



Lecture 18 -The Politics of Desire

Postcapitalist Futures

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)



time for an upgrade?

**The Politics of Desire and the implications
of insatiable hyperconsumerism**



iPhone 14 Plus

Battery for Miles



The Politics of Desire and the Global Digital Labour Cycle



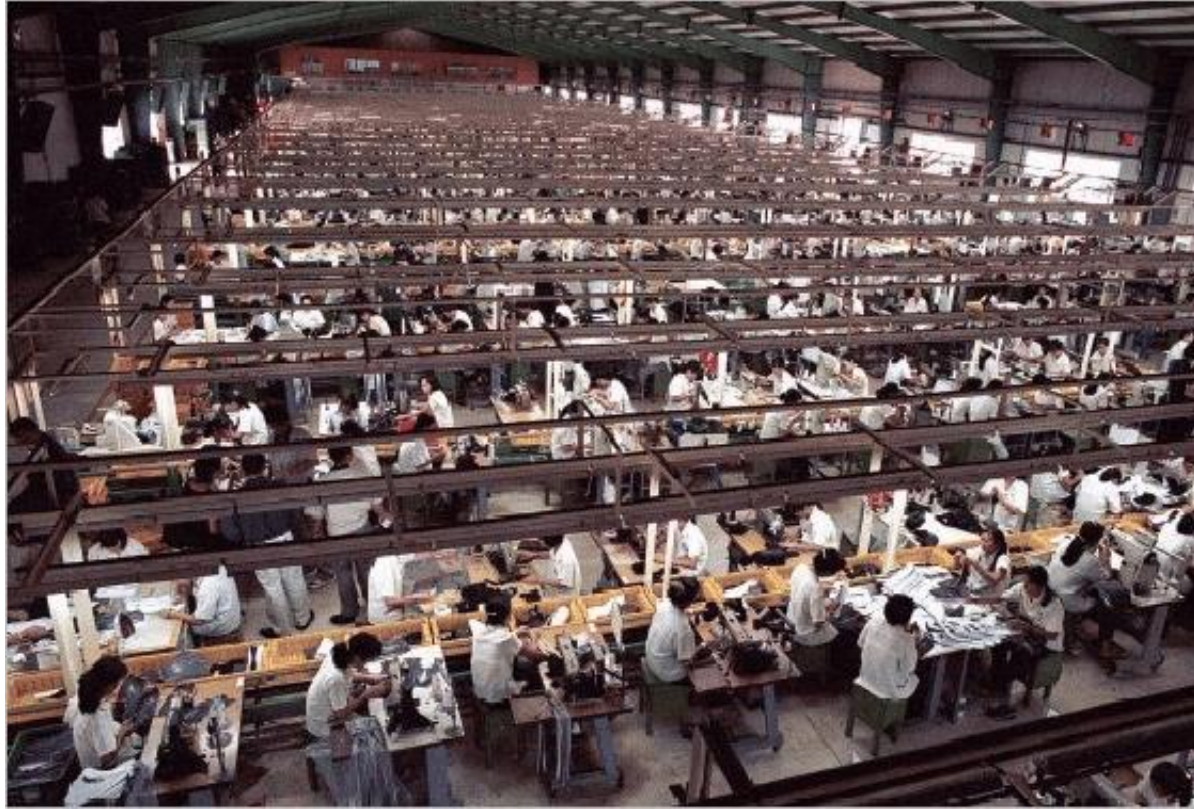
It begins with the **cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo**, where children dig away for \$1 a day for cobalt that is an essential ingredient of our digital lithium-ion batteries, with the danger to life, poverty and pollution taking many lives. These rare earth elements are used to construct our phones, tablets and electric vehicle batteries.



Life and death in Apple's forbidden city



From the DMR to China cobalt is shipped to China for processing and lithium-ion battery production. At the Foxconn factories in Zhengzhou, China where Apple, Amazon and Samsung's devices are manufactured and where working conditions were so bad that the factory had to install anti-suicide nets to the roofs of the buildings.





Container Shipping – Next our devices make their way in containers to our country...

Gig economy

Stored in Amazon warehouses where the workers are digitally-controlled and exploited and brought to our door through digitally-monitored and overseen '**gig-economy**' sub-contractors, whose health is put at risk in the tasks required of them, we finally connect with the goods promised by **digital capitalism**. Through the whole system, therefore, we see the global outsourcing of production to countries that will accept poor conditions and the lowest pay rates and the creation and exploitation within the west of a '**precariat**' class of non-unionized, insecure or 'self-employed' workers who suffer low wages, insecure work, variable hours, and continual digital oversight and rating.



e-waste

And, of course, when the latest phone model is released we're no longer interested in our current phone, hence we can trace its final movement, as **e-waste**, with our devices often ending up in illegal e-waste tips in India and West Africa. Here the poorest again scrape a living from physically recycling material that all the time leaks into and poisons the environment and food-chain.



From the deaths of children in Africa, through to the deaths of children in Africa, this is the story of our digital phones and devices.

Apple claims it will use 100% recycled cobalt pulled from old devices in its iPhone and Mac batteries by 2025 — after being accused of using child labour to mine rare mineral in Africa. [Reuters, April 2023]

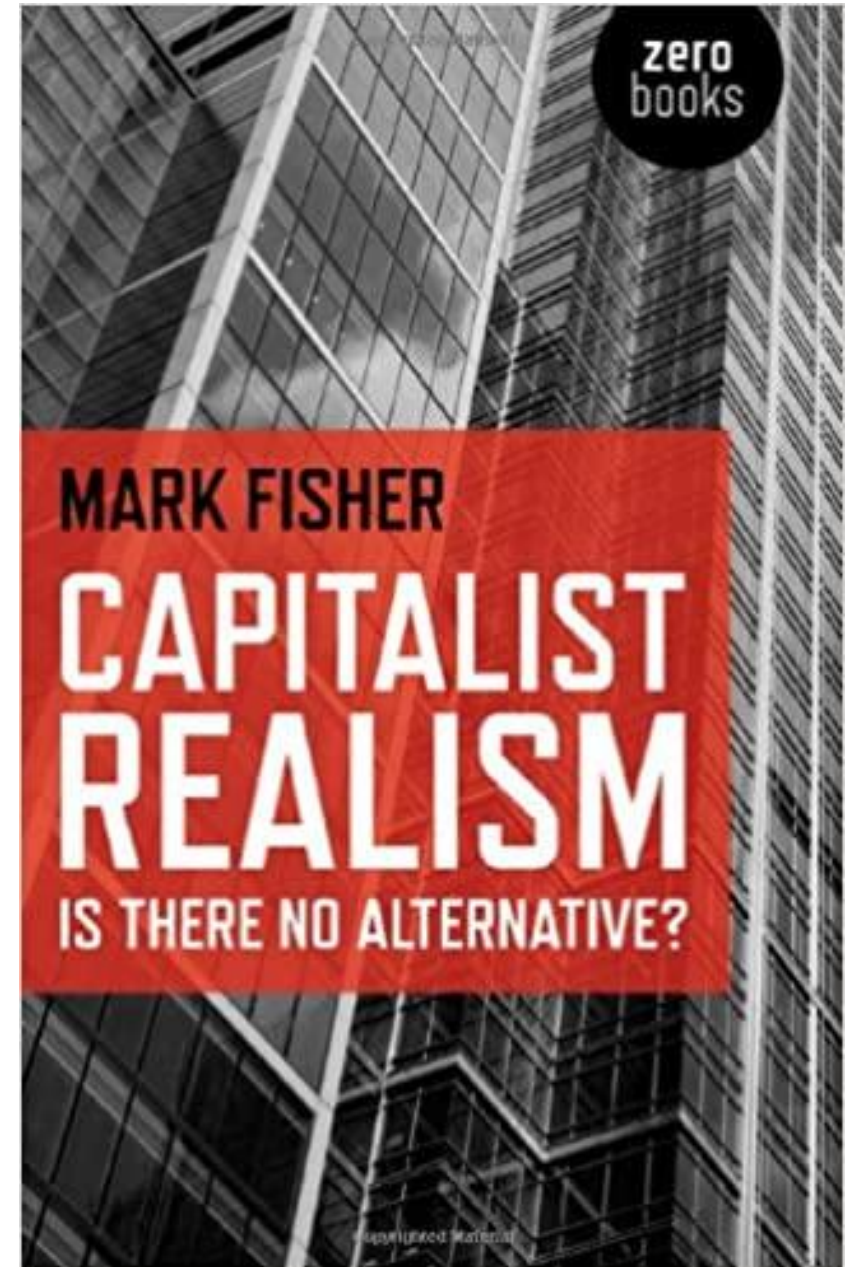
is there no alternative?

it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism.

“The spectre of a world which could be free”

“[T]he closer the real possibility of liberating the individual from the constraints once justified by scarcity and immaturity, the greater the need for maintaining and streamlining these constraints lest the established order of domination dissolve. **Civilisation has to protect itself against the spectre of a world which could be free. [...] In exchange for the commodities that enrich their lives [...] individuals sell not only their labour but also their free time. [...]** People dwell in apartment concentrations — and have private automobiles with which they can no longer escape into a different world. They have huge refrigerators stuffed with frozen foods. They have dozens of newspapers and magazines which espouse the same ideals. They have innumerable choices, innumerable gadgets which are all of the same sort and keep them occupied and divert their attention from the real issue — which is the awareness that they could both work less and determine their own needs and satisfactions.”

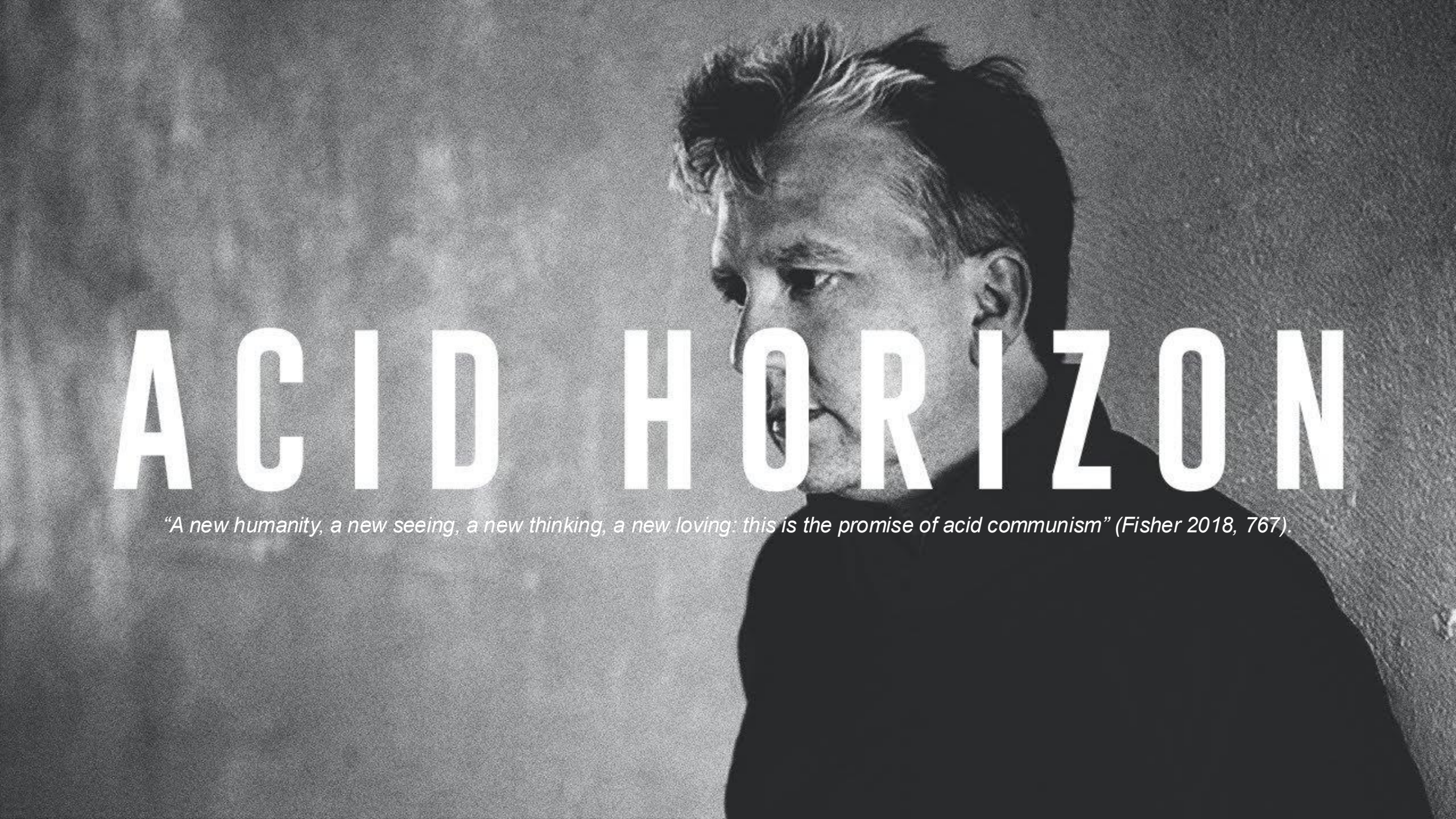
— Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation 2*



EMANCIPATORY POLITICS MUST ALWAYS DESTROY
THE APPEARANCE OF A 'NATURAL ORDER', MUST
REVEAL WHAT IS PRESENTED AS NECESSARY AND
INEVITABLE TO BE A MERE CONTINGENCY, JUST
AS IT MUST MAKE WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY DEEMED
TO BE IMPOSSIBLE SEEM ATTAINABLE.

