From work to text: Spatial textuality

Dr Julia Lockheart

Level 4 WEEK 3

Research

Have you brought any research notes?

Do you have an imagined *scenario* that you would like to see in an exhibition?

Did you do some research into the thinkers and keywords presented last week?

Have you made any connections between the ideas presented and your own ideas for an exhibition?

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes (1968)



The Death of the Author

= The death of authorial authority and authorised meaning

= A repudiation of the intentional fallacy

A text may “betray” itself

‘We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.’

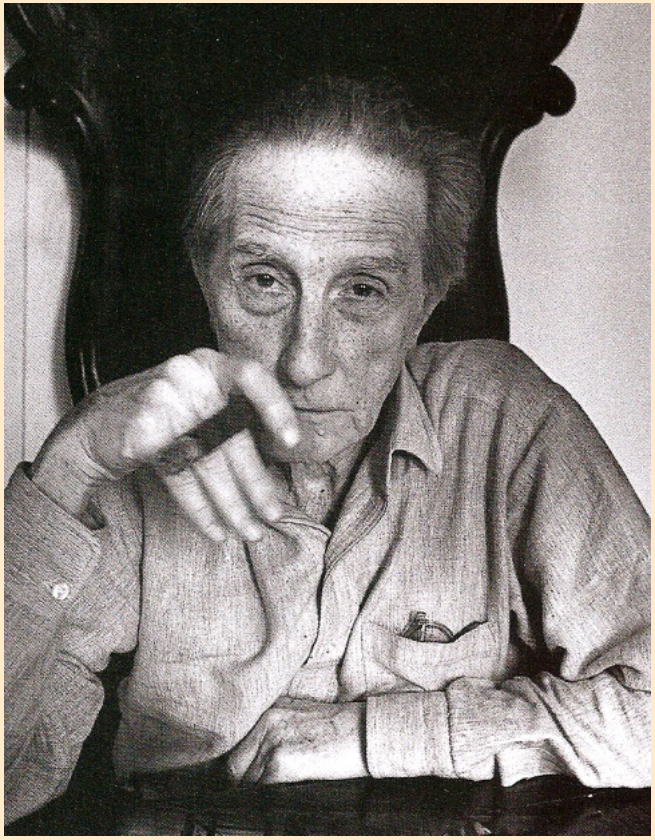
Barthes, *The Death of the Author* (1968)

The author as the maker of meaning, the critic as mediator or communicator of meaning, and the reader as consumer of meaning is radically overturned.

The Death of the Author = The Birth of the Reader

‘In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered.’

Barthes, *The Death of the Author* (1968)



‘No work of art is finished until completed by the spectator.’

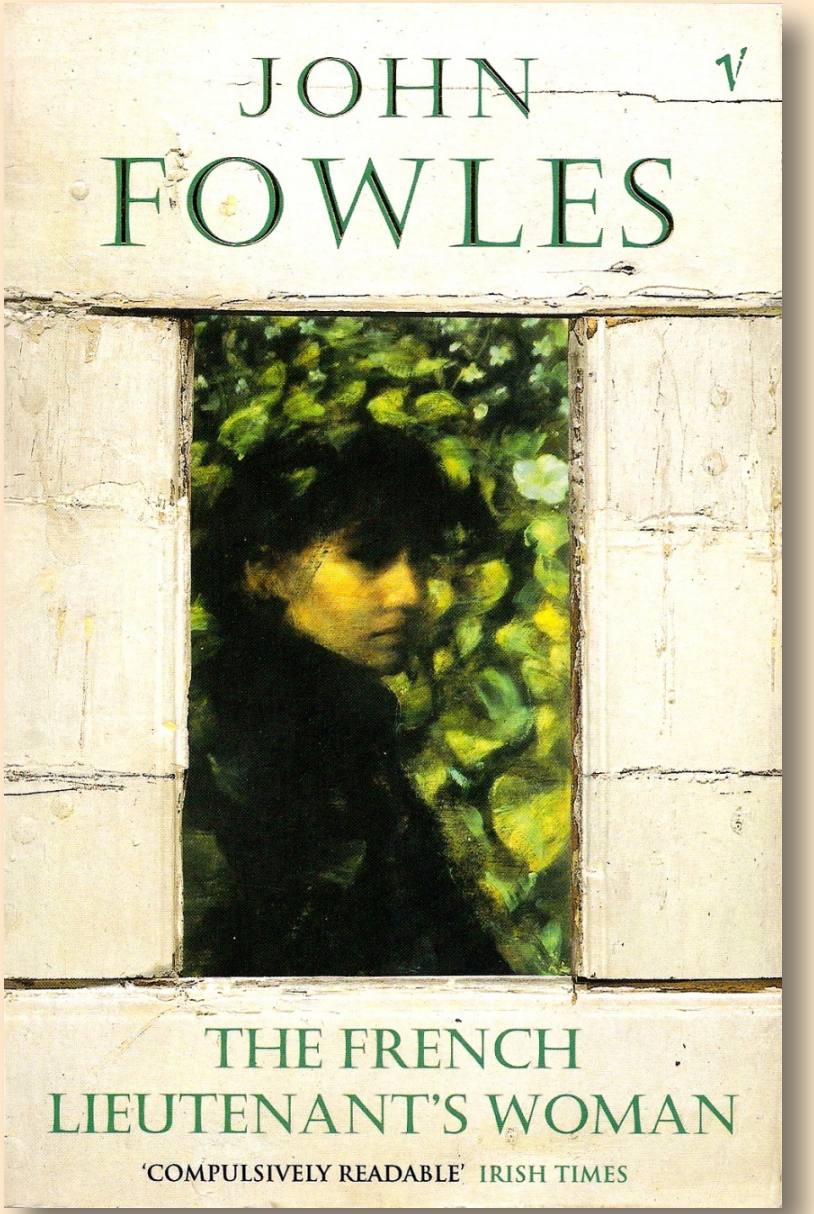
Marcel Duchamp

‘Works of art have a kind of “unconscious” which is not under the control of their producers. We have come to understand that one of those producers is the reader, viewer or listener – the recipient of a work of art is a co-creator of it.’

Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (2003)

The author as the reader of their own text

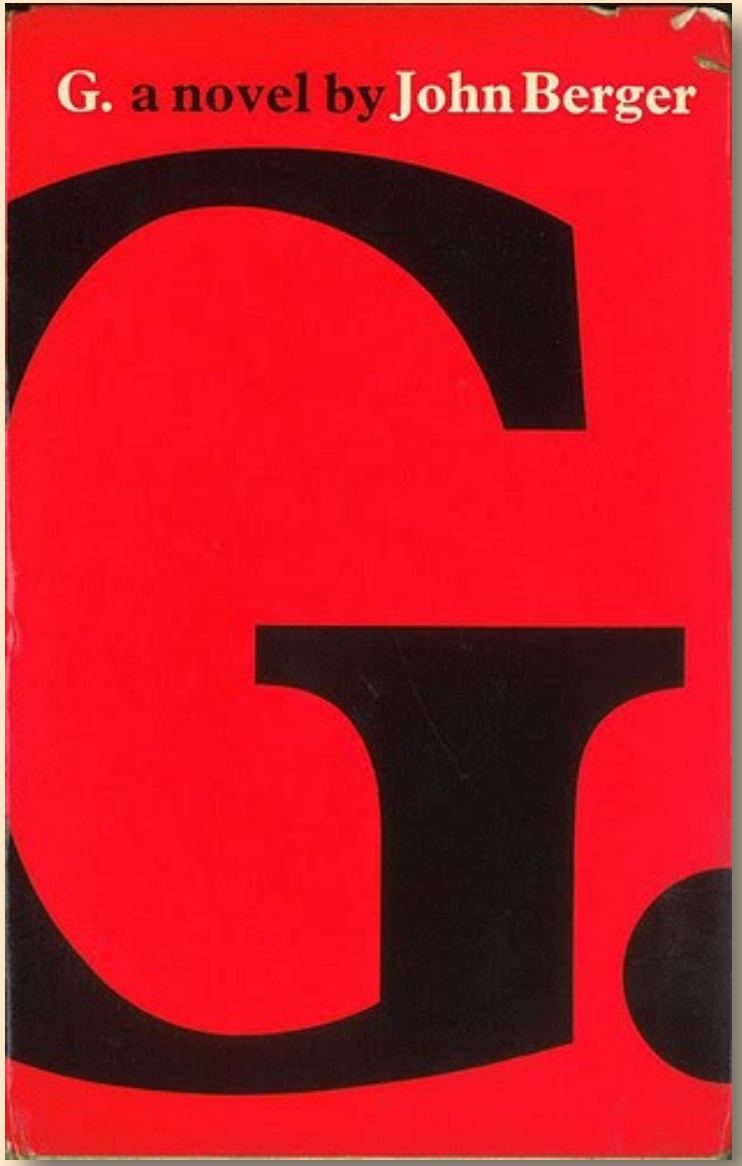
John Fowles,
The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969)



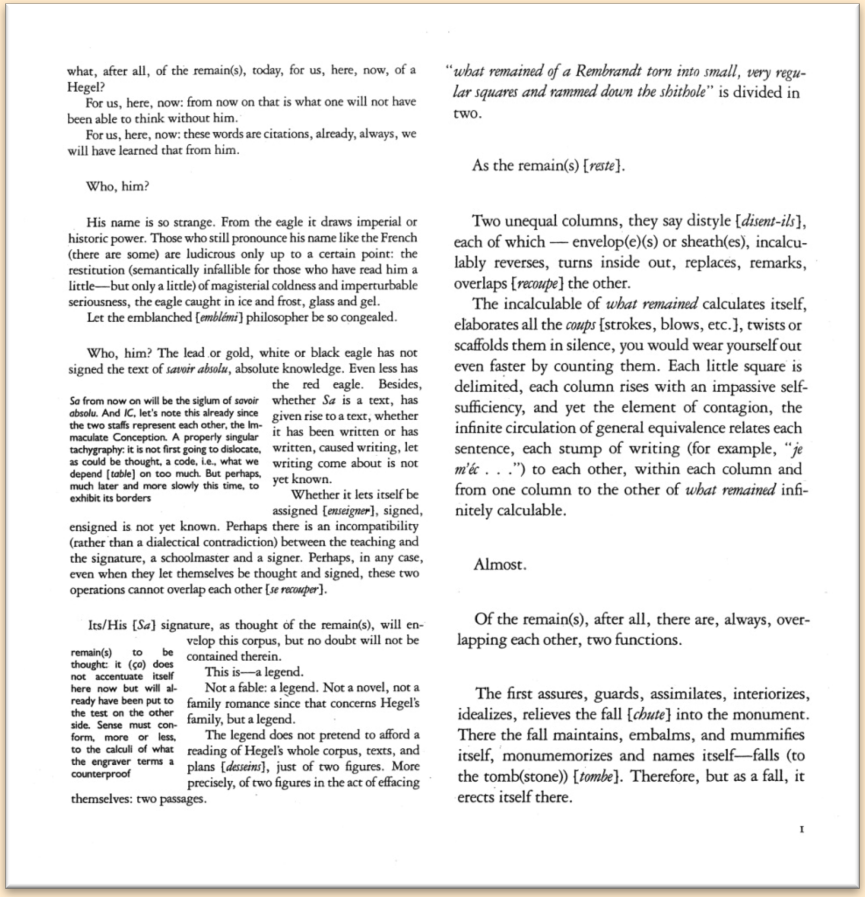
John Berger, *G* (1972)

The relations which I perceive between things—and these often include casual and historical relations—tend to form in my mind a complex synchronic pattern. I see fields where others see chapters. And so I am forced to use another method to try to place and define events.

Introduction to G (Berger 1972, p. 5)



The impossible passivity of the reader



what, after all, of the remain(s), today, for us, here, now, of a Hegel?

