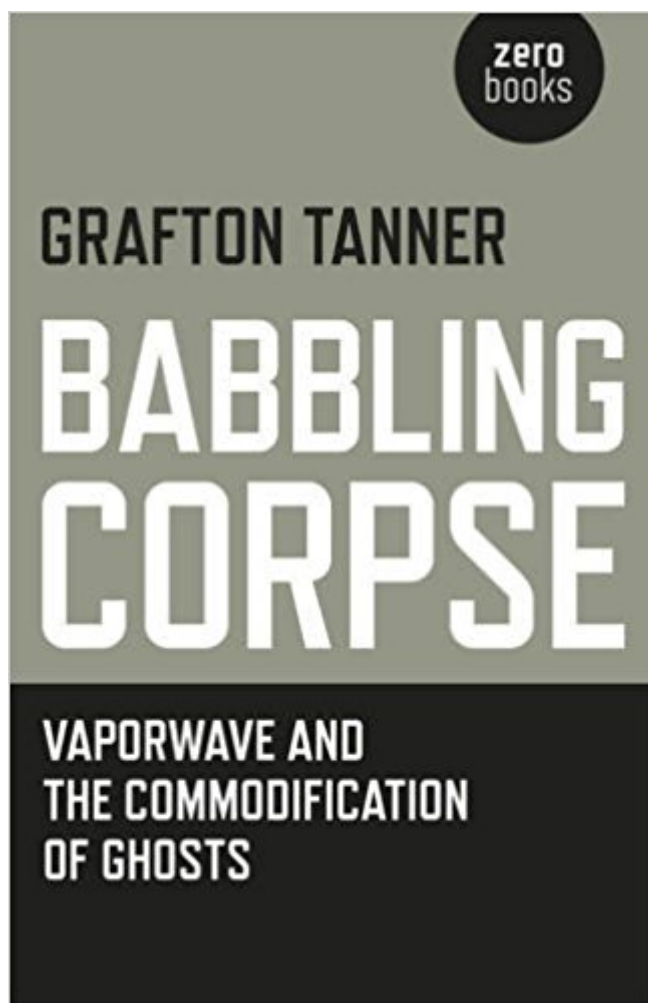


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# Babbling Corpse: Vaporwave And The Commodification Of Ghosts



## Synopsis

In the age of global capitalism, vaporwave celebrates and undermines the electronic ghosts haunting the nostalgia industry. Ours is a time of ghosts in machines, killing meaning and exposing the gaps inherent in the electronic media that pervade our lives. Vaporwave is an infant musical micro-genre that foregrounds the horror of electronic media's ability to appear - as media theorist Jeffrey Sconce terms it - "haunted." Experimental musicians such as INTERNET CLUB and MACINTOSH PLUS manipulate Muzak and commercial music to undermine the commodification of nostalgia in the age of global capitalism while accentuating the uncanny properties of electronic music production. Babbling Corpse reveals vaporwave's many intersections with politics, media theory, and our present fascination with uncanny, co(s)mic horror. The book is aimed at those interested in global capitalism's effect on art, musical raids on mainstream "indie" and popular music, and anyone intrigued by the changing relationship between art and commerce.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grafton Tanner is a writer and musician from Georgia.

What a captivating read this was, especially for someone like myself who was born too late to remember the eras vaporwave simultaneously pays homage and gives a critical eye to. Most fascinating was Tanner's comparison of America's fetishization of the pre-9/11 world to an abandoned mall, presumably safe and sound from contemporary problems that have become

harder to ignore. Even if you have just a small amount of knowledge about the music genre, the book is still worth your time and money.

This book is incredible. It goes so much deeper than just vaporwave. Grafton pulls you in and beats you with the reality of capitalism.

I love it

The concept of vaporwave is a function of Franken music. Taking samples of other music, endlessly repeating sounds, words and phrases either spoken or musical, and slapping them all together into an mp3 package, vaporwave can infuriate, bore or be completely ignored. It can have zero musical value, or appear as outright theft. It is a rebellion of sorts against the powerful commercial music establishment that dictates our tastes. To Grafton Tanner, it is the poster child of the decline and fall of Western civilization. It is at very least yet another symptom. Vaporwave music can be created by anyone, alone, with a computer. No musical talent, training or inspiration is necessary, and rarely is any evident. Ironically, the best vaporwave takes a community, a very real group of people to make it work. Unlike the world of social media, these artists actually had to get together. It was a revelation, they say. Beyond this small exception, we find ourselves more and more alone, perhaps followed by a troll online, posting here and there, continually proving there is nothing social about social media. It all boils down to rampant, uncontrolled capitalism. Capitalism has not delivered us from oppression, Tanner says. We mock it, we vilify it, but it owns us, bores us, and drains us. It is depressingly smothering. Tanner rightly points out that while Americans live in fear of attack, of drugs, of crime, of economic turmoil, of government intrusion — the culture industry still peddles ludicrous, infantile fantasies. The standard cinematic diet is of comic superheroes meant for teenage boys in the 1950s. There is so much bad, retrospective music everywhere it is invisible, and some of us have given up on it entirely. In this brief but densely packed book, Tanner expresses his frustration with a series of pop culture examples and insights on American Kultur. His writing is straightforward, simple, economical and powerful. He acknowledges and appreciates pop culture critics from the Left. His own observations are far clearer and deeper than the usual pabulum of the blogosphere and forum comments. He is perceptive, challenging, and authoritative. His positions are well founded. Thinking is required if you venture here. It was a distinct pleasure to read this little book. Grafton Tanner is a new voice very much worth listening to. David Wineberg

It should be known that you really don't need to be a fan of the vaporwave genre to get a lot from this book. Going in, I knew about vaporwave, felt that I "got it," but I never really listened to it; nonetheless I found Tanner's book extremely fascinating. The book is short, dense, concise, and well argued, and touches on very recent trends in the cultural imagination that most academic publishing won't get around to for another 3 years. Fantastic effort.

A riveting, terse sketch of vaporwave's importance, culture under capitalism and modern nihilism,

A wonderful book if you've struggled with a feeling of discontented nostalgia your whole life and wanted to explore the phenomenon with someone who understands.

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