

# Alienated Amusements: The Pleasures of Objective Enjoyment and Popular Narratives

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**ABSTRACT:** *The current paper seeks to critically analyze the contemporary notion of enjoyment and its ideological hegemonic functioning within contemporary popular culture. The present critique will employ and elaborate upon Todd McGowan's idea of a cultural turn in terms of a commandment to enjoy in association with Robert Pfaller and Zizek's notion of 'interpassivity'. All three of the theorists mentioned above are highly influenced by the thought of Jacques Lacan and his reworking of Freudian analysis of the human self and culture. I will argue that the capitalist commandment to enjoy is the direct cause of the condition of interpassivity underlying the operative function of popular culture. This is a state beyond passivity where even passive enjoyment is fetishistically relegated to the objects of desire. The more we move towards interactive and popular modes of narrative and symbolic mediation the more we become unaware of our passivity of response. My argument does not criticize the digital media alone but also the function of popular works of Literature and how they engender this particular form of enjoyment by presenting and propagating clichéd and watered down images of cultural types which attempt at not moral standardization but rather the dissipation of socio-political anxiety for the sake of the smooth functioning of the capitalistic apparatus.*

**Keywords:** Popular Culture, Enjoyment, Alienation

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## **Introduction**

From the very early conceptualizations of psychoanalytic theory, the term for power representing social hierarchy, and acting as a guard in front of the metaphorical inside of the symbolic world has been the ‘father’. It is the father that not only represents authority but is also the source of the production and introduction of anxiety through becoming the gatekeeper into the subjective matrix of being. Freud presents the hypotheses of a primordial herd headed by a father figure (164-165). In almost a metaphorical sense, Freud recounts how the patriarch of the horde, who would have the ultimate, unrestricted and singular power over unlimited enjoyment, would have been eliminated by his primitive fellow male members of the herd. This oedipal elimination of the father would result in what Freud refers to as ‘deferred obedience’ (65) in the form of the guilt pervading the conscience of the killers. In an act of true ambivalence, what the father prohibited was now deemed prohibited for all equal members of society. In the pursuance of enjoyment, they came to the point where an agreement upon dissatisfaction was made. For Freud this was the beginning of human society as we know it. This idea has been rejected for its obvious anthropological inaccuracies; but nonetheless, it still allows us an insight into how unrestricted enjoyment was curtailed in order for intra-social meaningful relations to form since “the self-perpetuation of the social order depends on conservation of resources, calculation of possibilities, and allowances for the future, enjoyment occurs without any consideration of how it will be sustained, without any fear of using itself up” (Freud, 165). Some form of sacrifice had to be made in order for the law to be established. The social world of meaningful relations had to stand on the rocky surface of dissatisfaction and lack.

It was perhaps Freud’s historical literalism regarding his insistence upon the biological father that makes his argument anthropologically unsatisfactory. But in the hands of Jacques Lacan (13 April 1901 – 9 September 1981) the idea of the father took on a linguistic role in the sense that it transcended the biological reality of the father and became the representative of the symbolic authority that has been conferred upon him by the linguistic structure of the symbolic order. The prohibition of the symbolic order of meanings that governs the unity of a subject and defends his sense of subjectivity from the all too traumatic realization of the sacrifice, is in itself inconsistent because of its never ending signifying function. The drive towards ultimate meaning or the essence of things is perhaps the greatest from of enjoyment which Lacan has referred to as *jouissance*. Lacan describes *jouissance* by referring to it as “superabundant vitality” (Lacan, 1986) ; the space of perceived fullness that exists beyond the prohibitive father that beckons the subject beyond a taboo based subjectivity towards the unhinging of all structures. The suture that barricades this ‘superabundant vitality’ from

flowing over is the metaphorical 'name of the father'. This particular name is what provides the biological father with linguistic/symbolic authority that he yields. As Lacan puts it: "It is in the 'name of the father' that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law"(Lacan, *Ecrits* 67). The biological father is just one of the names of the real father. A real/reality that exists within the system of significations/symbolic order that allow for hierarchal relationships to exist.

