

MANY REGIMES OF CAPITAL IN THE POSTDIGITAL AGE

20-22
OCTOBER
2021

online event

Keynote speakers:

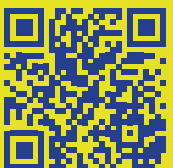
Tom Tyler
Gregg Lambert
Alex Taek-Gwang Lee
A. Kiarina Kordela
Ewa Mazierska
Ewa Plonowska Ziarek
Adam J. Nocek
Krzysztof Ziarek
Szymon Wróbel

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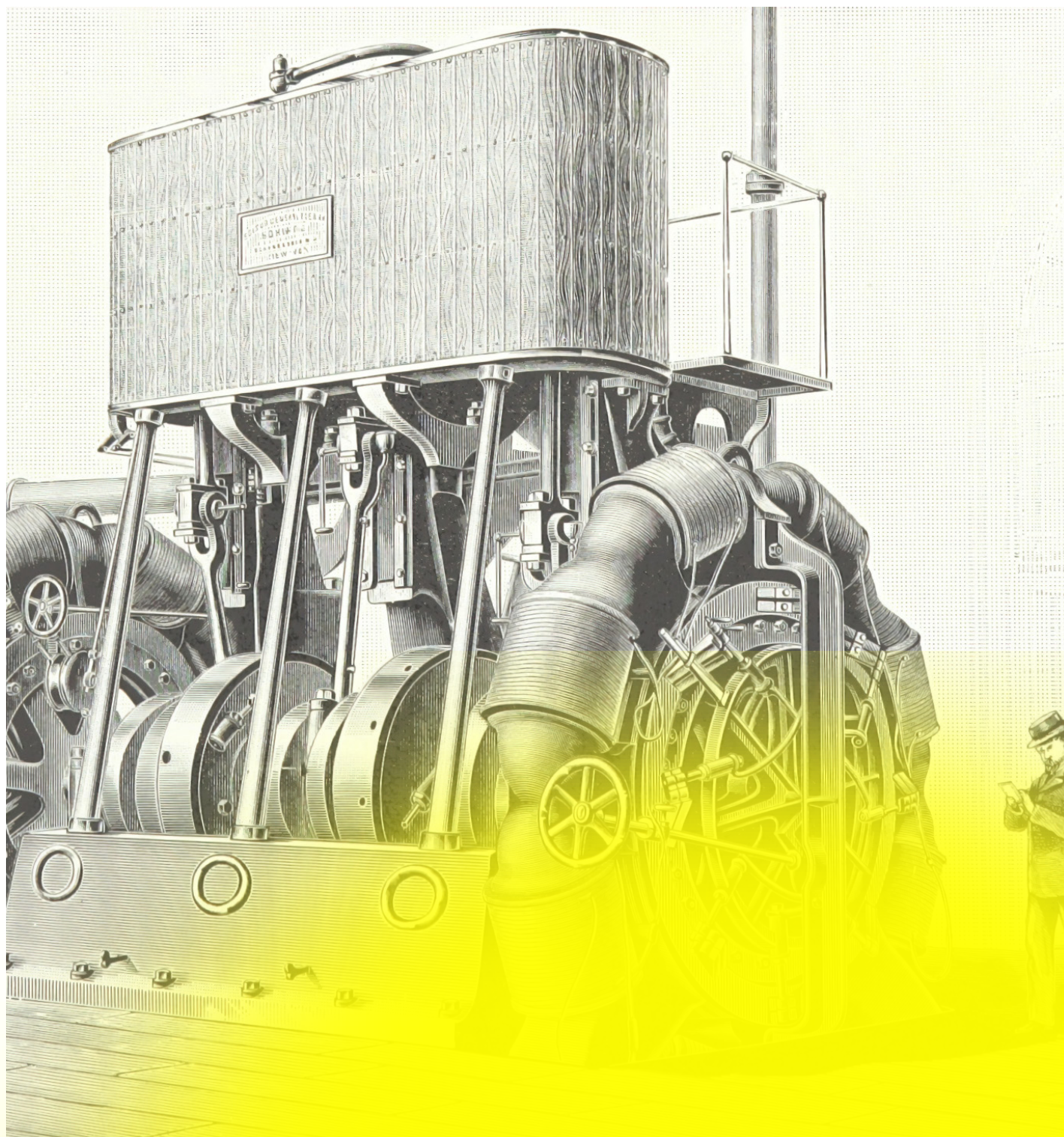


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Partners:





CONFERENCE PROGRAM

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20 October 2021: Day 1

9.45-10.00 Introductory Address

Robert Sucharski, Szymon Wróbel

10.00-11.00 Keynote Lecture

Tom Tyler, *Exchanges*

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-12.45 Panel 1. (Post)Modernism, (Post)Capitalism

Maciej Bednarski, *The Distribution of the Knowable*

Casey Rentmeester, *Capitolocene or Post-Capitalism?: Either Way, We Need Gelassenheit*

Sora Koizumi, *Lyotard, Baudrillard and "The Fragment of Machines"*

12.45-13.00 Coffee Break

13.00-14.00 Keynote Lecture

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee, *Vampire, Zombie and Baroque Capitalism*

14.00-15.00 Lunch Break

15.00-16.30 Panel 2. Capital, Nature, Infrastructure

Andrzej Frelek, *Capital as natural history – nature in the order of society and society in the order of nature*

Kamil Wielecki, *Not Quite a Capital but Still Capital Results: Building Public Infrastructure in Dagestan*

Laura U. Marks and Radek Przedpelski, *A Contribution to the Critique of the Carbon Footprint of Streaming Media. Earth's Carrying Capacity as a Regime of Capital in the Postdigital Age*

16.30-16.45 Coffee Break

16.45-17.45 Panel 3. The Time(s) of Capitalism

Sebastian Urbaniak, *Time and Capital: New Modes of Capitalist Temporality in Post-Digital Age*

Krzysztof Skonieczny, *Capitalism and Slowness. Resistance or Reterritorialization?*

17.45-18.00 Coffee Break

18.00-19.00 Keynote Lecture

A. Kiarina Kordela, *Capital, Or, Information. Affective Labor, Historical Materialism, and the Convergence of Forces and Relations of Production*

21 October 2021: Day 2

10.00-11.00 Keynote Lecture

Ewa Mazierska, *The Effect of Covid Pandemic on Global Capital, Labour and Social Relations*

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-12.45 Panel 4. Film and TV

T.J. Martinson, *Queer Commodities: Neoliberal Biomedicine and Speculative Futures in Never Let Me Go*

Zita Hüsing, *Hacking as a Weapon: Exposing the Underlying Imperfections of Neoliberal Democracy Through Technology in Mr. Robot*

Tom Ue, *Tourism, Race, and Money in Alejandro González Iñárritu's Babel*

12.45-13.00 Coffee Break

13.00-14.00 Keynote Lecture

Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, *Techno-Racism, Surveillance, and Digital Capital*

14.00-15.00 Lunch Break

15.00-16.30 Panel 5. Disciplinary Capital

Victor Gabriel García Castañeda, *Aestheticization of the Self, gaze seduction and attentional capital in digital environments*

Bhumika Sharma, Nandan Sharma, *Human Capital and the Right to Disconnect*

Piotr Fortuna, *Zuckerberg's Testimony. The Clash Between the Powers of Discipline and Control*

16.30-16.45 Coffee Break

16.45-17.45 Keynote Lecture

Gregg Lambert, *Resilient Capitalism*

17.45-18.00 Coffee Break

18.00-19.00 Keynote Lecture

Adam J. Nocek, *From Automation to Autonomy in Computational Capitalism*

10.00-11.30 Panel 6. Capitalist Images

Stankomir Nicieja, *Heroic Anti-Heroines: Managing Trauma Capital in The Contemporary Audio-Visual Productions*

Adam Cichoń, *Ricotta or Capitalism Without Liquid. Video Technologies And Extraction*

Fabio Tononi, *The Transformation of Images in the Age of Modernism, Postmodernism and Digital Reproducibility*

11.30-11.45 Lunch Break

11.45-13.15 Panel 7. Political Economy

Paul Firenze, *Capturing Capital: Information Vectors and the Capitalization of Social Practices*

Alec Stubbs, *Towards a Unified Political Economy of Capitalism in the Digital Age*

