Antisocial Media

Ian Alan Paul

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"The problem is no longer getting people to express themselves, but providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don't stop people from expressing themselves, but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, or ever rarer, the thing that might be worth saying."

-Gilles Deleuze

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1. Antisocial Media

1. Antisocial Media

<center>1</center>

Antisocial Media is not a collection of networks, but an antisocial relation among people, mediated by networks. It is the historical movement in which we are caught.

<center>2</center>

Antisocial Media is the moment when the network has attained the total occupation of antisocial life. Considered in its own terms, Antisocial Media is the affirmation of networks and the affirmation of all human life, namely antisocial life, as mere networks.

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The world at once present and absent which Antisocial Media makes networked is the world of the network dominating all that is lived. In societies where digital conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of networks.

<center>4</center>

Antisocial Media presents itself simultaneously as all of society, as part of society, and as instrument of unification. The networks detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be reestablished. Antisocial Media, like digital society, is at once unified and divided. Like society, it builds its unity on the disjunction. It is the same project everywhere: a restructuring without community.

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Antisocial Media reunites the separate, but reunites it as separate.

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What brings together users liberated from their local and national boundaries is also what pulls them apart. This society which eliminates geographical distance reproduces distance internally as networked separation. What requires a more profound rationality is also what nourishes the irrationality of networked exploitation and repression. What creates the abstract power of society creates its concrete unfreedom.

7

Antisocial Media is materially the expression of the separation and estrangement between user and user. The world of the network is thus shown for what it is, because its movement is identical to the estrangement of users among themselves and in relation to their global product. Separation is the alpha and omega of Antisocial Media.

8

Antisocial Media is nothing more than the common language of this separation. What binds the users together is no more than a networked relation at the very center which maintains their isolation. From the computer to the laptop to the tablet to the smartphone to the smartwatch, all the goods selected by the networked system are also its weapons for a constant reinforcement of the conditions of isolation of "lonely crowds."

9

Antisocial Media is the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue. It is the self-portrait of power in the epoch of its networked management of the conditions of existence. It is the diplomatic representation of networked society to itself, where all other expression is banned. It says nothing more than "that which networks is good, that which is good networks."

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When analyzing Antisocial Media one speaks, to some extent, the language of the networked itself in the sense that one moves through the methodological terrain of the very society which expresses itself in Antisocial Media. One cannot abstractly contrast Antisocial Media to actual antisocial activity: such a division is itself divided. Objective reality is present on both sides. Every notion fixed this way has no other basis than its passage into the opposite: reality rises up within Antisocial Media, and Antisocial Media is real.

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But the critique which reaches the truth of Antisocial Media exposes it as the networked negation of life, as a negation of life which has become networked. Antisocial Media in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the non-living.

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The user's consciousness, immobilized in the falsified center of the movement of its world, no longer experiences its life as a passage toward self-realization and toward death. One who has renounced using their life can no longer admit their death. This antisocial absence of death is identical to the antisocial absence of life.

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In a society where no one can any longer be recognized by others, every individual becomes unable to recognize their own reality. This is why the user feels at home nowhere, because Antisocial Media is everywhere. Antisocial Media is the nightmare of imprisoned digital society which ultimately expresses nothing more than its desire to sleep. Antisocial Media is the guardian of sleep.

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It is not a supplement to the real world, an additional decoration. It is the heart of the unrealism of the real society. In all its specific forms, as information or propaganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption, Antisocial Media is the present model of antisocially dominant life. The only use which remains here is the fundamental use of submission.

15

Antisocial Media is ideology par excellence, because it exposes and manifests in its fullness the essence of all ideological systems: the impoverishment, servitude and negation of real life.

16

Under the shimmering diversions of Antisocial Media, banalization dominates digital society the world over and at every point where the developed consumption of networks has seemingly multiplied the roles and objects to choose from. The satisfaction which no longer comes from the use of abundant networks is now sought in the recognition of their value as networks: the use of networks becomes sufficient unto itself; the user is filled with religious fervor for the sovereign liberty of the networks. The fetishism of networks reaches moments of fervent exaltation similar to the ecstasies of the convulsions and miracles of the old religious fetishism.

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Every given network fights for itself, cannot acknowledge the others, and attempts to impose itself everywhere as if it were the only one. What hides under the networked oppositions is a unity of misery. Behind the masks of total choice, different forms of the same alienation confront each other, all of them built on real contradictions which are repressed. Antisocial Media, then, is the epic poem of this struggle, an epic which cannot be concluded by the fall of any Troy.

