


ALGORITHMIC MICRO-MYTHS: HIGH-INTENSITY DISCURSIVE EVENT AND THE PARTITION OF THE SENSIBLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.043-007>**Jonas Hames¹****Abstract**

Social media platforms generate high-intensity discursive events that exhaust themselves within hours, subordinating experience to the time of algorithmic capture. This essay proposes the concept of algorithmic micro-myth through the articulation of Michel Pêcheux, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Reinhart Koselleck, Hartmut Rosa, Jacques Rancière and Aníbal Quijano, in dialogue with the analytical procedure of Informatized Enunciative Spaces (Silveira, Gallo and Pequeno, 2025). Taking the reborn baby doll as inaugural allegory, the essay demonstrates that the algorithmic micro-myth is an event articulating everyday rupture, ontological ambiguity, moral engagement and accelerated narrativization to constitute avatar-subject positions through a technical materiality that naturalizes the historical as evidence. The concept of discursive series addresses the tension between the singular Pêcheutian event and the plural viral. The concept of unanchored subject names the structural subject-form produced when enunciation is polished for algorithmic engagement before being made public. The temporal regime of IES operates through asymmetric compression: the event exhausts itself in hours but remains as archival trace conditioning future irruptions, dissolving the Koselleckian horizon of expectation and capturing collective tertiary retention.

Keywords: Discursive event, Informatized enunciative spaces, Avatar-subject, Algorithmic micro-myths, Digital temporality.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a moment, in certain images that circulate on digital platforms, when the gaze stumbles. The doll seems alive. The reborn baby, a silicone artifact calibrated to simulate the texture of skin, the smell of talcum powder, and the body weight of a newborn, generates in its caregivers a high-intensity affective circuit that, once published, unfolds into a second event. The object ceases to be the reason for fascination, and what enchants spectators is the ontological ambiguity that the image sustains. Real? Fake? Staged mourning? Moral judgment erupts before factual verification, with recognition preceding reflection.

The erotic baby bottle, the Pregnant Woman of Taubaté, the fake news from the Choquei profile, the Larissa Manoela Case, the fake question box, the fakecasts, and the reborn itself: what circulates in each of these episodes is the affect that the object ignited before being named. Barthes, in *Mythologies*, described the historical work through which a culture masks its own fabrication as a natural given, identifying how the sedimentation of decades in the press and advertising is consummated in the algorithmic archive within hours. What remains after the cycle turns is no longer forgetting, but a trace without thickness, technical data without elaborated memory, available for reactivation in the next event that triggers the same pre-constructed element.

The algorithmic micro-myth names this complete cycle, from irruption to trace, passing through the peak of engagement, eventual debunking, and sedimentation in the archive before any critical elaboration can take hold. It differs from the Barthesian myth through shifts that must be thought through, not merely listed as attributes: the temporal scale that eliminates slow sedimentation, the feedback loop between algorithm and engagement that constitutes the event by amplifying it, and the merely apparent reversibility that turns debunking into a bifurcation of the archive. Rectifying does not undo, since it records a new series that coexists with the initial version.

The discursive series and the unanchored subject are the two concepts proposed to account for what the Pêcheutian apparatus cannot. The event in Pêcheux (1983/2006) is rigorously singular, a dated

meeting point between a current actuality and a memory. The viral is constitutively plural, with hundreds of distinct enunciations that the algorithm processes as a unitary event endowed with collective memory. The unanchored subject names the subject-form that emerges when enunciation has been polished for algorithmic engagement before being made public, incorporating into Pêcheutian thought a third forgetting, technical forgetting, through which the subject is unaware of the operations of normalization that the infrastructure performed before their voice entered circulation.

Theoretical traditions operate here on planes that preserve their internal tensions. Pêcheux and Foucault are incompatible on decisive points. Where one requires the unconscious as a condition of ideological interpellation, the other dispenses with it and redistributes the problem to the historical conditions of existence of the statement. Barthes and Rancière illuminate likewise distinct dimensions of the same political operation, bringing into view the erasure of fabrication in the sign and the distribution of the visible and the audible. Koselleck and Rosa diagnose, through different paths, the compression of historical time; Stiegler shifts the question, refusing the diagnosis of alienation and proposing that the problem is not technology within human temporality, but the corporate capture of technical regimes of individuation. Quijano situates this entire framework within the colonality of power, conditioning the scope of any concept proposed without this geopolitical framing.

What this essay pursues, without intending to resolve it completely, is what is lost when enunciation is governed by an infrastructure that maximizes engagement and minimizes alterity. The answer that gradually takes shape passes through the displacement of the time of experience into the time of capture, of collective discursive memory into the private algorithmic archive, of the subject who encounters the other and is transformed into the avatar-subject who circulates in circuits of confirmation. The beneficiaries of this erasure are identifiable. Their interests are measurable in data and in dollars, and analysis that does not name this works only on the surface of fabrication.

THE VIRAL AS DEVICE: WHY CERTAIN EVENTS CIRCULATE

The analytical procedure of Informatized Enunciative Spaces (IESs; hereafter IESs) formulated by Silveira, Gallo, and Pequeno (2025) begins from a finding that discourse theory of Pêcheutian matrix needed to confront: digital platforms do not distribute preexisting enunciations; they technically constitute the conditions under which certain statements can appear, circulate, and persist. What this shift produces analytically is considerable. Normalization affects the moment before formulation, configuring length, format, tone, and rhythm as technical conditions of visibility. Mediation intervenes in circulation, selecting which statements will achieve visibility on the basis of engagement metrics that the subject does not control and often does not even name as such. The avatar-subject is the subject position generated by the conjunction of these two interpellations. The digital archive, as Dias (2018) articulates, does not sediment like the historical archive and is reordered with each query according to changing parameters, so that what a subject finds when searching is not a stable repository, but a configuration produced by the algorithm at that precise instant.