The question that arises now is that at what point is it at which our ambivalent relationship with the father begins? At what point does the father become a source for the anxiety which forces us into becoming subjects to a systematicity of meanings that requires conformity to its social ordering? The answer lies in the object of desire (mother). An object that one believes to be fully incorporated within one's own oceanic non being, but, as it turns out, lacked organic unity with ones being through being subjected to the authority of the father. The separation from the mother through the taboo against incest is how the name of the father is inscribed into the very essence of our being and initiates our entry into the symbolic order. This realization of a lack in organic unity between the self and the object announces and initiates the subject's entry into the symbolic order. This is an order of signification that arises out of the inscription of a lack on ones being; a lack that relentlessly and continuously keeps deferring the imaginary unity of desire and object. One loses the imaginary object the more one pursues it, but it is precisely the losing that allows for the hunt to go on indefinitely. The study of ontology is the study of the hunt and the prey that keeps slipping past the hunter, but never completely beyond reach. Always leaving its foot prints in the damp soil of existence. Ever enamouring the leaves of the forest of life with the scent of its body that is never to fully materialize but paints in imagination, contours of fullness. The mother that symbolized the ultimate lost object of desire, is found to be one of the names of the symbolic father through which desire can be sustained. It is the taboo against incest that first makes us realize the limitations that existence requires from us. In place of unlimited enjoyment what we get is recognition within the symbolic order. As McGowan (2004) puts it:

With the onset of the symbol—the inception of the prohibition of enjoyment— recognition gains a paramount importance. Once this occurs, all of the things for which people strive are important not for the immediate enjoyment that they might provide, but for recognition that they can confer upon those who have obtained them. Money is perhaps archetypal in this sense. Its value doesn't lie so much in the

enjoyment that it can purchase as in symbolic recognition it produces. This is why the very wealthy are eager to give some of their money away—to forsake any enjoyment of it—in exchange for having their names associated with what they have funded (25).

Interestingly this enjoyment that we are giving up on cannot exist as the object of our desire before it is prohibited. An object only becomes the object of desire once it has been made taboo (thus the mother becomes one of the names of the father in the sense of the signifying function of the mother as the ultimate lost object of desire arises only after the prohibition of the father). We elevate objects into this image of complete and full enjoyment only when they are forbidden. The irony here is that in order to sustain itself, desire has to remain dissatisfied. Thus, as desiring beings we never find what we are looking for in our objects of desire, since what we want is to desire itself. Always fantasising (and fantasising is the key word here) the ultimate enjoyment, it is desire that sustains our human subjectivity within the symbolic order.

Living in this contemporary age of what Fredric Jameson has referred to as *Late Capitalism*, because of the present's affinity between the economic sphere and the cultural domain (Jameson, 1991), when we look back at pre-modern societies; we find that the ultimate cultural command, which in Lacanian terms is referred to as the *law of the father*, was dissatisfaction. Pre-capitalist societies, which were not necessarily based on a system of equality did not allow for pure hedonistic enjoyment for all its members. Thus, such hedonism was only part of their fantasy structure as long as it remains within a utopian imaginary space. Its realization within the real world was deemed a moral abomination. At this point in history the *law of the father* commanded renouncing the possibility of unrestrained enjoyment in return for membership within the symbolic order that creates subjectivity. “Liberal or competitive capitalism—the first stage of capitalist development— demanded the renunciation of enjoyment in order that the work requisite for the functioning of the system would be done. The ideal of the work ethic served as the predominant ideological means through which liberal capitalism perpetuated the renunciation it required” (McGowan 31). The members of the early industrial societies accepted a gap or lack in our subjectivity through the renunciation of some ‘thing’ that we are not allowed to enjoy in exchange for entry into the symbolic order as an equal member of society.

Now, desire or more specifically, prohibited desire, in itself is the outcome of the law of the father, since we only desire what we cannot have, but at the same time this explicit sense of dissatisfaction contains within itself a radical potential which consistently remains in a dialectical relationship with the discourse of

power. This potentiality of desire and the resulting dissatisfaction can be employed in the service of politically emancipatory movements and cultural critique since it allows an anxiety to take hold of the subject. Literature and all other works of imagination have traditionally delved into this repository of imaginary dissatisfied fantasies in order to create a higher sense of what we lack in the symbolic order. It is this anxiety of desire which posits itself as an agent of social change behind emancipatory movements against the forces of control. Herbert Marcuse, in his extremely influential essay *The Affirmative Character of Culture* (2007) notes that: “What counts as utopia, phantasy, and rebellion in the world of fact is allowed in art” (100). Desire in the form of literary and artistic representation acts as a sustained refusal against ideological forces that demand banality and conformity. It ensures a systematic symbolic identification between members of a society to create intersubjective bonds based on common dissatisfaction. It was precisely this desire for this unattainable singular and organic “thing” that prompted mass utopian dreams in the Marxist revolutions of the early twentieth century. The class consciousness that Marx championed so, was one aspect of this desire arising from lack, presented in an intersubjective form.