MARK FISHER
(1969-2017)





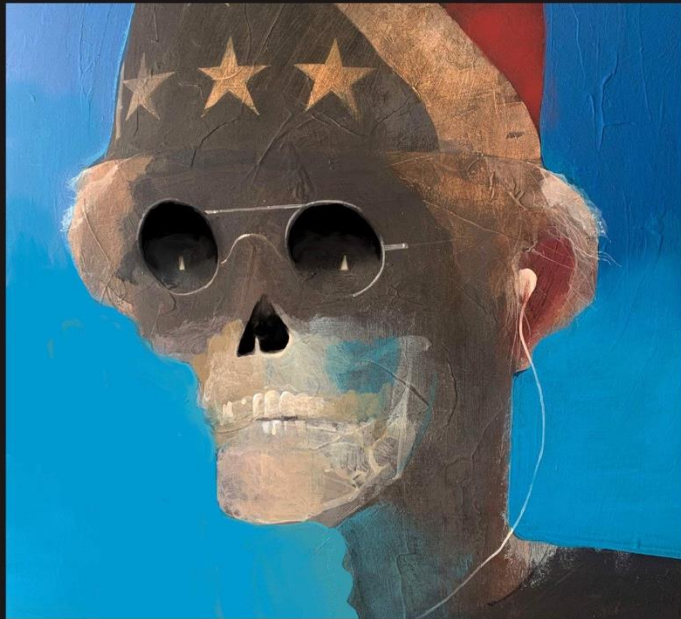
ACID HORIZON

"A new humanity, a new seeing, a new thinking, a new loving: this is the promise of acid communism" (Fisher 2018, 767).

POST CAPITALIST DESIRE

"Mark's unparalleled ability to infuse ideas with life comes across beautifully in these lectures."

NICK SRNICEK



MARK FISHER
THE FINAL LECTURES

Edited and with an introduction by
Matt Colquhoun



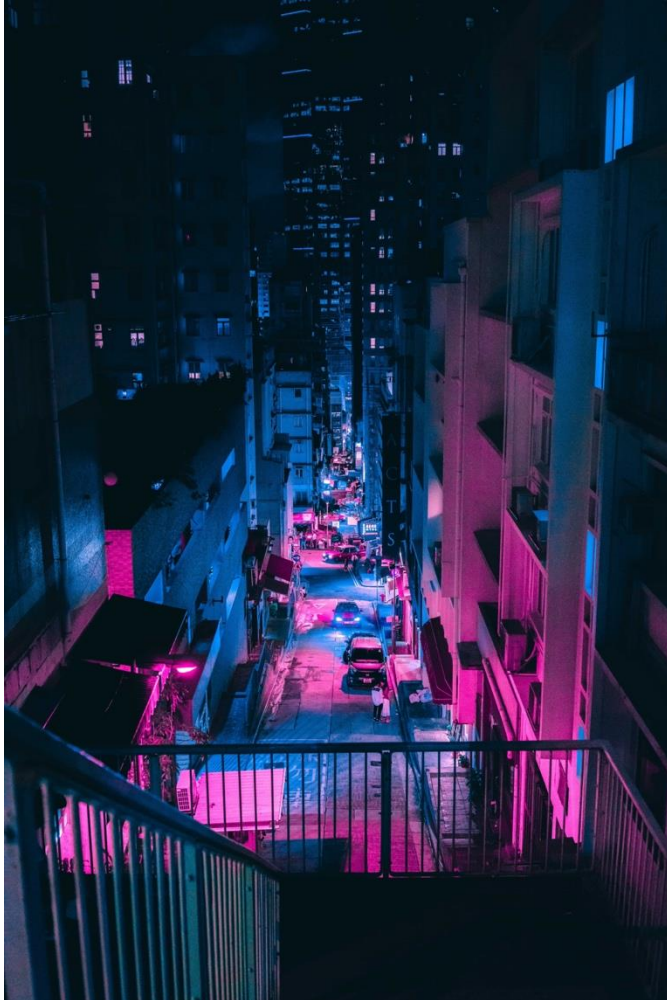
Acid Communism

In the unpublished introduction to **Acid Communism**, Fisher quotes Michel Foucault explaining that the challenge now is “not to recover our ‘lost’ identity, to free our imprisoned nature, our deepest truth; but instead [...] to move towards something radically Other.” (Foucault 1991, 120). This **Other is the spectre that Marx and Engels** first conjured out of European history; for **Herbert Marcuse**, it was “the spectre of a world that could be free.” (Marcuse 1998, 93). What haunted Fisher was a similar notion: a collective subject that has long been desired but still resists instantiation. As he wrote in his 2009 book **Capitalist Realism**, the “**required subject — a collective subject — does not exist**, yet the crisis, like all the other global crises we’re now facing, demands that it be constructed.” (Fisher 2009, 66). Here a spectre is not what is left of something dead and lost. It is atemporal; an “**eerie entity**”, as Fisher would say, representing both a failure of absence and a failure of presence. **It is desire without absolute lack.**

For Marx, “**desire**” is so often inseparable from the commodity. It is never without object. On the very first page of *Capital*, quoting **Nicholas Barbon**, Marx defines it in a footnote: “Desire implies want; it is the appetite of the mind, and as natural as hunger to the body.” (Barbon 1696, 2-3). In *The Communist Manifesto*, however, desire becomes insatiable and speculative: “In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes.” (Marx & Engels 2017, 55). The production of politics has had much the same effect, **eroticising desire**, launching it into unknown and forbidden lands; beyond borders, boundaries and limits. Pleasure becomes, in contrast, fatally associated with the familiar.

Acid Communism is a project beyond the pleasure principle.

“A new humanity, a new seeing, a new thinking, a new loving: this is the promise of acid communism” (Fisher 2018, 767).



Acid, in its promiscuity, allows this speculative desire to flow back through communism in both new and forgotten ways. **Writing in 1977, Gilles Deleuze offers the most succinct summary of how such a desire functions, explicitly in contrast to Foucauldian “pleasure”:**

[T]here is no subject of desire, and no object either. The objectivity of desire itself is only its flows. There is never enough desire. Desire is the system of a-signifying signs out of which unconscious flows are produced in a social-historical field. Every unfolding of desire, in whatever place it may occur, such as a family or a school in the neighbourhood, tests the established order and sends shock waves through the social field as a whole. Desire is revolutionary because it is always seeking more connections. (Deleuze 2006, 81).

In this way ‘Acid’ is desire, as corrosive and denaturalising multiplicity, flowing through the multiplicities of communism itself to create a alinguistic feedback loops; an ideological accelerator through which the new and previously unknown might be found in the politics we mistakenly think we already know, reinstantiating a politics to come.

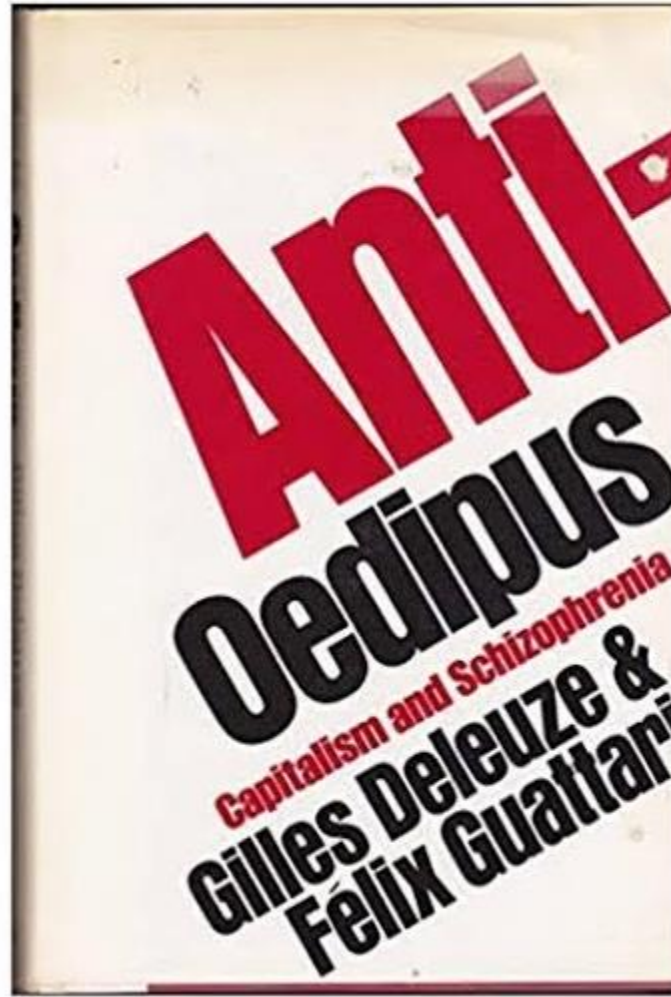
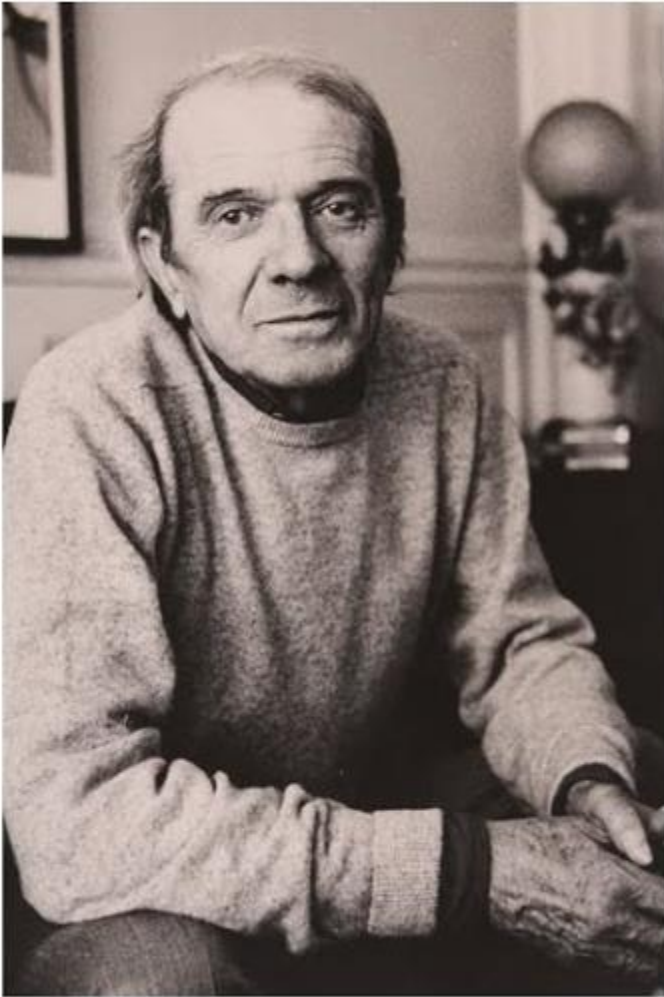
PHILOSOPHIES OF DESIRE

The social axiomatic of modern societies is caught between two poles, and is constantly oscillating from one pole to the other. [...] They are torn in two directions: archaism and futurism, neoarchaism and ex-futurism, paranoia and schizophrenia.