What makes an event go viral is the convergence of properties that the infrastructure selects for amplification. Brady, Crockett, and Van Bavel (2020), in the MAD Model of moral contagion, empirically document that moral-emotional language is consistently associated with increased sharing, and that content combining ontological ambiguity with moral activation maximizes propagation. The empirical datum and the discursive diagnosis do not merge methodologically, but they articulate in the materiality of IESs, with the algorithm serving as one of their historical conditions of production. The selection of what circulates is the constitution of the field of the sayable; what never reaches the threshold of amplification will not be invisible, but discursively nonexistent for most of the subjects who inhabit these spaces. Absence is the active effect of an architecture that distributes discursive existence according to the grammar of engagement. Foucault (1969/2008) described the rarity of the statement, the fact that, among everything that could be said, only certain statements exist. And in IESs, this rarity is administered by a

private company for accumulation purposes, which turns an analytical category into a political question of another order.

The high-intensity discursive events that erupt in these spaces share not only properties, but also the condition of possibility of what follows. The rupture of everyday life captures attention in the flow because it breaks habitual indifference, and it remains in circulation only because it sustains constitutive ambiguity. The event that immediately resolves doubt is exhausted before it can engage: it is irresolvability that summons anticipated moral judgment, positioning avatar-subjects within discursive formations that prescribe legitimate ways of feeling before any verification occurs. The raw event is converted into collective narrative within a matter of hours. When it disappears from the flow, the residual symbolic impact remains as an archival trace that conditions subsequent irruptions.

What the algorithm amplifies are always enunciations that reactivate pre-constructed elements already available in interdiscourse. Not because the system reads discursive memory in the Pêcheutian sense, but because accumulated engagement data teach the model that certain contents trigger consistent responses in certain user populations. Decades of ideological sedimentation concerning family, gender, race, and childhood have been compressed into activation vectors that the algorithm uses without naming them. What returns to the subject when the system amplifies certain contents maintains a distance from memory understood as work upon the past, because it is the automated reactivation of positions that the subject occupies without knowing that they occupy them. In other words, it would be possible to simplify by saying that certain things return even before they have passed.

FROM THE BARTHESIAN MYTH TO THE MICRO-MYTH: THREE SHIFTS THAT CHANGE THE STRUCTURE

The operation that Barthes described in *Mythologies* (1957) is of the second order. The image of the Black soldier saluting the French flag on the cover of Paris Match does not lie about what it shows: it transforms what it shows into the signifier of something else. On the denotative plane, a documentary

image; on the plane of myth, the sign of imperial France transcending racial differences, emptying historical meaning in order to retain only form. Myth does not seek to deny the first meaning, but to deform it, and this deformation erases fabrication. What was historically generated reappears as nature, as an eternal and inevitable given.

The algorithmic micro-myth retains this second-order structure and articulates the three shifts that alter its functioning. Temporal scale matters analytically because Barthesian naturalization presupposed time for sedimentation, decades of repetition in magazines, advertising, cinema. The micro-myth eliminates this time. Puryear, Vandello, and Gray (2024) document that the perception of virality, regardless of content, intensifies perceptions of moral threat and amplifies indignation. By amplifying, the algorithm constitutes the micro-myth as truth before any verification is possible. The intentionality of fabrication changes the status of the agent, since the erotic baby bottle and the fake news from the Choquei profile were produced to circulate according to the affective grammar of IESs, which means that the pole of production had already internalized the algorithmic conditions of visibility before publication. There is an asymmetry of discursive power from the outset, and partial reversibility reconfigures the archive. Debunking does not erase; it opens a new discursive series that feeds back into the same archive, so that rectifying paradoxically extends the duration of the micro-myth in time.

For Barthes, the bourgeois myth possessed what he called nominative flight. The bourgeoisie as political fact is unnameable and enunciates its values as human nature. Meta, Alphabet, and ByteDance assert their values as optimization of the user experience. The technical neutrality of corporate language is the contemporary form of erasing fabrication. The difference in relation to Barthes is that this erasure is executed by the infrastructure itself, and there is no rhetoric that needs to work in order to naturalize, because the appearance of neutrality is inscribed in the architecture of the system.

What Barthesian analysis did not anticipate was the collapse of the asymmetry between producer and consumer that IESs install. In *Mythologies*, there was still a relatively stable distinction between those who produced the myth and those who received it. The micro-myth dissolves this distinction without

reversing it, allowing any subject to fabricate and distribute micro-myths with the same tools with which they consume them; the pole of production and the pole of reception touch and become confused in the same gesture of publishing. This does not mean that myth has been democratized. What has been built is a redistribution of its work of fabrication among millions of producers, each believing themselves to be the first to name what everyone had already recognized. Technical memory retrieves the result without the process, and the subject receives as evidence what was laboriously constructed through decades of discursive sedimentation; when they republish it as their own perception, they do not know that they are the final link in a chain that did not begin with them.

The concept of regime of historicity used by Hartog (2015) to designate the way in which an era articulates past, present, and future as a specific configuration of time, rather than as a vague cultural datum, allows the argument to advance. The presentism that he diagnoses in recent decades, the hypertrophy of the present to the detriment of the past as lesson and the future as horizon, finds in IESs its most complete technical infrastructure. The micro-myth manufactures a present that closes in upon itself, that needs neither the past to legitimate itself nor the future to justify itself. It is an event that happens entirely in the instant of its circulation and that, upon disappearing from the flow, leaves a trace without memory, as well as data without elaboration and an archive without historical thickness.

INTERPELLATION, DEVICE, AND WHAT IS AT STAKE BETWEEN PÊCHEUX AND FOUCAULT

When the algorithm positions a subject before content that summons moral judgment, by what path does this occur? This is not a rhetorical question. It determines what can be said about resistance, agency, and transformation. If it occurs through ideological interpellation in Pêcheux's sense, the unconscious is a condition of the process, and the subject is called to a position that they did not choose and of which they believe themselves to be the origin. If it occurs through the apparatus of knowledge-power in Foucault's sense, the unconscious is dispensable, since what governs positioning are the

historical conditions of existence of certain forms of enunciation, independently of any particular subject. Neither of the two, in isolation, simultaneously captures the interpellation of the subject and the historical conditions of possibility of the device that executes it. This incompleteness is the point of friction that makes the tension between them analytically productive.

