AHST 4342-501 (27532)
History of Media and New Media Art
Spring 2018
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities
T-Th 1:00-2:15

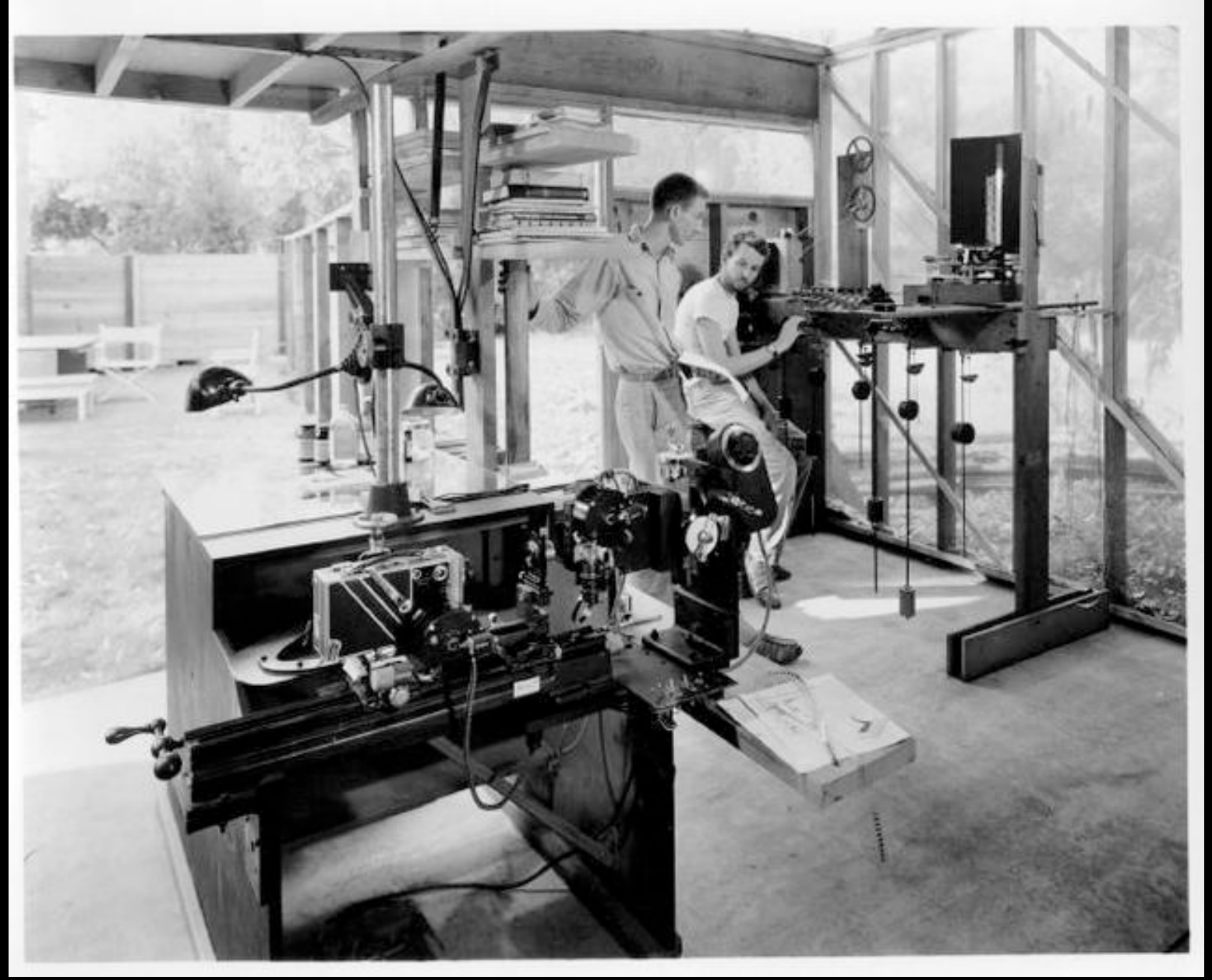
Tuesday 04/19/18

Discussion

Hallucinations and Hippie Modernism

John & James Whitney - "Five Film Exercises" Film 2-3 (1944)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdCjwS1OxBU

