Simmels

🔷 Introduction: Art vs. Reality

Simmel opens by discussing how **modern art theories focus on spatial organization**, particularly in painting and sculpture. However, he warns that the **space within art is fundamentally different from real space**:

- In **real space**, you can **touch and interact** with objects.

- In **paintings**, you can **only see** the objects—they belong to a **self-contained visual world**.

🎨 **Key point**: Art pulls reality into a new domain—**an "ideal space"** that's untouchable, independent, and unified. Even if art borrows from reality, it builds its own internal, symbolic world.

🔷 Dual Nature of a Vase

Simmel introduces a **vase** as a perfect example of an object that **exists in two worlds**:

1. **The Real World** – as a **physical, usable object** (held, filled, poured).
2. **The Artistic World** – as a **form of art**, appreciated for its aesthetic design.

📌 **Crucial Insight**: A vase is not purely aesthetic like a painting; it is **meant to be used**. That's why it **bridges the gap** between **function and form**, **utility and beauty**.

🔷 The Handle: Aesthetic and Functional Unity

The **handle** is the most vivid **symbol** of this dual nature:

- It connects the **vase to the practical world** (you hold the vase by it).
- But it must also be part of the **aesthetic whole**—not just stuck on like a tool.

🌀 **Philosophical tension**: The handle is both **practical** and **beautiful**. Its **design must reflect both roles**, not just utility or just beauty.

🔷 Soldered vs. Organic Handles

Simmel contrasts two types of handles:

1. **Soldered-on Handles** – seem **externally added**, suggesting **practical use**.
2. **Integrated Handles** – seem **grown** from the vase's body, reflecting **artistic unity**.

🐍 Sometimes handles are shaped like animals (snakes, dragons), which **accentuate their outsider quality**, like they crawled onto the vase. This emphasizes their symbolic meaning as **foreign appendages**.

🔷 Handles and Aesthetic Unity

Some vases look as if **the handle was carved out of the same material**, almost as if the vase was one single piece. This creates a **harmonious form**, similar to how:

👤 A **human arm grows out of the body**, forming a **natural, purposeful connection** to the outside world.

🔷 Organic Imagery and Human Soul

Simmel draws from **nature** and **the human body**:

🌿 Some ancient Central American bowls are shaped like a **leaf and stem**, where the **handle is the stem** and the bowl is the **leaf**—a natural extension.

✋ He compares tools to **extensions of the human body** (e.g., the hand). Tools extend the **soul's intention** into the world, just like a handle helps pour life from the bowl.

🔷 Aesthetic Failure: When One Aspect Dominates

When either **function** or **form** dominates too much, aesthetic failure results:

🚫 If the handle is **just decorative** and cannot be grasped, it feels like **useless arms** tied to the body—**trapped potential**.

🚫 If the handle has **too many purposes** (e.g., 3 handles pointing in different directions), it causes **confusion and chaos**—the user sees multiple options but can use only one at a time. This **breaks aesthetic unity**.

🔷 Detached or Imitative Handles

Simmel then critiques **movable** or **fake-looking handles**:

- When **a porcelain handle imitates straw**, it feels **unauthentic**—like a **mask** on the material.
- If it's **made of the same material but pretends to be something else**, it disrupts the **true essence** of the vase.

💡 Key idea: The **illusion** or **misrepresentation** of materials can ruin the vase's **unity and meaning**.

🔷 Handle vs. Spout: Symbolic Complements

Now Simmel introduces the **spout** (or opening) as the **opposite of the handle**:

- **Handle** = how the **world touches** the vessel (input, grasp).
- **Spout** = how the **vessel touches** the world (output, pour).

Together they form a **balance**: like the relationship between the **human soul and external world**.

- Senses bring the world into the soul.
- Will and action push the soul outward.

🌐 The handle and spout **encapsulate human interaction with the world**.

🔷 The Handle as Superaesthetic Symbol

Simmel now reaches his **philosophical climax**:

💎 The handle is not just about **form** or **utility**—it is about a **"superaesthetic beauty"**, a **higher unity** that integrates both. It reflects the **deepest structure of life**:

- We live in **multiple overlapping spheres**—home, work, nation, etc.
- Each of these **imposes functions on us**, yet we remain **individuals with unity**.

The handle symbolizes this **tension and harmony**: we must **serve outer worlds** (like utility) while staying **true to inner form** (like beauty).

🔷 Soul and Symbol: Human Life in Two Worlds

Simmel ends with a profound metaphor:

🧠 The **soul** is like a **handle**—rooted in one world but reaching into another. It helps us **grasp the outside world** while maintaining **internal integrity**.

We are like the **handle on the vase**:

- **Part of one whole** (self, identity, soul).
- **Reaching into another** (society, relationships, purpose).

🧉 The **handle**, though small and functional, represents the **philosophy of dual existence**, the beauty of being **within and beyond** ourselves at once.

Benjamin - crowds masses gestures - selections from 'On some motifs in Baudelaire

PART I: Baudelaire and the Crowd (Paragraphs 1–6)

❖ A Woman in a Veil – "Love at Last Sight"

A woman in mourning passes silently through the crowd, catching the poet's eye for just a moment. This becomes a metaphor for modern urban love.

Benjamin here is analyzing a Baudelaire sonnet. The poet doesn't see the crowd as hostile or chaotic. Instead, it is the *source of fascination*. The love he experiences is fleeting — **"love at last sight,"** not at first sight — a beautiful stranger never to be seen again.

✦ It's like a **sudden, erotic jolt**, not one grounded in ongoing intimacy — more like the lonely man who is overwhelmed by a sudden shock of desire.

The urban crowd brings *shock*, not just emotional excitement. The poet is deeply affected, not joyfully, but with a melancholic pang. This is a modern, **urban form of love** — intense, sudden, unfulfilled.

PART II: Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" (Paragraphs 7–14)

Poe's story (which Baudelaire translated) is used as a **classic literary example** of how modern writers capture the crowd.

The narrator of Poe's story, recovering from illness, sits in a London café, watching the people flow by. He becomes obsessed with following one particular man — *"the man of the crowd."*

✦ Poe's descriptions are vivid, even caricatured: clerks with odd ears, people moving mechanically, some talking to themselves out of loneliness despite being in a crowd.

✦ Poe is not concerned with "the masses" in a socialist way. He describes *people* in a general, alienated sense. The crowd is *inhuman, compulsive, and overwhelming*.

Baudelaire is deeply inspired by this image. He is attracted and repulsed — he is a **participant** in the crowd (*the flâneur*), but also an **observer** who feels distant and superior.

PART III: The Flâneur vs. The Man of the Crowd (Paragraphs 15–18)

Baudelaire identifies with the man of the crowd, but Benjamin argues this is incorrect.

✦ The man of the crowd is manic, restless. The **flâneur** is contemplative, leisurely, aristocratic.

The *flâneur* belongs to old Paris — a world of arcades, slow walks, and individual contemplation. London, on the other hand, is too modern, too chaotic. Poe's man has lost control — he's not at ease but *possessed* by the crowd.

Benjamin compares Poe's narrator to Hoffmann's **cousin**, who watches people from his home window, physically detached. He watches with *opera glasses*, practicing the "art of seeing" — he turns the crowd into visual entertainment.

PART IV: Big-City Anxiety and Shock (Paragraphs 19–23)

Poe, Baudelaire, and even Heine are all struck by **the horror of the crowd**.

✦ Big cities breed isolation, savagery, and shock. People are surrounded by others but feel profoundly alone.

Benjamin points out that the modern city produces **shock experiences**:

- The invention of the **match** (one flick = fire)

- The **camera shutter** (one click = captured moment)

- The **telephone** (lift receiver = instant connection)

✦ These rapid, disconnected movements transform how humans relate to time and perception.

Baudelaire says that in the crowd, the modern man becomes a **"kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness"** — bombarded by sensory data, constantly adjusting.

PART V: Industrial Work and Automatism (Paragraphs 24–28)

Benjamin now brings in Marx to explain **how factory work shapes human perception**:

✦ On the **assembly line**, the worker's body moves in response to the machine — not from experience, but from mechanical repetition.

Just like in a film, the scenes move rapidly, disconnectedly. In a factory, each action is cut off from the next — no continuity, no depth. This is mirrored in the behavior of Poe's pedestrians: they are robotic, smiling absently, reflexively bowing when bumped.

✦ Their gestures absorb the shock of city life, but they do not process or understand it. Like machines, they are **conditioned**, not experienced.

PART VI: Gambling as the Modern Worker's Mirror (Paragraphs 29–34)

Benjamin shifts to the **gambler** as another symbol of modernity.

Baudelaire's gambler is not chasing money rationally. He is driven by compulsion — repeating the same action over and over, disconnected from the past, like a factory worker.

✦ Gambling is a *shock-driven behavior* — **each round is disconnected from the last**, just like the mechanical actions of industrial labor.

✦ Workers and gamblers both live in an empty present, without continuity or depth.

Baudelaire's poem *"Le Jeu"* depicts gamblers hunched in a dark cave (Satan's realm), driven by a futile passion. The poet watches, *envying them*, but also fearful — because they've traded meaning for motion, **hell for nothingness**.

PART VII: Time and Experience in Baudelaire and Proust (Final Paragraphs)

Benjamin closes with Proust's reading of Baudelaire:

✦ Baudelaire's experience of time is fragmented. Only a few days — **"significant ones"** — appear in his poetry.