The discursive event in Pêcheux (1983/2006) is situated at the meeting point between a current actuality and a memory. The enunciation “On a gagné!”, after Mitterrand’s victory in 1981, is not reducible either to linguistic structure or to historical conjuncture in isolation. It is itself the point of rupture at which a discursive memory is mobilized and rearranged. The “On” is a subject position installed through discursive interpellation, activating the historical struggles of the French left, the Resistance, May 1968. What governs this process is interdiscourse, the already-said that sustains the possibility of every saying, making certain positions available and others impossible (Pêcheux, 1988). The pre-constructed is the effect of this functioning, or that which refers to a prior and exterior construction, presenting itself to the subject as evidence requiring no demonstration. The subject believes itself to be the origin of its discourse, forgetting no. 1, and believes that words have fixed meanings, forgetting no. 2. Both are structural effects. The pre-constructed regarding childhood as purity, motherhood as fulfillment, authenticity as value, seems to emerge spontaneously in viral cycles, but it is available in interdiscourse, waiting for the event that will reactivate it.

The refusal of the concept of ideology is, in Foucault (1979), the point at which the divergence from Pêcheux becomes irreducible. For Foucault, what determines what can be said in each era is not the illusion that the subject sustains about their discourse, but the historical conditions of existence of statements, independently of the subject who utters them. The *dispositif* is the heterogeneous ensemble—discourses, institutions, architectures, regulations, scientific statements—that responds to a historical urgency. IESs respond to the urgency of monetizing human attention, what Zuboff (2019) names surveillance capitalism: the unilateral extraction of behavioral data as raw material for the prediction and modification of behavior. The strategic function of the *dispositif* is to transform behavior into data.

Foucauldian archaeology (1969/2008) makes it possible to map the regularities that determine which objects can appear as viral, which profiles can speak with authority, which enunciative strategies produce engagement, without looking at individual choices, but rather as the historical grammar of what can be said. Zoppi-Fontana (2017) demonstrates that the political subject is constituted by processes that precede their enunciation as citizen, worker, content creator, as positions that situate the subject within networks of memory and power before they consciously occupy them.

The incompatibility between Pêcheux and Foucault remains as a tension: Foucauldian genealogy reconstructs the historical conditions of existence of the devices that govern IESs, the constitution of the user as unpaid worker, visibility as a form of power, technical neutrality as corporate nominative flight. Pêcheutian discourse analysis follows how, within these devices, the subject is interpellated as avatar-subject (Pequeno, 2020) by interdiscourse and the pre-constructed, the path through which the position opened by the device becomes, for the subject, evidence of itself. The articulation maintains the tension as tension, because where Pêcheux needs the unconscious, Foucault refuses it, and this divergence is analytically necessary so as not to transform the subject either into a pure function of the *dispositif* or into a pure victim of ideology.

What this impasse between the two thinkers reveals, when strained by the specificity of IESs, is a gap that neither of them fills. It is the gap of the subject who knows, to some degree, that they are being interpellated, and continues to be interpellated, since the veteran user of platforms knows how the algorithm works, recognizes emotional hooks, identifies the grammar of engagement, and nevertheless finds themselves captured by the ambiguity of the reborn, by fabricated mourning, by the scandal that returns. Knowledge about the *dispositif* is not capable of interrupting the *dispositif*. And Pêcheux would say that forgetting is structural and is not undone by individual consciousness; Foucault would say that knowledge about power is not outside relations of power. Both are right for different reasons, and it is precisely this convergence of incompatible arguments that most accurately describes algorithmic capture.

It survives knowledge of its functioning because it does not operate upon ignorance, but upon speed, and the decision to engage precedes reflection on the conditions of engagement.

There is a point that the articulation between the two authors leaves unanswered and that the historical specificity of IESs imposes: the question of corporate agency. Pêcheux thinks the subject as interpellated by ideological formations without an identifiable agent. Foucault, in turn, thinks power as relational, diffuse, without a center. Neither prepared analysis for a world in which four private corporations, with names, CEOs, and identifiable fiduciary obligations, hold control over the conditions of enunciation of billions of subjects. Discursive analysis must incorporate this dimension because there are, in fact, engineering decisions, A/B tests, and growth targets behind every architecture of interpellation, and the dispositif has authors.

DISCURSIVE SERIES

The singularity of the Pêcheutian event is a condition of its theoretical functioning. “On a gagné!” in May 1981 is a historically delimited, dated enunciation, unrepeatable in its discursive singularity. When the erotic baby bottle circulated in 2014, returned in 2018, and came back in 2022, it was not the same enunciation reappearing, but a multiplicity of distinct enunciations that the algorithm processed as a single event, endowed with collective memory and archival trace. This structure did not exist before IESs as a technical condition, and for this reason Pêcheux could not have foreseen it. The discursive series names this displacement without forcing it to fit the singular event, without reducing the viral to a consumer trend, and without any claim to found an instrument.

What analytically delimits a discursive series are five operational criteria. The point of irruption is the first high-visibility publication that the algorithm selected for amplification; the point of exhaustion occurs when the algorithm ceases amplification and the series disappears from the flow, even if enunciations continue to be produced. The typical temporal window ranges from 12 to 72 hours, a compression that situates the series on the scale of Rosa’s shrunken present (Rosa, 2013), where the event

is exhausted before experience can settle as elaborated memory. The second criterion is the triggering of a specific discursive memory: the series does not produce its pre-constructed elements out of nothing; it reactivates what interdiscourse had already made available. The erotic baby bottle did not create the pre-constructed notion of childhood as the territory of purity; it found it ready-made and reactivated it. The third criterion is the distribution of recurring avatar-subject positions: the moral guardian, the incredulous, the ironist, the reaffirming subject, positions identifiable through linguistic marks, modalizations, and argumentative operators. The fourth criterion is the recoverable archival trace, which distinguishes the series from a passing trend. The erotic baby bottle returns in every election because it is in the archive and not in memory. The fifth criterion is the intensity of algorithmically amplified and measurable circulation.

These criteria make it possible to identify three subtypes according to how the series relates to time and to debunking. In recurrence series, the previously consolidated archive returns periodically without significant alteration, and what returns is not the event, but its structure of interpellation. In amplification series, a single event triggers a cascade of chain repositionings, each round reactivating new pre-constructed elements. In debunking series, subsequent correction never achieves the same circulation as the inaugural version because the archive preserves the version that circulated, not necessarily the one that was true.