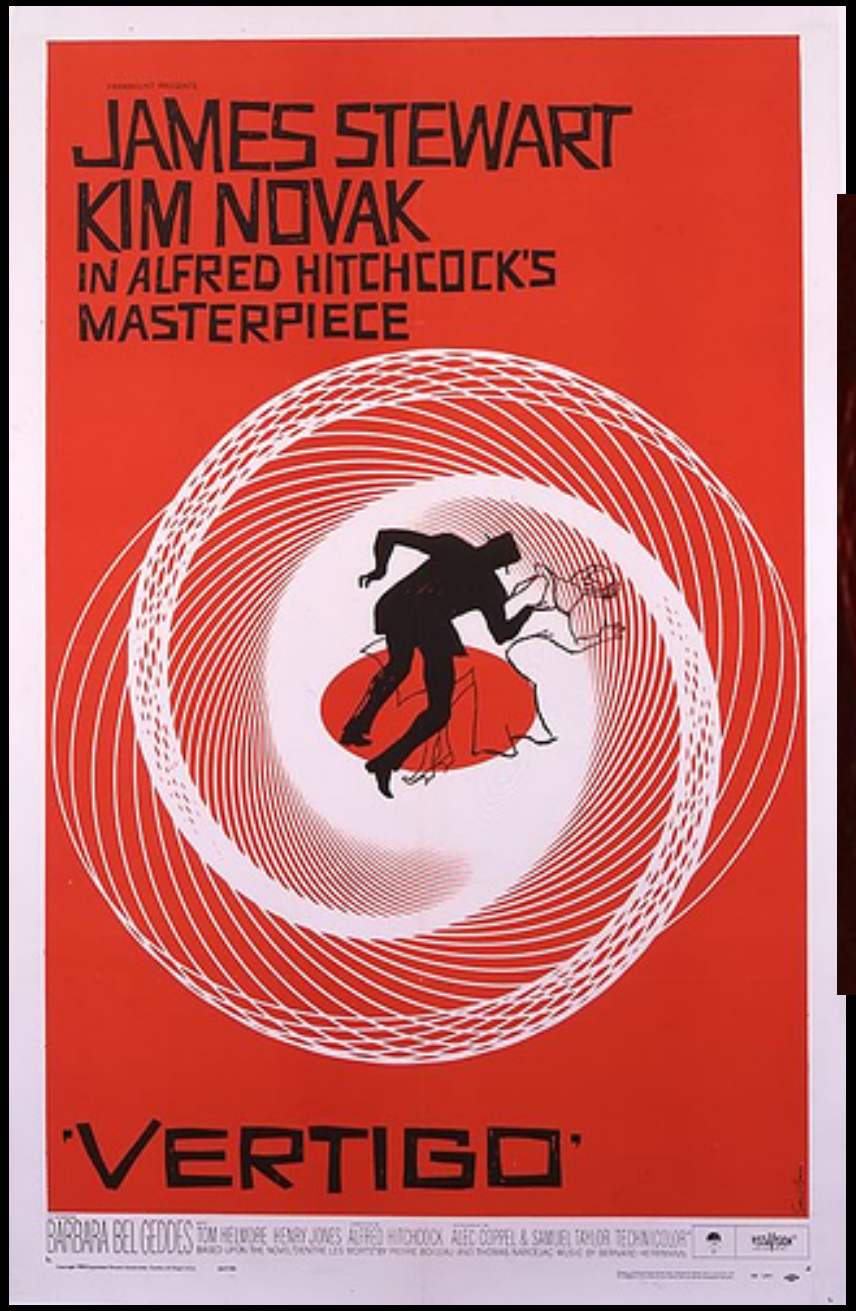
James Whitney, Yantra, 1950-57
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HidwTDZoz5c

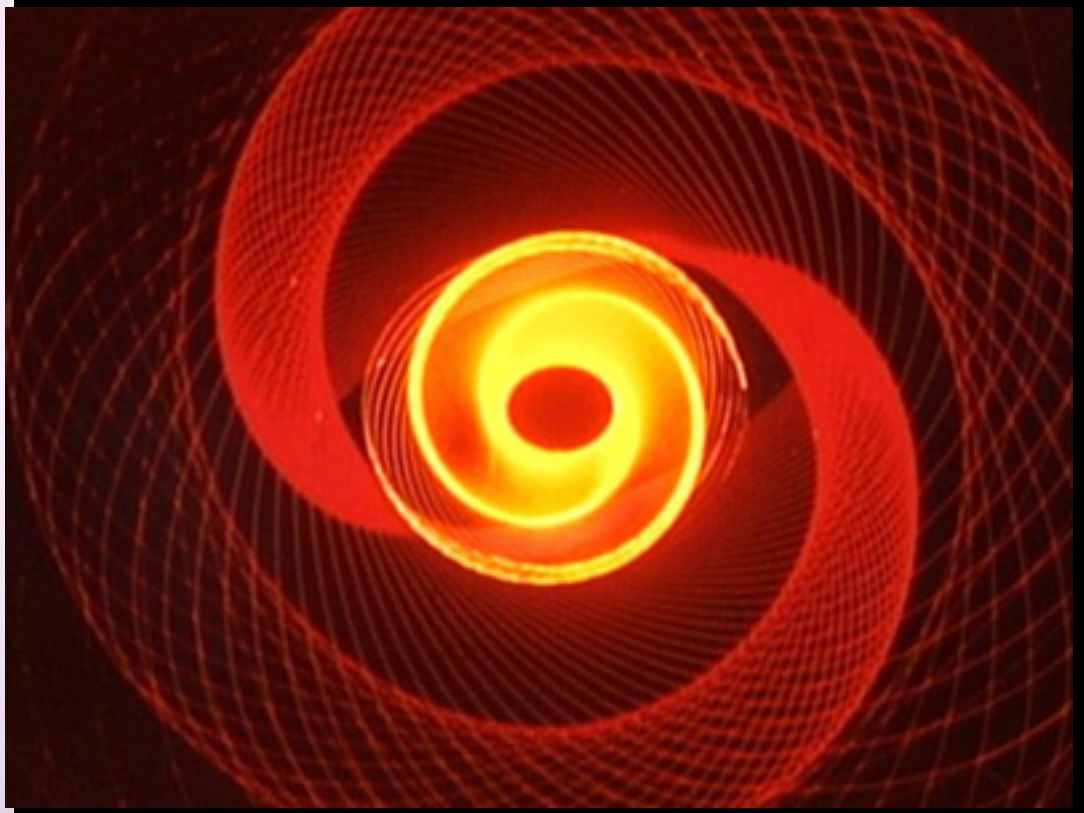


The analogue computer Whitney used to create his most famous animations was built in the late 1950s by converting the mechanism of a WW II M-5 Antiaircraft Gun Director. Later, Whitney would augment the mechanism with an M-7 mechanism, creating a twelve-foot-high machine. Design templates were placed on three different layers of rotating tables and photographed by multiple-axis rotating cameras.