Coming to the problem at hand, this ability of desire to create subjectivities that can perform the function of critique and act as the vanguard for mass intersubjective movements, is dealt with in late capitalism through a change in the law of father. The command of the capitalist father is no longer forbear and cease but rather to enjoy. This structural change was the result of the evolved system of the market which now had to base itself on mass consumption since the industrial age had created an economy which over produces commodities through the commodification of every aspect of our lives. This cultural development was detected and theorized by the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, specifically Adorno and Horkheimer, in the beginning of the twentieth century. Adorno and Horkheimer describe the age as one in which culture has been taken out from the hands of the masses and industrialized and mass produced to create what they refer to as the *culture industry*. According to them “products of the culture industry are such that they can be alertly consumed even in a state of distraction” (100). Almost a century after the publication of Adorno and Horkheimer’s work, we are at a point in history where technological innovation has sped up to a point of obsession; an obsession that has been fuelled by the culture industry’s promise of ultimate fulfilment through constant consumption of commodities. It has already been argued that desire for objects in the world arises out of a lack, and what the capitalist culture industry has come to capitalize is precisely on this idea of lack. This does not mean that the lack

has been filled and an organic unity has been achieved with the ultimate object of desire, rather this command only creates an illusion that the symbolic lack has been overcome. The commodification of everyday life requires objects created for consumption to be presented in such a way that they create this illusion of fulfilment so as to sustain consumption. The current age of market oriented subjectivity requires the law of the father to command enjoyment. Since the function of the superego is closely bound up with morality and law, the contemporary necessity to enjoy and be happy is tantamount to enjoyment being the contemporary moral law. According to McGowan: “The ‘commodification of everyday life’—the sine qua non of late capitalism—has the effect of, at once, undermining figures of authority and stressing the importance of enjoying oneself” (30). This moral injunction to enjoy has become so all pervasive that even those avenues of life that were considered to be subversive to the symbolic order (Individuality, originality, creativity.... all the buzz words of artistic and cultural resistance) have been appropriated in order to sell Coke. Every single advertisement fetishizes the commodity it sells through a promise of happiness rather than the use value of said commodity. Even a cursory look at contemporary advertising shows that the real claim operating behind the façade of a promise of variety in one’s life is nothing more than a uniform assertion of dissipation of anxiety and filling up of an ontological lack which has no real relation to the commodity being advertised. From tea companies promising marital bliss by creating the fetish of tea which has the power to resolve all marital spats as soon as the seductive aroma of tea spreads through the air to toothpastes claiming the territory of love by showing teenagers being struck with the toothy smile of the opposite sex, the content of advertisements has levelled down the precarious nature of life to simple formulas for instant gratification. But this goes beyond simple consumption of commodities since even the world of ideas and imagination has been invaded by such promises regarding enjoyment and happiness. Popular culture, be it popular media or popular Literature, operates on the same ideological principle of the pursuit of happiness. Unlike the works of high modernism that recognized the turbulence of modern existence and the ambiguity inherent in the all too hegemonic modern idea of progress and pursuit of individual happiness, popular literature fetishizes imaginary certainties in a world which in reality is becoming more and more precarious. The rise of genre Literature which coincides with the onset of modernity speaks to the idea of these imaginary certainties since these generic categorizations do not describe varieties of imaginative experiences, but are rather, classifications of the consumer of popular works. Like any other commodity, Literature is also commodified through market research by the managers of imagination. The hegemony of industrialized popular literary genres is best described by Adorno and Horkheimer in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* where they write: “Something is provided for everyone so that no one escape; differences are hammered home

and propagated. The hierarchy of serial qualities purveyed to the public serves only to quantify it more completely. Everyone is supposed to behave spontaneously according to a "level" determined by indices and to select the category of mass product manufactured for their type" (97). The 'type' mentioned here, is in itself, a retroactive self which is one of the mass produced subjectivities that the reader is supposed to relate to. The ever alienated commodified self is the target audience and the reader of popular works has to allow his imaginary to be invaded by the industrialized symbolic which now defines the completed experiencing self.