Jakub Gużyński, *Overcoming Scarcity: Abundance or Solidarity?*

13.15-14.15 Lunch Break

14.15-15.15 Keynote Lecture

Krzysztof Ziarek, *In Praise of the Useless*

15.15-15.30 Coffee Break

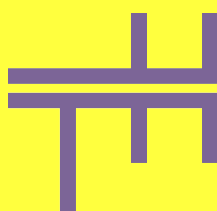
15.30-16.30 Concluding Remarks

Szymon Wróbel, *Capital after Vaccinations*

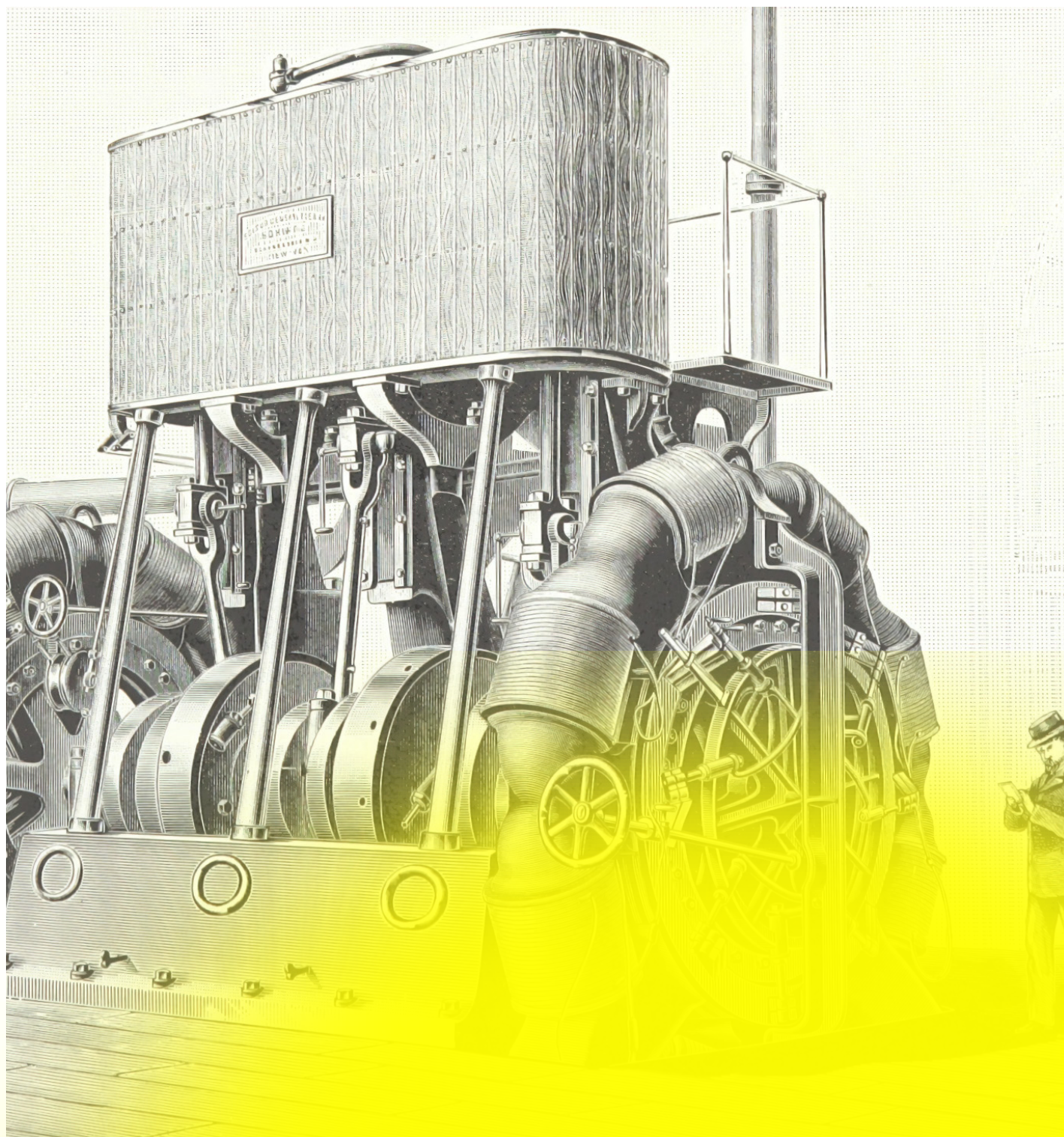
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Professor Szymon Wróbel
Dr Krzysztof Skonieczny
Dr Katarzyna Szafranowska
Mgr Adam Cichoń

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TECHNO-HUMANITIES LAB
FACULTY OF "ARTES LIBERALES"
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Partners:



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

A. Kiarina Kordela (Macalester College)

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Capital, Or, Information. Affective Labor, Historical Materialism, and the Convergence of Forces and Relations of Production

Abstract

Challenging McKenzie Wark's thesis that the emergence of information as a material force of production amounts to the supersession of capitalism, Kordela turns to the historical materialist relation between history and eternity as a more adequate way of conceptualizing the relation between capital and information. Challenging also the contemporary tendency to reduce affective labor to the service sector of production, Kordela brings together Marx and Spinoza in order to theorize labor-power as an individual's aggregate of affective capacities—the capacities of affecting and being affected by other individuals—within the transindividual constitution of each individual and the world. Accordingly, the capitalist appropriation of labor-power is inextricably economico-affective, paralleling labor-power's tension between toil and creativity. The maximization of economico-affective appropriation in informatized capitalism owes to an unforeseen exploitation of surplus (i.e., almost to entirely unpaid) labor, which is itself enabled by today's indiscernibility between the forces and the relations of production, both being information.

Bio

A. Kiarina Kordela is Professor of German Studies and founding Director of the Critical Theory Program, at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. She has published numerous articles in academic journals and anthologies, as well as three book monographs *Epistemontology in Spinoza, Freud, Marx, Lucan: The (Bio)Power of Structure* (Routledge, 2018), *Being, Time, Bios: Capitalism and Ontology* (SUNY Press, 2013)—available also in Italian translation (Ombre Corte, 2017)—and *Surplus: Spinoza, Lacan* (SUNY Press, 2007). She is also the co-editor of the two-volume collection *Spinoza's Authority: Resistance and Power in the Ethics and Resistance and Power in the Political Writings* (Bloomsbury, 2018), and *Freedom and Confinement in Modernity: Kafka's Cages* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011).

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Gregg Lambert (Syracuse University)

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Resilient Capitalism

Abstract

When the first wave of the pandemic was in full bloom in early part of 2020, after a brief dip that was not as severe as expected, affecting mostly labor markets and the supply chain of materials, global financial markets rebounded to their highest level fueled mostly on new growth markets and hedge trading keyed to post-COVID speculation. Many of the traditional indicators such as bond trading and interest rates no longer behaved in the normal manner due to policy changes by the Fed and the World Bank. In some ways, this both confirms some of the principles of the “Shock Doctrine” written by Naomi Klein on the eve of the last recession in 2008; in other ways, it challenges some of the assumptions concerning the continuation of neo-liberal economic policies in the current environment. In my talk, I will propose a new set of theses concerning what I call “Resilient Capitalism,” including questioning the traditional Marxist assumption that Capitalism has an external limit that would ultimately cause its collapse.

Bio

After completing his Ph.D, under the direction of late French philosopher Jacques Derrida, Professor Lambert joined the Department of English at Syracuse University in 1996, and was later appointed to Full Professor and Chair of English in 2005. In 2008, he was appointed as the Founding Director of the Humanities Center, where he currently holds a distinguished research appointment as Dean’s Professor of Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences. Since 2008, Professor Lambert has also served as Principal Investigator and Director of the Central New York Humanities Corridor, a regional collaborative research network between Syracuse University, Cornell University, the University of Rochester, and the NY6 Liberal Arts Consortium which has been generously supported by three consecutive awards from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Author of fifteen books, critical editions, and more than a hundred articles in journals and critical editions, Professor Lambert is internationally renowned for his scholarly writings on critical theory, philosophy, the role of the Humanities in the contemporary university, and; especially for his work on the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Ewa Mazierska

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The Effect of Covid Pandemic on Global Capital, Labour and Social Relations

Abstract

It is a widely accepted fact that the Covid pandemic and the restrictions imposed in most countries affected by it, had a huge impact on economic, social and cultural life. It led, for example, to the destruction of millions of small businesses, the increase of home and online work and temporary or permanent closures of many cultural institutions, such as cinemas and nightclubs. This paper is meant to sketch the new landscape affected by Covid and assess whether these changes are short or long term. I will look at several fields: a) Transfer of wealth upwards, especially from small businesses towards big tech companies and big pharma, as well as geographically, from the West towards China. b) The increase in the state's influence on individual freedoms, especially through introduction of 'state of exception' legislation. c) Opportunities for 'crony capitalism' thanks to the state's power to award lucrative contracts without due process. d) The increase of work conducted online. e) The growth of surveillance of workers and harvesting data from online activities. f) Promotion of a 'safety rhetoric', which pits the right to live 'Covid free' against those who argue for retaining basic freedoms, such as freedom of speech and right to entertainment and pleasure. g) Greater social atomisation due to the changes in work and closure of spaces such as pubs and clubs, where relatively free social interaction took place. A question worth considering is whether these changes – negative from the perspective of ordinary people – were an unfortunate by-product of the Covid pandemic, or planned in advance, and Covid only proved a golden opportunity for the global elite to increase their wealth and power. My article will be informed by studies of neoliberal capitalism, as well as journalistic discourse about the economic and social effects of Covid.

Bio

Ewa Mazierska is professor in film studies at the University of Central Lancashire and principal editor of a journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*. She has published over twenty monographs and edited collections, including *From Self-Fulfillment to Survival of the Fittest: Work in European Cinema from the 1960s to the Present*, *Postcolonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema: Representing Neighbours on Screen* (with Eva Năripea and Lars Kristensen), and *Work in Cin-*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

ema: Labor and Human Condition. Mazierska's work has been translated into almost twenty languages, including French, Italian, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Estonian, and Serbian. Ewa is a historian of film and popular music, who writes short stories in her spare time. She published over thirty of them in 'The Longshot Island', 'The Adelaide Magazine', 'The Fiction Pool', 'Literally Stories', 'Ragazine', 'BlazeVox', 'Red Fez', 'Away', 'The Bangalore Review', 'Shark Reef' and 'Mystery Tribune', among others. In 2019 she published her first collection of short stories, 'Neighbours and Tourists' (New York, Adelaide Books).