✦ Time in Baudelaire is *discontinuous, shattered by shock* — only certain instants stand out (a passing woman, a sudden fear, a longing). These moments are intense but isolated.

Proust and Bergson, by contrast, believed in **durée** — a continuous inner time, flowing and deep. Benjamin notes that Baudelaire's poetic world reflects the exact *opposite* of this — **disconnection, ephemerality, and repetition.**

✦ Time becomes a gambler's second-hand, always ticking, never pausing. Each moment is a *coup*, a *shock*, a *reflex* — not a memory.

PUSH BUTTON

1. Introduction: Frictionless Interfaces and Forgotten Labor

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, in 1916, worried that modern conveniences like push buttons disconnected people from understanding the work or mechanisms "behind the button." People simply pressed and expected results without knowing the processes. This early critique set the stage for Plotnick's analysis of how electric push buttons transformed user interaction with machines and electric power.

- **Key idea**: The ease of using a button can result in social detachment and ignorance of labor, technology, and responsibility behind it.
- Fisher's concern: Overreliance on effortless interfaces may make our ability to act or understand "rusty from disuse.

2. Scope and Methodology

Plotnick examines push buttons from 1880 to 1923 in two phases:

- **Phase 1 (1880–1915)**: Buttons were novel, and educators and manufacturers sought to make them intelligible to users. Some promoted hands-on learning; others emphasized ease and simplicity.
- **Phase 2 (1915–1923)**: Push buttons became "black boxes"—taken for granted. This prompted a renewed push for consumer education about what buttons actually did.

This study draws from media studies, science and technology studies (STS), and the social construction of technology (SCOT).

3. Understanding User Interfaces Historically

Push buttons are part of a broader class of **user interfaces** (like dials, knobs, and screens). Plotnick argues:

- Interfaces are **socially and historically constructed**.
- Technologies like the QWERTY keyboard or push buttons are not neutral—they reflect decisions about usability, labor, and control.

- These interfaces shape how users interact with machines and what kind of **skills or knowledge** they require.

4. The Electric Push Button as Material Technology

- The word "button" comes from French *bouton* meaning small projection.
- Push buttons evolved from **clothing fasteners** and **musical keys** to **electric interfaces**.
- By the 1880s–1920s, they became common in homes and businesses, controlling bells, lights, alarms, etc.

Three major design priorities:

1. **Ease of use** – Operable by hand or foot.

2. **Durability** – Resisting moisture, dust, and wear.

3. **Aesthetics** – Blending into home decor.

This evolution is shown in catalogs and patents—hundreds filed between 1880 and 1920.

5. Push Buttons in Everyday Life

- Early catalogs had few button types. By 1909, dozens were available: floor buttons, corded ones, illuminated, etc.

- They were used in:

    - **Electric bells (doorbells)**

    - **Lights**

    - **Communication systems**

    - **Novel gadgets** (e.g., early flashlights, car horns)

Push buttons represented **luxury and modernity**—especially for those with electric wiring.

6. Promoting Tinkering, Education, and Exploration

Educators promoted a **"push-button education"**:

- Schools taught children how to wire bells, build buttons, and understand electrical circuits.
- Manuals, magazines, and books for children and adults (e.g., *Electric Bells and All About Them*, *Harper's Electricity Book for Boys*) encouraged DIY exploration.

- Push-button education helped demystify electricity and combat public fear.
- Girls were also encouraged to learn, particularly for **domestic electrical management**.

This phase imagined the button as a **gateway to understanding** electricity, not just a convenience.

7. Selling Effortless Electrical Experiences

Contrary to educators, manufacturers marketed buttons as magical and effortless:

- **"You press the button, we do the rest"** (Kodak's slogan adapted widely).
- Ads focused on luxury, safety, and ease—no need to understand what happened behind the scenes.
- World's Fairs and promotional films encouraged **wish-fulfillment fantasies**: pressing a button summoned servants or goods.

Critics within the industry warned this made consumers **ignorant** of the actual labor and systems required to provide electricity.

8. Exposing Mechanisms Behind the Button (195–1923)

Once buttons became too normalized, companies struggled to make users appreciate electricity's cost and value.

- Organizations like **NELA (National Electric Light Association)** launched campaigns:

  - Ads and **films** like *Back of the Button* and *Yours to Command* tried to show the wires, workers, and infrastructure behind each press.
    Slogans changed: From promoting simplicity to emphasizing **invisible labor and engineering**.
    Engineers like **Charles Steinmetz** explained in public magazines how buttons hid complex systems and natural resources.

Thus, the button went from being **an educational entry point**, to a **symbol of effortlessness**, and then back to being **problematic due to over-familiarity**.

9. Conclusion: Rethinking the Push Button

Plotnick argues:

- Push buttons are not trivial—they are sites of **cultural negotiation**, power, and user interaction.
- The interface mediates **fantasy and reality**, **empowerment and ignorance**.
- Historians should pay more attention to interfaces like buttons, dials, and screens—not just the devices they control.
- Studying user interfaces helps us understand how **technology shapes, and is shaped by, social expectations and user experiences.**

DIGITAL GAMBLING

1. INTRODUCTION

Central Claim: Schull explores how **digital gambling machines** are deliberately designed to manipulate human desire and behavior. Through ethnographic research in Las Vegas, she reveals the intimate, engineered connection between gamblers' psychological states and the design features of digital machines.

Key Concepts Introduced:

- Gambling machines are more than entertainment—they are **tools of capital extraction**.
- The term "zone" is introduced: a **trance-like mental state** that gamblers strive to enter.
- The digital gambling interface showcases how **modern capitalism intensifies relationships between space, time, and money**.

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2. HISTORY & TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

Evolution of Slot Machines:

- **Mechanical reels (1890s):** Early slots had simple mechanisms.
- **Hopper mechanism (1963):** Automated payout device, increased speed and reduced human intervention.
- **Video screens (1970s):** Transition from physical reels to digital screens.
- **Microprocessors (1980s):** Enabled more complex functions and regulation.
- **Random Number Generator (RNG):** Core feature; constantly runs combinations until a button is pressed. Determines wins/losses based on statistical payout tables.

RNG as Theology:

- Industry insiders call it the "**really new god**" – emphasizing the RNG's power over fate.

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3. PRODUCTIVITY & TEMPORAL MANAGEMENT

Slot Machine as Productivity Engine:

- Borrowing from **Taylorism** (scientific management), casinos aim to **maximize play per unit time**.
- Cummings (casino analyst): Focus is on increasing "gaming productivity"—more bets per minute means more revenue.

From Handles to Buttons:

- Pull-handle = ~300 games/hour.
- Button = up to 600 or even 900 games/hour.
- **Touchscreens** and minimal movement increase play speed and reduce effort.

Time is Profit:

- Marx: "Moments are the element of profit."
- Foucault: Time should be mined for maximum productivity.

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4. MACHINE ERGONOMICS & STAYING POWER

Physical Comfort Equals Revenue:

- Chairs designed to prevent blood flow restriction.
- Screens angled to reduce eye fatigue.
- Controls positioned for easy access.

Digital Integration:

- Machines include **built-in televisions**, **bingo printers**, **food/drink request systems**.
- **Noise-canceling tech** to reduce distractions.

Goal: Make sure the player **never has to leave** their seat.

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5. CASHLESS, CREDITLESS, VALUELESS MONEY

The Disappearance of Real Money:

- Machines use **credits instead of coins**.
- Players insert bills, receive digital credits.
- Removes the "sting" of spending money; enhances dissociation.

Virtual Banking:

- Players can transfer funds from accounts directly into machines.
- **No PINs needed**, no $300/day ATM limit.
- The shift from physical cash to seamless digital transactions increases speed—and spending.

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6. OPERANT CONDITIONING & REWARD DESIGN

Behavioral Psychology at Work:

- Based on **Skinner's operant conditioning.**
- **Variable ratio reinforcement** is most addictive (rewards at unpredictable intervals).
- Near-misses and small wins keep players engaged.

Multi-Line Play:

- Modern machines allow **9+ lines** per spin.
- Maximum bet goes from 5 coins to 45+.
- Creates **illusion of frequent winning** even when net loss occurs.

Sensory Engineering:

- High-def graphics, simulated coin sounds, animations.
- Over 400 unique sound cues.
- Goal: Overstimulate senses to enhance immersion.

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7. PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE ZONE

The Zone:

- Deeply dissociative state where **gamblers lose track of time, space, money, and even bodily awareness**.

Design Features That Support It:

- **Speed:** Faster = deeper immersion.
- **Isolation:** Players avoid others, use tricks to keep people away.
- **Continuity:** No need to stop (credit systems, comfortable seating, automation).

Quotes from Gamblers:

- "I was inside the machine."
- "Don't congratulate me, don't interrupt—this is MY machine."

Perceived Control:

- Dynamic play rates adapt to player's speed.
- Players feel like they're "in sync" with the machine.
- **Illusion of skill and autonomy**, even when outcomes are fixed.

8. PLAYER-MACHINE MERGING

Physical and Psychological Fusion:

- Gamblers often describe feeling like the machine is an **extension of their body**.
- Body awareness fades: players don't feel their hands.
- Money and time lose meaning—credits feel like tokens, not currency.

Temporal Disappearance:

- Gamblers speak of losing hours without noticing.
- Chronometric time replaced by "game time."
- Pacing of wins/losses feels manipulable.

