

Infomodities

All the Psy-Ops that Fit the Screen

Jason Rodgers

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“News is the dialogue of fragmented power with itself. Notice how scientists, politicians or businessmen now complain that even they only learn about the events they manage from the news.

—“Some Fragmented Views from a Fragmented World” (Against Sleep and Nightmares)

Information bombardment from multiple media sources makes contemplation difficult. Everything is broken down into fragmented data having no relation to anything else presenting. It is superficially processed constantly. No rest, but neither exertion nor effort. Just continuous banality and superficiality.

Experts and management derive their power from specialization, from dividing experience into component parts and monopolizing key nexus points. At the same time, this power is their weakness. The capability to engage in a wide range of living facets is cut off, instead they rely on their oppressed underlings. Their view is cut off to such an extent that a perpetual bombardment of information is the only way they can maintain the illusion of awareness.

The more ever-present and expansive the system of power is, the more spread out and thin it is. Paradoxically, as the totality forms, each nexus becomes more isolated and fragmented. A continuous communication system becomes the nervous system of totalitarianism.

With info-power it becomes not a matter of understanding or a whole picture view, but the ability to manipulate pieces of discrete data, factoids, with no relationship to anything else. Data pours forth in a continuous stream, which immediately flows away, becoming irrelevant.

News is the recombinant mechanism of disjointed imagery, recontextualizing the stream of Internet and satellite images, giving the illusion that semiocapitalism, where political economy has leaked into all forms of existence, is under control on a human level, when actually it is beyond the control of individuals. This is the flip side of cyberculture theory, which holds electronic systems up as dynamical, as a new nature, thus out of human control.

Fragmented journalism in the digital age results in news as an even more fragmented discourse where each piece of data is disconnected from any whole knowledge. Consuming news is habitual, a ritual habit in which one feels they are informed. This is all fleeting data washing over the consumer.

Each news alert ding draws the attention of smartphone users as if they were Pavlov’s poor, tortured, salivating puppies.

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