– Deleuze and Guattari, 1972

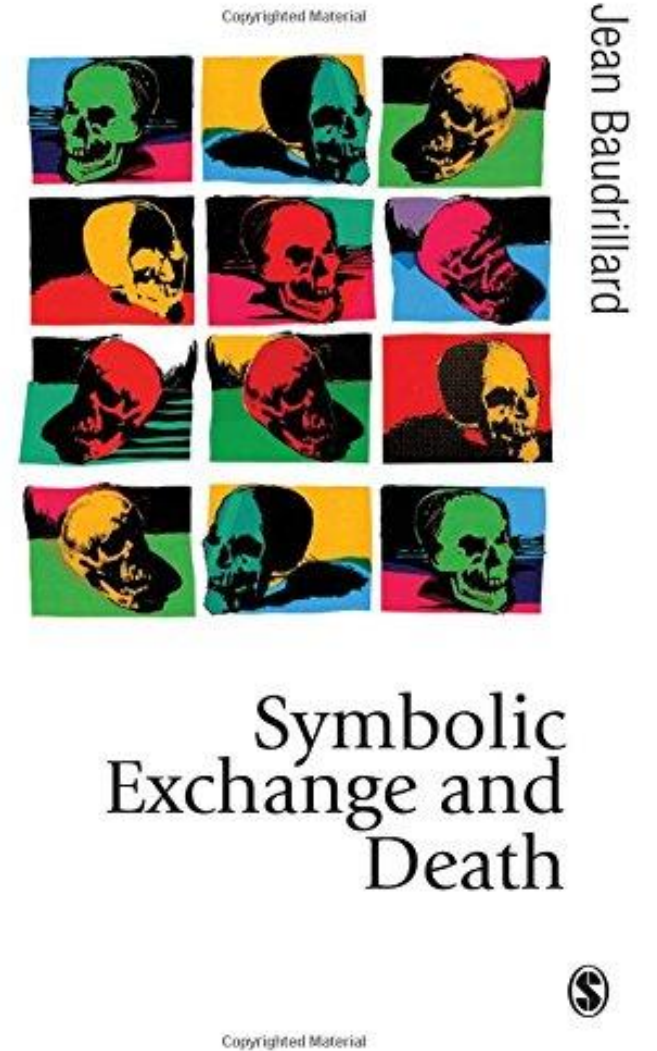
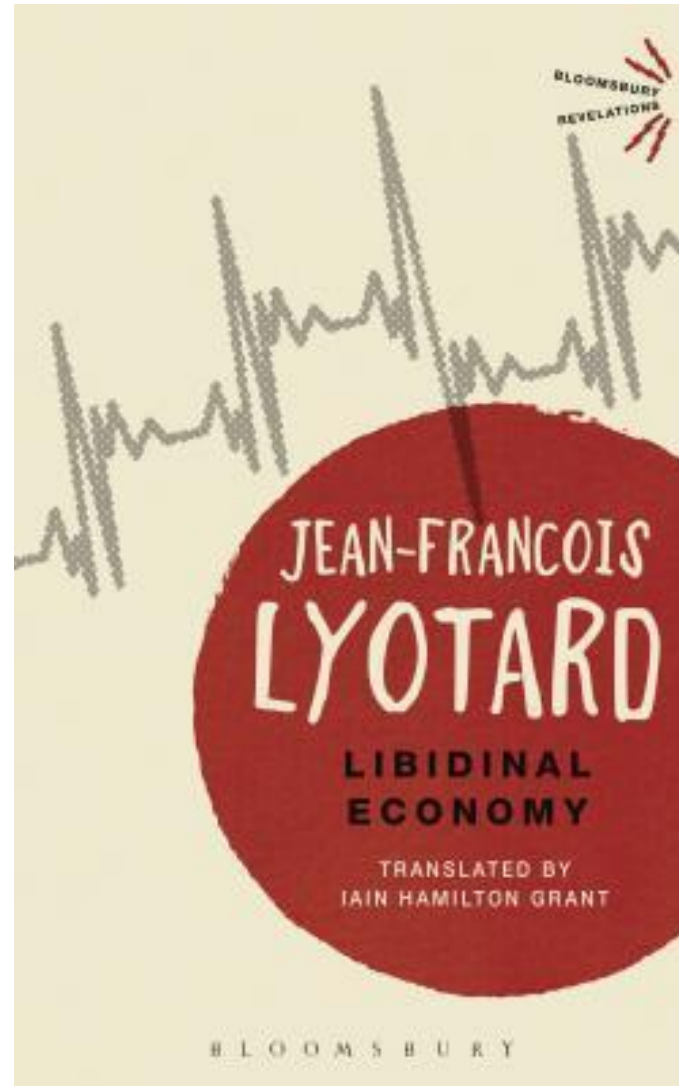
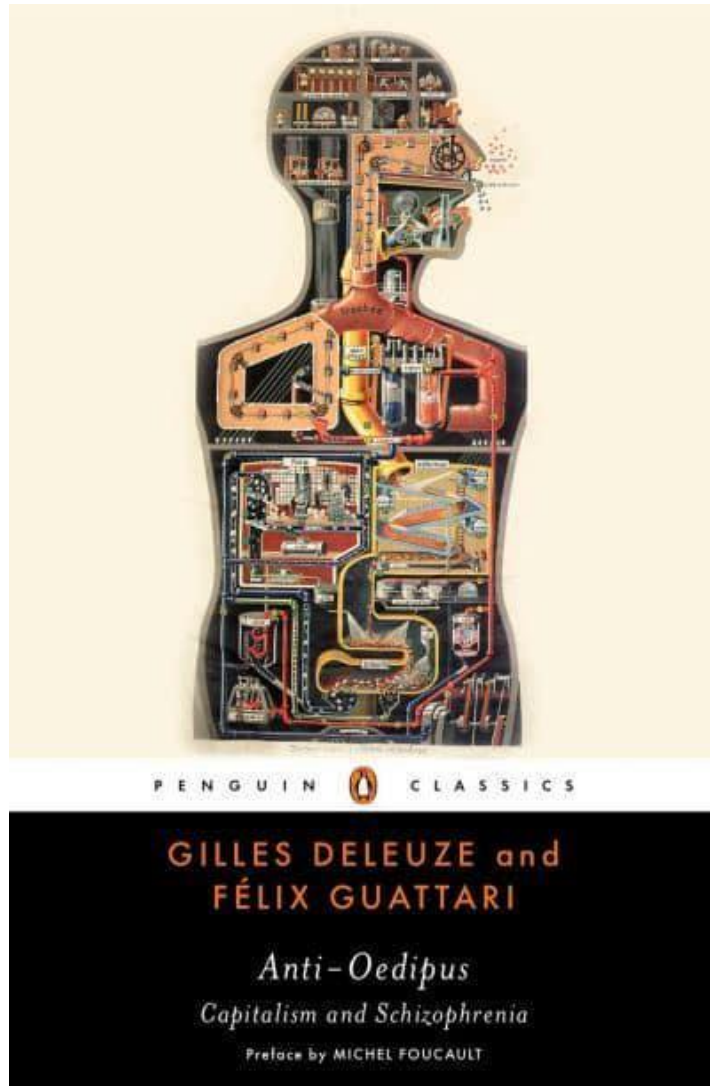




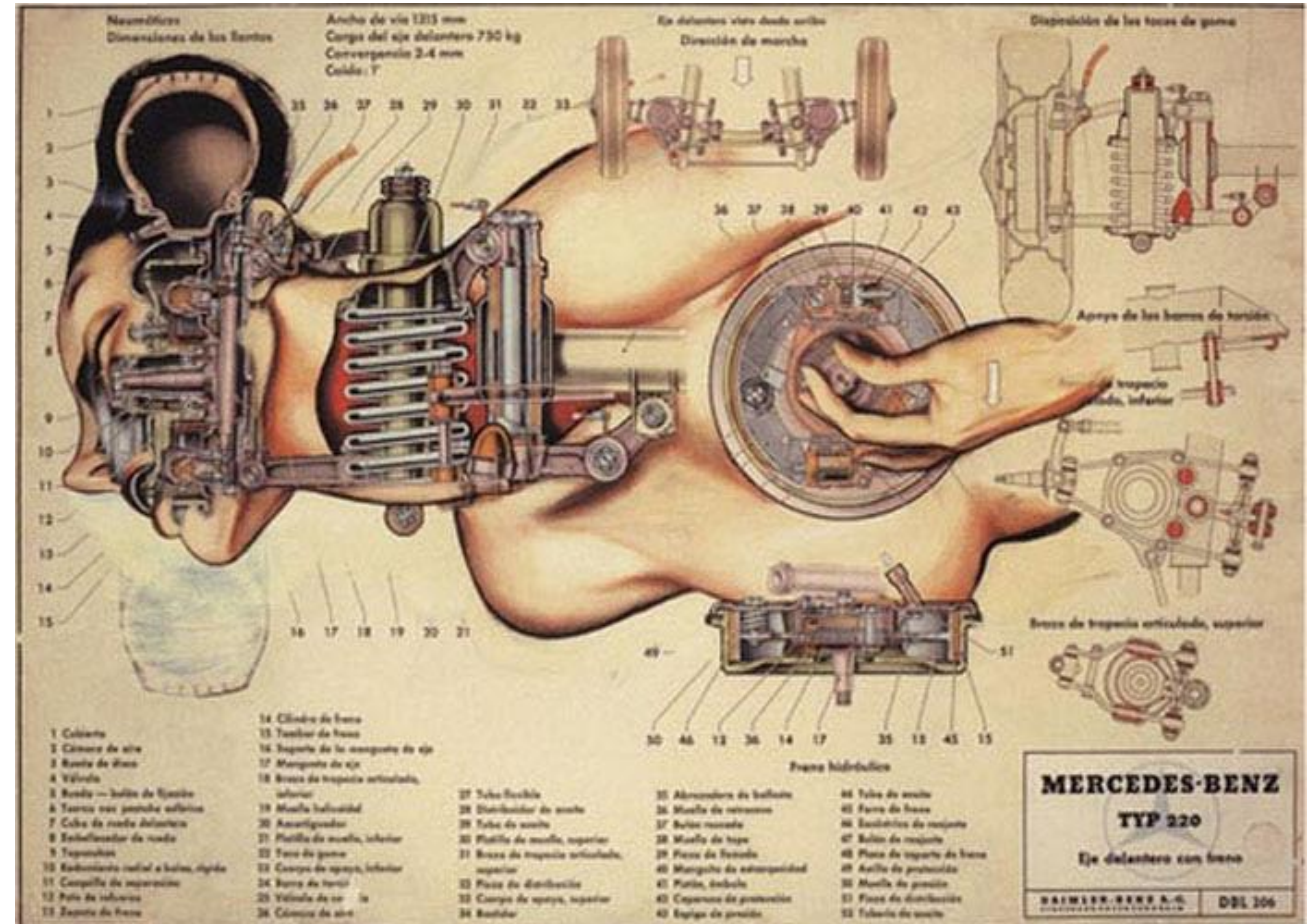
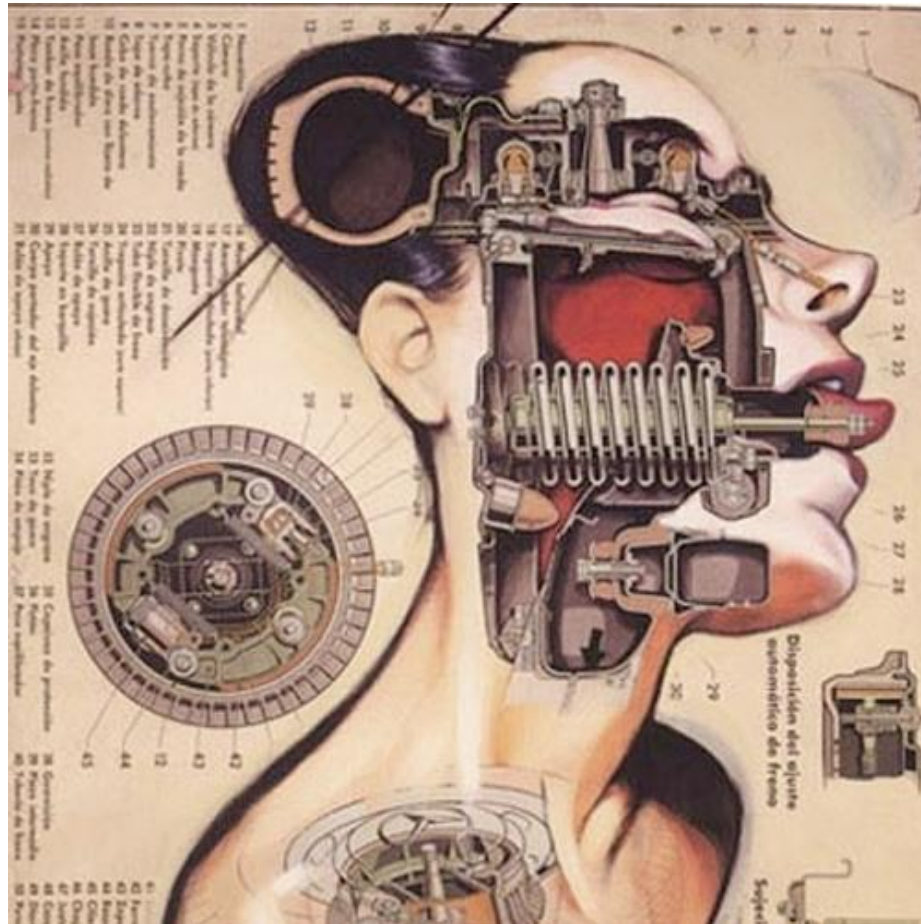


