


# Chapter 8

## Algorithmic Narcissism and the Passion Economy: Identity, Visibility, and the Ideology of Self-Performance

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter reveals how the passion economy (celebrated as a space of creativity and autonomy) quietly depends on algorithmic narcissism, a system that measures the self through visibility, metrics, and constant performance. While digital platforms promise empowerment, they also reshape identity, emotional labor, and authenticity into forms of self-exploitation. This chapter brings us to the central question: what*

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*happens when passion becomes performance, and the self becomes an algorithmic project? Ultimately, it invites readers to imagine a future where creativity is measured not by visibility but by humanistic connection.*

## INTRODUCTION

*“The passion economy can only flourish when it moves beyond algorithmic narcissism toward humanistic visibility, reclaiming creation as relational care rather than performative labor”*

Over the past decade, the global digital landscape has undergone a profound transformation, giving rise to a new class of labor built around personal meaning, creative autonomy, and individualized expertise. Commonly referred to as the passion economy, this emerging model now represents one of the fastest-growing segments of the digital labor market. Industry forecasts estimate that over 50 million people worldwide self-identify as creators, while analysts from Goldman Sachs predict the creator and passion-driven sectors will reach US\$480 billion by 2027, overtaking many traditional creative industries (Sachs, 2023).

In addition, the term creative class, first coined by Florida (2004) in his seminal book, has begun to fulfil its own destiny through overstimulation by information and digital consumption. The new generation is being raised in an era of overwhelming information and novel ideas about new occupations replacing old-fashioned, mechanistic work. The word “passion” is now marketable and has a unique exchange value in a complex digital value chain. In this new, emerging, passionate class, creativity becomes the backbone of the economy and a form of national soft power (Kim, 2021) also known as the passion economy.

At first glance, the passion economy appears emancipatory. It promises autonomy, authenticity, flexible work arrangements, and the possibility of aligning livelihood with personal meaning. Governments, universities, and entrepreneurial institutions increasingly promote passion-based digital labor as the future of work, particularly for younger generations. Surveys indicate that for many Gen Z individuals, earning income through passion-driven online activities is no longer aspirational but normative (Browley, 2022; Octavia & Sari, 2024).

As this chapter argues, the passion economy cannot be understood apart from the rise of algorithmic narcissism, a mode of selfhood shaped by metrics, comparison, and continuous optimization. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory (Freud and Lacan), humanistic and social critique (Fromm and Lasch), and postmodern philosophy (Baudrillard, Han, and Stiegler), this chapter examines how narcissism evolves into a contemporary ideological formation. These perspectives converge in the figure of the passion-driven creator, whose identity becomes inseparable from algorithmic

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