18

Antisocial Media does not sing the praises of users and their weapons, but of networks and their passions. In this blind struggle every network, pursuing its passion, unconsciously realizes something higher: the becoming-world of the network, which is also the becoming-network of the world. Even where the material base is still absent, digital society has already invaded the antisocial surface of each continent by means of Antisocial Media.

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Antisocial Media exists in a concentrated or a diffuse form depending on the necessities of the particular stage of misery which it denies and supports. In both cases, Antisocial Media is nothing more than a network of happy unification surrounded by desolation and fear at the tranquil center of misery.

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Here this network is explicitly presented as the moment of real life, and the point is to wait for its digitized return. But even in those very moments reserved for living, it is still Antisocial Media that is to be seen and reproduced, becoming ever more intense. What was represented as genuine life reveals itself simply as more genuinely networked life. At the same time all individual reality has become antisocial reality directly dependent on antisocial power and shaped by it. Thus all separate power has been networked, but the adherence of all to an immobile network only signified the common acceptance of an imaginary prolongation of the poverty of real antisocial activity, still largely felt as a unitary condition.

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Antisocial Media constantly rediscovers its own assumptions more concretely. It is the sun which never sets over the empire of digital passivity. It covers the entire surface of the world and bathes endlessly in its own glory.

2. Antisocial Capital

2. Antisocial Capital

1

Antisocial Media is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes a network.

2

Antisocial Media subjugates living users to itself to the extent that the digital economy has totally subjugated them. In Antisocial Media, which is the network of the ruling digital economy, the goal is nothing, development everything. Antisocial Media aims at nothing other than itself. It is no more than the digital economy developing for itself. The basically tautological character of Antisocial Media flows from the simple fact that its means are simultaneously its ends.

3

The development of productive forces shatters the old relations of production and all static order turns to dust. Whatever was absolute becomes historical.

4

Antisocial Media originates in the loss of the unity of the world, and the gigantic expansion of the digital network expresses the totality of this loss: the abstraction of all specific digital labor and the general abstraction of the entirety of production are perfectly rendered in Antisocial Media, whose mode of being concrete is precisely abstraction. Antisocial Media is the map of this new world, a map which exactly covers its territory. The very powers which escaped us show themselves to us in all their force.

5

Antisocial Media within society corresponds to a concrete manufacture of alienation. What grows with the digital economy in motion for itself can only be the very alienation which was at its origin.

6

Antisocial Media is the other side of money: it is the general abstract equivalent of all networks. Antisocial Media is the developed digital complement of money where the totality of the network world networks as a whole, as a general equivalence for what the entire society can be and can do. Ideology is at home; separation has built its world.

7

The unreal unity proclaimed by Antisocial Media masks the class division on which the real unity of the capitalist mode of production rests. What obliges the users to participate in the construction of the world is also what separates them from it. This reciprocal alienation is the essence and the support of the existing society.

8

The present phase of total occupation of antisocial life by the accumulated results of the digital economy leads to a generalized sliding of having into networking, from which all actual "having" must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function. Separated from their product, the user themself produces all the details of their world with ever increasing power, and thus finds themself ever more separated from their world. The more their life is now their product, the more they are separated from their life. The digital economy transforms the world, but transforms it only into a world of digital economy. None of the activity lost in digital labor can be regained in the submission to its result.

9

The economic system founded on isolation is a circular production of isolation. The technology is based on isolation, and the technical process isolates in turn.

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The time of production, network-time, is an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals. This time is in reality exactly what it is in its exchangeable character. It shows what it is: separate power developing in itself, in the growth of productivity by means of the incessant refinement of the division of digital labor into a parcelization of gestures which are then dominated by the independent movement of machines; and working for an ever-expanding market. For this to be done, the total network has to return as a fragment to the fragmented individual, absolutely separated from the productive forces operating as a whole. Thus the present "liberation from digital labor," the increase of leisure, is in no way a liberation within digital labor, nor a liberation from the world shaped by this digital labor.

11

Antisocial Media displays certain networked specializations of communication and administration when viewed locally, but when viewed in terms of the functioning of the entire system these specializations merge in a world division of networked tasks. The division of networked tasks preserves the entirety of the existing order and especially the dominant pole of its development.

This individual experience of separate daily life remains without language, without concept, without critical access to its own past which has been recorded nowhere. It is not communicated. It is not understood and is forgotten to the profit of the false networked memory of the unmemorable. All community and all critical sense are dissolved during this movement in which the forces that could grow by separating are not yet reunited. But in actual fact, the truth of the uniqueness of all these specific sectors resides in the universal system that contains them: the unique movement that makes the planet its field, capitalism.