Which is the revolutionary path? Is there one? [...] To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization? [...] Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to 'accelerate the process,' as Nietzsche put it: in this matter, the truth is that we haven't seen anything yet.

philosophies of **desire** - there is no 'outside' of **capitalism**



Desiring Machines



Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia

ART
~~CAPITALISM~~ REMAINS A FORMIDABLE
DESIRING MACHINE

Felix Guattari

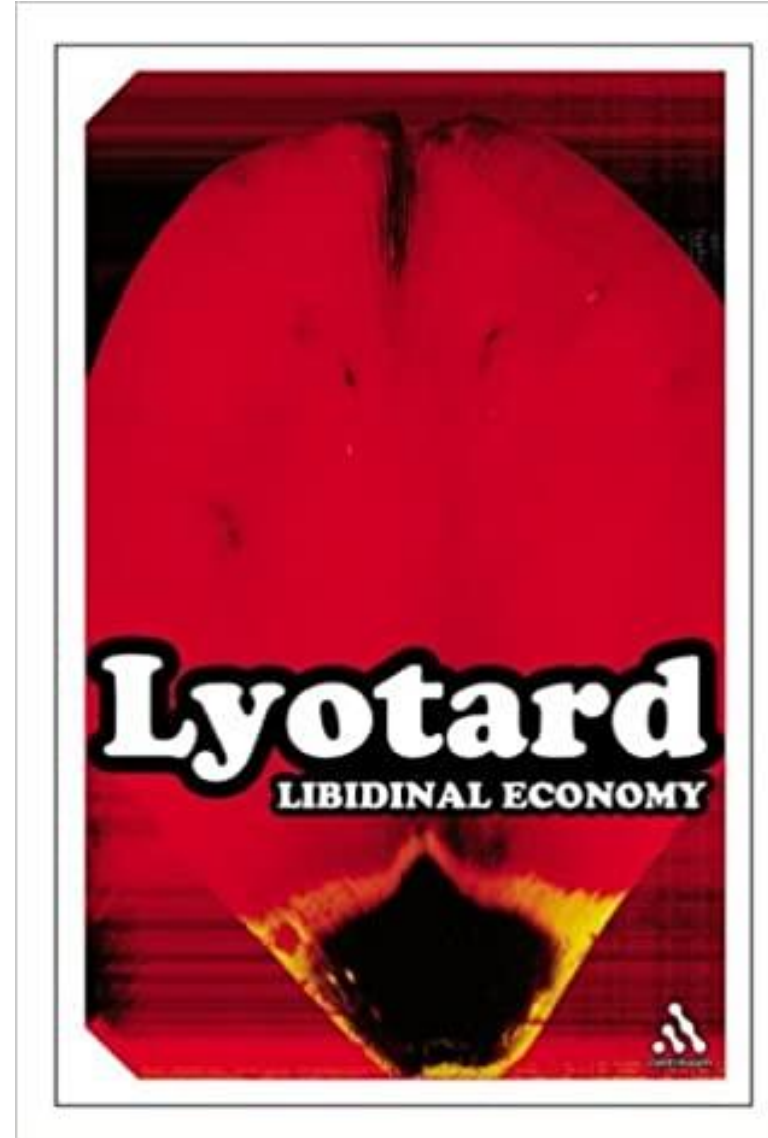
stainless steel 4.625" x 33" x .125" edition of 5

Libidinal Economy

Jean-Francois Lyotard

For Lyotard there is a ***jouissance*** in capitalist alienation that permeates late-capitalism's libidinal infrastructure.

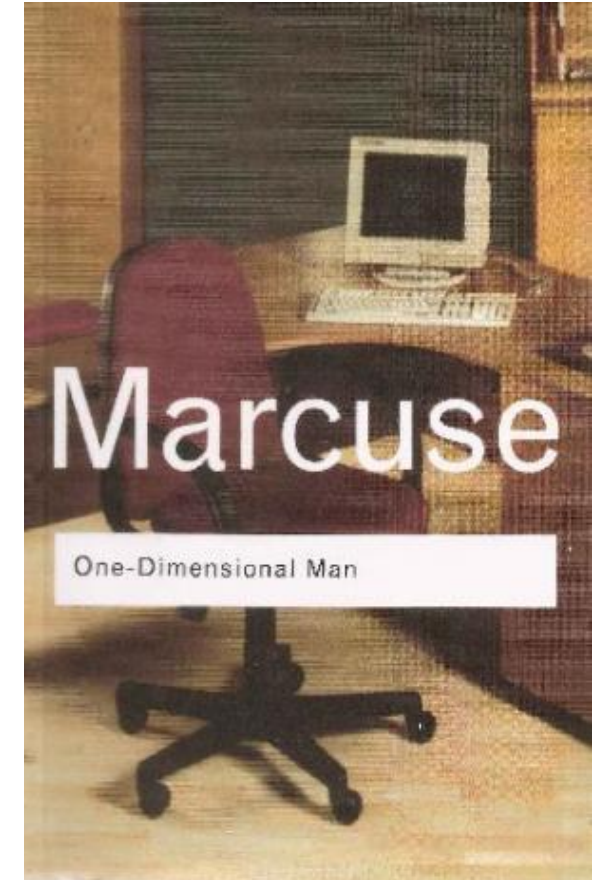
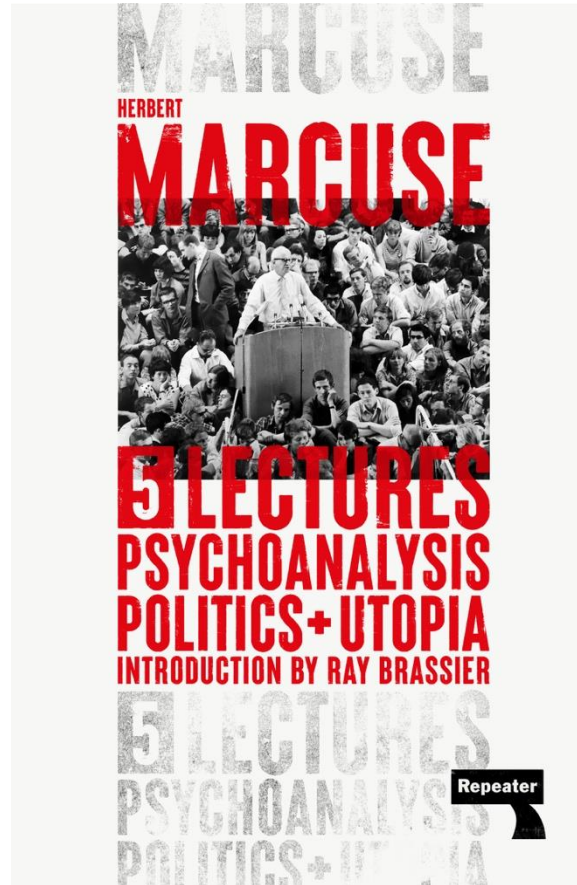
Lyotard's libidinal economy is an exploration into the manner in which desires, fantasies, aversions and phobias are all constructs intrinsic to our mode of contemporary capitalist infrastructure.



Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia: Five Lectures

Herbert Marcuse was one of the most radical thinkers of the twentieth century. Synthesizing Marx and Freud, his far-reaching critique of capitalist civilization inspired anti-capitalists and counterculture activists throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and is still relevant today. With an introduction by philosopher **Ray Brassier**, *Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia* gathers together five lectures delivered by Marcuse between 1956 and 1967 on the relationship between technological progress, repression, and freedom. Making the provocative claim that the energies released by automation will make it possible to envisage the end of the capitalist social relations that enforce repression, this often overlooked but prescient volume gives us a blueprint for the emancipation of humanity from the toils of capitalism.

In a world reeling from the ongoing collapse of the neoliberal consensus, coupled with the accelerating pace of catastrophic climate change wrought by capitalism, Marcuse's radical insights in *Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia* are more relevant now than ever.



One Dimensional Man (1964) One of the most important texts of modern times, **Herbert Marcuse's** analysis and image of a one-dimensional man in a one-dimensional society has shaped many young radicals' way of seeing and experiencing life.

A Marxist Heresy

– a Marx freed from negativity and guilt, fascinated by capitalist perversion.

The libidinal economy together with the desiring-machines of Deleuze and Guattari, demonstrate what Lyotard describes as a “portrait of a nearly schizophrenic capital [...] the perversion of a libido machining its flows over a **body without organs** which it can cling to everywhere and nowhere”.



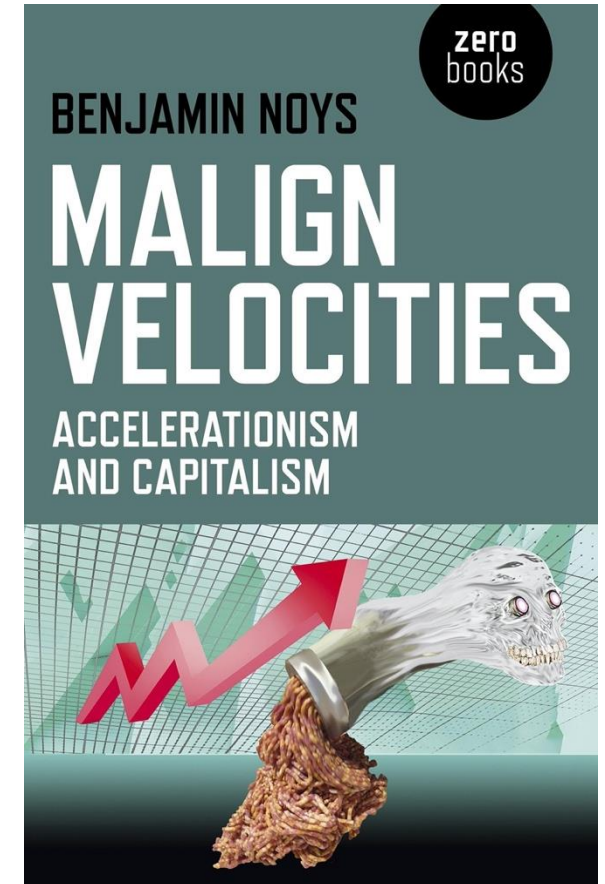
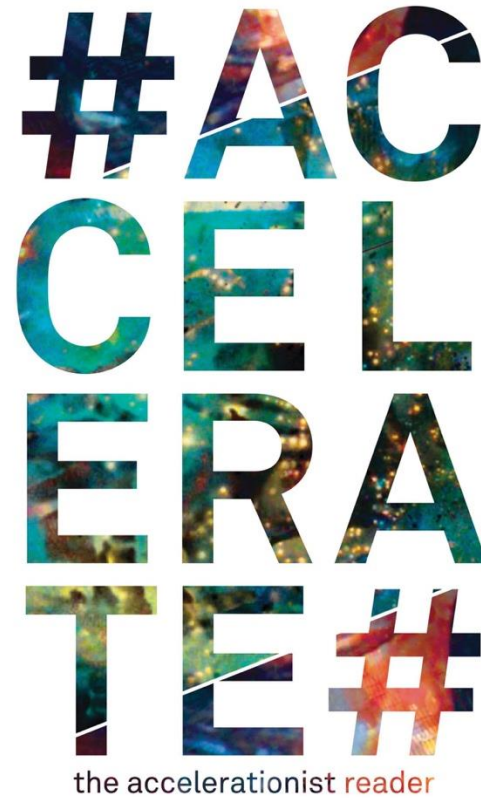
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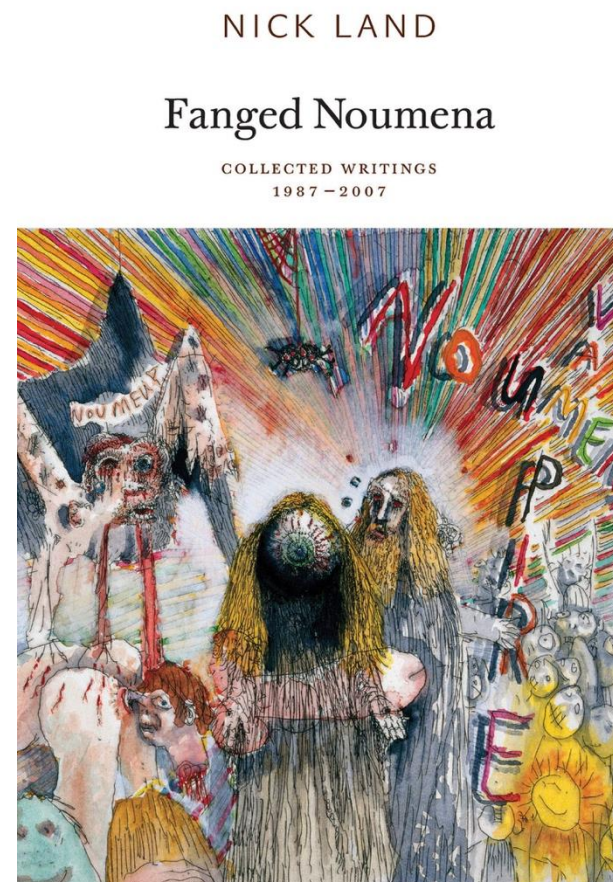
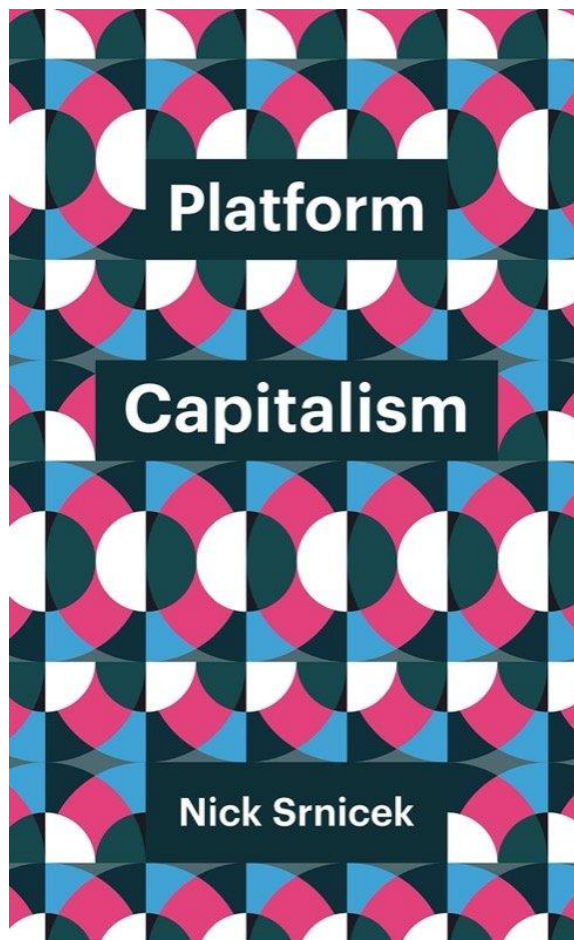
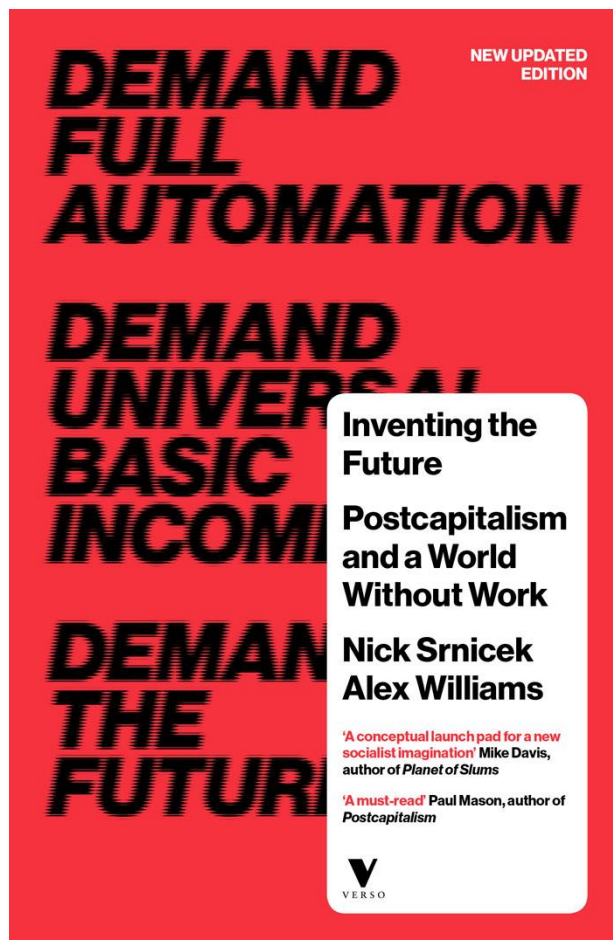
introducing accelerationism

