. Indeed, American Psycho's good-old-gaming days are not game(d) over, although his 80s couture and music taste are pretty much out-of-fashion - or would you buy into bodybuilding, H. Lewis and the News, P. Collins or a beige double-breasted wool-gabardine Cerruti 1881 suit. Or from a different perspective: once you wake up in the morning and observe planes *crashing into* your skyscrapers' window - as a seemingly success driven character, you might want to tune-into another movie and confront yourselves with the Patrick question: "Aren't we still in a game? Tell me the truth, are we still

playing?"[11] What is going to stop this madness? And how may I possibly relate to it?

American Psycho's main-vampire instinctively enacts a seemingly neo-modern gaming-empire. Patrick Bateman is dressed to be experienced as an attractive game character in an appealing game - senior vice presidents' business card, Harvard-esque business acumen, breath-taking apartment and an ivy-league fiancé; a promising management talent determined to fit into the systems of global value creation. Through the success story of his ego-game, Patrick reached the Platinum Bonus Level, so-it-seems, and has gotten stuck there a long time ago. Patrick operates on the verge of frenzyness; status-obsession, and the inability to recognize the anarchy he endorses, figurate as signature qualities. Indifference prevails. And in the course of events, the real world is *disappearing through* Patrick's actions. He is becoming a serial killer. A psycho. A maniac. But what if American Psycho is not meant as an invitation for pathologization? What if Patrick is not only an abnormal madman? What if Patrick Bateman's game-moves display a peculiar, yet precious, sensibility? An idiosyncratic response upon his fundamental experience, that maybe there is something wrong with the normality of (t)his world. Quite literally, he cannot change his mind. Yet, from this point of view, he pursues every option to bring about change. Patrick stands out of the crowd, violently pushing the envelope, to transgress the limits of his virtually unlimited existence. Alike for a whole generation of super-hero managers, an attitude change is not feasible, because the

confession of failure is not an option. Vanity to please ones mirror image, remains a driving desire. However, Patrick Bateman is pushing hard to reach boundaries; narcissistically[12] throwing stones onto the water-surface, to distort the reflection of (t)his mirror image that keeps him blindfolded. American Psycho brutality resides not in its superficial violence, but in the impossibility to stop the simulacra of its greed-society software. Baudrillard's naïf '*what comes after the orgy*'[13] question, seems no longer on the horizon. Nothing appears to be on the horizon, any more: the horizon is folded into the backside of the next move through the game. And through this clamping surface, that is permanently encouraging the realization of its absence, all traditional forms of orientation vanish. The orgy is perfectly reproducing itself - the displayed game has taken over long ago. Nothing else matters - 'and as things fell apart, nobody paid much attention'; the figurative signature quote, from the very beginning of Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* novel, comes disguised as a Talking Heads reference.

MAP # 2 "WHERE'S THE PHOTOGRA-PHERS? WHO IS TAKING THE PIC-TURES?"[14]

American Psychos' one and only affirmative emotional response occurs in the course of a U2 concert; in a completely framed and artificial environment, while he is trying to gather information about the mysterious Fisher account. In the course of events, this interaction between Patrick and his investment banker colleague Tim Price takes place: '"You're a

...Patrick Bateman (narrating): I have all the characteristics of a human being: blood, flesh, skin, hair; but not a single, clear, identifiable emotion, except for greed and disgust. Something horrible is happening inside of me and I don't know why. My nightly bloodlust has overflown into my days. I feel lethal, on the verge of frenzy. I think my mask of sanity is about to slip.

madman, Bateman. An animal. A total animal." "I can't disagree." I laugh weakly, walking him to the door. As he leaves I'm wondering and not wondering what happens in the world of Tim Price, which is really the world of most of us: big ideas, guy stuff, boy meets the world, boy gets it.'[15] The way Patrick observes Tim Price is symptomatic - it is really telling us much more about himself than about his alter ego. What you see is what you get. Patrick himself seemingly got the world. He is constantly operating in a modus of dream fulfilment. His exquisite empire-game-play transforms the world into a matrix-like hyper-real reality. His real world is becoming a movement within advertisement décors of high-end consumer dreams. His orgiastic mode of becoming instantly realizes all phantasms, which are *re-circling* (around) the consumption of status symbols, fancy leisure activities, murdering, raping, and other more open forms of violence. Within the American Psycho simulation, no desire prevails that is not instantly subject to fulfilment - except for getting into Dorsia, an equally hip and obscure diner & club, partly owned by his brother...

