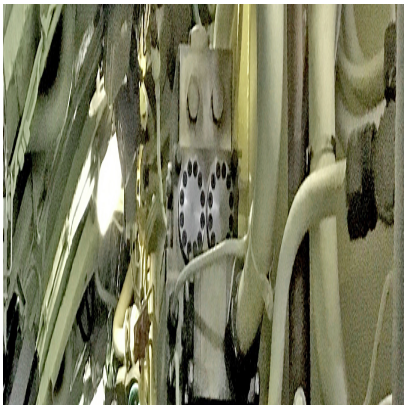


Weaponise!

Description

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I remember when the Internet was innocent â?? it put strangers with common interests in touch, supported grass roots activism, encouraged self-help groups to form, and enabled free expression and innovation. Now itâ??s a weapon.

Think of how good and bad human agents and their hirelings, surrogates, mercenaries and robots deploy tweets and other social media objects to intimidate, incite, infiltrate and subvert.

Consider this excerpt from the TV fantasy drama *Once Upon a Time*: â??Anna: Youâ??re a monster. You take the most precious thing in this world, love, and turn it into a weapon. Rumpelstiltskin: Love is a weapon, dearie. Always has been. Itâ??s just so few people know how to wield it.â•• (s04e04 Episode Script)

To weaponise now means to take an ordinary, everyday thing of value and use it to coerce, intimidate, subvert, subjugate and even destroy. At the very least, like a rifle leant against the sideboard, it engenders mistrust.

Militaristic metaphors

Love has always had weaponry at its core. After all, cupid smites his love victims with bow and arrow.

The Internet also smites its victims. By a Marxist reading, like all inventions of industrialised modernity on which we depend and that feed our addictions, it is driven by global capitalism and class domination â?? the insidious and covert suppression of the vulnerable by the powerful.

By a more charitable (Foucauldian) account, the Internet distorts, amplifies and moderates power relations. It is one of the many means by which power, as both an enabler and disabler, gets circulated and exercised in society.

For some critics, even this critical discourse about weaponry militarises the world. It also inures us to the language of actual war. Two reports in *The Guardian* and listed in the references below make these points better than I can.

Also see post: Whatâ??s wrong with accelerationism.



References

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- Poole, Steven. 2017. Weaponise! â??The meaning of 2017â??s political buzzword. *The Guardian* , 27 March. Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/mar/27/weaponise-the-meaning-of-2017s-political-buzzword (accessed 8 August 2018).
- Stallabras, Julian. 1996. *Gargantua: Manufactured Mass Culture*. London: Verso

Note

- Image above is inside decommissioned nuclear submarine at Port de Cherbourg, April 2017.

Category

1. Metaphor

Tags

1. Internet
2. love
3. trump
4. Twitter

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