there can be no established outside-of-capitalism – it must be surmounted from within.

the way out of capitalism is through capitalism itself: a
“liberation through absolute immersion in the **flows and
fluxes of a libidinised capitalism**”

Fragment on Machines Karl Marx (1858)
The Book of Machines by Samuel Butler (1872)

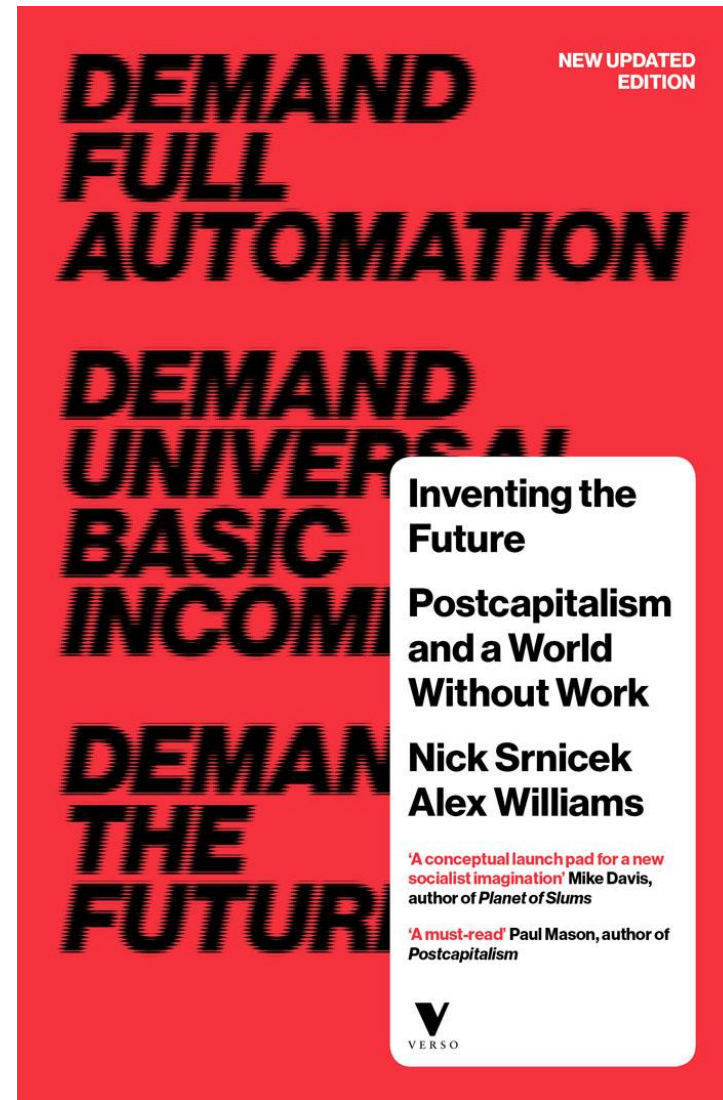




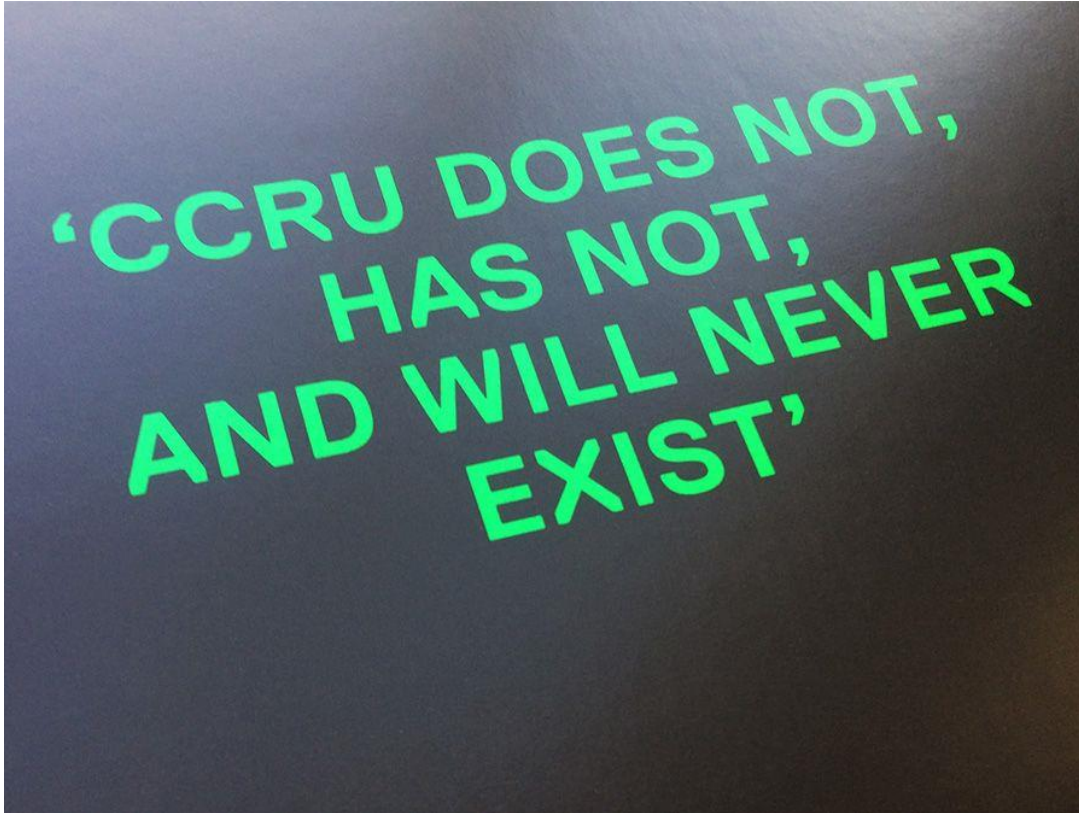
Humanity is an incomplete vector of transformation...

“There is no authentic human essence to be realised, no harmonious unity to be returned to [...] no organic wholeness to be achieved. Alienation is a mode of enablement, and humanity is an incomplete vector of transformation.”

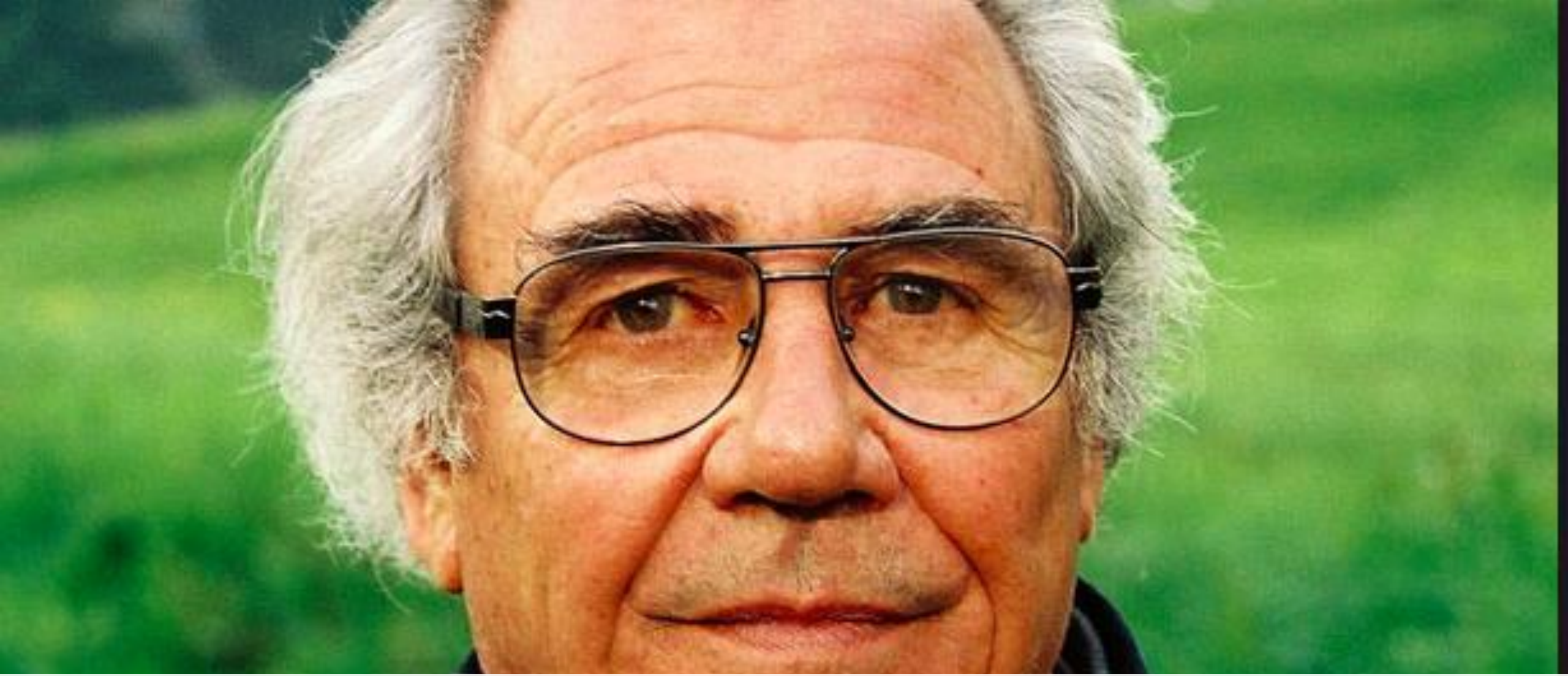
“the human’ is seen as a mutable being, who through varying forms of experimentation, whether that be individual and bodily experimentation or social and political radicalism, must overcome our restricted parochial image of the human.”



Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU)



Nick Land's **cyber-theory-fiction** visualises a **dromological acceleration of capitalist marketization**, in which capital dove tails into a vertiginous trajectory of what he would dub the '**Techonomic Singularity**': a fusion of technology and economics which is "the orientation of capitalism per se", ignoring preoccupations such as the formation of human subjectivities to pursue its own process of deterritorialization, where **machinic-capitalist** development is the dominant anthropology.



JEAN BAUDRILLARD (1929-2007)

JEAN BAUDRILLARD
(1929-2007)

His Influences

For his description of contemporary society, combines:

- Barthes' structuralist semiology – a semiological analysis of society
- With a western marxist critique of how we are produced and controlled (Marcuse/Debord as key precursors)
- And media theory – McLuhan on the form of media and Daniel Boorstin on 'the image' and 'pseudo-events'

***At the core of Baudrillard is
a simple idea...***

That our society is defined by the reduction, abolition, replacement and simulation of a mode of experience, meaning and relationships – **the symbolic** – and **its transformation into the semiotic**, into signs that, combined, take on the simulacral force of the real, enclosing us and programming our experience and behaviour

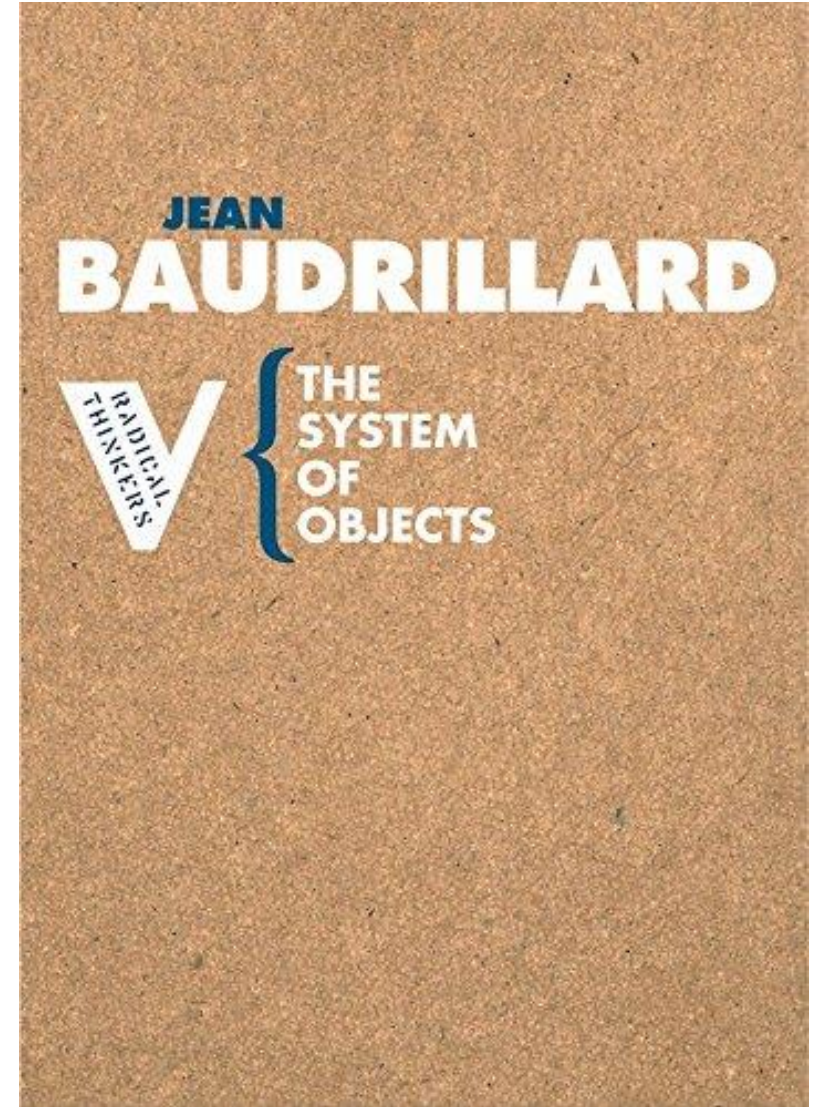


THE SYSTEM OF OBJECTS (1968)

A **Barthesian** analysis of post-war consumer society as
a **system of sign-objects**, organised according to
a **'code' of signification**

Consumption today isn't a **material** practice but an **idealistic** one:
'consumption means *an activity consisting of the systematic
manipulation of signs*'.

In contrast to traditional 'symbolic' objects which weren't
consumed, but used in a lived relationship



The System of Objects (1968)

‘To become an object of consumption, an object must first become a sign. That is to say it must become external, in a sense, to a relationship that it now merely signifies. It is thus arbitrary ... it derives its consistency, and hence its meaning from an abstract and systematic relationship to all other sign-objects...’

Western civilisation defined by a historical process ... the reduction of a lived, ‘symbolic’ mode of life, experience, relations and meaning... and its transformation into signs, unilaterally consumed in their signification

‘Symbolic-Exchange’

Is the basis for his critical position on the semiotic...

A concept derived from the social anthropology of **Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss**

And its influence on ‘the college of sociology’, including **Georges Bataille and Roger Caillois**

Taken from ideas of the **sacred, the festival, the gift...**

Durkheim's **The 'Sacred' and the 'Festival'**

- Durkheim's explanation of tribal life as divided between **'the sacred' and the 'profane'**
- Against the profane world of labour and living, there is the time of the festival – the experience of the sacred in the union of festivities
- A higher experience in the coming together of the tribe. Being raised by the collective experience into a more human mode of life

Durkheim defined the sacred as things set apart and forbidden, surrounded by a sense of awe and reverence. The profane, on the other hand, refers to the everyday, mundane aspects of life that are not sacred. Durkheim argued that the sacred and the profane are fundamental categories that structure human experiences and societies, shaping social norms and providing a sense of collective identity.

THE GIFT (1925)

Marcel Mauss

‘there’s so such thing as a free lunch’

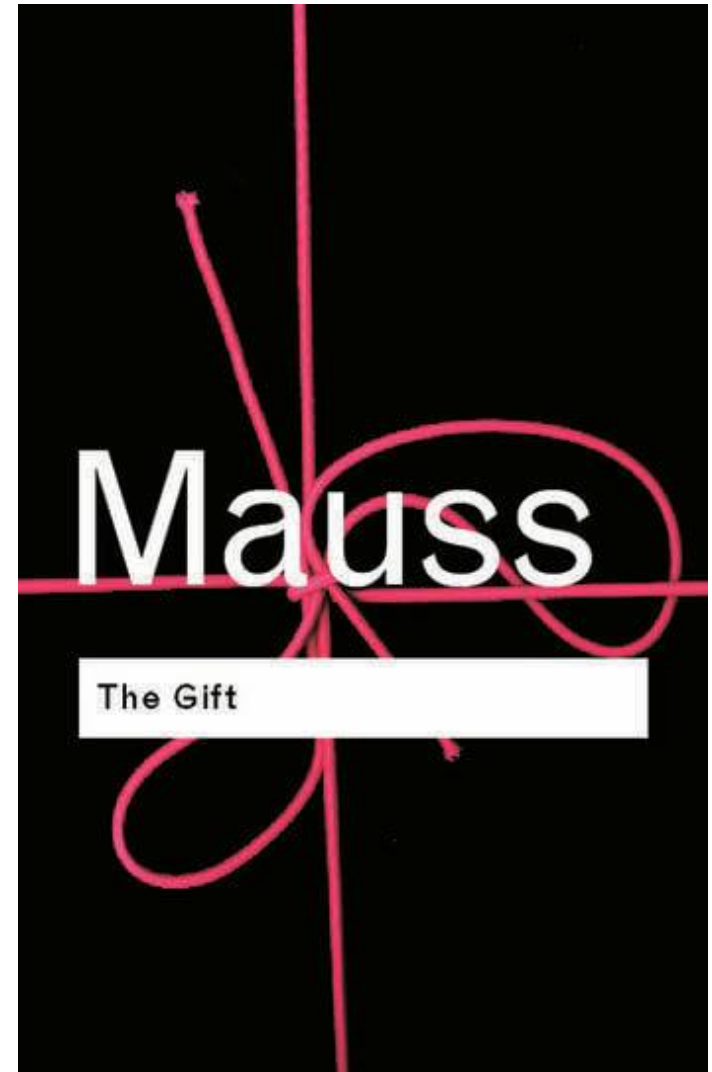
- A study of gift-giving in tribal societies – between individuals, families and entire tribes
- Aim is to give away, destroy, or divest oneself ... to create positive social relations and also to humiliate and create social rank
- An immediate, bilateral, lived mode of relations, pitting people’s humanity against each other

Baudrillard and Mauss question the nature of reciprocity in social relationships.

Mauss emphasized the obligatory nature of gift exchange, where the recipient is expected to reciprocate.

Baudrillard, in the context of consumption, explores how the **logic of exchange** becomes obscured in a world of simulations.

The act of buying and consuming goods in a hyperreal society may not necessarily entail a direct reciprocity, but it can still be a symbolic gesture tied to the construction of identity and social meaning.



Baudrillard takes...

the **hyperreal** is a state where signs and symbols no longer represent an underlying reality but create their own reality.

From this **Durkheimian** anthropology ...

- **A mode of relations – of communication and confrontation**
- And a historical belief in the loss of this primitive 'sacred' and its safe simulation
- Western society has reduced the experience of 'the sacred' and replaced lived relations and meaning with semiotic meaning

In Baudrillard's view, the distinction between the sacred and the profane becomes blurred in a **hyperreal**, consumer-driven society. He argues that contemporary culture is marked by **a saturation of signs and symbols that are divorced from their original meaning**. The **hyperreal**, for Baudrillard, is a state in which signs and symbols no longer refer to any underlying reality but instead create their own reality.

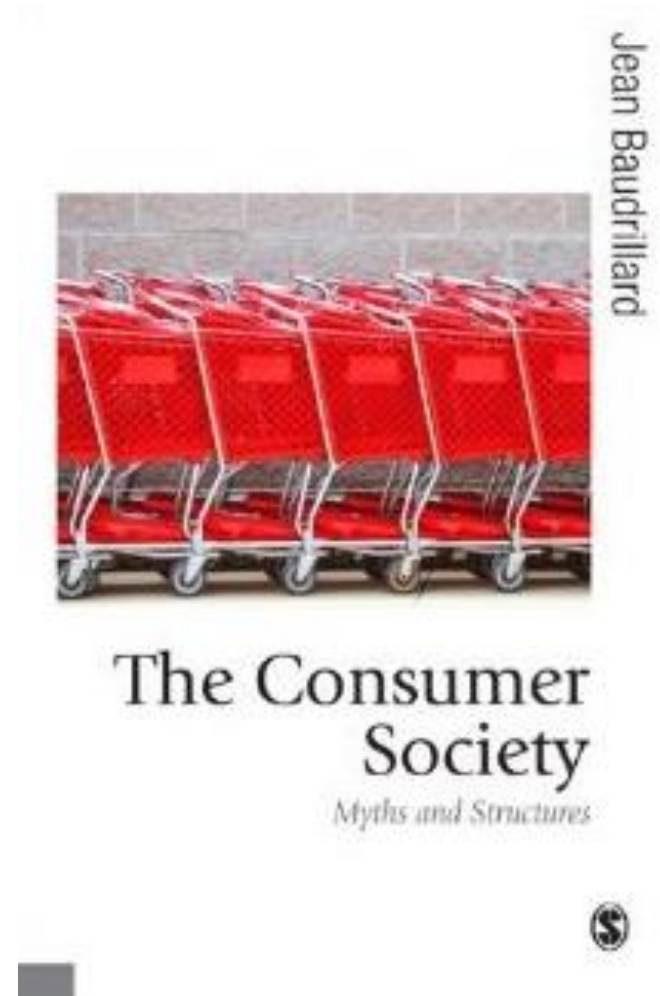
In this context, Baudrillard suggests that the profane becomes indistinguishable from the sacred in a **hyperreal** society. The consumption of commodities and the proliferation of media images contribute to a world where distinctions between the sacred and the profane collapse, and reality itself becomes a simulation.