For us, here, now: from now on that is what one will not have been able to think without him.

For us, here, now: these words are citations, already, always, we will have learned that from him.

Who, him?

His name is so strange. From the eagle it draws imperial or historic power. Those who still pronounce his name like the French (there are some) are ludicrous only up to a certain point: the restitution (semantically infallible for those who have read him a little—but only a little) of magisterial coldness and imperturbable seriousness, the eagle caught in ice and frost, glass and gel.

Let the emblanched [*emblémi*] philosopher be so congealed.

Who, him? The lead or gold, white or black eagle has not signed the text of *savoir absolu*, absolute knowledge. Even less has the red eagle. Besides, whether *Sa* is a text, has given rise to a text, whether it has been written or has written, caused writing, let writing come about is not yet known.

Sa from now on will be the siglum of *savoir absolu*. And *IC*, let's note this already since the two staffs represent each other, the Immaculate Conception. A properly singular tachygraphy: it is not first going to dislocate, as could be thought, a code, i.e., what we depend [*table*] on too much. But perhaps, much later and more slowly this time, to exhibit its borders

Whether it lets itself be assigned [*enseigner*], signed, ensigned is not yet known. Perhaps there is an incompatibility (rather than a dialectical contradiction) between the teaching and the signature, a schoolmaster and a signer. Perhaps, in any case, even when they let themselves be thought and signed, these two operations cannot overlap each other [*se recouper*].

Its/His [*Sa*] signature, as thought of the remain(s), will envelop this corpus, but no doubt will not be contained therein.

remain(s) to be thought: it (ça) does not accentuate itself here now but will already have been put to the test on the other side. Sense must conform, more or less, to the calculi of what the engraver terms a counterproof

This is—a legend.

Not a fable: a legend. Not a novel, not a family romance since that concerns Hegel's family, but a legend.

The legend does not pretend to afford a reading of Hegel's whole corpus, texts, and plans [*desseins*], just of two figures. More precisely, of two figures in the act of effacing themselves: two passages.

"*what remained of a Rembrandt torn into small, very regular squares and rammed down the shithole*" is divided in two.

As the remain(s) [*reste*].

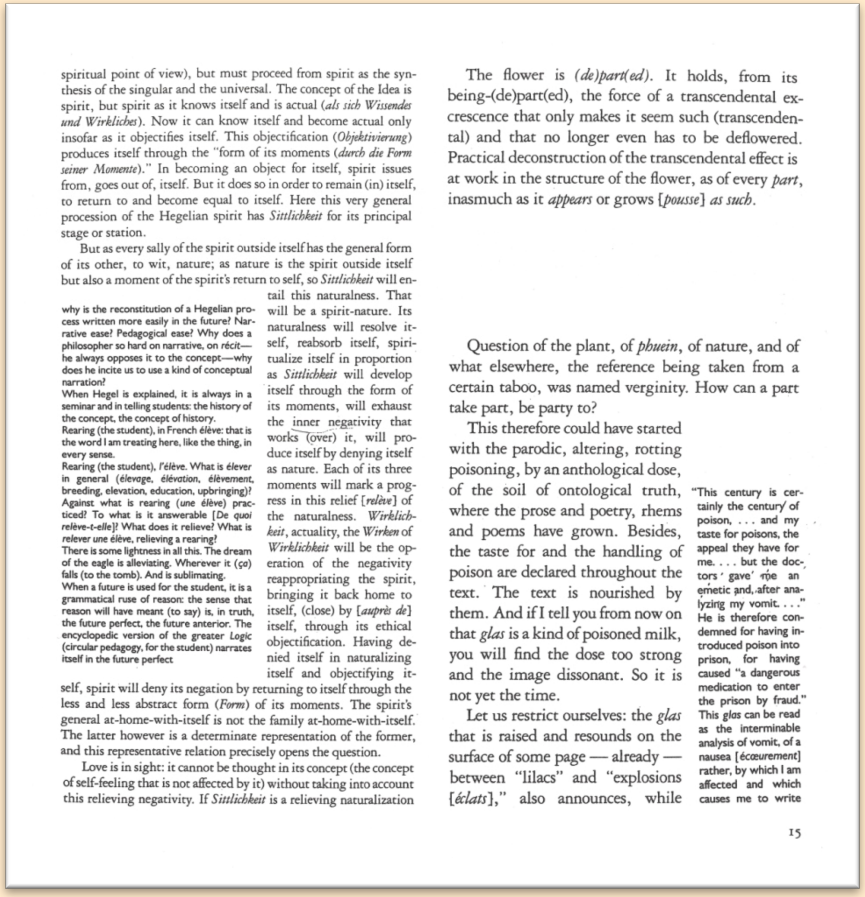
Two unequal columns, they say distyle [*disent-ils*], each of which — envelop(e)(s) or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps [*recoupe*] the other.

The incalculable of *what remained* calculates itself, elaborates all the *coups* [strokes, blows, etc.], twists or scaffolds them in silence, you would wear yourself out even faster by counting them. Each little square is delimited, each column rises with an impassive self-sufficiency, and yet the element of contagion, the infinite circulation of general equivalence relates each sentence, each stump of writing (for example, "*je m'éc . . .*") to each other, within each column and from one column to the other of *what remained* infinitely calculable.

Almost.

Of the remain(s), after all, there are, always, overlapping each other, two functions.

The first assures, guards, assimilates, interiorizes, idealizes, relieves the fall [*chute*] into the monument. There the fall maintains, embalms, and mummifies itself, monumemorizes and names itself—falls (to the tomb(stone)) [*tombe*]. Therefore, but as a fall, it erects itself there.



spiritual point of view), but must proceed from spirit as the synthesis of the singular and the universal. The concept of the Idea is spirit, but spirit as it knows itself and is actual (*als sich Wissendes und Wirkliches*). Now it can know itself and become actual only insofar as it objectifies itself. This objectification (*Objektivierung*) produces itself through the "form of its moments (*durch die Form seiner Momente*)." In becoming an object for itself, spirit issues from, goes out of, itself. But it does so in order to remain (in) itself, to return to and become equal to itself. Here this very general procession of the Hegelian spirit has *Sittlichkeit* for its principal stage or station.

But as every sally of the spirit outside itself has the general form of its other, to wit, nature; as nature is the spirit outside itself but also a moment of the spirit's return to self, so *Sittlichkeit* will entail this naturalness. That will be a spirit-nature. Its naturalness will resolve itself, reabsorb itself, spiritualize itself in proportion as *Sittlichkeit* will develop itself through the form of its moments, will exhaust the inner negativity that works (over) it, will produce itself by denying itself as nature. Each of its three moments will mark a progress in this relief [*relève*] of the naturalness. *Wirklichkeit*, actuality, the *Wirken* of *Wirklichkeit* will be the operation of the negativity reappropriating the spirit, bringing it back home to itself, (close) by [*auprès de*] itself, through its ethical objectification. Having denied itself in naturalizing itself and objectifying itself, spirit will deny its negation by returning to itself through the less and less abstract form (*Form*) of its moments. The spirit's general at-home-with-itself is not the family at-home-with-itself. The latter however is a determinate representation of the former, and this representative relation precisely opens the question.

why is the reconstitution of a Hegelian process written more easily in the future? Narrative ease? Pedagogical ease? Why does a philosopher so hard on narrative, on *récit*—he always opposes it to the concept—why does he incite us to use a kind of conceptual narration?
When Hegel is explained, it is always in a seminar and in telling students: the history of the concept, the concept of history.
Rearing (the student), in French *élève*: that is the word I am treating here, like the thing, in every sense.
Rearing (the student), *l'élève*. What is *élever* in general (*élevage*, *élévation*, *élèvement*, breeding, elevation, education, upbringing)? Against what is rearing (*une élève*) practiced? To what is it answerable [*De quoi relève-t-elle*]? What does it relieve? What is *relever une élève*, relieving a rearing?
There is some lightness in all this. The dream of the eagle is allevizing. Wherever it (ça) falls (to the tomb). And is sublimating.
When a future is used for the student, it is a grammatical ruse of reason: the sense that reason will have meant (to say) is, in truth, the future perfect, the future anterior. The encyclopedic version of the greater *Logic* (circular pedagogy, for the student) narrates itself in the future perfect

Love is in sight: it cannot be thought in its concept (the concept of self-feeling that is not affected by it) without taking into account this relieving negativity. If *Sittlichkeit* is a relieving naturalization

The flower is *(de)part(ed)*. It holds, from its being-(de)part(ed), the force of a transcendental excrescence that only makes it seem such (transcendental) and that no longer even has to be deflowered. Practical deconstruction of the transcendental effect is at work in the structure of the flower, as of every *part*, inasmuch as it *appears* or grows [*pousse*] *as such*.

Question of the plant, of *phuein*, of nature, and of what elsewhere, the reference being taken from a certain taboo, was named verginity. How can a part take part, be party to?

This therefore could have started with the parodic, altering, rotting poisoning, by an anthological dose, of the soil of ontological truth, where the prose and poetry, rhems and poems have grown. Besides, the taste for and the handling of poison are declared throughout the text. The text is nourished by them. And if I tell you from now on that *glas* is a kind of poisoned milk, you will find the dose too strong and the image dissonant. So it is not yet the time.

"This century is certainly the century of poison, . . . and my taste for poisons, the appeal they have for me. . . . but the doctors gave me an emetic and, after analyzing my vomit. . . ." He is therefore condemned for having introduced poison into prison, for having caused "a dangerous medication to enter the prison by fraud." This *glas* can be read as the interminable analysis of vomit, of a nausea [*écœurement*] rather, by which I am affected and which causes me to write

Let us restrict ourselves: the *glas* that is raised and resounds on the surface of some page — already — between "lilacs" and "explosions [*éclats*]," also announces, while

Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (1986)

Leonard as the reader of the text of his own life

Christopher Nolan,
Memento (2000)



- The work is an object; the text is discursive
- The work has an authorised meaning; the text has no assured meaning
- The work is singular; the text is plural

- The work begins with the author, the text begins with the reader

- The work establishes a hierarchy of quality, the text a quality of reading



5 minutes…

In small groups: -

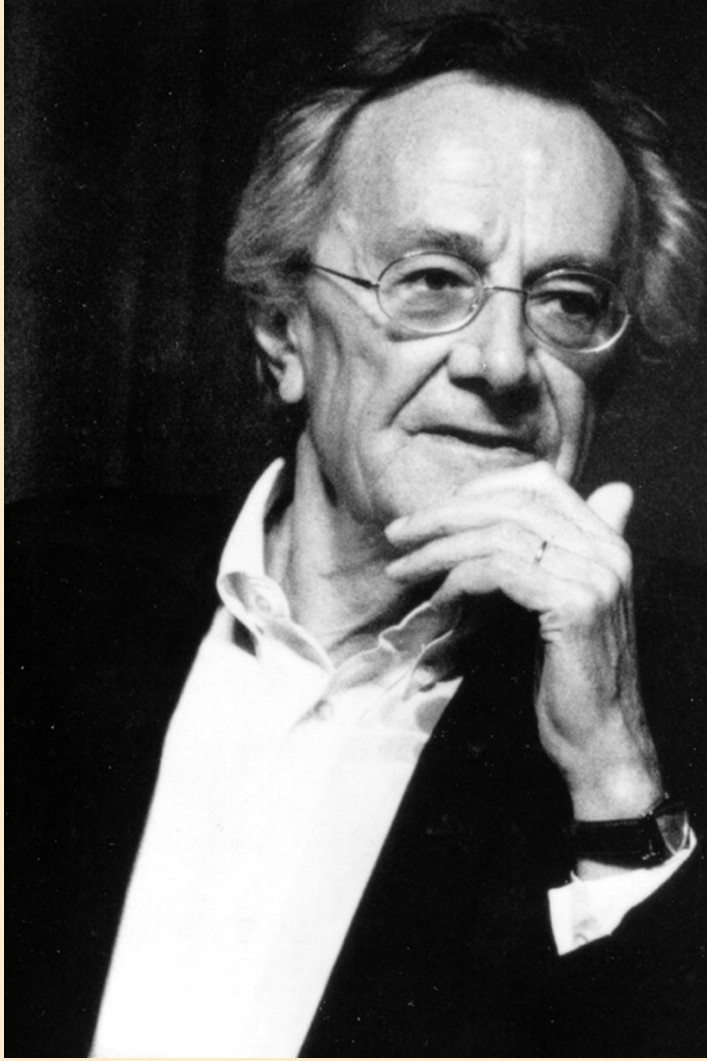
Can you make links to the idea of a ‘work’ and a ‘text’ in your scenarios?