Adam J. Nocek (Arizona State University)

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From Automation to Autonomy in Computational Capitalism

Abstract

This presentation undermines many of our well-worn conceptions about the autonomy of algorithmic technologies in this era of computational capitalism. The talk proposes, and against prevailing wisdom, that there is nothing autonomous about algorithmic computing. Rather, the autonomy of machine learning and other species of artificial intelligence is a strategic design of governmentality that conceals what it would mean to *live with technologies autonomously*.

Bio

Adam Nocek is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy of Technology and Science and Technology Studies in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering at Arizona State University. He is also the Founding Director of ASU's Center for Philosophical Technologies. Nocek has published widely on the philosophy of media and science; speculative philosophy (especially Whitehead); design philosophy, history, and practice; and critical and speculative theories of computational media. He recently published *Molecular Capture: The Animation of Biology* (Minnesota, 2021), and is working on his next monograph, *Governmental Design: On Algorithmic Autonomy*. Nocek is the co-editor (with Tony Fry) of *Design in Crisis: New Worlds, Philosophies and Practices*, *The Lure of Whitehead* (with Nicholas Gaskill), along with several other collections and special issues, including a special issue of *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* (with

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Cary Wolfe) titled, "Ontogenesis Beyond Complexity." He is a visiting researcher at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and previously held the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Visiting Professorship.

Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (State University of New York at Buffalo)

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Techno-Racism, Surveillance, and Digital Capital

Abstract

Accelerated by the pandemic of COVID-19, disruptive economic shifts in labor division and automation have speeded up the ongoing mutation of neoliberalism into digital capitalism. According to Zuboff, such "surveillance" digital capital is driven by the imperative of accelerated accumulation of data from all computational operations and its conversion into profits through the production of prediction products, ranging from advertising to predictive policing. Invented first by Google and now perfected by all digital giants operating on the global scale, surveillance capitalism extracts more or more "collateral" data, the byproduct of the billions of users' interactions with social media, internet searches, online transactions, and "smart" devices. Such data constitutes lucrative "behavioral surplus" used not merely for matching advertising with user profile information (UPIs), but primarily for the fabrication of new, more accurate "prediction products," traded "in a new kind of marketplace for behavioral predictions (Zuboff). Since big data is the hottest commodity, the object of global competition, as well as a currency, the economic imperative of its intensified extraction leads to the ever more sophisticated technologies of planetary surveillance, mediating all aspects of social life, ranging from social media and politics to workforce. Furthermore, such surveillance is inextricably intertwined with new modes of secrecy in so far as automated algorithms processing data are proprietary "black boxes" not open to public scrutiny. Another driver of digital capital is the aggressive push for further automation of jobs with Machine Learning (Lynch, 2020). As more and more scholars – Safiya Umoja Noble, Simone Brown, or Ruha Benjamin, among others – point out, the economic consequences and the intensity of digital surveillance vary greatly along geopolitical locations as well as race, ethnicity, poverty, and gender lines. I agree with Milner and Traub, the authors of "Data Capitalism

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

and Algorithmic Racism” (2021) written for Data for Black Lives and Demos, who argue that the data capitalism “is fundamentally intertwined with systemic racism.” In this paper I will examine how these interconnections between computational capitalism, systemic racism, automation of labor and surveillance produce a new dynamics of power mediating all social relations and intensifying “inequality along the lines of race, class, gender and disability.” I will also pose an open ended question of whether and in what way this new modality of capital can be challenged.

Bio

Ewa Plonowska Ziarek is Julian Park Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Buffalo. She is the author of *Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism* (Columbia 2012); *An Ethics of Dissensus: Feminism, Postmodernity, and the Politics of Radical Democracy* (Stanford 2001); *The Rhetoric of Failure: Deconstruction of Skepticism, Reinvention of Modernism* (SUNY, 1995); the editor of *Gombrowicz's Grimaces* and co-editor, among others, of *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis* (SUNY 2005); *Time for the Humanities* (Fordam, 2008) and *Intermedialities: Philosophy, Art, Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield 2010). Her interdisciplinary research interests include feminist political theory, modernism, feminist philosophy, ethics, and critical race theory. She is currently working on a book devoted to Hannah Arendt.

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee (Kyung Hee University)

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Vampire, Zombie and Baroque Capitalism

Abstract

Karl Marx was glad to use the metaphor of a vampire to portray the capitalist exploitation of the working class. He said that “capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks.” Marx’s metaphor of the vampire also indicated the imperialist expansion of the European bourgeoisie to the other territories and the reproduction of their mirror images all over the non-Europeans. This life-force-draining lust for self-cloning is the essence of the vampire-like capitalists, which Bram Stoker described well in his novel *Dracula*. I would say

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

that a vampire is an economic metaphor, whereas a zombie is a political allegory, the incarnation of baroque melancholia in Walter Benjamin's sense. The allegory of a zombie can be grasped as *Trauerspiel*, the mourning play of "baroque capitalism." The aesthetic aspect of baroque capitalism is the ideological apparatus to control the labor power. Capitalist accumulation is impossible if there is no living labor. This living labor is an actual worker alive in time. Therefore, the blood for the voracious appetite of the capitalist vampire is "surplus labor-time," and only then can the metaphor of a vampire be an adequate trope for explaining the capitalist exploitation of labor. On the contrary to the accelerationist presupposition, capitalism is unable to express itself fully without a worker's blood, i.e., surplus labor-time. In my presentation, I would like to take the term "baroque" to recall the original meaning of Catholic *dispositif*, the implosion of its logic from within. Benjamin's concept of *Trauerspiel* could be grasped as the ruined form of the religious propaganda. In the melancholic drama, there is no God, but only the undead, i.e., the spectre of father and the haunted son as in the case of *Hamlet*. Baroque capitalism is the aestheticization of its vampire-like accumulation, which transforms a worker to a zombie. A zombie is the embodiment of melancholia and the theatricalization of the capitalist ontology.

Bio

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee is a professor at the Department of British and American Cultural Studies and a founding director of Center for Technology in Humanities, Kyung Hee University, South Korea. He was invited as a visiting professor at Centre for Culture Media, and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India and an international visiting scholar at Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, National Taiwan University, Taiwan. He is a member of the advisory board for The International Deleuze and Guattari Studies in Asia and the board member of The International Consortium of Critical Theory (ICCT) as well as Asia Theory Network (ATN). He edited the third volume of *The Idea of Communism* (2016) and published articles in various journals such as *Telos*, *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* and *Philosophy Today* and chapters in *Back to the '30s?: Recurring Crises of Capitalism, Liberalism and Democracy* (2020) and *Balibar/Wallerstein's "Race, Nation, Class": Rereading a Dialogue for Our Times* (2018).

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Tom Tyler (University of Leeds, UK)

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Exchanges

Abstract

Exchange, Marx tells us, began on the boundaries of societies, as members of different communities came together and bartered with one another. In the process of exchange, owners bring their commodities to market and, by mutual consent, part with their own whilst appropriating those of the other. This “change of hands” (*Händewechsel*) is what constitutes commodities’ exchange. In time, money permitted qualitatively different commodities to be equated with one another, facilitating the development of capital, the production of profit, and all the inequalities and iniquities that are thereby engendered. In this presentation, I will discuss the videogame *Signs of the Sojourner* (Echodog Games, 2020), which invites players to travel between the communities of a near-future world and attempt to acquire goods for sale in their shop. The game provides insights into two kinds of capital: what Nicole Shukin has called *animal capital*, and what Mia Consalvo has analysed as *gaming capital*. But we will also find that, contrary to expectations, the game does not in fact concern itself with commodity exchange, but draws our attention instead to a very different kind of exchange in which, although questions of power and privilege do indeed arise, nothing changes hands at all.

Bio

Tom Tyler is a lecturer in Digital Culture at the University of Leeds, UK. He has published widely on animals and anthropocentrism within the history of ideas, critical theory and popular culture. He is the editor of *Animal Beings* (Parallax #38, 2006), co-editor of *Animal Encounters* (Brill, 2009), and author of *CIFERAE: A Bestiary in Five Fingers* (Minnesota UP, 2012) and *Game: Animals, Videogames and Humanity* (Minnesota UP, forthcoming 2022). Further details of his research can be found at <http://www.cyberchimp.co.uk/research/>.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Szymon Wróbel (University of Warsaw)

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Capital after Vaccinations

Abstract

Capital is a term we use constantly, but its meaning remains obscure. Katharina Pistor argues in *The Code of Capital. How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019) that capital is coded in law. Capital is made from two ingredients: an asset and the legal code. The term “asset” denotes any object, claim, skill, or idea, regardless of its form. In their appearance, these simple assets are just that: a piece of land, a building, a promise to receive payment at a future date, an idea for a new drug, or a string of digital code. With the right legal coding, any of these assets can be turned into capital and thereby increase its propensity to create wealth for its holder (s). The question is, however, what does it mean that the legal system encodes capital? Does this mean that the legal system gives capital longevity? Or does this mean that the code itself is capital, especially today in the age of cognitive capitalism? When does the legal code itself become an asset? In what sense legal codes act as only security instruments? And in what sense is it a kind of medicine (immunology or police) of capital? Capitalism, and especially algorithmic capitalism in this sense, is more than just the exchange of goods in a market economy; it is a market economy in which some assets are placed on legal steroids. Moreover, capital is not only an asset with “income-yielding capacity”; capital is a legal quality that helps create and protect wealth. In short: I argue that we must enrich the classical theory of the circulation of capital: $M - C - M'$ (Money - Commodity - Money with Profit) with a process of grafting capital that makes it immune to the permutations of fate. Capital needs a pharmacy where it get steroids that provide it with the ability to extend life. Perhaps in this fact lies the vampire nature of capital.