With the development of capitalism, networked time is unified on a world scale. But this history, which is everywhere simultaneously the same, is still only the refusal within history of history itself.

Antisocial Media, as the present antisocial organization of the paralysis of history and memory, of the abandonment of history built on the foundation of historical time, is the false consciousness of time. The pseudo-events which rush by in networked dramatizations have not been lived by those informed of them; moreover they are lost in the inflation of their hurried replacement at every throb of the networked machinery.

The history which is present in all the depths of society tends to be lost at the surface. It can only be evoked as a memory.

What Antisocial Media offers as eternal is based on change and must change with its base. Antisocial Media is absolutely dogmatic and at the same time cannot really achieve any solid dogma. Nothing stops for Antisocial Media; this condition is natural to it, yet completely opposed to its inclination.

Reasoning about history is inseparably reasoning about power. The victory of the network administrators is the victory of profoundly historical time, because this is the time of networked economic production which transforms society, continuously and from top to bottom. The real movement which suppresses existing conditions rules over society from the moment of the network administrators' victory in the digital economy, and visibly after the political translation of this victory.

The network administrators are the first ruling class for which digital labor is a value. And the network administrators which suppress all privilege, which recognize no value that does not flow from the exploitation of digital labor, have justly identified with digital labor their own value as a dominant class, and have made the progress of digital labor their own progress.

The class which accumulates networks and capital continually modifies nature by modifying digital labor itself, by unleashing its productivity. Networking is its weapon. In networking, language attains its complete independent reality as mediation between consciousnesses. The concentration of "communication" is thus an accumulation, in the hands of the existing system's administration, of the means which allow it to carry on this particular administration. The independent digital economy, which dominates society to the extent of reinstituting the class domination it needs for its own ends, is thus confirmed.

This history which discovers its foundation in political digital economy now knows of the existence of what had been its unconscious, but this still cannot be brought to light and remains unconscious.

Fascism is technically-equipped archaism. Thus it is one of the factors in the formation of the digital network, and its role in the destruction of the old users' movement makes it one of the fundamental forces of present-day society. However, since fascism is also the most costly form of preserving the capitalist order, it usually had to leave the front of the stage to the great roles played by the capitalist States; it is eliminated by stronger and more rational forms of the same order. Wherever the concentrated network rules, so does the police. Digital networked economic production extends its dictatorship extensively and intensively. This dictatorship must be accompanied by permanent violence. Progress implies it.

It is then that political digital economy takes shape, as the dominant science and the science of domination.

The world's foundation has changed.

3. Antisocial Revolt

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1

The anarchists have an ideal to realize. It is this that must find its suitable form in action.

2

The world already possesses the dream of a time whose consciousness it must now possess in order to actually live it. Its opposite is the society of Antisocial Media, where the network contemplates itself in a world it has created. It must recognize itself as no more than a radical separation from the world of separation.

3

History, which threatens this twilight world, is also the force which could subject space to lived time. By being thrown into history, by having to participate in the digital labor and struggles which make up history, users find themselves obliged to view their relations in a clear manner.

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The subject of history can be none other than the living producing themselves, becoming master and possessor of their world which is history, and existing as consciousness of their game. Their actual existence has as yet been no more than a brief sketch, quickly opposed and defeated by various defensive forces of class society, among which their own false consciousness must often be included.

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For the first time the user, at the base of society, is not materially a stranger to history, because it is now the base that irreversibly moves society. No quantitative amelioration of their misery, no illusion of networked integration is a lasting cure for their dissatisfaction, because the users cannot truly recognize themselves in a particular wrong they suffered nor in the righting of a particular wrong. They cannot recognize themselves in the righting of a large number of wrongs either, but only in the absolute wrong of being relegated to the margin of life. They remain irreducibly in existence within the intensified alienation of digital capitalism: it is the immense majority of users who have lost all power over the use of their lives and who, once they know this, redefine themselves as users, as negation at work within this society.

6

In the demand to live the historical time which they make, the users find the simple unforgettable center of their revolutionary project; and every attempt (thwarted until now) to realize this project marks a point of possible departure for new historical life.

7

Out of this practical communication among those who recognized each other as possessors of a singular present, who experienced the qualitative richness of events as their activity and as the place where they lived – their epoch – arises the general language of historical communication. This is where direct active communication is realized, where specialization, hierarchy and separation end, where the existing conditions have been transformed "into conditions of unity." This is another way of saying that the history of ideologies is over.