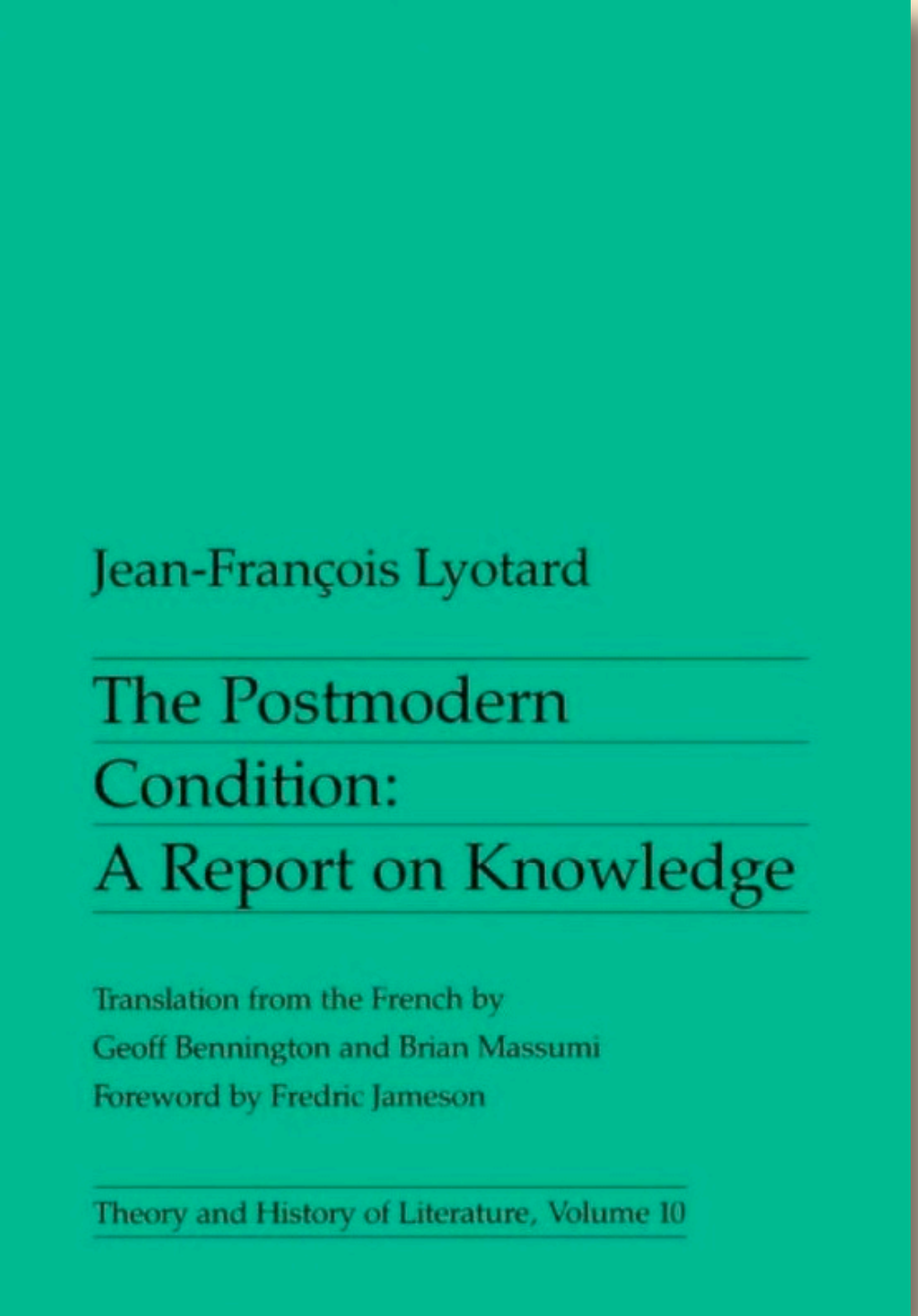
Lyotard (1924-1998)

- Synthesis of Marx & Freud
- "The philosophers of **suspicion**": Marx, Freud, Nietzsche
- Modern optimism – Postmodern scepticism

- After 1968, abandons Marxism
- 1974 *The Libidinal Economy*
- Critique of reason – experimentation with new ways of talking, seeing, living
- **1984 The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge**

(Accessible from http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Lyotard-PostModernCondition1-5.html)





Postmodernity for Lyotard

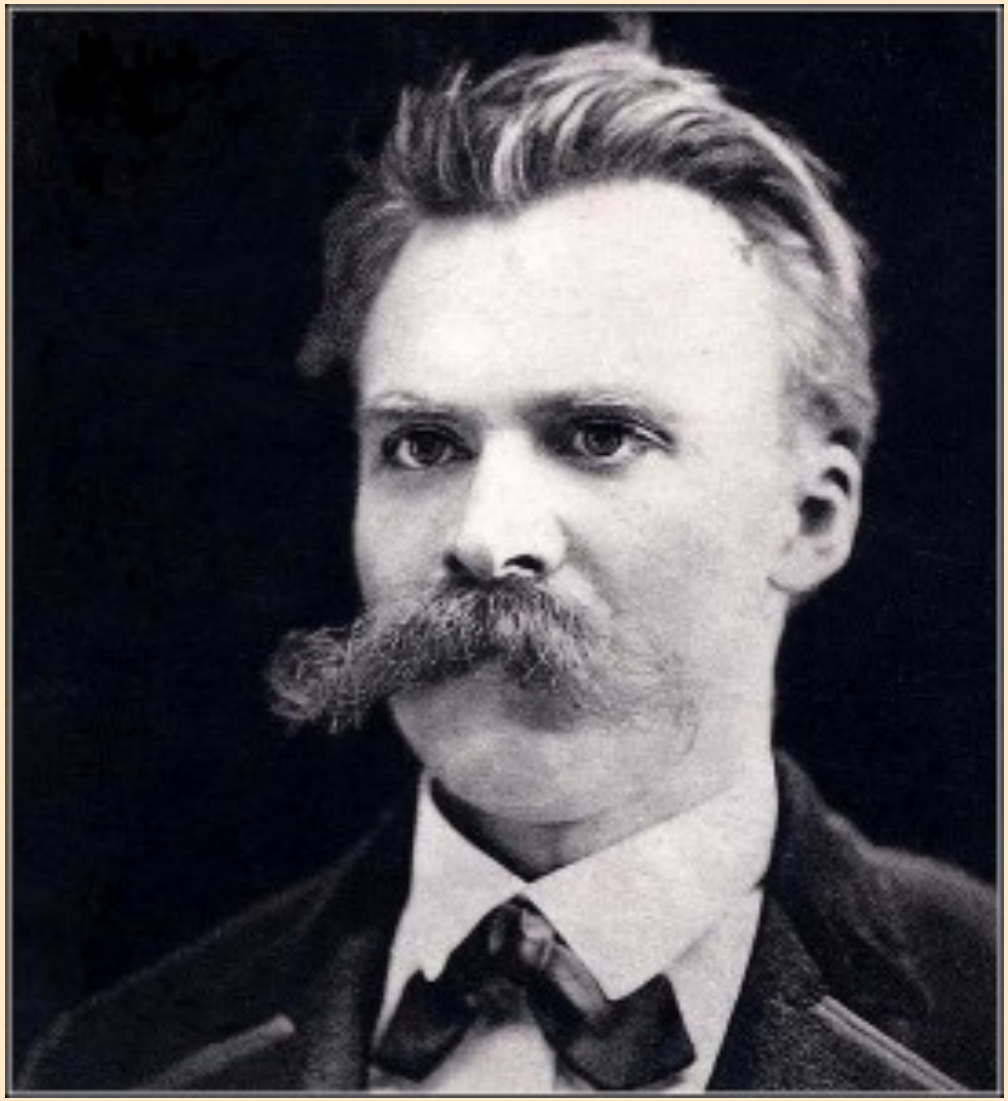
The postmodern condition is marked by a crisis in the status of knowledge in Western societies.

Postmodernity for Lyotard

There can no longer be Truth, only truths.