Bio

Szymon Wróbel is a professor of philosophy at the Faculty of *Artes Liberales* at the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He is the author of numerous books and articles scattered in various scientific journals. His books in English include: *Deferring the Self* and *Grammar and Glamor of Cooperation*, published in 2013 and 2015. In Polish: *Ćwiczenia z przyjaźni* (*Exercises in Friendship*), *Lektury retroaktywne* (*Retroactive Readings*) and *Polska pozycja depresyjna* (*Polish Depressive Position*) published by Kraków Publishing House Uniwersi-

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

tas. In 2016, IFiS PAN published his book, *Filozof i terytorium (Philosopher and Territory)* on the Warsaw School of Historians of Ideas. Together with Krzysztof Skonieczny, he is co-editor of two books – *Atheism Revisited. Rethinking Modernity and Inventing New Modes of Life* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020) and *Living and Thinking in the Post-Digital World* (Universitas 2021). Currently, he is the head of the experimental Laboratory of Techno-Humanities at the Faculty of *Artes Liberales* where for several years he realizes the “Technology and Socialization” project.

Krzysztof Ziarek (State University of New York at Buffalo)

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In Praise of the Useless

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has confirmed that capital can adjust almost instantaneously in search of continuing profit, finding new uses for modes of remote labor previously unacceptable, that is, not deemed profitable enough for capitalist enterprises. In this context, one could praise technological ingenuity, including adaptability of the modes of “delivery” of university instruction through informational platforms or the widespread possibilities of work from home, provided, of course, the technological infrastructure is available and up to the task. At the same time, this pandemic emergency has rendered home space much more available than before to exploitation. The last vestiges of the purported separation between the private, the public, and the economic seem to have disappeared. The pandemic has made salient the accelerating and increasingly global trend in contemporary societies: rapid decrease of time, space, and relations that are not rendered useful for capitalization. Is there any space or activity left uncolonized by the dominant machinery of use and profit? In this broad contemporary context, intensified by the pandemic, the paper will highlight the need and the necessity to harbor the use-less or use-free, and to understand its pivotal significance to human existence. It will underscore the critical link between the use-less and the capacity to be human, and thus to sustain relations within a world.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Bio

Krzysztof Ziarek did his doctoral studies in the University at Buffalo's English Department. Krzysztof Ziarek teaches 20th-century comparative literature, especially contemporary poetry and poetics, aesthetics, philosophy and literature, and literary theory. He is the author of *Inflected Language: Toward a Hermeneutics of Nearness*, *The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, the Avant-Garde, and the Event*, *The Force of Art* (Stanford University Press), and *Language After Heidegger* (Indiana University Press, 2013). Prof. Ziarek has also published numerous essays on Coolidge, Stein, Stevens, Heidegger, Benjamin, Irigaray, and Levinas, and co-edited a collection of essays, *Future Crossings: Literature Between Philosophy and Cultural Studies*. He is the author of two volume of poems in Polish, *Zaimejlowane z Polski* and *Sad dostateczny*. He has won NEH and ACLS fellowships. His work has been featured in the recently published *100 Global Minds*, ed. Gianluigi Ricuperati (Roads Publishing, 2015), which introduces readers to "the world's most innovative and inspiring thinkers."

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Maciej Bednarski (University of Warsaw)

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The Distribution of the Knowable

Abstract

The rapid development of computer technologies and telematics as prognosed by Lyotard came into being during last four decades and we have come to know it as Knowledge Society. Commodification of knowledge, its full *capitalization* via digital technologies changed the regime(s) of production, storage and distribution of knowledge. The process of re-merging *episteme* and *techne* is almost done. As Stiegler writes, *knowledge only exists in its transmissibility, even if and because there is a knowledge of the incommunicable*. We are all immersed in a world tightly entwined in cables and wireless connections – but we do not see the transmissions, we do not produce most of the knowledge, we do not receive most of it. What part do we take in this knowledge-capital regime?

I would like to explore a notion of *distribution of the knowable* based on Ranciere's *distribution of the sensible* of which the former could be considered a part of or a consequence. *Distribution of the knowable* would be the system of self-evident beliefs and motivations concerning where the knowledge comes from, who can produce it, how it can be produced, stored, transmitted, accessed; finally, what is knowable.

I will try to show that this notion could be helpful in thinking about contemporary regimes of knowledge-capital production (especially scientific knowledge) and that the analysis of the knowledge consumption using this notion accounts for several characteristics of this contemporary knowledge regime: a) the individual is only a consumer; b) modes of production usually determine the content; c) transmissibility of knowledge dominates the meaning; d) the easier access to the knowledge, the less valuable it is and e) broad access to external knowledge .

These remarks converge into a conclusion that most people are not full (or even part-time) members of the Knowledge Society. Each further step towards unification of knowledge and capital via technology solidifies such a state of affairs. The *distribution of the knowable* shows that the fusion of knowledge and capital results in mirroring the economical relations in epistemological relations: the real actors in both *systems* (or rather in one almost fully merged *system*) are corporations, foundations, think tanks and not individuals – it is Google and not John Smith who is a proper subject of knowledge. Analysing knowledge-as-capital *enframing* of human beings through the

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

notion of the *distribution of the knowable* spotlights the diminishing role of both the subject of knowledge (agent) and the subject of knowledge (merit) in the Knowledge Society.

Bio

Maciej Bednarski is a PhD candidate in Philosophy at the Doctoral School of Humanities at the University of Warsaw; holds a MA degree in psychology and BA degree in philosophy; his doctoral research project concerns the philosophical idea of the University in XXI century and its relation with digital technology.

Victor Gabriel García Castañeda (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

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Aestheticization of the Self, gaze seduction and attentional capital in digital environments

Abstract

Since the World Wide Web began to colonize our ecology in the early 1990s, online identities have been one of the most fertile territories for theoretical research and practical and artistic exploration. Although, in its beginnings, digital environments represented a place for identity experimentation and a refuge for anonymity –for example, as established in the works of Sherry Turkle and Howard Rheingold–, with the arrival of social media in the mid-2000s, users were pushed to reject anonymity and adopt a model of excessive advertisement of the Self that turned it into a monetizable commodity and commercial brand, as Paula Sibilia maintains. The self-disciplination of the digital bodies and their predisposition for attentional consumption implies the adoption of a capitalist logic that creates value for its platforms in relation to a myriad of phenomena such as: the democratization of the cult of celebrity, where everyone can aim to become an influencer; identity exploitation and its banal politization; aestheticization and curation of the image of the Self through multiple multimedia strategies –photoshopping or predetermined filters in platforms like Instagram and TikTok–; and the abbreviation and compression of perception processes that operate every time we stop at the miniscule moment when some online content captures our gaze

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

during our incessant scrolling. Facing this context, this paper aims to establish a relationship between the aestheticization of digital projections of the Self with the dynamics of the attention economy in order to pose the following question: What type of capital or capitals are at play at the intersection between the digital Self, the distributed gaze and the attention economy strategies of contemporary digital capitalism?

Bio

Victor Gabriel García Castañeda is a Philosophy PhD student at the Autonomous University of Barcelona doing research on the aesthetics of the post-digital subject and lecturer of “Social Theory and Communication” at the Iberoamerican University of Mexico City. He holds a Master’s Degree in Sociology from the Iberoamerican University of Mexico City and a bachelor’s in Philosophy and Social Sciences from ITESO (Guadalajara, Mexico). His research interests include: digital cultures, aesthetic and cognitive capitalism, online identity constructions, the attention economy and the informational person and body. He has previously worked as a research assistant, a political communications consultant and an editor for a nation-wide newspaper in Mexico.