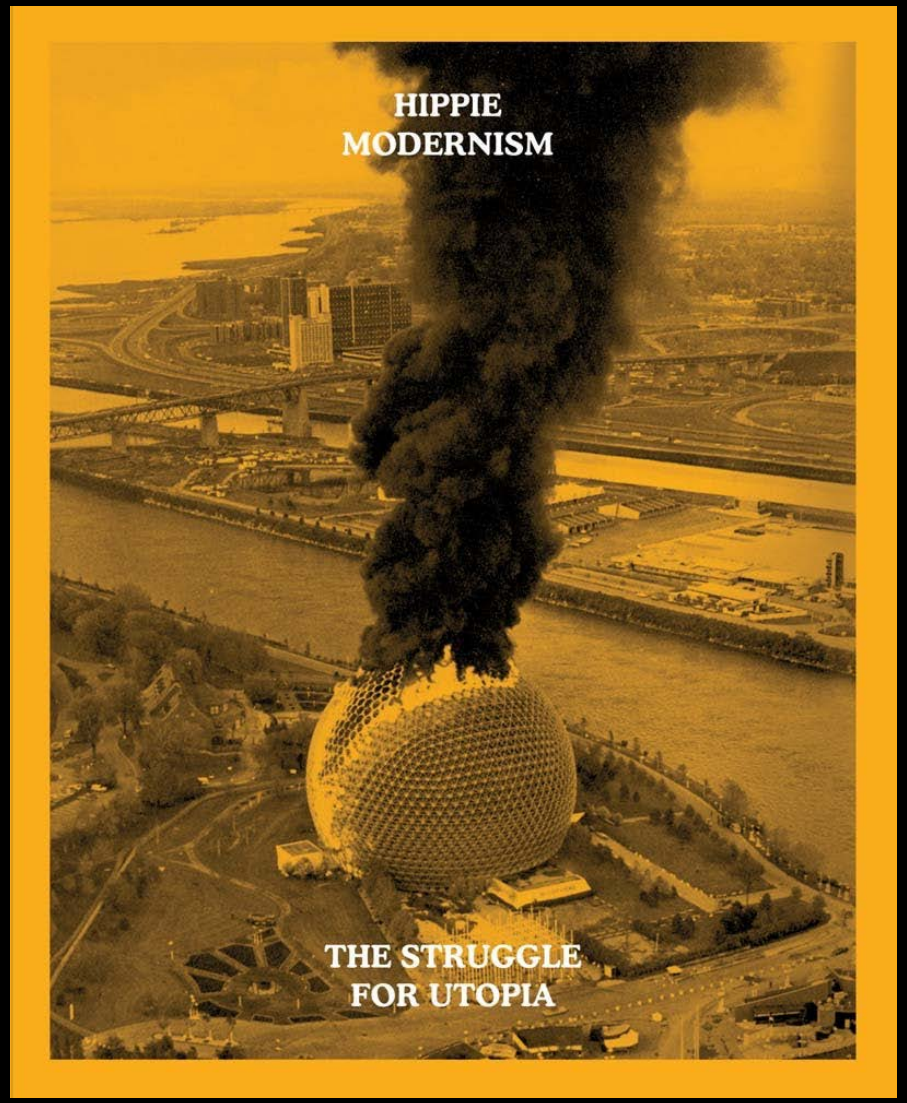
“I don't know how many simultaneous motions can be happening at once. There must be at least five ways just to operate the shutter. The input shaft on the camera rotates at 180 rpm, which results in a photographing speed of 8 frame/s. That cycle time is constant, not variable, but we never shoot that fast. It takes about nine seconds to make one revolution. During this nine-second cycle the tables are spinning on their own axes while simultaneously revolving around another axis while moving horizontally across the range of the camera, which may itself be turning or zooming up and down. During this operation we can have the shutter open all the time, or just at the end for a second or two, or at the beginning, or for half of the time if we want to do slit-scanning.”

