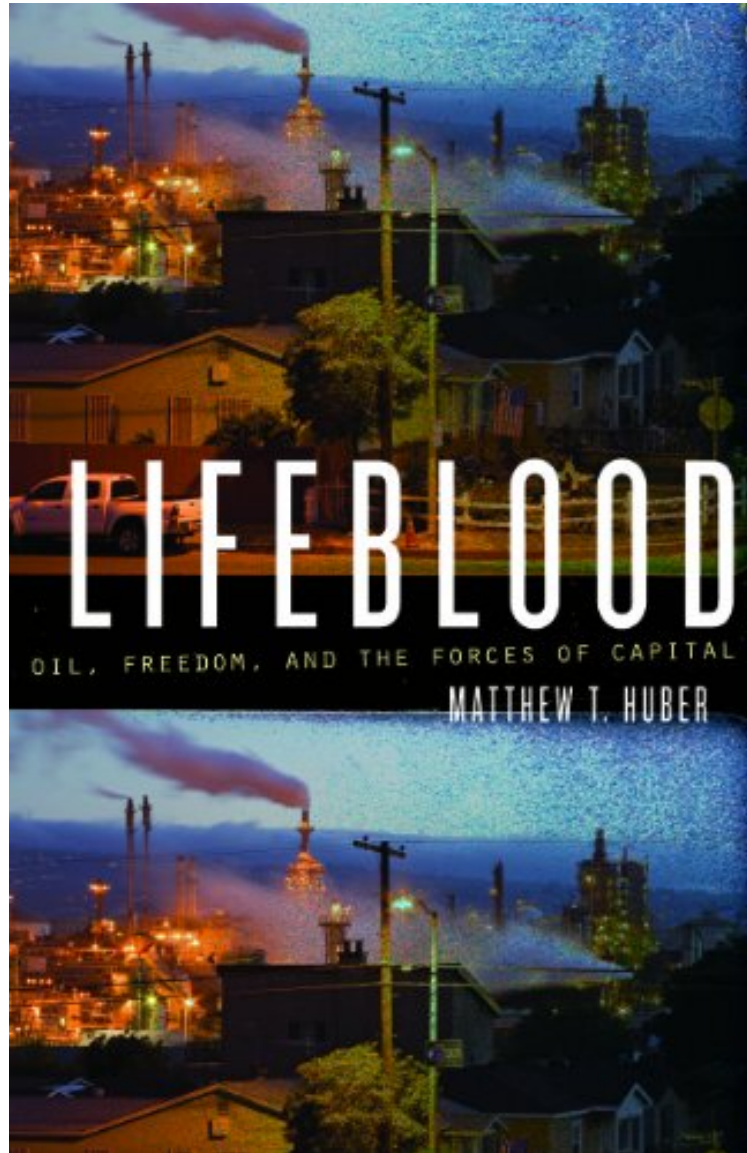


(Download free pdf) *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital* (A Quadrant Book)

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Matthew T. Huber

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Matthew T. Huber : Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital (A Quadrant Book) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital* (A Quadrant Book):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Oil, our LifebloodBy Allan MazurWriting from the perspective of a cultural geographer, Professor Huber describes the links between petroleum and Americans' "spatial experience of

freedom" as it developed under US capitalism. Beginning his overview in the 1920s, I was surprised that he makes no mention of our interstate highway system, but Huber's focus is theoretically deeper than my simple-minded expectation. He is not just recounting a history of the technology but is especially concerned with the interdependence of oil and neoliberalism, and with the "privatized geography of wealth accumulation centered on the home and automobile." He concludes that the biggest barrier to energy change is not technology but the culture and politics that have been produced through energy consumption. Readers with similar interests will certainly want this book.

If our oil addiction is so bad for us, why don't we kick the habit? Looking beyond the usual culprits—Big Oil, petro-states, and the strategists of empire—*Lifeblood* finds a deeper and more complex explanation in everyday practices of oil consumption in American culture. Those practices, Matthew T. Huber suggests, have in fact been instrumental in shaping the broader cultural politics of American capitalism. How did gasoline and countless other petroleum products become so central to our notions of the American way of life? Huber traces the answer from the 1930s through the oil shocks of the 1970s to our present predicament, revealing that oil's role in defining popular culture extends far beyond material connections between oil, suburbia, and automobility. He shows how oil powered a cultural politics of entrepreneurial life—the very American idea that life itself is a product of individual entrepreneurial capacities. In so doing he uses oil to retell American political history from the triumph of New Deal liberalism to the rise of the New Right, from oil's celebration as the lifeblood of postwar capitalism to increasing anxieties over oil addiction. *Lifeblood* rethinks debates surrounding energy and capitalism, neoliberalism and nature, and the importance of suburbanization in the rightward shift in American politics. Today, Huber tells us, as crises attributable to oil intensify, a populist clamoring for cheap energy has less to do with American excess than with the eroding conditions of life under neoliberalism.

"*Lifeblood* offers a radically alternative way of thinking about 'cheap oil' and 'oil addiction' and in so doing peers beneath the liquid surfaces of petroleum to see how the long century of American oil consumption has been central to the rise of American neoliberalism itself. An original and masterful account of oil in contemporary American capitalism."—Michael Watts, University of California, Berkeley
"Compellingly presented and enlivened by fascinating archival research, Huber's arguments about the 'ecology of politics' and the centrality of oil to the making of 'entrepreneurial life' are important and intriguing."—Gavin Bridge, Durham University