

Chapter 1

Sovereignty of Instrumentality


Examination of Digital Publishing From the Lens of Psychopolitics

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ABSTRACT

This study posits that a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to comprehensively analyze digital broadcasting environments, encompassing technical, cultural, psychological, and political dimensions. The research examines how digital broadcasting transforms the individual's identity, structures of desire, and mechanisms of consent, drawing on the ideas of theorists such as Adorno, Marcuse, Feenberg, and Rouvroy, especially within the framework of the concept of instrumental reason. The pervasive use of algorithms to manipulate content on digital platforms has the potential to subject the individual to unseen and covert forms of influence, thereby

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altering the very dynamics of personal identity, desire, and consent. In this context, the concepts of algorithmic governmentality, cultural hegemony, and surveillance capitalism are employed to demonstrate how media systems influence individual behavior through normative structures and affective engineering.

INTRODUCTION

In an age characterized by the pervasive influence of digital technologies across all facets of social life, broadcasting practices are not merely shaped and transformed by technical transformations but also by ruptures of an epistemological, cultural, and psychopolitical nature. The evolution of digital broadcasting has transcended conventional models centered on content production and distribution, metamorphosing into a multifaceted structure that exerts a direct influence on the subjectification processes, economies of desire, and structures of consent of the individual. In this paradigm, digital broadcasting should be regarded not solely as a media technology but also as an ideological apparatus that reshapes the self, desires, and political orientations of the individual.

This study aims to examine the phenomenon of digital broadcasting in the context of the “domination of instrumental reason” and argues that the content produced on digital platforms is not only aesthetic forms but also tools of cultural hegemony, emotional governance, and normative regulation. Theodor Adorno's concept of the “culture industry” (2016) and Herbert Marcuse's (2002) portrayal of “one-dimensional man” demonstrate that the proliferation of content in contemporary digital broadcasting environments functions as a structural instrumentality that fosters conformity rather than critical thinking. This instrumentality operates not only in the aesthetic preferences of the individual, but also in the management of their desires, the manipulation of their emotions, and the direction of their subjectivation.

In contemporary digital broadcasting environments, the individual is often positioned as a free agent with seemingly unlimited choice. However, this freedom is frequently constrained by algorithmically determined content recommendations, uniform aesthetic standards, and cultural norms. The content that is suggested on social media platforms is not only shaped according to an individual's past behavior but is also an output of algorithmic management systems that serve to predict and direct that individual's future behavior. This phenomenon can be conceptualized through the lens of “algorithmic governmentality,” a term coined by Antoinette Rouvroy (2020; Rouvroy & Berns, 2013), which underscores the transformation of the individual into a mere statistical dataset, deviating from the traditional liberal conception of the subject as an autonomous entity.

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