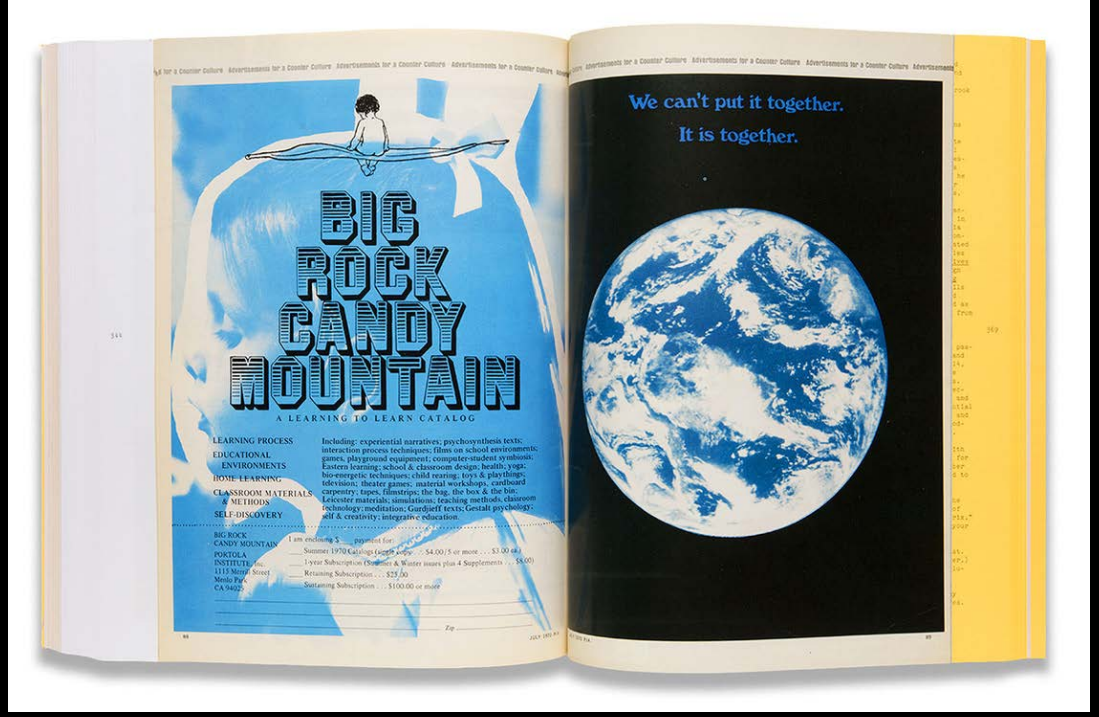
John Whitney, Jr. (1970)





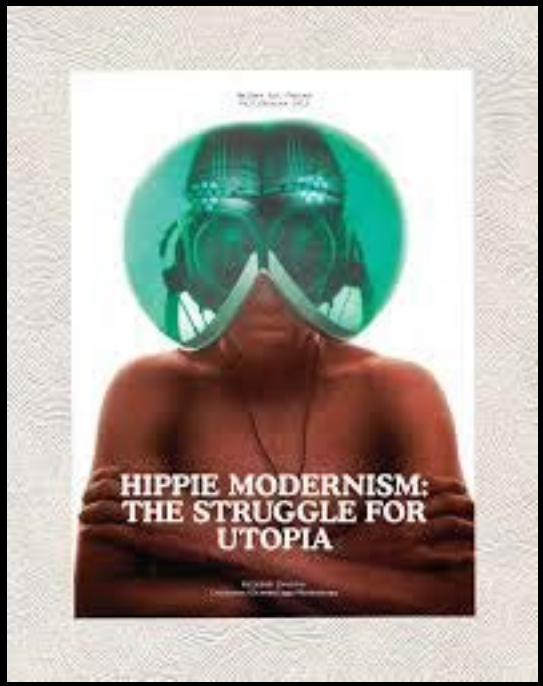
Saul Bass and John Whitney, Title Sequence to Alfred Hitchock's Vertigo (1958)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qtDCZP4WrQ

