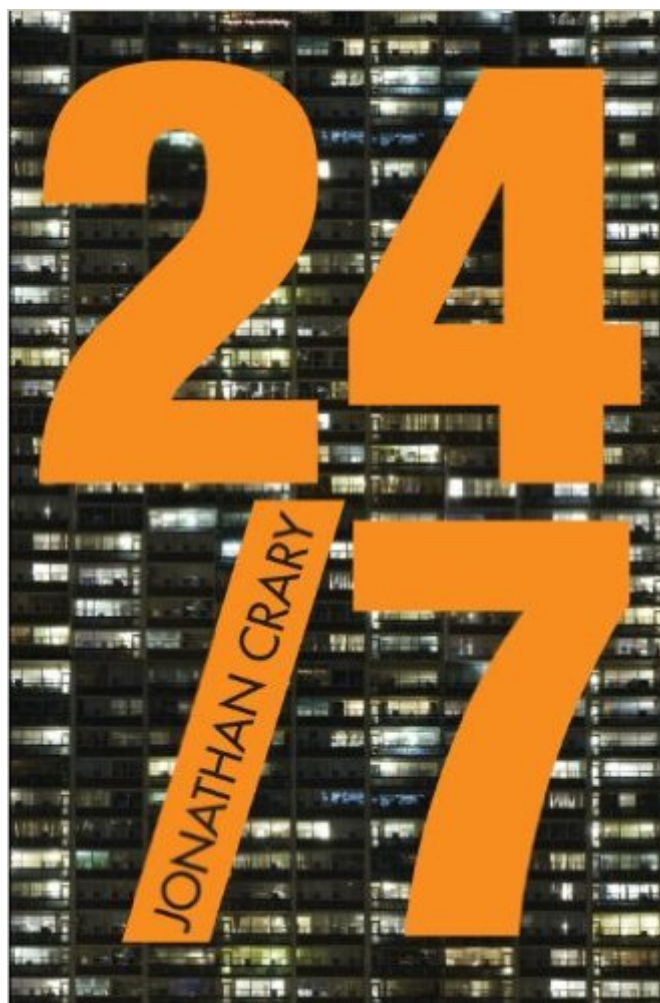


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24/7: Late Capitalism And The Ends Of Sleep



Synopsis

24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep explores some of the ruinous consequences of the expanding non-stop processes of twenty-first-century capitalism. The marketplace now operates through every hour of the clock, pushing us into constant activity and eroding forms of community and political expression, damaging the fabric of everyday life. Jonathan Crary examines how this interminable non-time blurs any separation between an intensified, ubiquitous consumerism and emerging strategies of control and surveillance. He describes the ongoing management of individual attentiveness and the impairment of perception within the compulsory routines of contemporary technological culture. At the same time, he shows that human sleep, as a restorative withdrawal that is intrinsically incompatible with 24/7 capitalism, points to other more formidable and collective refusals of world-destroying patterns of growth and accumulation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"24/7" by Jonathan Crary is a brilliant interdisciplinary analysis about capital's ongoing colonization of human consciousness. Professor Crary is a highly regarded art critic, essayist and editor whose studies about perception and power have proven widely influential. This masterful book provides uniquely compelling insights into our postmodern condition including the possibility of change. Dr. Crary frames the discussion with the tale of DARPA's quest to engineer a 'sleepless soldier' who might better fit into the military's increasingly automated systems of terror, torture and surveillance. The author supposes that these kind of non-sleep technologies will inevitably be adapted by struggling civilian workers and consumers, many of whom are in fact already compelled to develop

virtual identities in order to better compete in the cutthroat 24/7 marketplace. The author thoughtfully compares capital's attack on sleep with the broader assault on the earth's resources and the theft of community assets; with the infamous Bhopal disaster serving as an extreme example of the discord that exists between corporate violence and communities at sleep. Dr. Crary deftly assimilates the thoughts of leading postmodern theorists including Foucault, Agamben, Bauman, Deleuze and others to develop, enrich and articulate his ideas. For example, Dr. Crary argues that the so-called 'digital age' is properly understood as capitalism's ongoing project of subsuming individuals within its regime of discipline and control.

"24/7" explores the threat of a future "sleepless" society. As the modern world gradually encroaches on more and more of the "everyday," the author argues that sleep itself, that fundamental human function, may go the way of the dodo or the VCR very soon. The book opens citing a defense study on the white-crowned sparrow, a North American bird that can somehow manage without sleep for seven contiguous days during migration. When or if scientists unlock this small bird's secrets, any discoveries will have definite military applications. Then, the book argues, this research will inevitably seep over into the consumer and work world. Those daring few who take the first sleepless plunge will likely blaze a new pioneering trail and set a new standard for others who will probably feel forced to follow in an effort to "keep up" or "stay ahead of the competition." After all, if your competition doesn't sleep, how can you? This all may sound like a pernicious slippery slope, but the very recent rise of "Smart Phone" culture provides a convincing precedent. How many people now check their texts, phone messages or e-mails at all hours, including in the middle of the night? "24/7," as framed in this small but dense book, seems directly upon us. Not to mention the prevalence of caffeinated "energy drinks" that often renders sleep impossible. Sleep, as the book argues, remains an impenetrable affront to the machinations of the modern world. Many thinkers, even those dating back to the first glimmerings of the Enlightenment, have considered this largely unconscious time as wasteful or unproductive. Sleep also represents humans in their most vulnerable state and the infrastructures of technological society have made sleep relatively safe.

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