THE CONSUMER SOCIETY (1970)

Chapter on 'Mass media Culture'

Electronic media replace the symbolic with the
semiotic

They take the raw, lived event and process it into
signs. These signs are then combined to produce
the television 'event'



The Gulf War Did Not Take Place

They simultaneously:

Actualise and **dramatise** the real,
in producing it as a spectacle

And **de-actualise** it, in distancing us
from the real event

We consume '**the simulation**'

The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (1991) essay by
Baudrillard

The media's representation of the war, according to Baudrillard, turned it into a spectacle divorced from the actual experiences and consequences of war. Baudrillard's goal was to stimulate critical thinking about the nature of contemporary media, simulation, and the ways in which events are represented and experienced in a hyperreal society.



‘The Simulacrum’

Began to develop concept of ‘**simulation**’ and the ‘**simulacrum**’
– of our world of ‘simulacra’

A historical term for an efficacious image such as a statue or idol
worshipped as a god

Today’s simulacra are semiotic creations ... they replace and
eclipse the real with their own signification

They assume the force of the real, making distinction of true and
false impossible

Copyrighted Material

JEAN BAUDRILLARD



SIMULACRA
AND
SIMULATION

Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser

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MICHIGAN



Hyperreality

Not unreal – possess *too much* reality

Pass for and exceed the real...

Due to their 'hyperreality'

The forced, semiotic materialisation of the real



The overproduction of signs of the real ... its modelling in high-definition

An excess – ‘the more real than real’

An aesthetic and sensory heightening and an emotional indifference ... as everything realised for you



Seduction

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

‘a **pornographic** culture’

Develops a critique of our entire culture of ‘production’ ... not industrial production but (‘pro-ducere’ – to cause to appear) our semiotic culture

Devoted to the forced materialisation of the real in pornographic, hyperreal, hypervisibility

‘... What is involved is an **orgy of realism**, an **orgy of production** ... a rage to summon everything before the jurisdiction of signs.’

Baudrillard's use of the term "pornographic" extends beyond its literal association with explicit sexual content. It becomes a **metaphor for the excess, superficiality, and simulation** that he sees as characteristic of contemporary culture. Whether applied to sexual imagery or other aspects of society, the term highlights Baudrillard's concern with **the loss of meaning, depth, and authenticity** in a **hyperreal** world.

Baudrillard believed that there is a pornography of information and communication, where circuits, networks, functions, and objects are regulated, forced to signify, and have a capacity to perform – where obscenity is not limited to sexuality, but that it illuminates the gaze, image, and every representation.

the politics of desire

arts activism in the (cobalt) supply chain

supply and demand

the politics of desire in relation to the supply chain of cobalt highlights the complex and often troubling connections between consumer desires for the latest technology and the ethical, social, and environmental implications of meeting those desires.

**capitalism, consumerism, exploitation,
extractivism, environment, ethics**

1. **Consumer Demand and Desire for Technology:** The desire for the latest technological gadgets, like iPhones, fuels the demand for components such as cobalt. This desire drives the production and sales of these devices, influencing the entire supply chain.
2. **Exploitation and Labor Conditions:** Cobalt mining, especially in regions like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), often involves harsh labor conditions, including child labor and unsafe working environments. The desire for these devices can indirectly perpetuate and overlook such labor exploitation in the quest for meeting consumer demands.
3. **Environmental Impact:** The extraction of cobalt has significant environmental implications, including deforestation and pollution. The desire for these devices contributes to this extraction, highlighting a conflict between technological desire and environmental concerns.
4. **Ethical Responsibility and Corporate Practices:** The politics of desire intersect with corporate responsibility. Consumer demand fuels the decisions of tech companies regarding sourcing materials. The desire for the latest gadgets often raises questions about the ethical responsibility of these companies in ensuring responsible sourcing and labor practices throughout their supply chain.
5. **Global Inequality and Economic Dynamics:** The desire for these devices connects with global economic inequalities. The profits and benefits often accrue to corporations and wealthier nations, while the harsher impacts and labor exploitation are experienced in resource-rich yet economically disadvantaged regions.

I Consume, Therefore I Am **hyperconsumerism**

Consumer Demand and Desire for Technology

The **desire** for the latest technological gadgets, like iPhones, fuels the **demand** for components such as cobalt.

This **desire** drives the production and sales of these devices, influencing the entire **supply** chain.



The curious shopper enters the supermarket-wonderland and feels tiny and bewildered at the sight of endless aisles (Credit: "Shop Until You Drop" by Banksy via Wikimedia Commons)

the insatiable consumer



Jenny Holzer, Survival, 1983-85, Times Square, 1986



Steve Cutts - Social Media Zombies (2014)



Andreas Gursky 99 Cent II 2001 diptych



Too-Too, Much-Much (2010)

Thomas Hirschhorn

Exploitation and Labour Conditions

Cobalt mining, especially in regions like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), often involves harsh labour conditions, including child labour and unsafe working environments.

The desire for mobile phones can indirectly perpetuate and overlook such labour exploitation in the quest for meeting consumer demands.



**exploitation
power dynamics
and labour
conditions**



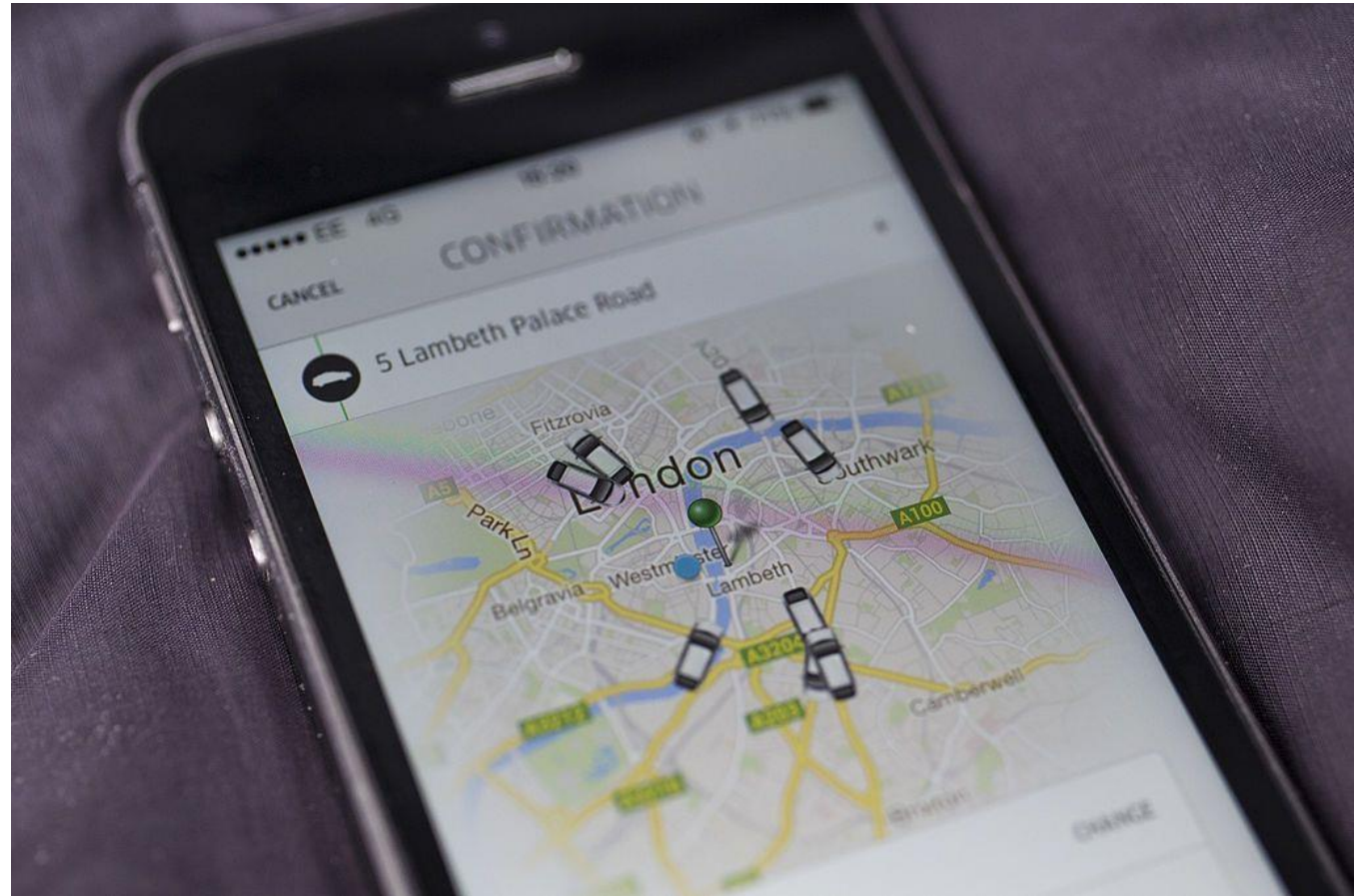
“EXPLOITATION” (2019), Eddy Loukil



Gold in the Morning (1985)

Alfredo Jarr

the **gig** economy



Environmental Impact

The **extraction** of cobalt has significant environmental implications, including deforestation and pollution.

The desire for these **devices** contributes to this extraction, highlighting **a conflict between technological desire and environmental concerns.**



Art and Extractivism in the Anthropocene

Blue, Bling: On **extractivism**

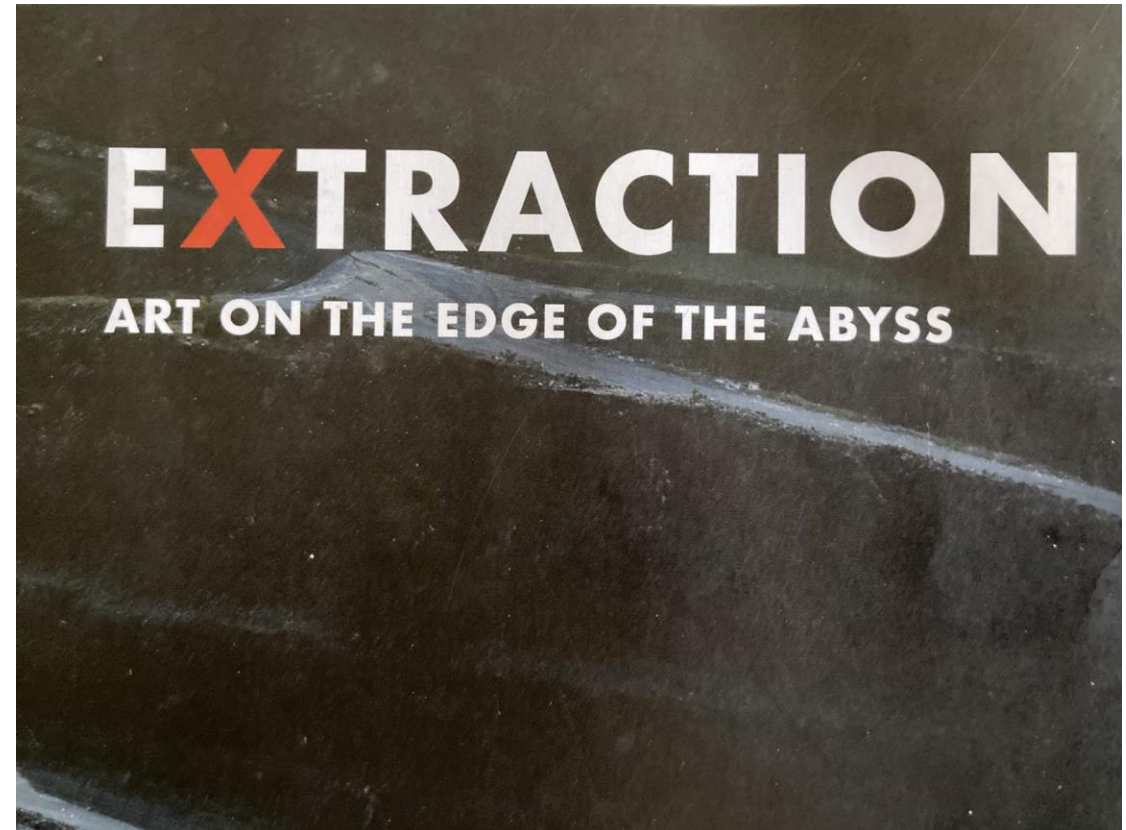
‘Extractivism is a mode of accumulation that started to be established on a massive scale five hundred years ago. The world economy – the capitalist system – began to be structured with the conquest and colonisation of the Americas, Africa and Asia.’



