



<ALT/OPTION>

The Alt key on a computer keyboard is something that allows you to modify the parameters of any event triggered by pressing any key on the board. Like the blank in scrabble it can change the meaning of any combination of letters by altering a single value.

The universe of discourse is often a keyboard with a missing Alt key. What passes for theory often leaves practice with very few options. In the *Sarai Reader 01* we inaugurated a section called Alt/Option with texts by Bruce Sterling ("The Manifesto of January 3, 2000") and Hakim Bey ("The Net and the Web"). Through these texts, Alt/Option became an argument for a change in the way we look at, and act in, online and off-line worlds.

In a world where the lowering of trade tariffs and the exponential growth of dispersed international factories of immaterial labour go hand in hand with the electrification of border fences, the call for the re-emergence of a global/non-national subjectivity of mobile working people, stateless refugees, permanent exiles and 'illegal' migrants is an Alt key in need for urgent usage. So is a process of the 'general secession of intellectual and intelligent work' from the conditions of global war, which threatens to shade into a quiet permanence of global panic. The anxieties of not knowing when you will be made an outsider, an alien, and of not knowing when to stop processing the data streams of a world at war need to give way.

In reminding us that "we no longer have roots, we have aeriels" and that the war of panic can undermine its own reality, McKenzie Wark, and Franco Berardi Bifo give us two options in the texts that follow, of re-inserting the Alt key in the keyboard of discourse.

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