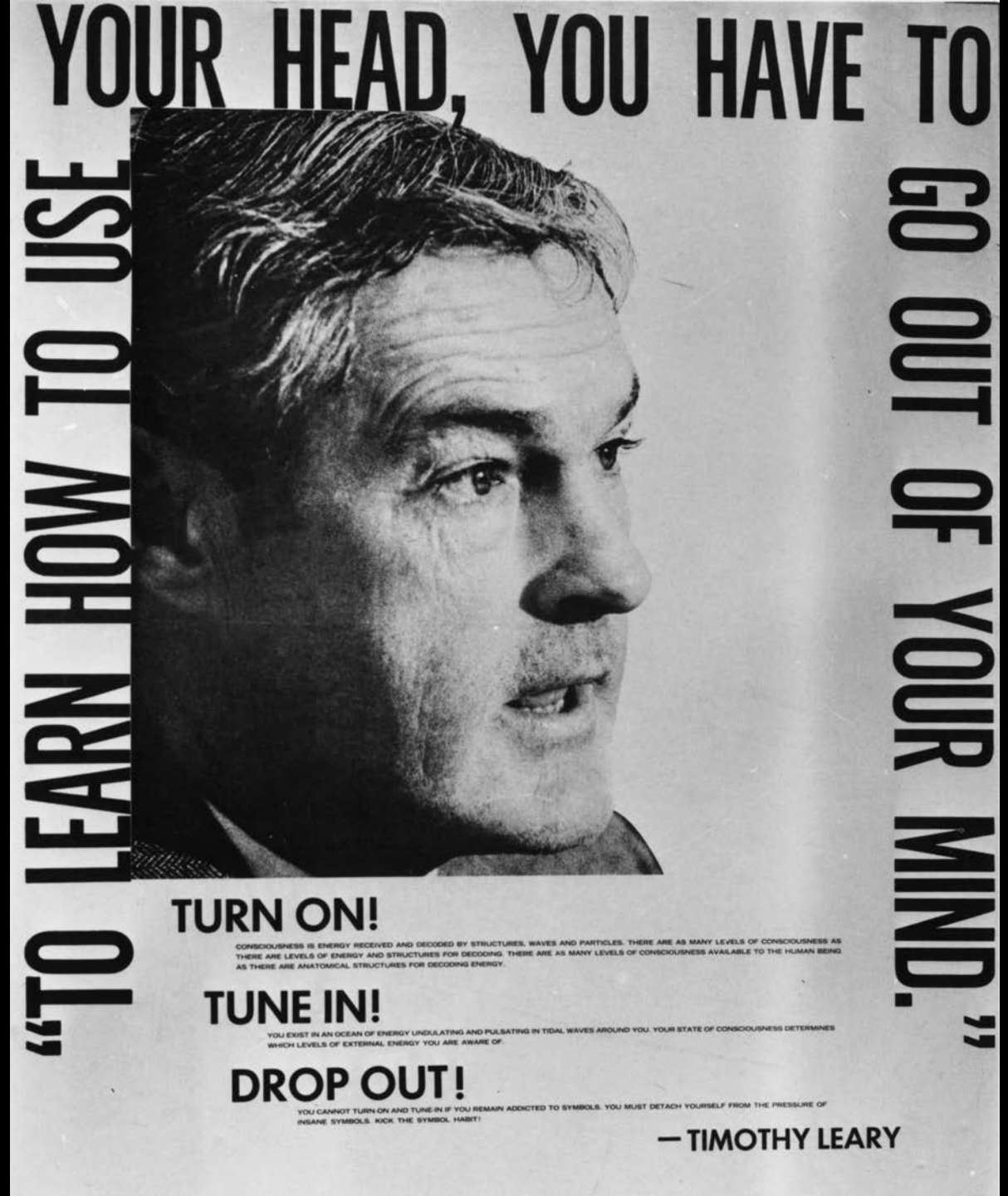


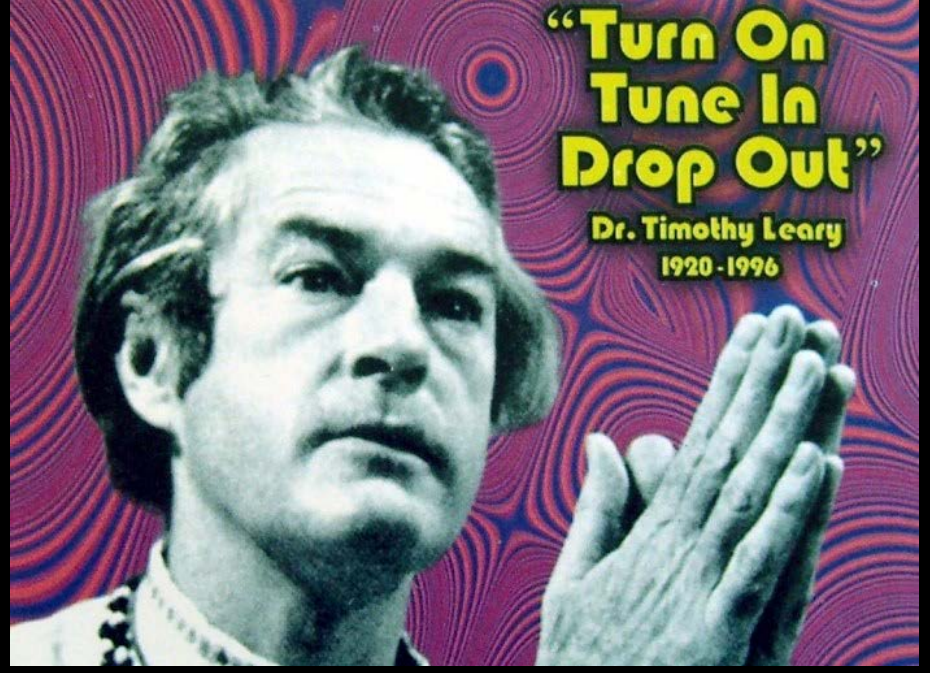


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYueI1Qvz9U

Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, 2015





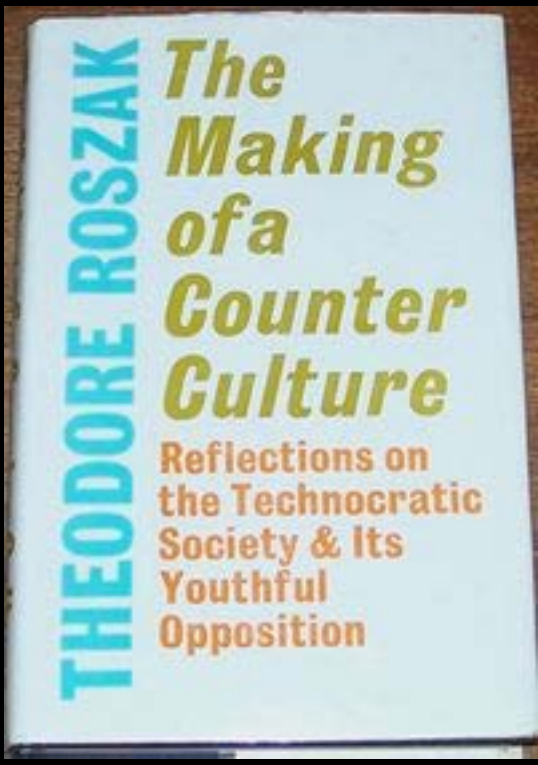


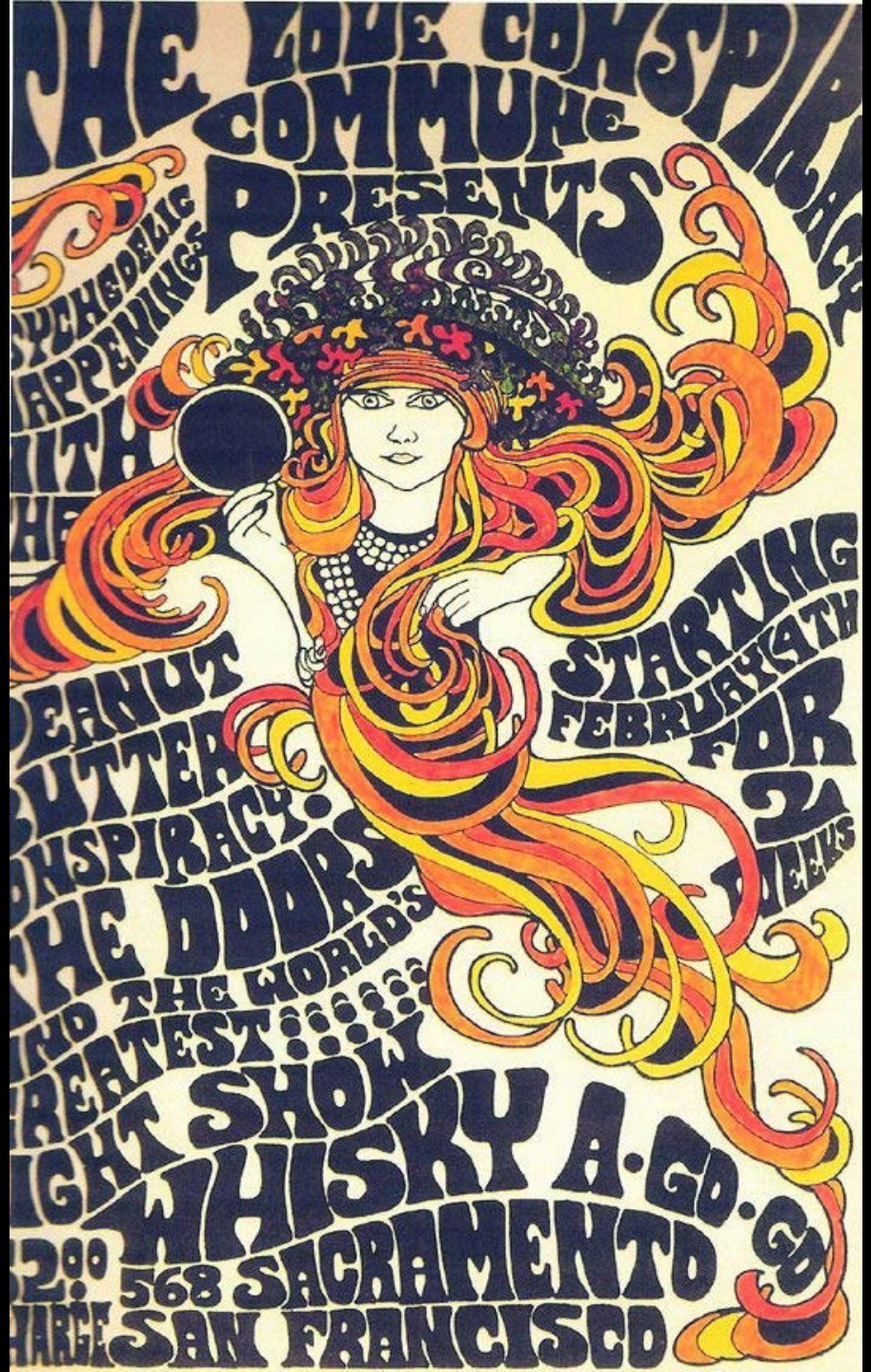
Timothy Leary (1920-1996)