Adam Cichon (University of Warsaw)

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Ricotta or capitalism without liquid. Video technologies and extraction

Abstract

In my presentation capitalism will have the face of Orson Welles, but only incidentally and only for a while. This act of discourtesy towards Welles is caused by the fact that he was chosen for the role of director in Pasolini’s *La Ricotta*. There is a metaphor in the title built on the process of production of *ricotta*. At the end of this process, *ricotta* should be wrapped in cheesecloth and drained. It has to be squeezed dry. In my paper I want to use the example of *ricotta* as a metaphor of capitalism and highlight one of the most recent forms of exploitation – extraction of data. In particular, I want to discuss the issue of videoconference platforms which grew enormously during the pandemic. I will follow McKenzie Wark’s suggestion that capital wants to commodify leisure time as well as work time. The rise of videoconference platforms made it pos-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

sible to directly transform a private sphere into a work sphere without resistance or “without friction”. At the same time, controversies grew. Some platforms were sued because of selling data to outside companies. Others would photograph employees every five minutes to ensure they are really working. The linkage between capitalism and video technologies is tight and the danger for us lies not in the rivalry between corporations but their cooperation (Zygmuntowski). In regards of the above, the relation between surveillance and extraction needs to be rethought. In my paper I will use Deleuze’s theory of information in connection with Lazzarato’s suggestion that capitalism is “a series of devices for machinic enslavement”. I will try to show that capitalism is a machine which wants to involve us in the process of production through draining us from information because “capital acknowledges our existence only as far as it serves production” as Welles states in *La Ricotta*.

Bio

Adam Cichoń is a PhD student at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw. He received his MA in Philosophy from the University of Warsaw. He is currently working on his PhD dissertation which is focused on the expression in Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema. He takes a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses the fields of philosophy, film studies and aesthetics.

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Capturing Capital: Information Vectors and the Capitalization of Social Practices

Abstract

In *Capital Is Dead*, McKenzie Wark (2019) asks if new information technologies have created a new relationship of production, fundamentally different from the relationship described in traditional economic understandings of capital and labor. The new exploiting class, which Wark calls the *vectoralists*, control, not the *means* of production (as capitalists do), but the vectors along which information products move. The new laboring (exploited) class, the *hackers*, includes not only traditional information work-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

ers (writers, programmers), but also information technology “users,” whose activities can now be captured in the vectors and turned into a distinctive property form: the information commodity (e.g., data, intellectual property).

This paper will argue that Wark’s “new” relationship of production is a difference in degree, rather than kind. That is, this relationship can still be described as one between capital and labor, if capital is conceived broadly (and, as I will argue, properly) as *the produced means of production*—a process wherein value is iteratively created from the relationship between stability and innovation. This understanding of capital is accounted for in the institutionalist economic tradition, dating back to Thorstein Veblen (1908), who regarded technologies not only as material artifacts, but also as the immaterial “ways and means” of a community’s social practices that provision human life. Capital is the means of producing value via these “technological” practices. The new technological conditions of production Wark identifies enable vectoralists (like more traditional capitalists) to engross forms of value which have heretofore been uncapturable due to their existence as the commonly held, immaterial ways and means of a community. “Uberization,” the “gig economy,” and other distributed labor networks (crowdsourcing) are important examples of this new type of engrossment.

Bio

Paul Firenze is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, where he teaches classes in ethics and information technologies, bioethics, and technology and society.

Piotr Fortuna (Polish Academy of Sciences)

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Zuckerberg’s testimony. The clash between the powers of discipline and control

Abstract

In my presentation I am going to interpret Mark Zuckerberg’s 2018 testimony to the U. S. Congress as a moment of clash between the powers of state-operated discipline (as described by Michel Foucault) and marketing-derived control (as conceptualized by

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Gilles Deleuze). My starting point will be the contrast between the centralized, hierarchical setting of the Congress and the distributed, horizontal dynamic of social media platforms. I will analyze recordings of Zuckerberg and other 'Big Tech' representatives testifying before the U.S. Congress (also during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the remote mode); relevant memes, including a popular meme 'Mr. Zuckerberg explains the internet to old people'; and a multifaceted discourse surrounding the events. I am particularly interested in tracing interrelations and tensions between the two types of power along with their relation to the capital. I will follow Deleuze in the assumption that we live in the times of transition from disciplinary societies to the societies of control. However, I will also recognize the fact that the disciplinary concepts and institutions are not likely to evaporate. Rather, they are evolving into new, hybrid forms, and the highly mediated congressional spectacle is a visible moment of the process.

Bio

Piotr Fortuna is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Science (IBL PAN) and the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology (PJATK). Graduate of philosophy and cultural studies at the College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities at the University of Warsaw. Currently working on a doctoral thesis on social media in the context of the Deleuzian concept of the societies of control. My research interests include digital culture, new technologies, visual culture, anthropology and film theory.

Andrzej Frelek (Polish Academy of Sciences)

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Capital as natural history – nature in the order of society and society in the order of nature

Abstract

In the introduction to the first edition of the first volume of *Capital* Marx describes his study of capitalist society as a study in "natural history". This is a very peculiar remark to be read in an introduction to a work that sits on the border between philosophy and economy. Why did Marx describe his work as such then?

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

My answer is that Marx uses this description because for him this social form actually never left the order of nature. Capitalist modernity appears as purely social but the source of abstract value is always natural – either the freely appropriated nature or the waged labour of human muscles and blood. Whether it is the ecosystems or the workers, incorporation into the value production chains ends up draining both of them to the point of destruction. This problematic is vivid in many capitalist approaches to climate change that produce new ecological issues while supposedly aiming to solve other ones – such as the destructive nature of soy agriculture, supposedly aimed at eco-conscious food alternatives.

My paper aims at a rethinking of the dialectical relation of nature and society beyond crude dualisms and antagonisms. While many modern theorists rightly call for the historicization of nature, I believe that this approach needs to be supplemented with one that simultaneously seeks to unravel the points where society is firmly set in the order of nature that is masked as social – an approach that is not unfamiliar to Adorno with his insistence on the mimicry of the worst of nature in society. My goal aims at a move towards a consciousness of the obscured mediation between society and nature, going beyond which speaks of the Benjaminian promise of “not the mastery of nature but of the relations between nature and man”.

Bio

Andrzej Frelek, PhD candidate at GSSR, IFiS PAN – working on a value-form influenced critical theory of climate change and its relation to Capital, technology and mediation.

Jakub Gużyński (Nicolaus Copernicus University)

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Overcoming Scarcity: Abundance or Solidarity?

Abstract

The assumption of scarcity is the foundation of modern economics. We take for granted that goods and resources are finite and insufficient to meet all our needs. Yet, once there was no scarcity. Paradoxically, this idea gained popularity in times

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

of unprecedented technological development and economic growth that was supposed to ensure widespread prosperity. However, opposite has happened, because effectiveness of capitalism is largely based on production of scarcity through primitive accumulation. In effect, commodification affects today even the most basic goods – like time, work, health and education – while new needs are continuously generated.

It may seem that the only solution to scarcity is abundance. Some believe that technology will soon allow us to cheaply produce everything we want, while others argue that we already have everything we really need. However, both those perspectives are caught in the capitalist logic, as abundance is conceptual twin of scarcity and part of the same ideology. While scarcity presents the ongoing misery as amoral necessity, promise of abundance makes us accept supposedly temporary exploitation in the hope for a better future.

Therefore, to free ourselves from scarcity we must realize why this idea was absent in premodernity. Although people have always been affected by periodic shortages, scarcity was not experienced as constant condition because of mutual obligations and reciprocity within the community. No matter how many goods were available, they were distributed according to needs and merits. It follows that only solidarity can overcome scarcity. We must replace competition with cooperation and move from imperatives of growth and private profit to fair distribution and collective goods. In this way we can abandon empty promises of future abundance and start to build just society now.

Bio

Jakub Gużyński – PhD student at Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. Currently working on a dissertation on John Milbank's political theology.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Zita Hüsing (Louisiana State University)

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Hacking as a Weapon: Exposing the Underlying Imperfections of Neoliberal Democracy Through Technology in Mr. Robot

Abstract

Money and profit pervade and dominate the modern twenty-first century neoliberal and supposedly democratic Western world, in particular the United States. These values inherently focus on capital and are refuted and critiqued in the USA Network show *Mr. Robot*. I designate the show as anti-capitalist due to its appeal to the urgency of re-thinking the position of the individual within the capital system. In particular, it focuses on the all-encompassing and penetrating power of the cooperative ECorp. The show reveals that the protagonist Elliot Alderson and his friend Angela have both been directly affected by ECorp. Elliot is a cyber security engineer of the firm AllSafe by day, and a hacker vigilante by night as part of a hacker group called fsociety. The group revolts against society and its imposed systems, especially corporate capitalism. Arguably, as a weapon, hacking exposes the weaknesses of democracy, namely its enabling of cooperative capitalism in the United States. It uncovers that the weaknesses of the democratic system lie in its profit-gearred core. In other words, hacking exposes and threatens the authority of democracy as a system of governance in the West, and specifically in the United States where technology, capital, cooperates and neoliberal democracy are deeply intertwined in a web-like structure that invites disentanglement through hacking. In a neoliberal critique, this analysis will demonstrate hacking's workings as a weapon due to its position outside of capital as a non-military force and due to its dismantling of connections between technology and capital. A modern Marxist approach will assist in untangling the many connections between hacking, democracy and neoliberalism. Zygmunt Bauman's work *Liquid Modernity* (2000) will serve as a guide throughout the analysis as well as Wendy Brown's insights from her essay "Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy" (2003).

