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Repressed futures: financial derivatives' theological unconscious

Bill Maurer

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Abstract

Financial derivatives are credited with bringing to the fore a number of sociological and metaphysical problems for modernity, from the instantiation of particular modalities of risk to the destabilization of referentiality in knowledge-claims about the world. This essay argues that derivatives can take on the particular power they hold in such accounts only through a repression of their mathematical technique. Opening up the black box of the mathematical technique through a history of statistics, it argues that the founding trauma animating derivatives' discursive power is the separation of religion [illegible] models that give form [illegible] m of this trauma. [illegible] athematical, probl[illegible]

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