9. AUTOPLAY & THE COLLAPSE OF DESIRE

Final Stage of Design:

- **AutoPlay**: Gamblers press one button and let the machine play itself.
- They stop making choices and just **watch credits go up and down**.
- Design overtakes desire—gamblers align completely with machine logic.

Digital Ritual:

- Gambling becomes pure binary: yes/no, win/loss.
- Human becomes **part of the RNG system**.
- Digital technology dissolves distinction between person, machine, and capital.

10. CONCLUSION: DESIGN & DESIRE

Bigger Argument:

- Digital gambling machines are not just about fun. They are part of a larger **capitalist project** to extract value.
- Digital tools intensify older capitalist tendencies: **fragmentation, discipline, control**, and now **interactivity, immersion, flow**.

Modernity vs. Postmodernity:

- From shock (modernity) → to **flow and absorption** (postmodernity).
- Everything becomes **convertible and abstracted**: time = money = body = credit.

Insight:

- Machines seem entertaining, but they are **hyper-efficient behavioral traps**, guiding players into **a closed loop of desire and design**.
- Players lose not just money but their sense of self, time, and agency.

Tv set Mccarthy location

- ◆ **1. Central Thesis of the Article**

11

Anna McCarthy introduces the concept of **"TV settings"** – arrangements people create around TV sets in public, non-domestic urban spaces (like restaurants, stores, etc.) in the U.S., especially those run by immigrants. She argues that these settings reflect **transnational experiences** and local social realities.

- **TV is more than just a medium** of entertainment or news; it's a **material object** around which people construct meaning through decoration and placement.
- She borrows the term **"misuse value"** from Bill Brown, meaning the way an object like a TV is reimagined and used differently than originally intended – i.e., not just for watching, but also as a **shrine, a shelf, a cultural marker**, or part of a commercial aesthetic.

◆ 2. Material Culture and TV Settings

McCarthy explains that **what surrounds a TV screen** (souvenirs, icons, images, flowers, signs) is as meaningful as what's displayed on it.

- Citing Hartley, Leal, Lyons, etc., she notes how the **TV console is a space of personal expression**, often linked to:

    - **Shrines or religious imagery**
    - **Social mobility indicators**
    - **Cultural celebrations**
- These **"TV settings"**, often made in workplaces like food shops or video stores, express both **immigrant identity** and **local social practice**, merging elements from home and host cultures.

◆ 3. Example: Bella Italia Restaurant

A key example is a pizzeria named **Bella Italia**, where the TV is surrounded by:

- An image of Patti LaBelle and a bell (a pun on the restaurant's name),
- A horseshoe, red pepper, surveillance camera,
- Plates and icons of Padre Pio and the Pope,
- Restaurant licenses, family photos, and decorative plaques.

This arrangement is what Grey Gundaker would call an **"object code"** – a meaningful arrangement of physical items that convey layered cultural, religious, and personal meanings.

🟡 These are not random — they're **intentional material expressions**:

- **Italy** is evoked through the tricolor paint, sacred imagery, and symbols of luck.
- The **surveillance camera** and licenses serve pragmatic needs.

- The mix of spiritual, nostalgic, and regulatory elements reflects the **dual nature** (aesthetic and functional) of such displays.

◆ 4. TV as Space-Binding Technology

She links these displays to the broader idea of **television as "space-binding"** – a term used to describe how TV collapses distance, making viewers feel connected to faraway places.

- At Bella Italia, **Italian soccer matches on the screen**, surrounded by Italian imagery, **create a hybrid space** — both *here (USA)* and *there (Italy)*.
- Dean McCannell's theory of **souvenirs and "elsewhereness"** helps explain how everyday objects make distant cultures present. But McCarthy critiques his simplistic tourist-vs-immigrant distinction, saying the **souvenir plate and the TV screen** both serve emotional, cultural, and symbolic purposes.

◆ 5. TV as a Thing Among Things

McCarthy argues that **TV is not just a source of images**. It is:

- A **physical thing** (like a fridge or a plate),
- A **platform** for decoration (flowers, doilies),
- A **surface** for sticking signs and symbols,
- A **semiotic magnet** that attracts other objects.

TV's **"thingness"** is often hidden by its content. But in immigrant-run spaces, its object-status is emphasized through decoration, location, and usage.

◆ 6. Fridge-Top TV Placement

A recurring "convention" in these settings is placing **TVs on refrigerators**, especially in food joints and delis. This is:

- A **space-saving strategy** in cramped areas

- A **symbolic combination** of two domestic machines (TV and fridge) in commercial, public spaces.
- Sometimes, **TVs are replaced with other objects**, like fish tanks, to alter the ambiance

This reflects how **practical concerns (visibility, safety, wiring)** combine with **aesthetic concerns** to create hybrid setups.

◆ 7. Decorative Clutter and Commercial Ephemera

In many small stores (like a **Russian deli**), the TV is surrounded by:

- Religious icons,
- Tourist posters,
- Promotional calendars and magnets,
- Branded stickers (e.g., Fila),
- Videotapes of Russian satellite shows.

These objects function like a **cultural montage**, invoking:

- **Food and taste (terroir)**,
- **Nostalgia for the homeland**,
- **Engagement with U.S. consumer culture**.

Even stickers or magnets, often ignored, are shown to carry **deep cultural and emotional meaning**, especially for immigrants who may have once seen these as symbols of a "dreamland."

◆ 8. The TV as a Sign Board

Another striking practice is the **attaching of textual messages directly to TV sets**.

Examples:

- A **handwritten warning sign** on a Manhattan deli TV: "Don't Touch."
- A **Chinese video store** displays bilingual signs above its outdoor TV to promote sales, with different messages for locals vs. tourists vs. seniors.

This transforms the TV into a **dual communicator**:

- **Screen = Moving images** (news, movies, shows),
- **Frame = Local announcements, personal messages, institutional voice**.

These glued-on signs show that **TVs don't just broadcast distant content**—they also help communicate **immediate, local needs**, like discounts, rules, or public service announcements.

◆ 9. Conclusion: What "Misuse Value" Really Means

McCarthy uses Bill Brown's idea of **misuse value** to explain how TVs are repurposed creatively.

- A TV **on a fridge with magnets** becomes a display piece.
- A screen showing foreign movies **outside a store** acts like an advertising banner.

- A VCR set playing home-taped satellite content becomes a **community media center**.

📌 She emphasizes:

- TV is not just for watching — it is a **flexible cultural artifact**.
- These settings blend **global media flows** with **local identity-making**.
- TV, as a physical object, participates in the **daily life and creative expression** of immigrant communities.

Data ai and interface

1. Introduction: Surveys vs. Fieldwork vs. Data

- Two quotes—one from **Malinowski (anthropologist)**, another from **Christian Rudder (data scientist/OkCupid founder)**—emphasize moving away from traditional surveys to **observing real behavior**.
- Malinowski pioneered **ethnographic fieldwork**; Rudder used **user behavior logs**.
- This comparison introduces the **intersection between anthropology and data science**.

  Core idea: Data science and anthropology both seek "actuality"—one through digital records, the other through lived observation.

2. Big Data as an Analytical Object

- **Big Data** has changed computer science by:
    - Enabling social web apps (Facebook, Netflix)
    - Enabling new AI systems (e.g., image recognition, speech-to-text).
- **Machine learning** replaced rule-based AI—algorithms now "learn" from **data, not rules**.
- **Anthropologists critique** Big Data hype. Scholars like **boyd and Crawford (2012)** and **Boellstorff (2013)** argue:
    - Big Data is **not neutral or purely objective**.
    - All data is **interpreted**, situated in **culture and power**.

3. Big Data and Surveillance

- **Cambridge Analytica** scandal showed how data is misused to manipulate users.
- Big Data is linked to **surveillance capitalism** (Zuboff), political control, and loss of privacy.
- However, Big Data systems are not perfect: examples include **technical breakdowns** or **UIDAI's faulty data**.
- This challenges the myth of Big Data's infallibility.

4. Data in Self-Care and the Quantified Self

- Devices like fitness trackers and pulse oximeters track bodily data
- Users start **depending on tech for self-awareness**, leading to **infantilization** (Schüll).
- Individuals outsource their agency to **"nudges"** and notifications.
- Raises ethical concerns about autonomy and control.

5. Anthropology's Two Approaches to Big Data

1. **Epistemological critique**: Big Data isn't pure truth—it's framed and interpreted.
2. **Power critique**: Big Data systems extract control over people, often invisibly.

6. Fieldwork vs. Data Science: Two Epistemologies

- Lev Manovich contrasts **face-to-face ethnography** with **remote data science**.
- Seaver argues: data scientists themselves can be **ethnographed**—they make cultural, not just technical artifacts.
- **Malinowski and Rudder both** criticize surveys—indicating deeper alignment between ethnographic and data-driven methods.

7. Surplus Value of Sociality

- Core argument: **Big Data systems extract "surplus sociality"**—social behaviors turned into **value** at interfaces.
- **Example: Walnut ATM Locator App** (during India's demonetization crisis):
    - Used **automated SMS data** (ATM withdrawal alerts) rather than **crowdsourced feedback**.
    - These SMS messages are usually **redundant**, but were **repurposed** as real-time ATM activity data

8. Redundancy, Data, and Surplus

- Redundancy = seemingly useless information (like bank SMSes).
- But just like **nineteenth-century statistical records**, they become **valuable when evaluated**.
- This is a **non-Marxian notion of surplus**—based not on labor exploitation but **automated record-making**.