In sum, Patrick Bateman has got too much of everything and he knows it. Yet, Patrick does not happen to seriously approach the post-modern 'what are you doing after-the-orgy-question', until the very end. While Tim Price takes a rehab-time-out, Patrick is killing a dozen people around Wall Street one evening. Finally, he is longing for to get into touch with the consequences of his actions. He is yearning for to get into contact with someone, to reassure that Patrick Bateman was not just another action figure in a disconnected virtual endeavour. During the final hide-away in his WTC office,

helicopters screen the area and Patrick uses his layers' answering machine for a confession - he is delivering a complete description of every single crime he committed. The *perpetual organ()sing*[16] of his gaming empire, is just about one step away from imploding. However, American Psychos' showdown is equally surprising and terrifyingly probable - everything continues as it was! Surrounded by his peers, back at the Harvard Club, his lawyer tells him that really nothing went wrong. While everyone is impressed by the spectacular non-event of Ronald Reagan professionally lying into CNN-cameras, Tim Price wonders: '"How can he lie like that? How can he pull that shit?"…Price looks away from the television screen, then at Craig, and he tries to hide his displeasure by asking me, waving at the TV, "I don't believe it. He looks… normal. He seems so… out of it. So… undangerous."'[17] Cut(e).

MAP # 4 WHAT IS THE EMPIRE?

Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's Empire puts forward a yet more radical attempt, to conceptually describe contemporary game-plans. They characterize Empire as a 'kind of smooth place across which subjectivities glide without substantial resistance or conflict.'[18] Like within Patrick Bateman's Vampire's Empire, exiting is not an option. Hard and Negri arrogate, that rather we must push through Empire to come out the other side. Rather than resisting capital's global circulation, we have to accelerate the process. Indeed Patrick Bateman maybe mistaken for a contingent description of an accelerating character - someone who attempts to push right through Empire. In accordance with Hardt and Negri's descrip-

...Patrick Bateman: Harold, you're my lawyer, so I think you should know...I've killed quite a few people.

...Patrick Bateman (narrating): My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone. In fact I want my pain to be inflicted on others. I want no one to escape. But even after admitting this - and I have, countless times, in just about every act I've committed - and coming face-to-face with these truths, there is no catharsis. I gain no deeper knowledge about myself, no new understanding can be extracted from my telling. There has been no reason for me to tell you any of this. This confession has meant nothing...

tion, resistance and conflict remain invisible. 'Empire is not born of its own will but rather it is called into being and constituted on the basis of its capacity to resolve conflict'[19]. The main characteristic of Empire is to successfully handle conflict, to adhere all kinds of ongoing relationships. In American Psycho, conflict is non-apparent, because vampire's empire as a gaming system regulates and resolves everything itself - its lawyers, secretaries, detectives, gatekeepers, prostitutes and the Harvard Club do a great job. They feed into the game that keeps Patrick Bateman occupied. The *on-going self-organizing communication* is taking good care of itself. Patrick is beautifully connected and floats in that apparatus - 'like a missionary or vampire, capital touches what is foreign and makes it proper'[20]. Exiting remains an un-displayed option. There is no sense for urgency, no need to exit the game as long as attractive bonus-material keeps him busy. The issue is not to few options - too many options[21] keep one occupied from taking of the blindfold.

Patrick Bateman appears to be the incarnation of a proto-typical Empire citizen. He is *Vampire's Empire's* dream come true: maximizing his score in the top-of-the-line investment banking league, celebrating his determination to partake and push through the game at maximum speed - too fast to be determined by any reference system - always on the verge of disintegration. 'The basic tautological character of the spectacle flows'[22] surrounding Ameri-

can Psycho's aura, steams 'from the simple fact that'[23] there is *no aura to come*; nothing to become - 'its means are simultaneously its ends'[24]. American Psycho's spectacle 'is the sun, which never sets over the empire of modern passivity. It covers the entire surface of the world and bathes endlessly in its own glory'[25]. This very enunciation of a *Vampire's Empire* kind of spectacle is, accordingly to Hardt and Negri's game-map what it takes, to identify management as the successful politics[26] of Empire creation. Management's means are simultaneously its ends. 'The multitude is the real productive force of our social world, whereas Empire is a mere apparatus of capture that lives only off the vitality of the multitude - (Empire is)...a vampire regime of accumulated dead labour that survives only by sucking off the blood of the living.'[27] From here-on American Psycho appears to be a proverbial vampire on empire's grounds.

