

Imagining the futures of capitalist society: Cross-perspectives from literature and cinema

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Universitat Pompeu Fabra

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Call for Abstracts & Papers:

The current crisis of capitalism has taken on new dimensions. Novel forms of nihilism, populism and religious fundamentalism spring up from its core. The state of emergency has become generalized: the permanent revolution of technological capitalism puts into crisis the very concept of the human and points toward a post-human condition; in addition, capitalist exploitation generates an unprecedented crisis of the environmental conditions of society itself. As a result, the spectre of dystopia haunts the current social imaginaries, and engenders apocalyptic myths and narratives. And yet the landscape of social imaginaries is deeply divided and volatile: paradoxically, the scientific and technological imagery derived from AI, robotics, neuroscience, biogenetics, and evolutionary theory breathes new life into eschatological and salvation myths.

In these circumstances of historical volatility and crisis, *artistic imagination* and its particular capacity to read possible futures into the “signs of times” becomes a *privileged site* of analysis and reflection. The systemic predicament of capitalist society has generated a fruitful wave of literary and filmic insights and interpretations that envision the development of the seeds of an opaque present (consider the oeuvre of Houellebecq, Márkaris, McEwan, Dardenne, von Trier, Costa, Pamuk, Raja’a Alem, Payne, Chirbes, etc.). To illustrate, after the fashion of postmodern fragmentation and playful fictionalization, we have been witnessing a flourishing of grand narratives drawing on scientific-technological developments as well as historical and sociological analysis, so as to diagnose and project the future of human/post-human society.

The aim of this *exploratory workshop* is to reflectively use the tools of cinema, literature and philosophy to engage questions regarding the diagnosis of the current crisis of capitalist society and its consequences: what forms of narrative and representation are used today in literature and cinema to account for the present crisis of capitalism? Are new forms of nihilism emerging today, and how are these linked to new forms of religiosity? How are current myths (apocalyptic, salvationist, etc.) interpreted and constructed through cinema and literature, and what is the role of techno-scientific narratives? How are the futures of capitalist/post-capitalist society represented in current literature and cinema?

We invite papers on cinema, literature and philosophy that reflect on the following themes (the list is not exhaustive):

- Capitalism, the techno-scientific revolution, and new forms of religion
- Old and new myths in times of crisis: between utopia and dystopia
- The post-human body, capitalism and the desire for immortality
- Gender, post-gender and the future of capitalism
- Capitalist/ecological futures
- Ethics and myths of work: capitalism, post-capitalism
- Towards a post-human or neo-human society?
- Capitalism and the present/future of artistic production

Papers can be comparative studies or case studies and can analyse artists and filmmakers from any geographical and cultural locations. Those interested should send a proposal (title, summary, affiliation) of 300-400 words to the organisers before the **20th of May 2018**.
Languages: English, Catalan, and Spanish.

All submissions must be sent to: submissions@thecrisisofcapitalism.com
Files must be .doc or .pdf to be considered.