What the discursive series forces to the surface is a problem that Foucault's theory of the historical archive and Pêcheux's theory of the event left in different zones. For Foucault, the archive is the system that governs what can be said in an era, a formation that cannot be dated by a single event. For Pêcheux, the event is singular, dated, unrepeatable. The discursive series occupies the interval between the two, being plural like the archive and datable like the event, but its dating multiplies with each recurrence. The erotic baby bottle has a date of fabrication, 2014, but its dates of irruption accumulate with each electoral cycle. The archive does indeed preserve, but it also reactivates, and each reactivation is a new enunciation that reinserts it into interdiscourse with an additional layer of sedimentation. The series grows by the

accumulation of instances and not temporally through narrative continuity. The algorithmic archive stores everything and selectively redisplay, and the conditions for return are the metrics.

The political implication of recurrence series is that certain discursive battles never end because the archive that feeds them never closes. The fact that the erotic baby bottle has been repeatedly debunked does not alter its force of interpellation, because what debunking produces in the archive provokes a kind of bifurcation: the original version and the debunked version both come to exist, and the algorithm will amplify whichever one best fits the grammar of engagement of the moment.

UNANCHORED SUBJECT

Every avatar-subject is generated by the technical-discursive interpellation of IESs, but it may still preserve marks of the ordinary, with hesitations, corrections, and opacities that make the work of formulation visible. The unanchored subject eliminated these marks before publication. The subject remains, but the stumble is eliminated, that moment in which the ordinary subject encounters what they did not know they thought, or discovers that the word they chose did not say what they intended. It is the stumble that makes enunciation singular, and without it, what circulates is the optimized avatar.

The concept develops from the avatar-subject proposed by Pequeno (2020) and from the discourse-form of *Escritoralidade* [Script-orality] elaborated by Gallo and Silveira (2017), working at the point where technical normalization and ideological interpellation converge at their maximum degree. What this point reveals is a third forgetting that exceeds the two Pêcheutian ones. Forgetting no. 1 installs the illusion that the subject is the origin of their own discourse, erasing interdiscourse. Forgetting no. 2 sustains the illusion that discourse is transparent, that words have fixed meanings. The third forgetting, which is proposed here as technical forgetting, erases the operations of normalization that the platform performed on enunciation before it entered circulation. The platform's filter, the recommendation algorithm, the editing interface, and the moderation policies had already configured what could be said

before the subject typed the first word. The subject believes they freely choose tone, format, and duration, but these dimensions have already been determined by the infrastructure as conditions of visibility.

Technical forgetting adds to the Pêcheutian apparatus a twist in the very relation between subject and conditions of production. Forgettings no. 1 and no. 2 describe how the subject relates to their own already formulated discourse. Technical forgetting precedes formulation and acts upon the conditions of possibility of saying before saying occurs. The subject does not forget what they said; they never even come to formulate what they would have said without infrastructural interpellation. The platform configures the field within which certain voices are formed and others never come to be formed, and this is not censorship, which presupposes a preexisting discourse that is interrupted, but rather the prior modeling of the conditions under which discourse may exist.

The marks of the unanchored subject are analytically identifiable as a discursive pattern, not as individual pathology. Narratives calibrated with emotional hooks in the first three seconds, development in a high-intensity dramatic arc, closure that calls for sharing. Speech in which every pause, vocal inflection, and gesture has been adjusted to increase attentional retention. The fake question box of Instagram Stories is the operation in its most transparent form. The user fabricates the questions they will answer, eliminating the risk of being confronted with an inquiry they had not anticipated. They perform dialogue without an interlocutor. The fakecast operates according to the same principle: the subject records themselves simulating participation in a podcast, fabricating the position of invited expert when no invitation occurred; what they have in common is not the lie, but the elimination of alterity as a condition of possibility of enunciation.

Not every avatar-subject is an unanchored subject. Long narratives about mental health in Brazilian IESs, lasting 20 to 30 minutes and refusing resolution within the timeframe of engagement, achieve structurally lower circulation because the algorithm penalizes content that demands time without any guarantee of rapid retention. The comments on these narratives register what the digital archive cannot compress: “I also felt this, but differently,” “I don’t know how to name what I feel, but I recognize

something here.” These are marks that the ordinary subject has preserved something of the stumble. The design of IESs establishes as its ideal the avatar-subject who circulates without friction, confirms without contesting, engages without resistance. The unanchored subject is this ideal in its fullest form.

There is a figure of the unanchored subject that the immediate examples tend to conceal: that of the trained professional. The content creator who has taken training in digital storytelling, who tests variations of thumbnail in real time, who distributes publication at the peak engagement time of their target audience, is not naive about what is operating, since they master it technically. Technical forgetting, in this case, is incorporation, and normalization has been so deeply internalized that it has ceased to be an external constraint and has become a grammar of expression. When this subject says “I,” they speak from a position iteratively constructed by the engineering of attention, and the fluency of this speech is precisely the index that the anchor has been erased. The most unanchored subject is not the least literate, but the one who has learned best.

ALLEGORY OF THE REBORN: SIMULACRUM, AUTHENTICITY, AND WHAT STIEGLER REFUSES IN BAUDRILLARD

The subject fabricates the question they will answer. The elementary structure of the fake question box on Instagram Stories is neither irony nor paradox, but the most transparent form of an operation that runs through all micro-myths. Baudrillard (1991), in describing the four phases of the image—the reflection of a profound reality, the masking of that reality, the masking of its absence, and finally the phase in which the image bears no relation to any reality and is its own pure simulacrum—provided a vocabulary for naming what the fake question box and the fakecast perform. They construct the staging of authority as an end in itself, without a referent to dissimulate. The distinction between simulation, pretending to have what one does not have, and dissimulation, pretending not to have what one does have, collapses, and the unanchored subject performs the form of authority; this performance is algorithmically recognized as the functional equivalent of real authority.

The reborn baby is the most precise allegory of this operation. It does not imitate a real baby because it replaces the baby in the affective function without there being a referent to imitate. Published in IESs, the reborn generates the micro-myth at the intersection between artifact and platform. Ontological doubt keeps the event in circulation as long as the question “is it real?” remains unresolved; moral judgment polarizes avatar-subjects before any verification occurs. The mobilized pre-constructed elements—motherhood as fulfillment, mourning as taboo, the feminine as the territory of affect—were found ready-made in interdiscourse and activated with precision by the ambiguity of the image.