8

When constantly growing capitalist alienation at all levels makes it increasingly difficult for users to recognize and name their own misery, forcing them to face the alternative of rejecting the totality of their misery or nothing, the revolutionary organization has to learn that it can no longer combat alienation with alienated forms. The consciousness of desire and the desire for consciousness are identically the project which, in its negative form, seeks the abolition of classes, the users' direct possession of every aspect of their activity.

9

The victory of the autonomous digital economy must at the same time be its defeat. As soon as society discovers that it depends on the digital economy, the digital economy, in fact, depends on society. This subterranean force, which grew until it appeared sovereign, has lost its power.

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The truth of this society is nothing other than the negation of this society. But what is pushed out of the field of theoretical vision in this manner is revolutionary practice, the only truth of this negation.

11

To effectively destroy the society of Antisocial Media, what is needed is users putting a practical force into action. The thought of history can be saved only by becoming practical thought; and the practice of the users as a revolutionary class cannot be less than historical consciousness operating on the totality of its world. Its own practice is the generalization of communication and of coherence in these struggles.

The critical theory of Antisocial Media can be true only by uniting with the practical current of negation in society, and this negation, the resumption of revolutionary class struggle, will become conscious of itself by developing the critique of Antisocial Media which is the theory of its real conditions (the practical conditions of present oppression), and inversely by unveiling the secret of what this negation can be.

The formation of the users' class into a subject means the organization of revolutionary struggles and the organization of society at the revolutionary moment: it is then that the practical conditions of consciousness must exist, conditions in which the theory of praxis is confirmed by becoming practical theory. The very development of class society to the stage of networked organization of non-life thus leads the revolutionary project to become visibly what it already was essentially.

Network history was born online and reached maturity at the moment of the decisive victory of the online over the offline. But if the history of the online is the history of freedom, it is also the history of tyranny, of state administration that controls the offline and the online itself. The network is the locus of history because it is conscious of the past and also concentrates the antisocial power that makes the historical undertaking possible. The network could as yet only struggle for historical freedom, but not possess it.

The networks of the assemblies were the highest reality of the users' movement in the first quarter of this century, a reality which was not seen or was travestied because it disappeared along with the rest of the movement that was negated and eliminated by the entire historical experience of the time. At the new moment of the users' critique, this result returns as the only undefeated point of the defeated movement. Historical consciousness, which knows that this is the only milieu where it can exist, can now recognize this reality, no longer at the periphery of what is ebbing, but at the center of what is rising.

The network administrators came to power because they are the class of the developing digital economy. The users cannot themselves come to power except by becoming the class of consciousness. The growth of productive forces cannot guarantee such power, even by way of the increasing dispossession which it brings about.

The only two classes which effectively correspond to Marx's theory, the two pure classes towards which the entire analysis of Capital leads, the network administrators and the users, are also the only two revolutionary classes in history, but in very different conditions: the network administrative revolution is over; the users' revolution is a project born on the foundation of the preceding revolution but differing from it qualitatively. By neglecting the originality of the historical role of the network administrators, one masks the concrete originality of the users' project, which can attain nothing unless it carries its own banners and knows the "immensity of its tasks."

The revolutionary organization can be nothing less than a unitary critique of society, namely a critique which does not compromise with any form of separate power anywhere in the world, and a critique proclaimed globally against all the aspects of alienated antisocial life. In the struggle between the revolutionary organization and class society, the weapons are nothing other than the essence of the combatants themselves: the revolutionary organization cannot reproduce within itself the dominant society's conditions of separation and hierarchy. It must struggle constantly against its deformation in the ruling network.

At the revolutionary moment of dissolution of antisocial separation, this organization must recognize its own dissolution as a separate organization. Its completion is also its disintegration throughout society. The networked element of the collapse of the users' movement will itself collapse.

It is the decision to reconstruct the entire environment in accordance with the needs of the power of the users' assemblies, of the anti-statist dictatorship of the users, of enforceable dialogue. And the power of the assemblies which can be effective only if it transforms existing conditions in their entirety, cannot assign itself a smaller task if it wants to be recognized and to recognize itself in its world.

In the power of the assemblies, which must internationally supplant all other power, the users' movement is its own product and this product is the user themself. They are to themself their own goal. Only there is the networked negation of life negated in its turn.

"Ideas improve. The meaning of words participates in the improvement. Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It embraces an author's phrase, makes use of their expressions, erases a false idea, and replaces it with the right idea."

-Guy Debord

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