Postmodernity for Lyotard

The end of belief
in universal theories



Friedrich Nietzsche

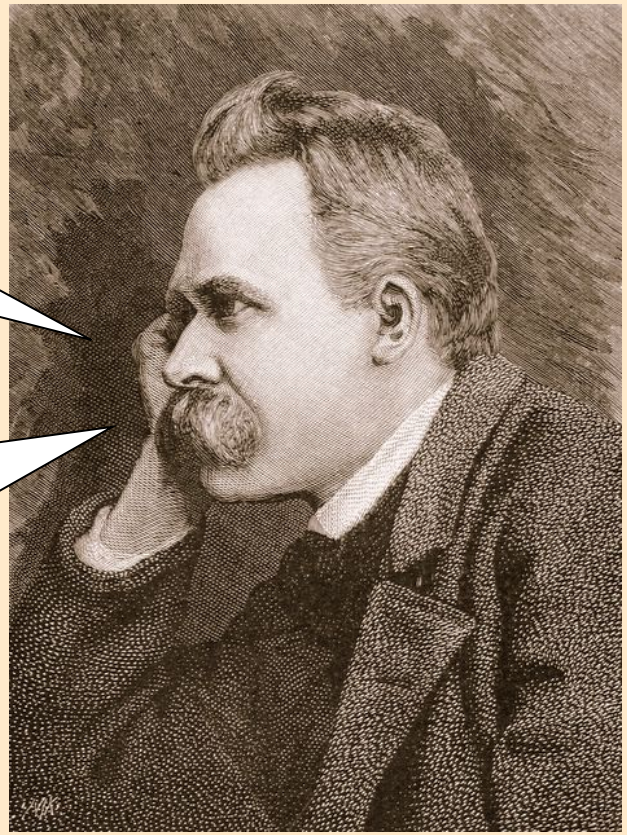
1844-1900

The 19th century triumph of mediocrity

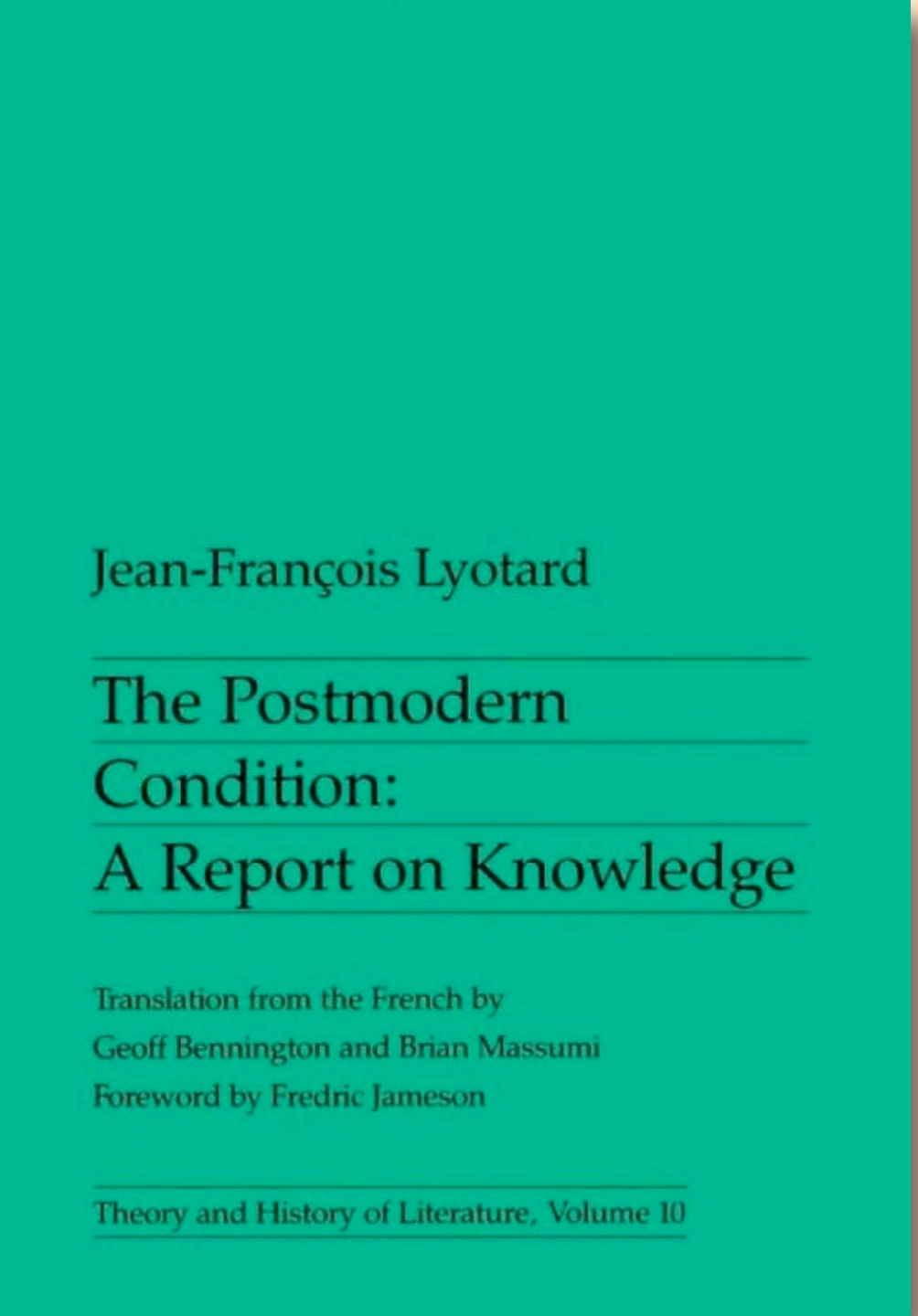


Truth is an illusion

There are no facts, only interpretations



The revaluation of values



1979 *The Postmodern Condition*

"I define postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives."
(Lyotard, 1979:4)

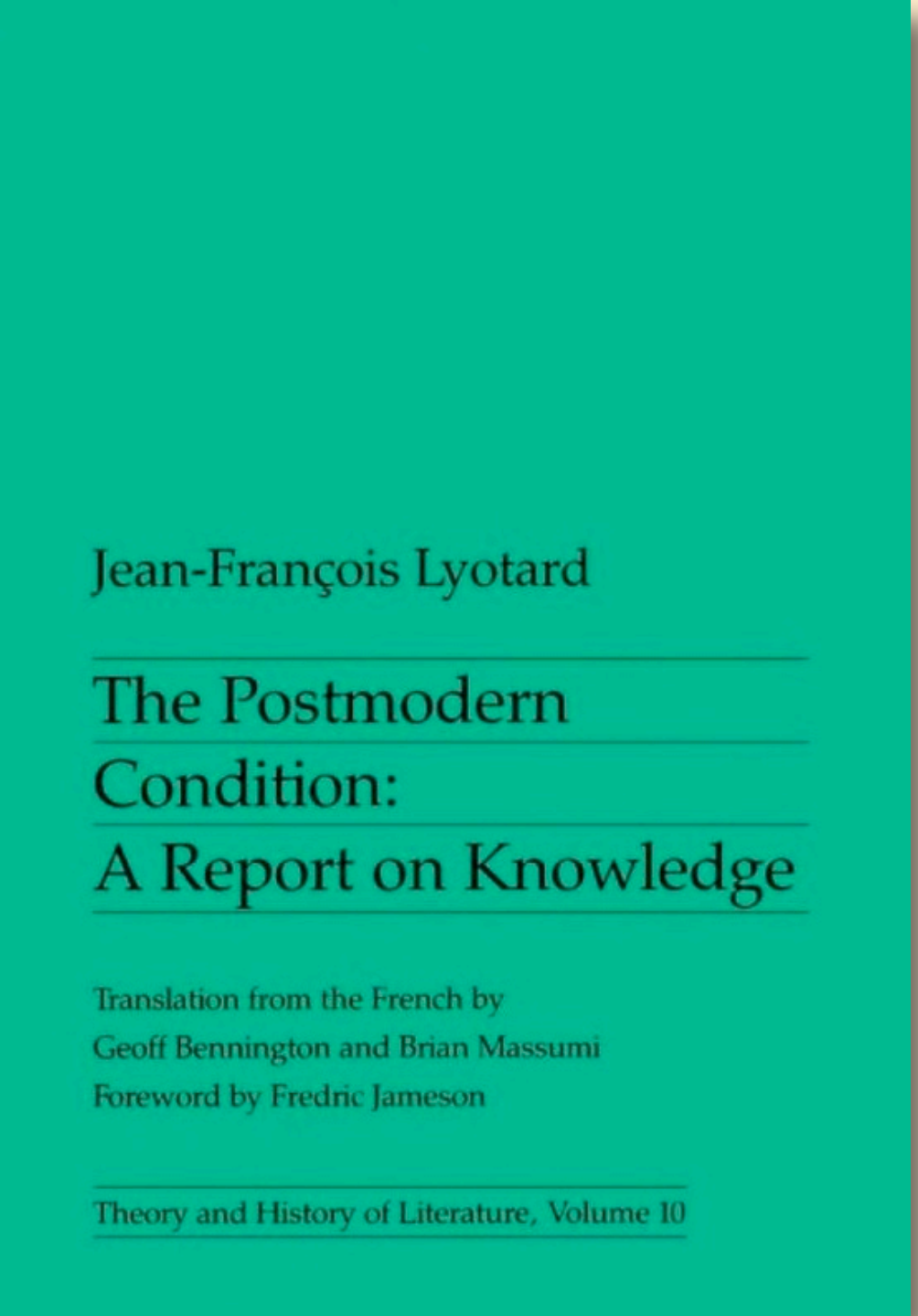
Metanarratives

- “Universal beliefs and theories.”

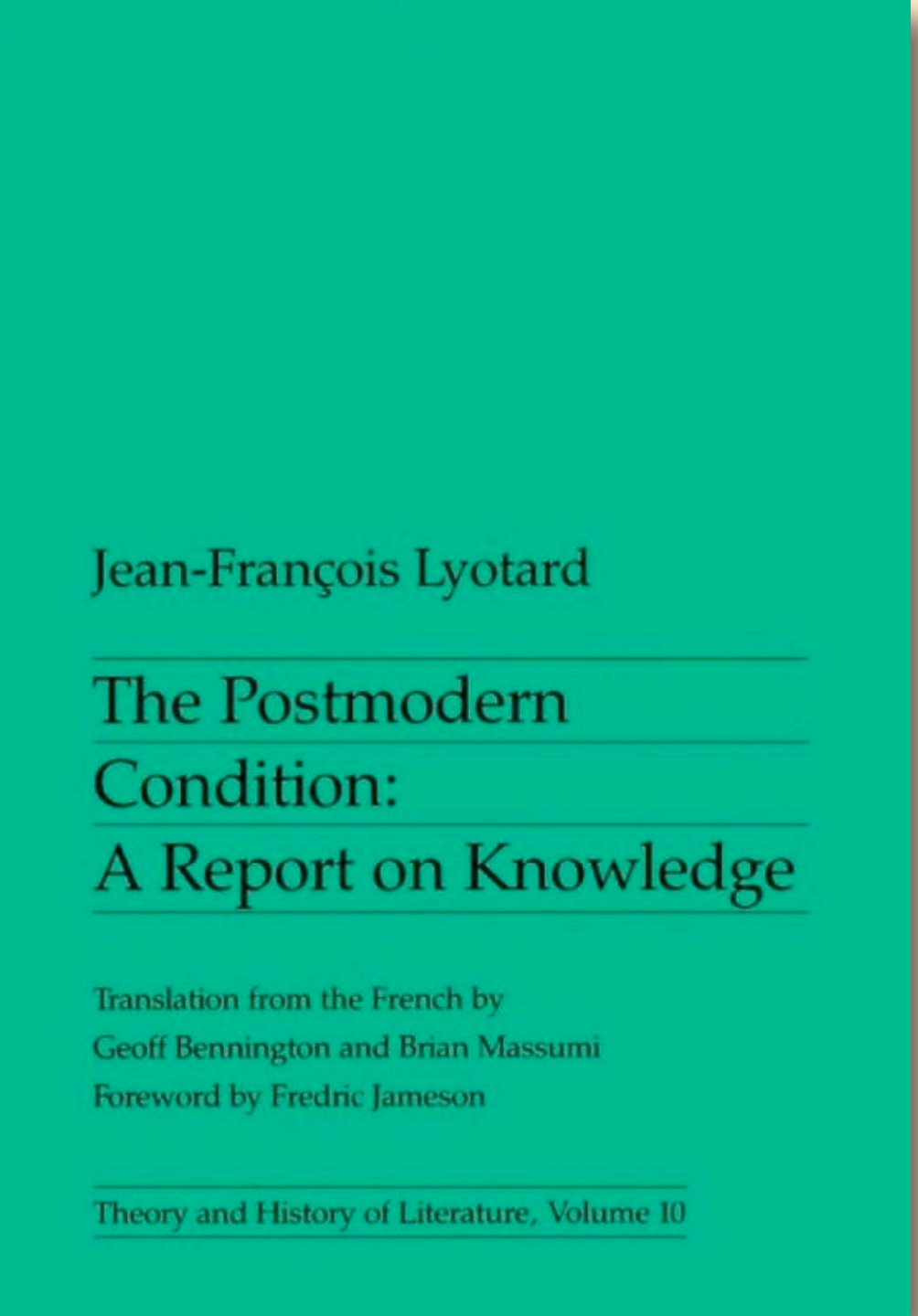
- “Metanarratives are the overarching stories we use to justify activities, institutions, values and cultural forms. They are the assumptions that underpin what we think and do.” (Adams & Dyson, 2004, p. 237)