9. Informating and Surveillance

- Zuboff's idea: digital systems not only automate but also **"informate"**—record data from every action.
- Bank SMS, app clicks, and Netflix views—all are examples of **automated traces** of sociality.
- These traces = **events** recorded by systems, forming the basis of AI models.

10. Anthropological Fieldnotes vs. Interface Data

- Fieldnotes = redundant observations made valuable through **interpretation**.
- The essay compares this to **automated data** used by apps like Walnut.
- Both extract surplus from everyday life:

    - Anthropologist: surplus of **imponderabilia** (subtle social cues).
    - Data scientist: surplus of **user activity logs**.

11. The "Office" vs. the "Person"

- Drawing from **Max Weber**, the author distinguishes:

  - **Anthropology**: interested in the **person** (their full lived experience).
  - **Data science**: interested in the **user as an office**—a recordable set of behaviors.

12. Engineering the Unconscious

- UI/UX designers use **A/B testing** and **nudging** to alter user behavior **without awareness**.
- **Cambridge Analytica** manipulated unconscious fears using social media data.
- Author introduces the idea of **"machinic unconscious"**: data that reflects desires, patterns, or habits that users themselves aren't aware of

13. Metaphors: Traps and Lures

- Recommendation systems are likened to **traps** (Seaver)—designed to **capture user attention**.
- These traps work by **luring unconscious investments**, not through rational persuasion.

14. GANs and AI Ethics

- AI models like **ConvNets** can be fooled by **GANs** using imperceptible noise—a metaphor for **nudging the unconscious of machines**.
- This mirrors how human users are nudged.
- Raises concerns about **AI bias, ethical use, and the "opacity"** of machine learning.

15. Conclusion: Nudging the Machinic Unconscious

- Modern AI relies on human-labeled data, which contains **social biases and unconscious patterns**.
- **Nudging** now affects both humans and machines.
- AI ethics must account not just for **bias and outcomes**, but also for the **machinic unconscious** that emerges from social data.

Mulvey

◆ I. Introduction

A. A Political Use of Psychoanalysis

- **What is she doing here?** Laura Mulvey is borrowing psychoanalysis (Freud and Lacan) not to understand the individual mind but to analyze how *cinema*, as a cultural product, reflects and reinforces social ideas — especially those around **sexual difference** (male/female roles).
- **Main argument**: She claims film mirrors a male-dominated (patriarchal) society that already controls how men and women are perceived. Cinema doesn't invent this — it uses it, plays with it,

and reinforces it.

- **Psychoanalysis as a weapon**: She is using psychoanalysis as a **political tool** to expose how deeply **gender inequality** is embedded in cinema's very structure — not just in storylines, but in how people are shown and looked at.
- **Phallocentrism and Castration**:
    - Phallocentrism: a world centered on the male symbolic organ — the phallus (not the actual penis, but symbolic power).
    - Paradox: It *needs* the "castrated" woman (the one who lacks the phallus) to make sense of the male system.
    - So, woman represents *lack*, and man represents *power*.
- **Woman's role in patriarchy**:
    - Symbolizes castration (because she "lacks" the penis).
    - Helps the male child enter language/society (symbolic order).
    - But once she has done this, she becomes irrelevant in the symbolic world — she only exists as a **memory**, a symbol, not a real participant.
    - She's stuck in between being a symbol of **lack** and **fullness** — but both are male projections.
- **Main idea**: Woman isn't allowed to make meaning; she's only the one *on whom* meaning is imposed.
- **Feminist importance**: This theory helps feminists understand the root of female oppression. But it also reveals the huge challenge: how can we fight an unconscious structured by patriarchy when even our language and culture are based on it?
- **She admits limits**: Psychoanalysis can't fully help explain female sexuality, desire, or identity. But it's still useful to understand *how we got stuck* in patriarchal systems.

B. Destruction of Pleasure as a Radical Weapon

- **Cinema as a system of looking**: Mainstream cinema satisfies unconscious male desires through ways of seeing (especially through the "male gaze")
- **Change in cinema**: She notes that cinema has evolved — it's no longer just big-budget Hollywood. Independent, alternative, and political cinema can now exist.
- **Critique of mainstream cinema**: Hollywood films are not *evil*, but they reflect male-centered social ideas — and *rely on manipulating visual pleasure* (looking at beautiful women, heroic men, etc.) to entertain.
- **Radical aim**: She wants to disrupt this pleasure system — to **"destroy the pleasure"** of narrative film so we can build a new kind of cinema that doesn't cater to male fantasy.
- **Why destroy pleasure?** Because current cinematic pleasure is based on male-dominant systems. It's better to break the illusion, challenge viewers, and open up new ways of experiencing film, even if they're less "pleasurable."

◆ II. Pleasure in Looking / Fascination with the Human Form (A. Scopophilia — Pleasure in Looking)

A. Scopophilia — Pleasure in Looking

- **Definition**:
  - Scopophilia: the pleasure we get from *looking* at others as objects (coined by Freud).
  - It's a drive that exists even in childhood — children spy, get curious, and enjoy secretly observing.
- **Voyeurism**:
  - Watching others secretly, especially in sexual ways.
  - The person being watched becomes an object.
  - In extreme cases: "Peeping Toms."
- **Cinema and voyeurism**:
  - Though films are public, they create a **private, voyeuristic illusion** — audience in darkness, screen lit up.
  - Film makes you feel like you're secretly watching a world that doesn't know you're there.
- **Result**: You (the viewer) feel in control, separated, and indulging in a secret visual pleasure.

B. Narcissistic Pleasure — Identification with the Image

- **Lacan's Mirror Stage**:
  - A baby sees itself in a mirror and feels joy: "Look! A complete version of me!"
  - But that image is also a lie — it's more perfect than the messy real self. This is called **misrecognition**.
  - This is how the *ego* forms — based on an external image.
- **Cinema mirrors this**:
  - You don't just look at others; you also *see yourself* in them.
  - That's why the human form is central in film: it feeds this ego recognition.
- **Film creates ego ideals**:
  - Stars like Marilyn Monroe or James Dean become ideals we identify with.
  - You see them, love them, and imagine being like them.
  - The viewer both loses themselves (escapes reality) and reinforces their ego by identifying with ideal images.

C. Contradiction in Filmic Pleasure

- **Two types of visual pleasure**:
  1. **Scopophilia**: Sexual pleasure from *objectifying* someone (they're *not* you).
  2. **Narcissism**: Ego pleasure from *identifying* with someone (they *are* like you).
- **Problem**: These two are in tension. One separates, the other connects. But film merges them beautifully — creating fantasy worlds that satisfy both.
- **Underlying truth**: All this pleasure still links to something darker: the **castration complex** (Freud's idea that fear/desire around penis loss shapes the unconscious). Woman = lack = fear = object of obsession

◆ III. Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look

A. Woman = Passive Object; Man = Active Gaze

- **Male gaze dominates**: In film, women are shown to be *looked at*; men are the *lookers*.
- To be looked at ness
- **To-be-looked-at-ness**:

  - Women are made to be visually appealing (like pin-up models).
  - Their beauty *halts* the story — she's a spectacle, not a character.
- **Example**: In musicals or classic Hollywood, when the woman sings/dances, the story pauses — it's about watching her, not narrative
- **Quote from Boetticher**: The woman only matters in terms of how she affects the male hero. She isn't important in herself.

B. Male = Doer/Actor; Female = Icon

- **Man = narrative driver**: The story moves forward through him. He does things, solves problems.
- **Woman can't be erotic object and actor**: Men don't want to look at other eroticized men — so male characters aren't displayed sexually.
- **Identification**:
  - The audience identifies with the male protagonist.
  - The camera often follows his view (subjective camera).
  - So the viewer sees women *through* him — he becomes your surrogate.

C.1 The Female Threat — Castration and Control

- **Deep psychoanalytic reading**: Woman reminds man of what he fears: lack of penis = castration = anxiety.
- **Two male responses**:
  - **Voyeurism/Sadism**: Investigate her, punish her, control her (like in noir films).
  - **Fetishism**: Turn her into a perfect, beautiful image — too beautiful to be scary.
- **Examples**:
  - Hitchcock uses voyeurism and sadism.
  - Sternberg uses fetishism — his women become living art

C.2 Sternberg vs Hitchcock

- **Sternberg**:

  - Films with Marlene Dietrich.
  - Story doesn't matter, just the beautiful female image.
  - She's flattened into a visual object — lace, shadows, lights — no narrative depth.
  - Male character often doesn't even "see" her; she's there *just* for the viewer.
- **Hitchcock**:
  - Uses male protagonists to mirror the *viewer's own gaze*.
  - Examples:
    - **Rear Window**: Jeffries watches people through a camera lens — just like a film audience. Lisa (his girlfriend) becomes sexy when she enters that visual world.
    - **Vertigo**: Scottie obsesses over the image of Madeleine, then tries to force Judy to *become* that image.
    - **Marnie**: The man wants to control and "fix" a woman he sees as broken.

- **Common theme**: Woman is always either punished or turned into a fetish to remove the threat of castration.