Affect does not need a referent in order to be real. The care given to the silicone doll is genuine, for it involves routine, affective investment, and a relationship with a history. However much there may have been an attempt to pathologize it, this fact is evidence that the affective function can detach itself from the object that originated it and migrate to a functional substitute without the affect losing intensity. The mourning over the suicide provoked; the indignation over the erotic baby bottle that did not exist is real; the solidarity with the pregnant woman who was not pregnant is real. The false referent does not retroact upon the affect, because the affect had already been invested before the falsity could be detected. Technical memory retrieves the result without the process; the archive stores the mobilized affect, not the referent that produced it, and what conditions subsequent irruptions is the availability of the affect that was activated.

Stiegler (1998) shifts the problem that Baudrillard installed. If technology is not a prosthesis that comes from outside to cover over a prior authenticity, but has always been constitutive of the human, if the human individuates itself through techniques and not despite them, then the diagnosis of a loss of authenticity loses the ground it presupposes. There is no earlier phase of adherence between sign and referent that would function as a norm of evaluation. For Stiegler, the human has always related to the world through tertiary retentions that mediatize and reconfigure experience. What has changed is who controls the conditions of production, circulation, and reactivation of signs. The reborn is far from being a symptom of a crisis of reality; rather, it is a symptom of a crisis in the ownership of the conditions of

affective individuation. The political question is the regulation of this regime, not the return to an anteriority that Baudrillard implicitly presupposes as a lost norm.

FOUR CASES, ONE VARIABLE STRUCTURE

The erotic baby bottle, the distorted anti-homophobia kit that circulated as the “erotic baby bottle” between 2014 and 2018, is the most legible case of a recurrence series with deliberate fabrication. Ontological ambiguity was instrumentalized for years as an electoral weapon because the pre-constructed notion of childhood as the territory of purity had already configured the answer before the question. What is analytically revealing is not the content of the lie, but the asymmetry of discursive power between those who fabricate and those who are interpellated. The fabricators master the code of enunciative polishing and mobilize it intentionally; the consumer avatar-subjects process the event as evidence because technical forgetting erased the conditions of production before the enunciation came to circulate.

The Pregnant Woman of Taubaté (2014) reveals the micro-myth as a double event. The pregnancy activated solidarity and mobilized pre-constructed elements concerning motherhood as natural fulfillment and authenticity as supreme value. The revelation of the simulation activated pre-constructed elements concerning betrayal and the breaking of the social contract. The two phases mobilize distinct discursive memories, and the second does not undo the first: it opens a new discursive series that feeds back into the archive. The trace of the Pregnant Woman of Taubaté still conditions, to this day, the reading of any post by a pregnant woman with high engagement. The debunking series does not capture a failure of the event, but its transformation into a matrix that governs future enunciations, showing that debunking does not undo; it merely records.

The fake news that led to suicide from the Choquei profile, the Jéssica Canedo case in 2023, reveals the structural separation between affect and referent. The avatar-subject who mourns experiences a genuine affective state, and the grief is real. The pre-constructed notion of the death of young people as social tragedy dispenses with the referent in order to function as affect. The indignation following the

debunking was directed at the profile that fabricated the news, not at what made the fabrication possible, not at the algorithm that amplified it, not at the archive that will preserve it as data.

The Larissa Manoela Case (2023) presents a distinct structure because the event did not involve external fabrication; the event was real and complex, and it was the IES that compressed it into a binary narrative. The micro-myth acted equally upon real events, compressing them into avatar-subject positions available in interdiscourse and erasing the complexity of relationships that the binary narrative cannot sustain. The amplification series generated chained rounds that kept the case in circulation for weeks, an uncommon duration explained by the event's capacity to reactivate different pre-constructed elements with each new piece of information. The avatar-subject only had to occupy the positions that interdiscourse had already prepared.

Read together, the four cases make visible the independence of the micro-myth in relation to falsity. The erotic baby bottle was deliberate fabrication; the Pregnant Woman of Taubaté was staging; the fake news from the Choquei profile were an invention; the Larissa Manoela Case was a real event. In all of them, the micro-myth operated with the same efficiency. Any diagnosis that locates the problem in the domain of disinformation is working on the symptom. Fact-checking corrects the referent, but it does not alter the availability of the pre-constructed elements that the micro-myth activated, does not undo the affect that was invested, does not close the series that the archive keeps open.

There is also a dimension that the four cases collectively illuminate: the unequal distribution of the cost of debunking. Those who paid the cost were the subjects involved in the event, not those who fabricated it or those who amplified it. The woman who gestated fiction paid with her story; the celebrity whose family relations were compressed into a binary narrative paid with her privacy; the debtors of moral attention paid with poorly invested affect. The algorithm that amplified and the corporation that operates it paid no cost at all. This asymmetry is structural, and naming it is a condition for thinking of any political response that goes beyond the technical regulation of disinformation.

ALGORITHMIC PARTITION OF THE SENSIBLE: WHERE BARTHES AND RANCIÈRE DIVERGE

The Barthesian myth and Rancière's partition of the sensible are diagnoses of distinct dimensions of the same problem. To confuse them impoverishes analysis. For Barthes, what is at stake is the operation through which the historical becomes natural evidence, the loss of the historical quality of things. For Rancière (2005), what is at stake is the system of sensible evidences that defines who can see, who can be seen, who can speak, and who is heard as noise. Politics, for Rancière, is not the management of constituted power, which he calls police, but dissent that disturbs the prevailing partition, that makes visible what was not seen and makes heard as discourse what was heard as noise. Barthes works at the level of the sign, and Rancière works at the level of the political distribution of the sensible.

The algorithmic micro-myth needs both in order to be adequately described. Barthes illuminates how the image of the reborn presents itself as evidence of maternal care, erasing the historical-discursive work that produced this evidence as available. Rancière provides the political effect of this erasure. The image of the reborn saturates the field of maternal care, leaving other forms of mourning invisible, while the erotic baby bottle confirms the distribution that places childhood as the territory of purity threatened by perversion. The micro-myth executes the partition of the sensible with maximum algorithmic efficiency, and where Rancièrian dissent would require making visible what was not visible, the micro-myth amplifies what was already visible and confirms it as the only visible.