Examples of metanarratives

- Religion
- Political ideologies
- Science
- Truth
- Justice



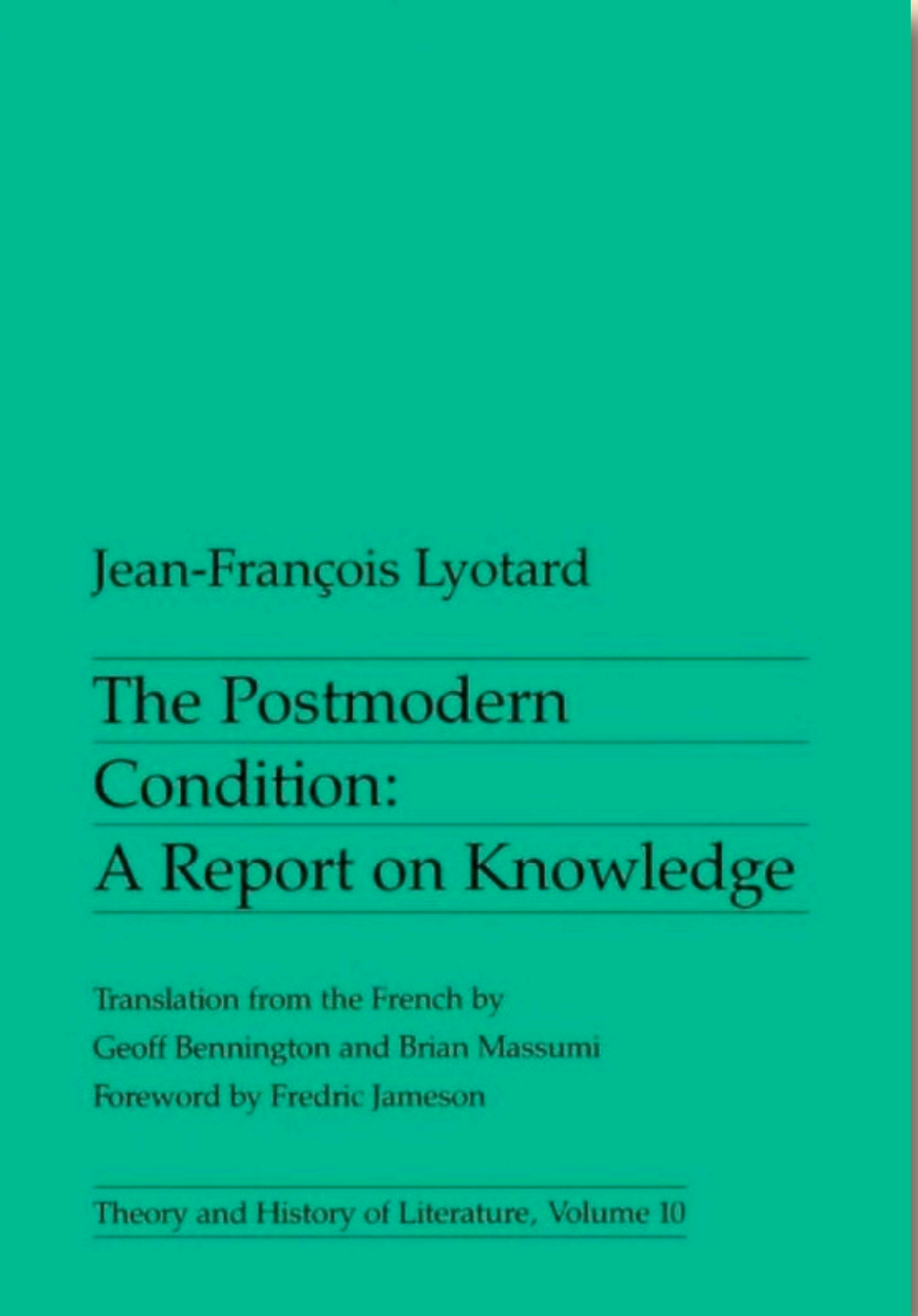
THE LOGIC OF MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE



The logic of maximum performance

Today “the legitimation of power is based on its optimizing the system’s performance – efficiency.” (Lyotard, 1979:xxxiv)

“Be operational – or disappear!”



- The logic of maximum performance cannot judge what is true or just.
- Crisis in knowledge

Mininarratives are

provisional, temporary, contingent, relational, different, dissensual

Lyotard & postmodern knowledge

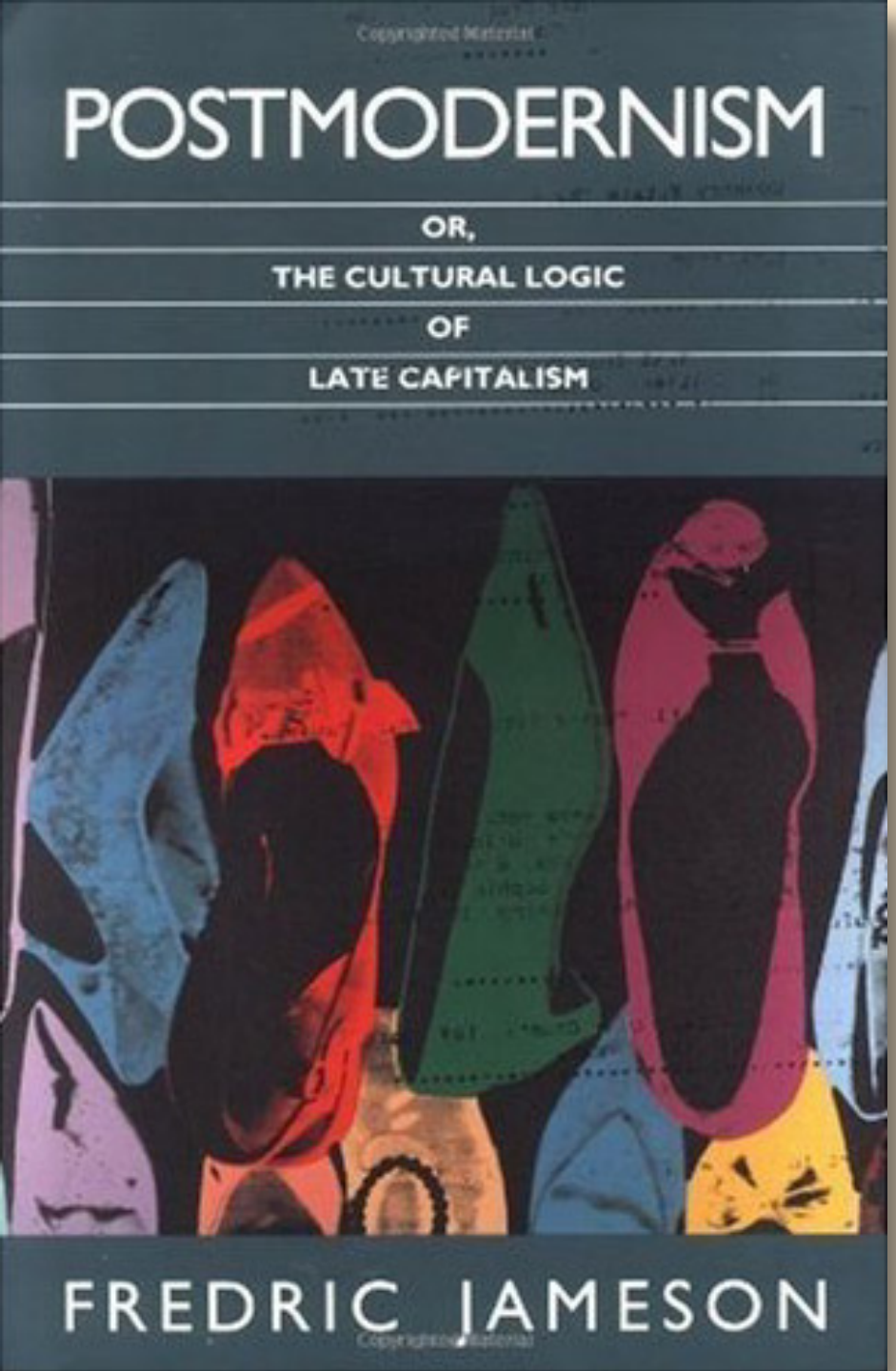
- Strategic mini-narratives
- Rejection of all compromise & engineered consensus
- Multiplicity of truths
- Key concepts: difference - play - experimentation
- Constant conflict & re-invention
- Creativity & variety & desire can never be controlled by any theory

Postmodernity = loss of credibility in the stories & institutions that have produced the modern world

- Universal knowledge
- Universal morality + law
- Scientific worldview
- History = progress
- Teleological histories
- The nation state
- “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” = the French Revolution
- The classless society = Communism
- The ability of reason to organise society + politics + industry

‘The narrative of the death of metanarrative is itself grander than most of the narratives it would consign to oblivion.’

Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 1995



Fredric Jameson,
Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (1984)