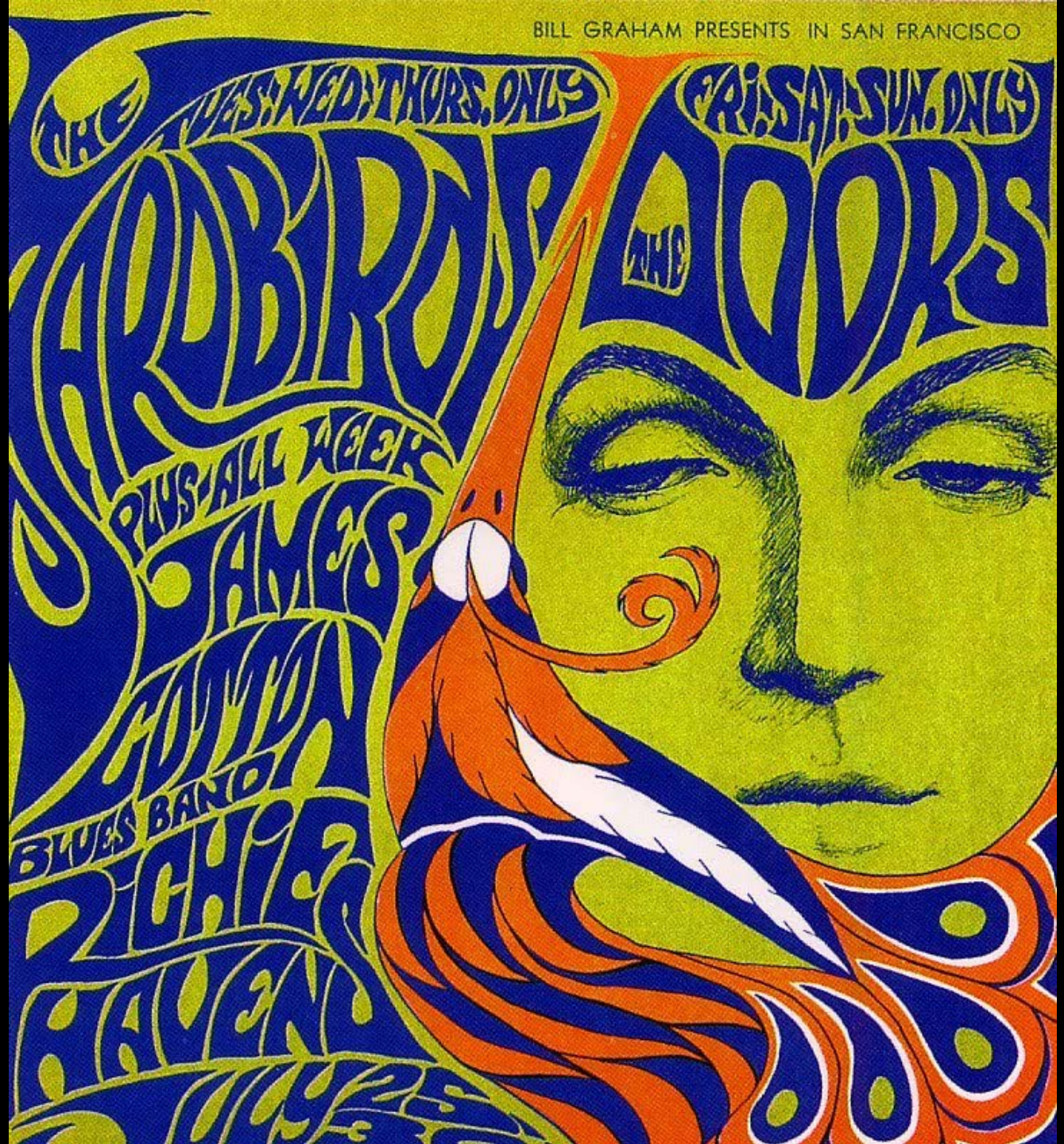
COUNTER CULTURE

Published 1969

Youth culture rejecting **technocracy**, the regime of corporate and technological expertise that dominates industrial society




THE LOVE CONSPIRACY
COMMUNE
PSYCHEDELIC HAPPENINGS
PRESENTS
STARTING FEBRUARY 14TH FOR 2 WEEKS
PEANUT BUTTER CONSPIRACY
THE DOORS
AND THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIGHT SHOW
WHISKY A-GO-GO
$2.00 CHARGE
568 SACRAMENTO
SAN FRANCISCO


BILL GRAHAM PRESENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO
THE YARDBIRDS
TUES. WED. THURS. ONLY
PLUS ALL WEEK
JAMES COTTON BLUES BAND
RICHIE HAVENS
THE DOORS
FRI. SAT. SUN. ONLY

Student question:

What is cybernetic cinema?

Student question and writing:

Is disrupting vision the same as retraining it?

Zabet Patterson makes a claim in her essay…that the camera obscura allows for more control for the user than a gun director. One of the arguments made is that the mechanical nature of the director somehow make [using] it akin to [being in a] prison, where the user is stuck inside for as long as they intend to use the device…I believe the work of the Whitney brothers go further than simply breaking from a militaristic use of vision. By creating visual environments with no obvious point of focus, the Whitney brothers actually created an environment that evolution has not prepared human vision to deal with in day to day life...The Whitney brothers' use of military hardware still works as a metaphor, because while the technology was designed to make the human eye more efficient, the Whitney brothers' pieces attempt to make us question what purpose our vision has in a modern, peaceful era.

Student question and writing:

Could the work of the Whitney brothers be appreciated by today's culture, where instant gratification is preferred and prolonged concentration is rare?

Totaling nearly 10 minutes, *Lapis* may be 'too lengthy' to be appreciated by the majority of today's culture in which children are taught to respond to and expect instant gratification with technology, and multitasking is rewarded…Those interested in slowing and foregoing instant gratification to take in *Lapis* would still need the context of history to fully understand and appreciate the work. Perhaps it is time for an updated version of *Lapis*, one that critiques our current technologies and how they have trained and changed human vision, if it does not already exist.