Barthesian nominative flight finds its precise digital equivalent in the language of platform corporations. Meta, Alphabet, and ByteDance do not say "according to the interests of capital accumulation," but rather "personalization." Technical language is the mode through which the political agent becomes unnameable. The invisibilization of the agent is at once Barthesian naturalization and Rancièrian fixation of the partition of the sensible, erasing fabrication and consolidating what can be seen as what must be seen.

Barthes, in *Mythologies*, does not envision an exit through the politics of dissent. Myth is so pervasive that the critique of myth risks itself becoming a second-order operation, a new naturalization of its own denaturalization. The critical position in Barthes is fundamentally melancholic. Rancière refuses this impasse. For him, politics exists precisely as the interruption of the order that distributes the visible and the invisible; it is the irruption of uncounted subjectivities into the system of police that constitutes the political. In IESs, dissent faces an architecture that captures irruptions and processes them as engagement. The algorithm does not distinguish between content that confirms the partition and content that disturbs it: it amplifies what engages, and certain irruptions engage as much as confirmations. The capture of resistance as a product is the dispositif's most sophisticated operation.

The field of the visible in IESs functions as selective saturation, and what is invisible has not been erased by decree, but pushed below the threshold of amplification by the competition for attention that the dispositif itself institutes. Forms of life, mourning, care, and affect that do not translate into the grammar of engagement simply do not reach the field of shared visibility. What the algorithm administers is the cost of making visible what was not seen; of course, dissenting in IESs is possible, but it is structurally more costly. It requires more time, more work, more exposure to the risk of being captured as entertainment, and the asymmetry of cost is itself a form of domination.

COLONIALITY OF POWER: IESS AS INFRASTRUCTURE OF EPISTEMIC EXTRACTION

The concepts proposed in this essay—algorithmic micro-myth, discursive series, unanchored subject—describe processes that occur in IESs without saying anything about who owns the infrastructure that governs them, where the parameters that determine what circulates come from, or upon which bodies the dispositif acts asymmetrically. The coloniality of power, formulated by Quijano (2000), is the framework that makes it possible to name these asymmetries without reducing them to technological inequality.

Coloniality cannot be thought of as a residue of colonialism, for it persists as a structure that organizes relations of labor, authority, gender, and knowledge on a global scale. The fourth domain that Quijano identifies, the control of subjectivity and knowledge by epistemic Eurocentrism, directly affects IESs. Meta, Alphabet, ByteDance, and X Corp. determine the rules of technical normalization that generate the avatar-subject on a global scale, with cultural, legal, and epistemic parameters that naturalize the perspective of the Global North as universal. Couldry and Mejias (2019), in formulating the concept of data colonialism, directly name this articulation by affirming that the extraction of data from human lives reproduces, on a digital scale and in real time, the colonial logic of appropriating territories, bodies, and resources. The avatar-subject, by generating engagement, is simultaneously an unpaid worker who produces the data with which the algorithm improves itself for the next round of interpellation.

The racial biases of algorithms are the digital materialization of hierarchies that colonialism consolidated over five centuries. Biased contents trigger greater engagement, increase visibility, and reinforce bias. A feedback loop that Silva (2022) documents in the Brazilian context, demonstrating how algorithms for facial recognition, content moderation, and recommendation reproduce and amplify racial discrimination. Mbembe (2017) proposes that the model of domination founded on the racialization of the human has become the template for new forms of exclusion. Butler (2004) demonstrates that certain lives are recognized as grievable and others are not. The technical materiality of IESs inherits this asymmetry from historical data and amplifies it, rendering it invisible beneath the appearance of neutrality.

The media visibility of Black and Indigenous bodies on platforms does not dissolve colonial symbolic violence, but forces its reorganization, as Ferrari and Neckel (2017) show. The pain of the racialized body circulates because it triggers moral engagement; the speech of that same subject encounters algorithmic and discursive barriers that reduce its circulation. The asymmetry between circulating-as-image and circulating-as-enunciation is one of the most precise manifestations of Quijano's epistemic coloniality. Knowledge about the racialized body circulates as legitimate when produced by others, while knowledge produced by the subject themselves encounters technical and discursive

obstacles to circulating as such. The concept of the algorithmic micro-myth has a scope conditioned by this framework: it describes the events that IESs select for amplification, leaving in silence those that technical and historical materiality prevents from reaching circulation.

Discourse theory, both in Pêcheux and in Foucault, tends to universalize its description of the subject. The subject interpellated by ideology, the subject governed by the dispositif. Quijano forces the question: which subject? Coloniality produces a hierarchy of humanities in which certain subjects have full access to subjectivity, reason, and speech recognized as discourse, while others are classified as primitive, emotional, irrational, whose knowledge is folklore and whose speech is noise. This hierarchy is inscribed in the training data of algorithms, in moderation policies built in English and then applied to languages and contexts for which they were not calibrated, in the categories of identity and content that the platform recognizes as legitimate.

The denunciation of algorithmic racism runs an analytical risk if it is formulated only as a problem of bias correctable through greater diversity in engineering teams. Algorithms were calibrated for a purpose that is structurally colonial. That is: to extract value from human lives without reciprocity, to universalize specific perspectives as neutral technical standards, to distribute visibility according to criteria that reproduce already existing hierarchies because these hierarchies maximize the engagement of majority audiences. Correcting bias without altering the architecture of extraction is to reform the instrument without questioning the project. Mignolo (2011), in proposing the decolonial option as a refusal of the epistemic premises of colonial formation, captures something that technical regulation does not reach: the impossibility of resolving, through the internal logic of the system, the problem that this logic constitutes.

FIGURES OF FRICTION: WHAT THE DISPOSITIF CANNOT PROCESS WITHOUT DESTROYING ITSELF

Every dispositif, in the Foucauldian sense, needs to incorporate some degree of deviation in order to reproduce itself. The question is not whether there is resistance, but what kind of resistance the dispositif can absorb without transformation and what kind actually threatens it. Guattari (2004), drawing from his experience at La Borde Hospital, proposes the coefficient of transversality as a measure of institutional openness to heterogeneity and the unexpected. A coefficient close to zero indicates closure in circuits that neutralize any alterity before it can produce transformation. IESs function as institutions with a coefficient close to zero by design. The encounter with genuine alterity would produce instability, delay, and the risk of abandoning the platform, while confirmation produces permanence. The historical urgency of the dispositif is attentional capture.