Bio

Zita Hüsing is a PhD candidate at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She received her M.A. in English Literatures and Cultures and her M.A. in North American Studies from the University of Bonn in Germany. Her area of research is twentieth and twenty-first century American literature. She specializes in Science Fiction and Southern studies with an interest in the Posthuman, Ecocriticism and New Materialism.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

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Lyotard, Baudrillard and "The Fragment of Machines"

Abstract

This presentation aims to clarify what "The Fragment of Machines" has influenced Jean Baudrillard's and Jean-François Lyotard's thoughts in the 1970s.

Karl Marx's "The Fragment of Machines" (in *The Grundrisse*) has influenced many social theories until now. For example, Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, and Antonio Negri's *Marx Beyond Marx*. Above all, this text has been an important reference for thinking about cognitive capitalism, post-industrial society, and accelerationism.

Lyotard and Baudrillard were also some of them who borrowed their ideas from "The Fragment of Machines". From 1968 to the 1970s, Lyotard and Baudrillard were the professors at the Nanterre University where many new left students were influenced by Marcuse. In this university, one of symbolic space for May 68, Lyotard and Baudrillard developed their social theories different from classical Marxism.

These two thinkers rejected Marxism that focused on industrial production. However, they considered *Grundrisse* as an important text. Because this text prefigured post-industrial society for them. In *Libidinal Economy* (1974), whereas Lyotard anticipated financial capitalism after Nixon Shock, he claimed that the essence of production was not physical power but "knowledge" by referring to "The Fragment of Machines". Moreover, this definition of production is repeated in *Postmodern Condition* (1979).

As for Baudrillard, whereas he also anticipated financial capitalism in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972), he claimed that production was not real but a kind of "code" mentioning "The Fragment of Machines" in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976).

Thus, Lyotard and Baudrillard have prefigured financial or information capitalism by using the *Grundrisse* in the 1970s. This presentation aims to show this genealogy and would discuss continuities and differences between the 1970s and today.

Bio

Sora Koizumi is a doctoral student in Human Science at Osaka University in Osaka, Japan.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Laura U. Marks (Simon Fraser University),

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Radek Przedpełski (Trinity College Dublin and National University of Ireland, Maynooth)

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A Contribution to the Critique of the Carbon Footprint of Streaming Media. Earth's Carrying Capacity as a Regime of Capital in the Postdigital Age

Abstract

Following the provocation of the conference, this dialogical and performative panel considers streaming media and its resulting carbon footprint—currently over 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions—as a regime of capital in the postdigital age, analysed by our transdisciplinary project Tackling the Carbon Footprint of Streaming Media (TCFSM) brings together media studies and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) engineering.

What we call digital media can no longer be perceived as “virtual”: their networked filaments exert a real, energetic, and material impact on the Earth. Marx would see the high-definition video we stream, as with other commodities we consume, as “definite quantities of congealed labour-time” (1990: 130). In this case, however, we are talking about nonhuman labour and the labour of the environment that has to absorb toxic emissions. It is symptomatic that the power consumption of data centres is measured in kilowatt-hours. Artworks that rely on media, VR/AR/XR, and artificial intelligence tend to gloss over the carbon footprint of their own streaming and the energy of data centres running algorithmic operations that make them possible. We shift attention to the precarious human labour that undergirds the production and operation of ICT infrastructures and the non-human performances of data centers, networks, devices, electrons, and carbon.

We consider the problematic of the Carbon Footprint of Streaming Media after Deleuze and Guattari—as an axiomatic system of capture and relay between different forms of capital grounded in the earth's resources and the habitual sensorimotor responses of computer users. This system links the performance of algorithms, and their material supports in the earth and precarious human labour to the affective capital of end-users hooked on “binge-watching.” To uncouple and rewire these habitual connections, Laura founded the Small File Media Festival to celebrate media artworks of no more than 5 MB in size, recasting Marxian didactic consciousness-raising as an empowering encounter with ecological neuro-cinema.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Bios

Dr. Laura U. Marks works on media art and philosophy with an intercultural focus. A programmer and founder of the Small File Media Festival, she teaches in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. Laura was the principal investigator, together with Dr. Stephen Makonin (SFU Engineering), research associate Dr. Radek Przedpeński, and PhD student Alejandro Rodriguez-Silva (SFU Engineering) on the one-year project “Tackling the Carbon Footprint of Streaming (TCFSM)” funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s program “Living within the Earth’s Carrying Capacity.” The project’s mandate was to survey the engineering literature on the carbon footprint of streaming media in order to translate engineering findings into accessible terms, identify gaps in the research, and make policy recommendations.

Dr. Radek Przedpeński (rah-deck pshet-peoo-skee) (his/him) is a lecturer in media studies and visual culture at Trinity College Dublin and National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has a background in digital media and sound design. Radek is also a migrant artist working in sound, photography and video. Between April 2020 and April 2021 Radek was a postdoctoral research associate on the Tackling the Carbon Footprint of Streaming Media transdisciplinary project at Simon Fraser University. Radek co-edited a volume on *Deleuze, Guattari and the Art of Multiplicity* (published by Edinburgh University Press in October 2020). Radek co-organised at TCD international conferences on Deleuze, Guattari and aesthetics (2016, 2018) and on art in the Anthropocene (2019).

T.J. Martinson (Indiana University-Bloomington)

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Queer Commodities: Neoliberal Biomedicine and Speculative Futures in Never Let Me Go

Abstract

This paper looks to Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* to interrogate the ways in which contemporary biomedicine depends upon, and its neoliberal apparatus in-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

centivizes, the commoditization of genetic material in order to ensure the health and financial welfare of its speculative future. While *Never Let Me Go's* depiction of biological commoditization might be dismissed as speculative itself, this paper compares its dystopian aesthetics to real-world corollaries, such as the Human Genome Diversity Project, which mined the biological materials of indigenous groups for economic gain. To probe what sustains the exploitative practices of biological commoditization, the paper borrows from Rebekah Sheldon's work on reproductive futurism to demonstrate the co-constitutive relationship of biomedicine and neoliberal endorsements of heteronormative reproduction. The paper closes with a queer reading of *Never Let Me Go's* uniquely restrained narrative voice, which I argue allows us to read the novel as modeling a queer desire that resists the malignant specters of reproductive futurity and neoliberal speculation responsible for her and her fellow clones' prescribed deaths.

Bio

T.J. Martinson holds a Ph.D. in English from Indiana University-Bloomington. His research explores the aesthetic intersections between contemporary metafiction and genomics.

Stankomir Nicieja (University of Opole)

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Heroic anti-heroines: Managing trauma capital in the contemporary audio-visual productions

Abstract

Apparently, after decades of neoliberalism and ever-escalating identity politics, the accumulated traumas remain the only viable capital left for people to spend. Today almost everyone wants to reveal herself or himself as deeply traumatised, as a victim of oppression or major injustice. The media, social as well as the traditional, are filled with leaders of opinion and celebrities who speak openly about their diseases, weaknesses, painful moments, vulnerabilities or mental health crises. Even the apparently most privileged and pampered people in the world, members of the British

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Royal family, feel entitled to portray themselves as persecuted and unfairly treated. In my paper I want to investigate how the trauma capital gets symbolically accumulated and spent. I will do it by examining one of the most popular genres available on television and streaming platforms today, the police procedural. Looking at such shows as *The Bridge* (2011–2018, Danmarks Radio and Sveriges Television), *Marcella* (2016–2020, ITV and Netflix) and *Mare of Easttown* (2021, HBO), I want to probe the peculiar economy of the trauma capital. All the above-mentioned shows, as well as their numerous clones and imitations, are constructed around strong, yet traumatized female leads. The protagonists are not just heroic functionaries consumed by the mission of solving crimes and catching criminals, they must also overcome their own despair and reconcile with their troubled pasts. Although they are the clearly the tools of the repressive state apparatus, they are also victims. In my paper I want to analyse the enormous appeal of the shows that put traumatised female police officers at their centres and examine what such shows reveal about our present condition.

Bio

Stankomir Nicieja is an associate professor at the Department of Cultural and Media Studies, University of Opole. He has published on various aspects of the relations between literature, film and politics as well as utopian studies and film theory. He is the author of the monographs *Lessons from the East: Representations of China and East Asia in Contemporary Anglophone Films and Novels* (Peter Lang, 2018) and *In the Shadow of the Iron Lady: Thatcherism as a Cultural Phenomenon and Its Representation in the Contemporary British Novel* (University of Opole Press, 2011). He also co-edited several volumes including *Evil and Ugliness Across Literatures and Cultures* (2012), *Faces and Masks of Ugliness in Literary Narrative* (2013), *Poisoned Cornucopia: Excess, Intemperance and Overabundance Across Cultures and Literatures* (2014) and *The Outlandish, Uncanny, Bizarre: Culture, Literature, Philosophy* (2016). His academic interests include cinema, contemporary British and American fiction and utopian studies.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Casey Rentmeester (Bellin College)

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Capitolocene or Post-Capitalism?: Either Way, We Need Gelassenheit

Abstract

The ubiquity of capitalism in contemporary society is captured by Jason Moore's term, the Capitalocene, that is, the era of capital, understood as a system of power, profit and re/production in the web of life. In her *Capitalism is Dead*, McKenzie Wark provides an insight into the power of information in the contemporary age, ultimately arguing that those who own and control information—Amazon and Google being obvious players, but also any institution that is putting the power of data analytics to work, *including the university you work for*—now have power over both labor *and* capital, thus entering us into a post-capitalist version of society. Whether we situate contemporary reality as the Capitalocene or as some version of post-capitalism, it is clear that humans living today are constantly at risk of exploitation, not only financially, but emotionally and even cognitively. When every click, scroll, and purchase on the internet is tracked in a database and used to manipulate future behavior (with implications for capital), one is right to feel a bit weary and wonder whether the algorithm-generated advertisement on your screen represents a true reflection of your interests. The author analyzes conscious rebellions to the so-called Capitalocene and the information age by looking specifically at two manifestos—the work of the late Erik Olin Wright in *How to be an Anti-capitalist in the 21st Century* and the work of Richard Polt in *The Typewriter Revolution*, a Heidegger-inspired treatise on practical ways to revolt against what he calls “the Information Regime.” He then looks explicitly at the later Heidegger's concept of *Gelassenheit* as an appropriate mode of being-in-the-world that can help us to overcome the all-too-common tendencies of prioritizing production and efficiency that rather emphasizes “focal things” and “focal realities” in Albert Borgmann's sense of the terms.