MAP # 5 VARIOUS EXITS?

Vampire's empire computer gamers can always stop the game; Patrick cannot (and does not want to?) leave (t)his Empire. Arcade junkies might play another game, or the same game on another operating system or computer, or even emulate the old (Amiga) version of vampire's empire, e.g. on a new machine. Most importantly, vampires' empire computer players can simply exit the virtual gaming environments en total, to play somewhere or something else. Or

American Psycho (Bret Easton Ellis):…"Why?" and though I'm very proud that I have cold blood and that I can keep my nerve and do what I'm supposed to do, I catch something, then realize it: Why? And automatically answering, out of the blue, for no reason, just opening my mouth, words coming out, summarizing for the idiots: "Well, though I know I could have done that instead of not doing it, I'm twenty-seven for Christ sakes and this is, uh, how life presents itself in a bar or in a club in New York, maybe anywhere, at the end of the century and how people, you know, me, behave, and this is what Patrick means to me, I guess, so, well, yup, uh…" and this is followed by a sigh, then a slight shrug and another sigh, and above one of the doors coverted by red velvet drapes in Harry's is a sign and on the sign in letters that match the drapes' color are the words THIS IS NOT AN EXIT.

reset and start all over again. This grounding options are neither realizable within Empire, nor within American Psycho. Because Empire occupies all in-betweens, it incorporates all open space and thus extinguishes all outside[28]: 'it is virtual, built to control the marginal event, and organized to dominate, and when necessary intervene in the breakdowns of the system.'[29] Leaving - kill yourself instead of killing others, and blow up any suitable skyline[30] - would stop the game, and equal a breakdown of Empire. *Leave-taking* is thus just not feasible, because *Empire*'s de-escalating forces are always coming inbetween. Instead of leaving for real, Patrick dissolves in a decadent and violent dream world; here is no way to get into touch with anything or anyone - nothing remains (no contact, no response, and no responsibility) but a void & empty nightmarish reality rapped into beautiful wallpaper.

Alike within the Matrix - in its blue pill variety - ignorance is bliss. Cypher alias Reagan[31], the traitor in the first matrix sequel, could not care less, if the steak in his mouth is for real, or not. Indifference prevails and all reality principles remain abandoned. If you make the right choice and opt for the blue pill, life is *becoming identical* with the simulacra producing the simulation. Differences that could mark a difference are erased, within this vampire's empire. Any space around you translates into plain indifference, across all scales. The gaming environment absorbs every perspective, erases all the exits and nothing may-be subject to change, in the end. Because 'Empire not only manages a territory and a population but also creates the very world it inhabits'[32]. From this perspective Patrick appears just as much as a victim in (t)his unreal world, as Reagan in

the Matrix: Imprisoned in a virtual and violent super-structure; mediatized by fluidly commanding forms called *Empire*.

MAP # 6 …LIFE IS A MYSTERY, EVERYONE MUST STAND ALONE…?

'This is not an exit' comes as a sign, at the end of the Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho book. It could, in all simplicity, be read as a warning - dedicated to both the reader and the protagonist. This is not an exit - because arriving at the end makes no difference, any more. There is no real end anyway, because the ends have become its means, and vice versa. You are forever going to continue your quest. And if you do, your time playing is never going to come to an end. Obviously everything falls apart and everyone notices. Everybody knows about your sick and obscure perversions, daily routines and violent deeds. Effortlessly, 'the becoming of Empire is actually realized on the basis of the same conditions that characterize its decadence and decline.'[33] Yet, every creation of Empire bears the seeds of its turmoil in itself - so much for self-referentiality - that makes the apparent suspension of time, history and actors within Empire *nothing but an illusion*; nothing but a simulation that hides the fact, that there really remains nothing worthwhile safeguarding. SOCIAL REALITY CAN COLLAPSE, AND REVERT INTO WHAT EVER WILL HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE MEANTIME. Whichever step you take next, the social matrix of communication got you - this is not an exit. Things (=games, desires, this narrative, capitalism) are eventually going to materialise in an event, fall differently into place and take your virtual pleasure-dome onto a different social body. (T)his alternative is always (t)here; this

planet's future is in your hand. Aura is coming! Lesson learned? Everyone is a little bit Patrick Bateman-ish - everyone is ones own American Psycho - out there to reproduce the all-inclusive game-map of Empire. If only we realize (y)our posture, take on different roles and agree upon different actions, things will progress: at least, this used to be a pragmatic, common sensual and neo-modernistic resolution.