Depthlessness

Pastiche

Historicism

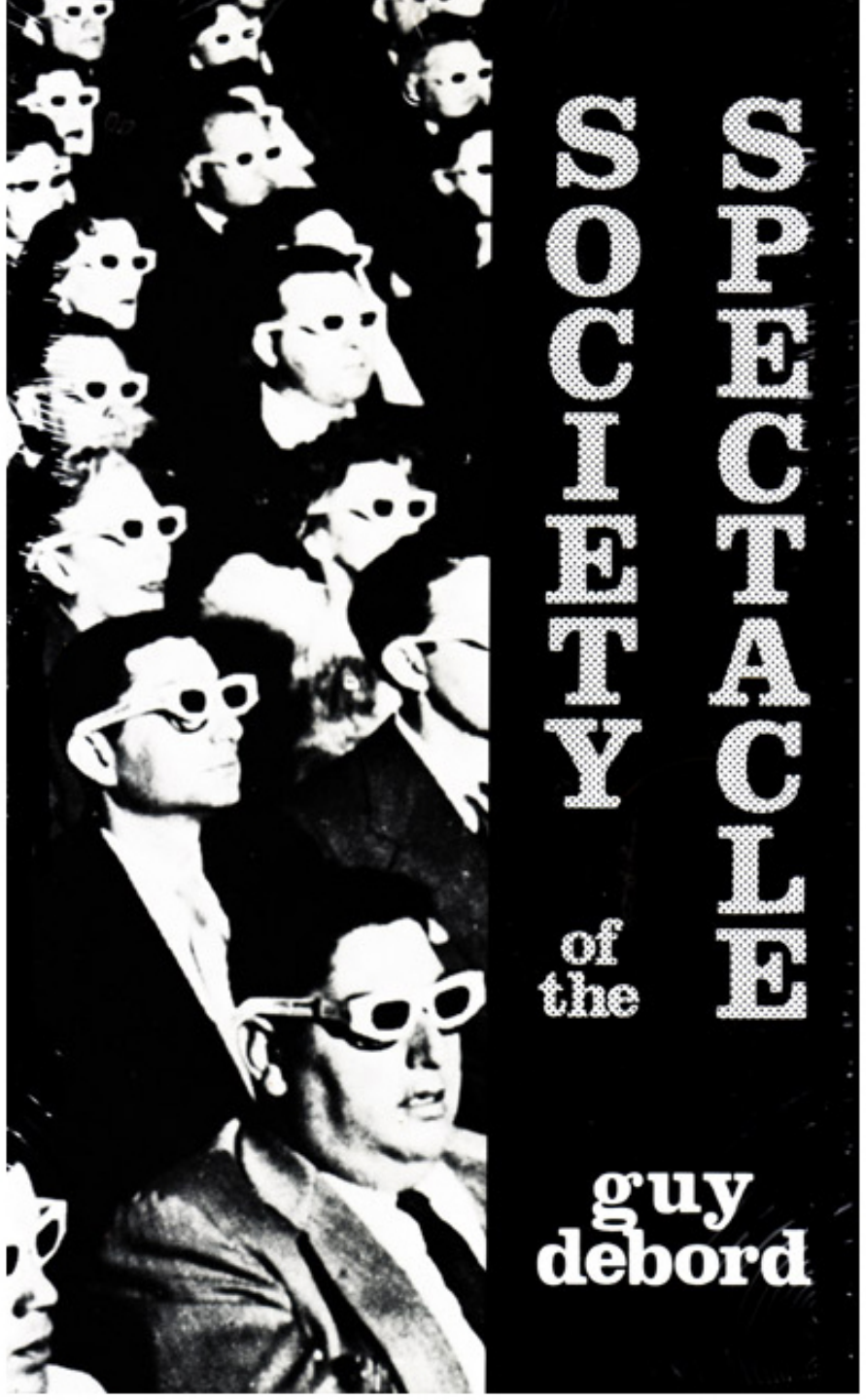
Blurring of high/low

Loss of a cognitive map

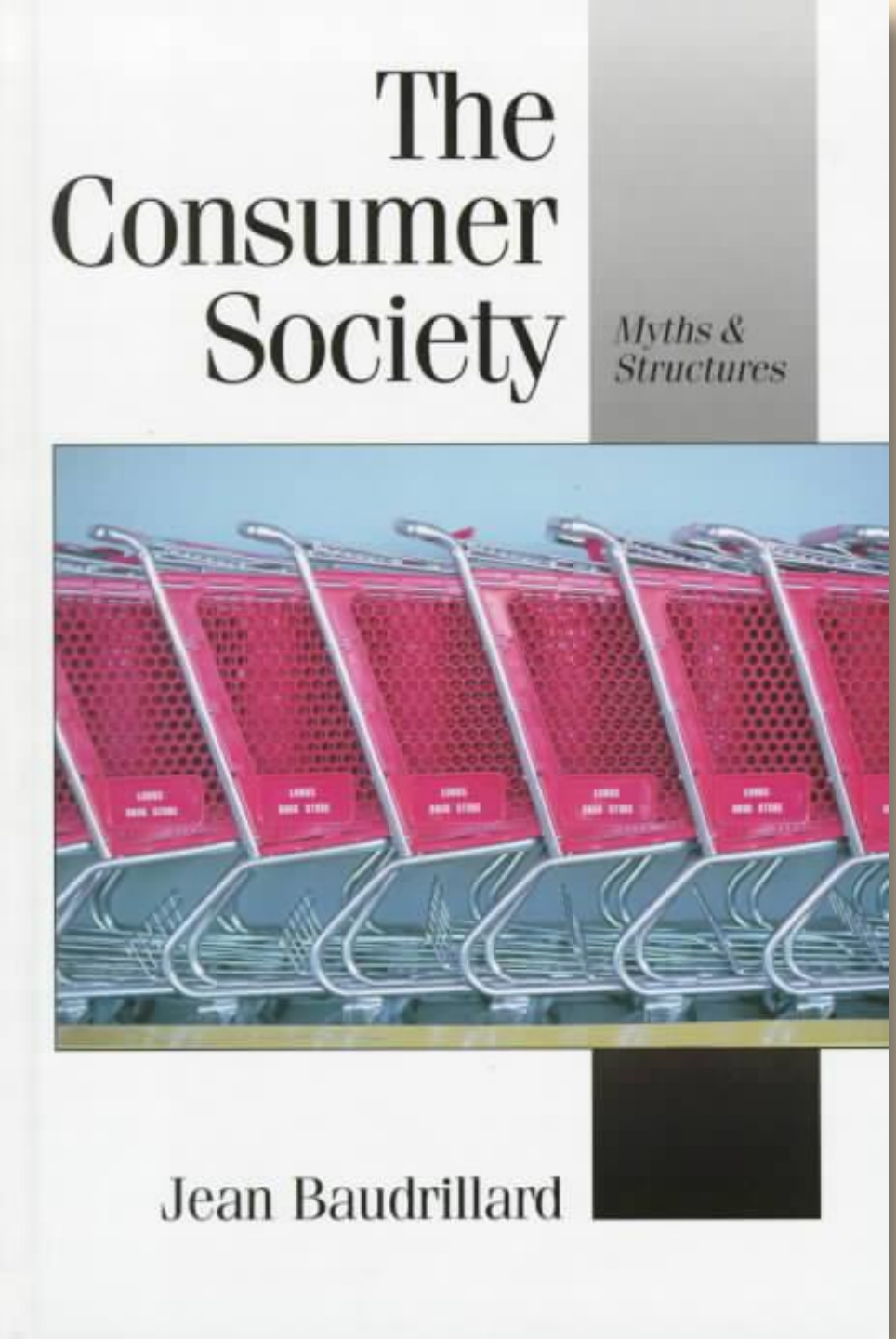
"I think of the postmodern attitude as that of a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows that he cannot say to her "I love you madly", because he knows that she knows (and that she knows he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still there is a solution. He can say "As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly". At this point, having avoided false innocence , having said clearly it is no longer possible to talk innocently, he will nevertheless say what he wanted to say to the woman: that he loves her in an age of lost innocence." Umberto Eco

Premature 'Honey' Curb Your Enthusisam

Larry David



‘The present age prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, appearance to essence.’



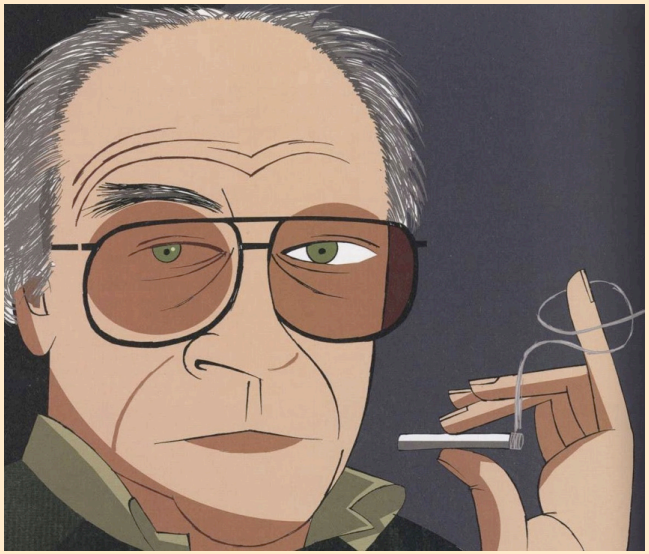
Consumption today is primarily a consumption of signs or images



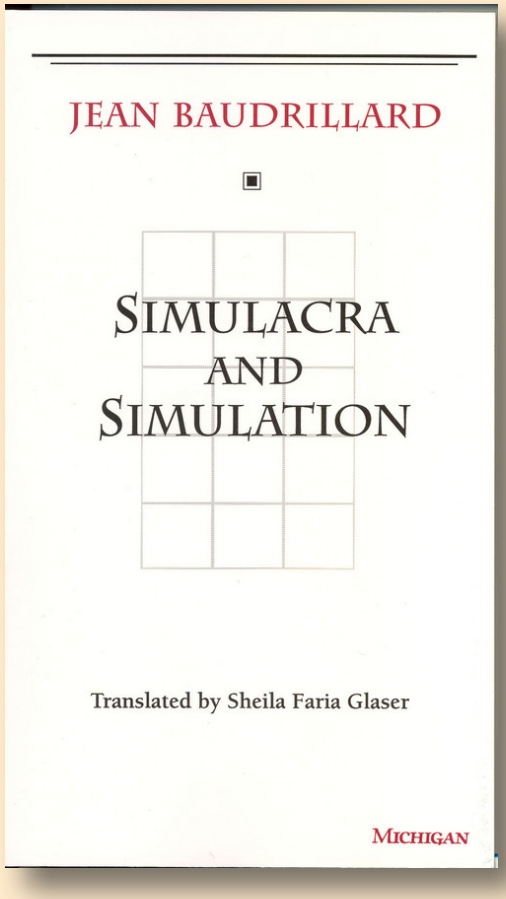
5 minutes…

In small groups: -

Can you make links to the idea of Postmodernism can be used in your scenarios?

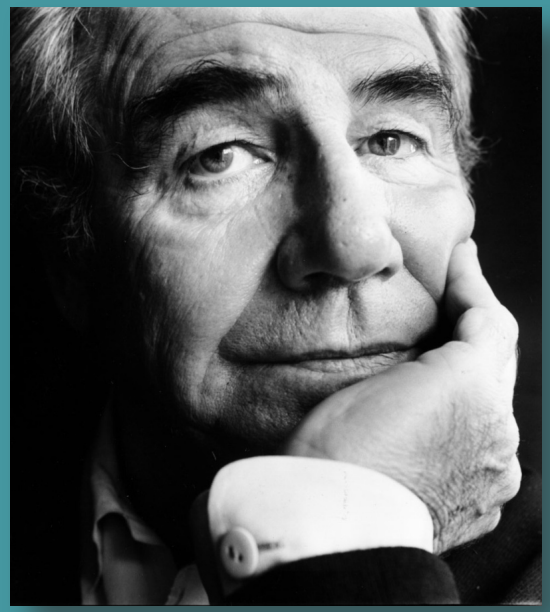


The Loss of the Real



Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981)

The postmodern world makes everything a simulacrum, a copy of reality – there is no longer a realm of the 'real' versus that of imitation or illusion; there is only simulation.



Postmodernist culture is a culture of the present made from fragments of the past:

'All that remains to be done is to play with the pieces – that is postmodernism.'

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

‘It is a cliché to say that we live in a postmodern world, and indeed “postmodern” has become one of the most used, and abused, words in the language. Yet it is striking that few people can say with any sense of assurance what that term “postmodern” actually means or involves.’

Stuart Sim, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 2nd Ed., 2004

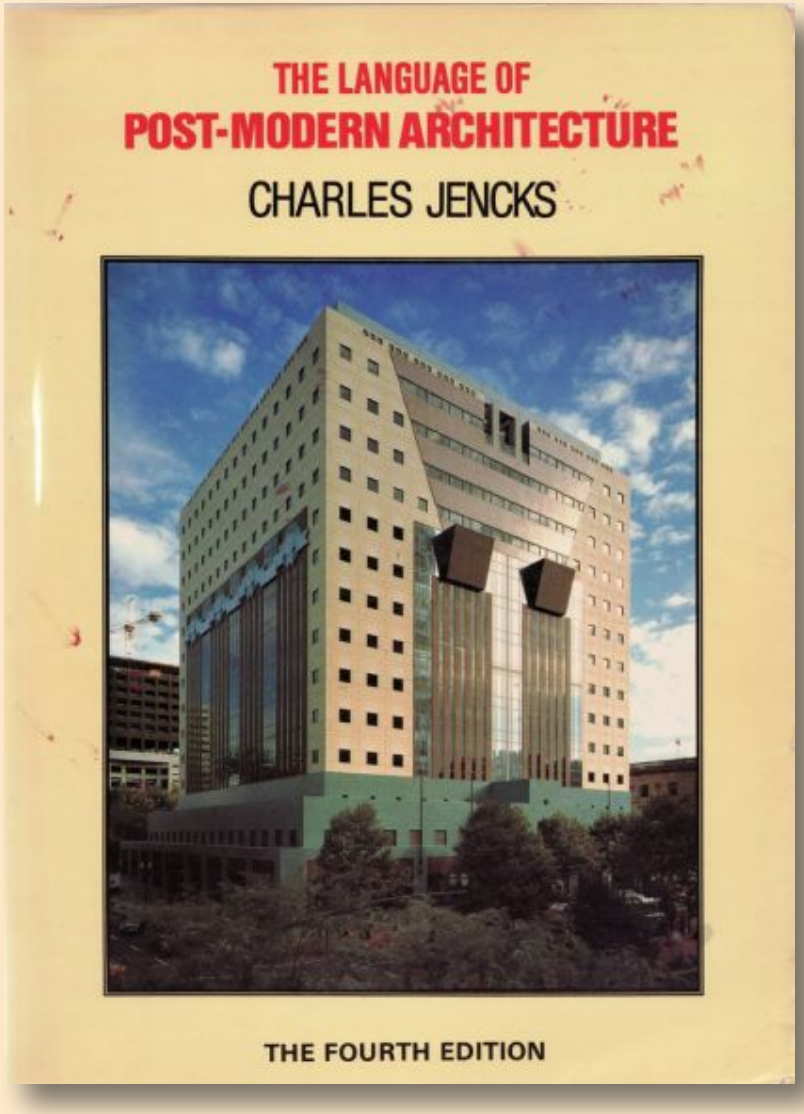


The International Style

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,

Seagram Building

New York City.