Bio

Casey Rentmeester is the Director of General Education and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Bellin College in Green Bay, WI, USA. He is author of *Heidegger and the Environment* (2016), co-editor of *Heidegger and Music* (2021), and has written numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Bhumika Sharma (Himachal Pradesh University)

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Nandan Sharma (Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences)

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Human Capital and Right to Disconnect

Abstract

Information and Communication Technology has become a “double-edged sword” with regard to work-life balance. Innovations such as smartphones and smart watches allow employees to get messages, calls, or emails constantly. Communications continue from clients, colleagues and superiors at all hours of the day as well as weekends, holidays, and vacations. This new work culture may be called Telework where the work may be performed, using information technology, and is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis. It has one hand allowed more flexibility to the employees in organizing their working hours. At the same time, this connectivity makes it difficult to fully disconnect from work. This strain on employees has led to *techno-stress*. It leads to lack of recovery time, fatigue and eventually burn-out. The French Supreme Court in December 2018 ruled that employees are under no obligation to bring work home. France was later joined by other countries such as Germany, Italy, and Spain etc. Under the new legislations with slight degree of variations, employees now have a right to disconnect from the use of digital tools. The right ensures observance of rest time and leave as well as of personal and family life. Employers are now bound to implement proper control measures allowing them to better manage risks and have healthier employees in various countries. Creating awareness of techno-stress and advancing science via research in this area are important steps to ensure the smooth and stress-free integration of technology into people's lives. In present times, employees are the human capital and their right to disconnect is crucial for mental health.

Bios

Bhumika Sharma completed her B.A.L.L.B. (Hons.) in 2010 and L.L.M. in 2012 from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Her specialization in L.L.M. is Cyber Law. Currently, Bhumika is pursuing Ph.D. from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla on "labour welfare legislations in India". The taboos around menstruation is one of the key issues getting her attention. Other areas of her research interest include labour wel-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

fare, women rights, cyber-laws, business laws, human rights. She has published more than fifty research papers in various journals of national repute and chapters in edited books. She also has a flair for poetry on social issues and problems.

Dr. Nandan Sharma is currently serving as Professor and Head at the School of Law, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Management Sciences, Shoolini University, Solan (HP) India where he teaches Professional Ethics, Legal Research Methodology and IPRs at UG/PG and PhD level. He received Ph.D. in 2017 in Intellectual Property Laws from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla (HP) India. He is the Head of the School and Coordinator for Legal Aid Clinic. He holds fifteen years of teaching experience and his academic contributions include several international paper presentations, National and International Conferences, Workshops, FDPs, book chapters, 02 edited and 01 authored books published by Shreeram Law House as well as conference papers. He is a regular speaker, Chairperson and keynote speaker in various national events like Seminars, Moot Courts, Parliamentary Debates and Webinars.

Krzysztof Skonieczny (University of Warsaw)

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Capitalism and Slowness. Resistance or Reterritorialization?

Abstract

It is a truth almost universally acknowledged that capitalism is intimately linked with acceleration. This link was deeply analyzed by philosophers and social theorists such as Karl Marx, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Paul Virilio and more recently Hartmut Rosa, among others. Certain anti-capitalist theorists – often inspired by the above-mentioned – claimed that acceleration would also be the demise of capitalism, for example because of the intensification of capitalism's internal contradictions. However, a significant number of scholars from various disciplines have argued that capitalist acceleration is detrimental to democracy (e.g. Shoshana Zuboff) or simply unbearable for human subjectivity (Rosa, Richard Sennett). Arguments such as these lead to the formulations of various manifestos, scholarly interventions or even lifestyle books devoted to the (anti-capitalist) values of slowing down. In my presentation, I will (1) analyze a number of these interventions in various fields, such as economic theory (e.g., Karen Wendy Gilbert), philosophy (e.g., Isabelle Stengers), sociology (e.g., Rosa)

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

and lifestyle writing (e.g., Carl Honoré); (2) ask the question if can these theories (and theories of slowness in general) be understood as forms of resistance, or if slowness was already incorporated (“reterritorialized”) by capitalism.

Bio

Krzysztof Skonieczny is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw. His interests include political philosophy, psychoanalysis, posthumanities, animal studies and contemporary American literature, which he occasionally translates. He is the author of *Immanence and the Animal. A Conceptual Inquiry* (Routledge 2020) and co-editor (with Szymon Wróbel) of *Atheism Revisited. Rethinking Modernity and Inventing New Modes of Life* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020). He is currently working on a book tentatively entitled *Deleuze and Slowness. Idiots, Cows and Catatonics*.

Alec Stubbs (Loyola University Chicago)

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Towards a Unified Political Economy of Capitalism in the Digital Age

Abstract

As Yann Moulier Boutang notes in his work *Cognitive Capitalism*, a new Manchester has been born in California, where the tech titans of Silicon Valley serve as the auguries a new modality of capitalist development: a phase of “new monasteries, as powerful as the Benedictines of Clairvaux, [that are] now exploiting not forests, but the networks of collective intelligence” (p. 6-7). This work attempts to answer the question, “What is this new modality of capitalism?” by engaging with the cognitive capitalist theory as presented by Boutang, Vercellone, Lazzarato, Hardt, and Negri, as well as the netarchical capitalist theory as presented by Bauwens and Kostakis, and the vectoralist claims of Wark. In outlining the particularities of these three theories, I argue that the three are compatible and co-constitutive of one another, each pointing to the underlying phenomena of an externalization of the labor force to new modes of social knowledge production under capitalism. Each theory can, at times, be overly abstract in their analysis of social knowledge production, and as such, I also

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

attempt to concretize the discussion being had about this new mode of production by analyzing four distinct, yet mutually reinforcing economies that share the same new characteristics: (1) the surveillance and attention economy, (2) the digital sharing economy, (3) the research and development (R&D) economy, and (4) the cloud computing economy. All four of these economies are built on this new mode of social knowledge production, and the cognitive capitalist, netarchical, and vectoralist theories can account for their shared characteristics of a socially productive labor force, producing knowledge-goods, that has been externalized beyond the firm and that captures a productive surplus through intellectual property rights, proprietary digital platforms, and vectors of information ownership and control.

Bio

Alec Stubbs is a PhD Candidate in the Philosophy Department at Loyola University Chicago. His work focuses on post-capitalist economic alternatives, the philosophy of political resistance, and the intersection of emerging technologies and capitalist forces of production.

Fabio Tononi (Independent Scholar)

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The Transformation of Images in the Age of Modernism, Postmodernism and Digital Reproducibility

Abstract

This study investigates how the ontology of the image has changed in the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, according to the cultural hegemony that gradually took shape in Western societies. It does so by comparing and contrasting three different types of images that belong to three epochs: modernism, postmodernism, and the age of digital reproducibility. Under examination are three self-portraits by three significant figures: Vincent van Gogh, Andy Warhol, and Kim Kardashian (taken from her Instagram profile). The production, circulation, and consumption of images underwent a drastic transformation from one era to the next, with consequences for their aesthetics and materiality. This was mainly due to technological developments

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

and the consolidation of mass society, which was brought about as a result of neoliberal capitalism and consumerism.

Modernist images are defined by thematics of alienation, solitude, and isolation, which reflect what has been called the 'age of anxiety'. Examples of this are paintings by artists such as Van Gogh, who, through his paintings, communicated what man, in truth, is. On the contrary, postmodern images are centred around commodification. Two main features characterise postmodern images: the end of style and the technological reproducibility. As a consequence, depth is replaced by surface. Postmodernist examples include paintings by pop artists such as Warhol, whose work was informed by the rise of new media and the advertising industry. Radicalising the logic of postmodernism, digital images – which mainly circulate in cyberspace – are not expressions of a particular ideology, but rather are determined by present-day multinational capitalism. Digital images are not necessarily created by artists. They are also made by anyone who possesses a smartphone and posts photos on social networks such as Facebook and Instagram, be they celebrities or ordinary people. This is a new mode of appearance of present-day neoliberal capitalism. The result is the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense. These are images that, most of the time, no longer make viewers reflect or move, and thus pose novel theoretical problems.