Popular culture as a whole has lionized the idea of 'being yourself' whereas the self has been found to be more and more deconstructable with every passing moment. The irony here is that the motto of being oneself appeals to an essentialism which has been the motto of more traditional societies. These traditional societies were not economically and culturally based upon the same principles of production and consumption that the culture industry is based upon. These traditional ways of life, grounded upon the principles of essentialism, have been deemed backward and barbaric by the progressive enlightened modernity in the presence of a system in which the self is supposed to be in conformity with the ever changing demands of the modern evolutionary cultural concept of changing times. But, the cynicism inherent in the propagation of the essential self turns out to be the turning of the concept of the self into a fad. One can only be one's own self through the commodities that are on sale. Even the self has become a commodity that is being sold by motivational speakers everywhere. The more alienated the self becomes, the more the culture industry promises its near proximity through its commandment to enjoy. Enjoying in the sense of a self-realization which can only come through commodity fetishism. But these commodities are not just objects on supermarket shelves. Subjectivity itself is commodified by the alienation of experience where the objects are representative of not labour but rather a stylized ready-made selfhood.

Within the symbolic discourse of everyday life it is the symbol or the word that replaces the thing hence creating a desire for the thing in itself. A void between the word and the thing that it represents allows for the creation of imaginative discourses that we see in works of art. A ceaseless desire that has resulted in the creation of infinite styles and combinations keeping the anxiety of existence alive. But the object produced by the society of enjoyment has to fraudulently close this gap. The capitalist attempt at closing this gap results in creations of objects for mass consumption. Objects that have to deny the complexity of the

symbolic order and rather create images that deny complexity and mediation and promise direct satisfaction. But a mediation is always there. Guy Debord in his highly influential *Society of the Spectacle* theorized the rise of the image and what it mediates by telling us that “The spectacle is a social relation between people that is mediated by an accumulation of images that serve to alienate us from a genuinely lived life. The image is thus an historical mutation of the form of commodity fetishism” (24). Alienation being the keyword here, images have now taken on the power of creating reality itself. Just like a commodity becomes a fetish by pointing towards itself instead of the reality of the labor behind it, the contemporary world of images ceases to point towards real experience involving lack and simply creates a spectacle of images which cannot but point towards itself. Adorno in his essay *The Schema of Mass Culture* refers to the same phenomenon by saying that mass culture “is a system of signals that signals itself” (89). The self-referential system of images further alienates selfhood by holding hostage any knowledge of the self within its ‘spectacular’ grasp. The spectacle is not just the image that we see on TV but rather, as Adorno suggests, it is a ‘system of signals’. This system involves everything that popular culture produces including popular ‘literary’ narratives which create the same clichéd spectacle of the consuming subject. In place of complexity, we are given an ideological repetition of the same. Interestingly this repetition always looks novel since the narrative combinations may change, but the ideological message and the image of the desired self always remains the same. This image is a watered down image of the ambiguities of life. An image where the enjoyment of perfect unity becomes possible. An example of this is the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer, where the outsider figures of the monster (Vampire and Werewolf) are turned into teenage heartthrobs and the human ‘young adult’ heroine falls in love with both of them. Having a child by the vampire and turning into one herself, she still retains a connection with the werewolf. Both the creatures that have traditionally been depicted as representatives of moral ambiguity (if not pure villainy) and a lack of control are shown to be both morally upright and in full control of themselves. The human, vampire and werewolf combination represents the erasure of the lack within the symbolic order and the merging of these discordant subjectivities and desires into a single spectacular image of modern enjoyment. This image dictates the command to enjoy, since now within the realm of the spectacular everything is not just possible but is also encouraged, while in reality, life becomes more and more precarious. This culturally industrialized depiction of monsters is in stark contrast to the traditional depiction and function of the monster, where the monster was both a villain and a tragic figure. The original vampires of 19<sup>th</sup> century gothic fiction: Carmilla (1872) and Dracula (1897) were both outside figures threatening to upend the social order through violence and sexuality. These were not just scary creatures but rather depictions of the extremes of passions depicting the eruption of the

‘real’ in the symbolic order. Although, these representations do not predate the emergence of the culture industry, the totalizing effect of the said industry still perhaps lacked the technological means to reproduce itself and thus allowed some aspects of the literary ‘product’ to signify something beyond the spectacle itself. The capitulation of this signifiatory property of the products of the culture industry and its total absorption into the arch spectacle of popular culture is completed when the proverbial vampire’s fangs are taken out in Stephenie Meyer’s ‘insider’ vampires that completely conform to the aesthetic politics of the cultural industrial complex. The ‘levelling down’ of monstrosity to the category of stereotypical protagonist good guy robs the traditional narrative of its angst, thus making it digestible and ‘enjoyable’.