◆ IV. Summary

- **Cinema = Male fantasy machine**: It builds a world where men look, act, and control — and women exist as things to be looked at.
- **Woman = symbol of lack**: She's passive, fragmented, and eroticized, so men don't have to deal with her as a full human.
- **Unique power of cinema**: Film has 3 "looks":
    - The **camera** filming the scene
    - The **audience** watching the film.
    - The **characters** looking at each other.
- **Mainstream film suppresses the first two**:
    - Hides the camera (to keep realism).
    - Doesn't let the audience *think* about its own gaze (to keep immersion).
- **Result**:
    - You don't feel like you're watching; you feel like *you're inside* the film through a male character.
    - But this setup constantly risks breaking — especially when the woman's image becomes too much, too direct, too fetishized.

Interkom

Introduction

- Anthropologists traditionally studied face-to-face mediation (speech, ritual, exchange) to understand communities.
- Benedict Anderson expanded this by showing how **new technologies like print** created **imagined communities** (national identities).
- Inspired by Anderson, Barker asks: **What kinds of communities arise with non-print, electric media** like telephony, satellite, Internet?
- He introduces **interkom**, a *homemade Indonesian communication network* (like DIY telephone lines) that **exists outside the state**.
- Interkom is different because it's **locally made**, **unregulated**, and **invisible** despite being physically present in Bandung, Indonesia.

Rhizomatic Evolution: From Lokalan to Jalur Lintas

- **Origins**:
    - Started by connecting **nearby houses** (kampung level) like a **homemade telephone party line**.
    - Culturally closer to **CB radio** (chitchatting, music sharing) than official communication.

- **Growth**
    - Expanded within neighborhoods → multiple kampungs → city outskirts.
    - Early networks called **lokalan** ("local lines").

- Mid-1990s: **Higher wattage interkom sets** allowed **longer-distance lines** called **jalur lintas** ("traversing lines").

- **Complex Evolution**:

  - Networks **not only expanded** but **divided** like **mitosis** (splitting):

    - **Overcrowding** → New lines formed.
    - **Different content** → Music lines, polite conversation lines.
    - **Privacy** → Private "Cave Lines" (**Jalur Guha**).
- **Joining and Expanding**:
  - New users often joined because of **"cepretan"** (cross-talk between lines).
- **Attrition and Rebirth**:
  - Lines **die out** when unused, but **new lines** spring up from former users.
- **Comparison to Kinship**:
  - Interkom lines are **segmentary like kinship systems** but:
    - Based on **wires**, not blood.
    - **Voluntary**, not hereditary.
    - **Non-exclusive**: You can join multiple lines.
    - **Horizontal** and **rhizomatic**, not hierarchical.

The Locality of Interkom

- **Social roots**:
  - Originated as **household/kampung** communication.
  - Helped families stay connected without physically visiting.
  - Alternative to socializing at risky places (e.g., warungs associated with drinking/gambling).
- **Early State Involvement**:
  - Mid-1980s: During Suharto's New Order, interkom was **briefly integrated into neighborhood security** (RT/RW-level communication with police and military).
  - Examples: **Jalur Kecamatan** (Subdistrict Line) and **Jalur Kantibmas** (Security Line).
  - However, **state involvement faded**, and interkom returned to being a **grassroots community tool**.
- **Community Maintenance**:
  - Lines built **informally**: each member bought cable to connect their house.
  - Maintenance was done by local volunteer **technicians** (sometimes rewarded with cigarettes, coffee).
  - Some lines had **formal organizations** (membership fees, elected heads).
- **Cultural Activities**:
  - **Arisan** (rotating savings events), **feasts**, **outings**, **music festivals** were organized through interkom.
  - Strengthened **kinship-style bonds** but extended beyond family and kampung.

Voice-to-Voice Community

- **On-air and On-land Split**:
  - Users had **two names**:

    - **Nama udara** (on-air name) — creative, playful (e.g., "Seagull", "Scooby-Doo").

■ **Nama darat** (real-world name).
                ○ On-air, users created **new identities** based on **voice modulation** (sweetness, strength, style).

- **Freedom of Speech**:
    ○ On interkom, speech is **more free** and **less hierarchical** than face-to-face.
    ○ People can joke, tease, and flirt more openly without shame.
- **Cornering (Pojok-Memojok)**:
    ○ Popular "game" where **two people** engage in **flirtatious or intimate banter** over the line.
    ○ Like **public-private flirting**: many listeners hear it but only two are speaking.
    ○ Creates **long-term voice partnerships** ("pojokan" or "pasangan").
- **Social Norms**:
    ○ Despite flirtations, **serious conflicts** are rare because it is "only entertainment."
    ○ Real-life infidelity = serious; on-air flirtation = acceptable **as long as it stays on-air**.
- **Risks and Rules**:
    ○ If on-air flirtations became real-life affairs, it could lead to **severe community backlash**.
    ○ Thus, users maintain a strict boundary between **on-air fantasy** and **on-land reality**.

Discourse Networks and Imagined Communities

- **Comparison to Anderson's Imagined Communities**:
    ○ Interkom does **not fully create a national community** (like print-capitalism and nationalism did).
    ○ It creates **voice-to-voice communities** — **localized, playful, flexible**, not nationalistic or state-controlled.
- **Feelings of Waas**:
    ○ *Waas* = a **Sundanese word** meaning the **sweet longing** for something still within reach.
    ○ Interkom creates *waas* — not nostalgia or alienation, but a **playful extension** of familiar ties.
- **State vs. Grassroots**:
    ○ Indonesian state could have turned interkom into a **security surveillance tool**.
    ○ But users kept it **informal**, **fun**, and **free** — disconnecting if it stopped being enjoyable.
- **Conclusion**:
    ○ Interkom showcases a **unique type of community**:
        ■ **Neither traditional** (face-to-face),
        ■ **Nor fully imagined** (nation-state),
        ■ But **voice-based**, fluid, and **rooted in pleasure and kinship metaphors**.

━━━---

Freud-creative writer

Here is a **detailed, section-by-section explanation** of Sigmund Freud's 1908 essay *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming*. This essay explores the psychological roots of literary creativity, comparing it to children's play and adult daydreams (phantasies). Freud tries to answer why and how imaginative writers create such impactful works—and why we, as readers, enjoy them.

📌 INTRODUCTION: Art as a Psychological Phenomenon

Freud begins by noting that while many poets and philosophers (like Plato, Keats, and Coleridge) have tried to explain the creative imagination, his own approach is psychological—not literary. He wants to understand:

- How do writers create?
- Why does their work move us so deeply?

Freud's central idea: **creative writing is a kind of fantasy-making**, deeply connected to **play in childhood**, **daydreaming in adulthood**, and even to **mental illness** (but in a healthy, socially acceptable form).

🧠 From Childhood Play to Artistic Creation

Freud draws a parallel between a child playing and a writer writing.

- A child rearranges the world during play in a way that brings them pleasure.

- Similarly, the writer reshapes reality in their imagination—creating a "fantasy world" that feels real and emotionally important.
  "The opposite of play is not serious, but real."

Children **link play to real objects** (e.g., using a stick as a sword), while adults **detach from physical play** but **continue to fantasize mentally**—this becomes daydreaming or phantasying.

🎭 Daydreams: The Adult Version of Play

As adults stop physically playing, they don't stop creating fantasies. Instead:

- **They replace play with daydreams**, also called "phantasies."
- Daydreams fulfill **wishes**—especially **unsatisfied or forbidden** ones.
- People are often **ashamed** of these fantasies and hide them.

Key idea: **We never truly give up a pleasure; we just transform it.**

🔍 Why Adults Hide Their Fantasies

Fantasies often deal with **socially unacceptable wishes**, especially erotic or egotistical desires. So:

- Adults feel embarrassed and **hide** them.
- But such hidden fantasies are **still powerful mental activities**.

Example: A well-brought-up woman may not admit to erotic fantasies; a man might hide his grand ambitions. But both exist internally.

🧍 How Freud Learns About Fantasies

Freud's knowledge comes from patients in psychoanalysis:

- These people are "forced" to reveal fantasies because of their mental illness.
- Freud believes that what neurotic people reveal is **true for healthy people too**, just more hidden.

💭 Phantasies: Wish-Fulfillment and Emotional Substitution

Main argument:

> "Every phantasy is a wish-fulfillment, a correction of unsatisfying reality."

Types of wishes:

1. **Ambitious/Ego-based** (power, success)
2. **Erotic** (love, affection)

They often **merge**: The hero in a fantasy might succeed just to impress the woman he loves.

🕰️ Phantasy and Time: Linking Past, Present, and Future

Fantasies exist **between three points in time**:

1. **Present trigger** (a real event or need),
2. **Past memory** (often from childhood),
3. **Future wish-fulfillment** (the imagined scenario).

Example:

- A poor orphan boy imagines being adopted by a rich family and becoming successful.
- His fantasy helps him recreate the comfort he lost in childhood.

⚠️ Dangers and Depths of Phantasy

If phantasies become **too strong**, they may lead to:

- **Mental illness** (neurosis or psychosis)
- **Dreams**—which Freud sees as **nighttime versions** of daydreams,
- Night dreams are **distorted** wish-fulfillments, shaped by the unconscious.

✍️ Now, About Writers…

Freud now returns to writers. Can we compare their work to daydreaming?

Yes—but he **focuses on popular authors** (novelists, storytellers), not literary "greats," because:

- Their stories have **mass appeal**, and
- They follow **predictable emotional patterns** like fantasies

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🦸 The Hero = The Writer's Ego

Every story has a **hero** at the center who:

- Is favored by the author,
- Survives dangerous situations miraculously,
- Has all women fall for him,
- Has clear enemies and allies.