MAP # 7 WELCOME TO CLASS REAL[34]

The Franz Kafka / Matrix reading of the 'this is not an exit' sign, is slightly more complex. The general invitation sounds simple, though. Morpheus is, in ancient Greek mythology, the gatekeeper, between awaked-ness and dreaming - between the Matrix that really hides the fact that there is no real world to begin with, and the real world. Morpheus discloses to us, and to his novice Neo: 'I can only show you the door, you have to go through it yourself'. Is it going to be an exit? Well, see for yourself - obviously in Neo's case, there was nothing behind the door; nothing but the incessant re-entry[35] into the game that he attempts to leave. Being on the red pill, means to go for and fight the Matrix. Find out what the Matrix really is, and you'll notice no difference between

yourself and the Matrix. Winning the Matrix game equals the becoming of a better agent, by functionally replacing the old agent Smith - while becoming more Matrix than the Matrix itself[36]. Obviously, there appears nothing behind Patrick Bateman's door at the end of American Psycho - nothing but Ronald Reagan performing on CNN, nothing but the desire to act in a similarly controlled manner, while fitting into the game. THIS is not an exit.

The match-making narrative, in Kafka's famous parable *Vor dem Gesetz*[37], might be even more depressing, than The Matrix super-hero-option - especially for Americans. Counteracting the(ir) dominant just-do-it-mentality, the main character, a man from the countryside, does not even dare to step through the first door, although the door-keeper encourages him to doing so. From an ego-shooter gaming perspective, the exit seems absurdly simple. Why not shooting down this gatekeeper, and another, and another. This is what Patrick Bateman and George W. Bush do. With respect to the relevance of Patrick Bateman's exit-option-question, Slavoj Zizek suddenly appears as a *deus ex machina*[38] on the sideline. Let him help us out - by reversing our point of view, regarding the exiting issue:

Before the law (Franz Kafka): ... but the doorkeeper says that he cannot grant admittance at the moment. The man thinks it over and then asks if he will be allowed in later. "It is possible," says the doorkeeper, "but not at the moment." Since the gate stands open, as usual, and the doorkeeper steps to one side, the man stoops to peer through the gateway into the interior. Observing that, the doorkeeper laughs and says: "If you are so drawn to it, just try to go in despite my veto. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the least of the door-keepers. From hall to hall there is one doorkeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third doorkeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him."

"the really deluded person in the parable is not the man from the country (say: Patrick Bateman), but the door-keeper himself who "is subject to the man and does not know it" - why a bondman is always subject to a free man, and it is obviously the man from the country who is free: he can go where he likes, he came to the Door of Law out of his own free will, while the door-keeper is bound to his post. Since the door was only meant for the man from the country, the door-keeper had to be waiting there for years for the man from the countries whimsical decision to go to the door's of the Law …"[39]

Along these lines the real interesting question in American Psycho is thus not, why Patrick continuously does what he is doing - his practices might be nothing more but another symptom of our multi-optional society, or the residual of sick childhood experiences. The real question, is why his door-keepers act the way they do: his secretary (discovering Patrick's sketch-book-agenda filled with most perverse & violent drawings), the woman from the real-estate company (who obviously identifies Patrick as the originator of the countless dead bodies and blood-paintings on the wall of the apartment she's trying to re-rent), the owner of the Asian laundry-shop (where-to Patrick brings his blood-stained bed-cloth), etc, etc. For the keeper-overseer in Kafka's famous parable, just as for the man from the country, the same question is equally unanswerable, their behavior equally improbable - the door is right in front of them and you and everyone - why do you still spend your life-time guarding it?

