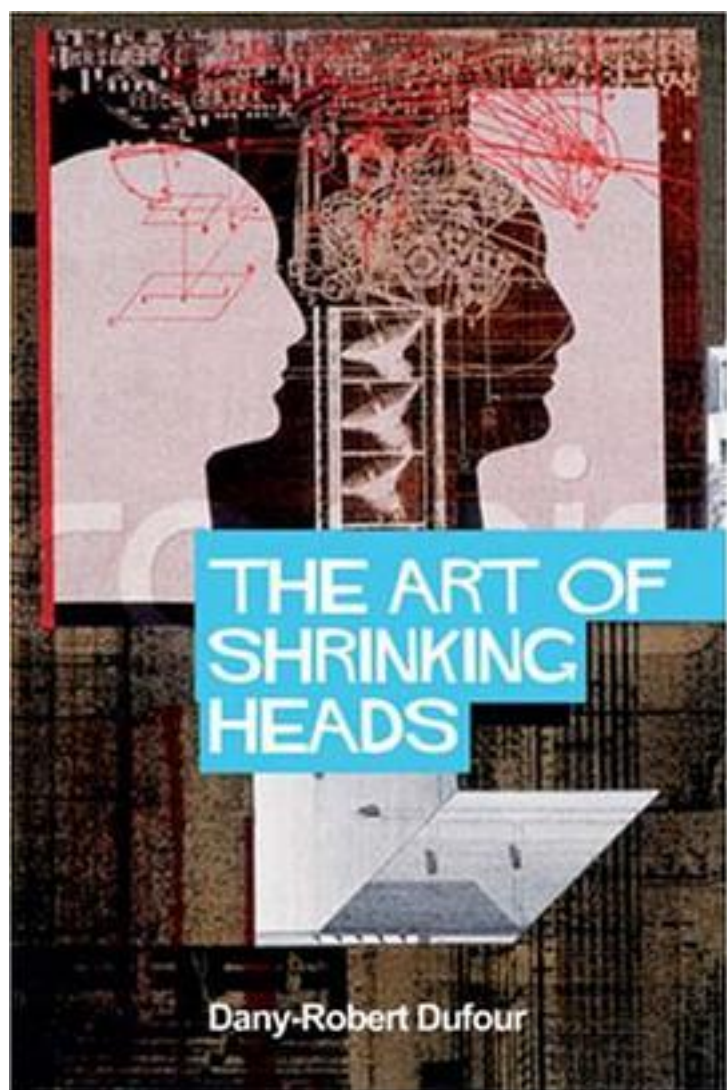


The Art of Shrinking Heads



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After the hell of the Nazis and the terror of Communism, it is possible that a new catastrophe has appeared on the horizon: this time it is neoliberalism that wants to create its own 'new man'.

For two centuries, Kant's critical subject and Freud's neurotic subject provided us with philosophical templates for modernity, but today modern capitalism is systematically destroying these two subjects and replacing them with something new. The two subjects of modernity both presupposed some reference to a higher value or power (like Reason) which provided a symbolic guarantor, but neoliberalism, by emphasizing the exchange of commodities in the marketplace, destroys all transcendental references of this kind. Now human beings no longer look beyond themselves and no longer have to agree about symbolic values: they only have to get on with the circulation and consumption of goods. Deprived of his faculty of judgement and urged to enjoy himself without restraint, the 'new man' of neoliberalism takes centre stage in the era of global capitalism.

In this biting critique of our contemporary condition Dufour shows that the radical transformation of the subject brought about by neoliberalism - what he calls 'the art of shrinking heads' - contains a new kind of violence which has far-reaching consequences for our ways of living together.

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