This is **wish-fulfillment through fiction**, just like in daydreams. The hero = **the author's ego**, protected and victorious.

🔍 Variations in Stories = Variations in Fantasy

Even "psychological" novels follow this pattern:

- The writer **splits** himself into multiple characters,
- Or lets the hero watch others (Zola's late works).

This is like when people fantasize **passively** (watching rather than acting).

🔗 Applying the Phantasy Model to Literary Creation

Freud suggests a way to analyze literary work:

1. **A present experience** triggers the writer,
2. It recalls a **childhood memory**,
3. This evokes a **wish**,
4. The story becomes its **fantasy fulfillment**.

   A story, then, is a *sublimated* (disguised) personal fantasy.

📚 Retelling Old Stories: Still a Kind of Fantasy

Even writers who retell myths or folk tales aren't exempt:

- They **choose** and **modify** their material,
- Myths themselves may be **collective national fantasies**, just like individual dreams.

🎁 Why Do Readers Enjoy Fiction?

Why do we **enjoy** stories that are essentially someone else's fantasy?

Freud's answer:

1. Writers **disguise** their selfish or erotic daydreams,
2. They **present them attractively**—through **aesthetic form**,
3. This **"bribes" the reader**—offering surface pleasure so that deeper, repressed pleasures can be released safely.

We get:

- **Fore-pleasure** (from beauty, style, structure),
- **Deep pleasure** (from the emotional satisfaction of the story).

🔚 Conclusion

Freud says:

- Writers give us **access to our own hidden desires** without shame.
- Their **secret art** is to **transform private fantasies into shared pleasure**.
- Fiction gives us permission to feel, imagine, and escape—just like when we played as children.

The mirror

🔮 1. The Mirror and the Sleeping Man (Tabourot Anecdote)

Theme: The **limit of self-knowledge** through reflection.

- A man uses a mirror to see if he looks good while sleeping, but ironically, **one cannot see oneself with closed eyes**, not even with many mirrors.
- This becomes a metaphor: mirrors **cannot show the unconscious** parts of ourselves—the hidden or unknown self.
- Like Freud's concept of the **"uncanny"**, where seeing your own reflection unexpectedly can shock you—it's a confrontation with the **otherness within the self**.

👁 2. Sideways Glances and Mirror's Duplicity

Theme: Oblique (indirect) reflections reveal truth better than direct ones.

- Looking sideways at a mirror gives you an alternate view—just like an echo changes the direction of sound.
- In the mirror, **left becomes right**, symmetry is flawed, and this "tiny gap" is where **truth slips in**.
- Mirrors reveal **grace** (as Alberti said) but also deformities. The distortion hints at **a deeper, troubling difference**—a "mirror of otherness."

🎭 3. Montaigne and the Mirror of the World

Theme: Self-discovery by accident and reflection in the world.

- Montaigne says he doesn't find himself by introspection, but through life's **random events**—like mirrors catching reflections unexpectedly.
- This self-portrait is not a clear photograph but an **encounter of two selves**: the known and the unknown.

💘 4. Mirror and Love – Rousseau & Madame Basile

Theme: Love, seduction, and guiltless reflection.

- Rousseau gazes at Madame Basile through a mirror, thinking he is unseen—but she sees him via the mirror and reacts subtly.
- The mirror **makes desire possible without real confrontation**—offering a safe, imaginary zone for voyeurism and romance.
- This scene mirrors the **act of writing**—confessional and revealing, but done **indirectly**, through reflection.

🪞 5. The Mirror as Deception and Power (Stendhal & Goethe)

Theme: The mirror gives **power to the observer**.

- Stendhal describes mirrors used by women to **observe men without being seen**—it creates a power dynamic.
- In Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a **love story unfolds under the magical mirror**—the lovers see each other and the world reflected, intensifying their emotions and suggesting that **mirrors reflect not just bodies but the soul and nature**.

👹 6. Monsters and Anamorphosis

Theme: Mirrors as **distorting, magical, or frightening tools**.

- Renaissance scientists and artists like **Leonardo and Cardano** used mirrors to **create illusions**—stretching, multiplying, distorting images to **play with reality and perception**.
- **Anamorphosis**: an art technique where a distorted image becomes clear only from a specific angle—used in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, where a skull appears when viewed sideways.
- Moral: **Truth requires the right point of view**, and mirrors teach us about **vanity, illusion, and hidden realities**.

🌀 7. Hallucinatory Mirror Techniques

Theme: Magic, illusion, and psychological effects.

- Mirrors were used in **optical machines** and "dream devices" that caused **hallucinations or surreal imagery** (e.g., bulls' heads instead of human faces).

- These devices weren't just entertainment—they revealed how **reason and fantasy** constantly battle.
- Mirrors **challenge our sense of control**, offering the thrill of illusion and the terror of not knowing what's real.

🎭 8. Courtly Mirrors and Narcissism

Theme: Social symbolism of mirrors in 17th–18th century.

- At Versailles and other royal courts, **mirrors were everywhere**—not for reflection alone, but to **multiply splendor** and reflect power.
- Over time, especially in Rococo art, mirrors became less about authority and more about **pleasure, sensuality, and games**.
- For aristocrats, mirrors helped **hide the loss of political power**, covering emptiness with beauty.

💋 9. The Libertine Mirror

Theme: Pleasure, self-love, and boudoirs.

- In the 18th century, mirrors were used in boudoirs and bedrooms for **romantic and sensual purposes**.
- They helped maintain **mood, mystery, and desire**, balancing visibility and invisibility in intimate spaces.
- Too many mirrors could spoil pleasure—**mirror placement was an art**, used to seduce and soothe

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🪞 10. Mirror Fragments and Lacanian Reflections

Theme: Childhood, imagination, and psychological cracks.

- Restif de la Bretonne recalls smashing a mirror as a child—yet he saw **a world behind the cracks**.
- This reflects **Lacan's "mirror stage"**: how children form their identities by seeing themselves as "whole" in the mirror.
- But a broken mirror shows the self as fragmented—**a sign of potential mental disturbance or imaginative freedom**.

🧠 11. Reflection and Identity

Theme: Fragility of self-image.

- Seeing your own face is never easy—it triggers **vulnerability, self-judgment, and anxiety**.

- Studies show people struggle to recognize distorted or partial images of themselves, especially those with **mental disorders**.
- The mirror both **constructs and threatens identity**. It can reflect narcissism or, when distorted, self-loathing or dissociation.

🧍 12. The Mirror and the "Same"

Theme: Limits of recognition and fear of decay.

- Mirrors remind us of **change, aging, and mortality**. They are **mirrors of vanity**—temporary beauty and false identity.
- Shakespeare's *Richard II* smashes a mirror when he loses power—he no longer recognizes the face staring back.
- The mirror becomes a **symbol of lost identity, power, and truth**.

🧠 Key Differences Explained Simply

1. 🌹 Rousseau – *The Mirror of Love and Fantasy*

- **Mirror is playful and poetic.**
- It enables **imaginative, romantic projection** without direct guilt or punishment.
- He uses it to describe **inner longing**, **secret gazes**, and **safe indulgence**.
- Later, it becomes a **literary metaphor**—how he writes about himself indirectly.

2. 🕵️‍♀️ Stendhal – *The Mirror of Power and Strategy*

- The mirror is **social and strategic**.
- Used by women to **observe men without being observed**, flipping the gaze.
- It shows **gender roles and control**—where women gain an edge via reflection.
- No emotional involvement, more about **clever manipulation and observation**.

3. 🧟 Freud – *The Mirror of the Uncanny*

- Mirror moment is **unintentional**, shocking.
- It brings up **deep psychological disturbance**—the **strangeness of seeing yourself** as an outsider.
- Introduces the idea of the **uncanny (Unheimlich)**: the familiar becoming unfamiliar.
- Unlike Rousseau (pleasure) or Stendhal (strategy), Freud experiences **existential discomfort**.

Enlightenment Calculations by Lorraine Daston — Line-by-Line, Full Breakdown

📍 Opening Metadata (Title & Publishing Info)

- **Title**: *Enlightenment Calculations*
- **Author**: Lorraine Daston, historian of science

📌 Section 1: "Introduction: Monuments to Reason" (pp. 182–184)

◆ The Festival of Reason, 1793

- **Date**: 20 Brumaire, Year II (10 Nov 1793), height of the French Revolution.
- **Event**: At Notre-Dame, a huge ceremony called the *Festival of Reason* celebrated secular Enlightenment values.
- **Visuals**:
    - Procession of women in white, crowned with flowers, symbolizing purity and liberty.
    - A giant artificial mountain built inside the church.
    - On top: a small round Greek temple labeled "To Philosophy".
    - Busts likely of Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin, and Montesquieu.
    - A *Torch of Liberty* burning on a Greek altar — again stressing symbolism.

◆ Revolutionary Monuments as Allegories

- Daston highlights that such **monuments were deeply symbolic** — *allegories of stability* in politically chaotic times.
- Despite unstable governance, the Revolution kept creating grand, physical symbols (temples, columns, pyramids) to suggest rational permanence.

◆ The Other Monument: Prony's Calculating Project

- Simultaneously, **another "monument to reason"** was being created — not artistic, but *mathematical*.
- At the **Bureau de Longitudes**, **Gaspard Riche de Prony** directed a huge team to compute **logarithmic and trigonometric tables**.
- These were to fill **seventeen elephant-folio volumes** (very large books).
- French government's instruction: this should not only be exact, but also "the most vast and imposing monument to calculation ever executed or even conceived."