Bio

Fabio Tononi is the editor-in-chief of The Edgar Wind Journal. He is also a member of the committee of the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory, Institute of Modern Languages Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London. His research interests include the relationship between images and neoliberal capitalism, the work of Aby Warburg, the aesthetics of Sigmund Freud, and the relationship between art and cognitive neuroscience – specifically as it relates to memory, imagination, empathy, the unfinished, motion and emotion. Previous to this, Tononi was the convenor of the Aby Warburg Reading Group and Seminar at the Italian Cultural Institute, London (2020), and the convenor of the Seminar on Freedom and Free Will (2019–2020) and the Erasmus and Luther on Free Will Seminar (2018–2019) at the Warburg Institute, School of advanced Study, University of London. Tononi received a Ph.D. in Aesthetics and History of Art from the Warburg Institute in 2021 (supervisors: David Freedberg and Manos Tsakiris; examiners: Vittorio Gallese and Andrea Pinotti); an M.A. in Art History, Curatorship and Renaissance Culture from the Warburg Institute, in collaboration with the National Gallery of London (supervisor: David Freedberg); an M.A. in Art History from the University of Florence (supervisor: Maria Grazia Messi-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

na); and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Parma (supervisor: Arturo Carlo Quintavalle). He also held an internship at Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, in Florence.

Tom Ue (Dalhousie University)

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Tourism, Race, and Money in Alejandro González Iñárritu's Babel

Abstract

The title of Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006) gestures towards the divisions between people because of their differences in language and culture. And indeed, the film is set all over the world: In Morocco, two boys, Yussef and Ahmed, play with a gun that their father recently purchased—to disastrous effects. The former accidentally shoots Susan, who is on vacation with her husband Richard. Back in the US, Amelia is caring for the couple's young children and she takes them to Mexico to attend her son's wedding. Meanwhile, in Japan, Chieko, who is deaf, is trying to connect with various people, with varying levels of success. In this paper, I argue that Iñárritu uses the form of the network narrative to foreground the interlays between economics and race. In the first half of this paper, I concentrate on Richard's and Susan's trip, ostensibly an attempt to repair their marriage, to reveal how Iñárritu encourages us to think more critically about the racism and neo-colonialism inherent in tourism. I attend to his treatment of spectatorship, reflected for instance in the film's reaction shots, to show how he makes pronounced imbalances in race and money, inequalities that ultimately privilege the already very privileged white American couple. In the second half, I focus on Chieko's narrative to suggest that her own situation—ostensibly removed from the film's main action geographically, thematically, and racially—is nevertheless wedded to it: Chieko's father had given away the gun that was sold to Yussef's and Ahmed's father. Through her narrative, Iñárritu demonstrates the extent in which we are all, perhaps inadvertently, complicit in an economy that promotes inequalities. This paper advances scholarship by recovering the links between racial and economic injustices in *Babel* and by revealing how the film posits more positive kinds of viewership and participation.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Bio

Tom Ue is Assistant Professor of Literature and Science at Dalhousie University. He is the author of *Gissing, Shakespeare, and the Life of Writing* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) and *George Gissing* (Liverpool University Press, forthcoming), and the editor of *George Gissing, The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming). Ue has held the prestigious Frederick Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship and he is an Honorary Research Associate at University College London.

Sebastian Urbaniak (University of Szczecin)

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Time and Capital: new modes of capitalist temporality in post-digital age

Abstract

The problem of the temporality of capitalism is a decisive one for recognizing the importance of non-economic factors in the functioning of capitalism. From its inception, capitalism was oriented towards the future, but the effectiveness of colonizing the future was a function of controlling the past. In fact it was an expression of a linear conception of history which was articulated by Hegel and Marx. The ordinary „Now” was the diabolical trap for the subject - between the past and the future. But it was also the only possible space of indeterminism, freedom in which social movements and individual resistance could develop.

With the advancement of information technology, in particular prediction systems and predictive statistics, the past loses its importance as a determinant of the control of the future, and thus the present. The future is no longer just the domain of profit, and is becoming a material undergoing preparation, another raw material calculated for profit. The Speculative Now ceases to be a space of freedom: the prediction of the future makes it possible to control social movements and individual resistance to fit in with the predetermined recursion of capital profit.

The possibilities of historical transformation offered by Marxist analyzes of the course of linear history were finally buried as capitalism was the first to internalize the new temporality, modeling it in accordance with the logic of its own recursion: in this way capitalist hegemony will not find an end because it had internalized all the contradic-

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

tions that stood in its way and transformed them into fertile tensions. Unless, in fact, one abandons this linear model and opposes capitalist temporality with its own, which is not its mirror image, but a kind of antithesis.

Bio

Sebastian Urbaniak holds a Master of Arts in Archaeology and Intercultural Mediation. He is working now on a PhD dissertation about ethnofuturism as a postcolonial strategy in Polish science-fiction literature. He is also interested in philosophy of the Black Power movement and post-digital transformations in capitalistic society. He published his works in *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensia*, *Culture and Society* and *Nowa Krytyka* (New Critique). Now he is working as a co-editor on a book about afro-futurism in European perspective.

Kamil M. Wielecki (University of Warsaw)

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Not quite a capital but still capital results: Building public infrastructure in Dagestan

Abstract

The paper presents some outcomes of two ethnographic fieldwork trips to Dagestan, North Caucasus, Russia in 2018–19 (perhaps a third one will be possible in the Fall of 2021). In Dagestan, somewhat paradoxically – if one considers the big economic emigration from many regions of the Republic – a vehement urbanization takes place. It includes not only the development of private homes and housing estates but also a wide range of public infrastructure projects. Surprisingly enough, the construction of the latter ones – such as roads, water mains, power lines, playgrounds or mosques – is performed without any help from the state or even somewhat in opposition to it. The infrastructure is established with labor of local communities, and is funded by the communities themselves or by economic migrants to other Russian regions who send their remittances back home. In the empirical dimension, the paper shows some examples of such initiatives, tools and technologies used by local communities in order to improve public well-being. In theoretical

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

terms, in turn, it has two aims: 1) polemics with the statement (Sztompka, Putnam) that both socialism and the neoliberal order lead to social atomization, crumbling of trust, and promotion of self-interest; 2) to argue that the Bourdieusian concept of social capital – typically deployed in such cases – fails to grasp what is going on *out there*, and that this goal is better served by using anthropological theories of the gift, reciprocity, and sharing (Mauss, Ledeneva, Gudeman).

Bio

Dr. Kamil M. Wielecki is a social anthropologist at the University of Warsaw, Poland. He has done long-lasting ethnographic fieldwork research in Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Russia (Central Siberia and Dagestan). His areas of interest include postsocialist studies, the political economy of capitalism, and economic and philosophical anthropology.

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Social capital in labor relations influenced by digitalization trends

Abstract

Digitalization trends affect the labor sphere heavily. In fact, the digital present has been forming an utterly new format of labor relations, with the novel liaisons and interdependencies, which may be either conducive to social cohesion or pose certain risks to social development sustainability. On the one hand, the newly sprung organizational innovations, such as hierarchy-free firms or the concept of remote work, inspired by the digital era, are able to contribute to reliable social and labor relations based on trust and cooperation. On the other hand, one should be aware of the actual negative shifts in the principles and methods of labor activity regulation, as well as in the patterns of labor market behavior. Those shifts are vivid and must be seriously considered.

The first obvious challenge lurks in the pursue of profits and cost optimization policies, which call for the extreme flexibility of businesses. This, in turn, brings about the

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

emergence of new employment forms, potentially detrimental to the socialization in labor relations. Nowadays, an average firm's team may get afflicted by the excessive virtually and turn into a mere set of business functions. A virtual team tends to be unstable, with short-term social contacts.

Another challenge refers to the growing inefficacy of social dialogue, seemingly redundant in the new digital paradigm. Seeking better business opportunities numerous firms readily adopt outsourcing practices, adding to the uncertainty fears of the personal. Employees treated as outsourced find themselves deprived of the social protection offered by collective bargaining. Moreover, trade unions may fail to serve as a unifying and rallying entity, yielding to independent contracting practices.

To conclude, the digitalization-related changes in national economies have certain implications for labor relations. In the light of those changes, one should not neglect the obvious threats to social capital sustainability within the labor sphere.

Bios

Viktoris Zvonar Dr. Sc. (Economics), Leading Research Fellow, Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He is professionally engaged in the economic research on social phenomena, such as corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, social capital, human development, NGO-business collaboration, etc. Currently, he is involved in the research project, investigating the possible benefits of wide cooperation in Ukraine's economy.

Oksana Dyakonenko is PhD (Economics), Senior Research Fellow Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. She studied at Vadym Hetman Kyiv National Economic University, Ukraine. Her current research includes the issue of social capital in the structure of labor relations, the transformation of social dialogue under the influence of social capital, as well as the decentralization of management. Over the past two years, she has co-authored two collective monographs: "Human Development in Ukraine: Priorities for Rural Settlement Development in the Context of Government Decentralization" (Akademperiodika, 2020) and "Innovative Principles Human Resource Management: Opportunities, Challenges, Priorities for Achieving Socio-Economic Security" (NUWMNM, 2020), in which the results of research on this topic are presented.