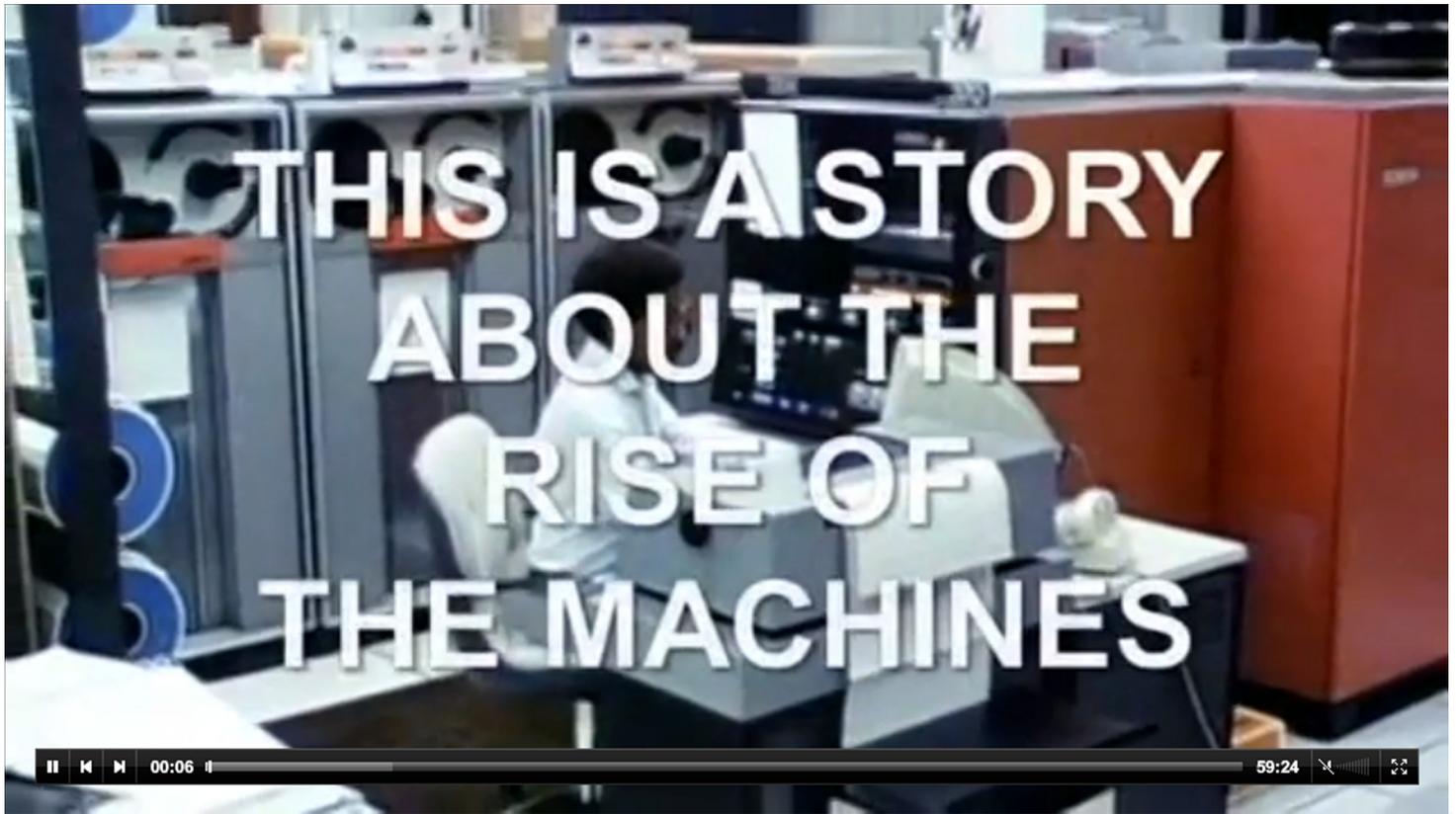


All Watched Over By Machines of Loving Grace



**DETAILS**

*All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace* is a series about how humans have been colonised by the machines they have built — “Although we don’t realise it, the way we see everything in the world today is through the eyes of the computers.”

**Series**

[Part 1 — Love and Power](#)

Part one explores the dream that rose up in the 1990s that computers could create a new kind of stable world. They would bring about a new kind global capitalism free of all risk and without the boom and bust of the past. They would also abolish political power and create a new kind of democracy through the internet where millions of individuals would be connected as nodes in cybernetic systems – without hierarchy. The film tells the story of two perfect worlds. One is the small group of disciples around the novelist Ayn Rand in the 1950s. They saw themselves as a prototype for a future society where everyone could follow their own selfish desires. The other is the global utopia that digital entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley set out to create in the 1990s. Many of them were also disciples of Ayn Rand. They believed that the new computer networks would allow the creation of a society where everyone could follow their own desires, yet there would not be anarchy. They were joined by Alan Greenspan who had also been a disciple of Ayn Rand. He became convinced that the computers were creating a new kind of stable capitalism. But the dream of stability in both worlds would be torn apart by the two dynamic human forces – love and power.

[Part 2 — The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts](#)

English ⌵

**RELEVANT TOPICS**

- coltan    computers    consumerism
- database    dominant culture    science
- social control    technology

Part two shows how our modern scientific idea of nature, the self-regulating ecosystem, is actually a machine fantasy. It has little to do with the real complexity of nature. It is based on cybernetic ideas that were projected on to nature in the 1950s by ambitious scientists. A static machine theory of order that sees humans, and everything else on the planet, as components—cogs—in a system. But in an age disillusioned with politics, the self-regulating ecosystem has again become the model for utopian ideas of human “self-organising networks”, with dreams of new ways of organising societies without leaders and in global visions of connectivity like the Gaia theory. This powerful idea emerged out of the hippie communes in America in the 1960s, and from counter-culture computer scientists who believed that global webs of computers could liberate the world. But, at the very moment this was happening, the science of ecology discovered that the theory of the self-regulating ecosystem wasn’t true. Instead they found that nature was really dynamic and constantly changing in unpredictable ways. But it was too late, the dream of the self-organising network had by now captured imaginations...

### Part 3 — The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey

This episode looks at why popular culture finds this machine vision so beguiling. The film argues it is because all political dreams of changing the world for the better seem to have failed, meaning the retreat into machine-fantasies that say we have no control over our actions because they excuse our failure. At the heart of the film is Bill Hamilton, a scientist. He argued that human behaviour is really guided by codes buried deep within us—a theory later popularised by Richard Dawkins as the “selfish gene”. It said that individual human beings are really just machines whose only job is to make sure the codes are passed on for eternity. This final part begins in 2000 in the jungles of the Congo and Rwanda, where Hamilton is to help prove his dark theories. But all around him the Congo is being torn apart. The film then interweaves the two stories—the strange roots of Hamilton’s theories, and the history of the West’s tortured relationship with the Congo and technology...

Film by: [Adam Curtis](#). 2011. 59.26K views.

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