If we take the mediatory function of this spectacular/image based world and look at it from a Lacanian perspective what we will find in the end analysis is the uncanny resemblance with Lacan’s conception of the ‘imaginary’. In Lacan’s theoretical apparatus of the emergence of subjectivity in human beings, a very important part is played by the mirror stage where the child looks at itself in the mirror and wrongly construes itself as a complete, organic and unified being. In opposition to the fragmentation that the child faces as it comes more in proximity with the symbolic reality of its separation from the mother; the child creates this unified image of itself to ward off the trauma of symbolic separation. According to Lacan in *Écrits*, “The mirror stage is a drama whose internal dynamic shifts from insufficiency to anticipation—a drama that, for its subject, caught in the mirage of spatial identification, vehiculates a whole series of fantasies which range from a fragmented image of the body to what we will term an orthopedic form of its unity, and to that ultimate assumption of the armature of an alienating identity [ego], whose rigid structure will mark the subject’s entire mental development” (4). Since the image is only there as part of the fantasy structure of human consciousness- something that is there in the mirror but not in reality- it in itself becomes an object that the child gazes upon. Paradoxically the “Ideal I” of complete unity is alienated into the mirror thus becoming an object of desire. The imaginary functions in tandem with the symbolic in order to create “this illusion of wholeness that the ego provides for the subject serves to obscure both the lack in the subject and the lack in the big Other. Through the illusion that the ego provides, the subject can visualize an image of enjoyment, an image that seems to overcome all lack” (Mc Gowan 66).

The imaginary is overwhelmingly narcissistic since it fetishizes an alienated ideal ego in order to forget the desire producing lack in the Other/symbolic order.

McGowan further states that “The subject in the society of enjoyment exists predominantly in a state of narcissistic isolation, an isolation that provides a sense of imaginary enjoyment. The narcissist, of course, takes his or her own ego as a love object, and Lacan emphasizes that the ego is itself imaginary: the ego first develops as a bodily image, as a way that the subject sees itself” (66). The imaginary is conducive to the capital oriented commandment to enjoy since the image promises fullness of experience along with essential meanings; meanings that the symbol blocks. But this promise is never kept since enjoyment in the real sense would always be a traumatic experience since it would break all bounds of social relations. This kind of unmediated experience would perhaps only result in the complete breakdown of the symbolic order but this is never the case. The commandment to enjoy is yet another form of controlling and redirecting desire since in order for consumerism to work there has to be a notion of completeness which can only be filled by consumption. The more powerful the commandment to enjoy, the more we work and toil without question, in order to earn money that may buy us the commodities that we have been presented with as spectacles of fullness. Not finding this fullness –since it’s not there- may leave us even more dissatisfied, but this dissatisfaction is not the realization of an impossibility but rather, “we tend to see this dissatisfaction as the result of a mistake, something that might be remedied, rather than as that which constitutes us as subjects. What is absent, then, is a more general sense of dissatisfaction” (McGowan 138).

McGowan’s thesis of the end of dissatisfaction opens up the question of the quality of this dissatisfaction. Surely, in the quest for correcting this ‘mistake’, it is very possible that enjoyment itself becomes the very thing that overpowers the commandment to enjoy, through the experience of repeated dissatisfaction, hence opening up an avenue of resisting the command through a pessimistic realization of impossibility. But, this failure of the command to enjoy through repetition has been anticipated by consumer culture which through its spectacle has mutated human experience as a whole. In the twenty first century there has been an overemphasis on the interactive aspect of technology. We are constantly bombarded with signals regarding the necessity of interactive gadgetry. From cell phones to video games and even TV programs where you can interact with the screen and choose your own plot sequences (like the Netflix film *Bandersnatch*), interaction is propagated as something that would increase the powers of enjoyment of a subject. Ironically the more we interact with these objects the more we do it in such a passive manner that we neither enjoy nor get tired of these things.