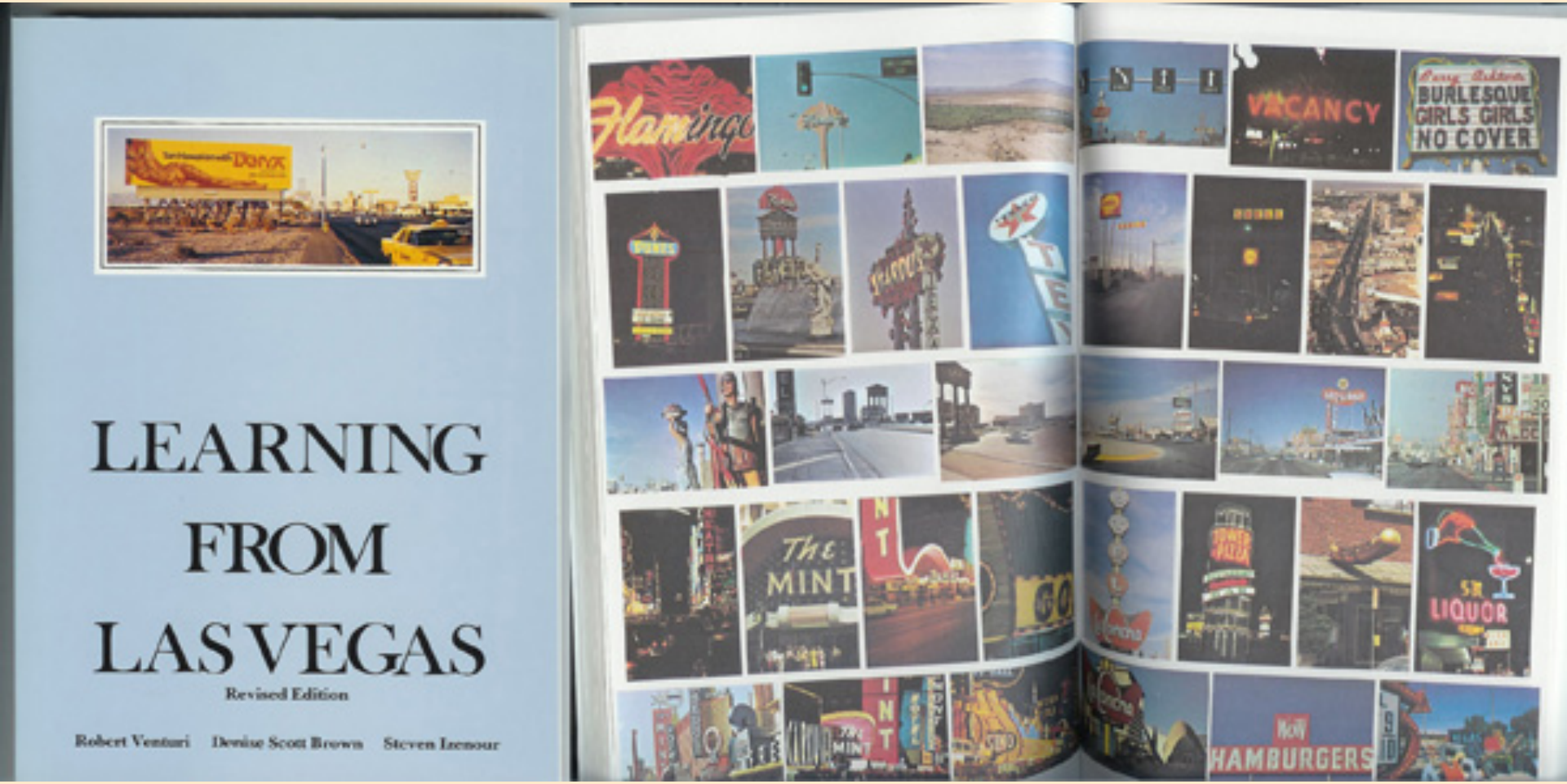


Charles Jencks,
The Language of Post-Modern Architecture,
1977

‘Double-coding’



Philip Johnson, AT&T Building, New York, 1984



Robert Venturi, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1972



Frank Gehry's House, Santa Monica, 1977-8

Simulacrum/Simulacra

- ‘Likeness, similarity’: a representation of something, such as a statue or a painting, especially of a god.
- An image without the substance or qualities of the original
- An inferior copy (Plato)







- Three versions of Duchamp's *Fountain*: original photographed by Alfred Stieglitz (1917), Replica of lost original (1964), Bronze *Fountain* by Sherrie Levine (1991)

A simulacrum

- is a copy without an original
- is a version of reality with no basis in reality other than itself

The ecstasy of communication



The Gulf War did not take place

Hyperreality

- The desert of the real
- The loss of distinct boundaries between reality and illusion



- Nick Holt, *Guys and Dolls* (2010)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hcfa4btv2M



- Security Marine Bank, Wisconsin (c.1971)



‘A perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation.’

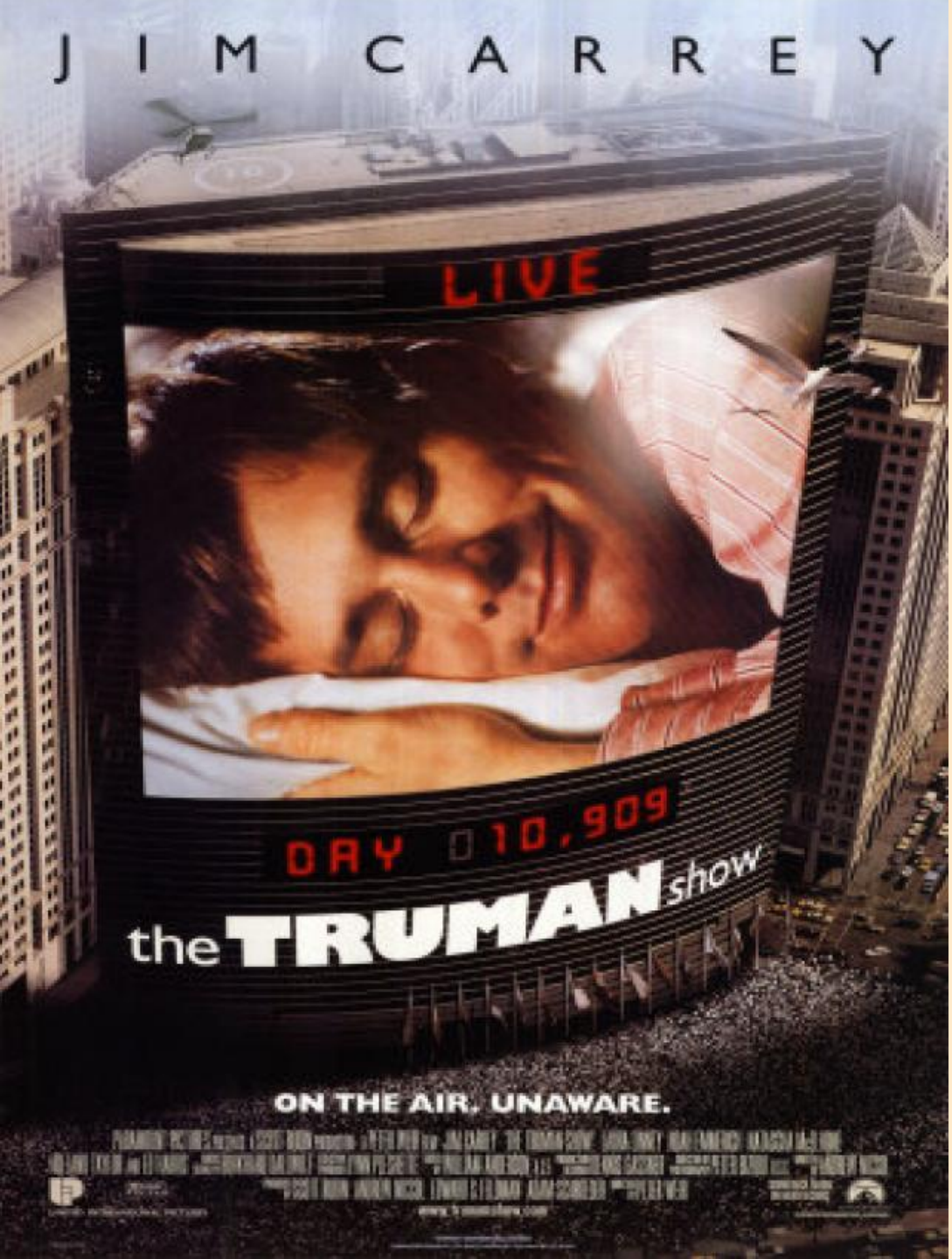


Main Street USA, Disneyland

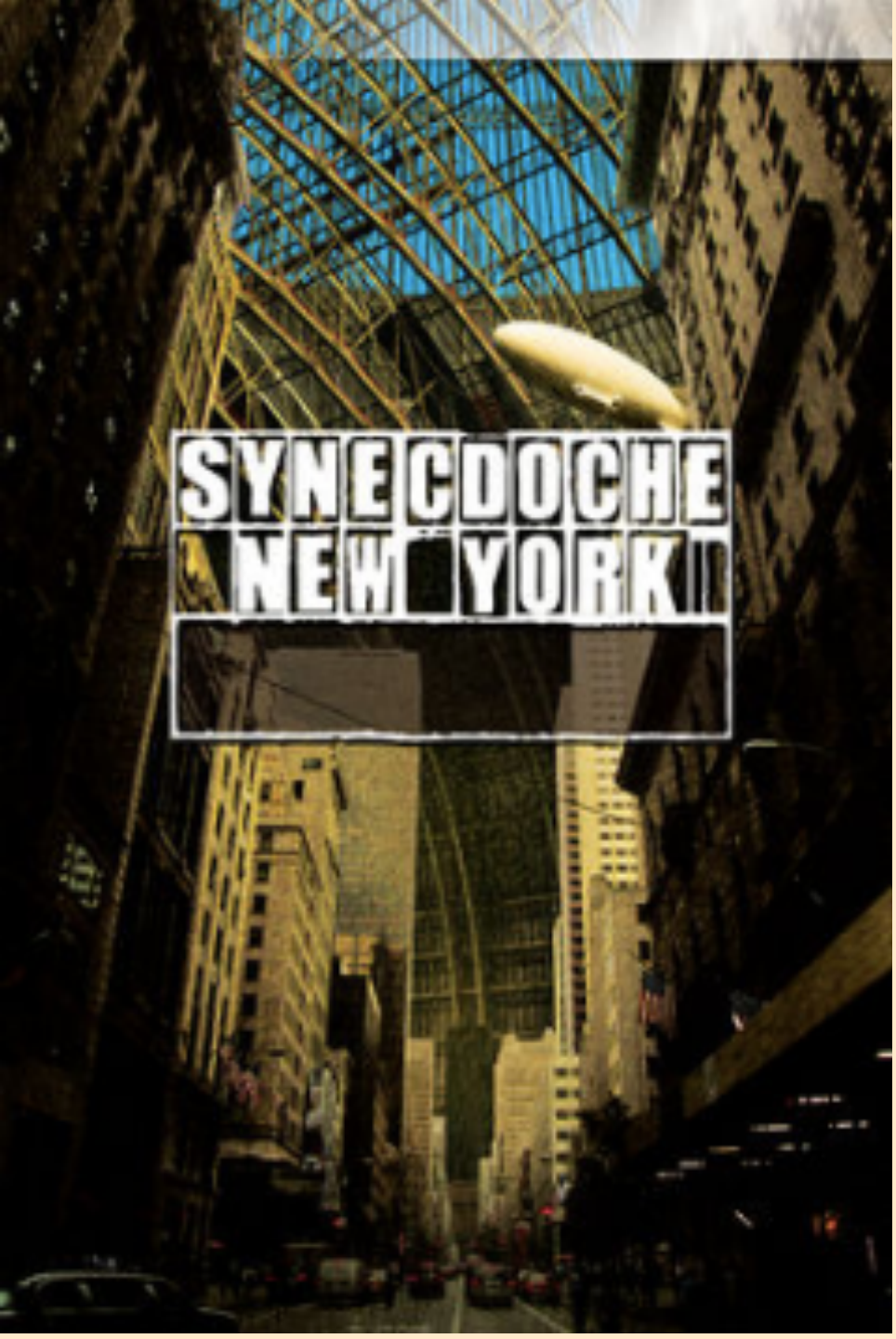
‘Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation.’

