

# The revolution will not be...

**Derek Horton**

The revolution will not be digitised. This disc will spin but the revolution will not be digitised. This disc will make approximately five hundred revolutions per minute. Digital decoding will free up its sounds and you will hear allusions to revolutions: revolutionary allusions, revolutionary contusions, revolutionary confusions, revolutionary delusions, but the revolution will not be digitised. Five hundred revolutions every minute will be no more revolutionary than forty-five, or seventy-eight, or thirty-three and a third. For as long as you want them to, the disc's revolutions will go on, steadily, five hundred every minute for as many minutes as you can take, but eventually they will end. So, regrettably Comrade Trotsky, there will be no permanent revolutions, and the revolution will not be digitised. The disc will spin, the bit stream will pulsate, the digits will alternate in milliseconds and the signals will be decoded, but there will be no digital revolution. Information will be digitised and revolution information will be transmitted, but it will not be revolutionary information. There will not be an information revolution. Revolutions are not made of information and information will not be revolutionised. The revolution will not be digitised. The revolution will not be glorious, the revolution will not be sexual, the revolution will not be pink, the revolution will not be velvet, the revolution will not be bloodless. *Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise, revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way. Whoever heard of a revolution where they lock arms singing 'We Shall Overcome'? You don't do any singing, you're too busy swinging.* The revolution will not have a soundtrack. There will be music but *just because there is music piped into the most false of revolutions.* The revolution will not be met with dancing in the street, even though some will say, 'fuck revolution, let's dance'. *Walk through the doors that are locked to confound us, too many fences, let's cut them all down - fuck art, let's dance.* Let's dance, that's a clean shortcut to areas of enjoyment long closed to us by the accumulated rubbish of the culture route, but it's not a revolution. Revolution will be in the air. But the air, once breathed, will be expelled and the air will be stale. *The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution.* Allusions, contusions, confusions and delusions will abound. Any number of apparently new things, any number of events, any number of ideas, will all be described as revolutionary, but the

absence of revolutions will be as revolutionary as it gets, and the revolution will not be digitised. The so-called avant-garde will not be revolutionary. *The avant garde has always been made up of people who are bored by other people's ideas. You don't need a revolution. All you have to do is be one individual who is tired of looking at something that looks like something else.* The rev, the rev, rev, rev, revolution will start stutteringly. There will be no children of the revolution – but the revolution will be children. Children will be the revolution. The revolution will not be digitised, the revolution will be material, the revolution will be embodied, the revolution will be real, but the revolution will be potential until it is realised. *You cannot make the revolution, you can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit or it is nowhere.* The revolution will not be digitised, the revolution will not be, the revolution will only be potential until you realise the revolution is you.

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The tacit influence of Gil Scott Heron, Mark Bolan and Walter Benjamin is acknowledged. More explicitly, the words appearing in italics in the text are drawn from the following sources:

*Revolution is bloody...* Malcolm X, in George Breitman (ed.) *Malcolm X Speaks*. New York: Merit Publishers, 1965

*Just because there is...* Jim Carroll, *Maybe I'm Amazed*, 1981, in Jim Carroll, *Fear of Dreaming: The Selected Poems*. London: Penguin, 1993

*Walk through the doors...* The Gods Hate Kansas, *Fuck Art Let's Dance*. On the CD *Mischief Is Its Own Reward*, New Disorder Records, 1999

*A clean shortcut...* Mary Austin on Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, cited by James Weldon Johnson in *Black Manhattan*. 1930, reprinted New York: Da Capo, 1991

*The most radical...* Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1963

*The avant garde has...* Frank O'Hara (interviewed by Edward Lucie-Smith in 1965) in Frank O'Hara, *Standing Still and Walking in New York*. Bolinas, California, Grey Fox Press, 1975

*You cannot make...* Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974