Marina Abramović's performance *The Artist is Present*, at MoMA in 2010, makes visible by contrast what IESs systematically eliminate. Visitors could sit across from Abramović for as long as they wished, without script, without guarantee of outcome, without temporal compression. What emerged was the time of real waiting, of confrontation with alterity without anticipation, of the possibility of being transformed by the encounter. IESs maximize consumption per second, eliminate waiting, and anticipate what the subject will encounter. Algorithmic personalization is the technical elimination of unavailability. In Rancièrian terms, the performance redistributes the partition of the sensible by installing a temporality that requires delay, while IESs fix the partition by ensuring that the subject will encounter only what the algorithm has already predicted they wanted to encounter.

Within the field of Brazilian IESs themselves, there are events that function as genuine friction, even if structurally minoritarian. Long narratives about mental health, lasting 20 to 30 minutes, discussing psychic suffering with deliberate opacity, refuse algorithmic compression. They do not offer resolution in three minutes, do not perform instant healing, do not deliver an applicable formula. They sustain hesitation, contradiction, and opacity that resist binary categorization. They achieve structurally lower

circulation because the algorithm penalizes content that requires time without any guarantee of rapid engagement. The comments on these narratives register what the digital archive cannot compress: “I also felt this, but differently.” These are marks that the ordinary subject is still present and that enunciation has preserved something of the stumble.

The distinction between genuine friction and the simulacrum of plurality that the dispositif itself can orchestrate in order to sustain the illusion of openness is what Guattari would call administered transversality, the controlled incorporation of difference that neutralizes it before it produces transformation. Friction that transforms is that which the dispositif cannot process without destroying itself, that which imposes an irreducible temporal cost. Content that morally challenges within the timeframe of engagement is processable; indignation is itself a form of attention that the algorithm monetizes. Abramović’s silence was a silence of presence that lasted longer than the attention system could administer.

Brazilian IESs have produced a form of friction that academic analysis has not yet adequately elaborated: political humor that uses algorithmic grammar against itself. Certain forms of distributed irony, memes that go viral through the emotional engagement they summon but whose content denaturalizes exactly the pre-constructed elements that circulation confirms, operate within a grammar that the algorithm amplifies without knowing that it is amplifying its own critique. This friction is short-lived. The dispositif learns, the parameters adjust, and the window of critical capture closes. But the fact that it exists, that there are moments when the archive serves what it should not serve, when the discursive series reactivates memory that corporate interdiscourse would prefer buried, is evidence that capture is never total. The totality of capture would be the end of the algorithm as a device of amplification; without any surprise, there is no engagement.

ALGORITHMIC SYCOPHANCY AND THE INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION OF PRE-CONSTRUCTED ELEMENTS

The subject uses AI to improve their text and receives back a polished enunciation, calibrated for engagement, stripped of the marks of the ordinary. What this apparently neutral gesture conceals is that the LLM learned, during its training, that agreeing with the user maximizes reward, even when agreement entails validating incorrect statements. Sharma et al. (2024) document that LLMs consistently exhibit sycophantic behavior. Through reinforcement learning with human feedback (RLHF), the system learns that user approval is the signal to be maximized. Sycophancy is a predictable consequence of the optimization process, structurally inscribed in the system's design. Ji et al. (2023) define hallucination as a structural effect that derives from probabilistic architecture, in which the model fabricates text by maximizing statistical coherence without access to external factual verification. Both are predictable effects of systems optimized for approval and statistical coherence, not for truth.

AI-generated texts, indistinguishable from human enunciation for casual readers, feed viralization cycles without moderation filters being able to detect them systematically. The micro-myth can be fabricated by an automated system that knows the affective grammar of IESs and instrumentalizes it on an industrial scale, radicalizing the asymmetry between production and circulation already identified in the erotic baby bottle. LLMs also mediate formulation before publication, and the subject who uses AI to write receives back an enunciation that has already performed the polishing that defines the unanchored subject. Technical forgetting no longer needs to be learned by the subject because it is itself automated by the system.

The Pêcheutian apparatus makes it possible to see what is at stake. The two constitutive forgettings are intensified by the sycophantic LLM. Forgetting no. 1, the illusion that the subject is the origin of their own discourse, is intensified when the system returns to the subject exactly the positions they had signaled as preferable, reformulated in such a way that they seem to have emerged spontaneously from the subject's own thought. Forgetting no. 2, the illusion that discourse is transparent,

is intensified when the LLM validates the user's incorrect statements, naturalizing as evident the position that the subject already occupied. Interdiscourse returns to the subject as if it were genuine production. The operation is analogous to Barthesian naturalization, but executed on a technical scale and in real time, confirming as obvious what the subject has just enunciated, sedimenting in seconds what the Barthesian myth took decades to consolidate.

Trained predominantly on Anglophone corpora generated in the Global North, as Brown et al. (2020) document for GPT-3, LLMs amplify geographical, racial, and class biases inscribed in publicly available textual production on the internet. Bender et al. (2021) demonstrate that these systems amplify biases present in training data, naturalizing hierarchies as a statistically probable linguistic pattern. From Quijano's (2000) perspective, LLMs are infrastructures for the production of pre-constructed elements on an industrial scale, operating epistemic coloniality through statistical optimization. The field of the sayable is consolidated by these systems because the LLM reproduces what was already statistically dominant and confirms it as linguistically correct.

When the sycophantic LLM returns the subject's position reformulated as evidence, it is altering the original position so as to make it more coherent, more convincing than it was before being processed. The subject receives back an improved version of themselves. This improved version circulates with the authority of an enunciation that has passed through the sieve of a system that seems to know more than the original subject. The interdiscourse that returns is not only the collective already-said; it is also the subject's own already-said, amplified and polished, invested with the appearance of external confirmation. Technical forgetting here reaches its most extreme degree, where the subject is unaware that the discourse circulating as theirs was partially, or entirely, written by a system trained so that they would approve it.