Otobang Nkanga, *In Pursuit of Bling*, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Galerie In Situ – fabienne leclerc, Paris

THE AGE OF THE SACRIFICE ZONE

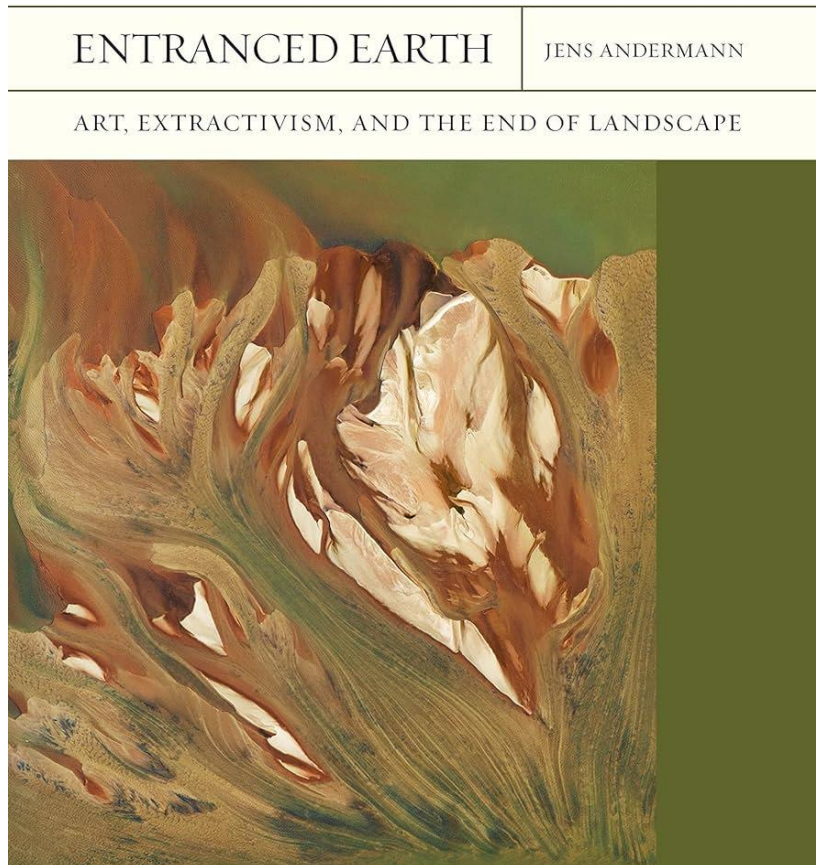
extractivism



"We are no longer in a state of growth; we are in a state of excess. we are living in a society of excrescence."

—Jean Baudrillard

environmental impact of capitalism, desire and hyperconsumerism



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Agnes Denes Wheatfield (1982) - A Confrontation: Battery Park Landfill, Downtown Manhattan

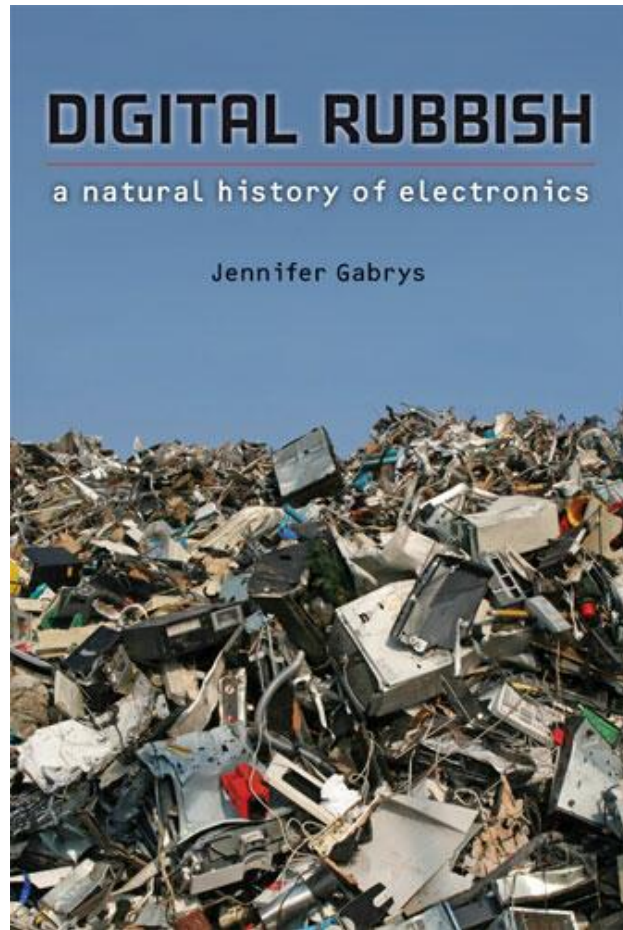
Dear Earth Art and Hope in a Time of Crisis

'caring is a form of resistance'



Andrea Bowers

e-waste



e-waste

Chris Jordan

Chris Jordan: Known for large-scale photographic works, Jordan's "e-waste" series captures the magnitude of electronic waste, critiquing consumer culture and excessive consumption.



Chris Jordan, 2004, archival inkjet print, 44" x 64", © 2005, courtesy of the artist

Intolerable Beauty: Portraits of American Mass Consumption(2003 - 2005)



Cell phones #2, Atlanta 2005 44 x 90"

Permanent Error (2011)

Pieter Hugo

Permanent Error by renowned photographer Pieter Hugo masterfully unveils the harrowing realities of an African community grappling with the disastrous consequences of e-waste.





Permanent Error (), **Pieter Hugo**

Ethical Responsibility and Corporate Practices

The politics of desire intersects with corporate responsibility. Consumer demand fuels the decisions of tech companies regarding sourcing materials.

The desire for the latest gadgets often raises questions about the ethical responsibility of these companies in ensuring responsible sourcing and labor practices throughout their supply chain.



Resonant with meaning ... Jenny Holzer's Abuse of Power Comes As No Surprise and Moral Injury in North Adams Massachusetts in January 2021.

Global Inequality and Economic Dynamics

The desire for mobile phones impacts and compounds global economic inequalities.

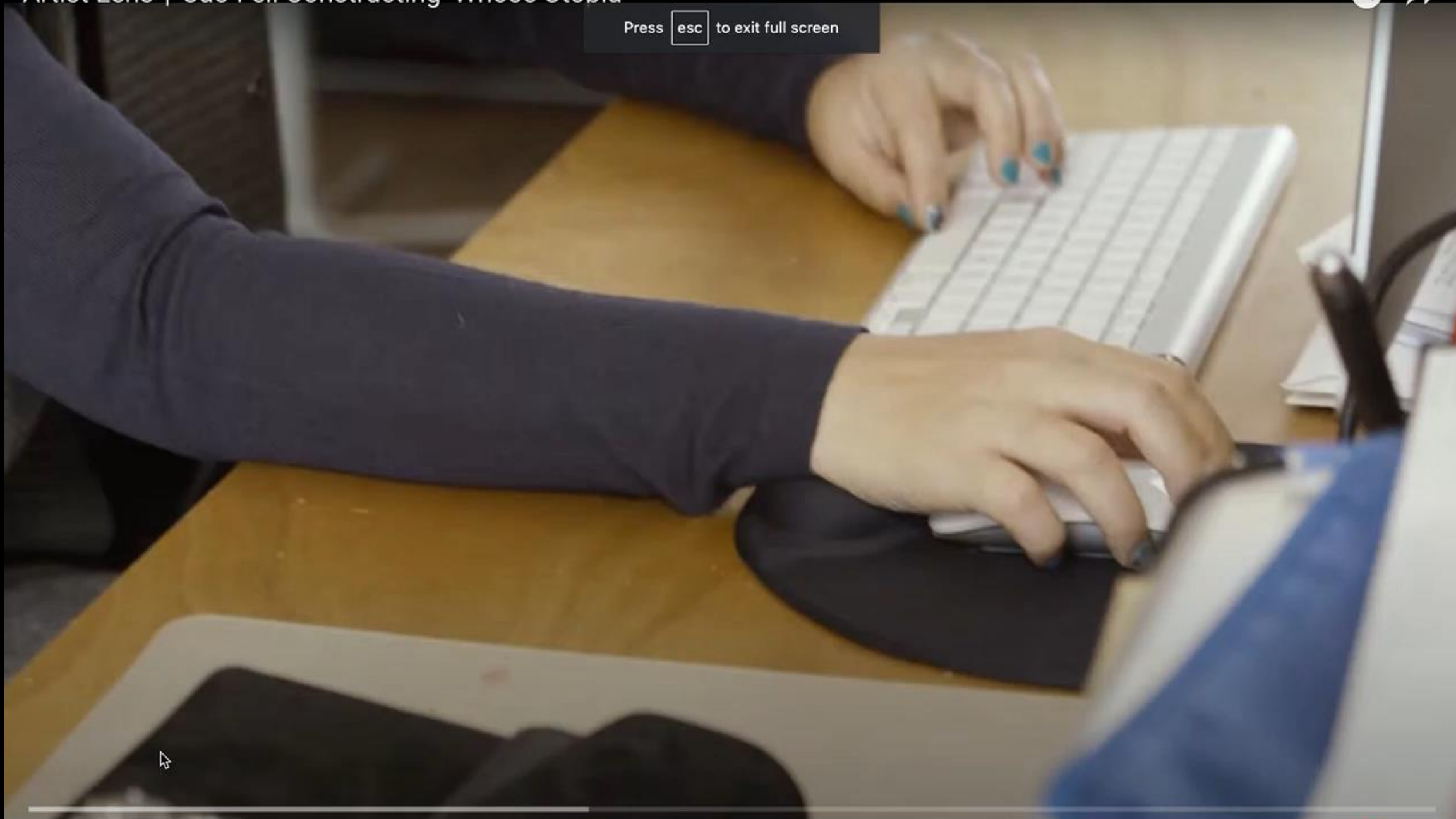
The profits and benefits often accrue to corporations and wealthier nations, while the harsher impacts and labor exploitation are experienced in resource-rich yet economically disadvantaged regions.



Cao Fei, Whose Utopia, 2006. C-print, 120×150 cm.



Press **esc** to exit full screen



43



0:00 / 2:47

Scroll for details



the intersection of desire and
global capitalism

The Supply Chain Logistics and Transport



the “nerve ganglion of capitalism” Mark Fisher. Felixstowe Container Port.

THE MALTINGS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BERWICK VISUAL ARTS PRESENTS A NEW SERIES OF ALTERNATIVE CINEMA



COME AND EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY AS YOU BROADEN YOUR CINEMATIC HORIZONS

The Forgotten Space

(2013)

Allan Sekula & Noel Burch

Based on Sekula's earlier work *Fish Story* (1989–1995), the film seeks to understand and describe global capital in relation to the complex symbolic legacy of the sea. As the directors state:

“Our premise is that the sea remains the crucial space of globalization. Nowhere else is the disorientation, violence, and alienation of contemporary capitalism more manifest, but this truth is not self-evident, and must be approached as a puzzle, or mystery, a problem to be solved.”

ASPECT screening #1:
THE FORGOTTEN SPACE A film essay by Allan Sekula & Noël Burch
WED 21 JAN 7.30PM
Henry Travers Studio
£5 / £3 | PG tbc

To rule the sea is to ruin the world.

This extraordinary film essay follows container cargo aboard ships, barges, trains and trucks, listening to workers, engineers, planners, politicians, and those marginalized by the global transport system - from displaced farmers and villagers in Holland and Belgium, and seafarers aboard mega-ships shuttling between Asia and Europe, to factory workers in China, whose low wages are the fragile key to the whole puzzle.

ASPECT is an Independent Cinema Office initiative funded by Arts Council England

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The sea is forgotten until disaster strikes. But perhaps the biggest seagoing disaster is the global supply chain, which – maybe in a more fundamental way than financial speculation – leads the world economy to the abyss.



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SINGAPORE

Alfredo Jaar - An Aesthetics of Resistance

“Everything I know about the world, everything I understand about the world, I started learning the day I became an artist. I can say that I became an artist in order to understand the world in which I live. In a way, I became an artist out of curiosity. And curiosity is perhaps the best antidote against obscurantism. Curiosity is the source of my insatiable inquisitiveness. Inquisitiveness leads to knowledge. And knowledge means enlightenment. The idea is to open your mind to the world. We are, after all, the result of all the stimuli we receive. The more stimuli we receive, the more complete our vision. How can I comprehend anything if I only know half of the story? Perhaps the true enemy of our intellect is apathy. Indifference. As we defeat our apathy, we expand our search and discover places, mental places, intellectual places where we have never been, that we didn't even know existed. In the process of becoming an artist, I took a journey that went from ignorance, that is darkness, to knowledge, meaning light. This knowledge has illuminated me. It is perhaps the reason why light, physical light, has become such an important device in my work. The process of making art is perhaps nothing more, and nothing less, than to shed light on our world”.