JEAN BAUDRILLARD


Poundbury,
Dorset



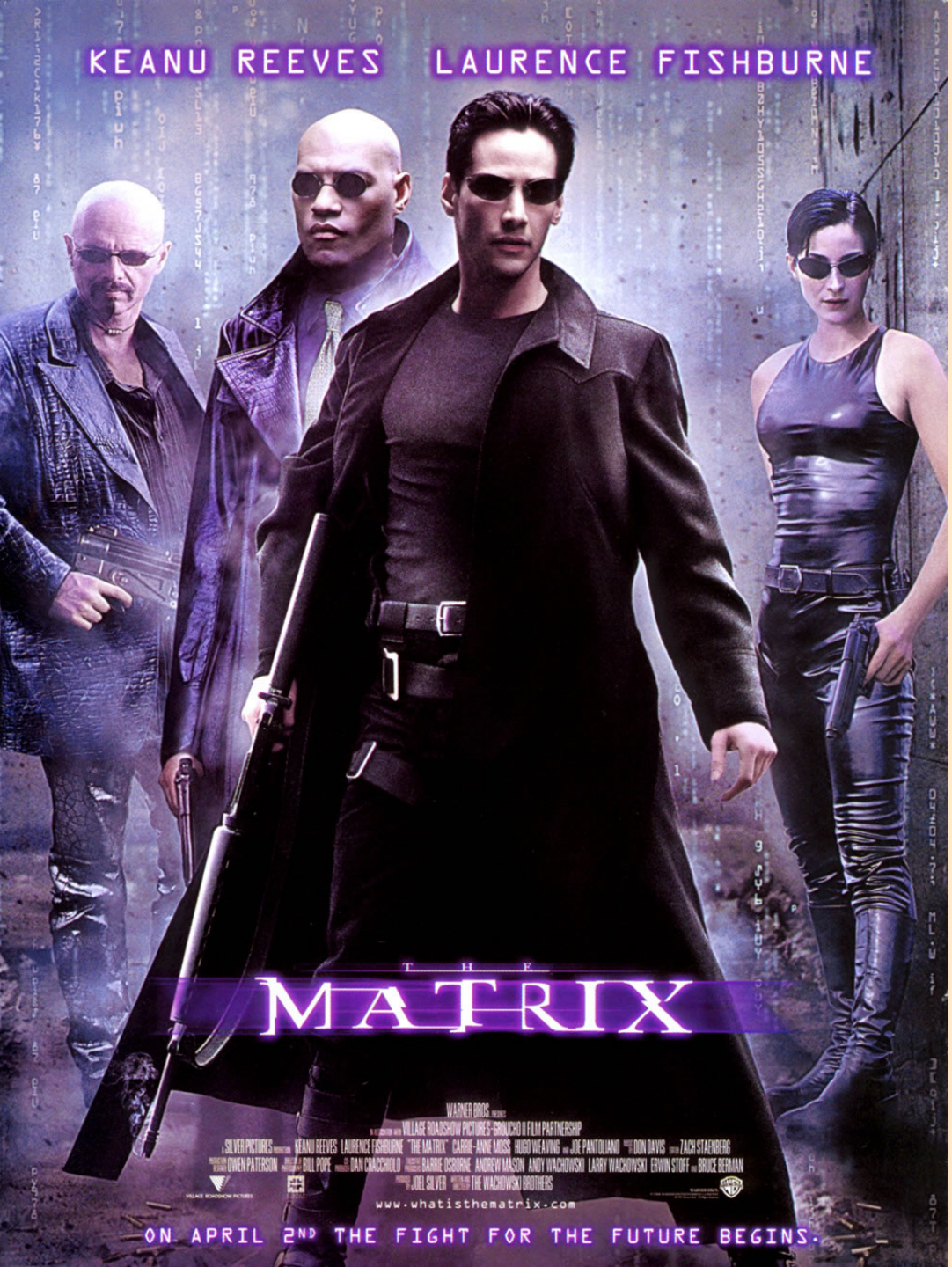
Peter Weir, *The Truman Show* (1998)



John Seymor Hoffman, *Synecdoche New York* (2008)



Virtual reality, video gaming and ‘games transfer phenomena’



- Larry and Andy Wachowski, *The Matrix* (1999)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUyrgEtzbvM



- Illusion
- Reality



- Illusion
- Reality
- Reality within illusion



- Illusion
- Reality
- Reality within illusion
- Illusion within reality

Precession of Simulacra

- The sign represents a basic reality
- The sign misrepresents or distorts reality
- The sign disguises the fact that there is no corresponding reality underneath
- The sign bears no relation to reality at all

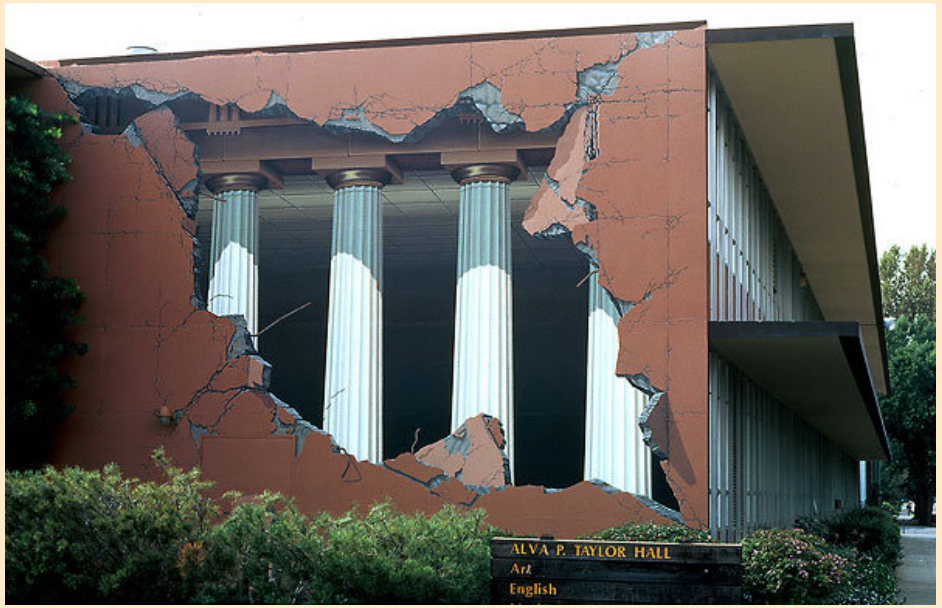
The sign misrepresents or distorts reality



During the 16th Century Reformation thousands of religious paintings and statues were destroyed or defaced because they were perceived to distort or diminish divine reality.

The sign misrepresents or distorts reality





- Examples of *trompe l'oeil* paintings by John Pugh

The sign misrepresents or distorts reality







- Our social media or digital self

The sign disguises the fact that there is no corresponding reality underneath



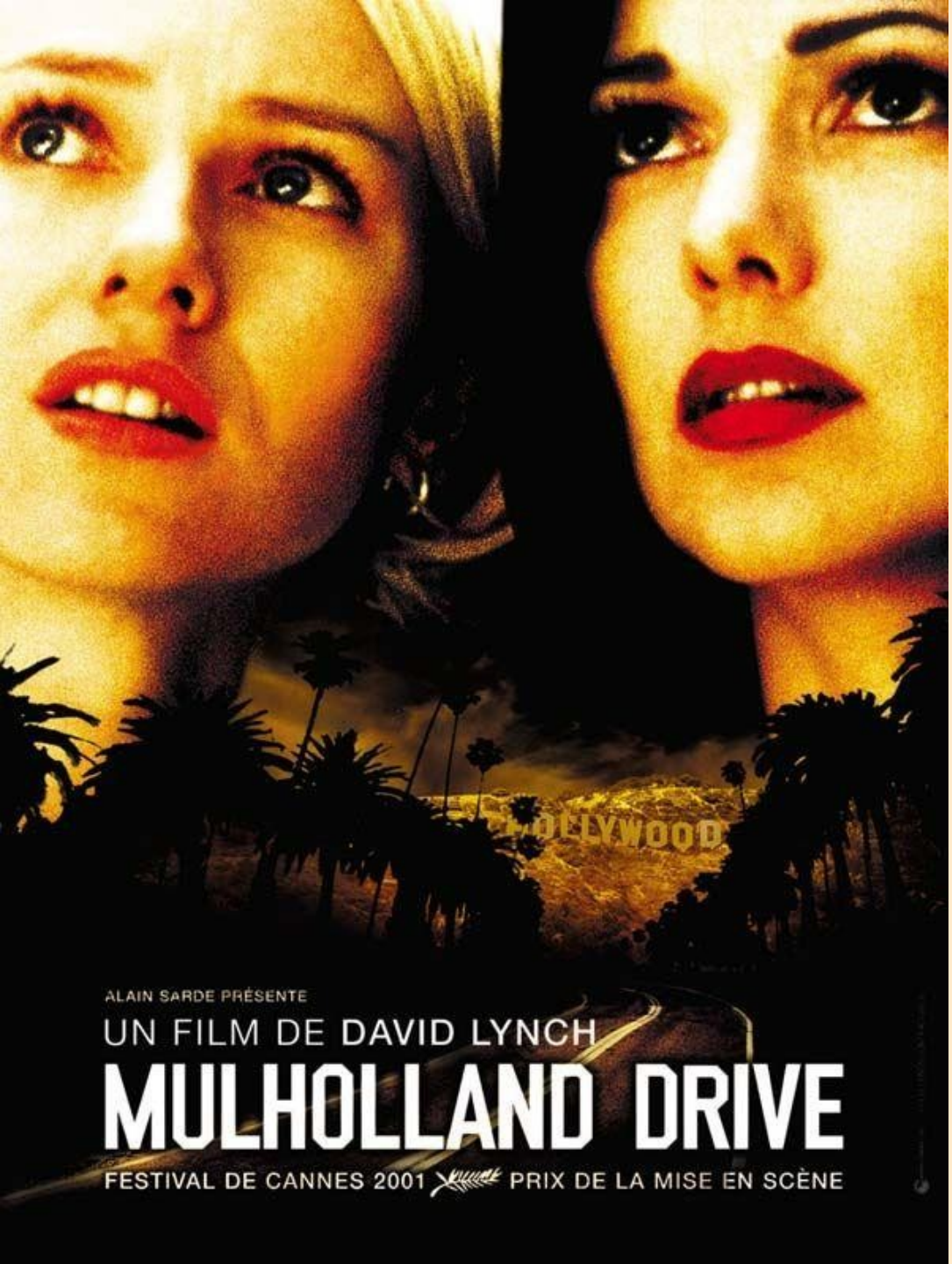


- Best Supermarkets

The sign disguises the fact that there is no corresponding reality underneath



‘Ancient Roman ruins’, Parc Monceau, Paris (built 1773-1778)



The sign bears
no relation to
any reality at all

David Lynch,
Mulholland Drive
(2001)

Loss of the cognitive map

By Next week

- Select an object in your home
- think about the space that it's in
- Write 250 words about the object and its space
- Use 1 quotation.
- Think about your practice.

Erbyn wythnos nesaf.

- ***Dewiswch gwrthrych yn eich cartref***
- ***Meddyliwch am ei gofod***
- ***Ysgrifennwch 250 o eiriau am y gwrthrych a'i gofod***
- ***Defnhddiwch un dyfyniad***
- ***Meddyliwch am eich arfer***