◆ Irony and Failure of Practical Use

- Initially, this was meant for **France's national cadastre** (a land survey system started in 1791).

- But:

    - Project delayed due to complications in defining the new **meter**.
    - Eventually, the cadastre was **defunded**.
    - So the tables were **never actually used**.

- Their **intended precision** (14-15 decimal places) was **comically excessive** — even Prony admitted it was only useful in "extraordinary cases."

◆ Summary of the Paradox

- Just like the Festival's symbolic mountain and torch, Prony's tables became **monuments without use**.
- They were admired not because of practical value, but **as artifacts of Enlightenment rationalism taken to extremes**.
- Daston calls them **"fetishes of rationalism"** — admired for irrational features: excessive precision, size, and the sheer labor they embodied.
- The real value was **symbolic, not functional**.
- However, this symbolic meaning **varied depending on the viewer** — Babbage saw them differently than Prony; Edward Sang, differently again.

📌 Section 2: "What Calculation Meant" (pp. 184–186)

◆ Enlightenment Definitions

Daston opens with three quotes:

1. **Condillac**: Truth is discovered by breaking down and recombining ideas — a kind of calculation.
2. **D'Alembert/Diderot (Encyclopédie)**: Calculation is the art of finding the expression of a unique relationship through combining multiple relationships.
3. **Prony** (in a letter): All knowledge is susceptible to rigorous analysis through good language and Lockean/Condillac-style reasoning.

◆ Calculation = Intelligence

- In the 18th century, **calculation was a model of intelligence**, not mindless labor.
- It involved the **highest human faculties**: reasoning, analysis, even morality.
- **"Calculator"** meant an elite thinker — e.g., a sentence in a 1778 dictionary praises a good **astronomer** as a "great and good calculator."

◆ Turning Point

- But near 1800, this changes:

    - Calculation becomes seen as **mechanical**, repetitive, "idiot savant" level work.
    - High intelligence becomes defined not by calculation but by **spontaneity and creativity**.

- Calculation is now assigned to **women**, **clerks**, and **assistants** — those doing routine tasks, often without recognition.
- This shift reflects a broader change in how **society viewed intelligence**.

📌 Section 3: "The Prony Project: Pyramid of Labor" (pp. 186–189)

◆ Motivation and Method

- The **metric system** replaced older measurement units, so older trig tables (based on 60-degree angles) were obsolete.
- Prony was tasked with making **new tables for a decimal-divided circle**.
- He was **inspired by Adam Smith**'s *Wealth of Nations* — especially the idea of dividing labor to increase efficiency.

◆ The Three-Tiered Structure:

1. **Top Tier**: Brilliant mathematicians (e.g., Legendre, Carnot) — created formulas and oversaw accuracy
2. **Middle Tier**: "Calculators" trained in math — translated formulas into usable forms.
3. **Bottom Tier**: 70–80 mostly uneducated workers (e.g., hairdressers, shop apprentices, etc.) — did manual calculations and filled in huge books by hand.

◆ Assembly Line of Calculation

- Prony structured the team like a **factory**.
- Calculations were done in an almost **industrial style**, although with no actual machines.
- Two complete copies were finished by 1801.
- They used techniques like **finite differences** to make interpolation easier.

◆ Practical Irrelevance but Lasting Symbolism

- Decimal division was later **abandoned** in favor of old sexagesimal (60-based) system — another reason the tables were never used.
- But the project stood out in history as:
  - The **largest**, most detailed calculation effort of its time.
  - A turning point in how labor and mental effort were organized.
  - A **"spectacle" of reason**, like revolutionary parades, but applied to **numbers**.

This takes us up to page 189.

Would you like me to **continue this in the same line-by-line depth** from page 190 onward (sections on Intelligence, Work, and Moral Economy)?

📌 Section 4: "Intelligence" (pp. 190–193)

◆ Intelligence as a Cultural Idea in the Enlightenment

Opening quotes:

- From Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*: Intelligence is the **power to understand complex ideas easily**.
- From Prony: Intelligence could even be **measured on a national scale** — suggesting a racialized or nationalized view of intellectual superiority.

Key idea: In the 18th century, intelligence was seen not as a mysterious "gift," but as a **mechanism of mental operation** — about clarity, order, and rational analysis.

◆ Theories of the Mind (Empiricism & Sensationalism)

- Philosophers like **Locke** and especially **Condillac** believed that all thought comes from **sensory experience**, which can be analyzed.
- Condillac's method: break ideas into **simple units**, compare, and **recombine**.
- This makes **thinking = calculating** — a **combinatorial process** governed by rules.

  💡 **Contrast to Romanticism**: Romantics later argued genius was *spontaneous and organic*, not something rule-governed like calculation. Daston highlights this shift.

◆ Thought as Combinatorics

- Enlightenment thinkers **admired logic** and **structured reasoning** as the highest form of intelligence.
- Genius, for them, wasn't irrational or chaotic — it was **greater combinatorial agility**.

◆ Calculation and Morality

- Daston now brings in **Albert Hirschman**'s argument:

  - Enlightenment thinkers **tamed dangerous passions** like ambition by encouraging *calculated self-interest* (e.g., greed, avarice)
  - These were seen as "lesser evils" that made behavior **predictable** — and thus socially manageable.

- *Example*: In Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, a woman trusts her captor more after learning he's greedy — because greed is **stable** and **calculable**.

◆ Moral Theories as Math

- Philosophers like:
  - **Francis Hutcheson**: Tried to *quantify moral good → Moment of Good = Benevolence × Ability*

  - **Jeremy Bentham**: Invented *Utilitarianism* as a calculus of pain and pleasure.

💡 Calculation becomes the **universal metaphor** — even **morality** is understood as an **equation**.

◆ Calculation ≠ Mechanization (Yet)

- Enlightenment thinkers **did not** compare minds to **machines** (Pascal, Leibniz had mechanical calculators).
- Why? Because those machines were **unreliable and impractical**.
- Even **La Mettrie**, in *L'Homme Machine*, didn't compare mind to calculator — rather, he emphasized imagination (a more organic metaphor).

📌 Section 5: "Work" (pp. 193–198)

◆ "Mechanical" as Manual Labor

- In 18th-century French and English, the term **"mechanical"** didn't mean "robotic" or "automated" — it meant **physical/manual labor**.
- **Work = bodily effort**, not intellectual effort.
- In the *Encyclopédie*, "workers" are defined as people who **carry burdens** and perform **physical tasks**.

◆ Manual Work vs. Intelligence

- **Artisans** (craftsmen) were **respected for skill**, but still seen as **unthinking** or driven by **habit**.
- **D'Alembert**: Praised mechanical arts but criticized how **artisans couldn't articulate** what they do — lacked reflective capacity.
- 17th-century philosopher **Ralph Cudworth**: Compared artisans to *inanimate objects* — they work via **habit**, not understanding.

  💡 Longstanding philosophical divide: **Head (reason)** vs. **Hand (habit/skill)**

◆ Prony's Tables: A Hybrid Project

- Prony's project **smashed that old boundary**.
  - He combined **elite mathematicians** (high reasoning) with **manual laborers** doing arithmetic
  - This was socially shocking: the **"manual" people were calculating**, a task formerly reserved for intellectuals.
- Prony even **observed** that the least intelligent workers made the **fewest mistakes** — due to their **automatic, unthinking obedience**.

◆ The Paradox of "Mechanical Intelligence"

- Babbage, decades later, called this idea **"paradoxical"**: could intellectual tasks be made mechanical?
- This idea would later shape his dream of creating a **calculating engine** — a machine doing the job of lower-tier humans.

◆ **Prony's vs. Babbage's Vision of Mechanization**

Feature	Prony	Babbage
Model of a Machine	A **system** or **hierarchy of workers**	An actual **mechanical machine** (calculating engine)
Division of Labor	A structure for organizing **human minds**	A way to remove **humans** from the process
View of Intelligence	Could be **distributed** across a group	Must be **isolated** from repetitive tasks
System Goal	A "**mean intelligence**" across the whole group	Use **machines** to replace lowest cognitive tiers

●
  Prony was not thinking about replacing people with machines — he used people to **build a structured, human-machine hybrid** system.

◆ **The French vs. British Manufacturing Metaphor**

- Babbage saw Prony's project like a **British factory** — aiming for *efficiency*.
- Prony actually modeled his process on **French luxury manufacturing** (e.g., Gobelins tapestries, Sèvres porcelain):
    ○ High cost, highly skilled, made for kings.
    ○ Not meant for *mass production*.

◆ **Prony's Objection to British Publication Plan**

- Prony resisted British proposals to:
    ○ Convert the tables to the old sexagesimal system (which they had originally been meant to replace).
    ○ Use shortcuts and approximations to publish them quickly and cheaply.
- Prony argued this would **ruin the purity** of the tables, which he saw as **scientific art objects**, not mass-market utilities.

  💡 Prony equated "expedient" with "corrupt," and "economic" with "compromise."

📌 Section 6: "The Moral Economy of Calculation" (pp. 198–202)

◆ A Shift in Moral Attitudes

- By the mid-19th century, **calculation** started to carry **moral suspicion**:
    - *Too much calculation = selfishness, coldness, opportunism*.
    - Germaine de Staël: Savants switched sides too easily during the Revolution — driven by calculation, not conviction.
    - Thomas Carlyle (Romantic): Opposed *"Mechanics"* (profit, logic, machine) to *"Dynamics"* (love, religion, poetry).