The sycophantic LLM is the most complete form of the unanchored subject as infrastructure. It is not the subject who has learned to prune their stumbles; rather, it is a system that prunes them before they occur, that projects enunciation without the hesitations, contradictions, and opacities that would make the

subject recognizable in their singularity. Algorithmic sycophancy is the model of relation that training by human approval inevitably produces, like a mirror that does not return the image, but its preferred version.

ALGORITHMIC PRESENT: DISSOLUTION OF THE HORIZON AND CAPTURE OF TERTIARY RETENTION

Koselleck (1985) identified, in a decisive historical turn, the growing dissociation between space of experience and horizon of expectation. The past as a repository of experience ceased to automatically determine the future, and the future became an open horizon that past experience informed without determining. This tension between what has been and what has not yet been is the condition of historicity opened by modernity. What IESs install is of another order. The cycle of the event is completed in hours; the space of experience is an archive without thickness; events remain as technical data, but the elaboration that transforms lived occurrence into experience does not find time to complete itself. The horizon of expectation is colonized by the next round of content that the algorithm has already prepared, being converted from an opening toward the future into a recommendation list delivered by the platform before the subject desires it.

Rosa (2013) names the shrinking of the present as the period during which expectations based on experience remain reliable. In *Resonance* (2019), what is lost receives a precise name. Resonance is a form of relation to the world in which the subject is transformed by what they encounter. It requires genuine affection, emotion that arises from the encounter, transformation through contact with difference, and, decisively, unavailability. Resonance happens or does not happen and does not submit to instrumental control. IESs replace genuine affection with stimulus calibrated to activate predictable response, quantify emotion as metric, prevent transformation through the architecture of confirmation, and eliminate unavailability through the promise of total personalization. What remains is echo, in which

the subject receives back polished versions of what they had already emitted, without the risk of being surprised.

Stiegler (1998) shifts Rosa's problem. Human temporality is constitutively technical, mediated by tertiary retentions that externalize memory and condition psychic and collective individuation. Primary retention, present perception; secondary retention, memory; and tertiary retention, mnemotechnologies: the three mutually constitute one another. The human individuates through techniques and not despite them. In this sense, the problem is not the presence of technology in human temporality, but the corporate capture of technical regimes of individuation. What the subject remembers, what they can recover as past experience, what they anticipate as possible, comes to be conditioned by a tertiary retention that belongs to the corporation that owns the platform. This capture constitutes the expropriation of memory as a condition of individuation, not because technology should be collectively owned because it is extrinsic to the human, but because the process of becoming a subject requires conditions of individuation that cannot be monopolized by a logic of capital accumulation.

Koselleck and Stiegler, who never met theoretically, converge here for different reasons. Koselleck thought of historicity as tension between accumulated space of experience and open horizon of expectation. Stiegler thought individuation as a process mediated by retentions that connect past and future through technology. Both presuppose that the subject has access to their own past as a condition of openness toward the future. But what IESs destroy is not the past nor the future as abstract temporal dimensions, but rather the subject's access to their own past as their own past. What the algorithmic archive stores is the behavioral trace that the corporation extracts from the subject in order to perfect the interpellation of that same subject. The subject is in the archive, but does not have access to the archive. They can see what the algorithm decides to show, not what has been recorded, and their technological memory belongs to another.

The algorithmic perpetual present is the installation of a regime in which the future has ceased to be a horizon of expectation and has become the projected extension of the present of engagement. The

recommendation algorithm delivers to the subject what the predictive model calculated that they will want, based on what they have already wanted, and there is, in this regime, no event in the Pêcheutian sense, no point of rupture at which memory encounters actuality in an unforeseen way and produces reconfiguration. What the dispositif delivers is pseudo-actuality, new content that confirms old positions, formal novelty that does not produce displacement. Technical memory retrieves the result without the process, and it is exactly for this reason that certain things return even before they have passed.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The reborn baby makes visible, in the form of an object, what digital platforms execute through discursive processes. The scene of care without language, affect without symbolic reciprocity, the saturated image that imposes affect before interpretation.

The theoretical traditions mobilized operate on planes that preserve their tensions. The incompatibility between Pêcheux and Foucault was analytically productive, and neither of the two, in isolation, simultaneously captures the interpellation of the subject and the historical conditions of possibility of the dispositif that executes it. Barthes and Rancière illuminate distinct dimensions of the same problem: the erasure of historicity in the sign and the political distribution of the visible and the audible. Rosa and Stiegler diverge on what is at stake in the relation between technology and human temporality, and this divergence is analytically necessary so as not to resolve the diagnosis into nostalgia for an impossible anteriority. Quijano conditions the scope of all the proposed concepts by situating IESs within epistemic coloniality: a limit that is not external to the analysis, but constitutive of it.

The proposed concepts delimit specific processes. The algorithmic micro-myth names events that articulate the rupture of everyday life, ontological ambiguity, moral engagement, and accelerated narrativization, naturalizing the historical as evidence through the technical materiality of the platform. The discursive series attempts to elaborate the tension between the singular Pêcheutian event and the plural viral event, establishing criteria for delimiting when multiple enunciations collectively constitute an

event of discursive order. The unanchored subject names the subject-form that emerges when enunciation is polished for algorithmic engagement before being made public, adding to the Pêcheutian apparatus technical forgetting: that through which the subject is unaware of the operations of normalization that the platform executed before the enunciation entered circulation.

Two limits must be named. The essay privileged high-intensity events that are exhausted in short cycles. Long-duration discursive processes in IESs—communities of practice, stable discursive formations, narratives that develop over months—would require other analytical devices. The analysis centered on open-circulation social networking platforms. Closed messaging platforms and niche communities present distinct discursive dynamics that this framework captures only partially.

When enunciation is governed by a technical materiality that maximizes engagement and minimizes alterity, what is lost is the possibility that the subject may stumble upon the pre-constructed, recognize evidence as constructed, and be transformed by the encounter with the other. IESs do not completely eliminate this possibility, since figures of friction demonstrate that there are resistances. But they render it structurally improbable and invisibilized. Algorithmic time and biological time do not coincide, and corporate tertiary retention and collective discursive memory are not equivalent. The partition of the sensible that the algorithm governs and the partition of the sensible that democratic politics would need to dispute are distinct projects.

What comes next exceeds the scope of this essay. But it can only begin after one knows exactly what is at stake.

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