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Back in the day we attempted to make machines that would take in outside data, process it, and try to predict the future. To fund it, they predominantly sold the information to people who wanted to buy and sell stocks. Enough people started doing this that they started making the machines send out stock reports themselves, which other machines take in as data to further sell, buy, and report on stock themselves.

This eventually created a massive feedback loop of stock data being managed by autonomic intelligence (not the same as artificial intelligence) that outright blocked the human element, and right now the open secret is that the market is out of human control. If anyone tried to pull these data loops, even one crucial out of sync chain link could cause the world economy to collapse over night.

In tandem with this technology, the internet happened and a load of marketers started moving to "content marketing", which is the idea that the product and the marketing are one and the same. You are selling a lifestyle story, which is why if you pay attention, most companies that used to just sell a product have made massive investments into media space. This is fine in and of itself, the 80's had a similar version of this. The problem is that the easy proliferation of consumer data reaches these autonomic intelligences, and they begin to report on what kind of narratives sell vs what narratives don't.

We live in a post hypernormalisation world, a soviet term for propaganda that obfuscates ones perception of reality. When you mix in marketing and propaganda with these feedback loops, add on top of that Google's ad program that essentially bubbles people into feedback loops; and only give them what they want to hear so you can sell them something. It creates mass psychological dissonance between different groups of people that, consciously or not, have their life's context formed around media narratives.

Anyway, the implication is that you basically have your cultural narrative content being created by abstract machinations who may or may not be intelligent. That's not exactly reassuring as there's no moral parameter to prevent the data from trying to get everyone to kill each other.

So people have their lives contextualized by inhuman machinations; but this is more than just consumer's being taken for a ride. The consequence of religion falling out of style in the public consciousness is that there's no longer a single common cultural narrative. The largest point of contention is that there's always been a percentage of any population that gives way to radical behavior. In antiquity this would often be religious fanaticism. Yet if these cultural narratives are weakened; and the only other alternatives to them are autonomically generated among content marketing teams. Their narratives too shallow to really make a lifestyle out of, you run into a phenomenon where a percentage of the population essentially migrates between brands in a pseudo idolatrous methodology. When you come down to it a fanbase acts as a community to bring people together to discuss a specific narrative. It's to be noted that unlike religious narratives, many of these narratives aren't burdened with offering any illusion to benefiting society at large.

Have you ever stopped to think about how we live in a world where a bunch of people do crazy shit over cartoons, harass people, send death threats; all over multimedia franchises? Do you really think that's normal behavior? These people would have been in a Monastery a couple hundreds of years ago. They're fanatics, nothing wrong with it. Assuming it's constructive; but these narratives don't have that interest in mind.

So to put it bluntly, we quite literally live in a society where abstract mathematical formula are in charge of a market that pretty much doesn't sell products anymore and is more focused on selling narratives based on algorithmic parameters. If not outright apocalyptic, these will be interesting times.