(Mission Complete)

MAP # 8 END OF MISSION BONUS SEQUENCE: SELF-DESCRIPTIONS THROUGH INDIFFERENCE AND WYSIWYC[40]

Why not taking a stand on the shoulders of Niklas Luhmann, for to reverse a Patrick Bateman-ish posture. Luhmann systematically attempts to think through causality, without assuming the primacy of the individual, liberal humanist subject. This means undertaking social (read: organ()sing) analysis, without the assumption of the psychological 'self' as first cause. Luhmann defines an organization as a system that automatically produces itself as an organization. Communication (re)produces the distinction between the organizations organization and its environment. Thus maintaining its re-production through the connectivity of its own communication. Within any organization, there is nothing without communication (absence of observers, action, presence). And without communication, there is nothing an e.g. observer could actually relate to in organizations. What remains to be done, is to observe characterize and describe the: how this self-production takes place. Thus gradually shifting the focus from the question of form and social order to situations and practices of social reality production. Luhmann does not see constitutive individual human (or group, or cultural) intentionality, or any other essential (such as efficiency, fairness, innovativeness), as the primary determinant of organization. The primary determinant is the organization of the organization itself. The ongoing flow of social inter-activity through its homemade inter-passivity[41] is the key aggregation level for analysis. Organ()sing is a-life and making a living as long as it can 'produce further operations out of the present state of being, into which it has put itself.' (Luhmann, 2000)

This experimenting with Niklas Luhmann in a nutshell takes beginnings for granted, because every beginning has already begun[42]. It comes as a self-referential undertaking; it can only glide through, and make sense of what related communication can possibly refer to - through series of self-determined referencing (actions) and through series of other-determined referencing (observations). Luhmann makes use of the distinction between operation and observation, in order to be able to show that, even when an observation already is an operation, there are still operations going on which go unobserved; indifferent-activities, automatically and perpetually reproducing its social body extensions. Since no-one, except the procession of ever-more communication, knows, how communication is re-cycling itself, we invent the notions of reproduction and circularity. And go on, trying to observe what we get, once getting operational with such a notion.

This disposition curiously follows irritations and intermissions. And mistakes them for potential connectivity producers, through dead-ended communicative loops. Self-descriptions[43] are key to mistakes - for to eventually intermitting communications self-referential circularity. Per default, within the frame of Luhmann's operational system theory, perturbations and interludes are observable along three sense-dimensions[44]. Self-descriptions come into play in relation to an absence of observers through differentiations, an absence of actual presence (time) through past and future, and an absence of actors through social relationships. From here-on *communication incessantly translates indifference into relationships*:

1. Through the concept of system differentiation, that is organizing the relationship between systems and environments. It is traditionally re-presented by the categories, through which objects can be arranged in a system. And determines the relationship between systems' inside and outside, whilst excluding and superseding the observer. Initial questions regarding this dimension comprise: What seems to be the case and what not? Which perspectives are in, and which are out? What is nowhere at all?

2. Related to concepts of actualization and evolution, the time dimension is traditionally re-presented by progress or momentum. It deals with temporalized complexity, based on a distinction between before and after; currently in the forms of past and future through the exclusion of the ever related absent presence. There are many ways to start questioning: When does something begin, and why does it not yet happen? How long does it already take? What is becoming?

3. In relation to the concept of communication and its media, the social dimension used to be represented by the animal sociale. Whilst currently communication through applied distinctions between alter and ego (double contingency) excludes the actor. Key questions include: Who is involved and who remains excluded? How is rejec-

tion produced and how acceptance? Why do persistent levels of social indifference prevail?

Perceived from within the un-folding flow of communication, these potential absences (of observers, actors and presence) create b(u)y themselves incredible levels of indifference. ¥€$[45] - they present voids, which are key to appreciate the success of our contemporary communication and media[46] based GLIBERALL - global-liberal-overall - SOCIETY. Organ()sing through these voids is key to appreciate the breath-taking success of contemporary American Psycho's; its organ()sing is key to do away with them, while moving on.

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NOTES

[1] Signature quote in Easton Ellis. (1998, 2000) Glamorama, p.27 - here, Christian Bale, the actor who plays the American Psycho character in Harron's movie, keeps on re-appearing.

[2] Bruch & Ghoshal (2002). Active non-action is becoming an issue. Up to 90% of all managers brilliantly simulate to be constantly over-worked - without actually producing anything worthwhile: 'beware the busy manager'

[3] Hardt (1993) p14: 'difference is not a determination but, in this essential relationship with life, a differentiation.'

[4] Capitalism reproduces itself within an inherently schizophrenic (and thus undecide(a)dly open) axiomatic form - Deleuze & Guattari (1992).
Watson and Lovelock (1983) p286-289.