Student questions:

What is the effect of seeing the same image, but across different modes of media?

Why are the colorful dots and patterns of James Whitney's *Lapis* so uncomfortable to the eye?

Do Gestalt principles necessitate anthropocentrism?

Student question and writing:

Why repurpose tools of war as tools of art?

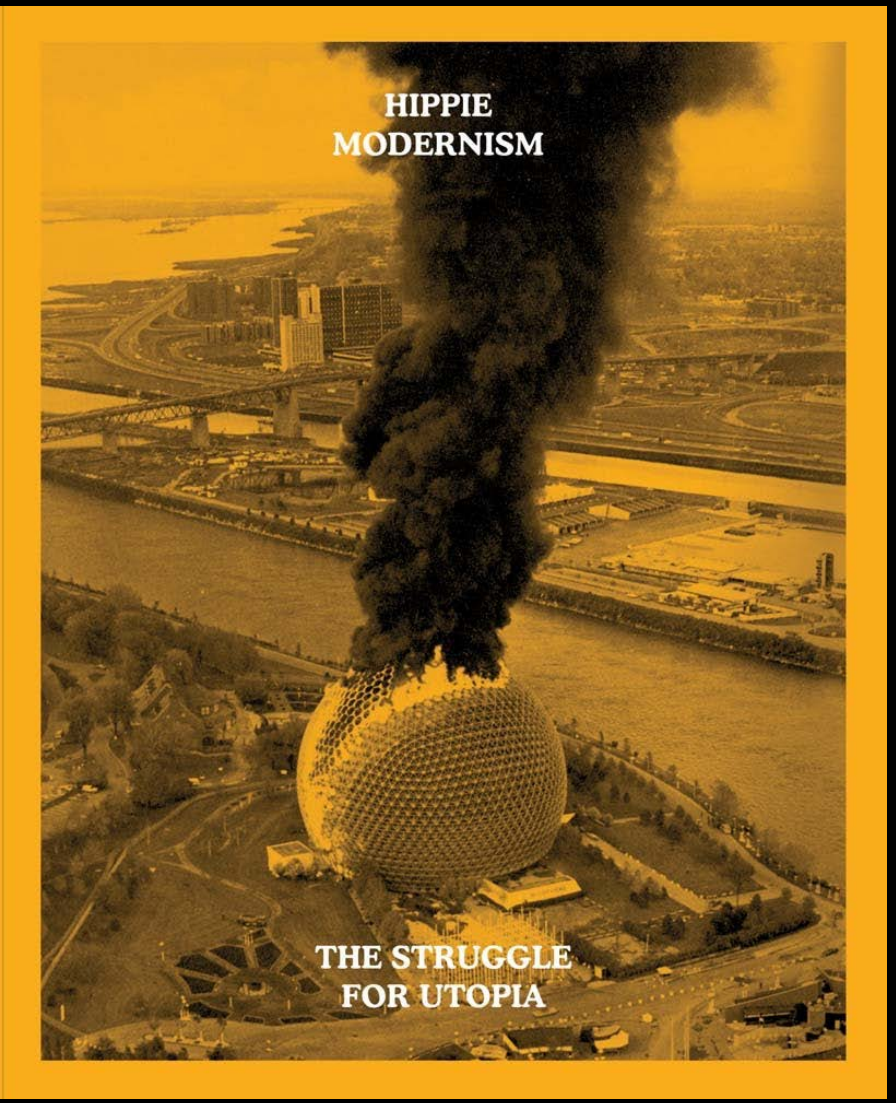
The passage in the Old Testament of the Bible holds great significance here: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:4)

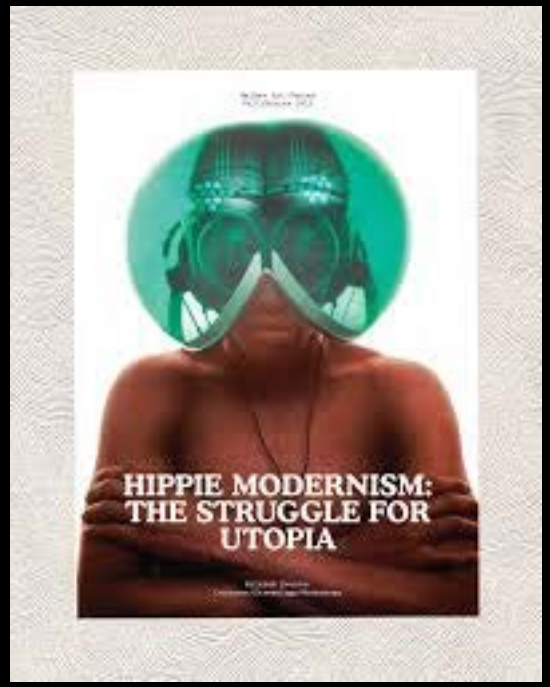
Student questions:

Is our perception of reality related linearly to the constraints we put on computers and machines?

How does the definition of human nature change with the introduction of cybernetics and the cyborg?

Do analog computers imitate human behavior?





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