This brings us to Pfaller and Žižek's idea of interpassivity which is a combination of interactivity and passivity. The question that they ask is who really is amused, who enjoys when the subject seemingly interacts with the commodity? The answer that they have come up with is that it is the object that enjoys in our stead. Žižek explains the phenomenon by commenting that, "Perhaps the fundamental attitude defining the subject is neither that of passivity nor that of autonomous activity, but precisely that of interpassivity . . . (I can continue to work in the evening, while the VCR passively enjoys for me; I can make financial arrangements for the deceased's fortune while the weepers mourn for me). This allows us to propose the notion of false activity: you think you are active, while your true position, as it is embodied in the fetish, is passive" (Žižek, *Plague of Fantasies* 149). As subjects the more we interact with objects due to the command to enjoy, the more passive we become in front of the object. It is almost as if it is the object that enjoys in our stead. Referring to 'canned laughter' in comedy shows Žižek states: "After some supposedly funny or witty remark, you can hear the laughter and applause included in the soundtrack of the show itself. . . it serves to remind us when to laugh—is interesting enough, since it implies the paradox that laughter is a matter of duty and not of some spontaneous feeling; but this answer is not sufficient because we do not usually laugh. The only correct answer would be that the Other—embodied in the television set—is relieving us even of our duty to laugh—is laughing instead of us" (Žižek, *Sublime Object* 33). The 'Other' that Žižek refers to is the symbolic order which is now, not just commanding us to enjoy but also has taken upon itself the experience of enjoyment as well. In other words, human experience has been alienated in the realm of objects.

Robert Pfaller, who first coined the term interpassivity, takes the debate one step further. Commenting upon the object oriented nature of interpassivity and the audience for which interpassive functions are performed, he gives us the example of video recording. According to Pfaller "Interpassive substitute actions are commonly performed in shameful isolation. The interpassive subject does not perform the drama for an actual audience, but solely for an ideal audience. This ideal audience is the bearer of the objective illusion" (Pfaller 26). We do not just interact directly with the television but rather with advent of recording devices, we would like to amass as much data as possible whether we ever get a chance to watch it or not. When we even attempt to watch it, our interactive response is delegated to the TV program itself, but who are we doing it for? In whose eyes are we enjoying subjects? As Pfaller claims in the quotation given above, the performance of enjoying interpassively is performed for an imagined ideal audience. This is precisely how Lacan had theorized the function of the alienated

ego during the onset of imaginary stage. It is the gaze of the ideal audience that supposedly knows what enjoyment really and it is for this audience that the function of recording is performed instead of actually watching what has been recorded. All objects of popular culture find popularity precisely because the interpassive individual consumes them repeatedly in order to satisfy the gaze of this imaginary ideal audience. As interpassive subjects we remain as dissatisfied as before but now our satisfaction is delegated to objects of popular imagination that dictate their own terms of satisfaction. An obsession with downloadable content, which can be stored in a terabyte hard drive (even though this terabyte of data can never be fully interacted with) pleases the screen which shows the data rather than the now interpassive subject that has delegated its desire to the screen.

Popular narratives, be it popular literature, TV, pop psychology or pop music are designed precisely for this interpassive subject. Critics have pointed this out and have been pointing it out up till now since the dawn of the industrial age. The image of success in whatever appropriate form is presented for our objective enjoyment. Popular narratives of the self, present us with a demystified image of the perfect human self, telling us at the same time how and in what way to interpassively desire it. The angst producing works of art that symbolize artistic modernism and required real effort to be put into traversing its symbolic depth has been replaced by a shallow image of for instance; what it means to be a teenager through popular literature for adolescents, how to be successful in everyday life through self-help books, how to sustain the false sense of completeness and unity through motivational speeches, and how to be a great academic through the creation of modes of interactive presentation through multimedia and slides.

In conclusion I would just like to say that the function of the critic is to create situations where true symbolic interaction can take place instead of the comfortable interpassive environments. The critic needs to create critical instances that require an in depth active interaction with the existing symbolic order. This would perhaps call for a bit of boredom, but it is within the seriousness of boredom where we will finally be free from our interactive passivity to be finally able to do what has been made extremely impossible. To be free in our inactivity to think.

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