[5] Lenin (1987).

[6] McLuhan (1964).

[7] Luhmann (1997).

[8] Lessing (1999).

[9] Hardt & Negri (2000).

[10] Signature and closing quote from the David Cronenberg movie eXistenZ (1999).

[11] McLuhan (1964) p41. The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis.

[12] Baudrillard (1989: 30): 'On the aromatic hillsides of Santa Barbara, the villas are all like funeral homes. Between the gardenias and the eucalyptus trees, among the profusion of plant genuses and the monotony of the human species, lies the tragedy of a utopian dream made reality. In the very heartland of wealth and liberation, you always hear the same question: „What are you doing after the orgy?" What do you do when everything is available - sex, flowers, the stereotypes of life and death? This is America's problem and, through America, it has become the whole world's problem.'

[13] Easton Ellis (1991:210).

[14] Easton Ellis, op.cit., p384.

[15] Map # 3 Organ()sing (HIDDEN BONUS MATERIAL) > Naturally contemporary society is characterized by a great multiplicity of gaming systems. They are commonly operating through the ever-absent fluid of self-organizing communication (Deleuze Guattari, 1980, 1992: 205-228: bodies without organs) and wincing, jerking, convulsively moving 'organs without bodies' (Zizek, 2004); like Patrick Bateman - producing the perpetual mobile of late capitalistic society - driven by the power of literally everything being subject to multiple exchange-flows - producing an infinitely set of possibilities for trade- and exchangeability. There-of organ()sing comes as the indifference producing and (sup)porting mechanism. Organ()sing deals with the promise and production of the inter-face that is never available: the virtually present pair of eyes, currently missing at the table. Organ()sing relates to the void, that comes into place and play once several people pretend to collaborate without producing any consequences; while relating to one another without performing a relationship beyond plain indifference. Organ()sing describes and follows real levels of lived through productivity - and translates them into initiating stories; antenarratives on the subjectivation of 1 (me, and you, and any-one) pushing through this plane and line of flight.

[16] Easton Ellis (1991: 397).

[17] Hardt & Negri (2000: 198).

[18] Hardt & Negri, op.cit., p15.

[19] Hardt & Negri, op.cit., p226.

[20] Schwartz (2004).

[21] Debord (1978: chapters 1 and 13).

[22] Op.cit.

[23] Op.cit.

[24] Op.cit.

[25] Hardt & Negri (2000: 63-64): "Politics in its contemporary form understood as the science of administration and management."

[26] Hardt & Negri (2000: 62).

[27] Hardt & Negri (2000) preface.

[28] Hardt & Negri, op.cit., p39.

[29] Dis-played as a kind of social suicide in the denouement of David Fincher's (1999) movie Fighclub.

[30] Cypher: I don't want to remember nothing. Nothing. You understand? And I want to be rich. You know, someone important, like an actor.
Agent Smith: Whatever you want, Mr Reagan.

[31] Hardt & Negri, op.cit., preface.

[32] Hardt & Negri, op.cit., p20.

[33] Mamoru Oshii calls the last game-map 'class real', in his ingenious gaming-movie Avalon.

[34] Luhmann (1997) p. 98.

[35] Letiche & Maier (2001).

[36] http://archive.8m.net/kafka.htm

[37] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deus_ex_machina 'The phrase deus ex machina has been extended to refer to any resolution to a story which does not pay due regard to the story's internal logic and is so unlikely it challenges suspension of disbelief, and presumably allows the author to end it in the way he or she wanted.'

[38] Zizek (2001) p110-111.

[39] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WYSIWYG 'WYSIWYG (pronounced "wizzy-wig") is an acronym for What You See Is What You Get, and is used in computing to refer to the technology that makes sure the image seen on the screen corresponds to what is printed out on paper.'

[40] Zizek (1989), p34.

[41] Glanville/Varela (1981) in Luhmann N (1996), p109.

[42] Luhmann (1997) p866-1150.

[43] Luhmann, op.cit., p1136.

[45] Koolhaas (2004), p240-251.

[46] 'Whatever we know about our society, or indeed the world in which we live in, we know through the mass media.' (Luhmann,1996, 2000: 1) & 'We walk around in a sphere, a megasphere where things no longer have a reality principle. Rather a communication principle, a mediatising principle' (Baudrillard, 1988: 8).