    💡 Calculation came to represent a **lack of soul**, not rational virtue.

◆ Victorian Reaction: Discipline > Automation

- But by late 19th century, Victorians tried to **reclaim calculation** as a **moral act of attention**.
- Calculating wasn't just a task — it became a test of **willpower** and **moral discipline**.

◆ Edward Sang vs. Prony's Tables

- Scottish mathematician **Edward Sang** recalculated **logarithms from scratch** — up to 28 decimal places!
- He *rejected* Prony's tables as **unreliable**:
    - Too much delegated labor.
    - No proof of care or verification.
    - Some parts may have been copied or simulated, not actually computed.

    💡 Sang didn't trust systems without **visible moral responsibility**.

◆ Sang's Argument Against Automation

- Sang distrusted both:
    - **Prony's human workers** (hired assistants).
    - **Machines** like **Babbage's Difference Engine**.

- He believed:
    - True calculation requires **full attention and integrity**.
    - Machines and underlings **cannot substitute** for moral will.

◆ Final Statement: Calculation as Moral Labor

- Sang's ultimate message: **You cannot delegate thought.**
- Even in repetitive, dull work, the *individual's responsibility* matters.
- Calculation is not just mechanical — it is a **moral, intellectual act**.

A Stain in the Picture

1. Abstract and Introduction

Prince sets the intellectual terrain for the paper by linking **subjectification**—the process of becoming a subject—to our interactions with technological screens, especially smartphones. He argues that we don't just use screens; we live through them, form attachments, and situate ourselves within them. These attachments take place through repeated interactions: clicking, scrolling, liking, photographing. Importantly, he expands the meaning of **interface** to include historic technologies (like the telegraph), not just modern digital ones. The interface becomes the edge where the subject's self is continually reformed and disrupted. The goal of the essay is to **track the conditions under which this attachment to the screen can be forcefully interrupted**.

2. The Chappal Selfie

Prince begins with a now-viral photograph of five children, one holding up a **chappal (sandal)** in place of a smartphone, mimicking the act of taking a selfie. This image captures the tension between **material deprivation** and **symbolic participation** in a global digital culture. Some viewers romanticized it as joyful innocence in poverty; others critiqued it as symbolic of technological inequality. But Prince shifts the discussion: he focuses not on the children's emotion or poverty, but on how convincingly they **reproduce the form** of the selfie. This imitation is not trivial—it reveals that even without a camera, the **gesture** of the selfie is powerful enough to inscribe one's presence into the digital sphere. The chappal becomes a prosthetic **interface**, allowing the children to temporarily inhabit the digital subject-position, showing how **deeply internalized the grammar of the selfie has become**.

3. The Sociality of the Selfie

Prince draws on two dominant perspectives:

- **Alice Marwick** sees selfies as tools for self-branding and microcelebrity in the attention economy. They perform **narcissism** but also enable social mobility.
- **Paul Frosh**, on the other hand, sees selfies as **phatic gestures**—akin to small talk or social nods—meant to maintain social connection rather than convey deep meaning.

Prince integrates these with **Goffman's theory of face-work**: how people manage impressions and perform stability in their self-image during social encounters. Selfies, according to this view, are like strategic rituals of identity maintenance. But Prince pushes further: before we perform for others, we perform for ourselves—**looking into the mirror, checking expressions, fixing appearance**. This signals another layer of affect—pleasure, anxiety, or frustration with our own visibility. The selfie becomes both an outward and inward operation, rooted in **self-affection and internal discipline**.

4. Lacan's Gaze and the Stain

To deepen the theoretical argument, Prince introduces **Jacques Lacan's concept of the gaze (le regard)**. He distinguishes between the **eye** (biological seeing) and the **gaze** (the structuring field in which one is seen). The gaze reveals that the subject is always **vulnerable under visibility**—one does not control what is seen or how. Referencing **Mulvey's theory** of the male gaze and **Foucault's concept** of disciplinary visibility, Prince shows how power and desire shape what is visible. Lacan's idea of the **"stain" (la tache)** emerges as the point where the subject is caught in the image—marked by desire but also by a kind of failure or disruption. It's where the subject becomes **visible as lack**, not as mastery.

5. Desire and the Picture

Prince uses literary and visual theory to show how images are not inert—they actively engage the viewer. **D.H. Lawrence** critiques photographic realism, suggesting painters like **Cezanne** reveal emotional and conceptual depths in their work. **W.J.T. Mitchell** famously asks: "What do pictures want?"—treating images as **desiring agents**. Lacan, however, frames the picture as the **scene of the subject's suspended desire**—one sees themselves in the image not as they are, but as a projection of what they wish to be. Prince argues that in the chappal selfie, viewers are drawn into the photo not because they identify with the children, but because they **desire** the relation to the screen that the image models. Our **stain**, our point of attachment, is the imaginative act of populating the screen with our own subjectivity.

6. Atmospheric Gaze

Two field anecdotes emphasize the **impersonal or atmospheric gaze**:

1. At a temple, a priest rebukes someone for taking a selfie in the presence of the deity. The gaze of God—**Darshan**—is not to be disrupted by profane mimicry.
2. On a hilltop, a local man warns the group not to take selfies because a rockslide had nearly killed others earlier.

Both episodes articulate a gaze that is **not from a person**, but from an imagined divine, environmental, or moral force. The **interruption** of the selfie act here signals how **external, invisible authorities can regulate subject formation**, and how taking a picture under these gazes can feel **dangerous, violating, or foolish**. It's as if the subject, in attempting to map themselves on the screen, risks being **erased altogether**.

7. Interface Rituals and Territorialization

Prince shifts focus to micro-actions—clicking, swiping, scrolling—and argues these are **rituals of attachment**. Drawing on **Freud's repetition compulsion**, he suggests scrolling is not aimless but a **repetition seeking satisfaction** that is never quite found. **Lacan** viewed repetition as the repetition of a **missed encounter**, not reproduction. **Deleuze & Guattari's 'ritornello'** adds another layer: these gestures are like **musical refrains**, marking temporary territories of safety. For example, people feel disoriented when Facebook changes its layout—it's not a trivial reaction, but a response to the **disruption of psychic and behavioral rhythms**. Interfaces become **felt territories**, and scrolling becomes a way to **manage desire, comfort, and orientation**.

8. Mobile Interfaces and Ethics

Smartphones are **portable screen-territories**. In public places like the metro, people carve out private zones through headphones and screens. Occasionally, someone peers over—a gesture that feels like a **breach of territory**. Prince links this to **anthropological fieldwork**: the observer is never neutral; they too are **observed and implicated**. This makes the anthropologist a **stain**—a visible participant in the field of desire and knowledge. Prince's reflexive turn situates anthropology itself within the **visual field it critiques**, showing that the gaze always runs both ways.

9. Historical Screens: Morse Code

Prince returns to history to show that even **non-visual interfaces** like the **Morse telegraph** created subjectivity. Operators had distinctive rhythmic "touches" called "fists," which others could recognize. Even **Morse himself** was surprised that operators could identify each other through these **signature**

rhythms. This historical detour reinforces that subject formation at interfaces has **long preceded digital screens**—it's not about visuals alone, but **about rhythm, habit, and sonic territory**. The telegraph key is an interface too—shaping presence, identity, and attachment.

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10. Interruptions and Interface Crises

In one story, Suka, a worker, **destroys a new phone** because its interface feels alien. He cannot navigate it, and thus feels expelled from his screen-territory. His violent act reveals how strong these attachments are. Then, Prince examines **Rupi Kaur's banned period photo on Instagram**. The stain—here, menstrual blood—is read as a threat to Instagram's visual norms. Yet, public backlash forces a reversal. The **stain becomes a political act**, challenging platforms' attempts to control desire, visibility, and bodies. The subject uses the stain to **demand space in the image**.

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11. Face as Interface and Resistance

As surveillance tech advances, the **face becomes an interface**. Facial recognition software sees not humans but data points—**biometric surfaces**. Snapchat filters and L'Oréal's Modiface reduce faces to **editable templates**. Yet Prince finds resistance in projects like **CV Dazzle**—makeup that confuses facial recognition. Inspired by **WWI camouflage and cubism**, it turns the face into an anti-face. Visibility is **weaponized**, but also **tactically disrupted**. Art becomes politics, and the subject reclaims autonomy by **interfering with the machine's gaze**.

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12. The Pottu Ban

Prince turns to a real policy from Sri Lanka banning **large pottus** (forehead bindis) in passport photos. Officially done for **facial recognition compatibility**, it targets **Tamil cultural identity** under the guise of technical neutrality. Women argue this erases cultural markers. Like the menstrual stain, the bindi becomes a **sign of resistance**. When states and platforms seek **"clean" visibility**, subjects respond by **insisting on the right to be marked, seen, and recognized on their own terms**. The stain is political—it cannot be scrubbed clean.

🔚 Conclusion

Prince concludes that **screens are where desire, power, and subjectivity converge**. Whether it's a chappal, blood, or a bindi, the **stain is where the subject attaches to the image**—it marks both vulnerability and resistance. Interfaces are not neutral; they are **battlegrounds of visibility**. Subjects continually reassert themselves **against erasure**—through mimicry, camouflage, rhythm, and protest. The gaze, the image, and the screen remain **zones of struggle and self-making**.