



Enjoying What We Don't Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis (Symplek Studies in Contemporary Theory)

Todd McGowan

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Although there have been many attempts to apply the ideas of psychoanalysis to political thought, this book is the first to identify the political project inherent in the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis. And this political project, Todd McGowan contends, provides an avenue for emancipatory politics after the failure of Marxism in the twentieth century.

Where others seeking the political import of psychoanalysis have looked to Freud's early work on sexuality, McGowan focuses on Freud's discovery of the death drive and Jacques Lacan's elaboration of this concept. He argues that the self-destruction occurring as a result of the death drive is the foundational act of emancipation around which we should construct our political philosophy. Psychoanalysis offers the possibility for thinking about emancipation not as an act of overcoming loss but as the embrace of loss. It is only through the embrace of loss, McGowan suggests, that we find the path to enjoyment, and enjoyment is the determinative factor in all political struggles—and only in a political project that embraces the centrality of loss will we find a viable alternative to global capitalism.

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